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COUNTRY CONDITIONS REPORTS

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Exhibit 1

BRIEF EXPLANATION REGARDING ORGANIZED CRIME DOMINANCE, STATE PROTECTION FAILURE IN BRAZIL

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1. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF VIOLENCE AND CRIMINALITY IN BRAZIL

Organized crime in Brazil has become one of the country's most serious security challenges. Large criminal organizations such as the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and the Comando Vermelho (CV) have expanded from prison-based origins into sophisticated networks involved in drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal mining, and other criminal enterprises [CC 10, CC 11].

On May 28, 2026, the United States Department of State officially designated both the Comando Vermelho and the PCC as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs), with Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) status taking effect on June 5, 2026 [CC 2]. Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that both groups are ‘two of the most violent criminal organizations in Brazil’ and have ‘orchestrated brutal attacks against Brazilian police officers, public officials, and civilians’ [CC 2].

Around 31 million Brazilians — 19% of the population — live in areas dominated by criminal organizations, likely the highest proportion in Latin America [CC 18]. Brazil's resilience score against organized crime stands at only 4.92 out of 10 in the Global Organized Crime Index, reflecting weak national policies and ineffective law enforcement [CC 7].

2. THE TRANSNATIONAL EXPANSION AND CORPORATE NATURE OF THE FACTIONS

The Comando Vermelho has grown from a localized prison gang to a presence in 25 of Brazil's 26 states, operating like a decentralized franchise network [CC 20]. Intelligence data compiled by Brazil's national intelligence agency ABIN, presented to the Senate, confirms that the CV has been active in Tocantins since at least 2013, among the first four

states outside Rio de Janeiro where the faction established operations [CC 15].

This presence is directly relevant to this case. A study released by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security (FBSP) at COP30 in November 2025 documents criminal factions in 17 municipalities in Tocantins [CC 13]. In Palmas, the city where the applicant and her family resided, the CV and PCC are engaged in direct territorial competition [CC 13]. A complementary study on the Amazon Legal Region documents at least two competing criminal organizations operating simultaneously in Palmas, with faction presence in the region growing 32% in a single year [CC 13].

The CV operates like a corporate franchise with detailed records of members, their relatives, and rivals, reflecting a level of coordination that allows it to locate and track targets across state lines [CC 10, CC 4]. This capacity for sustained surveillance and pursuit is directly relevant to the applicant's experience of being found each time her family relocated within Brazil.

3. TARGETING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES BY CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Organized crime in Brazil increasingly targets police officers, former officers, prosecutors, and their family members. In September 2025, former São Paulo Police Chief Ruy Ferraz Fontes was assassinated by the PCC in retaliation for his career combating the organization [CC 8]. Investigations into PCC assassination plots revealed that the organization surveils and monitors family members of targeted law enforcement officials [CC 8, CC 17].

NPR reporting documents the established pattern of revenge killings by criminal organizations against police: 'Criminal groups, when they recognize a police officer off-duty, they execute him for the same reason [retaliation].' Statistics show that less than 8% of homicides in Brazil result in a conviction, meaning criminal organizations act with near-total impunity [CC 16].

This targeting pattern is directly relevant to this case. The applicant's father, a military police officer, was killed by a criminal faction following a police operation. The faction subsequently threatened to kill all male members of the applicant's family in retaliation — a pattern entirely consistent with the documented behavior of criminal organizations toward

law enforcement families across Brazil.

4. STATE FAILURE, PUBLIC-ACTOR COMPLICITY, AND INABILITY TO INTERVENE

Although the government frequently launches security operations against criminal organizations, these actions rarely dismantle their structures [CC 3]. The clearest example is the October 2025 operation in Rio de Janeiro: despite being the deadliest police raid in Rio's history, with 122 deaths, the CV continued to control the targeted neighborhoods and resumed operations within 24 hours [CC 3, CC 6].

In smaller cities and interior states like Tocantins, the situation is no better. Studies document that in cities like Palmas, the competition between criminal factions generates increased homicides, threats, and other violent crimes without meaningful state intervention [CC 12, CC 13]. The Brazilian government's own officials have acknowledged the limits of state authority. Minister Wellington Dias stated publicly that Brazil today has both an 'official state' and a 'parallel state' controlled by criminal organizations [CC 18, CC 22].

Corruption further undermines protection. Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes confirmed the political infiltration of the Comando Vermelho at the municipal, state, and federal levels when ordering the arrest of the president of the Rio de Janeiro state legislature [CC 21]. Human Rights Watch reports that police abuses and corruption within the force make communities distrust law enforcement and less likely to report crimes or seek protection [CC 3].

UN human rights experts have specifically expressed alarm about reprisals against family members of victims and witnesses in Brazil, noting that authorities must guarantee protection against 'intimidation, harassment or criminalisation' — yet have acknowledged that the Brazilian state consistently fails to do so [CC 9].

This pattern of state failure is directly relevant to this case. The applicant's family repeatedly sought police protection after the murder of her father and the kidnapping of her brother, consistent with documented patterns showing that missing-persons reports in Brazil are routinely treated by police as a non-criminal, 'atypical occurrence' that does not trigger a formal investigation [CC 14]. On each occasion, authorities told the family they were unable to help, explicitly advising them to stop searching for the missing brother because it was 'too

dangerous,' and telling the applicant that police could only respond if a crime was committed directly inside her home.

5. IMPOSSIBILITY OF INTERNAL RELOCATION

The Comando Vermelho has a confirmed presence in 25 of Brazil's 26 states, with operational capacity to locate and target individuals across the country [CC 20]. The UK Home Office Country Policy and Information Note on Brazil acknowledges that the risk a person faces from an organized criminal group depends on 'the group's intent, size, reach and capabilities', all of which, in the case of the CV and PCC, are documented to extend nationally [CC 4].

The applicant's own experience illustrates this impossibility. Her family moved four times within Brazil and was located and surveilled each time. Internal relocation within Brazil would not be reasonable or effective, as the documented operational reach of the CV and the PCC precludes any realistic prospect of safety elsewhere in the country [CC 20, CC 13, CC 15].

6. CONCLUSION

The country conditions evidence presented establishes three critical conclusions for this case: first, that the CV and PCC operate nationwide, which precludes the applicant's ability to internally relocate within the country; second, that criminal organizations systematically target law enforcement officers and their family members in retaliation; and third, that the Brazilian state is unable and unwilling to provide effective protection to persons in the applicant's situation.

On May 28, 2026, the United States government formally recognized the severity of this threat by designating the Comando Vermelho and the PCC as foreign terrorist organizations [CC 2]. This designation reflects the international community's recognition that these organizations represent a serious, well-documented, and transnational threat — corroborating every element of the applicant's account and establishing that the harm she fears is consistent with documented patterns of criminal organization behavior in Brazil.

Exhibit 2

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EXCERPTS FROM COUNTRY CONDITIONS REPORTS

CC 1

**BRAZIL 2024 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT - U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or detention; and serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including violence or threats of violence against journalists.

The government did not always take credible steps to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses.

CC 2

**TERRORIST DESIGNATION OF COMANDO VERMELHO
AND PRIMEIRO COMANDO DA CAPITAL - U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Today, the U.S. Department of State is designating Comando Vermelho (CV) and Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) and intends to designate both groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), effective June 5, 2026.

CV and PCC are two of the most violent criminal organizations in Brazil. Together, they command thousands of members and have orchestrated brutal attacks against Brazilian police officers, public officials, and civilians. Their influence and illicit networks extend far beyond Brazil's borders, across our region and into our country.

CC 3

WORLD REPORT 2026: BRAZIL - HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

In October, police conducted the most lethal raid in Rio de Janeiro's history, which left 122 people dead, including 5 police officers.

While some police killings are in self-defense, many result from illegal use of force. Inadequate investigations into those cases, carried out by the police themselves, result in impunity for abuses.

In seven states and the federal district, official forensic units remain fully subordinated to civil police, a set-up that does not accord them the necessary independence, particularly in police abuse cases. Forensic units in other states have varying degrees of independence from police.

CC 4

COUNTRY POLICY AND INFORMATION NOTE, BRAZIL: ORGANISED CRIMINAL GROUPS - UNITED KINGDOM HOME OFFICE

3.1.5 Brazil has a diverse criminal landscape, with approximately 80 criminal gangs and militia groups operating alongside and against the 2 largest gangs in the country, the PCC and the CV. The PCC has approximately 100,000 members operating in almost every Brazilian state as well as internationally, with its base in Sao Paulo. The CV has approximately 30,000 members, operating in about 20 Brazilian states and other Latin American countries, and has its base in Rio de Janeiro. The majority of other OCGs are present in 3 states or less and generally ally with either the PCC or the CV (see Organised Criminal Groups (OCGs), Militias).

5.1.2 Different factions of the same OCG can and do communicate with each other meaning that the PCC and CV would have the ability to track a person of interest across Brazil, due to their presence throughout the country. Whether they would have a desire to do so would depend on the alleged infraction. In general, stealing from an OCG, informing on them, personally disrespecting a group leader and failure to repay a large debt could result in a person being tracked. What constitutes a large debt would depend on the perception of the creditor. Former group members are monitored and are targeted if they break the conditions of being permitted to leave. Generally, these issues relate to people who have been part of the OCG. However, prominent public figures

such as prosecutors and politicians who attempt to disrupt OCG activity are also likely to be tracked throughout the country (Political violence, Tracking of persons by OCGs, Leaving an OCG).

CC 5

BRAZIL: FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2025 - FREEDOM HOUSE

However, independent journalists and civil society activists risk harassment and violent attack and political violence is high. Minority groups suffer from crime, disproportionate violence, and economic exclusion, issues the government struggles to address. Corruption is endemic at top levels, contributing to widespread disillusionment among the public.

Gang violence, militias, and police violence in parts of Brazil, especially favelas, have impeded free movement and access to education.

CC 6

RIO POLICE UNDERMINE PUBLIC SAFETY - HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

A month after the deadliest police raid in Rio de Janeiro's history, the Red Command, the organized crime group that was the target of the operation, continues to control the Alemão and Penha neighborhoods. Meanwhile, 122 families, including those of 5 police officers who were killed, mourn the loss of their loved ones. The deadly results and tactics employed raise serious questions as to whether the police command sought, rather than avoided, shootouts.

The ratio of people killed to those injured — an astounding almost 20 to 1 — is the opposite of what one would expect from a police force that has the duty to protect people's lives and begs the question of whether the true intention was to kill, rather than arrest suspects.

Rio de Janeiro authorities have conducted military-style operations again and again for years without weakening criminal groups. On the contrary, those organizations have expanded to other states and neighboring countries.

Since the operation, police have retreated from the Alemão and Penha neighborhoods and organized crime's grip on those communities is as strong as ever. The people who died will soon be replaced by other poor, young men with few job and educational prospects.

CC 7

STATE OF DENIAL? – GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

In the 2023 Global Organized Crime Index, Brazil's mafia-style group indicator score was 8 out of 10, placing the country second in South America after Colombia and Venezuela (9.5), for this category of criminal actor. These large criminal groups from the south-eastern region of Brazil have increased their footprint across the country with two goals in mind: establishing new routes for transnational drug exports and diversifying their revenue streams into other profitable illicit trades, including wildlife trafficking and illicit gold mining in the resource-rich Amazon region, and extortion and protection racketeering in densely populated urban margins.

Under the Index, Brazil ranks 18th out of 35 countries in the Americas for overall resilience indicators against organized crime (scoring 4.92 out of 10). This low resilience score is due to difficulties in implementing anti-organized crime policies at a national level. The 2023 Index gave Brazil a score of 4.5 out of 10 for national policies and laws that can effectively combat organized crime, and the same score was given to law enforcement capacity. With state governments controlling police forces, the federal government has its hands tied and has largely been unable to coordinate effective public security solutions to rising criminality.

CC 8

THE PCC'S MAFIA MOMENT – GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

On 15 September, Ruy Ferraz Fontes, São Paulo's former police chief, was assassinated by three assailants using high-grade rifles in a busy road in the city of Praia Grande. Ongoing police investigations indicate that the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) was behind the killing, reportedly in retaliation for

Fontes's long track record of combatting Brazil's largest organized crime group.

This is not the first assassination carried out by the PCC against a former law enforcement officer; the former head of a São Paulo prison was also killed in a similar fashion. Fontes's murderers are still at large, but the police have identified seven suspects – two of whom are PCC members – who were reportedly involved in the killing.

In this context, the prospect of a new wave of mass killings by the police to avenge Fontes cannot be ruled out. This would most likely result once again in the death of innocent civilians while failing to dismantle the PCC's authority and power. Fontes's assassination therefore exacerbates an already volatile situation involving a powerful criminal organization that appears to be increasingly willing to demonstrate its strength through public acts of violence, and an increasingly lethal local police force. Rather than repeating failed interventions, state authorities should take inspiration from the Hidden Carbon operation. Large mafia-style groups such as the PCC are capable of withstanding coercive operations by state forces.

CC 9

UN EXPERTS URGE SWIFT INVESTIGATION INTO DEADLY POLICE OPERATION IN RIO DE JANEIRO - UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR)

UN experts today expressed grave concern over the deadliest police operation in the history of Brazil, which has left at least 120 people dead, including four police officers, and called on Brazilian authorities to ensure an independent investigation with a view to ensuring accountability, halt ongoing human rights violations and ensure the protection of witnesses, relatives, and human rights defenders.

The experts expressed alarm at threats to criminalise relatives of victims, residents, and human rights defenders who helped recover bodies the following morning. “We are particularly concerned about reprisals against families and witnesses. Authorities must guarantee their life, safety and personal integrity, and prevent any form of intimidation, harassment or criminalisation,” they said. “It is the responsibility of the authorities to preserve the scene for subsequent forensic examination.”

RED COMMAND (COMANDO VERMELHO) PROFILE - INSIGHT CRIME

The Red Command (Comando Vermelho – CV) is Brazil's oldest criminal group. Created in a Rio de Janeiro prison in the 1970s as a self-protection group for prisoners, it started out with low-level crimes like muggings and bank robberies. But in the 1980s, the group moved into the cocaine trade, working with Colombian drug cartels and taking on a social leadership role in many of Rio's marginalized neighborhoods.

It has since grown into a sizable national and transnational threat. The Red Command has a major influence in prisons across the country, with the northern region of Amazonas and the western state of Mato Grosso being its secondary strongholds. In 2023, the Red Command was able to overtake militias and become the group with the greatest territorial control in Rio, ruling more than half of the city. The Red Command is also engaged in an ongoing turf war in the tri-border region between Colombia, Brazil, and Peru.

The Red Command has a relatively loose leadership structure and has been described as a network of independent actors, rather than a strict hierarchical organization headed by a single leader. The gang's structure resembles the organization of a franchise, as it has local divisions and separated networks working as allies.

In addition to the PCC, the Red Command's main enemies are militias composed of active and former security force officers, and the Rio-based criminal group Pure Third Command, a breakaway faction of the Third Command (Terceiro Comando), which was set up by dissident former Red Command members.

BRAZIL'S ORGANIZED CRIME PROFILE - INSIGHT CRIME

As well as being Latin America's largest country by population, economy, and area, Brazil is also home to some of the region's most powerful criminal organizations.

Brazil's two largest gangs, the First Capital Command (Primeiro Comando da Capital – PCC) and the Red Command (Comando Vermelho – CV), have used prisons as bases of operations, becoming increasingly involved in international drug trafficking as well as arms and contraband trafficking.

Corruption also poses a challenge for many Brazilian security institutions. Police and soldiers often work with organized crime groups, or form their own criminal organizations, as in the case of the militias.

Most courts are slow, corrupt, and generally ineffective. Pretrial detention is common for criminal suspects, contributing to problems in the prison system.

Brazil has one of the world's largest prison populations, divided into federal and state systems. The facilities are often overcrowded, under-resourced, and controlled by one or more gangs.

CC 12

INSIGHT CRIME'S 2025 HOMICIDE ROUND-UP: BRAZIL - INSIGHT CRIME

Brazil's homicide rate dropped from 21 per 100,000 in 2024 to 19.2 in 2025, continuing a downward trend that started in 2019. The decrease means 3,615 fewer people were murdered in Brazil last year compared to 2024, and the data includes homicides, femicides, police killings, robbery followed by murder, and manslaughter.

Northern states reported high levels of violence due to fighting between Brazil's two biggest gangs, the First Capital Command (PCC) and the Red Command (CV), and local gangs. Meanwhile, the Red Command frequently engaged in shootouts with other gangs and the police in its home base state, Rio de Janeiro.

Brazil has also registered a record number of disappearances since 2015, suggesting the drop in its homicide rate may be due at least in part to undetected murders.

REPORT INDICATES PRESENCE OF FACTIONS IN 17 MUNICIPALITIES OF TOCANTINS; PCC AND CV DISPUTE TERRITORY IN PALMAS AND ARAGUAÍNA - JORNAL OPÇÃO TOCANTINS

The 4th edition of the Cartographies of Violence in the Amazon research identified 17 municipalities in Tocantins with the presence of criminal factions, equivalent to 12% of the state's cities. In 14 of them, only one group operates, while three have territorial disputes.

According to the document, four organizations operate in the state: Comando Vermelho (CV), Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), Amigos do Estado (ADE), present in Almas, and Bonde do Cangaço, identified in Taguatinga. The most serious tensions occur in Palmas and Araguaína, where CV and PCC are directly disputing territorial control.

The survey includes cities such as Alvorada, Gurupi, Paraíso do Tocantins, Porto Nacional, São Bento do Tocantins, Xambioá, Araguatins, and Miracema do Tocantins. The capital, Palmas, appears as an area of conflict between the country's main factions.

The advance of criminal factions in Tocantins mirrors the broader scenario in the Legal Amazon, according to the report, where organized crime already reaches 45% of municipalities. The study released at COP30 indicates that the presence of criminal groups in the region grew by 32% in one year, increasing from 260 to 344 cities. This expansion is linked to the control of river, air, and land routes, as well as its intersection with environmental crimes.

According to the researchers, this dynamic directly affects the states that act as a link between the forest and the rest of the country, such as Tocantins and Maranhão, both identified in the report as essential for the circulation of drugs destined for national consumption and international trafficking.

The rate of reported missing persons increased by 4.9% in Brazil in 2024, totaling 81,873 cases reported to Civil Police authorities nationwide. After a sharp decline in 2020 and 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic period, the number of reports began to rise again, reaching, in the most recent year, the highest figure since 2018. Based on recent statistics, an average of four missing persons reports per hour were filed with law enforcement authorities.

The increase in missing persons in Brazil coincides with a period in which a significant decline in intentional violent deaths has been observed, alongside the expansion of criminal organizations such as the PCC - First Capital Command (Primeiro Comando da Capital) and the Red Command (Comando Vermelho). Following conflicts stemming from internal splits in previous years, these groups began consolidating new territories in partnership with local criminal organizations. It is therefore noteworthy that the states currently located in the most violent regions of the country also present the largest increases in the number of missing persons during the period analyzed.

This phenomenon, moreover, is not new in Brazil. Since at least the period of the military dictatorship, the existence of clandestine cemeteries used for the disposal of bodies has been documented. In 1990, the country became aware of a clandestine cemetery in São Paulo, created by state agents during the military regime for the disposal of the remains of victims of political repression and of death squads formed by police officers. In the Perus mass grave, as it became known, 1,049 bags containing skeletal remains were found.

Even during the democratic period, the practice of disposing of the bodies of executed individuals in clandestine graves has persisted, although research on the subject remains scarce. This practice has been primarily adopted by criminal factions and militias as a means of eliminating rivals without drawing the attention of the State. If there is no body, there is no crime, nor an investigation.

Most of these individuals end up appearing in the statistics as “missing persons,” which is considered by the police to be an atypical occurrence, that is, not a crime. And since it does not constitute, a priori, a criminal offense, this type of report frequently does not result in the opening of a police investigation, lacks material evidence, and is not subject to statutes of limitation (Ferreira, 2013).

In light of the significant increase in missing persons reports in Brazil, particularly in regions marked by high homicide rates and

disputes among criminal organizations, it is urgent to recognize that this dynamic may be concealing an even more perverse dimension of criminality: execution followed by concealment of the body. The absence of specific legislation defining forced disappearance as a crime hampers the institutional response to the problem, contributing to the invisibilization of victims and to the suffering of families who are deprived even of the possibility of mourning.

CC 15

BRAZIL HAS 31 'POWERFUL' FACTIONS, AND CV IS ONLY ABSENT FROM 5 STATES - UOL NEWS

A mapping by ABIN (Brazilian Intelligence Agency) reveals that Brazil has 31 criminal factions with the potential to affect the security of states. Among these criminal groups, three have national reach: PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital), CV (Comando Vermelho), and TCP (Terceiro Comando Puro).

The expansion of Comando Vermelho began in 2013. That year, the faction was present in only four states, in addition to Rio de Janeiro, where it originated. The ABIN (Brazilian Intelligence Agency) report shows that CV operated in Pará, Tocantins, Rondônia, and Santa Catarina. Currently, the group has expanded its operations and is only not active in five states: Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul, and São Paulo]

CV allied itself with local groups and created a network for supplying drugs and weapons. Over the years, Comando Vermelho began to ally itself with factions from other states that were facing the advance of PCC. "So, it [CV] begins to offer these groups a network of logistical access to weapons and drugs, a much more decentralized chain of command than the São Paulo faction," assesses the coordinator of Abin. He also mentions that the group also offers the advantage of being able to hide in communities in Rio de Janeiro.

Comando Vermelho is involved in all clashes between criminal factions in the country. Mesquita also mentions that the expansion of CV consolidated in 2024, becoming one of the main challenges to national security. The assessment was made during a meeting on November 5th at the Joint Committee for the Control of Intelligence Activities of the Federal Senate.

**FAMILIES OF SLAIN BRAZILIAN POLICE OFFICERS
ASK FOR TOUGHER PENALTIES - NPR (NATIONAL
PUBLIC RADIO)**

GARCIA-NAVARRO: "There are many families with the same problem with the same cause. There have been too many killings," she says. "It's been terrible. There are so many policemen dying," she says. The numbers of total cop killings across Brazil are unclear, mostly because official statistics don't count off-duty deaths like Jorge Henrique Xavier's, but at least 87 policemen were killed in 2014 in Rio State alone, say advocacy groups. Other groups, like the police union, say the number is triple that. The families of the dead cops have now joined forces. They want tougher penalties for cop killers. At the main police headquarters in Alemao, where Jorge Henrique Xavier worked, officers wear bulletproof vests and are heavily armed. It's a sign of the tensions here. Flavia Louzada is a military policewoman who also works in Alemao.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: "The bullet doesn't only kill a policeman," she says. "It kills a whole family."

CANO: We have a very excessive use of force and many of these are revenge killings. So police do carry out revenge killings. And criminal groups, when they recognize a police officer off-duty, they execute him for the same reason.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: And that, he says, taps into something broader here than the battle between the police and the drug gangs. He says the police act extra judicially because there is no faith in the criminal justice system. Cano says that statistics show that out of a hundred homicides, less than eight result in a sentence against the perpetrators.

**EXPERT DISCUSSES PCC THREATS AGAINST
AUTHORITIES – CNN BRAZIL**

A joint operation by the São Paulo Public Prosecutor's Office and the Civil Police uncovered plans by the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) to assassinate authorities working to combat

organized crime. Investigations revealed that the criminals even rented a house less than a kilometer from the residence of one of the targets.

Among the targets of the criminal group was Lincoln Gakiya, whose family was monitored by the criminals. The faction's actions demonstrate an escalation in the audacity of organized crime, which seeks to intimidate the authorities responsible for confronting it.

CC 18

IS BRAZIL ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING A NARCO-STATE? - BBC BRAZIL

The year 2025 has been prolific in events that reinforce the diagnosis that organized crime has gained power and influence in Brazil.

Experts argue that criminal groups have a "parasitic" and sometimes "symbiotic" relationship with the State, without, however, intending to replace it.

These are two powers that coexist, they say, often sharing the so-called monopoly of violence, or the prerogative to use violent means to maintain order or prevent crime—which, in theory, should belong solely to the State.

"In Brazil, and in many other countries around the world, I work with the idea that there are coexisting power regimes, different sovereignties, and that the State does not have a monopoly on force and justice, a fundamental condition of state hegemony," says Gabriel Feltran, research director at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and full professor at Sciences Po in Paris.

According to a survey released in 2024 by the National Secretariat for Penal Policies (Senappen), linked to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP), there are currently 88 criminal organizations spread throughout the country.

Some of them exert territorial control over the communities in which they are present: they monitor who enters and leaves, impose rules of conduct, and punish those who do not follow the rules.

Around 31 million Brazilians live in conditions like these, in areas dominated by gangs, according to a recent survey conducted by Datafolha at the request of the Brazilian Forum on Public Security.

This represents 19% of the population, 5 percentage points higher than in 2024 — a jump that gives an idea of the extent of the problem's progression.

The percentage is not only high by Brazilian standards. It is probably the highest observed in Latin America, says Benjamin Lessing, a professor at the University of Chicago.

CC 19

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO LIVE UNDER THE IRON LAW OF COMANDO VERMELHO (WHICH CONTINUES EXACTLY AS IT DID BEFORE THE MEGA POLICE OPERATION IN RIO)? - BBC BRAZIL

Rules like these, imposed by the faction created in Rio de Janeiro, govern the lives of millions of people who live in communities controlled by CV drug traffickers, not only where the criminal group originated, but also in other states where it has expanded throughout the country.

Robberies are prohibited – and offenders generally have one of their hands cut off by the CV (Comando Vermelho, a Brazilian criminal organization). If someone still insists, they can be "thrown into the tire" (thrown inside tires and incinerated). Looking at a "bandit's woman" is also serious, punishable by physical assault or death.

If the chaos persists, the CV resorts to torture and aggression. The complaint from the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of Rio de Janeiro (MPRJ), resulting from police investigations and which formed the basis of the operation in the Penha and Alemão complexes, includes images, for example, of a woman inside a bucket of ice, with a caption accusing her of being a

"troublemaker" and "causing trouble at the dance." Another photo shows a man on the ground, apparently being assaulted.

“Physical aggression serves not only as punishment, but also as a visible warning to other members of the community, reinforcing the authority of the drug traffickers and the vulnerability of the residents,” explains researcher Julia Quirino, a specialist in defense and security, in her book *Panóptico Criminal*, in which she analyzes how the CV governs the favelas under its control in Rio de Janeiro.

In a Senate hearing on Wednesday (November 5th), the undersecretary of intelligence for the Rio Military Police, Daniel Ferreira, said that the operation had a “minimal” impact on dismantling the CV.

Residents also report that there have been no changes in the drug trafficking routine after the mega-operation. The day after the deaths, while the bodies were still being removed from the woods, there were drug traffickers armed with rifles in the community.

This doesn't only happen in the Penha or Alemão favela complexes. In other areas controlled by the CV (Comando Vermelho), reports indicate that criminals have become even more heavily armed – and now even carry explosive devices on their belts, in case the police show up.

Just like in prisons, where the faction originated, the CV – like any armed criminal group – establishes rules of coexistence within the favelas. In the 1980s, the criminal organization created a statute with ten commandments, widely known by residents of the communities under its control, researchers who study the faction, and authorities – and which all members follow to this day: (...)

Residents or drug dealers who disregard these rules are punished by the group. And they are the ones who decide what penalties will be applied.

Eliana Souza, coordinator of the NGO Redes da Maré, says that the CV law is established to regulate daily life because other forms of authority are not present there.

"The state acts there in a negligent and passive way. This ends up generating a process of territorial control by other actors. We are talking about basic services: education, garbage collection, occupation of public spaces."

According to Geni, in the last 17 years, 707 police interventions resulting in deaths were recorded in Greater Rio. In total, 2,936 people died, including 31 police officers.

CC 20

COMANDO VERMELHO: HOW THE FACTION EMERGED AND SPREAD ACROSS BRAZIL - BBC BRAZIL

"The Comando Vermelho operates like a franchise. There are several owners of favelas. No one has more or less power; it's a partnership. This is what allowed Comando Vermelho to grow nationally. This factional ideology allowed leaders from other states, initially, to become business partners in their factions," says journalist Rafael Soares, author of the book *Militiamen: How agents trained to combat crime began to kill in its service*.

According to him, in the last six years, Comando Vermelho has established a presence in 25 states — before that, the organization extended its dominion to only 10 states.

The expansion of Comando Vermelho required new investments. Drug trafficking remains central to its activities, especially with its control of border areas, such as the Amazon, where the faction and the PCC are expanding their routes.

But the profits no longer come solely from drugs. According to a study by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security, organized crime moved approximately R\$ 146.8 billion in illegal markets in 2022.

CC 21

MORAES SEES CV INFILTRATION IN POLITICS WHEN ORDERING BACELLAR'S ARREST - CNN BRAZIL

Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes stated that he sees strong infiltration of the Comando Vermelho (Red Command) in Rio de Janeiro politics when he ordered the preventive detention of state deputy Rodrigo Bacellar (União), president of the Rio de Janeiro Legislative Assembly (Alerj).

"As I have had the opportunity to express my views on the need for the uniform repression of crimes with interstate and international repercussions, one of the main characteristics of criminal organizations operating in the state of Rio de Janeiro, in addition to territorial dominance through the use of force, and the ability to corrupt public and political agents on a large scale," says the minister in the decision that ordered the arrest of the parliamentarian.

"It is the political infiltration that these groups have achieved in recent years, whether at the municipal, state, or federal level," the minister added.

"Including influence within the state's Executive Branch, capable of increasing the risk of continued criminal activity and undue interference in investigations of the criminal organization," the minister emphasizes.

CC 22

‘CRIME IS INTERWINED IN BRAZIL. WE HAVE THE OFFICIAL STATE AND THE PARALLEL STATE,’ SAYS LULA’S CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR - BBC BRAZIL

The political coordinator of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's (PT) reelection campaign, the Minister of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, Wellington Dias (PT), said he recognizes that, in Brazil, the advance of organized crime has created "two" states.

"In Brazil today, we have the official state and the parallel state," Dias states in an interview with BBC News Brazil.

The minister's statement came amid the government's attempt to approve measures aimed at public safety . Polls indicate that this issue, along with health, is one of the main concerns of the Brazilian electorate at the moment.

Exhibit 3

Brazil 2024 Human Rights Report

Executive Summary

The human rights situation in Brazil declined during the year. The courts took broad and disproportionate action to undermine freedom of speech and internet freedom by blocking millions of users' access to information on a major social media platform in response to a case of harassment. The government undermined democratic debate by restricting access to online content deemed to "undermine democracy," disproportionately suppressing the speech of supporters of former president Jair Bolsonaro as well as journalists and elected politicians, often in secret proceedings that lacked due process guarantees. The government also suppressed politically disfavored speech on the basis that it constituted "hate speech," a vague term untethered to international human rights law.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: arbitrary or unlawful killings; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or detention; and serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including violence or threats of violence against journalists.

The government did not always take credible steps to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses.

Section 1. Life

a. Extrajudicial Killings

There were several reports police committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year. Some killings were attributed to a police operation against transnational criminal organizations in Sao Paulo State in the first half of the year and a police operation that took place from July 2023 to April in Baixada Santista, a coastal area including the port city of Santos.

In July, a São Paulo court charged two officers from a police shock battalion (ROTA) with aggravated homicide and obstructing evidence in the death of Fábio Oliveira Ferreira, who was killed in the operation in July 2023. One defendant was Captain Marcos Correa de Moraes Verardino, one of the coordinators of the operation, who allegedly fired three shots at Ferreira after he had surrendered. The other defendant, Corporal Ivan Pereira da Silva, also of ROTA, allegedly shot the victim twice in the chest while the victim was lying on the ground. In December, the two defendants were acquitted by courts in São Paulo State. The São Paulo Public Prosecutor's Office of appealed the decision, and higher courts were considering that appeal at year's end.

In April, Roraima State Civil Police reported it launched an operation to dismiss a group of officers from the military police of Roraima suspected of being part of a militia and an extermination group, according to a *Globo*

news report. More than 100 officers were investigated, and several arrests were made. The investigation examined cases in which police officers allegedly provided armed security for illegal miners, robbed and tortured competing invaders, and robbed the miner bosses themselves.

There were developments in the politically motivated 2018 killing of city councilwoman Marielle Franco and her driver Anderson Gomes, in Rio de Janeiro. In March, police arrested Chiquinho Brazão, a Federal Chamber deputy (representative), and his brother, Domingos Brazão, a member of the Rio de Janeiro State Audit Court, for their alleged role in ordering the 2018 killing of Franco. The brothers remained in custody and were charged with qualified homicide and attempted homicide. Rivaldo Barbosa, who was the chief of police of Rio de Janeiro when Franco was killed, was also arrested in March for allegedly helping plan the killing and for obstruction of justice. In November, two former police officers were sentenced for the killings. Ronnie Lessa was sentenced to 78 years and nine months for firing the shots that killed Franco and Gomes and injured one of Franco's aides. Élcio de Queiroz was sentenced to 59 years and eight months for driving the getaway car.

b. Coercion in Population Control

There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

Section 2. Liberty

a. Freedom of the Press

The constitution and law provided for freedom of expression, including for members of the press and other media. Supreme Court (STF) rulings, however, restricted the freedom of expression for individuals it deemed to be in violation of the law prohibiting antidemocratic speech.

Censorship by Governments, Military, Intelligence, or Police Forces, Criminal Groups, or Armed Extremist or Rebel Groups

The law prohibited politically motivated judicial censorship, but there were reports of censorship. The government censored online content deemed in violation of STF orders, which instructed platforms to remove content that allegedly spread misinformation related to the electoral system or judicial institutions or to disparage judicial officials with online threats or harassment. Court records reveal that Justice Alexandre de Moraes personally ordered the suspension of more than 100 user profiles on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), disproportionately suppressing the speech of advocates of former president Jair Bolsonaro instead of taking narrower measures to penalize content that incited imminent lawless action or harassment. The government telecommunications regulator Anatel ordered internet service providers to block X by order of the STF on August

31, after the company failed to appoint a legal representative and pay outstanding fines for failure to remove content in compliance with orders issued by the STF and the Superior Electoral Court. The STF authorized fines of 50,000 reais (\$9,000) per day to individuals or companies who accessed the platform via a virtual private network (VPN), although no fines were reportedly assessed. The STF authorized X to resume its operations in the country on October 8 after the company complied with court orders and paid outstanding fines. Other media companies were subject to similar content removal orders. This broad repression blocked Brazilians' access to information and viewpoints on a range of national and global issues. Additionally, the court's temporary prohibition on the use of a VPN, under penalty of fine, further eroded freedom of the press by removing privacy protections from individuals whose ability to blow the whistle on government corruption hinged on their capacity to do so anonymously.

Nongovernmental criminal elements at times subjected journalists to threats or violence due to the journalists' reporting on their criminal activities.

b. Worker Rights

Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

The law provided for freedom of association for all workers (except members of the military, military police, and firefighters), the right to

bargain collectively with some restrictions, and the right to strike. The law prohibited antiunion discrimination, including the dismissal of employees who were candidates for, or holders of, union leadership positions, and it required employers to reinstate workers fired for union activity.

New unions were required to register with the Ministry of Labor, which would accept the registration unless objections were filed by other unions. The law stipulated certain restrictions, such as *unicidade* (in essence, one union per occupational category per city), which limited freedom of association by prohibiting multiple, competing unions of the same professional category in a single geographical area. Unions that represented workers in the same geographical area and professional category could contest another union's registration.

The law stipulated a strike could be ruled "disruptive" by the labor court and the union could be subjected to legal penalties if the strike violated certain conditions, such as if the union failed to notify employers at least 48 hours before the beginning of a walkout or end a strike after a labor court decision. Employers were not allowed to hire substitute workers during a legal strike or fire workers for strike-related activity, provided the strike was not ruled abusive as defined in the law.

The law obliged a union to negotiate on behalf of all registered workers in the professional category and geographical area it represented, regardless of whether an employee paid voluntary membership dues. The law included

collective bargaining rights, such as the ability to negotiate a flexible hourly schedule and work remotely. The law permitted the government to reject clauses of collective bargaining agreements that conflicted with government policy.

Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining were generally respected, according to observers. Collective bargaining was widespread in establishments in the private sector.

In the view of nongovernmental organization (NGO) experts, the government usually effectively enforced applicable laws, and penalties were commensurate with those for other laws involving denials of civil rights, such as discrimination. Penalties were regularly applied against violators.

Forced or Compulsory Labor

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Acceptable Work Conditions

Wage and Hour Laws

The law provided for a minimum wage, which was higher than the official poverty income level. The law limited the workweek to 44 hours and specified a weekly rest period of 24 consecutive hours, preferably on Sundays. The law also provided for paid annual vacation, prohibited

excessive compulsory overtime, limited overtime to two hours per workday, and stipulated any hour worked above the monthly limit had to be compensated with at least time-and-a-half pay; these provisions generally were enforced for all groups of workers in the formal sector. The constitution also provided for the right of domestic employees to work a maximum of eight hours per day and 44 hours per week, and to receive a minimum wage, a lunch break, social security, and severance pay.

Occupational Safety and Health

The Ministry of Labor set occupational safety and health (OSH) standards that were consistent with internationally recognized norms, although unsafe working conditions were prevalent throughout the country, especially in construction, according to media reports. The law required employers to establish internal committees for accident prevention in workplaces. Inspectors identified unsafe conditions and responded to worker complaints, but the number of inspections conducted was lower than necessary. The law also prohibited firing employees for their committee activities. Workers could remove themselves from situations that endangered their health or safety without jeopardy to their employment, although those in forced labor situations without access to transportation were particularly vulnerable to situations that endangered their health and safety.

Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement

The Ministry of Labor addressed problems related to minimum wage, overtime, and OSH laws. In the view of NGO experts, officials effectively enforced OSH laws. Penalties for violations included fines that varied widely depending on the nature of the violation. Penalties were in general commensurate with similar crimes such as fraud or negligence. Penalties were regularly applied against violators. The number of labor inspectors was insufficient to enforce compliance, according to the Labor Inspectors Union. Inspectors had the authority to make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions.

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, the informal sector represented almost 40 percent of the workforce.

Gig workers were not considered employees, and food delivery and ride-share companies did not consider the workers who provided services through their platforms to be employees. These workers were not protected by labor laws.

c. Disappearance and Abduction

Disappearance

There were no reports of enforced disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities.

In July, President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva reinstated the Special Commission on Political Deaths and Disappearances to deal with state crimes and political repression that occurred from 1961 to 1979. The commission was created in 1995 but was closed in 2022 by the government of then President Bolsonaro.

Prolonged Detention without Charges

The constitution prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of persons to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observed these requirements; however, political figures and rights groups alleged the government held hundreds of individuals accused of participation in protests that led to the invasion of government buildings on January 8, 2023, in detention for several months without filing charges. They also alleged these protesters were denied access to legal counsel.

Lengthy pretrial detention was a problem. The length of pretrial detention frequently equaled or exceeded the maximum sentence for the alleged crime, according to the National Security Forum. As of 2023, approximately one-quarter of the prison population was awaiting court trial, according to the Brazilian Forum on Public Security.

d. Violations in Religious Freedom

See the Department of State's annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

e. Trafficking in Persons

See the Department of State's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* at <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

Section 3. Security of the Person

a. Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The constitution prohibited such practices, but there were credible reports government officials employed them.

Military police officers in Porto Alegre, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, were accused of torturing Vladimir Abreu de Oliveira for approximately 40 minutes before attempting to hide his body by throwing him from a bridge in May. An investigation revealed Abreu de Oliveira suffered multiple severe injuries while alive, leading to his death. Five officers were indicted, with charges ranging from torture resulting in death to omission of assistance, and two were in preventive detention. Civil police were

conducting a separate investigation.

b. Protection of Children

Child Labor

See the Department of Labor's *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/findings/>.

Child Marriage

The legal minimum age of marriage was 18, or 16 with parental or legal representative consent. While child marriage declined in recent years, the practice of early marriage (marriage before age 18), especially among girls, was common, according to UNICEF. The government did not always effectively enforce the law.

In March, a report from the newspaper *Econômico Valor* noted approximately one in five women married before turning 18.

c. Protection to Refugees

The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to refugees, returning refugees, or asylum seekers, as well as other persons of concern.

Provision of First Asylum

The law provided for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government had a system for providing protection to refugees.

d. Acts of Antisemitism and Antisemitic Incitement

According to the Brazilian Israelite Federation, there were approximately 120,000 Jewish Brazilian citizens, of whom approximately 70,000 lived in the state of São Paulo, according to 2021 data, and 34,000 in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

The law criminalized the manufacture, sale, distribution, or broadcast of symbols, emblems, ornaments, badges, or advertising that used the swastika for purposes of publicizing Nazism. The penalty was two to five years' imprisonment.

In June, the Brazilian Israelite Confederation (CONIB) and the Israelite Federation of the State of São Paulo (FISESP) reported a sharp increase in the number of cases of antisemitism after the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023. From January to May, 886 cases of antisemitism were recorded, almost six times more than in the same period in 2023. Most of the attacks occurred in digital environments, such as social networks and messaging apps.

Following Israel's military response in Gaza to the Hamas October 2023


terrorist attacks, on February 18, President Lula da Silva stated that “what is happening in the Gaza Strip... it’s a genocide.” In the speech, he then compared what was occurring in Palestine with “when Hitler decided to kill the Jews.” On February 19, CONIB stated it “repudiated the unfounded statements by President Lula comparing the Holocaust to the State of Israel’s defense against the terrorist group Hamas,” saying the government had adopted an “extreme and unbalanced posture in relation to the tragic conflict in the Middle East.”

On October 21, the Public Ministry of Santa Catarina’s Special Task Force to Combat Organized Crime arrested four individuals, allegedly members of a neo-Nazi group, for inciting discrimination and planning violent acts in different regions of the country. The arrests were part of “Operation Overlord,” which took place in the states of Santa Catarina, São Paulo, Sergipe, Paraná, and Rio Grande do Sul. According to CNN Brasil, the operation aimed to combat antisemitism and hate speech and prevent the planning of violent acts. The individuals arrested allegedly were part of a band that performed at neo-Nazi events in several regions.

For further information on incidents in the country of antisemitism, whether or not those incidents were motivated by religion, and for reporting on the ability of Jews to exercise freedom of religion or belief, please see the Department of State’s annual *International Religious Freedom Report* at <https://www.state.gov/religiousfreedomreport/>.

Exhibit 4

Terrorist Designation of Comando Vermelho and Primeiro Comando da Capital

 state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/05/terrorist-designation-of-comando-vermelho-and-primeiro-comando-da-capital



Press Statement

[Marco Rubio, Secretary of State](#)

May 28, 2026

Today, the U.S. Department of State is designating Comando Vermelho (CV) and Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) and intends to designate both groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), effective June 5, 2026.

CV and PCC are two of the most violent criminal organizations in Brazil. Together, they command thousands of members and have orchestrated brutal attacks against Brazilian police officers, public officials, and civilians. Their influence and illicit networks extend far beyond Brazil's borders, across our region and into our country.

The Trump Administration will continue to use all available tools to protect our nation and our national security interests by keeping illicit drugs off our streets and disrupting the revenue streams funding violent narco-terrorists. Today's action taken by the State Department further

demonstrates the Trump Administration's unwavering commitment to dismantling cartels and criminal organizations in our region and ensuring the safety of the American people.

Today's actions are taken pursuant to section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and Executive Order 13224. FTO designations go into effect upon publication in the Federal Register.

Exhibit 5

World Report 2026: Brazil | Human Rights Watch

[hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/brazil](https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/brazil)

January 5, 2026



Brazil

Events of 2025

Penha favela residents protest in front of the Guanabara Palace against a deadly police operation that resulted in 122 killings, in Rio de Janeiro, October 29, 2025.

In a landmark ruling, the Brazilian Supreme Court convicted former President Bolsonaro and other former officials of plotting a coup. It was the first time in Brazil's history that the leaders of a coup were tried.

Amazon deforestation fell 11 percent in the last year. Cattle raised in illegally deforested land kept on entering the legal supply chain. The government sought a sharp increase in oil production, ignoring its impacts on the global climate.

Police killed 5,920 people between January and November 2025. A court ruling and a resolution that instructed prosecutors to lead investigations into police killings, instead of leaving them in the hands of the police themselves, offered hope of improved investigations.

Brazil became the first Latin American country to pass a law to protect children's rights online.

Democratic Rule

In September, a panel of five Supreme Court justices [sentenced](#) former President Jair Bolsonaro to more than 27 years in prison for plotting to remain in office after losing the 2022 election and other crimes. The plan included killing President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the vice-president, and a Supreme Court justice investigating Bolsonaro. The Supreme Court also convicted seven others, including active and retired military officers.

Charges included involvement in the ransacking of federal buildings in Brasilia carried out by a crowd calling for a coup on January 8, 2023. As of August, the Supreme Court had [convicted 638 people](#) who participated in the attack and another 552 had signed plea agreements. Bolsonaro allies in Congress promoted a bill to [grant amnesty](#) to all.

In September, the attorney general [charged](#) congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro, former President Bolsonaro's son, and a businessman with coercion for seeking US government interference in the trial against Bolsonaro. The Trump administration [imposed tariffs](#) on Brazil and [sanctions and visa restrictions](#) on Supreme Court judges who took decisions against Bolsonaro, their relatives and other officials.

Also in September, the Supreme Court [ordered](#) an investigation into Bolsonaro's conduct during the Covid-19 pandemic, after a [Congressional inquiry concluded](#) his policies endangered the health and lives of Brazilians.

Corruption and Transparency

[Budget allocations](#) decided by lawmakers have increased eight-fold since 2014, to 50 billion reais (US\$9 billion) in 2025. The Supreme Court had suspended such disbursements in 2024 due to lack of transparency, but allowed them to resume in 2025 after approving [a plan](#) drafted by Congress and the government that required, among other measures, public identification of the lawmakers responsible for the allocations and of those receiving the funds. Yet in August, a Supreme Court justice [ordered](#) federal police to investigate disbursements totaling 694 million reais (\$129 million) allocated by lawmakers between 2020 and 2024 that were registered in the official system without providing sufficient information about their use.

In April, federal police and the comptroller-general [uncovered unauthorized deductions](#) from pensions paid to 3.3 million retirees totaling more than 6 billion reais (\$1 billion). Media [reported](#) successive governments had received allegations of fraud but failed to act.

Freedom of Expression

In June, a comedian was [sentenced](#) to eight years in prison for public comments a court labeled “discriminatory.” Brazil’s penal code includes criminal defamation provisions that are incompatible with the obligation to protect [free speech](#).

Also in June, the Supreme Court expanded the [liability regime](#) applicable to social media platforms in ways that digital rights experts fear could incentivize them to censor legitimate speech to avoid possible fines.

In July, a Supreme Court justice temporarily [banned](#) Bolsonaro from using social media over allegations he used them to obstruct justice, and, in August, the justice [ordered](#) that the former president be placed under house arrest for violating the ban.

Public Security and Police Conduct

[Homicides](#), not counting killings by police, fell 10 percent, to 30,159, between January and November, compared to the same period in 2024.

Police [killed](#) 5,920 people from January to November 2025; police killed 5,725 during the same period in 2024. Black Brazilians are [three and a half times](#) more likely to become a victim than white individuals.

In October, police [conducted the most lethal raid](#) in Rio de Janeiro’s history, which left 122 people dead, including 5 police officers.

While some police killings are in self-defense, many result from illegal use of force. Inadequate investigations into those cases, carried out by the police themselves, result in impunity for abuses.

In April, the Supreme Court [ordered](#) prosecutors to lead investigations whenever there is “suspicion” that police were responsible for an unlawful killing. In May, the CNMP [published a resolution](#) detailing how prosecutors should conduct these investigations to ensure they are thorough and independent.

In February, Rio de Janeiro’s new attorney general [reestablished a unit of prosecutors](#) tasked with overseeing police conduct.

[In seven states and the federal district](#), official forensic units remain fully subordinated to civil police, a set-up that does not accord them the necessary independence, particularly in police abuse cases. Forensic units in other states have varying degrees of independence from police.

Detention Conditions

More than [674,500](#) people were incarcerated as of December 2024, exceeding the capacity of Brazilian facilities by [35 percent](#).

In April, the Supreme Court [prohibited](#) invasive body searches of visitors to prisons. Strip searches can be conducted only in exceptional cases and only with the visitor's consent.

The number of children and young people held in youth detention—[12,054](#)—increased nearly 3 percent in 2024 compared to 2023, after several years of reduction.

Exhibit 6



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Brazil: Organised criminal groups

Version 1.0

March 2025

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Executive summary

As of 2024, more than 80 organised criminal groups (OCGs) exist in Brazil. The largest are the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), based in Sao Paulo, and the Comando Vermelho (CV), based in Rio de Janeiro. Both operate throughout Brazil. Militias, OCGs made up of current and former state agents, also operate in low-income communities (known as favelas) in Rio de Janeiro, where they extort populations under their control. The Amazon, border areas and urban favelas are particularly affected by OCG activity.

A person who fears an armed group or criminal gang is not likely to be able to demonstrate a link to the Refugee Convention on the grounds of political opinion, unless they have been living in a community controlled solely by the PCC or CV.

Those most affected by OCG activity are people living in poor communities. Young, black males from low socio-economic backgrounds are vulnerable to joining OCGs due to the perceived benefits they offer. Indigenous peoples are also affected by the general impacts of OCG activity due to the resource-rich, strategic regions in which these communities generally live. However, they are not likely to be targeted or face persecution or serious harm due to their race alone.

A person is likely to face persecution or serious harm from non-state actors or, in the case of militias, rogue state actors when they have taken, or are perceived to have taken a stand against the group, or: are members or former members of the group who have, or are perceived to have, transgressed the rules of the group. Whether and to what extent a person is at risk from a group will depend on: the reason(s) for the group's interest; the area the person usually resides in and will return to; the group's intent, size, reach and capabilities.

In general, the state is willing and able to provide effective protection, but consideration must be given to the circumstances of the case and the OCG they claim to fear.

Internal relocation is generally possible but will depend on the size, reach, capability and intent of the group or gang the person claims to fear, as well as the reasons why the group has an interest in them.

Where a claim is refused, it is likely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

All cases must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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Assessment

Section updated: 27 March 2025

About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of whether, **in general**, a person:

- faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm from an organised criminal group
- can obtain effective protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- can relocate within a country or territory to avoid persecution/serious harm
- if a claim is refused, it is likely to be certified as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

The term ‘organised criminal group’ (OCG) is used in place of ‘gangs’ as sources differentiate between criminal gangs (which generally have no connection to the state) and militia groups (which are made up of current or former state agents).

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1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

1.1 Credibility

1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#)

1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

1.1.3 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person’s claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

1.1.4 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).

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1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.
- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention, Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 A person who fears an armed group or criminal gang is not likely to be able to demonstrate a link to the Refugee Convention on grounds of political opinion. This is because, while non-state armed groups maintain (and vie for) pockets of territorial control and carry out some state-like functions in areas of control, their presence and capacity are not so pervasive to be considered ‘political’ in nature.
- 2.1.2 In the country guidance case of [EMAP \(Gang violence, Convention Reason\)](#), heard on 27 April and 9 June 2022 and promulgated on 16 November 2022, the Upper Tribunal (UT) considered whether persons who fear a gang in **El Salvador** fall within the scope of the Refugee Convention on the grounds of political opinion and membership of a PSG.
- 2.1.3 The UT in [EMAP](#) held that the main gangs operating in El Salvador, MS-13 and Barrio 18, are ‘political actors’ and that:
 - ‘... (ii) Individuals who hold an opinion, thought or belief relating to the gangs, their policies or methods hold a political opinion about them.
 - ‘(iii) Whether such an individual faces persecution for reasons of that political opinion will always be a question of fact. In the context of El Salvador it is an enquiry that should be informed by the following:
 - ‘(a) The major gangs of El Salvador must now be regarded as political actors;
 - ‘(b) Their criminal and political activities heavily overlap;
 - ‘(c) The less immediately financial in nature the action, the more likely it is to be for reasons of the victim’s perceived opposition to the gangs.’ (Headnote, paragraphs (ii) and (iii))

- 2.1.4 The UT in [EMAP](#) provided further analysis of the applicability of political opinion in paragraphs 112 to 122 of the determination. It considered that there are a range of reasons why a gang (or gangs) target a person, not all of which will fall within the Refugee Convention.
- 2.1.5 The UT's findings in [EMAP](#) **are specific to the circumstances in El Salvador at the time of the ruling**. However, the situations in El Salvador and Brazil have some similarities and merit comparison. Both have high levels of organised crime dominated by gangs which have de facto control over parts of the country (in El Salvador) and certain communities (in Brazil) and have sought to influence the state.
- 2.1.6 However, there are significant differences between the 2 countries:
- Brazil has a more diverse criminal landscape with approximately 80 criminal gangs as well as armed militia groups working and competing with the largest 2 groups, the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and the Comando Vermelho (CV), for control over territory and drug trafficking routes. Although the PCC and CV have a presence in most states of Brazil and exercise de facto control over the communities they dominate, they are not necessarily as dominant as their equivalents in El Salvador.
 - The PCC and the CV are relatively smaller (approx. 130,000 members altogether, or 0.06% of the population) than the MS-13 and Barrio 18 in El Salvador (60,000 members, 1% of the total population).
 - The PCC, CV and militia groups have sought to influence the state. However, their influence on political affairs is not as extensive as in El Salvador. Whilst corruption exists within state agencies in Brazil, particularly at the local level, the state continues to take action against OCGs, including corrupt officials, at a federal level (see [Risk](#), [Protection](#)).
- 2.1.7 On the available evidence, the situations are sufficiently different to conclude that OCGs in Brazil are not 'political actors' in general, and that the UT's findings in [EMAP](#) **do not generally apply** to a fear of an OCG in Brazil, in relation to political opinion. However, in low-income urban communities or favelas that are controlled by the PCC or CV, the influence of these OCGs is significant and they exercise extensive social control over residents. Therefore, although a person who fears an OCG in Brazil does **not** generally fall within scope of the Refugee Convention on grounds of political opinion, this may be applicable where they have been living in an area controlled by the PCC or CV.
- 2.1.8 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.1.9 A person with a well-founded fear of persecution from an OCG for a non-convention reason may still qualify for humanitarian protection.
- 2.1.10 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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3. Risk

- 3.1.1 Those living in favelas and low-income communities dominated by OCGs

are not, in general, likely to face treatment amounting to persecution or serious harm solely by virtue of living there.

- 3.1.2 Persons who fear OCGs in Brazil are not at a general risk of persecution by OCGs. They are likely to face persecution or serious harm when they:
- disrespect a group leader, or take (or are perceived to take) a stand against the organised criminal group, including public figures such as journalists, prosecutors and politicians
 - are, or are perceived to be, an informant
 - have stolen from the group, or owe the group a debt
 - are members or former members of the group who have (or are perceived to have) transgressed the rules of the group
- 3.1.3 Whether a person is at risk from an OCG and the extent of the risk, will depend on:
- their actions, and the reason(s) for the group's interest
 - the area the person usually resides in and will return to
 - the group's intent, size, reach and capabilities
- 3.1.4 In general, family members of targeted persons do not become targets themselves, although there may be some instances in which family members do become targets, including where a major betrayal/transgression has occurred, or if the person had a leadership role. Some indigenous people also face displacement, exploitation and harm due to increasing OCG activity in their territories but in general they do not, as a group, face a real risk of treatment amounting to persecution or serious harm (see [Victims of OCG activity](#), [Environmental crimes](#), [Political violence](#)).
- 3.1.5 Brazil has a diverse criminal landscape, with approximately 80 criminal gangs and militia groups operating alongside and against the 2 largest gangs in the country, the PCC and the CV. The PCC has approximately 100,000 members operating in almost every Brazilian state as well as internationally, with its base in Sao Paulo. The CV has approximately 30,000 members, operating in about 20 Brazilian states and other Latin American countries, and has its base in Rio de Janeiro. The majority of other OCGs are present in 3 states or less and generally ally with either the PCC or the CV (see [Organised Criminal Groups \(OCGs\)](#), [Militias](#)).
- 3.1.6 The PCC and CV are rivals and compete for territory and control of drug trafficking routes. Expanding into the Amazon has led them to branch into environmental crimes such as illegal mining and logging. They are also involved in arms trafficking, kidnap, bank robberies and increasingly in financial crimes such as money laundering through legitimate businesses, extortion and loansharking. The PCC has reportedly begun infiltrating the state, through obtaining public contracts for services and funding candidates for municipal elections (see [OCG activities](#), [Primeiro Comando da Capital \(First Command of the Capital, PCC\)](#), [Comando Vermelho \(Red Command, CV\)](#), [Corruption](#)).
- 3.1.7 Militia groups formed of current and former law enforcement officers compete with the CV for territory in favelas or poor communities in Rio de

Janeiro, and there are reports of such groups developing in other states. Although these groups initially formed to counteract the drug gangs, sources report that they are now indistinguishable, as they also dominate and extort communities under their control, monopolising the provision of essential services and sometimes making alliances with the gangs, leading them to become 'narcomilitias'. It is unclear how many militia groups currently operate and in which states outside of Rio de Janeiro. Due to their connections to state apparatus, sources reported that militias pose more danger to individuals than other OCGs (see [Militias](#)).

- 3.1.8 The PCC and CV both originated in and exercise significant influence over inmates within the country's overcrowded state prison system, where they position themselves in opposition to the state and provide order and resources to inmates which the state cannot. Within Brazil's prisons, they recruit new members and incarcerated leaders continue to issue orders to members on the outside (see [Primeiro Comando da Capital \(First Command of the Capital, PCC\)](#), [Comando Vermelho \(Red Command, CV\)](#), [Recruitment and leaving OCGs](#), [Federal prisons and prisoner transfers](#)).
- 3.1.9 In general, OCGs in Brazil do not engage in forced recruitment. Most recruitment takes place within prisons. Sources stated that most OCG members are young, black males from low socio-economic backgrounds who view joining an OCG as a way to make money and attain a higher level of social status. Alongside those living in poor communities under the 'rule' of OCGs, this demographic are therefore the people most likely to be affected by OCG activity. As OCGs are diversifying their activities, sources reported that they have actively recruited IT and finance professionals and in some cases fund individuals' education to help them secure strategic positions, such as public service roles, which benefit the group. They may also recruit people who work in ports and airports to assist their drug trafficking activities (see [Recruitment and leaving OCGs](#)).
- 3.1.10 In general, the offer to work for an OCG can be refused without repercussion, although some sources suggest that it may be difficult to refuse, particularly in prisons. Generally, a person with a low-level position in an OCG may be able to leave the group. OCGs may also allow a person to leave for religious reasons. Anyone with more than a medium-level role may not be permitted to leave due to their knowledge of the group's operations. Those who owe a debt to the group would also be unable to leave until the debt is repaid. Those who leave the PCC are prohibited from engaging in any further criminal activity and will be monitored to ensure they comply with this rule. If they are found to be taking part in criminal activity, they are likely to be targeted (see [Recruitment and leaving OCGs](#)).
- 3.1.11 In the communities OCGs dominate (generally low-income communities and favelas on the peripheries of large cities), OCGs exercise significant social control. The PCC is highly organised, with a strict set of rules its members must follow. In cases of both rule-breaking by members and disputes brought to them by community members, the CV and PCC impose their own form of justice through 'crime courts', where penalties for perceived wrongdoing are not standardised and can be minimal, or as severe as execution. In neighbourhoods which are under the control of an OCG, residents are generally not permitted to go to the police and are instead

required to bring any disputes to the OCG who will mediate. Examples of accusations that may result in a person being at risk of serious harm include being an informant, personally disrespecting a group leader, stealing drugs or money from the group, and owing and not repaying a debt. People are reportedly also sentenced to death by OCGs for sexual crimes and child abuse (see [OCG 'crime courts' and punishments](#)).

- 3.1.12 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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4. Protection

- 4.1.1 In general, the state is willing and able to provide protection but there may be exceptions to this. Consideration must be given to the circumstances of the case and the OCG a person claims to fear. The onus is on the person to demonstrate that they would not be able to obtain effective protection.
- 4.1.2 Brazilian law criminalises being part of an OCG, and the government speaks out against organised crime. Multiple policy initiatives exist to combat organised crime, including citizen security initiatives, deployment of troops at ports, isolating group leaders in maximum security prisons and increasing resources to fight environmental crime. Police regularly conduct searches and seizures and arrest OCG members (see [Legal context](#), [Government rhetoric](#), [Policy initiatives](#), [Searches, seizures and arrests](#)).
- 4.1.3 High-profile OCG leaders have been arrested and transferred to high security federal prisons across the country, where they are kept in isolation. Sources indicate that this has had a positive effect in disrupting their communications. However, the same leaders have been convicted of crimes they have ordered when they are already in jail (see [Federal prisons and prisoner transfers](#), [Notable decisions](#)).
- 4.1.4 The federal police generally work hard to combat OCGs, but have limited human resource in relation to the size of the country (there are 13,000 federal police officers and Brazil has 16,000 kilometres of land border and a population of approximately 212 million people). A lack of cooperation and communication between federal and state entities challenges the efficacy of combatting OCGs. However, the federal police regularly carry out searches and seizures and investigations into OCG activity (see [Searches, seizures and arrests](#)).
- 4.1.5 State-level law enforcement is heavy-handed. Lengthy, violent confrontations between the police and OCGs in low-income/marginalised areas and favelas, result in local residents confined to those areas, including children, being caught in the crossfire and killed. These community members do not necessarily have any connection to OCGs and are predominantly of Afro-Brazilian descent. Such police operations also restrict the freedom of movement of people in the community. The duration of these operations varies (see [Operations in favelas](#), [Freedom of movement](#), [Witness protection](#)).
- 4.1.6 State police can treat complaints of threats or danger from an OCG with suspicion as such threats can be an indication of the complainant's involvement with the group, and they may not receive protection. Residents

of communities controlled by OCGs are forbidden by the groups to go to the police in general, and must instead bring any issues before the OCG itself (see [OCG 'crime courts' and punishments](#), [Operations in favelas](#), [Searches, seizures and arrests](#)).

- 4.1.7 Sources report that in general the judiciary is independent, but is overburdened and inefficient, with millions of backlogged cases. However, many OCG members have been convicted, and most OCG leaders have been sentenced and are in prison. Approximately 70% of the PCC's members are in prison (see [Judicial response to OCGs](#), [Searches, seizures and arrests](#)).
- 4.1.8 Corruption is widespread, with OCGs, particularly the PCC and militias, having made political connections to state officials, including in the state police and judiciary. The PCC have reportedly funded candidates to municipal elections. Militia members are reported to have official positions in state and local governments. Militia members are put on trial less frequently than gang members, and areas under their control are targeted less frequently in police operations. The federal government works hard to combat corruption but lacks the necessary resources (see [Corruption](#), [Operations in favelas](#)).
- 4.1.9 Brazil has a witness protection programme which is open to all. However, it is hampered by budgetary limitations and is not always effective in protecting a person's identity. Persons of political importance are generally well-protected. Witnesses against corruption and militias face a heightened risk of retribution due to these actors' connection to the state apparatus (see [Witness protection](#)).
- 4.1.10 For background information about the criminal justice system generally and an assessment of its effectiveness in providing protection, see the [Country Policy and Information Note, Brazil: Actors of protection](#).
- 4.1.11 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 In general, internal relocation is likely to be reasonable, particularly to Brasilia in the Federal District. However, decision makers must consider the size, reach, capability and intent of the group or gang the person claims to fear, as well as the reasons why the group has an interest in them.
- 5.1.2 Different factions of the same OCG can and do communicate with each other meaning that the PCC and CV would have the ability to track a person of interest across Brazil, due to their presence throughout the country. Whether they would have a desire to do so would depend on the alleged infraction. In general, stealing from an OCG, informing on them, personally disrespecting a group leader and failure to repay a large debt could result in a person being tracked. What constitutes a large debt would depend on the perception of the creditor. Former group members are monitored and are targeted if they break the conditions of being permitted to leave. Generally, these issues relate to people who have been part of the OCG. However,

prominent public figures such as prosecutors and politicians who attempt to disrupt OCG activity are also likely to be tracked throughout the country ([Political violence](#), [Tracking of persons by OCGs](#), [Leaving an OCG](#)).

- 5.1.3 Persons who do not fall within the above circumstances would generally be able to relocate, either to a different part of the same state or to a different state, depending on the group they are claiming to fear (see [Tracking of persons by OCGs](#)). For 2024 data on which OCGs operate in which states, see [Location of OCGs in Brazil](#). For a map of which neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro are occupied by which OCG, see [Rio de Janeiro OCGs](#).
- 5.1.4 OCGs are present in every state of Brazil, and the PCC and CV have near nationwide and international reach. The PCC has approximately 100,000 members operating in almost every Brazilian state as well as internationally, with its base in Sao Paulo. The CV has approximately 30,000 members, operating in about 20 Brazilian states and other Latin American countries, and has its base in Rio de Janeiro. The majority of other OCGs are present in 3 states or less and generally ally with either the PCC or the CV (see [Organised Criminal Groups \(OCGs\)](#)).
- 5.1.5 Brazil has a population of approximately 212 million people. In 2023, sources reported approximately 39,500 homicides (around 0.016% of the population). In 2023, the states with the highest number of murders per 100,000 inhabitants were Amapa, Pernambuco and Alagoas (all in the North and Northeast regions of the country) and the states with the lowest number of murders per 100,000 inhabitants were the Federal District, Santa Catarina and Sao Paulo. Sources do not disaggregate crime data based on the perpetrator, so it is unclear how many crimes are attributable to specifically OCG activity. However, sources reported that homicides were generally higher in areas where OCGs are in conflict and that recently OCGs have been competing for territory in the North and Northeast regions of Brazil (see [Homicides](#), [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 5.1.6 Freedom of movement within Brazil is generally possible. However, it can be restricted in territories where OCGs are in conflict and during police operations against OCGs which tend to be heavily armed. There have been reports of local residents being caught in the crossfire. This is usually in low-income communities and favelas. Local services such as schools and health centres may also close during these events. Residents who live in a neighbourhood dominated by one faction may not be able to cross into a neighbourhood dominated by another. People may also be expelled from their homes if the dominant OCG suspects they are connected to another faction (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 5.1.7 While the onus is on the person to establish a well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm, decision makers must demonstrate that internal relocation is reasonable (or not unduly harsh) having regard to the individual circumstances of the person.
- 5.1.8 For more on internal relocation within Brazil generally, see Country Policy and Information Note, [Brazil: Internal Relocation](#).
- 5.1.9 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

6. Certification

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it must be considered for certification under section 94(3) of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as Brazil is listed as a designated state. Such a claim must be certified under section 94(3) if you are satisfied it is clearly unfounded.
- 6.1.2 Where a claim is refused, it is likely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 6.1.3 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

Exhibit 7

Brazil: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report

 freedomhouse.org/country/brazil/freedom-world/2025



Overview

Brazil is a democracy that holds competitive elections. Its political arena, though polarized, is characterized by vibrant public debate. However, independent journalists and civil society activists risk harassment and violent attack and political violence is high. Minority groups suffer from crime, disproportionate violence, and economic exclusion, issues the government struggles to address. Corruption is endemic at top levels, contributing to widespread disillusionment among the public. Societal discrimination and violence against LGBT+ people remain serious problems.

Key Developments in 2024

- In August, Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes ordered X to be blocked nationwide after its owner, Elon Musk, ignored a court order to name a new in-country legal representative. The order was reversed in October, after X complied and paid a fine.
- In November, the Federal Police indicted former President Jair Bolsonaro and 36 other for orchestrating a coup to prevent Bolsonaro's successor, Luiz

Inácio Lula da Silva, from taking office. No charges were officially filed against Bolsonaro by year's end.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority	3
elected through free and fair elections?	4

Brazil is a federal republic governed under a presidential system. The president is elected by popular vote for a four-year term and is eligible for reelection to a second consecutive term.

In the 2022 race, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers' Party (PT), who served as president from 2003 to 2011, and incumbent Jair Bolsonaro of the Liberal Party (PL) were the two leading candidates. Lula campaigned on economic concerns and social policy, while Bolsonaro's campaign focused attention on evangelical support. Lula won 50.9 percent of the vote in an October runoff.

The highly polarized campaign was marred by disinformation, aggressive rhetoric on social networks and online messaging services, and political violence. Bolsonaro did not explicitly concede after losing the election, initially remaining silent while his supporters blocked major roads and called for new elections and military intervention. Bolsonaro unsuccessfully challenged the results in court, calling for some runoff results to be "invalidated." Lula was sworn in on January 1, 2023, with some of Bolsonaro's supporters still camping outside military headquarters asking for intervention. On January 8, 2023, thousands of Bolsonaro's supporters stormed the National Congress, Supreme Court, and presidential palace in Brasília, occupying government buildings and calling on the military to keep Bolsonaro in power. Police forces responded by retaking occupied buildings, using tear gas to disperse rioters, and with mass arrests.

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free	3
and fair elections?	4

Legislative elections are generally free and fair. The bicameral National Congress is composed of an 81-member Senate and a 513-member Chamber of Deputies. Senators serve staggered eight-year terms, with one- to two-thirds coming up for

election every four years. Members of the Chamber of Deputies serve four-year terms.

In the October 2022 elections, the PL became the largest single party in the Chamber of Deputies with 99 seats, while the PT won 69. The *Centrão* (“Big Center”), an array of patronage-based parties without clear ideological positions that provided legislative support to Bolsonaro, became the largest force in the Chamber of Deputies; the five parties understood to make up the *Centrão* won a combined 231 seats. The PL became the largest party in the Senate.

Local elections were held in October 2024 with parties in the *Centrão* faring well, though the PL performed relatively poorly. The elections were marred by reports of widespread harassment and political violence compared to local polls in the past.

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented	4
impartially by the relevant election management bodies?	4

Brazilian election laws are generally well enforced. The Superior Electoral Court (TSE) presides over cases related to violations of electoral law.

While Brazilian voters have cast ballots electronically since 1996, Bolsonaro repeatedly claimed that the country’s ballot system was vulnerable to fraud ahead of the 2022 elections, though no evidence has been found. The Defense Ministry inspected several hundred voting machines that October but found no irregularities, though its report did not explicitly declare whether potential fraud was possible.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other	4
competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of	4
undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or	
groupings?	

Brazil has an unfettered multiparty system marked by vigorous competition among rival parties. The electoral framework encourages the proliferation of parties, a number of which are based in a single state. Ahead of the 2022 elections, 32 parties were registered, 23 of which won seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

Some parties display little ideological consistency. Lawmakers often switch parties, rendering electoral coalitions fragile. The executive branch must assemble diverse and often ideologically incoherent coalitions to pass legislation due to the large number of parties.

Political parties operate with little transparency and under no governance rules and often are targets of investigations into the misuse of public funds.

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections? 4 4

Opposition parties can compete and gain power through elections at both the federal and subnational levels. The PL and PT both received significant support in the 2022 elections. The Bolsonaro administration used public programs to lessen the opposition's power to compete freely.

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 2 4

Powerful business interests undermine democratic accountability by facilitating or encouraging corruption among elected officials. Criminal groups have carried out attacks against political candidates and representatives, especially women and LGBT+ politicians.

Brazilian voters face high levels of political violence, which increased by 400 percent between 2018 and 2022 according to a survey conducted by two nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In November 2022, Agência Pública recorded 15 murders and 23 attempted murders over that year's election period. By September 2024, authorities recorded 319 complaints of harassment related to the year's local elections. In December, NGOs Justiça Global and Terra de Direitos recorded 558 incidents of political violence during those polls; 46 cases were recorded in 2016.

Militias and other criminal organizations—which may exercise significant control over campaigning and other political activity within their territories—have been blamed for a rise in violence in recent years. In August 2024, the Regional Electoral Court in Rio de Janeiro State said it would move polling stations to lessen armed actors' influence on the local elections.

The January 2023 riots in Brasília were mainly conducted by ordinary citizens, but some security officers and officials were accused of either supporting the riots, displaying inaction as they occurred, or otherwise backing former President Bolsonaro openly. President Lula accused elements of the country's intelligence agency, police, and military of either mounting a lax response or of complicity. In November 2024, the Federal Police indicted Bolsonaro and 36 other people for orchestrating a coup to prevent Lula from taking office, though no charges were officially filed against Bolsonaro by year's end. In December, Walter Braga Netto—one of the indicted individuals, a former defense minister, and Bolsonaro's running mate in 2022—was arrested for allegedly interfering in the investigation into the alleged coup.

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?	3 4
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The constitution guarantees equal rights without prejudice, but some groups have greater political representation than others, and there is great unevenness in exercising de facto political rights. Afro-Brazilians and women and their interests remain underrepresented in electoral politics and in government. Women held 18.1 percent of Chamber of Deputies seats as of December 2024, and female presentation in that chamber has consistently increased in the 21st century. Afro-Brazilian representation also improved in 2022. Two transgender federal deputies were elected in 2022. That December, Lula announced a cabinet that featured more racial and gender diversity.

C Functioning of Government

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?	3 4
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Widespread corruption undermines the government's ability to make and implement policy without undue influence from private or criminal interests. During the 2010s, the functioning of government was severely hampered by a rolling political crisis due to corruption scandals.

The presence of active-duty and retired military officials in the Bolsonaro administration prompted unease about the military's influence in politics under Bolsonaro. The Defense Ministry was additionally responsible for examining a

number of voting machines during the 2022 elections, though that responsibility was shifted elsewhere in late 2023. Lula’s administration reduced the participation and influence of the military in government.

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 2 4

Corruption and graft are endemic in Brazil, especially among elected officials. Between 2014 and 2021, an investigation known as Operation Car Wash focused on bribery, money laundering, and bid-rigging involving state oil company Petrobras and private construction companies. However, a series of investigative reports known as the Car Wash Leaks, published by the *Intercept Brasil* in 2019, exposed an improper relationship between Sérgio Moro—a judge who later became a Bolsonaro-era justice minister and won a Senate seat in 2022—and federal prosecutors. The Supreme Court annulled the convictions in 2021.

Criminal inquiries have targeted members of Bolsonaro’s family in recent years. In August 2023, Jair Renan Bolsonaro, the former president’s youngest son, had his devices seized by police in the course of an embezzlement investigation. In March 2024, Jair Renan and a business associate were charged with falsifying financial documents and money laundering. In July, the Federal Police accused former President Bolsonaro of attempting to illegally sell \$1.2 million worth of gifts provided to the Brazilian government from counterparts, including Saudi Arabia’s government, between 2019 and 2022.

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 2 4

Brazil enacted the Freedom of Information Act (LAI) in 2012, but compliance varies among the country’s states and municipalities. In 2019, the Bolsonaro administration modified the LAI by decree, giving a larger group of officials the power to classify information as secret. The Bolsonaro administration often decreed 100 years of secrecy on information it considered sensitive.

The Lula administration began rescinding those instructions and stripping secrecy from some Bolsonaro-era decisions after taking office. It also created a transparency policy and formed a working group on official transparency. However, authorities are known to deny access to data requested by NGOs.

While in office, the Bolsonaro administration used a “secret budget,” an opaque system of financial grants that routed billions of reais through a rapporteur. Observers criticized the arrangement, which allowed lawmakers to receive added

funding in exchange for backing the administration without transparency or oversight. In late 2022, the Supreme Court ruled the arrangement unconstitutional. Some of these grants were still implemented under Lula in 2024, though to a lesser extent than under Bolsonaro. In August 2024, the Supreme Court ordered that lawmakers' budget amendments be suspended until transparency was guaranteed, while ordering the Federal Court of Accounts and Office of the Comptroller General to investigate transfers. Both legislative chambers appealed the ruling later that month.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

Are there free and independent media? 3 4

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the country's media environment is vibrant. However, investigative journalists, particularly those who cover corruption and crime, face threats, harassment, obstruction, and sometimes deadly violence. The legal framework provides inadequate protection for freedom of expression. Defamation is subject to criminal penalties. Journalists who criticized former President Bolsonaro faced online and offline harassment, and outlets that carried criticism faced economic pressure from his administration.

In January 2023, the federal government announced the creation of the National Observatory of Violence Against Journalists, which is meant to monitor violent incidents, refer cases to the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, and perform other functions. In January 2024, the National Federation of Journalists noted a 51.9 percent decline in violent incidents against journalists from 2022 to 2023, though it also reported that journalists increasingly faced lawsuits meant to curtail their activity.

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 4 4

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion, and the government generally respects this right in practice. However, Afro-Brazilian religious groups face considerable discrimination. Violence against Afro-Brazilian religious groups is

frequent, especially in Rio de Janeiro's favelas. In recent years, Afro-Brazilian temples ("terreiros") have closed after assaults or threats from evangelical drug dealers, who claim territory and seek to repress faiths other than their own.

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 4 4

Education policy was politicized under Bolsonaro, with his administration placing persistent pressure on academia and scientific organizations, especially by reducing funds and by mobilizing supporters to harass teachers and researchers. The Lula administration moved to reinstate public education and scientific research funding and has refrained from placing pressure on academics.

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 3 4

People are generally able to express personal views in public without fear of institutional surveillance or retaliation. However, recent electoral periods have been affected by the fear of political violence. Violent homophobic rhetoric contributes to a sense of fear among many that open discussion of LGBT+ rights and issues could be met with harassment or attack.

Social media intimidation and harassment by troll groups has proven to be a serious problem in Brazil. Bolsonaro allies, including family members, have faced investigations over their involvement in disinformation campaigns but continued to spread disinformation after Bolsonaro left office.

In October 2022, the TSE gave its then-chief, Supreme Court Justice Moraes, the unilateral authority to order the removal of online content that did not comply with previous TSE rulings as part of an antidisinformation effort. Bolsonaro supporters and legal experts criticized the move, fearing that it could allow for censorship. Moraes cited the proliferation of false information and hate speech when initially proposing the move to the TSE. In August 2024, Moraes ordered X to be blocked nationwide after its owner, Elon Musk, ignored a court order to name a new in-country legal representative. Brazilian internet users were prohibited from using virtual private networks to access X, risking a daily fine of up to 50,000 reais (\$8,900). The order was reversed in October, after X complied and paid a fine.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

Is there freedom of assembly? 3 4

While freedom of assembly is generally respected, police or other security agents sometimes use excessive force against demonstrations.

Some police personnel appeared unresponsive or friendly to pro-Bolsonaro protesters during the January 2023 riots in Brasília. Lula criticized some elements of the police and the military for their response.

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work? 3 4

NGOs operate freely in a variety of fields. However, activists working on land rights and environmental protection issues have faced harassment, threats, and violence in recent years, along with verbal hostility from former President Bolsonaro and officials in his administration. In a September 2024 report, Global Witness noted that 25 environmental activists were killed in Brazil in 2023.

In June 2022, British journalist Dominic “Dom” Phillips and activist Bruno Araújo Pereira, who were documenting the exploitation of the Amazon rainforest, went missing in Amazonas State; their bodies were discovered that month, when a fisherman confessed to killing them and directed authorities to their remains. In November 2024, the Federal Police completed its investigation into their deaths, saying that nine people had been involved in the murders and one was charged with orchestrating them. Brazilian press outlets reported that Ruben Dario da Silva Villar, who allegedly leads an illegal fishing enterprise and was detained over an unrelated matter in 2022, was the charged individual. Another three individuals had been charged for their involvement before the investigation closed.

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 3 4

Industrial labor unions are well organized, and although they are politically connected, Brazilian unions tend to be freer from political party control than their counterparts in other Latin American countries. However, controversial labor reforms enacted in 2017 diminished the strength and role of unions in collective bargaining with businesses.

F Rule of Law

Is there an independent judiciary? 3 4

The judiciary, though largely independent in many parts of the country, is overburdened, inefficient, and often subject to intimidation and other external influences, especially in rural areas. Corruption allegations against judges are not uncommon. Despite these shortcomings, the country's constitution has resulted in an active judiciary that often rules in favor of citizens over the state.

The Supreme Court serves as an autonomous counterweight to the executive. Tensions between the court and the executive were high during the 2022 election, with Bolsonaro frequently issuing threats against the court. The court remained independent, issuing several decisions against Bolsonaro. In 2023, the Supreme Court issued the first conviction related to the Brasília riots, convicting a man of charges including attempting a coup and handing that defendant a 17-year prison sentence. In November 2024, the Supreme Court reported that 265 people had been convicted in relation to the riots while 476 people who were not directly involved in storming government buildings had received lesser punishments.

Also in 2023, the TSE barred Bolsonaro from office until 2030, saying that he abused his power when telling foreign ambassadors that the country's electronic voting system was untrustworthy in 2022.

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 2 4

The judiciary generally upholds the right to a fair trial. However, federal, state, and appellate courts are severely backlogged. Access to justice varies greatly due to income inequality, and the state struggles to provide legal counsel for defendants and prisoners who cannot afford an attorney. Under a 2017 law, members of the

armed forces and military police accused of certain serious crimes against civilians can be tried in military, rather than civilian, courts. In the vast majority of homicides committed by police, there is no due process.

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?	1 4
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Brazil saw 22.8 intentional violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants in 2023 according to the *Brazilian Public Security Yearbook*, which was most recently released by the Brazilian Public Security Forum (FBSP) in July 2024. According to the report, 46,328 such deaths were recorded in 2023.

The police force remains mired in corruption, and serious police abuses, including extrajudicial killings, continued in 2024. Police officers are rarely prosecuted for abuses, and those charged are almost never convicted. The FBSP counted 6,393 deaths caused by police in 2023 in its *Brazilian Public Security Yearbook*. Some 82.7 percent of the victims whose race was known were Black. Police in the states of Amapá, Bahia, and Sergipe had some of the highest lethality rates in the country. Conditions in overcrowded prisons are life-threatening, characterized by disease, inadequate food, and deadly gang-related violence. Violence is more likely to affect poor, Black prisoners.

In its July 2024 report, the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) counted 411 incidents of violence against Indigenous people in 2023, including 208 murders and 35 attempted murders.

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	2 4
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While Brazilian society is largely tolerant, some populations are not able to fully exercise their human rights in practice.

Just over half of the population identifies as Black or of mixed race. Afro-Brazilians suffer from high rates of poverty and illiteracy, and almost 80 percent of Brazilians living in extreme poverty are Black or mixed-race. Victims of violence in Brazil are predominantly young, Black, and poor. The FBSP also counted 1,467 femicides in 2023, a 0.8 percent increase from 2022; 63.3 percent of femicide victims were Black. There were 83,988 cases of rape in 2023, a 91.5 percent increase from 2011.

In 2019, despite intense pressure from some religious and political leaders, the Supreme Court ruled LGBT+ people are protected under a criminal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of “race, color, ethnicity, religion, and national origin.” However, Brazil has one of the world’s highest-recorded levels of anti-LGBT+ violence. According to a May 2024 report by the Observatory of LGBTI+ Deaths and Violence in Brazil, 184 LGBT+ people were murdered in 2023 while another 18 died by suicide.

Many Indigenous communities—who comprise about 1 percent of the population—suffer from poverty and lack adequate sanitation and education services. The Indigenous population faces considerable discrimination, and their lands were subject to increased pressure under Bolsonaro, encouraged by his rhetoric and support for easing environmental laws.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?	3
	4

Brazilians enjoy freedom to travel within and outside of the country, and to make decisions about their places of residence and employment, though access to high-quality education across all levels remains a challenge.

Gang violence, militias, and police violence in parts of Brazil, especially favelas, have impeded free movement and access to education. According to a report by Fogo Cruzado, which tracks gun violence in parts of Brazil, there were 1,346 gun-related incidents in the first six months of 2024 in the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area, though that represents a 24 percent fall from the first half of 2023.

Movement within the state of Bahia and especially in the state capital of Salvador has been affected by violent clashes between organized criminal groups between each other and with police.

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?	3
	4

While property rights are generally enforced, laws granting Indigenous populations exclusive use of certain lands are not always upheld, sometimes leading to violent conflicts. In a report on rural conflict released in April 2024, the

Pastoral Land Commission said that it registered 2,203 conflicts in 2023, the highest number since its surveys began in 1985. It also recorded 31 killings in 2023, a 34 percent decrease from 2022. In its July 2024 report, which covered the events of 2023, CIMI counted 276 cases of illegal exploitation or property damage against Indigenous people.

Requirements for starting new businesses are often onerous, but authorities have taken steps to ease the process. Corruption and organized crime can pose obstacles to private business activity.

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 3 4

The government generally does not restrict social freedoms. Same-sex marriage became legal in 2013. Gender-based violence remains widespread, though legislation has been introduced to combat it. A 2006 law sought to address high rates of impunity for domestic violence. Law 14.188 amended the penal code to criminalize simple bodily harm due to gender and criminalize psychological violence against women.

Abortion is legal only in the case of rape, a threat to the mother's life, or a rare and usually fatal brain deformity in the fetus. However, women and young girls are denied their legal right to abortion due to discretionary acts from the bureaucracy and judicial system. The sale of misoprostol, a drug that induce an abortion, is illegal in Brazil, though the drug is sold on the black market. As many as one million Brazilians seek abortions through clandestine means annually, including by traveling abroad. In November 2024, a Chamber of Deputies committee supported a proposed constitutional amendment that would fully ban abortion.

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation? 2 4

Slavery-like working conditions pose a significant problem in rural and urban zones. A 2012 constitutional amendment allows the government to confiscate all property of landholders found to be using slave labor. The federal government maintains a list of employers who subject workers to slavery-like conditions.

State spending to address inequality was obstructed when a 20-year budgetary spending cap was enacted in 2016, though the Bolsonaro administration increased aid payments for part of 2022. In 2023, Brazil saw its lowest levels of poverty and extreme poverty since 2012. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics reported in December 2024 that the percentage of people living in poverty fell from 31.6 in 2022 to 27.3 in 2023.



On Brazil

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Country Facts

- **Population**
215,300,000
- **Global Freedom Score**
73 100 free
- **Internet Freedom Score**
65 100 partly free

Exhibit 8

DECEMBER 1, 2025

Rio Police Undermine Public Safety.

Raid That Killed 122 Part of a Pattern of Abusive Use of Force
Published in [Nexo Jornal](#)



César Muñoz

Brazil director, Americas Division

[X_Cesar_Munoz](#)

A month after the deadliest police raid in Rio de Janeiro's history, the Red Command, the organized crime group that was the target of the operation, continues to control the Alemão and Penha neighborhoods. Meanwhile, 122 families, including those of 5 police officers who were killed, mourn the loss of their loved ones. The deadly results and tactics employed raise serious questions as to whether the police command sought, rather than avoided, shootouts.

The Rio state government said that the October 28 raid resulted in the killing of 117 suspects, including two children, while only six members of the public were injured.

The ratio of people killed to those injured – an astounding almost 20 to 1—is the opposite of what one would expect from a police force that has the duty to protect people's lives and begs the question of whether the true intention was to kill, rather than arrest suspects.

The police explanation of the raid strategy helps understand the deadly outcome. They said that on October 28 several units entered the lower areas of the Alemão and Penha neighborhoods. They pushed gang members up the hillsides through the favela's narrow passages toward a wooded area.



People take part in a demonstration against a police raid in Rio de Janeiro on October 28, 2025 that left 122 people dead, including two children, October 31, 2025.

© Faga Almeida/UCG/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

At the top, the military police elite unit, the Police Battalion of Special Operations (BOPE, in Portuguese) had formed what police described as a “wall.” By the end of the day, the police had left behind scores of bodies riddled with bullets. Fewer than 23 percent of the officers who participated in the raid wore body cameras, despite a Supreme Court ruling requiring it.

Residents told the Public Defenders’ Office that police hid in their homes to ambush suspects on the street. Police use that strategy so commonly that it is known as *troia*, for the legendary Greek to conquer Troy.

The raid is part of a pattern of abusive use of force by Rio de Janeiro police forces. Ten years ago, when I started researching police conduct in Rio on behalf of Human Rights Watch, police killed five people from each person that they injured, according to official records I obtained. That was especially surprising given that several police commanders and officers told me the forces had poor aim and deficient training.

Police face very dangerous and well-armed gangs in Rio de Janeiro, and some killings by police are in self-defense. Yet, our research shows that in other cases police used lethal force disproportionately, in violation of Brazilian and international law.

The key to determining when self-defense is really the issue is prompt, thorough, independent investigations, which are never carried out in Rio de Janeiro.

After the October 28 raid, police did not preserve the site of the shootings, conduct crime scene analysis, or maintain the chain of custody of evidence. I have documented similar failures in scores of other police killings in Rio in the last decade.

Traditionally, Brazilian civil police have investigated killings by civil and military police. The chief of Rio’s civil police, who has a duty to ensure an independent investigation, showed the folly of this set-up when, before all the bodies had been even identified, he referred to those killed in the raid as “narcoterrorists.”

He was echoing Donald Trump’s language to justify extrajudicial killings of suspected drug traffickers in the Caribbean.

Prosecutors, not police, should lead these investigations under both a recent Supreme Court ruling and a resolution by the National Council of Prosecutors.

In addition, forensic procedures should be independent. But Rio de Janeiro is one of seven Brazilian states, together with the federal district, in which official forensic units are subordinate to the civil police.

The October 28 investigation also needs robust involvement by federal prosecutors, assisted by federal police, since state prosecutors participated in planning the disastrous raid. Brazil’s attorney general should consider full federalization of the case, an option Brazil’s Constitution allows.

As long as there are no thorough, effective investigations into killings by police, abusive officers will continue to have free rein and abusive raids will continue. These raids threaten police officers who seek to abide by the law as well as the public.

Rio de Janeiro authorities have conducted military-style operations again and again for years without weakening criminal groups. On the contrary, those organizations have expanded to other states and neighboring countries.

Since the operation, police have retreated from the Alemão and Penha neighborhoods and organized crime's grip on those communities is as strong as ever. The people who died will soon be replaced by other poor, young men with few job and educational prospects.

Rio de Janeiro, and Brazil, needs a new public security strategy based on data and science, which truly dismantles dangerous criminal groups by prioritizing intelligence and investigation, and by targeting money laundering, arms trafficking, and penetration in the legal economy.

That requires much stronger coordination between state and federal law enforcement, which has been hampered by distrust that some members of these agencies may be on the criminal group's payroll. Prosecutors need to strengthen investigations into allegations of links between organized crime and police and politicians.

Continuing ineffective abusive operations in low-income, mostly Black neighborhoods, undermines the very rule of law that authorities claim to defend, and only results in more bloodshed.

Related Content

[Brazil: Serious Investigative Failures in Deadly Rio Raid](#)


Region / Country

- [Americas](#)
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Source URL: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/12/01/rio-police-undermine-public-safety>

Exhibit 9

State of denial?

 globalinitiative.net/analysis/organized-crime-is-driving-a-deadly-surge-in-violence-in-brazil

July 14, 2025

- [Global Organized Crime Index](#)
- [Latinoamérica y el Caribe](#)
- [AMA-Obs](#)
- [latin-america-caribbean](#)

Organized crime is driving a deadly surge in violence in Brazil, taking advantage of public security failures

Violence in Brazil's northern and north-eastern regions is a growing concern. In 2023, the homicide rate in northern Brazil was 41.5% [higher](#) than the national average. Meanwhile, six of the 10 cities with the highest homicide rates in the country in 2023 were in the north-eastern state of [Bahia](#). Rising insecurity in these regions has been driven by the country's two mafia-style groups, Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and Comando Vermelho (CV), moving into these areas.

The Brazilian government is seeking to address this violence by proposing a constitutional amendment to reform public security. The bill, which is currently being [debated](#) in congress, aims to standardize police operational strategies and codes of conduct across Brazil's 27 states to bolster enforcement efforts against organized crime.

Alongside this proposal, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's administration suggested launching a pilot programme in Bahia in December 2024 to address the state's public security crisis. The programme would provide local law enforcement with federal intelligence and technical guidance from academic researchers to help them displace criminal networks from their territories. However, the Bahia state government [refused](#) federal assistance on the grounds that organized crime is not the main public security problem in the state, a justification that is not backed up by existing data. The evidence shows that criminal networks are potent and highly time-sensitive drivers of lethal violence in Bahia and Brazil more broadly.

Organized crime moves north

In the 2023 Global Organized Crime Index ('the Index'), Brazil's mafia-style group indicator [score](#) was 8 out of 10, placing the country second in South America, after Colombia and Venezuela (9.5), for this category of criminal actor. These large criminal groups from the south-eastern region of Brazil have increased their footprint across the country with two goals

in mind: establishing new routes for transnational drug exports and diversifying their revenue streams into other profitable illicit trades, including wildlife trafficking and illicit gold mining in the resource-rich Amazon region, and extortion and protection racketeering in densely populated urban margins.

At the core of the expansion of the PCC and the CV is their willingness to cooperate with smaller, local criminal networks. In exchange for allowing the PCC and CV to move into their turfs, these smaller groups [receive](#) weapons and cash. This support has empowered the local groups, which were previously limited to low-level drug retailing, to govern communities, influence public security and confront the state. Compared to the 2021 iteration, the 2023 Index saw an increase of 0.5 points for criminal networks in Brazil, placing the country well above the global average.

Rising criminal violence in Bahia illustrates concerning trends regarding organized crime's capacity to shape public security in Brazil, and government responses to this violence exemplify the institutional shortfalls Brazil faces when tackling organized crime. Bahia is the fourth most populous state in Brazil, with a population of over 14 million, and its coastal capital, Salvador, is one of the country's main [hubs](#) for drug exports to West Africa and Europe. There are 21 criminal organizations operating in Bahia – approximately 23% of the illicit entities mapped [nationwide](#). Lethal police crackdowns have dramatically increased in tandem with the rise in criminality in the state: between 2019 and 2022, killings by police in the state doubled, reaching 1 464 [victims](#) per year.

Under the Index, Brazil ranks 18th out of 35 countries in the Americas for overall resilience indicators against organized crime (scoring 4.92 out of 10). This low resilience score is due to difficulties in implementing anti-organized crime policies at a national level. Indeed, the 2023 Index gave Brazil a score of 4.5 out of 10 for national policies and laws that can effectively combat organized crime, and the same score was given to law enforcement capacity. With state governments controlling police forces, the federal government has its hands tied and has largely been unable to coordinate effective public security solutions to rising criminality.

Exhibit 10

The PCC's mafia moment

 globalinitiative.net/analysis/the-pccs-mafia-moment-assassination-ruy-ferraz-fontes

September 24, 2025

The assassination of a senior police officer in Brazil reveals the PCC's growing strength

On 15 September, Ruy Ferraz Fontes, São Paulo's former police chief, was [assassinated](#) by three assailants using high-grade rifles in a busy road in the city of Praia Grande. Ongoing police investigations [indicate](#) that the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) was behind the killing, reportedly in retaliation for Fontes's long track record of combatting Brazil's largest organized crime group.

Although there is a tendency to attribute blame to the PCC for all manner of crimes in Brazil, given Fontes's career and the professional nature of the murder it is highly likely that this is the case. This is not the first assassination carried out by the PCC against a former law enforcement officer; the former head of a São Paulo prison was also [killed](#) in a similar fashion. Fontes's murderers are still at large, but the police have identified seven suspects – [two of whom are PCC members](#) – who were reportedly involved in the killing.

The public murder of a senior police officer bears the hallmarks of a mafia killing, reflecting the PCC's stature as a criminal behemoth intent on showing its strength. It also raises questions about how the state will respond to this demonstration of criminal prowess.

Settling an old score

Fontes was in charge of the first police task force that had [investigated](#) the PCC in the late 1990s, resulting in the arrests and indictments of the group's leaders. In 2019, Fontes was responsible for transferring the PCC's senior bosses from São Paulo-based penitentiaries to federal prisons scattered across Brazil in an attempt to dismantle the group's chain of command. After retiring from the police in 2023, he became an official in the municipal government of Praia Grande, a city neighbouring Santos, the exit point for the bulk of the PCC's [cocaine exports](#) to Europe and West Africa. Despite having faced death threats from the PCC since at least 2010, Fontes lost the right to a police escort after retiring.

Fontes's murder is alarming because, in contrast to its arch-rival, the Comando Vermelho, the PCC has generally adopted a low-profile approach when it comes to confronting state forces, particularly over the last decade. Although the group was responsible for prison rebellions during the 1990s and early 2000s, and high-profile attacks on the police in São Paulo in 2006

and 2012, it has tended to operate under the radar so as to avoid courting police crackdowns, which would interfere with its lucrative and growing drug business.

This strategy has paid off handsomely. The PCC has become entrenched in densely populated neighbourhoods of São Paulo and other major Brazilian cities, including those in the [Amazon region](#), setting up drug sale points, establishing rules of community conduct and playing the role of arbiter in settling local disputes. The organization has also become one of the world's largest cocaine suppliers, with reportedly over 40 000 members active in [28 countries](#). The PCC has reinvested its drug money into a number of legitimate and illicit markets, including illicit gold mining, real estate and the [fuel sector](#).

Getting away with murder?

Fontes's assassination occurred in the wake of an unprecedented investigation into the PCC's money laundering and market diversification initiatives. Just a few weeks prior, federal agents and local prosecutors had launched what is believed to be the largest organized crime investigation in Brazilian history, deploying 1 400 law enforcement officers across 10 Brazilian states. The [operation](#), called *Carbono Oculto* ('Hidden Carbon'), targeted the PCC's involvement in the Brazilian fuel sector supply chain, including import, processing, distribution and retail. According to investigators, the PCC reinvested its proceeds from the fuel sector into at least 40 investment funds operated by prominent financial institutions. These funds held BRL30 billion (US\$5.6 billion) in [assets](#). Fontes's assassination may signal that the PCC has decided to move away from its longstanding non-confrontational approach in an attempt to intimidate state authorities and prevent them from continuing to clamp down on the group's financial operations.


While it is impossible to definitively establish the PCC's intentions behind Fontes's killing, the murder of a senior police officer in broad daylight threatens to unleash a spiral of violence. Over the past two years, São Paulo Governor Tarcísio de Freitas has pursued a tough public security strategy. Under his watch, police lethality in São Paulo increased by 61 per cent in 2024 with over 800 people killed in police operations – the [largest increase](#) among Brazil's 27 states. The centrepiece of this aggressive policing strategy has been the coastal region around the port of Santos, a stronghold of the PCC. Over the course of 2023 and 2024, the São Paulo government launched two large-scale [military police operations](#) in the Santos region under the guise of combatting the PCC. These resulted in the deaths of at least 92 people, including unarmed civilians and a [four-year-old boy](#). Cases of unlawful police violence in the Santos region were particularly acute following the killing of a police officer in the area in February 2024.

In this context, the prospect of a new wave of mass killings by the police to avenge Fontes cannot be ruled out. This would most likely result once again in the death of innocent civilians while failing to dismantle the PCC's authority and power. Fontes's assassination therefore exacerbates an already volatile situation involving a powerful criminal organization that appears to be increasingly willing to demonstrate its strength through public acts of violence, and an increasingly lethal local police force. Rather than repeating failed interventions, state authorities should take inspiration from the Hidden Carbon operation. Large mafia-style groups such as the PCC are capable of withstanding coercive operations by state forces. Cutting off their sources of revenue and laundering mechanisms provides a more effective way to confront organized crime's growing reach in Brazil.



Exhibit 11

Brazil: UN experts urge swift investigation into deadly police operation in Rio de Janeiro

 [ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/brazil-un-experts-urge-swift-investigation-deadly-police-operation-rio-de](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/10/brazil-un-experts-urge-swift-investigation-deadly-police-operation-rio-de)



Press releases Multiple Mechanisms

31 October 2025

GENEVA — UN experts* today expressed grave concern over the deadliest police operation in the history of Brazil, which has left at least 120 people dead, including four police officers, and called on Brazilian authorities to ensure an independent investigation with a view to ensuring accountability, halt ongoing human rights violations and ensure the protection of witnesses, relatives, and human rights defenders.

The operation, known as “*Operação Contenção*,” was conducted on 28 October 2025 in the Alemão and Penha complexes, which are predominantly inhabited by people of African descent. According to information received, some bodies were found with hands tied or gunshot wounds to the back of the head. Residents also reported homes being raided without warrants being shown, arbitrary arrests and the use of helicopters and drones to fire projectiles.

“The scale of violence, the nature of the reported killings, and the consequences on poor communities of African descent living in urban peripheral areas expose a deeply entrenched pattern of racialised policing and impunity,” the experts said. “These acts may amount to unlawful killings and must all be investigated promptly, independently, and thoroughly.”

The experts expressed alarm at threats to criminalise relatives of victims, residents, and human rights defenders who helped recover bodies the following morning. “We are particularly concerned about reprisals against families and witnesses. Authorities must guarantee their life, safety and personal integrity, and prevent any form of intimidation, harassment or criminalisation,” they said. “It is the responsibility of the authorities to preserve the scene for subsequent forensic examination.”

They urged Brazilian authorities to immediately:

- Halt all ongoing operations resulting in excessive use of force and ensure that no further unnecessary loss of civilian life occurs;
- Protect witnesses, relatives, community members and human rights defenders from reprisals and arbitrary prosecution;
- Preserve all evidence and safeguard the chain of custody in all cases of killings and other possible violations with a view to hold those responsible to account;
- Ensure independent forensic examinations and investigations in line with international human rights standards;
- Comply with international standards on the use of force, including during protests related to the events, and ensure accountability for all police wrongdoing.

United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms have repeatedly raised concerns regarding excessive use of force by law enforcement officials in Brazil. The experts called for action to prevent the recurrence of such atrocities.

“This tragic event underscores the urgent need for Brazil to reform its security policies, which continue to perpetuate a model of racialised brutal police violence. Brazilian authorities must break with the legacy of impunity which has characterised similar events in the past,” they said.

In a [report](#) published last year, the experts found that Brazil’s police culture and public security policy rely on repression, violence, and hypermasculinity. Police kill over 6,000 people annually — mostly of African descent — “These killings — often in operations targeting “criminals” - are widespread and systematic, functioning as a form of social cleansing against marginalised groups,” they said. In addition, in his [latest report](#) to the General Assembly the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions urged the adoption of “zero tolerance” for police killings and implementation of the report’s recommendations.

The experts wrote to the Brazilian Government about their concerns, urging the adoption of emergency measures without delay, and requesting information on steps taken to ensure accountability, remedy and reparation for the victims and their families.

ENDS

*The experts:

- **Akua Kuenyehia, Tracie Keesee and Victor Rodriguez**, members of the UN International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement;
- **Bina D’Costa, Barbara Reynolds, Catherine Namakula, Isabelle Mamadou, Miriam Ekuidoko**, members of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent;
- **K.P. Ashwini**, UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance;
- **Mary Lawlor**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders;
- **Morris Tidball-Binz**, UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions.

Background: The International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement was established in July 2021 by the Human Rights Council to make recommendations, inter alia, on the concrete steps needed to ensure access to justice, accountability and redress for excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officials against Africans and people of African descent.

Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN human rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms. Special Procedures mandate-holders are independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. They are not UN staff and are independent from any government or organisation. They serve in their individual capacity and do not receive a salary for their work.

For media queries regarding the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement, please contact: ohchr-emler@un.org

For media queries regarding Special Procedures, please contact: Maya Derouaz (maya.derouaz@un.org) or Dharisha Indraguptha (dharisha.indraguptha@un.org).

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Tags

Exhibit 12

Brazil Red Command

Red Command (Comando Vermelho)

by *InSight Crime*

27 Nov 2022 Updated 12 Mar 2026

The Red Command (Comando Vermelho – CV) is Brazil’s oldest criminal group. Created in a Rio de Janeiro prison in the 1970s as a self-protection group for prisoners, it started out with low-level crimes like muggings and bank robberies. But in the 1980s, the group moved into the cocaine trade, working with Colombian drug cartels and taking on a social leadership role in many of Rio’s marginalized neighborhoods.

It has since grown into a sizable national and transnational threat. While still maintaining its power base in poorer neighborhoods around Rio de Janeiro, the Red Command has a major influence in prisons across the country, with the northern region of Amazonas and western state of Mato Grosso being its secondary strongholds. It also has a foothold inside Bolivia, from where it sources much of its cocaine. Its clashes with militia groups and the **Pure Third Command** (Terceiro Comando Puro – **TCP**) are a regular source of violence in Rio.

Since 2020, it has had to fend off **repeated incursions** and massacres by state forces and by militia groups into Rio favelas under its control.

History

The Red Command was born from an alliance between common criminals and leftist militants, when the two groups were thrown together in prisons under the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985. The terrible conditions in Candido Mendes prison, on Ilha Grande island in the state of Rio de Janeiro, pushed inmates to band together to survive within the system. They first formed a left-wing militia organization called the “Falange Vermelha,” or “Red Phalanx,” but the ideology was soon abandoned as the group became more deeply involved with organized crime, and was dubbed “Red Command” by the press.

By 1979, the group had spread out of the prison and into Rio’s streets. Members who were on the outside were tasked with providing money to those on the inside through criminal activities such as

Manage consent

bank robbery, allowing them to maintain a decent quality of life in prison and to finance escape attempts.

The ideas of the Red Command spread to other prisons, and the power of the organization grew. Two decades later, in São Paulo, a similar prisoners' movement would emerge — the First Capital Command (Primeiro Comando da Capital – **PCC**) – as did others, which were modeled on the Red Command.

The Red Command was ideally placed to partner with Colombian cartels when the cocaine trade began to boom in the 1980s, as it had the structure and organization to reliably obtain and distribute large quantities of the drug. Members on the outside now had a clear objective: forming well-armed gangs to take over drug turf in the name of the Red Command. It gained control of many poor neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro that had been neglected by the state, setting up a parallel system of government inside the favelas and providing employment to inhabitants long excluded from Brazilian society.

By the 1990s, the city's all-powerful illegal gambling bosses, known as “bicheiros,” saw their influence diminish, paving the way for the Red Command to become Rio's top organized crime group and build up its presence in other states.

In 2005, the Red Command was thought to control more than half of Rio de Janeiro's most violent areas, though this fell to under 40 percent by 2008. A police pacification program intended to bring a state presence to criminally-dominated areas may have further reduced the group's influence in the early 2010s, through the establishment of Police Pacification Units (Unidades de Polícia Pacificadora – UPPs) in Rio's poor neighborhoods known as *favelas*, but the security strategy's long-term effects were **limited**. Most UPPs were closed in 2021, as authorities considered the program a failure.

The Red Command is thought to have maintained links to the now largely demobilized Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – **FARC**). Red Command leader Luiz Fernando da Costa, alias “Fernandinho Beira-Mar,” was arrested in Colombia in 2001 while allegedly exchanging weapons for cocaine with the guerrillas.

At the end of 2016, a breakdown in a longstanding alliance between the Red Command and the PCC generated a **wave of violence** in Brazilian prisons. Over the following year, the conflict between the two groups continued as the PCC sought to reduce the power of the Red Command by forming alliances with enemy gangs as well as co-opting Red Command members with the aim of assuming control over drug trafficking in the group's traditional zones of influence.

The feud has since spilled into neighboring Bolivia, with the two groups fighting for control over drug trafficking routes in the state of Mato Grosso and the Bolivian border province of Santa Cruz.

Rio's government launched a new version of the UPPs in 2021, aiming to contend Red Command's power, but it also failed to achieve significant results.

In recent years, the gang has had to **contend** with militia groups muscling in on its territory, including in Rio de Janeiro, where, by 2022, its presence had fallen to around a quarter of the city. The loss of control can also be attributed to police operations that have disproportionately targeted favelas held by the group. Since 2022, the Red Command has been **reclaiming** territory from militias, who have lost ground in about 20 percent of the area of the city of Rio de Janeiro where they have had influence over the past two years.

In 2023, the Red Command was able to **overtake** militias and become the group with the greatest territorial control in Rio, ruling more than half of the city, according to data from the Fogo Cruzado Institute and the Fluminense Federal University's Study Group on New Forms of Illegalism.

Leadership

The Red Command has a relatively loose leadership structure and has been described as a network of independent actors, rather than a strict hierarchical organization headed by a single leader. The gang's structure resembles the organization of a franchise, as it has local divisions and separated networks working as allies.

However, there are prominent bosses within the structure, including Luiz Fernando da Costa, alias "Fernandinho Beira-Mar," who is currently **imprisoned**, and Isaias da Costa Rodrigues, alias "Isaias do Borel," who was in prison for more than 20 years until his release in 2022. Márcio dos Santos Nepomuceno, alias "Marcinho VP", is another prominent **figure** in the gang, and recognized as one of its major leaders together with Fernandinho Beira-Mar.

In December 2014, authorities in Paraguay arrested a top Red Command leader, Luiz Cláudio Machado, alias "Marreta," who is still imprisoned.

Fernandinho Beira-Mar has maintained **strong influence** within the group despite serving a life sentence, and police have continued to target his legacy. In January 2022, a raid **killed** Lindomar Gregório de Lucena, alias "**Babuino**," the Red Command's alleged leader in Rio de Janeiro and Beira-Mar's reported foster son.

Geography

The Red Command is based in Rio de Janeiro, but has a presence in other parts of Brazil. It is particularly strong in the northern state of Amazonas and the western state of Mato Grosso, while also operating in Paraguay and Bolivia. In addition, reports in 2022 suggested it had begun to expand into French Guiana.

The Red Command is also engaged in an **ongoing turf war** in the tri-border region between Colombia, Brazil, and Peru, where the group has **expanded** its influence.

Allies and Enemies

The Red Command worked closely with the PCC, until the groups' longstanding alliance was violently broken in 2016. The rupture unleashed violence in a half-dozen parts of the country and has yet to fully abate.

In addition to the PCC, the Red Command's main enemies are militias composed of active and former security force officers, and the Rio-based criminal group Pure Third Command, a breakaway faction of the Third Command (Terceiro Comando), which was set up by dissident former Red Command members.

The Red Command maintained an alliance with the Family of the North, a powerful group based in the Amazon metropolis of Manaus, between 2015 and 2018, when **ruptures emerged**. In 2020, this alliance was definitely shattered when the Red Command **attacked** the FDN in Manaus, leading to hundreds of deaths. The result was the Red Command becoming the dominant drug trafficking group in Brazil's Amazonas, but the gangs now fight for control over trafficking routes in the region.

A rising preoccupation for the Red Command is the rate at which favelas under its influence in Rio de Janeiro have been targeted for violent police raids. A study in 2021 **found** that Red Command neighborhoods saw four times the number of security operations than those under militia control, **according** to the Intercept. The loss of territory to the militias could **become a real threat** to the group's territorial control in Rio.

The Red Command is thought to have links to Colombia's **demobilized FARC rebels** and maintains ties with other networks trafficking cocaine from the Andes region, as well as marijuana from Paraguay.

Exhibit 13

Brazil Brazil

Brazil Profile

by *InSight Crime*

24 Nov 2023



Brazil, Latin America's largest economy, faces a new era of violence and crime.

As well as being Latin America's largest country by population, economy, and area, Brazil is also home to some of the region's most powerful criminal organizations.

The country shares porous borders with every nation in South America except Ecuador and Chile, and its many major ports make it a key hub for global cocaine trafficking. It is also a major drug consumer.

Brazil's two largest gangs, the **First Capital Command** (Primeiro Comando da Capital – PCC) and the **Red Command** (Comando Vermelho – CV), have used prisons as bases of operations, becoming increasingly involved in international drug trafficking as well as arms and contraband trafficking.

Militias, largely comprised of current and former police officers, are another source of violent crime, extorting whole neighborhoods and committing extrajudicial killings.

Geography

Brazil has a 16,000-kilometer land border and an 8,000-kilometer coastline, and its busy ports are **used to ship** cocaine to Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Brazil's neighbors include the world's three main cocaine producers, Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, as well as one of the top marijuana producers, Paraguay.

Additionally, Brazil contains most of the Amazon basin, an ecologically critical region that has attracted timber traffickers, unauthorized miners, wildlife smugglers, and drug runners, among other criminals.

History

Brazil's origins as a colony of the Portuguese, rather than the Spanish, empire lend it a different linguistic and cultural heritage compared to most of its Latin American neighbors. It became an independent country in the first half of the Nineteenth Century.

Brazil saw a massive exodus of rural dwellers towards the main urban centers of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro from the 1950s to 1970s, which led to the growth of informal settlements known as "favelas." The concentrated inequality and poverty in the favelas, which lacked a clear state presence, made them ideal breeding grounds for organized crime.

In the 1950s, a powerful criminal mafia began to form around *jogo do bicho*, or the **animal game**, an illegal gambling racket that became hugely popular. The bosses who ran the game built up large fortunes, laundering their profits through legitimate companies. Eventually, they branched out into contract killing and prostitution rings, buying off police and politicians. The power of the bicheiros, or animal game bosses, peaked in the 1980s, when they **began laundering money** through Rio de Janeiro's famous Carnival celebrations.

Meanwhile, organized criminal groups also began to form amid the strong state repression and brutal squalor that characterized the country's prisons during a period of military rule lasting from 1964 to 1985. Brazil's two most powerful gangs, the Red Command and the PCC both began in prisons in the early 1970s and the 1990s, respectively, later hitting the streets of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

During the 1970s, links began to emerge among the bicheiros, international drug smuggling networks, and local traffickers. As the global cocaine market boomed in the 1980s, Brazil attracted South America's most prominent drug producers as a transit point for drugs bound for European and US

markets. Colombian groups moved into Brazilian territory, attracted by its location and the availability of precursor chemicals. They began smuggling cocaine into the country in base form and setting up laboratories close to domestic points of sale as well as international ports used to send the drug to markets abroad.

Under the premise of fighting drug gangs, vigilante groups known as militias, made up of current and former members of the police, began to emerge in urban areas. Today, these vigilante groups represent an important criminal threat. They **operate their own rackets**, including extortion and kidnapping, primarily in the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area. Some have also moved into the drug trade.

Since the start of the 21st Century, Brazil's criminal groups have solidified their presence in their traditional strongholds of prisons and favelas, while expanding into the Amazon and neighboring countries – particularly **Paraguay**. In response, recent national governments have largely **followed anti-crime policies** focused on heavy-handed police and military operations, and mass incarceration.

Environmental crime surged from 2019 to 2022 during the administration of President Jair Bolsonaro, who staunchly opposed environmental protection measures, claiming they hindered economic growth. Bolsonaro's administration also significantly relaxed gun restrictions, allowing criminals easier access to powerful firearms.

Bolsonaro's successor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who had previously served as president from 2003 to 2010, took steps early in his term to reverse those aspects of his predecessor's legacy. Lula launched hard-hitting military operations against environmental criminals in the Amazon and promised to roll back loosened gun laws. However, his overall anti-crime posture **has remained** largely traditional.

Criminal Groups

Brazil's two main prison gangs, the **PCC** and the **Red Command**, have long dominated the country's organized crime landscape.

The PCC was born in the 1990s in the prisons of Latin America's largest city, São Paulo, and is now **firmly established** as one of the region's most powerful **criminal actors**. The gang has become a transnational threat, moving much of the cocaine **flowing** from Brazil to Europe and having set up a **secondary power base** in neighboring Paraguay.

The Red Command was created in the 1970s as a self-protection group for prisoners in Rio de Janeiro, and served as an inspiration for the PCC. The two groups maintained a truce throughout the 2000s and early 2010s, but it broke down in 2016, setting off a violent, nationwide underworld realignment.

The Red Command has used its strong presence in its home turf of Rio de Janeiro to gain major influence in prisons across the country. It also has a foothold inside Bolivia, from where it sources much of its cocaine. However, it faces competition in Rio from two gangs that formed as splinter groups: the **Pure Third Command** (Terceiro Comando Puro) and **Amigos dos Amigos**.

The **Family of the North** (Familia do Norte – FDN) has long been Brazil’s third-largest criminal group, with a strong presence in northern Brazil but not matching the nationwide presence of the PCC and Red Command. In early 2020, the FDN came under **sustained attack** by the Red Command in Manaus, the biggest city in the Amazon. While the fallout of this war has not been fully measured, it is likely the FDN has been left greatly weakened.

Bullet in the Face (Bala na Cara – BNC) is a prominent criminal group headquartered in Brazil’s southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul, with a presence in southern Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina.

Escritório do Crime and the Justice League (Liga da Justiça) are among the largest and most powerful militia groups in Rio de Janeiro, controlling many aspects of life in western parts of the city. Their criminal portfolio extends to drug trafficking, extortion and other organized crime activities. In the last couple of years, these militia groups have begun setting aside their traditional rivalries with the Red Command and morphing into hybrid criminal structures.

Brazil also is home to sophisticated **corruption networks**, many of which have organized around politics and the construction industry.

Additionally, foreign crime groups – primarily Nigerian networks and the Italian ‘Ndrangheta — have a presence in Brazil.

Security Forces

Brazil’s military is the largest in Latin America. Its primary role is enforcing border control, but the country’s large size, combined with the remoteness of its border regions and a lack of capacity on the part of neighboring nations, makes this difficult.

Brazilian police are divided into federal and state forces, which include military and civilian forces. The Federal Police are responsible for investigating international and state crimes. The Military Police are responsible for enforcing public order within the states. The Civilian Police manages criminal investigations on the state level. The Federal Highway Police have also begun to take on crime-fighting functions.

Brazilian police forces have a reputation for abusiveness, lack of accountability, and **low levels** of public trust. They frequently face accusations of extrajudicial killings, and innocent bystanders are often caught in the crossfire of shootouts between security forces and criminals.

Corruption also **poses a challenge** for many Brazilian security institutions. Police and soldiers often work with organized crime groups, or form their own criminal organizations, as in the case of the militias.

Judicial System

Brazil's judicial system has federal and state courts, as well as courts specialized in military, labor-related, and electoral matters. The country's highest court is the Supreme Federal Court (Supremo Tribunal Federal).

Most courts are **slow, corrupt, and generally ineffective**. Pretrial detention is common for criminal suspects, contributing to problems in the prison system.

Prisons

Brazil has one of the world's largest prison populations, divided into federal and state systems. The facilities are often overcrowded, under-resourced, and controlled by one or more gangs. They are frequently the scene of **prisoner abuse** and bloody battles between criminal groups, which use them as bases of operations.

Exhibit 14

InSight Crime's 2025 Homicide Round-Up

 insightcrime.org/news/insight-crime-2025-homicide-round-up

Christopher Newton

March 11, 2026

Despite the widespread use of states of emergency, the increasingly militarized response to organized crime, and the growth of criminal economies, the murder rate in 2025 across Latin America and the Caribbean declined.

While murders in the region dropped last year as a whole, a number of countries, including Ecuador and Haiti, saw homicide rates hit new highs, spurred by criminal dynamics.

In total, at least 108,838 people were murdered in Latin America and the Caribbean during 2025, putting the median homicide rate at around 17.6 per 100,000 people, over 5% lower than in 2024.

InSight Crime analyzes the organized crime dynamics behind the violence in every country in the region. All homicide rates are victims per 100,000 people, unless otherwise stated.

** Data for these countries is either preliminary, unreliable, incomplete, or measures homicides in a way that it is not possible to compare homicide rates with other countries. See the country's section in the text and the "Notes and Methodology" section for more information.*

Murder Rates on the Rise

Steady Murder Rates

Murder Rates Trending Down

Brazil (-8.5%)

Brazil's [homicide rate](#) dropped from 21 per 100,000 in 2024 to 19.2 in 2025, continuing a downward trend that started in 2019. The decrease means 3,615 fewer people were murdered in Brazil last year compared to 2024, and the data includes homicides, femicides, police killings, robbery followed by murder, and manslaughter.

Despite the high levels of crime, the drop can be partially explained by the consistent movement of criminality towards [technology](#) and [cybercrime](#), which involves less physical violence while still causing significant harm to its victims.

Some states did see increases in violence: Acre, Rondônia, Roraima, and Rio Grande do Norte in the north of Brazil; Rio de Janeiro in the southeast; and the Federal District in the center-west. Northern states reported high levels of violence due to [fighting](#) between Brazil's two biggest gangs, the First Capital Command (Primeiro Comando da Capital – [PCC](#)) and the Red Command (Comando Vermelho – [CV](#)), and local gangs. Meanwhile, the Red Command frequently [engaged in shootouts](#) with other gangs and the police in its home base state, Rio de Janeiro.

Police killings [increased](#) by 4.5% in Brazil in 2025. In October, police killed over 100 people in [Brazil's most lethal operation](#) to date in Rio de Janeiro. The country is known for having one of the most violent police forces in the region, with only 17% of residents in Rio's *favelas* saying they [trusted the military police](#), according to the latest survey by Brazilian research institute *Data Favela*, which specializes in collecting data on Brazil's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

Brazil has also registered a [record number of disappearances](#) since 2015, suggesting the drop in its homicide rate may be due at least in part to undetected murders.



Exhibit 15

Report indicates presence of factions in 17 municipalities of Tocantins; PCC and CV dispute territory in Palmas and Araguaína.

tocantins.jornalopcao.com.br/policia/relatorio-aponta-presenca-de-faccoes-em-17-municipios-do-tocantins-pcc-e-cv-disputam-territorio-em-palmas-e-araguaina-574286

Samir Leão

November 20, 2025

TO SHARE

On Wednesday, December 19th, the Brazilian Forum on Public Security (FBSP) released a study on the advance of criminal factions in the Legal Amazon. The research was launched at an event held in the Ford Foundation pavilion at the 30th United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP30) in Belém.

The 4th edition of the *Cartographies of Violence in the Amazon* research identified 17 municipalities in Tocantins with the presence of criminal factions, equivalent to 12% of the state's cities. In 14 of them, only one group operates, while three have territorial disputes.

According to the document, four organizations operate in the state: Comando Vermelho (CV), Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), Amigos do Estado (ADE), present in Almas, and Bonde do Cangaço, identified in Taguatinga. The most serious tensions occur in Palmas and Araguaína, where CV and PCC are directly disputing territorial control.

Figura 3.19 Pichação da facção CV em uma árvore, no Bairro Aurení 4, Palmas 2025



Fonte: Instituto Mãe Criúla, 2025.

The survey includes cities such as Alvorada, Gurupi, Paraíso do Tocantins, Porto Nacional, São Bento do Tocantins, Xambioá, Araguatins, and Miracema do Tocantins. The capital, Palmas, appears as an area of conflict between the country's main factions.

Corridor for trafficking

The report highlights that Tocantins has assumed a strategic role in connecting the Amazon and the Central-South regions, a situation that has made the state an important corridor for drug trafficking. The document attributes the advance of criminal factions to the increasing use of state highways to move illicit cargo disguised as legal products.

Amazonian context

The advance of criminal factions in Tocantins mirrors the broader scenario in the Legal Amazon, according to the report, where organized crime already reaches 45% of municipalities. The study released at COP30 indicates that the presence of criminal groups in the region grew by 32% in one year, increasing from 260 to 344 cities. This expansion is linked to the control of river, air, and land routes, as well as its intersection with environmental crimes.

According to the researchers, this dynamic directly affects the states that act as a link between the forest and the rest of the country, such as Tocantins and Maranhão, both identified in the report as essential for the circulation of drugs destined for national consumption and international trafficking.

Integrated response

The document concludes that the growing presence of criminal factions in Tocantins, coupled with the state's strategic geographic location, demands coordinated actions involving policing, intelligence, border surveillance, combating illegal mining, and territorial protection policies. The scenario described by the study places Tocantins on the map of the main routes of organized crime in the Amazon and reinforces the need for rapid and structured responses.

Figura
3.20 Pichação da facção PCC no Setor Sul Santo Amaro, Palmas
2025



Fonte: Instituto Mãe Crioula, 2025


Exhibit 16



Brazilian
Yearbook
of Public
Security
2025



FORUM BRASILEIRO DE
SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA



A636 Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security / Brazilian Public Security Forum. –
1. 2006 - . – São Paulo: FBSP (Brazilian Forum on Public Security), 2025.
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Increase in Missing Persons May Obscure Executions and Forced Disappearances

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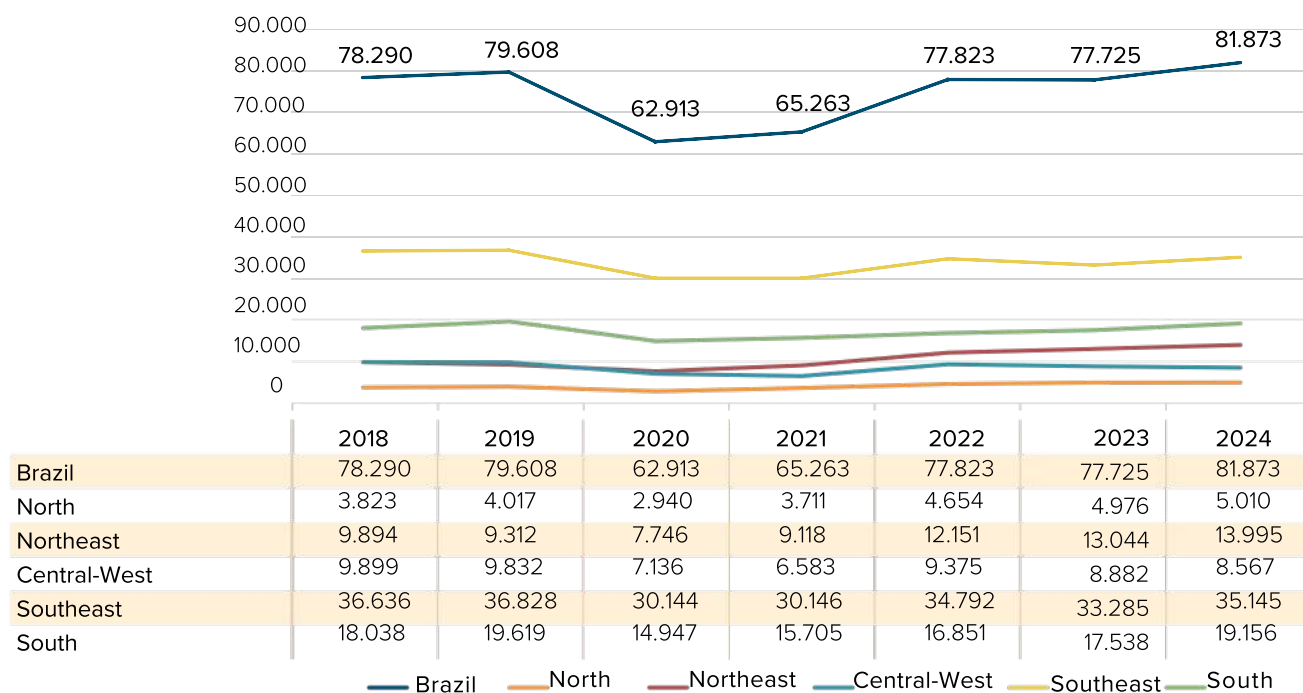
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The rate of reported missing persons increased by 4.9% in Brazil in 2024, totaling 81,873 cases reported to Civil Police authorities nationwide. After a sharp decline in 2020 and 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic period, the number of reports began to rise again, reaching, in the most recent year, the highest figure since 2018. **Based on recent statistics, an average of four missing persons reports per hour were filed with law enforcement authorities.**

An analysis of regional variation between 2018 and 2024 indicates that the Northeast and North regions recorded the largest increases during the period, at 41.4% and 31.0%, respectively. The Southern region also experienced an increase of 6.2%, while the Southeast region registered a decrease of 4.1%, and the Central-West region, a decrease of 13.5%.

CHART 26
Missing Persons Reports
Brazil and Regions, 2018–2024



Source: State Secretariats of Public Security and/or Social Defense; Rio de Janeiro Public Security Institute (ISP); Civil Police of the Federal District; Civil Police of the State of Roraima; Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) – Population Projections for Brazil and its Federative Units; Brazilian Forum on Public Security.

The increase in missing persons in Brazil coincides with a period in which a significant decline in intentional violent deaths has been observed, alongside the expansion of criminal organizations such as the PCC - First Capital Command (*Primeiro Comando da Capital*) and the Red Command (Comando Vermelho). Following conflicts stemming from internal splits in previous years, these groups began consolidating new territories in partnership with local criminal organizations. It is therefore noteworthy that the states currently located in the most violent regions of the country also present the largest increases in the number of missing persons during the period analyzed.

In 2024, the states that recorded the highest increases in missing persons rates were Amapá (+27%), Sergipe (+19.9%), and Bahia (+14.8%). These same states also stood out during the same period for reductions in intentional violent deaths. However, these territories are marked by intense disputes among criminal organizations for control of drug trafficking and by high levels of police lethality, which raises the hypothesis that part of the violence in these contexts may be concealed in the form of disappearances.

In light of this context, the analysis of the reduction in intentional violent deaths must be qualified by the growth in disappearances, acknowledging that official lethal violence rates may be underestimated due to the practice of disposing of the bodies of execution victims.

This phenomenon, moreover, is not new in Brazil. Since at least the period of the military dictatorship, the existence of clandestine cemeteries used for the disposal of bodies has been documented. In 1990, the country became aware of a clandestine cemetery in São Paulo, created by state agents during the military regime for the disposal of the remains of victims of political repression and of death squads formed by police officers. In the Perus mass grave, as it became known, 1,049 bags containing skeletal remains were found.¹

Even during the democratic period, the practice of disposing of the bodies of executed individuals in clandestine graves has persisted, although research on the subject remains scarce. This practice has been primarily adopted by criminal factions and militias as a means of eliminating rivals without drawing the attention of the State. If there is no body, there is no crime, nor an investigation.

Most of these individuals end up appearing in the statistics as “missing persons,” which is considered by the police to be an atypical occurrence, that is, not a crime. And since it does not constitute, a priori, a criminal offense, this type of

The states located in the most violent regions of the country currently also present the largest increases in the number of missing persons during the period analyzed.

¹ Perus Mass Grave: The clandestine cemetery where the military dictatorship hid the remains of victims of repression. Available at: <https://blogs.oglobo.globo.com/blog-do-acervo/post/vala-de-perus-descoberta-do-cemiterio-clandestino-onde-foram-enterradas-vitimas-da-ditadura.html>

The legal classification of disappearance is relatively recent in Brazil. It was only with the enactment of Law No. 13,812, of March 16, 2019, that a legal concept for the disappearance of a person was formally established.

report frequently does not result in the opening of a police investigation, lacks material evidence, and is not subject to statutes of limitation (Ferreira, 2013).²

The legal classification of disappearance is relatively recent in Brazil. It was only with the enactment of Law No. 13,812, of March 16, 2019, that the legal concept of a missing person was defined as: “any human being whose whereabouts are unknown, regardless of the cause of the disappearance, until their recovery and identification have been confirmed through physical or scientific means.”

Experts on the subject argue, however, that although the law represents an advance, it is excessively vague, as it does not differentiate among types of disappearance. The public prosecutor of the State of São Paulo, Eliana Vendramini,³ argues in her doctoral dissertation that disappearances should be classified into three types: voluntary disappearance, in which an adult individual voluntarily distances themselves from family and friends; involuntary disappearance, in which a person leaves or is removed by third parties without the ability to signal the event, due to incapacity, accidents, or natural disasters; and forced disappearance, in which a person, whether capable or not, is forcibly removed through violence or threat (Carneiro, 2022⁴; Brazilian Forum on Public Security (FBSP), 2023⁵).

In December 2006, the United Nations General Assembly approved the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which is defined under international law as a crime against humanity, and whose text entered into force in 2010. Although Brazil is a signatory to the UN Convention⁶, as well as to the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons⁷, the country still lacks domestic legislation formally classifying the offense as a crime.

Data from the Missing Persons Map in Brazil, produced by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security, show that the profile of missing persons is predominantly composed of men (62.8%), adolescents and young people (53.5%), and Black individuals (54.3%), who disappear primarily between Friday and Sunday—the same profile observed among homicide victims.

² FERREIRA, Letícia Carvalho de Mesquita. From a family problem to a social problem: ethnographic notes on missing persons in contemporary Brazil. *Anuário Antropológico* [online], vol. 38, no. 1, 2013.

³ CARNEIRO, Eliana Faleiros Vendramini. Missing persons: a critical analysis of the State’s criminal policy. 2022. 155 p. Doctoral Dissertation (PhD in Law) – Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), São Paulo, 2022. Available at: <https://tede2.pucsp.br/handle/handle/30904>. Accessed on April 23, 2024.

⁴ CARNEIRO, Eliana Vendramini. Missing persons: a critical analysis of the State’s criminal policy. Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. Doctoral Dissertation. São Paulo, 2022.

⁵ Brazilian Forum on Public Security. Map of Missing Persons in Brazil. Available at: <https://publicacoes.forumseguranca.org.br/server/api/core/bitstreams/91de3f95-67de-410a-9fb7-ce0227d248cb/content>

⁶ Regulated by Decree No. 8,767, of May 11, 2016. Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2016/decreto/d8767.htm

⁷ Regulated by Decree No. 8,766, of May 11, 2016. Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2016/decreto/d8766.htm

A brief Google search indicates the existence of clandestine cemeteries used for the disposal of bodies by criminal organizations in cities across several Brazilian states, including Mato Grosso⁸, Bahia⁹, Rio Grande do Sul¹⁰, Pará¹¹, São Paulo¹², Rio de Janeiro¹³, and Ceará¹⁴, among others. Not by coincidence, a recent study conducted by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security in partnership with Datafolha, entitled Victimization and Perception of Violence and Public Security Survey¹⁵, found that between July 2023 and June 2024, an average of 8% of the Brazilian population aged 16 years or older reported having knowledge of the existence of “clandestine cemeteries” in the cities where they lived. In 2024, this figure corresponded to approximately 14.2 million people. According to the same survey, this percentage is even more significant among residents of state capitals and municipalities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, where 17% of residents reported knowing of illegal cemeteries. In light of the significant increase in missing persons reports in Brazil, particularly in regions marked by high homicide rates and disputes among criminal organizations, it is urgent to recognize that this dynamic may be concealing an even more perverse dimension of criminality: execution followed by concealment of the body. The absence of specific legislation defining forced disappearance as a crime hampers the institutional response to the problem, contributing to the invisibilization of victims and to the suffering of families who are deprived even of the possibility of mourning. The approval of Bill No. 6,240/2013, which has been pending in the National Congress for more than a decade and classifies forced disappearance as a criminal offense, including it among heinous crimes, is an indispensable measure to break with the normalization of disappearances and to ensure the right to memory, truth, and justice.

In light of the significant growth in missing persons records in Brazil, especially in regions marked by high homicide rates and disputes among criminal organizations, it becomes urgent to acknowledge that this dynamic may be concealing an even more perverse form of criminality: execution followed by the concealment of the corpse.

8 <https://record.r7.com/cidade-alerta/policia-encontra-cemiterio-clandestino-de-facciao-criminosa-no-mato-grosso-23112023/>

9 <https://noticias.r7.com/bahia/balanco-geral-ba/balanco-geral-especial/videos/exclusivo-descobertas-ossadas-em-cemiterio-clandestino-em-simoes-filho-ba-31032018/>

10 <https://g1.globo.com/rs/rio-grande-do-sul/noticia/2019/08/22/cemiterio-clandestino-em-porto-alegre-teria-cerca-de-100-corpos-enterrados-segundo-mp.ghtml>

11 <https://www.oliberal.com/policia/cemiterio-clandestino-e-encontrado-em-ananindeua-tres-corpos-1.397692>

12 <https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/sudeste/sp/cemiterio-clandestino-em-sao-paulo-pelo-menos-14-ossadas-sao-encontradas/>

13 <https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2025/07/14/policia-encontra-cemiterio-clandestino.ghtml>

14 <https://g1.globo.com/ce/ceara/noticia/2020/10/30/policia-investiga-cemiterio-clandestino-utilizado-por-facciao-criminosa-para-torturar-e-enterrar-rivais-em-fortaleza.ghtml>

15 <https://publicacoes.forumseguranca.org.br/items/a8cdbf9d-848d-46ca-ba35-28e840b9914d>

I, Marina Viana Silva, telephone number 415 425-2508, mailing address P.O. Box 90487, San Diego, CA 92169, certify that I have performed the professional translation of this document from Portuguese to English, as a qualified translator fluent in both languages, and that the following is an accurate and complete translation of the document.

Marina Viana

Date: January 28, 2026



Anuário
Brasileiro
**de Segurança
Pública**
2025



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Crescimento dos desaparecimentos pode invisibilizar execuções e desaparecimentos forçados

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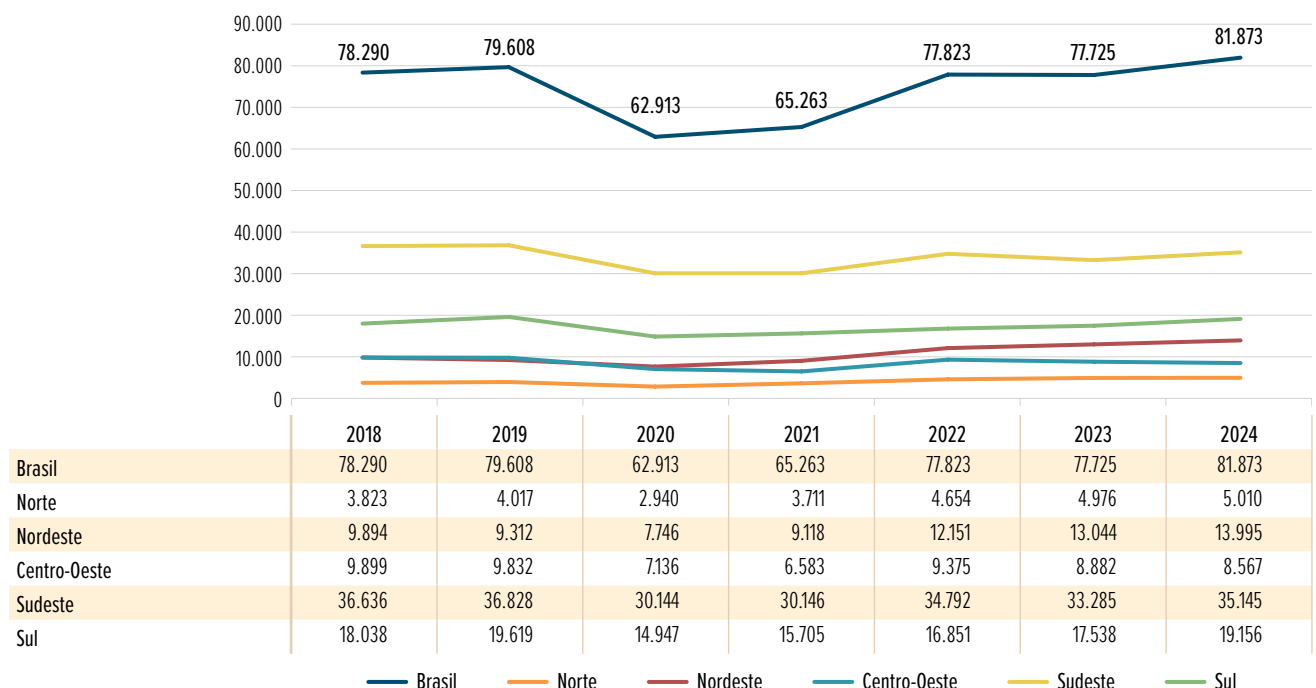
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A taxa de registros de desaparecimentos cresceu 4,9% no Brasil em 2024, totalizando 81.873 casos notificados às Polícias Cíveis de todo o país. Após uma queda acentuada nos anos de 2020 e 2021, período da pandemia de Covid-19, os registros voltaram a subir, atingindo, no último ano, o maior número desde 2018. Considerando as estatísticas recentes, **foram realizadas, em média, quatro notificações de desaparecimento por hora às autoridades policiais.**

A análise da variação por região entre 2018 e 2024 indica que as regiões Nordeste e Norte apresentaram os maiores crescimentos no período, de 41,4% e 31,0%, respectivamente. A região Sul também registrou aumento, de 6,2%, enquanto a Sudeste teve queda de 4,1% e a Centro-Oeste, de 13,5%.

GRÁFICO 26

Registros de Desaparecidos
Brasil e regiões, 2018-2024



Fonte: Secretarias Estaduais de Segurança Pública e/ou Defesa Social; Instituto de Segurança Pública/RJ (ISP); Polícia Civil do Distrito Federal; Polícia Civil do Estado de Roraima; Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) – Projeções da População do Brasil e das Unidades da Federação; Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública.

O crescimento dos desaparecimentos no Brasil coincide com o período em que vimos um declínio significativo das mortes violentas intencionais, mas também um movimento de expansão de organizações criminosas como o PCC e o Comando Vermelho, que após os conflitos gerados pelo racha em anos anteriores, passaram a consolidar novos territórios em parceria com organizações criminosas locais. Chama atenção, portanto, que justamente os estados das regiões mais violentas do país hoje, apresentam também os maiores crescimentos no número de desaparecimentos no período analisado.

Em 2024, os estados que registraram os maiores aumentos nas taxas de desaparecimentos foram o Amapá (+27%), Sergipe (+19,9%) e Bahia (+14,8%). Esses mesmos estados também se destacaram, no mesmo período, pela redução nas mortes violentas intencionais. Trata-se, no entanto, de territórios marcados por intensas disputas entre organizações criminosas pelo controle do tráfico de drogas e por elevadas taxas de letalidade policial, o que levanta a hipótese de que parte da violência nesses contextos esteja sendo ocultada sob a forma de desaparecimentos.

Diante deste contexto, a análise da redução das mortes violentas intencionais precisa ser matizada pelo crescimento dos desaparecimentos, reconhecendo que as taxas de violência letal oficiais podem estar subestimadas pela prática de descarte de corpos de vítimas de execução.

Esse fenômeno, aliás, não é novidade no Brasil. Ao menos desde a ditadura militar, sabe-se da existência de cemitérios clandestinos para a desova de corpos. Em 1990, o país tomou conhecimento de um cemitério clandestino em São Paulo, criado por agentes do Estado durante o regime militar para o descarte dos restos mortais de vítimas da repressão e de esquadrões da morte formados por policiais. Na vala de Perus, como ficou conhecido, foram encontrados 1.049 sacos com ossadas¹.

Mesmo durante o período democrático, a prática de descartar corpos de pessoas executadas em valas clandestinas se manteve, embora as pesquisas sobre o tema sejam escassas. Esta prática foi incorporada principalmente por facções criminosas e milícias como forma de eliminar rivais sem chamar a atenção do Estado. Se não há corpo, não há crime e tampouco uma investigação.

A maioria dessas pessoas acaba figurando nas estatísticas de “desaparecidos”, o que é considerado pelas polícias como um fato atípico, ou seja, não se trata de um crime. E como não constitui, a priori, um delito, esse tipo de ocorrência frequentemente não resul-

Os estados das regiões mais violentas do país hoje, apresentam também os maiores crescimentos no número de desaparecimentos no período analisado.

¹ Vala de Perus: O cemitério clandestino onde a ditadura militar escondeu as ossadas de vítimas da repressão. Disponível em <https://blogs.globo.com/blog-do-acervo/post/vala-de-perus-descoberta-do-cemiterio-clandestino-onde-foram-enterradas-vitimas-da-ditadura.html>

A tipificação jurídica de desaparecimento é bastante recente no Brasil. Foi apenas com a aprovação da lei 13.812, de 16 de março de 2019, que se estabeleceu o conceito jurídico para o desaparecimento de uma pessoa.

ta em abertura de inquérito policial, não possui materialidade e tampouco está sujeito à prescrição (Ferreira, 2013²).

A tipificação jurídica de desaparecimento é bastante recente no Brasil. Foi apenas com a aprovação da lei 13.812, de 16 de março de 2019, que se estabeleceu o conceito jurídico para o desaparecimento de uma pessoa: “todo ser humano cujo paradeiro é desconhecido, não importando a causa de seu desaparecimento, até que sua recuperação e identificação tenham sido confirmadas por vias físicas ou científicas”.

Especialistas no tema, no entanto, argumentam que embora a lei represente um avanço, foi excessivamente vaga ao não diferenciar os tipos de desaparecimento. A promotora de justiça do Estado de São Paulo, Eliana Vendramini³, defende em sua tese de doutorado que os desaparecimentos sejam diferenciados em três tipos: o desaparecimento voluntário, em que um indivíduo maior de idade se afasta voluntariamente de familiares e amigos; o desaparecimento involuntário, em que a pessoa se afasta ou é afastada por terceiros sem dispor de condições para sinalizar a ação, por ser incapaz ou ainda por acidentes e desastres naturais; e o desaparecimento forçado, em que a pessoa, seja ela capaz ou não, é afastada forçadamente por violência ou ameaça (Carneiro, 2022⁴; FBSP, 2023⁵).

Em dezembro de 2006 a Assembleia das Nações Unidas aprovou a Convenção Internacional para a Proteção de todas as pessoas contra o desaparecimento forçado, definido pelo direito internacional como crime contra a humanidade e cujo texto entrou em vigor em 2010. Embora o Brasil seja um dos países signatários da Convenção da ONU⁶, assim como da Convenção Interamericana sobre o Desaparecimento Forçado de Pessoas⁷, até o momento não conta com legislação para a tipificação do crime.

Dados do Mapa dos Desaparecidos no Brasil, produzido pelo Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, mostram que o perfil da pessoa desaparecida é marcado basicamente por homens (62,8%), adolescentes e jovens (53,5%), negros (54,3%), que desaparecem entre sexta e domingo – o mesmo perfil das vítimas de homicídio.

2 FERREIRA, Letícia Carvalho de Mesquita. De problema de família a problema social: notas etnográficas sobre o desaparecimento de pessoas no Brasil contemporâneo. Anuário Antropológico [online], v. 38, n. 1, 2013.

3 CARNEIRO, Eliana Faleiros Vendramini. Pessoas desaparecidas: uma análise crítica sobre a política criminal do Estado. 2022. 155 f. Tese (Doutorado em Direito) – Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2022. Disponível em: <https://tede2.pucsp.br/handle/handle/30904>. Acesso em: 23 abr. 2024.

4 CARNEIRO, Eliana Vendramini. Pessoas desaparecidas: uma análise crítica sobre a política criminal do Estado. Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. Tese de Doutorado. São Paulo, 2022.

5 Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública. Mapa dos desaparecidos no Brasil. Disponível em: <https://publicacoes.forumseguranca.org.br/server/api/core/bitstreams/91de3f95-67de-410a-9fb7-ce0227d248cb/content>

6 Regulamentado através do Decreto 8.767, de 11 de maio de 2016. Disponível em: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2016/decreto/d8767.htm

7 Regulamentada através do Decreto 8.766, de 11 de maio de 2016. Disponível em https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2016/decreto/d8766.htm

Uma rápida busca no Google indica a existência de cemitérios clandestinos para a desova de corpos por organizações criminosas em cidades dos estados do Mato Grosso⁸, Bahia⁹, Rio Grande do Sul¹⁰, Pará¹¹, São Paulo¹², Rio de Janeiro¹³, Ceará¹⁴, dentre outros. Não à toa, pesquisa recente do Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública e do Datafolha, intitulada Pesquisa de Vitimização e Percepção sobre Violência e Segurança Pública¹⁵, apontou que, entre julho de 2023 e junho de 2024, 8% da população brasileira com 16 anos de idade ou mais, em média, declarou que tinha conhecimento da existência de “cemitérios clandestinos” nas cidades em que moravam. Isso equivalia, em 2024, a cerca de 14,2 milhões de pessoas. Ainda segundo a pesquisa, esse percentual é ainda mais significativo entre os moradores de capitais e entre moradores de municípios com mais de 500 mil habitantes, quando 17% dos residentes nessas localidades declararam conhecer cemitérios ilegais. Diante do crescimento expressivo dos registros de desaparecimentos no Brasil, especialmente em regiões marcadas por elevadas taxas de homicídio e por disputas de organizações criminosas, torna-se urgente reconhecer que essa dinâmica pode estar ocultando uma face ainda mais perversa da criminalidade: a execução seguida da ocultação de cadáver. A ausência de uma legislação específica que tipifique o desaparecimento forçado como crime dificulta o enfrentamento institucional ao problema, contribuindo para a invisibilização das vítimas e para o sofrimento das famílias que, sequer, tem a possibilidade de enfrentar o luto. Aprovar o PL 6.240/2013, que tramita há mais de uma década no Congresso Nacional e tipifica o crime de desaparecimento forçado, incluindo-o como crime hediondo, é medida indispensável para romper com a naturalização do desaparecimento e assegurar o direito à memória, à verdade e à justiça.

Diante do crescimento expressivo dos registros de desaparecimentos no Brasil, especialmente em regiões marcadas por elevadas taxas de homicídio e por disputas de organizações criminosas, torna-se urgente reconhecer que essa dinâmica pode estar ocultando uma face ainda mais perversa da criminalidade: a execução seguida da ocultação de cadáver.

8 <https://record.r7.com/cidade-alerta/policia-encontra-cemiterio-clandestino-de-facciao-criminosa-no-mato-grosso-23112023/>

9 <https://noticias.r7.com/bahia/balanco-geral-ba/balanco-geral-especial/videos/exclusivo-descobertas-ossadas-em-cemiterio-clandestino-em-simoes-filho-ba-31032018/>

10 <https://g1.globo.com/rs/rio-grande-do-sul/noticia/2019/08/22/cemiterio-clandestino-em-porto-alegre-teria-cerca-de-100-corpos-enterrados-segundo-mp.ghtml>

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12 <https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/sudeste/sp/cemiterio-clandestino-em-sao-paulo-pelo-menos-14-ossadas-sao-encontradas/>

13 <https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2025/07/14/policia-encontra-cemiterio-clandestino.ghtml>

14 <https://g1.globo.com/ce/ceara/noticia/2020/10/30/policia-investiga-cemiterio-clandestino-utilizado-por-facciao-criminosa-para-torturar-e-enterrar-rivais-em-fortaleza.ghtml>

15 <https://publicacoes.forumseguranca.org.br/items/a8c8bf9d-848d-46ca-ba35-28e840b9914d>

Exhibit 17

Brazil has 31 'powerful' factions, and CV is only absent from 5 states.

 noticias.uol.com.br/cotidiano/ultimas-noticias/2025/11/07/faccoes-criminosas-brasil-relatorio.htm

Eduarda Esteves

November 7, 2025

A mapping by ABIN (Brazilian Intelligence Agency) reveals that Brazil has 31 criminal factions with the potential to affect the security of states. Among these criminal groups, three have national reach: PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital), CV (Comando Vermelho), and TCP (Terceiro Comando Puro).

How CV expanded across Brazil

The expansion of Comando Vermelho began in 2013. That year, the faction was present in only four states, in addition to Rio de Janeiro, where it originated. The ABIN (Brazilian Intelligence Agency) report shows that CV operated in Pará, Tocantins, Rondônia, and Santa Catarina. Currently, the group has expanded its operations and is only not active in five states: Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul, and São Paulo.

Gaps left by the PCC and leadership transfers are fueling the faction's growth. The general coordinator of situational analysis at ABIN (Brazilian Intelligence Agency), Pedro de Souza Mesquita, stated that with the expansion of the São Paulo-based faction into other countries, the CV (Comando Vermelho) realized there were territories that could be occupied in other states. Furthermore, Mesquita explained that when prisoners are taken to other states, they seek other regions to operate in, organize themselves, and then return to Rio de Janeiro.

CV allied itself with local groups and created a network for supplying drugs and weapons. Over the years, Comando Vermelho began to ally itself with factions from other states that were facing the advance of PCC. "So, it [CV] begins to offer these groups a network of logistical access to weapons and drugs, a much more decentralized chain of command than the São Paulo faction," assesses the coordinator of Abin. He also mentions that the group also offers the advantage of being able to hide in communities in Rio de Janeiro.

Comando Vermelho is involved in all clashes between criminal factions in the country. Mesquita also mentions that the expansion of CV consolidated in 2024, becoming one of the

main challenges to national security. The assessment was made during a meeting on November 5th at the Joint Committee for the Control of Intelligence Activities of the Federal Senate.

*We have clashes between organized groups in Brazil, and they all involve Comando Vermelho (Red Command). There is no clash between criminal organizations today that doesn't involve CV.***General Coordinator of Current Affairs Analysis at ABIN, Pedro de Souza Mesquita**

Exhibit 18

Families Of Slain Brazilian Police Officers Ask For Tougher Penalties

 npr.org/2015/02/20/387822909/families-of-slain-brazilian-police-officers-ask-for-tougher-penalties

Lulu Garcia-Navarro

February 20, 2015

[The Americas](#)

By

There's been a lot of news about police brutality in Brazil. But what is less known is the difficult situation for cops in Brazil. Unlike in the U.S., those who kill cops don't get harsher penalties.

KELLY MCEVERS, HOST:

Police in Brazil have a reputation as some of the most brutal and lethal in the world. Human rights groups estimate they're responsible for thousands of deaths a year. But police in Brazil are also a common target. Each year hundreds are killed, often in revenge slayings. Now the families of slain officers are demanding the government do more to punish their killers. NPR's South America correspondent, Lourdes Garcia-Navarro, reports.

LOURDES GARCIA-NAVARRO, BYLINE: Carine Xavier is wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with an image of her father on the job. He's staring intimidatingly into the camera holding a weapon. Underneath is the date of Jorge Henrique Xavier's birth and death. He was a military policeman working one of the toughest beats - the complex of favelas or shantytowns of Alemão in Rio de Janeiro. But he wasn't killed there. He was gunned-down a few months ago as was walking home from the convenience store in the rural city of Mage where he lived, not far from Rio.

CARINE XAVIER: (Foreign language spoken).

GARCIA-NAVARRO: "I got there just after he was killed," Carine tells me. "I didn't want to see him dead. I wanted to remember him smiling, happy."

C. XAVIER: (Foreign language spoken).

GARCIA-NAVARRO: "The only thing I held was his hand as I said goodbye. I said, father go with God," she says. There's actually a video of the moment the 54-year-old was murdered, which was caught by security cameras.

(SOUNDBITE OF GLOBO TV REPORT)

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: (Foreign language spoken).

GARCIA-NAVARRO: It made the news. In this Globo TV report, you can see three men pumping bullets into his prone (ph) body. The motive for the murder isn't clear, but his daughters say Jorge Henrique was trying to stop drug gangs from setting up shop in his neighborhood. Nathalia Xavier, Jorge Henrique's older daughter, says they want justice now.

NATHALIA XAVIER: (Foreign language spoken).

GARCIA-NAVARRO: "There are many families with the same problem with the same cause. There have been too many killings," she says. "It's been terrible. There are so many policemen dying," she says. The numbers of total cop killings across Brazil are unclear, mostly because official statistics don't count off-duty deaths like Jorge Henrique Xavier's, but at least 87 policemen were killed in 2014 in Rio State alone, say advocacy groups. Other groups, like the police union, say the number is triple that. The families of the dead cops have now joined forces. They want tougher penalties for cop killers. At the main police headquarters in Alemao, where Jorge Henrique Xavier worked, officers wear bulletproof vests and are heavily armed. It's a sign of the tensions here. Flavia Louzada is a military policewoman who also works in Alemao.

FLAVIA LOUZADA: (Foreign language spoken).

GARCIA-NAVARRO: "Our salaries are low," she says, "our work schedule is inhumane. Conditions are precarious, and when a policeman dies," she says, "the family is completely forgotten." So she founded a group called Policeman's Lives Are Sacred As All Lives Are, which has united the families of dead policeman. She says, you don't get harsher sentences in Brazil if you kill a cop, unlike in the U.S., and the government here treats the families of fallen cops badly.

LOUZADA: (Foreign language spoken).

GARCIA-NAVARRO: "The families face a lot of bureaucracy to get their financial rights, like compensation," she says.

LOUZADA: (Foreign language spoken).

GARCIA-NAVARRO: "The bullet doesn't only kill a policeman," she says. "It kills a whole family."

IGNACIO CANO: They live in difficult circumstances and the job is not very valued.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: That's Ignacio Cano, an expert in police violence in Rio. He says police officers are often poor themselves, so they live in the same marginal communities rife with gangs, which makes them targets. But Cano says main reason so many police are killed is because of how violent they are. On average, police in Brazil kill six people a day, according to human rights groups, and often in murky circumstances. And then the criminal groups fight back.

CANO: We have a very excessive use of force and many of these are revenge killings. So police do carry out revenge killings. And criminal groups, when they recognize a police officer off-duty, they execute him for the same reason.

GARCIA-NAVARRO: And that, he says, taps into something broader here than the battle between the police and the drug gangs. He says the police act extra judicially because there is no faith in the criminal justice system. Cano says that statistics show that out of a hundred homicides, less than eight result in a sentence against the perpetrators.

CANO: Up to 44 percent of the population in Brazil supports the idea that killing a criminal is the way to deal with crime.


GARCIA-NAVARRO: Back at the house of the daughters of the slain police officer, I'm shown a picture of a bloody man slumped in a corner of a room. They tell me it's one of the alleged perpetrators of their father's murder. When I ask how he died, they say they don't know. News reports say it was unclear who killed him or why. Lourdes Garcia-Navarro, NPR News, Mage.

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Exhibit 19

Expert discusses PCC threats against authorities.

 [cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/sudeste/sp/especialista-fala-sobre-ameacas-do-pcc-contra-autoridades](https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/sudeste/sp/especialista-fala-sobre-ameacas-do-pcc-contra-autoridades)

October 24, 2025

A joint operation by the São Paulo Public Prosecutor's Office and the Civil Police uncovered plans by the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) to assassinate authorities working to combat organized crime. Investigations revealed that the criminals even rented a house less than a kilometer from the residence of one of the targets.

Among the targets of the criminal group was Lincoln Gakiya, whose family was monitored by the criminals. The faction's actions demonstrate an escalation in the audacity of organized crime, which seeks to intimidate the authorities responsible for confronting it.

Protection of authorities

The case exposes the vulnerability of authorities working to combat organized crime. Investigations point to the need to strengthen protection structures for public officials, both during their service and after they leave their posts.

Read more

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The incident occurs after the execution of former police chief Rui Ferraz in Praia Grande, highlighting a pattern of attacks against people who have worked to combat organized crime. The situation has generated concern among public safety professionals, who fear for their physical safety and that of their families.

Combating organized crime

Experts advocate for the creation of a national agency to combat organized crime, integrating different institutions such as the police and the Public Prosecutor's Office. This measure aims to strengthen the fight against criminal organizations and protect the authorities involved in this work.

The investigation that uncovered the PCC's plans was conducted by police officers from DEINTER 8, in the Presidente Prudente region, who carried out meticulous investigative work. The case demonstrates the importance of investments in intelligence and infrastructure for the effective fight against organized crime.

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Exhibit 20

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Is Brazil on the verge of becoming a narco-state?



REUTERS

Camilla Veras Mota >

From BBC News Brazil in São Paulo

November 11, 2025

Reading time: 13 min

The year 2025 has been prolific in events that reinforce the diagnosis that organized crime has gained power and influence in Brazil.

The assassination of a former police chief in São Paulo, the death of a PCC informant by military police at Guarulhos airport, the expansion of the São Paulo group's fintech businesses on Faria Lima Avenue, the forced exodus of residents from a village in Ceará amidst a war between two factions, the exchange of gang members from other regions of the country in the Penha and Alemão complexes in Rio de Janeiro, evidenced by the deadliest police operation in the country's history, are just some of the high-profile cases that have led some Brazilians to question whether the country is heading towards becoming a "narco-state".

The term has been appearing in social media posts, in the speeches of commentators, and by some authorities.

BBC News Brazil posed the question to seven researchers in the fields of sociology and public safety. The answer, as one might

expect given the topic, is not simple.

In general, experts say that it is not possible to speak of a narco-state when discussing Brazil because the term does not describe the phenomena observed in the country.

There is no precise scientific definition, but the general idea would be of a nation where crime appropriates the structure of the State and makes it function in service of the drug industry — which is not the case when talking about Brazil and practically no other country, emphasize the sources interviewed by BBC News Brazil.

"That term is a bit of an exaggeration," says American researcher Benjamin Lessing, who has been studying criminal organizations in Latin America for over a decade.

"It's difficult to find an example, because what would a narco-state even be? If the State itself were fully engaged in drug trafficking, it wouldn't be a State...", he argues.

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In his opinion, the case of Venezuela would be the closest to the definition at present, but only if the accusation made by figures such as US President Donald Trump, regarding the involvement of state agents—in this case, members of the Armed Forces—in drug trafficking, were proven, which has not been the case so far.

In Lessing's opinion, there would also be possible specific historical cases, such as that of Panama between 1983 and 1989, when the country was governed by Manuel Noriega, who was directly involved in drug trafficking.

Or the situation in Mexico during the 1970s and 80s, under the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which "didn't manage drug trafficking, but regulated, let's say, the cartels." "The PRI managed to maintain peace between the cartels for a while by kind of managing the market," Lessing assesses.

The sources interviewed for this report emphasize that the word "narco-state" is more of a term that has been circulating in the press and in public debate, sometimes with political intentions, than a concept discussed among those who research criminal organizations.

This does not mean, however, that there is no worrying increase in organized crime in the country, nor that these factions have infiltrated politics.

Not by chance, violence is now seen as the main problem in the country by most Brazilians, topping the list of concerns for 30% of respondents in the most recent Genial/Quaest survey, far ahead of social problems (18%) and the economy (16%). It should be one

of the major issues discussed in the 2026 presidential elections.

So how do we characterize what we see in Brazil?

Experts argue that criminal groups have a "parasitic" and sometimes "symbiotic" relationship with the State, without, however, intending to replace it.

These are two powers that coexist, they say, often sharing the so-called monopoly of violence, or the prerogative to use violent means to maintain order or prevent crime—which, in theory, should belong solely to the State.

"In Brazil, and in many other countries around the world, I work with the idea that there are coexisting power regimes, different sovereignties, and that the State does not have a monopoly on force and justice, a fundamental condition of state hegemony," says Gabriel Feltran, research director at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and full professor at Sciences Po in Paris.

"But that doesn't mean a narco-state," he adds, who is the author of *Brothers: A History of the PCC*.



A portrait of the expansion of crime.

It is within this context of a "duopoly of violence"—of the State and of crime—that many researchers analyze and explain the growth of power exercised by criminal organizations.

Two indicators reveal the current situation in Brazil: the business dealings of organized crime—along with the billions of dollars it has begun to move—and the territorial expansion of criminal factions.

Cocaine trafficking today represents a small fraction of the estimated annual revenue of criminal organizations. It amounts to R\$15 billion out of a total of R\$348 billion, according to a recent study by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security (FBSP).

After enriching themselves through drug trafficking in the 1990s and 2000s, criminal organizations have diversified their activities and sources of income in recent years. Cybercrimes and cell phone thefts, for example, have proven to be an extremely lucrative business, generating R\$ 186.6 billion per year.

Legal markets, initially used for money laundering, have also proven profitable, moving R\$ 146.8 billion per year, according to figures from FBSP.

The financial growth of criminal factions occurred in parallel with their expansion throughout the national territory—and even internationally. After dominating communities in Rio de Janeiro and the outskirts of São Paulo, CV and PCC went beyond their original borders in search of control over both cocaine trafficking routes and drug sales points.

In this process of expansion, they grew through their own ventures, recruiting members across the country, or in association with local groups.

According to a survey released in 2024 by the National Secretariat for Penal Policies (Senappen), linked to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP), there are currently 88 criminal organizations spread throughout the country.

Some of them exert territorial control over the communities in which they are present: they monitor who enters and leaves, impose rules of conduct, and punish those who do not follow the rules.

Around 31 million Brazilians live in conditions like these, in areas dominated by gangs, according to a recent survey conducted by Datafolha at the request of the Brazilian Forum on Public Security.

This represents 19% of the population, 5 percentage points higher than in 2024 — a jump that gives an idea of the extent of the problem's progression.

The percentage is not only high by Brazilian standards. It is probably the highest observed in Latin America, says Benjamin Lessing, a professor at the University of Chicago.

In a study he and other colleagues recently conducted using data from Latinobarómetro (one of the largest public opinion surveys conducted in the region), the result was even worse, reaching about 26% of Brazil's population, somewhere between 50.6 million and 61.6 million people.

This was the highest percentage among 18 Latin American countries, including places known for the high penetration of the drug industry, such as El Salvador, Colombia, and Mexico, where the estimated proportion of the population living in areas dominated by criminal organizations was 9%.



GETTY IMAGES

| Cocaine originating from Brazil seized in Hong Kong in 2021: factions like the PCC have become internationalized in the last decade.

Brazilian mafias?

Lessing notes that the 9% figure may be an underestimate, due to the way the questions were formulated in Spanish to those interviewed by Latinobarometer—meaning the proportion of people living under the control of criminal organizations in those countries is possibly higher.

Nevertheless, he says he is "convinced" that Brazil is a leader in this worrying statistic, known among scholars of the subject as "criminal governance."

The explanation lies in Brazil's very particular characteristics when it comes to criminal organizations, including the fact that the country is not a drug producer, but a transit point.

"In this faction model, you are combining criminal governance with drug retail, whereas in Central America this drug retail market is not as strong," observes the sociologist.

"When you're selling drugs there at the 'drug den,' you have a lot of incentive to provide for the government. You want everyone there to like you more than the police. Just controlling crime won't prevent the police from coming in. And when the police come in, you want people to protect you, and for them to protect you, you have to earn their loyalty," he argues.

This was one of the research topics of sociologist Eduardo Dyna during his master's degree at the São Paulo State University (Unesp) a few years ago.

He studied the dynamics of protection, security, and conflict management of the PCC in the outskirts of São Paulo to understand the relationship between the faction's actions and the sense of security reported by some residents of these areas.

Dyna, who grew up on the outskirts of Osasco, chose the theme after encountering, in 2021, while taking her grandfather to the doctor, one of the banners that the faction had spread throughout areas of São Paulo and the metropolitan region with a warning to motorcyclists: "No wheelies or doing wheelies. Subject to beatings. We will not tolerate these things in the community."

"Those noisy motorcycle stunts are something nobody likes, and the PCC has banned those kinds of incidents," explains the researcher.

This is a practical example of how "criminal governance" manifests itself, an expression also used by the sociologist.



"It's forbidden to do wheelies and wheelies. Subject to beatings. We will not tolerate these things in the community, etc.": a warning attributed to the PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital, a Brazilian criminal organization) was spread in some areas on the outskirts of São Paulo and the metropolitan region.

Now pursuing his doctorate at the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar), Dyna is focusing on the internal contradictions of the São Paulo-based faction. On one hand, there's the "original" PCC, which, in a way, brought order to the outskirts of São Paulo. On the other, there's the business-oriented PCC, "from Faria Lima," more guided by market logic, a result of the faction's enrichment.

"The PCC has accumulated a lot of capital, a lot of money, and has also gone through a process of internationalization. All of this

produces forms of internal reorganization within the faction," observes the researcher.

"How can we understand a criminal organization like the PCC, which produces order in the outskirts of São Paulo, but is killing indigenous people in Roraima? It's the same organization, but the interests, due to this geographical region, are different," he adds.

In this sense, sociologist Rodrigo Ghiringhelli de Azevedo, a member of the Brazilian Forum on Public Security, points out that the national expansion of criminal factions in the last decade has given rise to a large network connecting different illegal businesses.

He cites everything from illegal mining, occupation of indigenous lands and illegal logging to infiltration of the fuel market and "corruption at the local level," with the involvement of criminal groups in the provision of services such as garbage collection and public transport, and the diversion of funds to finance election campaigns.

"This is perhaps an important new development for us to understand what is happening. These illicit markets have been connecting, and as they have been connecting, they have evidently increased the power of these groups and their capacity for influence in a number of sectors," says Azevedo, who is also a professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS).

"I would not, of course, call Brazil a narco-state. I think we are very far from that," says the sociologist. He assesses, however, that it is possible to speak of the presence of a "diffuse narco-state," which does not have control over institutions at the federal level, but which appears in specific examples and on a smaller scale—in cities and regions, for example.

"To what extent do these groups already have significant influence in local parliaments, where many urbanization issues are decided and councilors are elected, and also in state parliaments?" asks Azevedo.

"To what extent does this influence go, and to what extent is a sector of the political system already co-opted and working, in a certain sense, to boost and enhance these illicit activities? This is something that is clearly worrying."

The researcher does not point to any specific location, but states that in areas of Rio de Janeiro, such as the Baixada Fluminense, the territorial dominance of factions "causes this dynamic of organized crime to be very connected to the political and electoral dynamics, influencing electoral choices and establishing campaign financing relationships."

"So, it seems to me that Rio de Janeiro today has a more evident expression," he points out.

In his view, this process has even brought some factions, such as Comando Vermelho and Primeiro Comando da Capital, closer to what are known as "mafia organizations."

"They don't control the state apparatus, as a narco-state would, but they have considerable influence through corruption and the co-opting of personnel, both in public security and within Parliament and the Executive branch," he explains.



COLLECTION OF THE INSTITUTO MÃE CRIOLA

'Robbery in the lowlands': a message from a gang in Belém instructs members not to commit robberies in the community area, in an expression of 'criminal governance'.

What is behind the rise of the factions?

How did Brazil get to this point?

The increase in drug consumption in the country is one of the factors, already pointed out by Lessing as one of the motivators for territorial domination by the factions.

He also mentions the PCC's drive for national expansion, which ultimately led to the emergence of local factions that rejected the arrival of the São Paulo-based group and, in turn, also gave CV the opportunity to create a network of local alliances and grow nationally.

In the researcher's view, the State ended up facilitating this process, and that is another important element in the explanation.

"This is a thesis that I support in my book [in production], I think that in several dimensions the State ends up helping to spread the factions on the street," says the researcher.

One example would be the mass incarceration policy practiced for decades in Brazil.

Unlike what is observed in other countries heavily affected by organized crime, in Brazil the main groups emerged within the prison system. The CV (Comando Vermelho) in Rio de Janeiro in the 1970s, in a prison on Ilha Grande, and the PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital) in the Taubaté Detention Center, in São Paulo, in 1993.

Furthermore, the transfer of gang leaders to prisons in other states and to the federal prison system ended up generating an exchange that expanded and strengthened organized crime.

"The [criminal group] Família do Norte was born in the federal system, from contact between prisoners [from the Amazon] and Comando Vermelho," Lessing illustrates.

Once on the streets, the factions find fertile ground to proliferate in areas marked by vulnerability, such as urban peripheries, notes Eduardo Dyna.

The sociologist points out that these are places where the State is present with discipline and repression, but often absent when it comes to rights to education and health and the provision of infrastructure.

"This vacuum will be filled by someone, sometimes by a social movement, sometimes by a political party, sometimes by a church, sometimes by criminal organizations," the researcher assesses.

Within this context of expanding crime, Benjamin Lessing points out with concern that the State does not prioritize recovering territories currently controlled by factions.

In this respect, he draws attention to the recent case in Rio de Janeiro, of the police operation that killed 121 people in the Penha and Alemão complexes, an operation whose objective was not to free these regions from the control of the Comando Vermelho, but to execute dozens of arrest warrants.

"I think this is very revealing. The state is not trying to regain a monopoly on violence—the most basic thing we all think states do or should do," he points out.

"But nobody is doing that, neither the right nor the left. Nobody is saying, 'We have to establish a state presence in this place.' As if it were impossible, or undesirable, or not as important as arresting criminals," Lessing adds.

Experts like Dyna argue that the expansion of organized crime in the country is worrying and that authorities should prioritize tackling the problem, but they emphasize that the use of misleading terms, such as "narco-state," can be counterproductive in the discussion and may end up being used as tools by political groups to achieve their goals.

The scientific coordinator of the Center for Violence Studies at USP (University of São Paulo), Sérgio Adorno, agrees, and compares the use of the term to that of "narcoterrorist." The expression has circulated both in the US, with the Trump administration, and in Brazil, especially with right-wing governors, such as Claudio Castro of Rio de Janeiro or Tarcísio de Freitas of São Paulo. In Congress, the opposition is working to include this word in legislation.

"The moment you classify these acts as terrorist acts, you transform this problem into a national defense problem. And then it becomes a problem for the Armed Forces, responsible for defending the territory and sovereignty—which is very dangerous," he opines.

The writer and political analyst João Paulo Charleaux, who dedicates himself to the study of international law of armed conflict, makes a similar analysis and adds the word "war" among the terms sometimes misused in the debate surrounding public security.

"It's a rhetorical device that's not just rhetorical, because it has a practical effect. It gives the police the feeling that they can act as if

Exhibit 21

What is it like to live under the iron law of Comando Vermelho (which continues exactly as it did before the mega police operation in Rio)?

In 2020, no resident of the [Penha Complex](#), in the northern part of Rio de Janeiro, was allowed to wear the uniform of Chelsea, the English [football team](#).

At that time, Three, a British communications company, was the team's main sponsor. And the jerseys prominently displayed the number 3. But the number three is strictly forbidden in the favelas controlled by [Comando Vermelho](#) (CV), as it is associated with Terceiro Comando Puro (TCP), their biggest rival in the fight for territory in Rio.

Rules like these, imposed by the faction created in Rio de Janeiro, govern the lives of millions of people who live in communities controlled by CV drug traffickers, not only where the criminal group originated, but also in other states where it has expanded throughout the country.

The CV's law dictates even how to speak. Residents of communities controlled by the faction in Rio say that one of the rules is that you can't say "a gente" – for CV members, only those on the enemy side speak that way. In CV areas, it's "nóis". If you get it wrong, you get a scolding and are suspected of having ties to the TCP.

In areas controlled by the CV (Comando Vermelho) in Rio, residents have no option but to pay R\$ 130 for a gas cylinder – the price is around R\$ 90 where commerce is not controlled by crime. Internet costs vary depending on the contracted speed, ranging from R\$ 70 to R\$ 130.

According to residents interviewed for this report, those who don't pay are directly targeted by drug traffickers. One resident of a favela in the South Zone controlled by the CV (Comando Vermelho) recounted how an acquaintance was beaten for not paying for gas and was expelled from the community.

Most residents don't pay for electricity. Ride-hailing vehicles can't go up the hill – for that service, there are motorcycle taxis parked right at the entrance to the favela. Or vans, authorized by the drug traffickers, who profit from them.

Fighting is also not allowed – only CV members fight or resolve conflicts. In cases of domestic violence, if there is proof that the man hit the woman, the "deal" with the drug traffickers can result in beatings with sticks and expulsion from the favela, or, in more serious cases, murder.

Robberies are prohibited – and offenders generally have one of their hands cut off by the CV (Comando Vermelho, a Brazilian criminal organization). If someone still insists, they can be "thrown into the tire" (thrown inside tires and incinerated). Looking at a "bandit's woman" is also serious, punishable by physical assault or death.

At [funk](#) parties , if someone sprays lança-perfume (an illegal inhalant drug) on a drug dealer, they will face retaliation. If you bump into one of them – or try to confront them if they bump into you – you might get a scolding.

If the chaos persists, the CV resorts to torture and aggression. The complaint from the Public Prosecutor's Office of the State of Rio de Janeiro (MPRJ), resulting from police investigations and which formed the basis of the operation in the Penha and Alemão complexes, includes images, for example, of a woman inside a bucket of ice, with a caption accusing her of being a "troublemaker" and "causing trouble at the dance." Another photo shows a man on the ground, apparently being assaulted.

"Physical aggression serves not only as punishment, but also as a visible warning to other members of the community, reinforcing the authority of the drug traffickers and the vulnerability of the residents," explains researcher Julia Quirino, a specialist in defense and security, in her book *Panóptico Criminal* , in which she analyzes how the CV governs the favelas under its control in Rio de Janeiro.

"These extreme forms of punishment amplify the climate of fear and submission that drug traffickers seek to instill in communities."

The rules for [women](#) can be even more restrictive. Extramarital affairs, especially when the "victims" are CV members, can be fatal.

"The fact that there is a large quantity of weapons inside the favelas adds another layer of violence to the dynamics related to betrayals and jealousy," explains sociologist and anthropologist Carolina Grillo, coordinator of the Study Group on New Illegalities at UFF (Geni/UFF).

"Situations that would normally culminate in divorce can end in [femicide](#) ."

Furthermore, residents are prohibited from maintaining relationships with members of other factions or with police officers.

On social media, residents also need to be careful about what they post.

In 2020, in the Rocinha favela, dominated by the CV (Comando Vermelho), after a video leaked showing John Wallace da Silva Viana, aka Johny Bravo, the favela's leader,

surrounded by rifles, machine guns, and pistols, the drug traffickers swore to kill those responsible for the publication.

"Whoever recorded the kids at the dance has signed a contract with death, this thing won't stay like this, and recording at Rocinha dances will be prohibited, SIGNED: TEAM BRAVO," they wrote on a Twitter profile, which today is X.

Although it is difficult to control the use of cell phones, even for drug dealers, residents know that they cannot film or photograph the drug den or the cars that pass through the community with armed men.

According to Quirino, the barricades, which impede free movement within the favelas, also serve to demarcate territory – there, the faction members are in charge. It is up to the residents to respect the rules and always stay in line.

Under the pretext of needing to contain the expansion of the faction, more than 2,500 military and civil police officers surrounded and entered the Penha and Alemão complexes in the northern zone of Rio. In total, 121 people died, including four police officers. It was the deadliest police operation in Brazilian history.

Human rights organizations say it was a massacre. The governor of Rio, Cláudio Castro (PL), denied this, saying the operation was a success and that he plans to carry out new operations after opinion polls showed significant popular support.

In a Senate hearing on Wednesday (November 5th), the undersecretary of intelligence for the Rio Military Police, Daniel Ferreira, said that the operation had a "minimal" impact on dismantling the CV.

Residents also report that there have been no changes in the drug trafficking routine after the mega-operation. The day after the deaths, while the bodies were still being removed from the woods, there were drug traffickers armed with rifles in the community.

This doesn't only happen in the Penha or Alemão favela complexes. In other areas controlled by the CV (Comando Vermelho), reports indicate that criminals have become even more heavily armed – and now even carry explosive devices on their belts, in case the police show up.

The 10 commandments of CV

According to the Map of Armed Groups, by the Fogo Cruzado Institute and Geni, in 2023, at least 18.2% of the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area was under the control of some armed

group – a 105% increase in 16 years. The CV (Comando Vermelho) controlled almost 52% of these territories.

Just like in prisons, where the faction originated, the CV – like any armed criminal group – establishes rules of coexistence within the favelas. In the 1980s, the criminal organization created a statute with ten commandments, widely known by residents of the communities under its control, researchers who study the faction, and authorities – and which all members follow to this day:

- Do not deny your homeland;
- Don't snitch [betray your friends];
- Do not covet your neighbor's wife;
- Do not accuse in vain;
- Do not conspire;
- To speak the truth, even if it costs one's own life;
- Being collective;
- To empower the less fortunate;
- Don't steal from other colleagues;
- Eliminate our enemies.

Residents or drug dealers who disregard these rules are punished by the group. And they are the ones who decide what penalties will be applied.

Although CV-controlled areas strictly adhere to these commandments, each favela has its own rules (and punishments), which vary according to the orders of the local leaders. For example, in CV-controlled areas where the leader is evangelical, other religions, such as Umbanda and Candomblé, are prohibited.

Eliana Souza, coordinator of the NGO Redes da Maré, says that the CV law is established to regulate daily life because other forms of authority are not present there.

"While in other parts of the city this regulation is handled by the State, in most favelas this doesn't exist," says Souza.

"The state acts there in a negligent and passive way. This ends up generating a process of territorial control by other actors. We are talking about basic services: education, garbage collection, occupation of public spaces."

With the state failing to provide protection, drug traffickers seize power. And they prevent residents from seeking institutional help when they need it – all the problems in the favela are solved by them.

"You can't gossip. That's one of the residents' biggest fears: the fear of being accused of being informants. So, they're very afraid to talk to journalists, or to file a police report about any violence they've suffered, even if it's a case of domestic violence," says Grillo.

"Often, in order to mediate their conflicts, since they are prevented from seeking help from the police, they end up seeking help from the drug traffickers themselves."

A resident of a favela in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro recounted a personal experience. She was terrified of the frequent harassment from a criminal, so she sought out his superior at the drug den. She received a promise that the man would not bother her again. And, in fact, he never harassed her again.

"The residents always appear either as complicit in the trafficking or as terrified victims. In most cases, these people watched these boys grow up. You know these people or their relatives," explains Souza.

"It's not a relationship of complete isolation; there are possibilities for dialogue and interaction, but residents have to live very cautiously."

A resident of Complexo do Alemão confirms Souza's account. He said he lost some acquaintances in the last police operation.

"I was born and raised here, I know all the rules by heart. And that's how it is for those who have lived here forever. You can live peacefully – in many ways – because we know who has the power. We know what we can and cannot do," the resident told the reporter.

"I never got involved with those things, so they never got involved with me. I also don't stop talking to colleagues who got involved just because of that."

The fear of being lured

At age 13, Silva already held a position in the CV's drug den in Vila Cruzeiro, one of the communities in the Penha Complex.

While his parents thought he was at school, the boy worked as a fireworks maker (someone who sets off fireworks when they see the police arriving in the favela). He learned to shoot and witnessed the murders of residents and drug traffickers – who were set on fire with tires, in locations far from their homes.

Silva's story, whose real name has been omitted from this report to protect his identity, helps to understand one of the main concerns of those who live in a favela dominated by drug trafficking. He left a life of crime in his teens, when his parents moved from Vila Cruzeiro.

"Residents live in a state of panic regarding the fear of raising their children in a favela environment. Not only because of the fear of shootings and armed violence, but also because of the fear of being recruited by drug traffickers," explains Grillo.

"It's difficult for residents, who have to leave early for work and return in the afternoon, to balance work with childcare, in order to keep them away from drug trafficking," he adds.

A 2024 study by the Fogo Cruzado institute, funded by UNICEF, the United Nations children's agency, assessed the impact of armed conflict on children's education.

In Rio de Janeiro alone, 58.4% of schools, with approximately 800,000 elementary and high school students, are located in areas controlled by armed groups. In 2022, there were more than 4,400 shootings in the vicinity of schools in the Rio metropolitan area.

During the major operation in October in the Penha and Alemão complexes, schools were closed for at least three days.

Fear of the police

On the morning of the operation, a resident of Penha told reporters that he had already started hearing gunshots at 6 a.m. He was unable to work that day, nor leave his home.

His house wasn't hit by any bullets – his neighbors, however, weren't so lucky. "I saw pictures of other houses broken into by police searching for someone. Others with many bullet holes," says the resident.

There is a consensus among experts and residents interviewed for this report that nothing disrupts the residents' routine more than police operations.

"Besides being subjected to the arbitrary control of drug traffickers, there is the possibility of a shootout erupting at any moment due to police operations, which are very frequent in CV-controlled areas," says Grillo.

"They had to incorporate into their daily lives the possibility of not going to work, of not taking their children to school, of lying on the floor at home. And these are very lethal operations."

According to Geni, in the last 17 years, 707 police interventions resulting in deaths were recorded in Greater Rio. In total, 2,936 people died, including 31 police officers.

"It's complicated. Since I've lived here since I was a child, I know how to differentiate between right and wrong. But if you stop to think about it... if the wrong side is so wrong, why does all this happen when they [the police] come here?", asks the resident of Penha.

"We don't feel sorry for those who were on the wrong path. We feel sorry for those who lose their homes, those whose cars are burned. We know that morally they rise up to do the right thing. But how can doing the right thing go so wrong in this way?"

During the operations in Alemão and Penha, residents reported seeing decapitated bodies and evidence of stabbings.

The Rio de Janeiro Public Prosecutor's Office (MPRJ) has launched an investigation to determine the cause of death in the operation in Rio and said it will review the body cameras of the officers. The Federal Public Prosecutor's Office has requested to monitor the proceedings.

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva stated that the operation was "disastrous," declared that there was "massacre," and said that the federal government can conduct an independent investigation of the facts.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes also demanded information from the Rio de Janeiro government to verify whether measures had been taken to reduce police lethality.

The government of Cláudio Castro (PL) denies that there were abuses and says that the action followed the principles of "legality, necessity, proportionality, moderation and expediency".

"The police cannot justify these atrocities because these armed groups do the same," says Souza.

"The State cannot, at any time, compare itself to the type of action carried out by the very people they want to combat, who are acting illegally. The State needs to be present in this confrontation in a different way."

Exhibit 22

Comando Vermelho: How the faction emerged and spread across Brazil

... [bbc.com/portuguese/articles/cx2p9re07p9o](https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/articles/cx2p9re07p9o)

October 29, 2025

How Comando Vermelho emerged and spread throughout Brazil



From then on, news came of new shootings and blocked roads throughout the city — chaos in Tijuca, buses blocking Riachuelo Street in the center of Rio de Janeiro.

Chaos erupted from the northern zone, between the Penha and Alemão complexes, the central stage of the operation, and spread throughout the entire city. Shops closed early, subways were packed, and at bus stops, passengers wished each other luck in their attempts to get home.

The most violent police operation in Rio de Janeiro's history aimed to execute one hundred arrest warrants and prevent the [territorial expansion of Comando Vermelho](#), the state's oldest criminal organization.

Civil police have so far counted 121 dead, including four police officers, more than 100 rifles seized, and 81 arrested. 2,500 agents from Rio de Janeiro's security forces have been assigned to the operation.

Human rights movements classify the operation as a massacre and question its effectiveness as a security policy. The large number of victims was also criticized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which said it was "horrified" by the operation in the favelas.

In recent years, the faction has once again expanded its territory. According to the Map of Armed Groups (a partnership between the Fogo Cruzado Institute and the Group for the Study of New Illegalities — GENI — and the Federal Fluminense University — UFF), Comando Vermelho was the only criminal organization to expand its territorial control in the state, while all others lost ground.

Between 2022 and 2023, the organization increased the areas under its control by 8.4% and regained the leadership it had lost to the militias in previous years. As a result, it came to account for 51.9% of the areas dominated by armed groups in the Rio Metropolitan Region.

Play video, "How Comando Vermelho emerged and spread throughout Brazil", Duration 8:0308:03

From creation to chaos

Nearly 50 years of history — and a military dictatorship in between — separate the creation of Comando Vermelho from this bloody day in Rio de Janeiro. Back in the 1970s, political prisoners were mixed with common criminals at the Cândido Mendes Penal Institute, on Ilha Grande, more than 100 kilometers from the capital.

Until then, with little or no formal education, the older inmates, most of whom were imprisoned there for bank robberies, were unaware of their rights. They learned about them through their interaction with political prisoners—mostly children of middle-class families—who began to mediate negotiations in search of better conditions.

"Comando Vermelho was born inside prisons, in the heart of the state. It was based on the coexistence with people imprisoned under the National Security Law. Initially, it was called the National Security Phalanx. Then it became the Red Phalanx. And, years later, the press would name it Comando Vermelho (CV)," explains sociologist Carolina Grillo, from UFF.

"It's not that the left-wing political prisoners organized it. They both had one thing in common: bank robbery. These crimes were considered matters of national security because resistance groups against the dictatorship robbed banks to finance political resistance. So, it gained a special status in the legislation, which meant that conventional bank robbers were sent to Ilha Grande," adds Jacqueline Muniz, from the Institute of Comparative Studies in Conflict Management of the Department of Public Security.

One of its main founders was William da Silva Lima, known as Professor. In his book *400 x 1 – a history of Comando Vermelho*, Lima recounts that the group emerged to organize the prison space, creating rules of coexistence.

When the Amnesty Law came into effect in 1979, the political prisoners were released, while the others remained there. The fight for social justice within the prison lost momentum without the former cellmates.

The members of the Red Phalanx then reorganized themselves in other ways. In 1980, they began their escapes: more than one hundred prisoners managed to escape from prison—to the despair of the bankers. With the money from the bank robberies, the Red Command invested in another sector: the sale of cocaine.

"At that time, in the 1980s, Colombia became a cocaine producer. And this caused changes in international trafficking routes. Brazil became a hub on the route to Europe, as it remains to this day," says Grillo.

Due to the illegal trade, CV members needed to protect their merchandise from attempted thefts by other groups.

"There's no way you can go to the police station and file a report because your drugs were stolen. Unlike private property, where you have a deed, invoice, and tax ID, crime requires weapons to secure deals and maintain possession of your illicit assets," Muniz states.

"There were dissensions and rivalries, territorial disputes. And those who started profiting were the arms dealers and police officers who also began supplying weapons. This created a demand within the police themselves to arm themselves more heavily to confront armed trafficking," Grillo adds.

In the 1990s, violence rates reached their worst peaks in Rio de Janeiro's history. In 1994, there were 64.8 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. To give you an idea, currently, that rate is 24.3 deaths in the state.

In an attempt to weaken Comando Vermelho, the government transferred its leaders to different prisons. The effect was the opposite: CV spread its ideals to other prisoners and gained even more strength to become the main criminal organization in Rio de Janeiro.

Expansion in modern times

From then on, CV would no longer be limited to the state of Rio.

"The Comando Vermelho operates like a franchise. There are several owners of favelas. No one has more or less power; it's a partnership. This is what allowed Comando Vermelho to grow nationally. This factional ideology allowed leaders from other states, initially, to become business partners in their factions," says journalist Rafael Soares, author of the book *Militiamen: How agents trained to combat crime began to kill in its service* .

According to him, in the last six years, Comando Vermelho has established a presence in 25 states—before that, the organization extended its dominion to only 10 states.

"A historical milestone in the nationalization of the PCC [Primeiro Comando da Capital] and CV was the federal prisons. This 'brilliant' idea of the federal government to transfer the major leaders of the PCC and CV to federal prisons in other states," criticizes Grillo.

The expansion of Comando Vermelho required new investments. Drug trafficking remains central to its activities, especially with its control of border areas, such as the Amazon, where the faction and the PCC are expanding their routes.

But the profits no longer come solely from drugs. According to a study by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security, organized crime moved approximately R\$ 146.8 billion in illegal markets for gold, fuel, beverages, and tobacco in 2022.

The way weapons are supplied has also changed. Until a few years ago, traffickers armed themselves primarily in two ways: through illegal sales from Paraguay, or through diversions from the national security forces themselves. Today, there are ways to assemble your own weapons—and illegal companies capable of producing them on a large scale.

"These are factories with state-of-the-art equipment, very expensive machines that cost up to half a million reais. They are 3D printers that work with metal and deliver ready-made parts. Because it is an industrial machine, they produce on a large scale," explains Bruno Langeani, senior consultant at the Sou da Paz Institute.

In August, the Federal Police found a clandestine weapons assembly factory in Rio das Pedras, in the western zone of Rio de Janeiro, and seized four 3D printers.

This is not the only new technology adopted by organized crime. On Tuesday, the CV demonstrated its firepower by using drones that dropped explosives during confrontations.

Another point highlighted by Langeani is the ease of finding parts for assembling these weapons. With the policies of relaxing gun control rules during Jair Bolsonaro's years in government, there was an explosion of factories in this sector.

"There was an economic incentive for rifle grip factories, for example. Before, they practically only sold to the police and the Armed Forces. So, it didn't make sense to have such an industry in Brazil. But after Bolsonaro, thousands of civilians bought rifles. And these people sometimes want to customize them, change the stock or grip," he says.

The ineffectiveness of the operations

The data shows that the state's most expensive and violent police operations have not achieved the expected results. While the Comando Vermelho (Red Command) advances across Rio de Janeiro state, it is precisely in the areas under its control that the police are most active—and where confrontations are most frequent.

According to the Map of Armed Groups, the chance of a territory dominated by drug trafficking experiencing clashes is 3.71 times greater than in areas controlled by militias. In almost 60% of the areas where clashes occur, there is police involvement.

"I can't see a direct link between the government acting to dismantle either the militias or the drug traffickers. We don't see the regression of an area that, once occupied, reverts to the State. What we have seen is them dominating a little more space, or fighting among themselves, but the government managing to say: 'This wasn't safe here, now it is again,' that doesn't happen. We only see this worsening and this change of command—the State can't regain control of areas that have been dominated for decades," concludes Terine Husek, research manager at the Fogo Cruzado Institute.

Map by Caroline Souza, BBC News Brazil Visual Journalism Team

Exhibit 23

Moraes sees CV infiltration in politics when ordering Bacellar's arrest.

 [cnnbrasil.com.br/politica/moraes-ve-infiltracao-do-cv-na-politica-ao-decretar-prisao-de-bacellar](https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/politica/moraes-ve-infiltracao-do-cv-na-politica-ao-decretar-prisao-de-bacellar)

December 3, 2025

Brazilian Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes stated that he sees strong infiltration of the Comando Vermelho (Red Command) in Rio de Janeiro politics when he ordered the [preventive detention of state deputy Rodrigo Bacellar \(União\)](#), president of the Rio de Janeiro Legislative Assembly (Alerj).

"As I have had the opportunity to express my views on the need for the uniform repression of crimes with interstate and international repercussions, one of the main characteristics of criminal organizations operating in the state of Rio de Janeiro, in addition to territorial dominance through the use of force, and the ability to corrupt public and political agents on a large scale," says the minister in the decision that ordered the arrest of the parliamentarian.

"It is the political infiltration that these groups have achieved in recent years, whether at the municipal, state, or federal level," the minister added.

Rodrigo Bacellar was preventively arrested by the Federal Police this Wednesday (3).

The legislator was the target of Operation Unha e Carne, which combats the actions of public agents involved in leaking confidential information that culminated in the obstruction of the investigation carried out within the scope of Operation Zargun, responsible for the arrest of state deputy Thiego Raimundo dos Santos Silva (MDB), known as TH Joias, in September.

In the decision ordering the arrest, Moraes also cites that the facts narrated by the Federal Police "are extremely serious" and indicate that Bacellar was actively obstructing investigations involving a criminal faction and actions against organized crime.

"Including influence within the state's Executive Branch, capable of increasing the risk of continued criminal activity and undue interference in investigations of the criminal organization," the minister emphasizes.

The Federal Police executed search and seizure warrants at the congressman's residence and at the Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro (Alerj).

In a statement, the congressman's defense denied that he acted to obstruct investigations into criminal factions or leaked information to targets of police operations. The lawyers also

stated that Bacellar did not commit any act that would justify a request for preventive detention.

According to his defense, the congressman was questioned by the Federal Police this afternoon and provided all the requested clarifications.

Exhibit 24

'Crime is intertwined in Brazil. We have the official state and the parallel state,' says Lula's campaign coordinator.



BBC NEWS BRAZIL

Leandro Prazeres

From BBC News Brazil in Brasilia

April 9, 2026

Reading time: 20 min

The political coordinator of President [Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's \(PT\) reelection campaign](#), the Minister of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, Wellington Dias (PT), said he recognizes that, in Brazil, the advance of [organized crime](#) has created "two" states.

"In Brazil today, we have the official state and the parallel state," Dias states in an interview with BBC News Brazil.

The minister's statement came amid the government's attempt to approve measures aimed at public safety . Polls indicate that this issue, along with health , is one of the main concerns of the Brazilian electorate at the moment .

At the end of March, for example, Lula signed the Anti-Gang Law , which, among other measures, increased penalties for leaders of criminal factions such as the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and the Comando Vermelho (CV).

Despite this, the government is still struggling to approve the Proposed Constitutional Amendment (PEC) on Public Security, officially presented in April 2025, but which has not yet been approved by the National Congress .

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Speaking to BBC News Brazil, Dias states that the government knows the issue is sensitive, that time is running out, and that the population has not yet felt the effects of actions in this area.

"There hasn't been enough time yet. The reduction in the feeling of insecurity has been very small. It's been very low (...) I believe it's likely that by the time of the elections, we'll have already achieved a better feeling."

He will be one of the main figures responsible for the political and party negotiations aimed at securing an unprecedented fourth presidential term for Lula. Dias governed Piauí for four terms and is considered behind the scenes to be one of Lula's most trusted ministers.