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Non-Detained

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW
IMMIGRATION COURT
880 Front Street, Suite 4240
San Diego, CA 92101

In the Matter of)	
)	
Christian Chacao)	File No. A 234-678-751
Carla de Oliveira)	File No. A 234-678-753
Henrique de Oliveira Chacao)	File No. A 234-678-752
)	
In Removal Proceedings)	

Immigration Judge: Simpson, Scott

Next Hearing Date: April 1, 2026 at 1:00 PM.

**RESPONDENTS' COUNTRY CONDITIONS IN SUPPORT OF ASYLUM AND
WITHHOLDING OF REMOVAL**

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Exhibit 1

**BRIEF EXPLANATION REGARDING ORGANIZED CRIME DOMINANCE,
STATE PROTECTION FAILURE AND HUMANITARIAN IMPLICATIONS
FOR PERSECUTED INDIVIDUALS IN BRAZIL**

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1. GENERAL CONTEXT OF ORGANIZED CRIME IN BRAZIL

Brazil faces one of the most complex and far-reaching criminal structures in the contemporary world. Criminal factions that initially emerged within the prison environment, such as the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC – First Command of the Capital), Comando Vermelho (CV – Red Command), and Primeiro Grupo Catarinense (PGC – First Catarinense Group), have transformed into illicit corporations with transnational reach, operating through multiple spheres: economic, political, institutional, and territorial (CC2; CC3; CC5).

As of 2024, more than 80 organized criminal groups (OCGs) exist in Brazil. The largest are the PCC, based in São Paulo, and the CV, based in Rio de Janeiro. Both operate throughout Brazil (CC3). The PCC has approximately 100,000 members operating in almost every Brazilian state as well as internationally. The CV has approximately 30,000 members, operating in about 20 Brazilian states and other Latin American countries. The majority of other OCGs are present in 3 states or less and generally ally with either the PCC or the CV (CC3).

The consolidation of these organizations results, to a large extent, from the historical negligence of the Brazilian State in understanding the entrepreneurial nature of organized crime. The PCC has expanded its presence to other South American countries and beyond to Africa and Europe, controlling several stages of the cocaine supply chain, and serving as the primary interlocutor for European criminal groups sourcing cocaine from Brazil, notably the Italian organized crime group 'Ndrangheta (CC5).

Organized crime exists on a large scale in Brazil. The PCC is a violent prison gang that controls the majority of illegal contraband and drugs coming into and out of prisons in São Paulo, and remains an organization of great interest to the government of Brazil and the police. The CV is Brazil's second largest criminal group with a presence in 23 of Brazil's states. It similarly has roots in the prison system, with a base in Rio de Janeiro. PCC, CV, and other similar groups participate in a variety of illicit markets in Brazil (CC2).

Violent crime remains a key concern for large parts of the country, with several large cities having high homicide rates. Conflicts between armed criminal factions competing for territorial control between each other and state security forces play a major role in driving homicide numbers (CC2). The national homicide rate in 2023 was around 18.5 homicides per 100,000 residents. In 2023, there were 37,639 homicides (CC2). Brazil had the seventh-highest crime rate in the world in 2020 with exceptionally high rates of violent crimes, and Brazil's homicide rate was 23.6 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020 (CC6).

Brazil is one of the 50 most dangerous countries in the world, and the third worst in Latin America, according to the Global Peace Index 2024. In this ranking, which lists the countries best placed in terms of safety, Brazil appears in position 131 (CC8).

2. THE TRANSNATIONAL EXPANSION AND CORPORATE NATURE OF THE FACTIONS

The Brazilian crime group Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) has expanded its presence in other South American countries and beyond in Africa and Europe, and controls several stages of the cocaine supply chain. The criminal landscape in Brazil is increasingly

fragmented and many smaller criminal groups now also operate in the cocaine trade, often specializing in logistics (CC5).

In Brazil, the organized crime group PCC reportedly dominates most of the international cocaine trafficking routes through Brazil to Europe and Africa, and appears to be the primary interlocutor for European groups sourcing cocaine supplies from Brazil, notably the Italian OCG 'Ndrangheta. The foremost traditional rival of the PCC, the Comando Vermelho, reportedly also has international trafficking links to source countries (CC5).

These major groups are in competition for the dominance of the drug trade in the area around the triple intersection of the Amazonian borders of Brazil, Colombia and Peru (CC5). This geographical expansion is not the result of chance, but of a sophisticated corporate strategy grounded in business models of management, logistics, and asset diversification.

The extent of these connections reveals that Brazilian organized crime is not limited to a factional structure but represents a clandestine economic system sustained by money laundering, institutional corruption, and the use of advanced financial technologies (CC5).

3. INSTITUTIONAL INFILTRATION AND SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION

As criminal factions advance unchecked across Brazil, the presence of organized crime in government offices, police forces, internal affairs departments, and on the payroll of the Brazilian state in general represents a silent and lethal threat. Brazil is witnessing not only the territorial expansion of the PCC and CV, as well as dozens of other regional criminal groups, but also a true systemic infiltration of factions that threatens the sovereignty of Brazilian institutions (CC10).

There are indications of possible infiltration of public agents into schemes orchestrated by organized crime and factions. Investigations reveal the possible participation of civil and military police officers, both in the illegal protection and execution of targets, exposing a level of co-optation that weakens the credibility and authority of the institutions responsible for guaranteeing public order (CC10).

The government did not always take credible steps to identify and punish officials who committed human rights abuses (CC1). This institutional infiltration is not limited to an

isolated incident of punctual corruption but constitutes an organic mechanism sustaining organized crime, which uses the State itself as an instrument of power perpetuation.

The practices described – bribery, cooptation of police officers, and manipulation of internal processes – indicate a collapse of the boundary between legality and illegality, in which the public structure becomes partially functional to the criminal structure (CC10).

4. TERRITORIAL CONTROL AND SYSTEMATIC HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Criminal factions and militias are increasingly present in Brazilian territory and are already part of the daily lives of at least 28.5 million people — or 19% of the country's population. The data was released by Datafolha following research commissioned by the Brazilian Forum for Public Security (FBSP). The results of the study were based on people who lived in close proximity to organized crime in their neighborhoods (CC9).

Compared to the previous year's data, the increase was five percentage points, when 14% of respondents stated they had some type of contact with criminal groups. At the time, the number represented 23 million Brazilians, about 5 million fewer than the current figure (CC9).

The territorial control exercised by groups such as the PCC, PGC, and CV imposes on the civilian population a system of coercive governance, in which citizens are subjected to threats, forced evictions, and summary executions. This scenario goes beyond common criminality, reaching the sphere of systematic human rights violations.

Those who report suffering from organized crime also claim to live with the presence of clandestine cemeteries in their neighborhood. Furthermore, they also mention the presence of "crack dens" in the areas where they frequent daily (CC9). Brazil has been experiencing a troubling pattern in which the apparent reduction in lethal violence may not reflect a genuine improvement in public safety. According to the Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security 2025, missing persons reports grew by 4.9% in 2024, totaling 81,873 cases nationwide, the highest number recorded since 2018, averaging roughly four reports filed with police every hour (CC4).

What makes this trend particularly alarming is its correlation with the territorial expansion of major criminal organizations. As groups like the PCC and Comando Vermelho consolidated power in new regions, often through alliances with local criminal networks, the states experiencing the steepest rises in disappearances were the same ones reporting declining homicide rates. Across the country, regions marked by intense disputes among criminal factions over drug trafficking and by high levels of police lethality have seen this same paradox, raising serious concerns that violence in these areas is being concealed rather than reduced (CC4).

The mechanism behind this concealment is well documented: criminal factions and militias routinely dispose of the bodies of their victims in clandestine graves to avoid triggering state investigations. Clandestine cemeteries linked to organized crime have been identified across multiple Brazilian states, and a 2024 survey by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security and Datafolha found that approximately 14.2 million Brazilians, 8% of the population aged 16 and older, reported being aware of illegal burial sites in their own cities. In state capitals and large municipalities, that figure rose to 17% (CC4).

Because Brazilian law treats a missing person report as a non-criminal occurrence, these cases rarely lead to formal investigations, lack material evidence, and are not subject to statutes of limitation. In practice, executed individuals simply vanish into statistics as "missing," shielding perpetrators from accountability. Brazil still lacks specific legislation criminalizing forced disappearance, despite being a signatory to both the UN and Inter-American conventions on the subject, which severely undermines the institutional capacity to confront this reality and leaves countless families without answers, justice, or even the possibility of mourning their loved ones (CC4).

5. STATE INEFFICIENCY AND LACK OF PROTECTION

The U.S. Department of State has included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Brazil, indicating that there may be widespread violent crime and/or organized crime present in the country, and/or that local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes (CC2).

The United States Department of State, in its Brazil 2024 Human Rights Report, identified a wide range of serious human rights concerns throughout the country. These

included credible accounts of unlawful and arbitrary killings, the use of torture and other forms of cruel or degrading treatment, cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, and notable restrictions on press freedom and free expression, including acts of violence and intimidation directed at journalists. The report further noted that Brazilian authorities did not consistently take meaningful action to identify or hold accountable officials responsible for such abuses (CC1).

Brazil ranks first globally in absolute number of homicides according to the United Nations and is considered the eighth most violent country in the world, with firearms responsible for the vast majority of those deaths. The Brazilian State's response to this crisis has historically been rooted in a militarized and repressive model of policing, marked by excessive use of force, mass incarceration, and a pattern of neglect toward marginalized communities. In 2023 alone, over 6,400 people were killed as a result of police operations, with Black individuals comprising the overwhelming majority of victims (CC7).

This same demographic is disproportionately represented among the country's prison population, which is the third largest in the world. Rather than addressing the root causes of violence, these policies have deepened racial inequalities and left the most vulnerable populations, particularly those in favelas and impoverished territories, exposed to both criminal and institutional violence (CC7).

The absence of effective public policies for security, prison control, and protection of victims and witnesses has created an environment in which organized crime strengthens precisely where the State fails. This omission is not merely administrative: it represents a violation of the State's positive duties, which has the legal and constitutional obligation to prevent, investigate, and punish acts of violence and intimidation.

6. THE NATIONAL DIMENSION OF ORGANIZED CRIME'S CONTROL AND INSUFFICIENCY OF INTERNAL RELOCATION

Brazil's criminal landscape is shaped by the presence of over 80 organized criminal groups, but two organizations dominate the national scene: the PCC, headquartered in São Paulo, and the Comando Vermelho, based in Rio de Janeiro. Together, these two groups account for an estimated 130,000 members and maintain operations across nearly every

Brazilian state, with the PCC also extending its activities internationally. The dozens of smaller criminal organizations that exist throughout the country tend to operate within a limited number of states and typically align themselves with one of these two dominant groups, effectively amplifying their combined territorial footprint (CC3).

The operational structure of these organizations allows their regional branches to maintain active lines of communication with one another. This interconnected network means that when a person becomes a target, whether for being perceived as an informant, for owing an unpaid debt, for defying a group leader, or for any conduct seen as a violation of the group's internal code, the organization has the practical ability to pursue that individual across state lines and throughout the national territory. The decision to track someone can be taken based on acts such as informing on the group, stealing from it, or failing to repay a significant debt are among those most likely to trigger a sustained pursuit. Even former members who have been allowed to leave remain under surveillance and face retaliation if they are found to have broken the conditions of their departure (CC3).

This reality severely limits the viability of internal relocation as a safety measure. While moving to another region may be possible for individuals with no direct conflict with these groups, for those who have been specifically targeted, particularly by the PCC or CV, the nationwide reach and coordinated communication of these organizations mean that distance alone offers little meaningful protection (CC3).

The national dimension of this persecution is evidenced by the fact that approximately 28.5 million Brazilians (19% of the population) live under the direct control of criminal factions or militias (CC9). This represents a crisis of state sovereignty in which parallel powers exercise territorial, economic, and social control over significant portions of the national territory. The ability of these organizations to communicate across state lines and coordinate actions means that internal relocation within Brazil does not constitute a viable protection alternative for individuals targeted by these groups.

7. REGIONAL FACTIONS: THE PGC IN SANTA CATARINA

The state of Santa Catarina has become the stage for a complex and violent restructuring of organized crime, led by the Primeiro Grupo Catarinense (PGC). Like the

PCC, which originated within the São Paulo prison system in 1993, the PGC was born in Santa Catarina prisons to confront the PCC's advance and dominance in the state (CC11).

The origins of the PGC can be traced to 2001, when a precursor group known as "The Group" emerged inside the Florianópolis Penitentiary amid overcrowding, mistreatment, abuse, and torture. The organization was formally established on March 3, 2003. The state's own repressive prison policies, characterized by arbitrary transfers, lack of infrastructure, and documented cases of torture, served as a catalyst for the faction's growth, positioning the PGC as a self-proclaimed defender of inmates' dignity. When its leaders were transferred to federal prisons in an effort to dismantle the organization, the move enabled the PGC to forge strategic alliances with other criminal networks, most notably the Comando Vermelho (CC12).

The PGC functions as a highly organized criminal enterprise with a clearly defined chain of command. At the top sit two leadership bodies referred to as "Ministries", the first composed of permanent members and the second of individuals who rotate through the position. Authority flows downward through a territorial division system in which figures known as "Disciplines" oversee the organization's activities within designated geographic areas (CC12).

This organizational structure is reinforced by a formal internal code governing both the conduct of its members and the execution of criminal operations, enforced through "crime tribunals" where alleged infractions are classified by severity and judged in expedited proceedings. Sanctions range from monetary penalties to what the organization terms "strict exclusion", a euphemism for execution (CC12).

Known for the brutality of its methods against rival groups, the PGC maintains operational command even from within the prison system, issuing directives to members on the outside that include orders for kidnappings, extortion, and murders carried out with deliberate cruelty. The organization has been actively expanding its control over prisons throughout the state to block the PCC's efforts to recruit inmates and establish influence within the correctional system (CC11).

The conflict between the PCC and the PGC is driven by strategic and economic interests. The PCC views Santa Catarina as a critical corridor for its international drug trafficking operations, using its coastal ports to ship cocaine concealed within legitimate

cargo to five continents, while also investing in luxury real estate along the coast to launder proceeds from drug and arms trafficking. This expansion has placed it in direct and violent confrontation with the PGC, which was founded precisely to resist the PCC's encroachment into the state (CC11).

This rivalry escalated into open warfare between 2015 and 2018, producing the highest homicide rates in the history of Santa Catarina. In June 2015, the PGC issued a public declaration rejecting the PCC's practice of "baptizing", formally recruiting members within its territory, and explicitly declared war against what it called an "invading force." The dispute was fueled by competition over strategic international trafficking routes, particularly through the ports of Itajaí and São Francisco do Sul (CC12).

The PGC sustains its operations through a structured financial system drawing revenue from multiple sources: a recurring contribution required from members who are not incarcerated, a separate levy imposed on drug dealers operating within its territory, fees on specific activities, and money laundering schemes. This layered system of extraction reflects the organization's deep entrenchment in the communities it controls and its capacity to function as a parallel economic authority (CC12).

As part of its strategy to maintain territorial control and reduce police scrutiny, the PGC has imposed rules prohibiting crimes against individuals it classifies as "disadvantaged", including pedestrians, workers, and ride-hailing drivers, while severely punishing sexual offenses within its areas of influence. These measures project an image of social order while ensuring criminal operations proceed without attracting law enforcement attention, a phenomenon researchers have described as "Pax Monopolista" (CC12).

The continued threat posed by the PGC was underscored in November 2025, when the Santa Catarina State Prosecutor's Office launched a large-scale operation targeting the organization across twelve municipalities, including Palhoça. The operation resulted in eight preventive arrest warrants and thirty search and seizure warrants, with five individuals detained, one charged with criminal organization membership and money laundering. The crimes under investigation included drug trafficking and homicides, reinforcing the organization's capacity to maintain its operations and enforce its authority despite law enforcement efforts (CC13).

8. CONCLUSION

The evidence presented demonstrates that Brazil faces a structural crisis in human protection, in which the armed and economic power of criminal factions surpasses that of the State itself. The consolidation of organizations such as the PCC, CV, and PGC as parallel power structures, combined with institutional infiltration, systemic corruption, and state inefficiency, creates an environment in which victims of persecution by these groups cannot obtain effective protection within Brazil.

With approximately 28.5 million Brazilians (19% of the population) living under the direct control of criminal factions or militias, and with the documented ability of these organizations to track individuals across the entire national territory and internationally, internal relocation does not constitute a viable option for those targeted by these groups (CC9; CC3).

The Brazilian State's failure to provide protection is evidenced by: (1) the limited ability of local law enforcement to respond to serious crimes (CC2); (2) the government's failure to take credible steps to identify and punish officials who commit human rights abuses (CC1); (3) the infiltration of public agents into schemes orchestrated by organized crime (CC10); and (4) the absence of effective witness protection mechanisms.

The conditions documented in this brief establish that the Brazilian State is both unable and unwilling to provide effective protection to victims of persecution by organized criminal factions. The systematic nature of the violence, the national reach of these organizations, the continuity of threats against targeted individuals, and the State's documented failure to protect its citizens create a situation in which individuals fleeing persecution by the PCC, PGC, CV, and other Brazilian criminal factions face a well-founded fear of persecution that cannot be addressed through internal relocation or state protection mechanisms.

Exhibit 2

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EXCERPTS FROM COUNTRY CONDITIONS REPORTS

CC 1

BRAZIL 2024 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT - UNITED STATES 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

BRAZIL COUNTRY SECURITY REPORT - OVERSEAS SECURITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (OSAC)

The U.S. Department of State has included a Crime “C” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Brazil, indicating that there may be widespread violent crime and/or organized crime present in the country, and/or that local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes.

Violent crime remains a key concern for large parts of the country, with several large cities having high homicide rates. Almost every year since 2017 overall homicides have gone down, reaching the lowest levels in over a decade. However, some areas like the northern and northeastern regions of Brazil have seen higher rates than the rest of the country. The national homicide rate in 2023 was around 18.5 homicides per 100,000 residents. In

2023, there were 37,639 homicides, a 3.3% decrease from 2022. Around 90% of homicide victims are male. Conflicts between armed criminal factions competing for territorial control between each other and state security forces play a major role in driving homicide numbers.

Organized crime exists on a large scale. The largest Brazilian criminal organization, Primeiro Comando da Capital (First Capital Command, or PCC), is based in São Paulo, but has affiliations in many parts of the country. PCC is a violent prison gang that controls the majority of illegal contraband and drugs coming into/out of the prisons in São Paulo, and remains an organization of great interest to the government of Brazil and the police. Comando Vermelho (Red Command, or CV) is Brazil's second largest criminal group with a presence in 23 of Brazil's states. It similarly has roots in the prison system, with a base in Rio de Janeiro. PCC, CV, and other similar groups participate in a variety of illicit markets in Brazil.

CC 3

**COUNTRY POLICY AND INFORMATION NOTE
BRAZIL: ORGANISED CRIMINAL GROUPS - UNITED
KINGDOM'S HOME OFFICE (HO)**

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 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.

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.

CC 4

BRAZILIAN YEARBOOK OF PUBLIC SECURITY 2025 - BRAZILIAN FORUM ON PUBLIC SECURITY

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.

GLOBAL REPORT ON COCAINE 2023: LOCAL DYNAMICS, GLOBAL CHALLENGES - UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

The Brazilian crime group Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) has expanded its presence in other South American countries and beyond in Africa and Europe, and controls several stages of the cocaine supply chain. But the criminal landscape in Brazil is increasingly fragmented and many smaller criminal groups now also operate in the cocaine trade, often specializing in logistics.

In Brazil, the organized crime group Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) reportedly dominates most of the international cocaine trafficking routes through Brazil to Europe and Africa, and appears to be the primary interlocutor for European groups sourcing cocaine supplies from Brazil, notably the Italian OCG *'Ndrangheta*. The foremost traditional rival of the PCC, the *Comando Vermelho*, reportedly also has international trafficking links to source countries. Another important group which has emerged recently is the *Familia do Norte*, especially active close to the triple border of Brazil, Peru and Colombia. These three major groups are in competition for the dominance of the drug trade in the area around the triple intersection of the Amazonian borders of Brazil, Colombia and Peru.

CRIME RATE BY COUNTRY 2026 - WORLD POPULATION REVIEW

Brazil had the seventh-highest crime rate in the world in 2020 with exceptionally high rates of violent crimes. Brazil's homicide rate was 23.6 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020—and it had risen as high as 30.8 in previous years. Brazil's most massive problem remains organized crime, as it has expanded in recent years, and violence between rival groups is common. Drug trafficking, corruption, and domestic violence are all pervasive issues in Brazil.

INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC SECURITY - JUSTIÇA GLOBAL

Brazil leads the UN world ranking of homicides in absolute numbers and is the eighth most violent country in the world (UNODC/UN). According to the agency, 76% of deaths were caused by firearms. However, historically, the Brazilian State has opted for a public security policy that deepens violence and inequalities (mainly racial), with the excessive use of force by law enforcement agents, militarization, and over-incarceration, in addition to the discriminatory stance when it comes to guaranteeing the basic rights and services in favelas and other impoverished territories, noticeably occupied by black and/or indigenous populations.

BRAZIL IS THE 3RD MOST UNSAFE COUNTRY IN SOUTH AMERICA, SAYS GLOBAL PEACE INDEX - EXAME

Brazil is one of the 50 most dangerous countries in the world, and the third worst in Latin America, according to the Global Peace Index 2024, released this week.

The study, produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), is based on 23 indicators to assess the level of security in 163 countries around the world. The indicators are based on three axes: ongoing conflicts, security and protection measures, and militarization.

In this ranking, which lists the countries best placed in terms of safety, Brazil appears in position 131. In South America, Venezuela (142nd) and Colombia (146th) are in a worse situation than Brazil. Argentina was considered the best country in the region (46th overall), followed by Uruguay (52nd) and Chile (64th).

DATAFOLHA: PRESENCE OF FACTIONS AND MILITIAS AFFECTS 19% OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION - CNN BRAZIL

Criminal factions and militias are increasingly present in Brazilian territory and are already part of the daily lives of at least 28.5 million people — or 19% of the country's population .

The data was released by Datafolha following research commissioned by the FBSP (Brazilian Forum for Public Security). The results of the study were based on people who lived in close proximity to organized crime in their neighborhoods .

Compared to last year's data, the increase was five percentage points , when 14% of respondents stated they had some type of contact with criminal groups.

At the time, the number represented 23 million Brazilians , about 5 million fewer than now.

Those who report suffering from organized crime also claim to live with the presence of clandestine cemeteries in their neighborhood . Furthermore, they also mention the presence of "crack dens" in the areas where they frequent daily.

INFILTRATION OF FACTIONS CORRODES THE BRAZILIAN STATE FROM WITHIN - GAZETA DO POVO

As criminal factions advance unchecked across Brazil, the image of armed criminals in the middle of a poor community in some large city no longer accurately reflects reality. This image coexists with another, much more silent and even more lethal than the first: the presence of organized crime in government offices, police forces, internal affairs departments, and on the payroll of the Brazilian state in general.

Brazil is witnessing not only the territorial expansion of the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and Comando Vermelho (CV) , as well as dozens of other regional criminal groups, but also a true systemic infiltration of factions that threatens the sovereignty of Brazilian institutions.

The most emblematic recent case occurred on November 8, 2024, when Antônio Vinícius Lopes Gritzbach, later known as the "PCC informant," was executed with rifle shots at Guarulhos Airport. Gritzbach was a kind of "living archive" of the criminal faction's relations with the São Paulo police. He had knowledge of the PCC's financial inner workings and about police officers who received bribes from the faction within the São Paulo Civil Police.

“There are indications of possible infiltration of public agents into schemes orchestrated by organized crime and factions,” Celeste Leite dos Santos, prosecutor for the São Paulo Public Prosecutor's Office and president of the Instituto Pró-Vítima, told *Gazeta do Povo* . “According to what has already been widely reported, investigations reveal the possible participation of civil and military police officers, both in the illegal protection and execution of the informant, exposing a level of co-optation that weakens the credibility and authority of the institutions responsible for guaranteeing public order.”

CC 11

PCC AND PGC FIGHT FOR TERRITORY AND ADVANCE INTO SANTA CATARINA - GAZETA DO POVO

The government of Santa Catarina was still celebrating its title as the safest state and capital in the country, according to the 2024 annual ranking of the Safest Cities in Brazil by the consulting firm MySide, released in September of this year, when Greater Florianópolis began experiencing moments of terror. Criminal factions became involved in intense armed conflicts in the fight for territory, in an escalation of violence that began last week.

The Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and the Primeiro Grupo Catarinense (PGC) are locked in a territorial dispute, and what we saw last week were scenes the state hadn't witnessed in at least six years.

Like the PCC, which originated within the São Paulo prison system in 1993, the PGC was born in Santa Catarina prisons in 2003 to confront the PCC's advance and dominance in the state. This is all because the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) has ambitious plans for Santa Catarina. In addition to laundering money from drug and arms trafficking through the purchase of luxury properties in the trendy coastal cities of Santa Catarina, the faction is eyeing the state's ports, such as Navegantes, São Francisco do Sul, Itapoá, Imbituba, and Itajaí.

It is through the ports that the largest Brazilian criminal faction ships cocaine camouflaged among legitimate cargo to five continents, emphasizes the public prosecutor who has been investigating the São Paulo-based faction for over two decades, Lincoln Gakiya.

Rigid and bloodthirsty, the Primeiro Grupo Catarinense (PGC) also exerts dominance through cruel attack techniques against its rivals, points out the Public Prosecutor's Office (MPSC). The Santa Catarina-based organization is expanding its actions to control prisons in an attempt to inhibit the PCC's advance over inmates, and even while imprisoned, PGC leaders determine what faction members outside prison should do, including missions such as kidnappings, extortion, and murders using cruel methods. The investigations also seek to determine if last week's attacks were ordered by imprisoned faction members.

CC 12

THE WORLD OF CRIME IN SANTA CATARINA - BRAZILIAN FORUM ON PUBLIC SECURITY

The First Catarinense Group is a criminal organization with a well-defined hierarchical structure and its own normative system, exercising vigorous criminal governance. The leadership is formed by two "Ministries": the 1st (members who are "for life") and the 2nd (rotating members). Below this, the structure branches out into geographical areas, in which the "Disciplines" act as regional managers. Other positions with specific functions ensure the operational efficiency of the faction.

The PGC's internal "legislation" is detailed in its Statute, supplemented by manuals and communications that regulate everything from the behavior of its members to criminal activities. Infractions are tiered and judged in "summary" trials – the "crime tribunals," which can apply penalties ranging from fines to "strict exclusion," that is, the death penalty. Economically, the PGC is financed by a monthly "tithe" paid by members at large, and an "off-the-books" fund collected from drug dealers in the "drug dens." There are also fees levied on certain activities and the practice of money laundering.

CC 13

FACTION ALLIED WITH CV AND RIVAL OF PCC IS TARGETED IN OPERATION IN SC - CNN BRAZIL

According to a study conducted by the Federal University of Santa Catarina, the PGC (Primeiro Grupo Catarinense) originated in the state's prison system and follows similar models to the PCC. The faction is believed to have emerged due to the context of overcrowding and precarious conditions in the prisons.

Like the São Paulo faction, the PGC's structure features a complex and adaptable hierarchy, which includes divisions, functions, and even an internal statute. The branches are called First Ministry, Second Ministry, Disciplines, and Harmonies.

Another characteristic similar to the PCC is the presence of baptism within the criminal organization.

Regarding alliances, the PGC is said to have formed agreements with CV and FDN. The ties with CV reportedly began between 2008 and 2011.

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



OSAC Country Security Report

Brazil

Published: February 5, 2025

This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State COUNTRY Travel Advisory and [Brazil Country Information Page](#).

Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

[U.S. Embassy Brasília](#)

Av. Das Nações Sul, Quadra 801, Lote 3, Brasília-DF.

Tel: +55 (61) 3312-7000

Hours: 0800 – 1700, Monday to Friday.

After-hours Emergencies: +55 (61) 3312-7400.

[U.S. Consulate Porto Alegre](#)

Av. Assis Brasil, 1889 Passo d'Areia, Porto Alegre-RS.

Tel: +55 (51) 3345-6000

[U.S. Consulate Recife](#)

Rua Gonçalves Maia, 163, Boa Vista CEP, 50070-060 Recife-PE.

Tel: +55 (81) 3416-3050

[U.S. Consulate Rio de Janeiro](#)

Avenida Presidente Wilson, 147 – Centro, Rio de Janeiro-RJ.

Tel: +55 (21) 3823-2000

[U.S. Consulate São Paulo](#)

Rua Henri Dunant, 500, Chácara Santo Antônio, São Paulo-SP, 04709-110.

Tel: +55 (11) 3250-5000

[U.S. Consulate Branch Office in Belo Horizonte](#)

Note: Does not offer consular services.

OSAC Country Chapters

São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and Porto Alegre have active OSAC chapters.

Contact [OSAC's Americas team](#) with any questions.

Brazil Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should exercise increased caution due to crime.

Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Brasília and Belo Horizonte as being **HIGH**-threat locations for crime, and Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo as being **CRITICAL**-threat locations for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Brazil, indicating that there may be widespread violent crime and/or organized crime present in the country, and/or that local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond to serious crimes.

Crimes of opportunity such as armed robbery, pickpocketing, purse snatching, and smash-and-grab thefts occur with the greatest frequency. Criminals engaged in this activity are often armed and will target their victims indiscriminately, with a preference for persons projecting affluence and a lack of awareness of their surroundings. Targeted items include wallets/purses, jewelry, and electronics. Cell phones are of particular interest. It is not uncommon for quick snatch-and-grab robberies of phones. Store electronics in the trunk of a vehicle when traveling to and from an airport, and limit the number of possessions carried on your person when out and about in the city.

Street crime is an ever-present problem, especially in the evenings and late at night. Pay particular attention when traveling at night through rural areas and satellite cities, due to the significant potential for roadside robberies. Armed robberies are prevalent throughout major cities. In many of these instances, multiple armed criminals on foot or in vehicles (typically motorcycles) identify an isolated victim or take advantage of traffic jams to rob a series of gridlocked vehicles. The criminals stop in front of or alongside their victim's vehicle, present a firearm, and subsequently demand all of the victim's valuables, then depart the area. In the majority of these incidents, compliant victims are unharmed.

Foreign visitors of all nationalities, including U.S. citizens, have been victims of crime. Criminals most often target their victims due to perceived wealth and lack of awareness. There is no indication that criminals target U.S. citizens or U.S. government employees due to their nationality. Most criminals commit crimes while armed and will not hesitate to use violence if they encounter resistance. In most incidents, compliant victims were unharmed.

Foreign visitors may be more susceptible to targeting for certain crimes because they may be less likely to file a police report and/or return to testify at criminal proceedings, should police apprehend the perpetrators. Foreigners are normally seen by criminals as easier targets due to their facilitated identification and expected lack of familiarization with the local reality. Be

careful of cash transactions on the street – a hurried transaction often leaves the customer with shoddy/counterfeit goods or with counterfeit money.

Although the risk is greater at night, street crime frequently occurs during the day. Incidents of theft are frequent on city buses and metro trains. Brazil's criminals often use motorcycles in street crimes to evade police. Comply with criminals' demands; resisting increases the likelihood of serious bodily harm. Brazil's criminal justice system suffers from low conviction rates. An acute shortage of jail space in Brazil and resulting prisoner furloughs contribute to the cycle of violence. Despite laws that regulate firearms, weapons such as handguns, rifles, military grade weapons, blades, and improvised weapons are frequently involved in criminal activities. These crimes can include gratuitous violence.

Mass robberies, locally known as *arrastões*, occur when a gang of criminals sweep through public places and rob pedestrians, beachgoers, patrons, customers, and individuals stuck in traffic. An *arrastão* can occur randomly during daylight or night hours, regardless of location. Police struggle to react and capture the criminals. Comply with demands for valuables and do not resist. These have most commonly occurred in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

Do not accept drinks from strangers and always watch your drink. Criminals may add scopolamine or a similar drug to your drink. This has been particularly prominent in relation to casual meetings at bars and restaurants in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, as well as those utilizing dating applications in Brazil. People have woken up robbed of their valuables or sexually assaulted after accepting such advances. Criminals have also utilized dating apps to lure individuals to a location before robbing or assaulting them, which has led to loss of life. Individuals deciding to use such apps should do so with substantial caution.

Exercise extreme caution in nightclubs, especially in São Paulo, where nightclub staff have swindled patrons into purchasing bottles of alcohol without disclosing the actual price of the drinks, at times running up to US\$1,000/bottle. Security personnel have physically harassed patrons who refuse to pay and have taken their credit cards.

Criminals use a variety of scams to rob victims, including virtual kidnapping, whereby an unknown caller claims to have kidnapped a person you know, possibly a family member. Unless you immediately pay the ransom, they will harm the person in question. It only becomes clear that the kidnapping never occurred until after you pay a ransom. In another scam, an unknown caller states an employee or family member has been in an accident and needs immediate medical attention. You must provide payment for the injured individual to receive treatment—a common requirement in Brazil. This scam often targets household staff, who react without verifying with their employer.

Scams involving credit cards are common as well. Travelers using personal ATM or credit cards sometimes receive billing statements with unauthorized charges after using cards in Brazil, or discover their cards cloned or duplicated without their knowledge.

Due to the heightened risk of credit card fraud in Brazil, cybersecurity companies often note that, while still vulnerable, chip-and-PIN cards are more secure and harder to clone than magnetic swipe cards. Monitor credit card usage during and after your trip for transaction inconsistencies. Commonsense practices to guard against card fraud include inspecting the outside of an ATM for unusual or suspicious devices or equipment, and if using a credit card at a restaurant or store, making sure the employee brings the credit card reader to you. Never let anyone walk off with your credit card. There are reports of beach vendors adding additional zeroes to legitimate charges of those unfamiliar with the exchange rate. Always use an ATM in well-lighted, public areas, and never let someone “assist” you with your transaction.

Local cybercriminals target ATMs to obtain credit card and banking information, as well as portable point-of-sale (PoS) systems to obtain the information stored in the magnetic strip of credit cards. Because this scheme requires access to payment hardware, insider access is usually involved. Cyber criminals can install corrupt PoS card readers (commonly called *chupacabra*) at stores, restaurants, or ATMs. These devices steal card information wirelessly or with the help of an employee accomplice.

Avoid street vendors selling knock-off designer products; by buying them you may face a large fine.

In addition to using only trusted ATMs at major banks, hotels, or shopping malls, exchange dollars only at banks or other reputable money exchanging services. Be aware of the increased risk to credit and debit card information, and carefully monitor accounts for suspicious activity. Criminal groups have reportedly used explosives (primarily dynamite) to destroy ATMs in public areas late at night to gain access to money stored within.

Residential burglaries also pose a constant threat and concern. According to police, mobile street gangs often target residential areas in the city with more affluence. Criminals from the surrounding satellite cities travel by metro, bus, or car into these neighborhoods looking for targets of opportunity. Family members and household employees should not allow anyone to enter the residential grounds without proper identification and prearranged appointments. Local security companies that monitor security alarm systems tend to be the primary responders; local police response can be delayed for hours. Some neighborhoods employ static guard posts to monitor activity on the streets adjacent to homes. Larger properties and commercial sites generally employ 24/7 security guard services.

Typically, criminals gain entry to a property via the vehicle gate while the residents are leaving or arriving, or they threaten local staff into compliance. General countermeasures and situational awareness are strong criminal deterrents. Proper use of alarm systems to give first responders early warning, and properly checking surroundings when entering/exiting homes, have proven most effective. Residences should feature solid-core entry doors with quality deadbolts, peepholes, security grilles on all windows, adequate front and rear security lighting, and a monitored alarm system. Business and home surveillance camera systems are worthwhile investments and are effective deterrents against property crime.

Exercise increased caution in December and January. During the holiday season, Brazil experiences an increase in crime due to several factors: these include Brazil's system of prison furloughs, which allows for prisoner leave during the holidays; a higher percentage of police officers on annual leave during the coinciding summer vacations and Christmas season; and the reality that citizens receive a "13th month" salary bonus in December and are in possession of more disposable income during these months. Burglars target vacant homes and apartments during these two months with a greater frequency than the rest of the year. These crimes affect foreign visitors, who are targets on occasion due to perceived wealth.

Violent crime remains a key concern for large parts of the country, with several large cities having high homicide rates. Almost every year since 2017 overall homicides have gone down, reaching the lowest levels in over a decade. However, some areas like the northern and northeastern regions of Brazil have seen higher rates than the rest of the country. The national homicide rate in 2023 was around 18.5 homicides per 100,000 residents. In 2023, there were 37,639 homicides, a 3.3% decrease from 2022. Around 90% of homicide victims are male. Conflicts between armed criminal factions competing for territorial control between each other and state security forces play a major role in driving homicide numbers.

Organized crime exists on a large scale. The largest Brazilian criminal organization, *Primeiro Comando da Capital* (First Capital Command, or PCC), is based in São Paulo, but has affiliations in many parts of the country. PCC is a violent prison gang that controls the majority of illegal contraband and drugs coming into/out of the prisons in São Paulo, and remains an organization of great interest to the government of Brazil and the police. *Comando Vermelho* (Red Command, or CV) is Brazil's second largest criminal group with a presence in 23 of Brazil's states. It similarly has roots in the prison system, with a base in Rio de Janeiro. PCC, CV, and other similar groups participate in a variety of illicit markets in Brazil.

Assault with a deadly weapon that led to death fell 5.8% from 2022 to 2023. Additionally, attempted robbery that led to death, locally called *latrocínio*, saw a significant 22.7% reduction from 2022 to 2023.

Brazil's criminals often use motorcycles to evade police. A common street crime involves motorcycle-riding thieves driving alongside stopped cars and robbing the car's driver or pedestrians on the sidewalk. In most cases, the thieves depart after taking the victim's belongings, but sometimes victims receive injuries. Consulate employees have also been victims to these types of crimes. Comply with criminal demands for valuables, resisting increases the likelihood of serious bodily harm.

Carjacking and vehicle theft is common. Perpetrators usually carry firearms and may quickly escalate to violence. Incidents of vehicular robbery and theft declined from 2022 to 2023, by 9.5% and 3.7% respectively.

Bank robberies and assaults on ATMs and armored money trucks by criminal gangs remain a concern, yet incidents declined around 40% from 2022 to 2023, with 131 total incidents. These incidents increasingly involve the use of heavy weaponry and explosives. The criminals' superior

firepower can overwhelm police, particularly in rural interior towns. Gangs have attacked bank branches during day and night. In small cities, where the security is not as omnipresent, thieves have used explosives to assault banks, and have used innocent bystanders as “human shields,” creating a barrier to allow them to escape safely.

Cargo theft remains a major security issue on the roads throughout Brazil, despite a 10% decrease in reported incidents in 2023. Incidents increased in the north and northeast of Brazil in 2023, but São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro states saw about 82% of all incidents. Incidents of cargo theft, both from overland shipments originating at ports of entry and from storage facilities, occur frequently. Brazil’s rate of cargo theft is among the highest in the region, and of particular concern in Rio de Janeiro. Criminals target all commercial goods, although shipments of petroleum, pharmaceuticals, and mobile electronics are especially lucrative. As a result, many companies employ countermeasures, including armed security escorts for high value loads and the use of satellites to track truck movements.

Parks, beaches, and other recreational areas have experienced violent crimes, mostly at night, to include assault, theft, and sexual assault. Although assault and theft are also common during the day, higher rates of crime have been reported at night. Depart from these public areas before sundown.

Public transportation hubs, hotel sectors, and tourist areas are the locations with the highest crime rates, ranging from petty theft to armed robbery, especially at night. U.S. government personnel are discouraged from using municipal buses throughout Brazil due to the risk of robbery and assault at all times of day. Crime statistics indicate that passengers face an elevated risk of robbery or assault using public, municipal bus transportation throughout Brazil. Those utilizing metro systems in Brazil should be cautious of pick-pockets and mind their belongings closely – especially during rush hour. Sexual harassment is commonly reported on public transportation.

Crime on the roads remains a problem, especially during evening travel, traffic jams, and road closures due to protests. Carjacking and robbery occur in cities, particularly at night. Criminals take advantage of victims stopped at red lights, particularly in the evening hours, and in less dense or remote areas of the city. Call **0800-081-1078** for the Traffic Police (CTTU). Some U.S. companies use armored passenger vehicles to transport visiting senior executives they deem to be targets due to their high profile or high-value status.

Throughout Brazil, low-income informal housing developments in urban areas known as favelas (sometimes called *comunidades*, *vilas*, or *conglomerados*) are common and easily recognizable. Many of these marginalized areas lack a robust state presence and are controlled by criminal groups. They tend to more frequently see shoot-outs between criminals and police, as well as other illegal activity with a higher frequency. It is not uncommon for these areas to be in close proximity to middle or upper-income areas. These areas are off limits to U.S. government personnel and considered Level 4: Do Not Travel locations. It is recommended to avoid them, especially those without around-the-clock police presence. The [U.S. Embassy](#)

[website](#) has maps of informal housing developments in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília, and Salvador. However, the maps are not exhaustive.

Below includes additional areas of concern within each of the consular districts in Brazil and is separated by the five U.S. consular districts. To locate which consular district a particular location falls within, visit the [Contact Information and Working Hours](#) page on the Embassy website or reference the image below.

Travelers should exercise caution along Brazil’s border areas. Do not travel to any areas within 150 km/100 miles of Brazil’s land borders with Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and Paraguay due to crime (note: this does not apply to the Foz do Iguacu National Park or Pantanal National Park).



Figure 1: U.S. Consular Districts in Brazil.

Brasília Consular District

The Federal District (*Distrito Federal*) of Brasília was a planned city and has been the seat of the federal government since its founding in 1960. It has since grown to the fourth most-populated metropolitan area in Brazil. Several outer lying areas of Brasília, known as its Administrative Regions or “Satellite Cities” are considered Level 4: Do Not Travel locations between the hours

of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. (non-daylight hours) for U.S. government personnel, due to crime. These areas include Ceilândia, Santa Maria, São Sebastião, and Paranoá. For 2023, the homicide rate for the Federal District was about 8.0 homicides per 100,000 residents, down from 11.3 in 2022.

Bus stations in and around downtown Brasília remain a concern, including the principal station, Estação Rodoviária. Pickpocketing and armed robberies occur in these locations more frequently than in other areas of the city. Remain alert to surroundings, especially at large markets. Many foreign visitors to Brasília opt to stay in Asa Sul, Asa Norte, Lago Sul, Lago Norte, Sudoeste, and Aguas Claras.

Several states in the northern region of Brazil, which includes much of the Amazon basin, have seen higher violent crime rates in recent years when compared to other parts of the country. Manaus, capital of Amazonas state, was the municipality with the third highest homicide total in 2023 with 866, including 24 robberies leading to death. Amazonas had an overall homicide rate of 31.79. The state of Amapá saw a 59% increase in homicides from 2022 to 2023 and registered the highest homicide rate of any other Brazilian state at 41.29. The state of Pará had a rate of 30.11, with its capital city of Belém registering 284 homicides in 2023. The state of Roraima has had an ongoing challenge related to illegal mining, which has led to conflict between wildcat miners and indigenous groups. However, the state did see a 25% decrease in homicides from 2022 to 2023 with a rate of 20.42. Similarly, Tocantins saw a 14% decline to 22.76, and there was a 12% decline Goiás's homicide rate to 14.07.

The state of Mato Grosso in the center-west region registered a nearly 50% increase in attempted homicides in 2023, with a homicide rate of 23.86.

In Brazil's southeast, Minas Gerais registered a homicide rate of 12.94 in 2023.

Porto Alegre Consular District

Porto Alegre is the capital of Brazil's southernmost state, Rio Grande do Sul. In 2023, the state registered its biggest drop in homicides since 2010, with a homicide rate of 18 per 100,000 residents in 2023. Criminal violence in Porto Alegre and Rio Grande do Sul peaked between 2016 and 2017, mainly due to disputes between local criminal organizations over territory. However, since the implementation of the multiagency program, RS Seguro, by the state government in 2019 crime reporting has shown a substantial drop not only in Porto Alegre, but throughout the whole state. Rio Grande do Sul security authorities continue to repeatedly deny the presence of PCC and/or CV in the state and affirm their indirect presence locally is noted in specific partnerships with local minor criminal groups such as Os Manos and Bala na Cara.

In the Porto Alegre metropolitan area, there are currently over 1,000 surveillance cameras monitoring and deterring crime, controlled and monitored by a state-funded central command center and the current State Government keeps on investing heavily in security technology and other solutions. In neighborhoods such as Bela Vista, Higienópolis, Auxiliadora, Moinhos de Vento and Petrópolis (the site of Consulate direct-hire housing), static guards oversee main

access points. Larger apartments and commercial sites often employ 24/7 on-site private unarmed security guard services. Although there have been no reports of residential break-ins and burglaries against U.S. employees, residential burglaries pose a constant concern.

In Porto Alegre, the incidence of crime against tourists is greater in areas surrounding the airport, hotels, bars, nightclubs, the Porto Alegre Centro Histórico, public transportation, and other establishments that cater to visitors. It's not recommended to wander in suburban areas of Porto Alegre due to its lack of infrastructure, including unclear road signage, poor cellphone service in some areas, deserted buildings, and higher violent crime rates.

The state of Santa Catarina and its capital, Florianópolis are considered to have some of the lowest crime rates in Brazil, with only 8.9 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in 2023. The state does face issues such as money laundering and criminal activities at the seaports related to drug trafficking and transporting other illicit goods. The PCC has a small presence in Florianópolis and other main cities such as Joinville and Balneario Camboriu. Disputes between them and the main criminal organization in Santa Catarina, Primeiro Grupo Catarinense (PGC), for territory do occur, including a violent confrontation in late October 2023 between the two groups and police. However, these incidents are rare.

Although violence is rated very low in Santa Catarina State, visitors should still guard against petty theft- specially at beaches and other touristic spots, exercise caution at night, and preferably not display indications of wealth.

Santa Catarina has also one of the highest rates of neo-Nazism in the country, after São Paulo state, and is partially tied to its large German descendant population. Local security authorities have worked to identify and map neo-Nazi cells and supporters.

Recife Consular District

The northeast region of Brazil had the highest average homicide rate when compared to other regions of the country at 30.15 homicides per 100,000 residents. However, some states saw reductions from 2022 to 2023. Piauí saw a 11.3% decline in homicides, Sergipe had a 22% decline, and Rio Grande do Norte state saw a 17% decline as the state has worked to improve security, including in its capital, Natal.

Like many other metropolitan cities in Brazil, crime is a major concern in Recife. All neighborhoods in Recife are susceptible to criminal activity. Tourists and foreigners are frequently targeted by criminals in Recife Antigo (Old Town Recife). The state of Pernambuco, of which Recife is the capital, had the second-highest homicide rate in Brazil in 2023 at 36.78, a 6% increase from 2022. Public security officials reckon that over 70% of homicides in the state are linked to drug trafficking and violent conflicts among rival gangs. Recife registered the fifth-most homicides for any municipality in Brazil in 2023 with 556.

Alagoas state had the third highest homicide rate among Brazilian states with 35 homicides per 100,000 residents in 2023. Maceió, the state capital, registered 394 homicides. The state of

Ceara had a homicide rate of 33 homicides per 100,000 residents for 2023. Its capital, Fortaleza, registered the fourth most homicides among municipalities in Brazil with 715. Maranhão saw a 5% increase in homicides in 2023 with a rate of 25.35.

Rio de Janeiro Consular District

In Rio de Janeiro, violent crimes such as murder, armed robbery, carjacking, assault, drugging, and kidnapping are a frequent occurrence. In Zona Sul, opportunistic street crime such as pickpocketing, purse snatching, and smash-and-grab theft from vehicles and storefronts is a constant concern. These acts take place in all areas of the city at any time throughout the year. Major drug gangs and militias control organized crime in Rio de Janeiro, operating mainly in the favelas and in the country's prison system. All of Rio's neighborhoods are subject to criminal activity.

The south and southwest of the city are more common locations for foreign visitors to stay, and host many of the touristic points and tourist infrastructure in the city. Ipanema, Leblon, Urca, Lagoa, Jardim Botânico, Copacabana, Botafogo, Flamengo, and Barra da Tijuca are among neighborhoods where visitors commonly find lodging. However, crime occurs throughout the city, and you should always exercise an increased situational awareness when in public and transiting between destinations.

The city center, or *Centro*, is lower risk to visit during the day. However, it is not recommended to go to the center after dark as it is known to become more unsafe, with a higher risk of mugging and violent crime. The north of the city includes some higher-crime areas that may put visitors at greater risk if they are unfamiliar with the area. The U.S. government includes informal housing developments, commonly referred to as *favelas*, as Level 4: Do Not Travel locations in Brazil.

There has been an increase in roadway violence that is directly attributed to favela police operations. This is most impactful on the road from the Galeão–Antonio Carlos Jobim International Airport (GIG) to Zona Sul, along Linha Vermelha. A new tactic has appeared in recent months whereby criminals deliberately shoot at cars and drivers to divert police attention away from arrest operations they may be conducting. Linha Vermelha was shut down at least twice, for an hour or more, in late 2024 due to this kind of activity. This can impact travelers transiting to/from the international airport.

In 2023, the state of Rio de Janeiro had a homicide rate of 22.21. Fifty of the 131 bank robberies carried out nationally occurred in the state, and it saw the highest number of state security personnel killed with 51. The city of Rio de Janeiro registered the largest total number of homicides than any other municipality in Brazil in 2023 with 1,118 murders, a 6.6% increase from 2022, and saw the second most deaths resulting from armed robbery with 26.

Violence escalated in the state of Bahia in 2022-2023 as rival criminal factions, including PCC, CV affiliates, and others engaged in territorial battles, with violence concentrated in Salvador. In 2023, the state of Bahia registered a homicide rate of 32.67 homicides per 100,000 residents.

The state capital, Salvador, had the second highest number of homicides of any municipality in Brazil with 986.

São Paulo Consular District

All neighborhoods in São Paulo are susceptible to crime, including affluent residential sections where government and business leaders reside. Public transportation hubs, hotel sectors, and tourist areas have the highest rates of robbery and theft. The Secretary of Public Security publishes comprehensive crime statistics. In 2023, São Paulo state registered the lowest homicide rate of any state in Brazil at 5.64 homicides per 100,000 – its lowest rate in almost 20 years. However, the state registered the highest number of robberies that ended in homicide than any other state, with 43 in the city of São Paulo alone. Car theft remains a prominent problem in the state of São Paulo. Homicides in Sao Paulo state in 2024 are on track to be lower than 2023, with an estimated rate of 4.68 homicides per 100,000.

Many visitors to São Paulo stay in the west and southwest of the city. This includes areas near to Avenida Paulista, Jardins, Vila Madelena, Pinheiros, Paraíso, and Bela Vista. International business travelers commonly stay in the Itaim Bibi, Faria Lima, and Berrini areas. Crime, especially non-violent crimes, still occurs in these areas.

The Tri-Border Area (TBA) of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay is a regional hub for the transit of illicit goods, including narcotics and firearms. To date, no incidents directed against U.S. citizens have occurred in this area. Visitors to the area, to include Foz de Iguaçu, should remain especially vigilant and maintain a low profile. Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, and São Paulo states contain trafficking routes for marijuana and cocaine.

Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping “K” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Brazil.

While Brazilians are most often the targets of kidnapping, foreigners are also vulnerable. Vary routes and times of travel. Household help should not allow anyone to enter the residence without identification and prearranged appointments. Report suspicious persons or activities in the neighborhood to the police immediately. Kidnapping for ransom involving U.S. citizens is rare. Regardless, U.S. businesses often take security precautions for senior executives who are resident in São Paulo and other major cities, arranging significant security measures for high-level visits.

While kidnappings for ransom have become less common in recent years, incidents continue to occur. One tactic of organized gangs is to target individuals observed withdrawing money from ATMs or exiting banks. Using ATMs located in secure locations such as shopping malls or major hotels reduce the chances of criminal targeting.

Another version of this is express kidnapping, an ongoing criminal activity in which kidnappers take ATM users at gunpoint and take them to several ATMs to withdraw cash. Criminals have also utilized banking applications when carrying express kidnappings, forcing victims to open their banks apps and transfer funds. This has primarily been used with the local banking application Pix. While Brazilians are the most frequent targets, foreigners are also vulnerable to this crime.

It is also advised to park vehicles in garages and other well lighted/guarded areas, since criminals will often confront victims upon entry into their vehicles. Limit the amount of bank/credit cards in your wallet to limit the potential loss and duration of the incident.

“Virtual kidnapping” scams also occur with some frequency, particularly targeting business leaders. These incidents often involve allegations that the business leader’s family member has been kidnapped, and demand a ransom. Usually these incidents involve smaller amounts, with demands for expediency (before it is discovered that the alleged kidnapping victim is not actually kidnapped.)

Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Brasília, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo as **LOW**-threat locations for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Terrorism “T” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Brazil.

Brazil is a non-aligned country with no significant enemies and is not the target of any known radical groups. Though there are no known indigenous terrorist groups operating in Brazil, several al-Qa’ida members or sympathizers operate in the country. Concerns exist regarding the facilitation of transfers of money and people for terrorist organizations.

While organized terrorism may not be as pronounced of a threat in Brazil, lone wolf terrorist attacks have gained momentum. School shootings have become more prevalent in Brazil over the past few years. Since 2019, Brazil has experienced 17 school attacks that have led to the deaths of 26 people.

Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo as being **MEDIUM**-threat locations for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests. The U.S. Department of State has assessed Recife as being a **LOW**-threat location for political violence.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Civil Unrest “U” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Brazil. Civil unrest can develop quickly without prior notice, often interrupting

logistics and services. Avoid demonstration activity, as even those planned to remain peaceful have the potential to turn violent.

Political violence is possible in any of the major cities of Brazil, but generally uncommon. Economic conditions in Brazil have the potential to contribute to civil unrest, protests, and strikes.

Extremist groups occasionally conduct acts of civil disobedience and may conduct violent confrontations with police. There have been political protests in the past year throughout the country.

Elections/Political Stability

Nationwide municipal elections were held in October 2024 and were considered free and fair. However, the 2024 election campaign did register a record number of cases of political violence in Brazil. There were at least 338 episodes from July to September 2024, according to a survey by the Electoral Investigation Group of the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro.

General elections were last held on October 2, 2022, to elect the president, vice-president, and many other political offices. The presidential election was extremely close with current President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, or simply Lula, defeating the then incumbent Jair Bolsonaro.

Bolsonaro made several allegations of election fraud and requested that the Superior Electoral Court invalidate the votes recorded by electronic voting machines that lacked identification numbers. The court rejected the request. On January 8, 2023, pro-Bolsonaro protestors unsuccessfully stormed the offices of the National Congress, the Presidential Palace, and the Supreme Federal Court seeking to violently overthrow the democratically elected Lula. Bolsonaro was subsequently barred from running for office until 2030.

There has been increased polarization between right and left-wing supporters in recent years, with increased concerns of partisan violence. Polarization has resulted in more protests split along ideological lines. Protestors and counter-protestors often demonstrate on issues such as human rights, the right to bear arms, labor laws, and social security system reform. These demonstrations are sometimes violent.

The next general election in Brazil is scheduled to occur in October 2026.

Protests & Demonstrations

São Paulo hosts public demonstrations periodically. Frequent calls for strikes remain a constant concern. São Paulo continues to experience strikes originating from the public transportation, petroleum, postal, and education sectors. Most protests in São Paulo occur on Avenida Paulista (near the *Museu de Arte de São Paulo*, or MASP) or in or around Praça da Sé (See Square).

The vast majority of these are peaceful, but some develop into violence, resulting in disturbances, property damage, and confrontation between protestors and opposing groups and/or police. Some protestors in Brazil use black bloc tactics. Their mission is to infiltrate otherwise peaceful demonstrations to cause chaos and violence between police forces and protestors. Their tactics involve total face coverage.

In Rio de Janeiro protests often occur in the city center, which includes many other government and cultural buildings. These may occur near Praca Floriano and along the broad Avenida Presidente Vargas. Occasionally, demonstrations are organized along Copacabana's Avenida Atlantica.

In Brasília and other cities, protests over inflation, living conditions, and labor relations are common. While most demonstrations remain peaceful and well controlled by local authorities, acts of violence and confrontation with police occurs. Protests can form with little notice, and often result in clashes with police, deployment of tear gas, and destruction of property, to include burning city buses and attacking private business establishments. Within the Federal District, most protests and demonstrations take place in the city's large, open public Esplanda area.

In the past several years, Brazilians, political parties, and social organizations have used major international and national events as a platform to voice discontent with the Brazilian government.

In 2018, a massive nationwide strike by truck driver unions protesting diesel fuel prices, tolls, and the need for tax reform paralyzed roads, causing nationwide shortages of food, medicine, and oil.

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

Most Brazilians regard U.S. nationals in a positive manner and are friendly to foreigners.

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement and Emergency Contact Information:

- Civil Police Emergency Line: **197**
- Federal Police: **194**
- Military Police: **190**
- Federal Highway Patrol: **191**
- State Highway Patrol: **198**

The three national police forces—the Federal Police, Federal Highway Police, and Federal Railway Police—have domestic security responsibilities and report to the Justice Ministry.

Federal Police (*Policia Federal*, DPF): Responsible for crimes against federal institutions, to include international drug trafficking, terrorism, cyber-crime, organized crime, public

corruption, white-collar crime, money laundering, immigration, border control, airport security, and maritime policing.

Federal Highway Police (*Polícia Rodoviária Federal, PRF*): Brazil’s federal highway patrol is principally tasked with combatting crime on Brazil’s federal roads and highways, as well as monitoring and enforcing traffic laws. They may also perform emergency response. Federal roadways are designated with a “BR.”

There are two distinct units within each state’s police forces:

- **Civil Police (*Polícia Civil*):** They carry out criminal investigations, gather evidence, execute warrants, operate police stations (*delegacias*) where crimes are reported and processed. They focus on complex crimes like fraud, homicide, drug trafficking, and organized crime.
- **Military Police (*Polícia Militar*):** They are tasked with maintaining law and order. They conduct patrols, deter criminal activity, provide immediate response to emergencies and disturbances, conduct traffic enforcement, and crowd control. Despite the name, military police forces do not report to the Defense Ministry. They are the Brazilian equivalent of U.S. uniformed state police officers, deploying solely to respond to or act as a deterrent against the commission of crime.

The armed forces also have some domestic security responsibilities and report to the Defense Ministry.

Police Response

Local police are generally well equipped and responsive to requests for assistance from U.S. and other foreign visitors. However, disparities do exist across Brazil’s 27 states in terms of response capability and law enforcement resources for public security.

Civilian authorities have at times not maintained effective control over security forces. Members of the security forces have committed numerous abuses. From 2018-2023 police-involved shootings resulted in over 6,000 civilian deaths nationwide in 2023, with Bahia and Rio de Janeiro seeing the largest number of victims.

Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Brazil, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State’s Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [LGB Travelers](#)
- [Travelers with Disabilities](#)
- [Student Travelers](#)
- [Faith-Based Travelers](#)

Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Risk of Wrongful Detention “D” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Brazil.

The constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention, and limits arrests to those caught in the act of committing a crime or called for by order of a judicial authority; however, police at times did not respect this prohibition. The law provides for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observes this provision.

The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of corruption by officials and stipulates civil penalties for corruption committed by Brazilian citizens or entities overseas. There have been numerous reports of corruption at various levels of government, and delays in judicial proceedings against persons accused of corruption were common, often due to constitutional protections from prosecution for elected officials. This often resulted in de facto impunity for those responsible.

Brazil embraces a robust and energetic press system that is often critical of the government. The Brazilian press has been successful in the past in uncovering and reporting corruption. Several past high ranking Government officials have gone to prison as the result of investigative reporting.

Cybersecurity

Brazil is one of Latin America’s leading digital nations. Approximately 84% of Brazilians are active internet users, with 8 out of 10 active on social media. Brazilian financial institutions were early pioneers of online services, and continue to invest heavily in evolving IT security solutions. Next-generation biometric identity technologies are common features in Brazil’s consumer banking sectors. Nevertheless, cybersecurity and online fraud are persistent concerns, with annual losses reaching billions of dollars. Hacktivists have defaced government websites and taken them offline in recent years.

Brazil continues to rank as one of the most pervasive cybercrime environments in the world. Brazilian cybercriminals have grown more brazen despite new legislation and official efforts to stop malicious activity online. The banking sector has been the primary target of these operations; however, cybercrime in Brazil also affects daily Internet users, private-sector organizations, and short-term travelers. Maintain awareness of popular schemes to avoid becoming a cybercrime victim.

Import/Export Restrictions

Brazilian customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporarily importing or exporting items such as firearms, ammunition, antiques, mineral samples, tropical plants, wildlife, medications, and business and communication equipment. There are no known issues with bringing in satellite phones.

A country-specific listing of items/goods prohibited from being exported to the country or that are otherwise restricted is available from the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#).

Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).

Exhibit 5



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 \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

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Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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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](#).

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

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Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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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 **EI 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 EI 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 EI Salvador it is an enquiry that should be informed by the following:
 - ‘(a) The major gangs of EI 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 6



Brazilian
Yearbook
of Public
Security
2025



FORUM BRASILEIRO DE
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Increase in Missing Persons May Obscure Executions and Forced Disappearances

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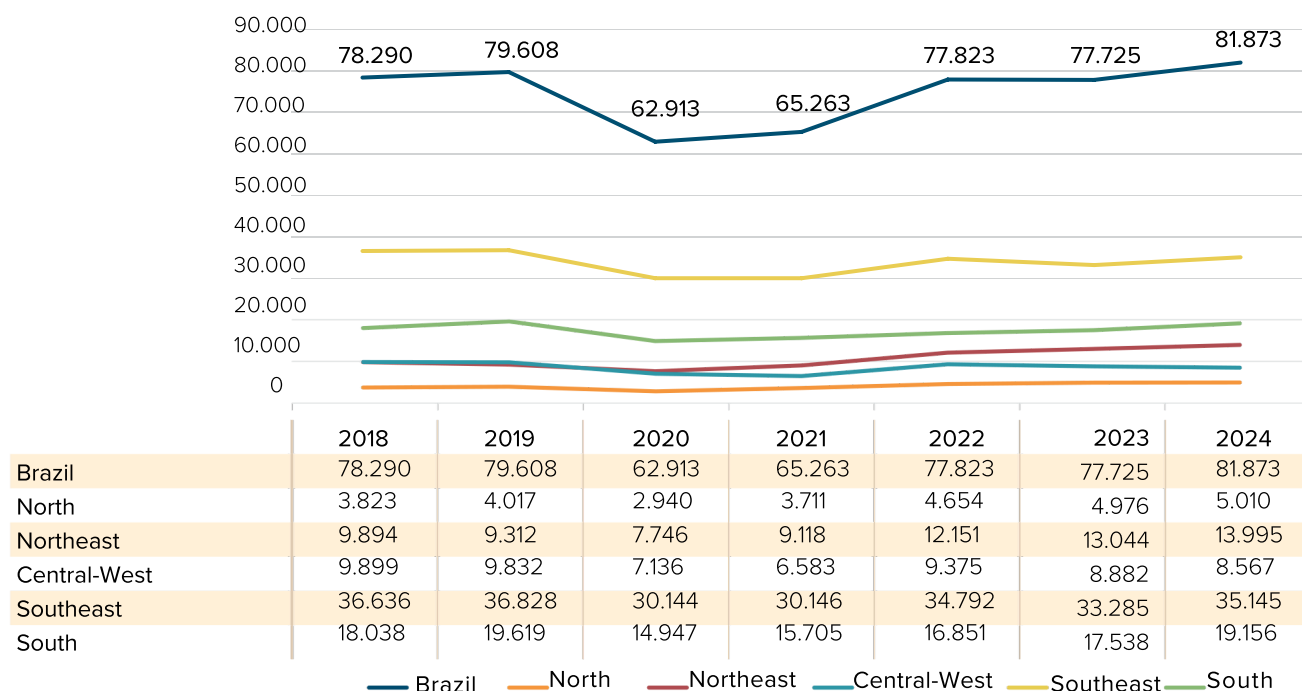
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The rate of reported missing persons increased by 4.9% in Brazil in 2024, totaling 81,873 cases reported to Civil Police authorities nationwide. After a sharp decline in 2020 and 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic period, the number of reports began 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-faccao-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-anandindeua-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-faccao-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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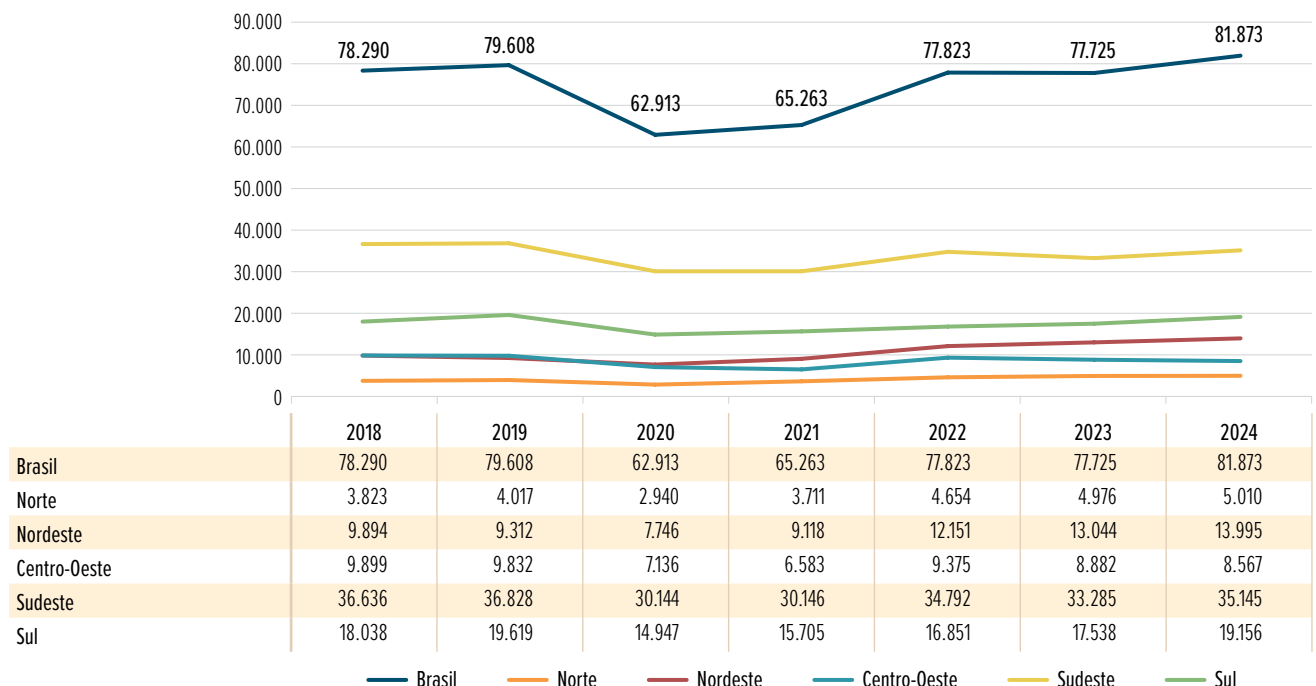
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A taxa de registros de desaparecimentos cresceu 4,9% no Brasil em 2024, totalizando 81.873 casos notificados às Polícias Cíveis de todo o país. Após uma queda acentuada nos anos de 2020 e 2021, período da pandemia de Covid-19, os registros voltaram 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.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>

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/a8c8bf9d-848d-46ca-ba35-28e840b9914d>

Exhibit 7



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



Global Report on Cocaine 2023

Local dynamics,
global challenges



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Special points of interest

Control of trafficking routes fragments

Loose networks of criminal groups take charge of smuggling

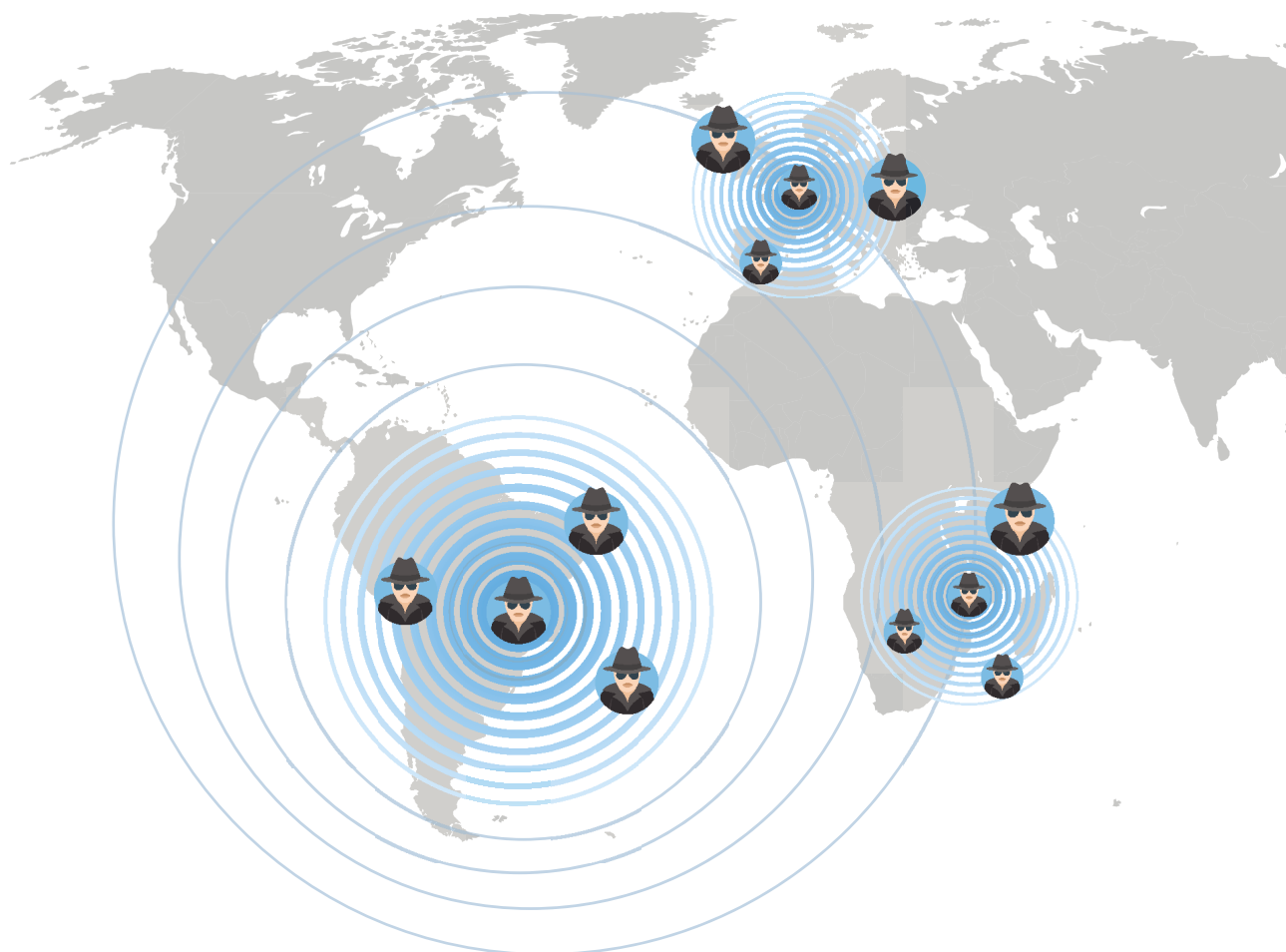
Small to medium-sized criminal groups are playing an increasingly key role in global cocaine trafficking. They function like networks rather than well-delineated organizations. These groups manage only parts of the supply chain and form partnerships with other organizations. This fragmentation has been seen across regions, and the actors involved have become increasingly specialized.

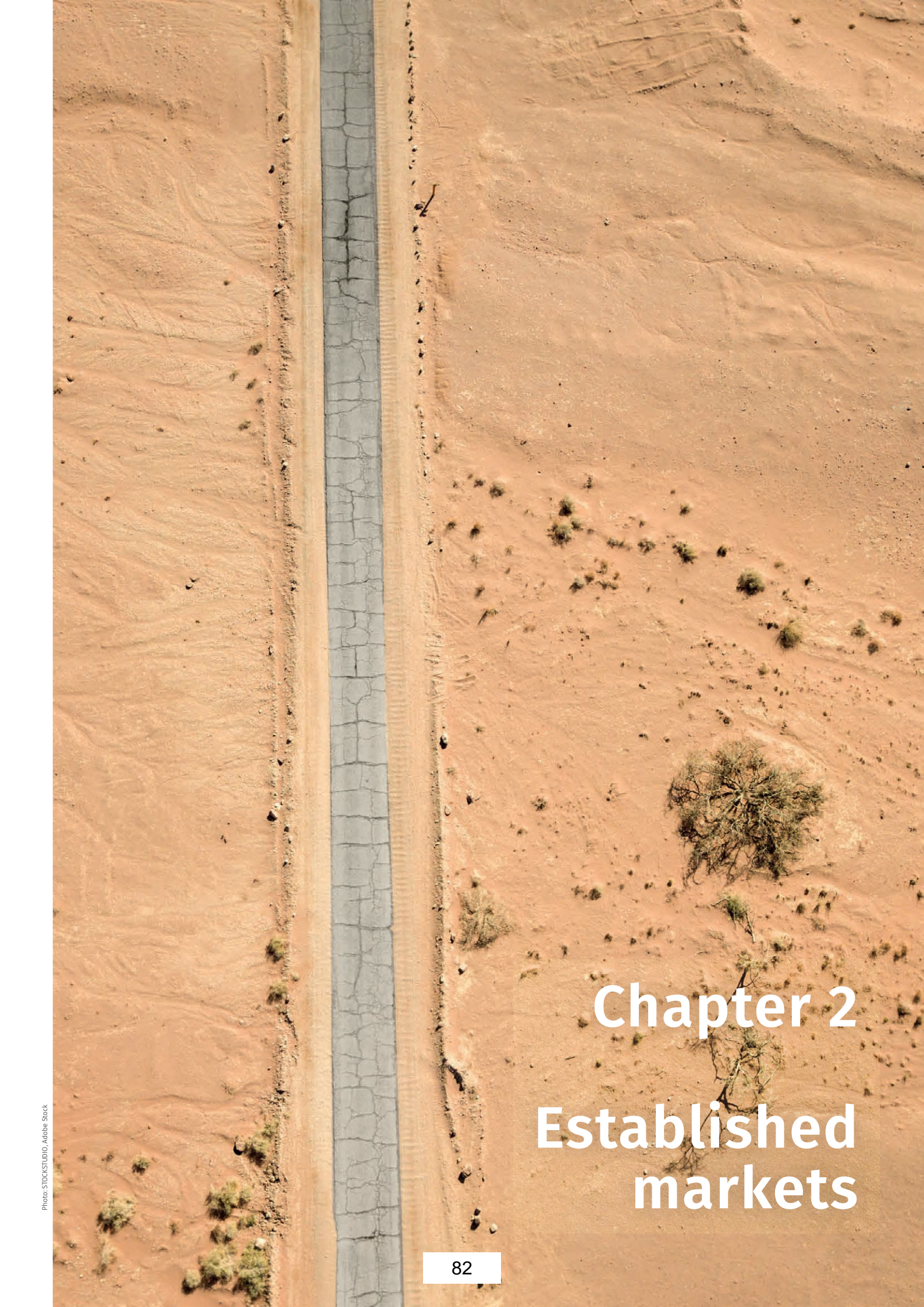
Mexican crime groups remain powerful actors at the global level. The *Cártel de Sinaloa* and the *Cártel Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG)*, for example, largely control the trafficking corridors from Mexico to the United States. But they then rely on local criminal groups and street gangs to distribute cocaine. Most Mexican crime groups are offshoots of former larger organizations. They constantly shift their alliances and fight for control of territory.

The Brazilian crime group *Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC)* has expanded its presence in other South American countries and beyond in Africa and Europe, and controls several stages of the cocaine supply chain. But the criminal landscape in Brazil is increasingly fragmented and many smaller criminal groups now also operate in the cocaine trade, often specializing in logistics.

In Europe, cocaine smuggling appears to be controlled by European criminal groups, some facilitating the receipt of the drug and others specializing in its distribution. Crime groups from the Balkan region have become major players in large-scale cocaine trafficking into Europe.

Expansion of the criminal group *Primeiro Comando da Capital* from Brazil to other countries in South America, and beyond to Africa and Europe





Chapter 2

Established markets

Established markets

The Americas

Supply of cocaine originating from Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru

The world's supply of cocaine originates virtually entirely in South America, specifically in the three countries of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru. Colombia continues to account for the largest share of the area under coca bush cultivation (between 60 and 70 per cent each year between 2015–2020) and potential manufacture of cocaine (between one half and two thirds each year during the same period).

Levels of coca bush cultivation in Colombia, which increased strongly during the period of negotiation between the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP, plateaued in the aftermath of the signing of the peace agreement (in November 2016) and subsequently declined.^{9–10} Despite this, the potential manufacture of cocaine hydrochloride continued to increase, driven (up to 2020) by a process of concentration of coca cultivation in areas where enhanced agricultural practices and processing methods resulted in improvements in the overall productivity of coca bush cultivation: more coca leaf per unit area under cultivation; coca leaves containing higher concentrations of cocaine;¹¹ and greater efficiencies in extracting the said cocaine and converting it into an export-ready product (in the form of cocaine hydrochloride). These improvements may have been incentivized by a more competitive, diverse and compartmentalized “free market” in which farmers and traffickers operated, increasingly characterized by numerous small actors rather than the monolithic ones which previously “regulated” the market.^{12–13} This environment appears also to have facilitated the penetration of non-Colombian actors, such as the active presence of Mexican organized crime groups¹⁴ and other, new, direct links with emerging European actors.¹⁵

In 2021, cultivation in Colombia increased sharply by 43 per cent, and potential manufacture of cocaine also increased significantly by 14 per cent, reaching record levels in both cases, and driving the corresponding global totals to the highest levels ever registered. In contrast with the preceding years, the overall productivity per unit area declined as coca cultivation expanded to new fields with younger crops producing their first harvests.¹⁶

Coca bush cultivation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru followed largely similar long-term trends over the 2005–2020 period, in particular a generally increasing trend (with individual year-on-year exceptions) observed since 2015. In 2020, the onset of the global COVID pandemic likely contributed indirectly to increases in the productive area under coca leaf cultivation (net of eradication) in both countries, mainly as eradication activities were negatively impacted.^{17–18–19–20} Furthermore, the pandemic temporarily obstructed the efficiency of the early stages of the supply chain (creating difficulties for buyers to access sellers) thus leading to a temporary over-abundance of coca leaf²¹ and price declines of coca leaf (documented in both Peru and, for coca leaf sold in authorized markets, the Plurinational State of Bolivia) as well as (in the case of Peru), coca paste (PBC) and cocaine hydrochloride.²² In Peru, prices rebounded around November 2020 but subsequently declined again; as of October 2022, prices of coca leaf and cocaine hydrochloride remained well below the level of January 2020.²³ In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, prices of coca leaf sold in authorized markets fell abruptly in June 2020 and recovered somewhat in the following months, while remaining generally lower²⁴ than 2019 levels during the

9 UNODC Colombia, SIMCI, and Gobierno de Colombia, ‘Colombia: Monitoreo de Territorios Afectados por Cultivos Ilícitos 2020’ (UNODC-SIMCI, 2021).

10 UNODC, ‘World Drug Report 2022’ (Vienna: UNODC, 2022).

11 UNODC Colombia, SIMCI, and Gobierno de Colombia, ‘Colombia: Monitoreo de Territorios Afectados por Cultivos Ilícitos 2020’.

12 UNODC and Europol, ‘The Illicit Trade of Cocaine from Latin America to Europe from Oligopolies to Free-for-All?’, 1, Cocaine Insights 1 (Vienna: UNODC, September 2021).

13 UNODC Colombia, SIMCI, and Gobierno de Colombia, ‘Colombia: Monitoreo de Territorios Afectados por Cultivos Ilícitos 2021’ (UNODC-SIMCI, Forthcoming).

14 UNODC Colombia, SIMCI, and Gobierno de Colombia, ‘Colombia: Monitoreo de Territorios Afectados por Cultivos Ilícitos 2020’.

15 UNODC and Europol, ‘Cocaine Insights 1’.

16 UNODC Colombia, SIMCI, and Gobierno de Colombia, ‘Colombia: Monitoreo de Territorios Afectados por Cultivos Ilícitos 2021’.

17 UNODC and CoE Brazil, ‘Brazil in the Regional and Transatlantic Cocaine Supply Chain: The Impact of COVID-19’, Cocaine Insights 4 (Vienna: UNODC, July 2022).

18 Policía Nacional del Perú, ‘Anuario Estadístico Policial 2019’ (Lima, Peru, June 2019).’’

19 UNODC, ‘Peru, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2020’, n.d.

20 UNODC, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia: Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2020 (La Paz: United Nations publication, 2021)..

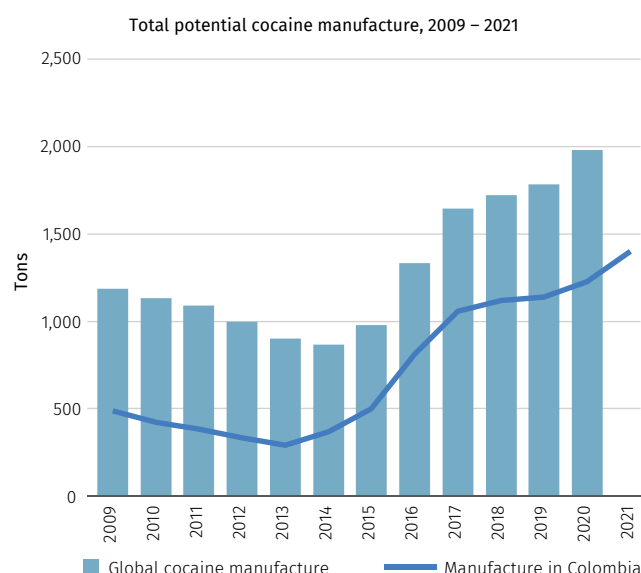
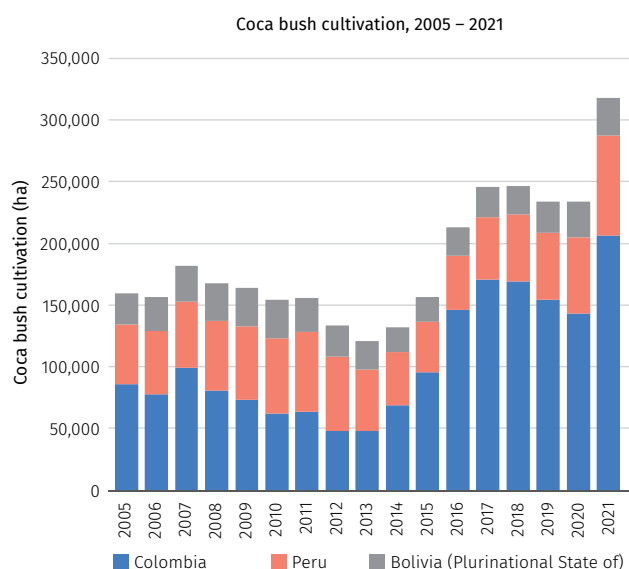
21 UNODC and CoE Brazil, ‘Cocaine Insights 4’.

22 Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo y Vida sin Drogas DEVIDA, ‘Price Monitoring Reports’, n.d.

23 DEVIDA (Peru) Monitoreo de precios de hoja de coca y derivados cocaínicos en zonas estratégicas de intervención. Reporte No 31, October 2022

24 Every month from June 2020 to December 2021, coca leaf prices, calculated as a weighted average of prices in the authorized markets of La Paz and Cochabamba and expressed in Bolivian currency, were lower than the corresponding month in 2019, with the exception of December 2020 (75 Bolivianos per kg, versus 70 Bolivianos per kg in December 2019).

Coca bush and cocaine production indicators in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru



Note: Estimate of coca bush cultivation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) in 2021 has not been confirmed by the Government of Bolivia.
Sources: UNODC calculations based on UNODC data and data from the respective Governments, and coca bush cultivation surveys carried out in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru in 2020 and previous years.

rest of 2020 and 2021.^{25 26 27}

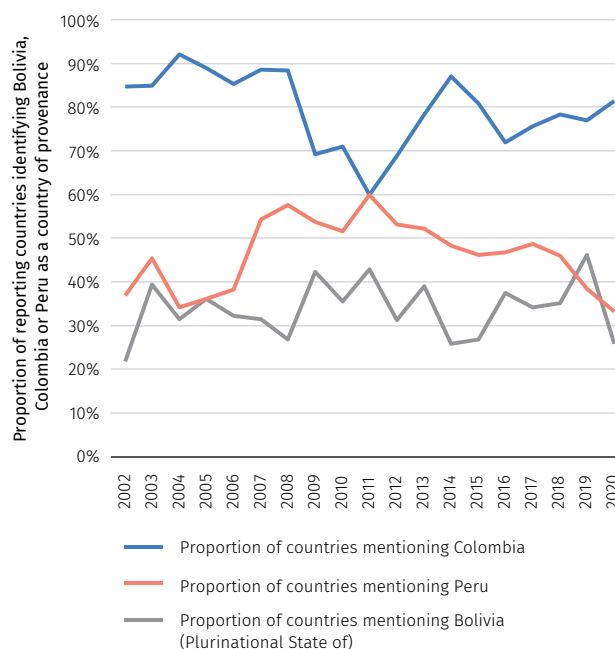
Reporting from Member States on the country of provenance (including mentions of countries of departure and transit prior to seizure, aside from countries of production or origin) of cocaine seized by their authorities, generally confirms the relative importance, at global level, of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia (Plurinational State of), in that order, as source countries for cocaine.²⁸

Given the concentration of the source of the world's supply of cocaine in three contiguous countries in South America – a feature which sets the cocaine market apart from other drug markets, such as those for heroin, cannabis or synthetic drugs – it is perhaps to be expected that the majority of global cocaine seizures are also concentrated in and around South America. From 2008 onwards, more than one half of global seizures of cocaine have taken place in this subregion. In 2020, the subregions of Central and South America and the Caribbean collectively accounted for 72 per cent of total global seizures of cocaine,²⁹ and approximately one quarter of past-year cocaine users.

Aside from supplying the domestic markets of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru and those of neighbouring countries, cocaine is trafficked from these three countries in various directions, often across

long distances, to reach consumers worldwide. Cocaine exits Colombia along various routes: via its Pacific coast,

Frequency of cocaine-producing countries mentioned by reporting countries as provenance for cocaine-type drugs (as proportion of reporting countries), 2002–2020



Note: Reporting on provenance in the Annual Report Questionnaire was revised in 2010 and again in 2020. Based on reported countries of "origin" (up till 2009), production (2010-2019), departure (2010 onwards) and transit (all years) of drugs seized by reporting countries. In order to maintain comparability over time, the frequency is expressed as a percentage of countries providing information in response to these questions.
Sources: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire, 2002-2020.

25 UNODC, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia: Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2019 (La Paz: United Nations publication, 2020).
 26 UNODC, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia: Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2020.
 27 UNODC, Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia: Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2021 (La Paz: United Nations publication, 2022).
 28 UNODC, 'Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire from Member States 2002–2020', n.d.
 29 UNODC, 'Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire', n.d.

heading northwards towards Central and North America;³⁰ via Ecuador, from where it exits via a variety of modalities to different destinations, including Europe as well as a northward route towards Central and North America;³¹ via Peru;³² via the Atlantic coast on the eastern flank of Colombia, especially through Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of),^{33 34} and to some extent through Guyana and Suriname;^{35 36} via Brazil³⁷ and on its waterways leading to the Atlantic Coast;³⁸ and across the land border with Panama.^{39 40} Outgoing cocaine consignments detected at ports in Colombia continue to be predominantly in the form of cocaine hydrochloride; in 2021, Colombian National Police seized 67 tons of cocaine hydrochloride in ports, but only 109 kg of cocaine base out of a total of 62 tons of cocaine base seized by Colombian National Police in 2021 were seized in ports.⁴¹ Operations of the Colombian National Police in 2019–20 yielded seizures of 526 kg of cocaine base along the route towards Ecuador.⁴²

From Peru, cocaine may exit through the following channels: via its extensive coastline with the Pacific Ocean; into Ecuador; via its eastern borders with Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Brazil, including through clandestine flights; and via its border with Chile.⁴³ This may include significant quantities of cocaine in base form, which so far have been documented mainly across the land borders shared with neighbouring countries; in particular a share of cocaine trafficked from Peru into Bolivia (Plurinational State of), is believed to be in the form of coca paste (PBC).^{44 45} Multiple experts indicate that trafficking into Brazil in base form also occurs across the land borders with Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia in order to feed the domestic market for

smokable cocaine consumer products (in base form),^{46 47} which are likely derived directly from coca paste (PBC) or cocaine base in the case of Brazil.⁴⁸ Some indications of the presence of laboratories in Brazil producing cocaine hydrochloride suggest however that the intended destination of cocaine in base form goes beyond the domestic Brazilian market for smoked cocaine, but the extent of this phenomenon is unknown^{49 50}, and significant numbers of laboratories processing cocaine hydrochloride for the domestic market likely also exist in Brazil.⁵¹

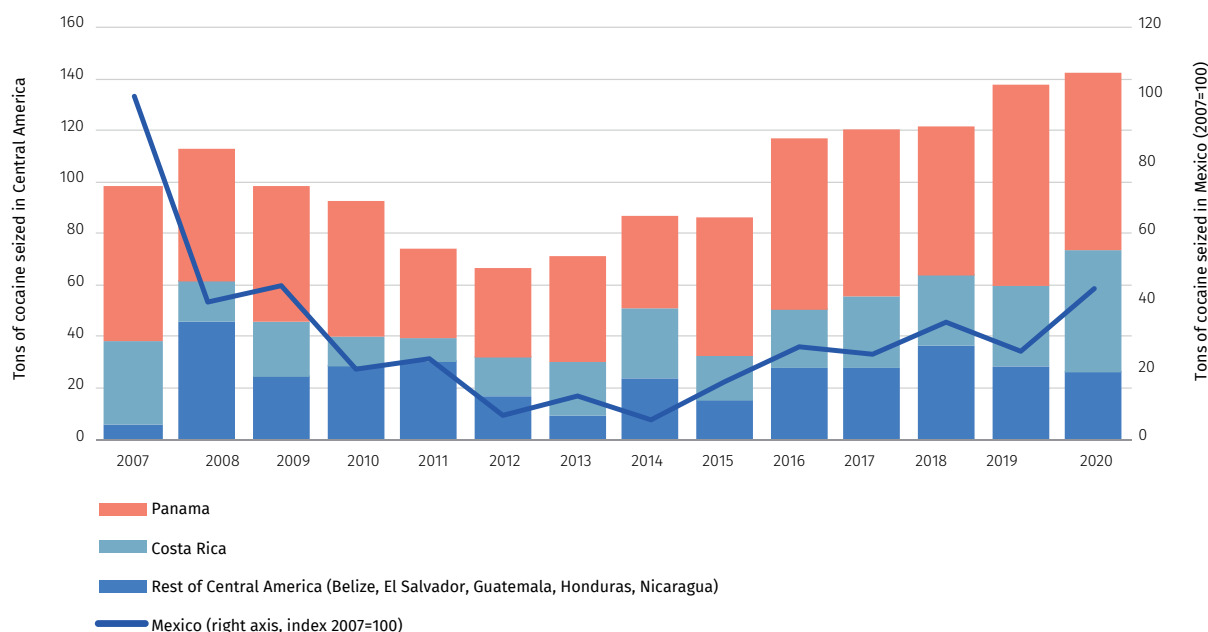
Bolivia (Plurinational State of), a landlocked country sharing borders with 5 countries, functions to some extent as a transit country in addition to a country of origin for cocaine. Aside from cocaine coming into Bolivia (Plurinational State of) across the border with Peru, cocaine trafficking from Bolivia (Plurinational State of) occurs eastwards and southwards, into Brazil,^{52 53 54} Paraguay,^{55 56 57} Argentina^{58 59 60 61} and Chile.^{62 63 64} On the other hand, aside from Brazil, the available evidence does not indicate significant quantities of cocaine reaching South American transit countries north of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (such as Ecuador, Guyana, Suriname or Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) from Bolivia (Plurinational State of).⁶⁵

There appear to be marked differences across the destination markets of Europe and North America in terms of the relative importance of the three countries of origin; in particular the share traceable to Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru tends to be higher in Europe than in North America (despite Colombia being an important

30 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets' (Colombia, 11 November 2021).
 31 Ibid.
 32 Policía Nacional de Colombia, 'Rutas y Destinos Del Tráfico de Sustancias Ilícitas, 2021' (Centro Internacional de Estudios Estratégicos contra el Narcotráfico, May 2022).
 33 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment' (Washington D.C.: United States Department of Justice, March 2021).
 34 Policía Nacional de Colombia, 'Rutas y Destinos Del Tráfico de Sustancias Ilícitas, 2021'.
 35 Interview #24, interview by UNODC, 2022.
 36 Jeremy McDermott et al., 'The Cocaine Pipeline to Europe' (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2021).
 37 Policía Nacional de Colombia, 'Rutas y Destinos Del Tráfico de Sustancias Ilícitas, 2021'.
 38 Interview #15, interview by UNODC, 2022.
 39 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.
 40 Policía Nacional de Colombia, 'Rutas y Destinos Del Tráfico de Sustancias Ilícitas, 2021'.
 41 Centro Internacional de Estudios Estratégicos contra el Narcotráfico, 'Informe Ejecutivo – Incautaciones Base y Clorhidrato de Cocaína 2018–2021' (Bogotá, April 2022).
 42 Policía Nacional de Colombia, 'Rutas y Destinos Del Tráfico de Sustancias Ilícitas, 2021'.
 43 Policía Nacional del Perú, 'Tendencias de las redes criminales del Tráfico Ilícito de Drogas en Perú' (Peru Ministry of Interior, 2020).
 44 Ibid.
 45 Mauricio Quiroz Teran, 'Resabios de Sendero y dos carteles de Brasil controlan la narcoruta Perú – Bolivia', El Deber, 19 July 2021.

46 Interview #15.
 47 Brazil Federal Police, 'PeQui Project (Identification Project for the Chemical Profile of Drugs)', n.d.
 48 UNODC, 'Cocaine: A Spectrum of Products', Cocaine Insights 2 (Vienna: UNODC, October 2021).
 49 'UNODC Technical Meeting on "Coca/Cocaine Production Sites"' (online web-based, 17 June 2021).
 50 In its response to the Annual Report Questionnaire for 2017, Brazil reported 3 cocaine hydrochloride laboratories seized during this year.
 51 Brazil Federal Police, 'PeQui Project (Identification Project for the Chemical Profile of Drugs)'.
 52 UNODC, 'Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019', n.d.
 53 UNODC, 'Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2020', n.d.
 54 UNODC, 'Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2021', n.d.
 55 UNODC, 'Paraguay, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019', n.d.
 56 Paraguay, 'Responses to the CRIMJUST "Illicit Flows" Questionnaire', 2022.
 57 Interview #34, interview by UNODC, 2022.
 58 UNODC, 'Argentina, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2016', n.d.
 59 Interview #19, interview by UNODC, 2022.
 60 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.
 61 Argentina, 'Responses to the CRIMJUST "Illicit Flows" Questionnaire', 2022.
 62 UNODC, 'Chile, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019', n.d.
 63 UNODC, 'Chile, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2020', n.d.
 64 UNODC, 'Chile, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2021', n.d.
 65 In January 2020, Mexican authorities seized 780 kg of cocaine were seized from a plane which had landed in Chetumal, close to the southern border (UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform). According to an Argentinian prosecutor cited in media coverage, the jet had likely left empty from Salta, Argentina and was loaded with cocaine in Peru or the Plurinational State of Bolivia. 'Piloto boliviano capturado en México con una tonelada de droga en 2019 tuvo un percance aéreo en Cuatro Cañadas', El Deber, 30 January 2020, sec. PAÍS.

Cocaine seizures in Central America and in Mexico, 2008–2020



Note: It should be borne in mind that significant quantities of cocaine transiting Panama and Costa Rica are destined for consumer markets outside North America, such as Europe, and thus do not necessarily transit Mexico.

Sources: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

country of origin also in Europe), while the North American market appears to be supplied predominantly from Colombia. Based on forensic profiling conducted by the Cocaine Signature Programme of the Drug Enforcement Administration (United States) during the second half of 2021, of the 436 samples taken from 99 seizures in the United States of at least 1kg each made during January–June 2021, 98 per cent were assessed to have originated from Colombia. On the other hand, out of 113 samples submitted to the Drug Enforcement Administration by 6 European countries for which the origin could be determined⁶⁶ and analysed during the same period, 67 per cent were traced to Colombia, 27 per cent to Peru, and 5 per cent to Bolivia (Plurinational State of).⁶⁷

Trafficking from South America to North America

North America, with its large consumer base,⁶⁸ continues to be one of the main destinations for cocaine trafficked from South America. Mexico is an important transit country functioning as a gateway for cocaine reaching the United States,⁶⁹ which accounts for the majority of cocaine users in North America,⁷⁰ as well as Canada (primarily via the United States, but also directly from Mexico⁷¹). Cocaine reaches Mexico from South America via different routes: via maritime shipments, especially

using go-fast boats; via clandestine flights; and also, via land.

Maritime trafficking appears to be the dominant modality along the western (Pacific) coast of the Central American landmass,⁷² with several identified maritime routes ending directly on the western coast of Mexico, including states like Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Michoacán, Jalisco and Sinaloa,^{73 74} while others make landfall further south, in Central American countries with a coast on the Pacific, such as (from north to south) Guatemala,^{75 76} El Salvador,^{77 78 79} Nicaragua,^{80 81} Costa Rica^{82 83} and Panama,⁸⁴ before continuing the journey north. Traffickers rely extensively on go-fast boats for trafficking along this route,⁸⁵ but other vessels, including semi-submersibles⁸⁶ and fishing

66 In another 39 cases the origin could not be determined.

67 Drug Enforcement Administration. January 2022 CSP Report, DEA PRB 2022–07, 2022.

68 See subsequent section on North America

69 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

70 UNODC, 'World Drug Report 2022'.

71 UNODC, 'Canada, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2020', n.d.

72 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

73 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

74 Manrique Gandaria, 'Envían droga a México por cinco rutas marítimas', El Sol de México, 26 February 2021.

75 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

76 Alex Papadovassilakis, 'The Jalisco Cartel's Quiet Expansion in Guatemala', InSight Crime, 18 May 2022.

77 Interview #16, interview by UNODC, 2022.

78 Interview #32, interview by UNODC, 2022.

79 Interview #33, interview by UNODC, 2022.

80 Interview #32.

81 Interview #33.

82 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'. Presentation by Costa Rica

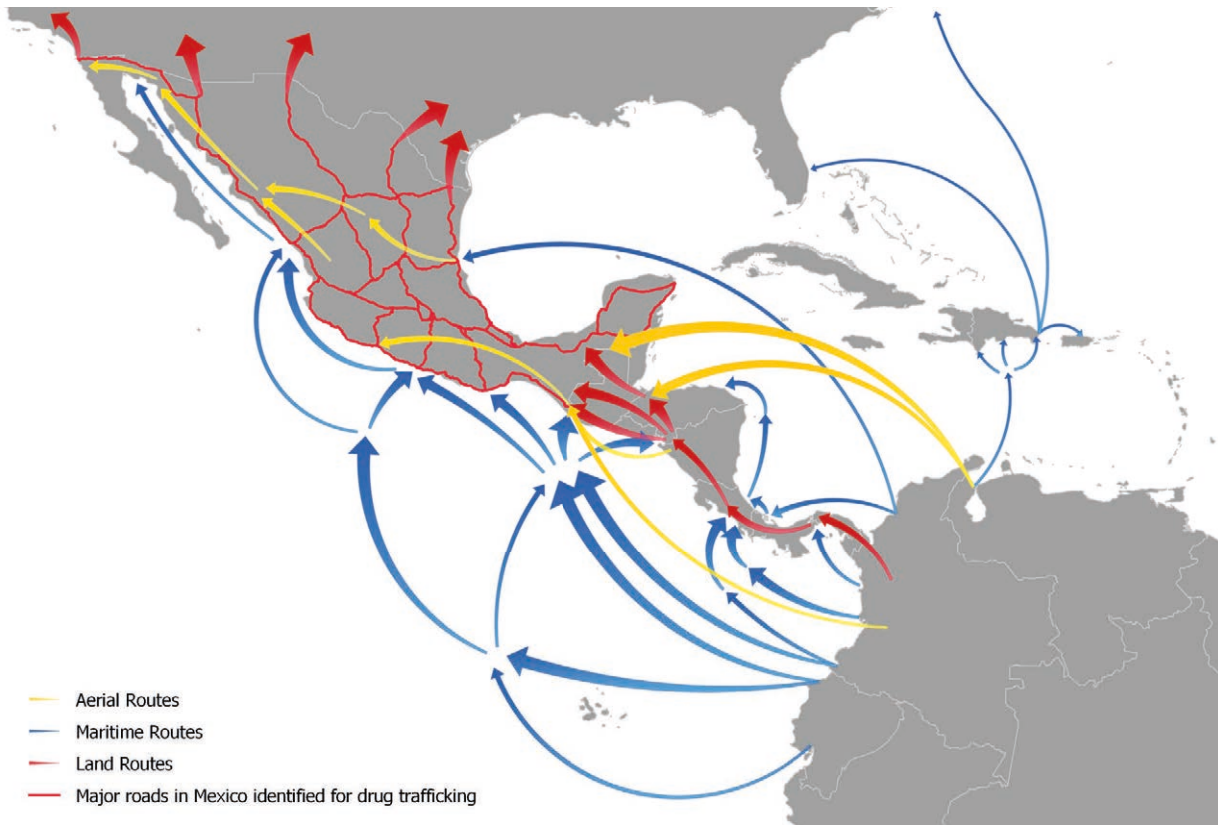
83 Interview #29, interview by UNODC, 2022.

84 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

85 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

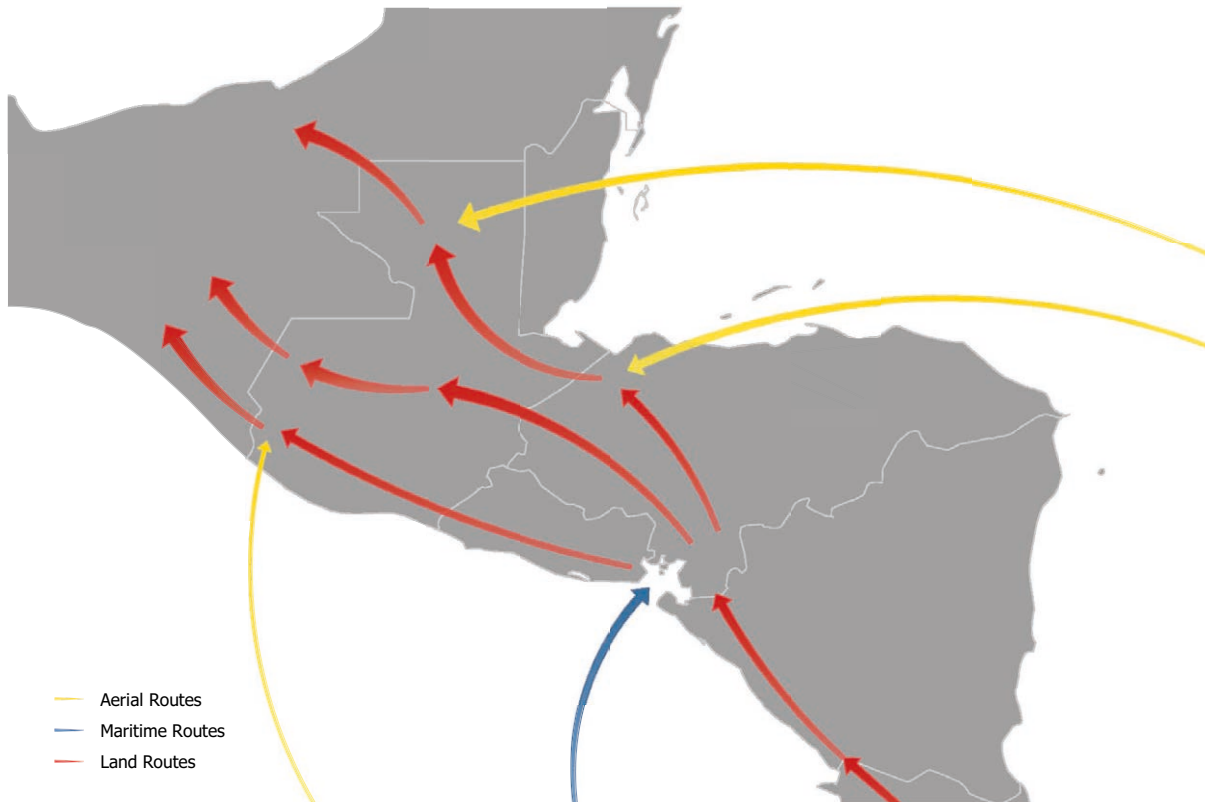
86 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

Cocaine trafficking routes from South America to North America, 2021



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
 Sources: UNODC CRIMJUST Annual Meeting of Strategic Analysts, Girardot, Colombia, November 2021; US Drug Enforcement Administration. 2020 National Drug Threat Assessment; Washington D.C.: National Drug Intelligence Center, 2021; El Heraldo, "Las seis rutas que usa el narcotráfico en su paso por Honduras", 21 February 2022.

Transition of cocaine trafficking towards Mexico from seaborne and airborne modalities to land routes, in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras



Sources: UNODC CRIMJUST Annual Meeting of Strategic Analysts, Girardot, Colombia, November 2021; UNODC interviews #16, #32 and #33; Héctor Silva Ávalos et al., "GameChangers 2020: The Resurgence of the Central American Cocaine Highway", Insight Crime, 28 December 2020; Julie López, "Por qué una aeronave con cocaína aterriza en Guatemala cada diez días desde 2019", Prensa Libre, 26 April 2021.
 The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

boats,^{87 88 89} are also used. The US Drug Enforcement Administration estimated this route to account for 74 per cent of cocaine flowing north out of South America.⁹⁰ Ecuador is a major departure country for cocaine leaving the South American landmass along this route.⁹¹ Once the vessels reach or approach the Pacific coast of Central America, cocaine may also be transferred to other maritime vessels to continue northward along the coast.⁹²

Although some clandestine flights have been observed along the Pacific coast of Central America, including some affecting the Mexican airspace close to the border with Guatemala,⁹⁷ and some departing from Ecuador to various destinations,⁹⁸ this mode of conveyance appears to be more pronounced along the eastern (Caribbean) coast, where flights are extensively used alongside maritime shipments to facilitate the northward flow of cocaine from South America towards Mexico.⁹⁹ Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) is a major point of departure for such flights.^{100 101 102} While some of these flights appear to reach Mexico directly (close to its southern borders, for example in the state of Quintana Roo),¹⁰³ others land on the Guatemalan side of the Mexico-Guatemala border,¹⁰⁴ or else in Honduras^{105 106} or Belize.¹⁰⁷

Cocaine is also trafficked through Central America towards Mexico via land routes, sometimes crossing several land borders sequentially from south to north.¹⁰⁸ Small quantities are trafficked already across the Colombia-Panama border,¹¹² but trafficking by land often comes after earlier segments of the itinerary involving

maritime or air modalities; specific instances of this transition to land routes have been documented for example in trafficking from El Salvador into Guatemala (after reaching El Salvador via maritime routes through the Gulf of Fonseca),^{113 114 115} from Honduras into Guatemala (after reaching Honduras by air^{116 117}), and from Guatemala into Mexico (after reaching Guatemala by air¹¹⁸).

Once cocaine enters Mexico, it is trafficked internally towards the United States, predominantly by land, and also by means of internal clandestine flights.¹¹⁹ In contrast with the important role of containerized shipping on maritime routes used for trafficking to Europe, cocaine trafficking from Mexico into the United States has been mainly documented across the shared land border using non-containerized mode of conveyance (even if sometimes commingled with legitimate goods), often concealed in vehicles, and sometimes using underground tunnels and drones.¹²⁰ However, the use of maritime vessels for trafficking into the United States, including through official points of entry, has also been observed.¹²¹

Aside from cocaine transiting through Mexico, a minority of cocaine reaches the territory of the United States via the eastern Caribbean route, whereby the drug moves northwards from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) towards the Caribbean islands via a combination of go-fast vessels and fishing boats, and reaches the United States via Puerto Rico and Florida, bypassing the landmass of Central America and Mexico entirely; the Dominican Republic functions as an important transit country on this route.^{122 123 124} Furthermore, maritime containers are used to traffic cocaine from the Dominican Republic to ports in Florida, Georgia, Philadelphia, and New York.¹²⁵

87 Ibid.

88 Interview #32.

89 Interview #33.

90 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

91 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

92 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

93 Interview #29.

94 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

95 Interview #32.

96 Interview #33.

97 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Interview #24.

101 Interview #16.

102 Alessandro Ford, 'Game Changers 2020: The Resurgence of the Central American Cocaine Highway', InSight Crime, 28 December 2020.

103 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

104 Interview #24.

105 Ibid.

106 Interview #16.

107 Ibid.

108 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

109 Interview #32.

110 Interview #33.

111 Ford, 'Game Changers 2020: The Resurgence of the Central American Cocaine Highway'.

112 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

113 Interview #32.

114 Interview #33.

115 Interview #16.

116 Ibid.

117 Ford, 'Game Changers 2020: The Resurgence of the Central American Cocaine Highway'.

118 Ibid.

119 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

120 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

121 Ibid.

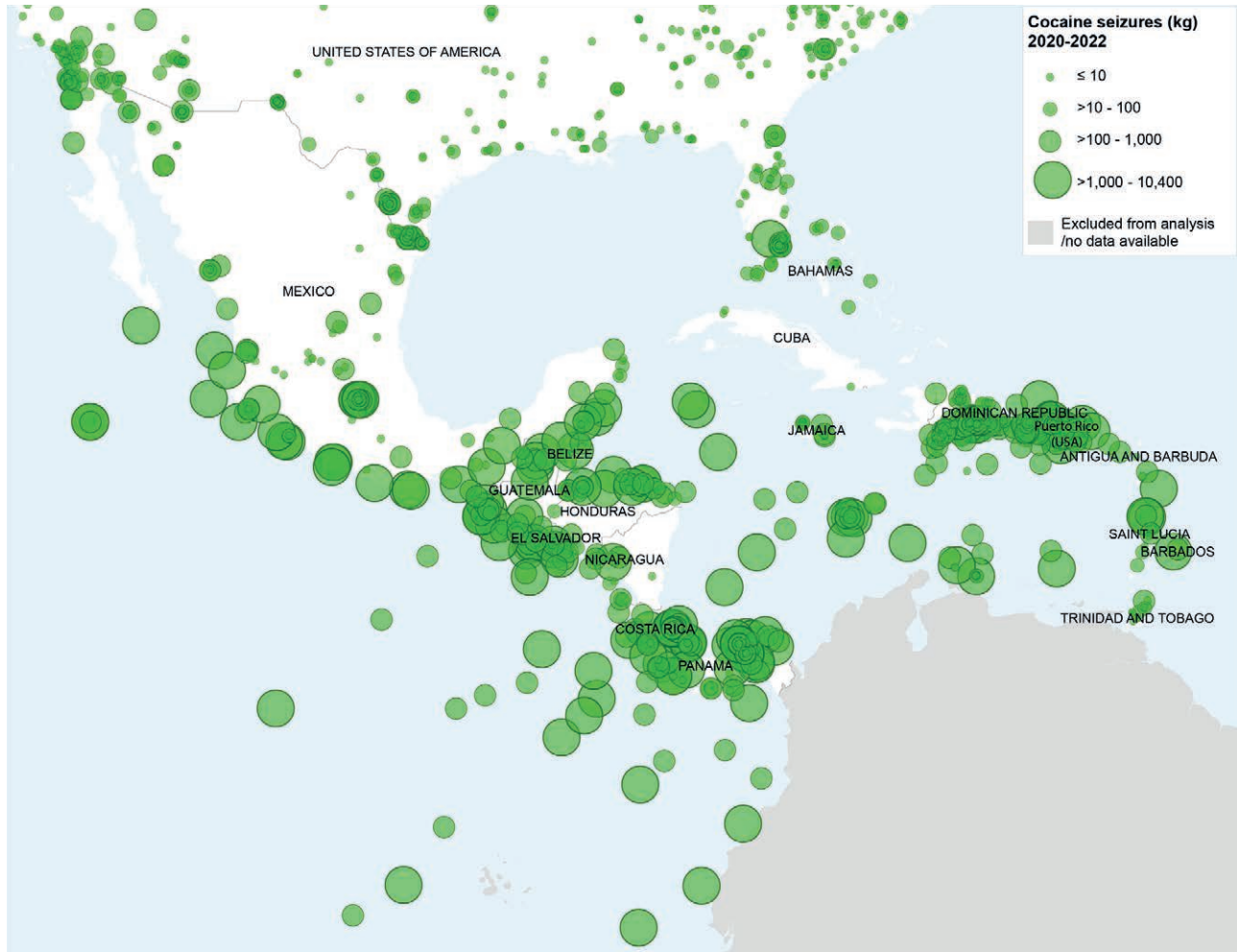
122 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

123 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

124 Interview #24.

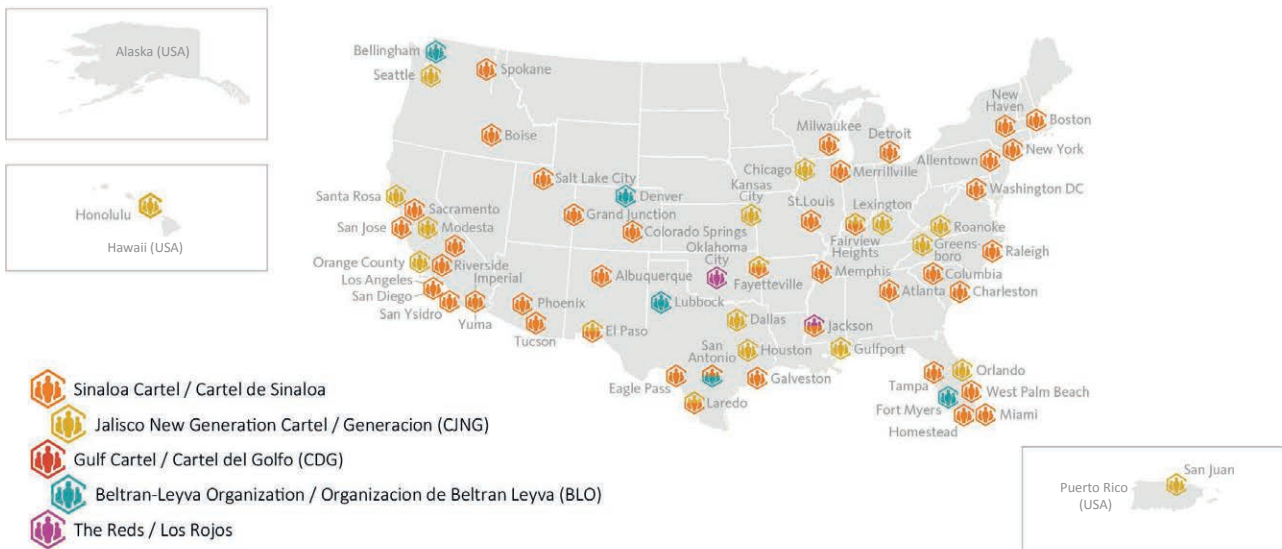
125 Drug Enforcement Administration, '2020 National Drug Threat Assessment'.

Individual cocaine seizure cases recorded in UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform in and around Central America and the Caribbean, 2020–June 2022



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Source: UNODC, Drugs Monitoring Platform.

Dominant Mexican transnational organized crime groups active in the United States, 2019



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Note: Different groups may be present in the same city; only the ones with the strongest presence are shown. Source: Adapted from: US Drug Enforcement Administration, National Drug Threat Assessment 2020, March 2021.

Cocaine trafficking from the Pacific coast of South America, 2019-2021



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Sources: UNODC, CRIMJUST Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets, Girardot, Colombia, November 2021; UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform; Policía Nacional del Perú, *Tendencias de las redes criminales del Tráfico Ilícito de Drogas en Perú*, 2020; World Customs Organization Regional Intelligence Liaison Office - Western Europe; Ministerio Público de Chile, Fiscalía, "Observatorio del Narcotráfico, Informe 2021", September 2021.

According to United States authorities, Mexican organized crime groups, especially the *Cártel de Sinaloa* and the *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación*, are foremost in orchestrating the trafficking of cocaine into the United States, and they are also active within the United States, controlling the wholesale distribution within the country. Dominican groups manage the incoming flows through the eastern Caribbean route and are especially involved in the distribution of cocaine in the north-east of the United States, including having a role at the mid-level (procuring from suppliers within the United States).¹²⁶

Trafficking within and from South America to other markets

Aside from northwards trafficking towards the North American market, a number of other intra-regional and inter-regional trafficking routes originating in South

America, notably maritime routes, are important in supplying cocaine markets worldwide.

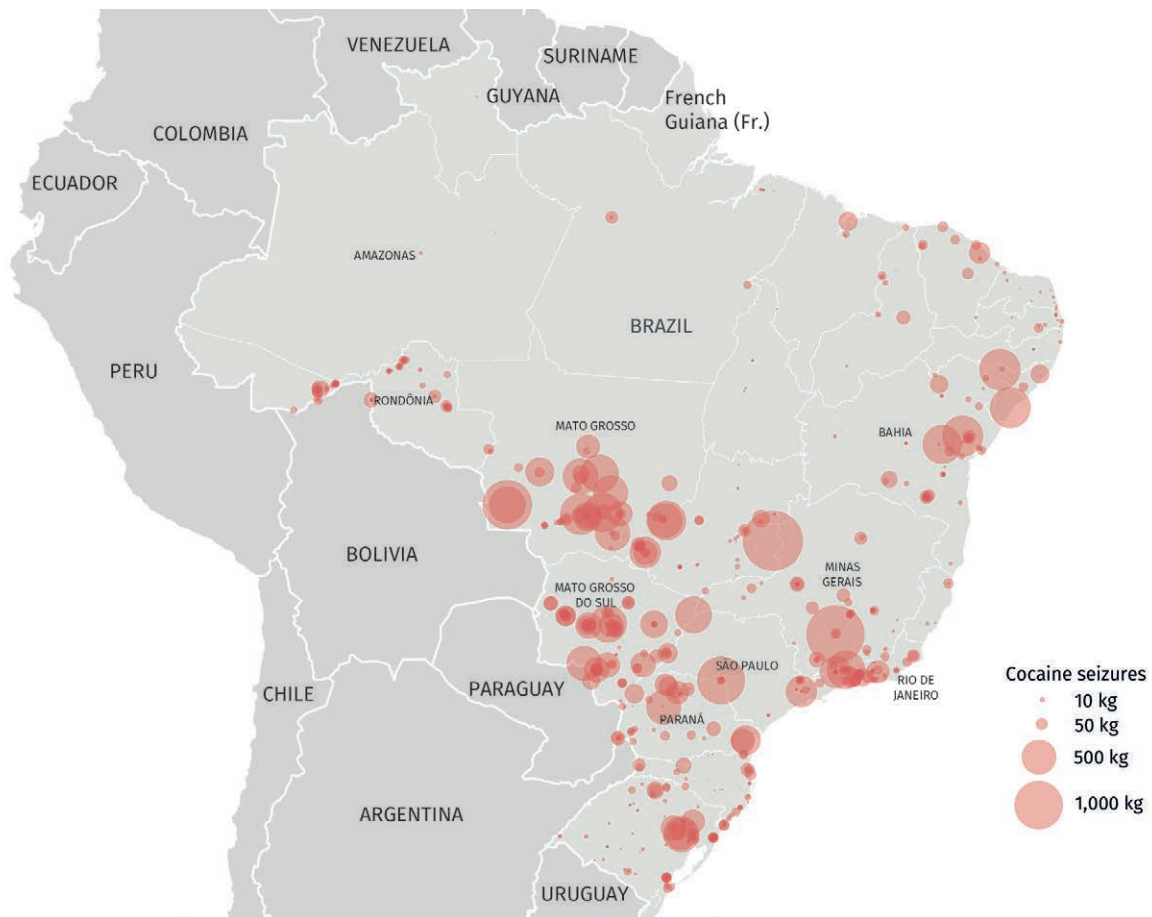
Firstly, the Pacific coast is a springboard for shipments of cocaine to outlying destinations. In 2021 alone, Colombian authorities made at least four seizures of 1 ton or more at the Pacific port of Buenaventura, from containers destined for Guatemala, Netherlands, Mexico, and Spain.¹²⁷ Peruvian authorities estimated that, as of 2019, maritime routes accounted for 45 per cent of the outgoing flows of cocaine-type drugs from Peru; these routes exploit in particular the legal trade from ports such as Callao and Paita.¹²⁸ Ecuador, bordering both Colombia and Peru, has in recent years gained in importance as a departure point for cocaine shipments, especially those destined towards Europe; based on reporting by customs

126 Ibid.

127 UNODC, 'Drugs Monitoring Platform', n.d.

128 Policía Nacional del Perú, 'Tendencias de las redes criminales del Tráfico Ilícito de Drogas en Perú'.

Cocaine seizures on highways by Brazilian Road Police, 2020



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Source: Polícia Rodoviária Federal, Brazil; Centre of Excellence for Illicit Drug Supply Reduction, Brazil.

authorities to the World Customs Organization, the proportion of cocaine reported to the Regional Intelligence Office for Western Europe with Ecuador identified as a departure point rose from 14 per cent in 2018 to 29 per cent in 2020 and 28 per cent in 2021.^{129 130}

Based on seizures made by Ecuadorean authorities, the proportion of cocaine destined for Europe increased from 9 per cent in 2019 to 33 per cent in 2021, increasing to more than 50 percent when only counting cases where the destination was known.¹³¹ In 2021 most of the largest seizures in Ecuador were made at the port city of Guayaquil.¹³² In January 2021, Gambian authorities seized nearly 3 tons of cocaine from a container, likely owned by a Gambian resident, which had been shipped from Guayaquil.¹³³ These routes are in addition to the more established trafficking from Ecuador towards North America, mainly on undeclared sea voyages using go-fast boats, underwater craft and fishing vessels (sometimes in combination with tug-boats).¹³⁴ Chile is also used as a transit country for cocaine

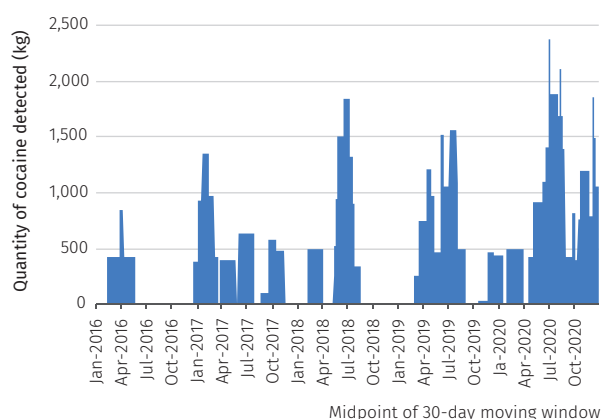
trafficked from Colombia and Peru¹³⁵ to Europe and the United States, in particular via ships departing the port of San Antonio;¹³⁶ this includes a strategy in which containerized goods are nominally imported and re-exported so that the country of departure appears as Chile.^{137 138}

Secondly, large quantities of cocaine are trafficked across land borders into Brazil from each of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru.^{139 140} The entry channels include trafficking by air (small planes), land (couriers, cars, trucks and buses) and rivers (small boats, especially in the Amazon area).¹⁴¹ Aside from trafficking directly from the source countries, cocaine also enters Brazil from Paraguay. Paraguayan authorities assessed that, in 2019, 38 per cent of cocaine salts seized on their territory was destined for Brazil.¹⁴²

129 WCO RILO (Regional Intelligence Liaison Office) Western Europe.
 130 Shipments with an unknown point of departure are not considered.
 131 'CRIMJUST Annual Meeting - Latin American and Caribbean' (Colombia, 3 February 2022).
 132 UNODC, 'Drugs Monitoring Platform', n.d.
 133 Ibid.
 134 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

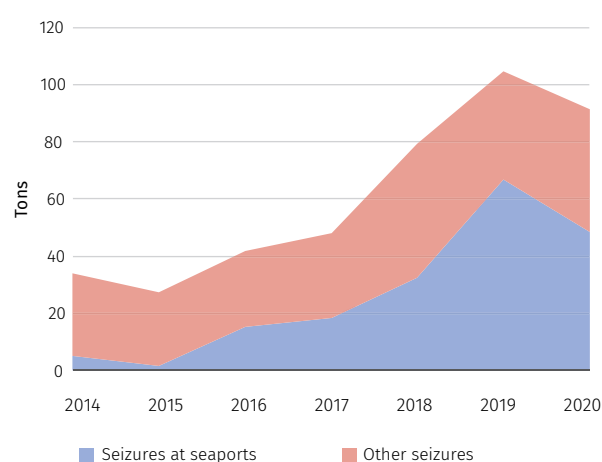
135 Interview #2, interview by UNODC, 2022.
 136 Fiscalía de Chile, 'Informe 2021 Observatorio del Narcotráfico en Chile' (Fiscalía de Chile, 2021).
 137 Interview #2.
 138 UNODC, 'Chile, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2021'.
 139 UNODC, 'Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019'.
 140 UNODC, 'Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019'.
 141 UNODC, 'Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019'.
 142 UNODC, 'Paraguay, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019'.

Quantity of cocaine detected in aircraft-related trafficking incidents in Brazil, 2016-2020 (30-day moving window)



Source: Monitoring of media reports by UNODC; reproduced from UNODC and CoE Brazil, 'Brazil in the Regional and Transatlantic Cocaine Supply Chain: The Impact of COVID-19', Cocaine Insights 4 (Vienna: UNODC, July 2022).

Cocaine seized in Brazil by Federal Police, breakdown into seaport seizures and others



Source: Polícia Federal, Brazil; reproduced from UNODC and CoE Brazil, 'Brazil in the Regional and Transatlantic Cocaine Supply Chain: The Impact of COVID-19', Cocaine Insights 4 (Vienna: UNODC, July 2022).

The Brazilian states of Mato Grosso (bordering the Plurinational State of Bolivia) and Mato Grosso do Sul (bordering the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Paraguay) are important points of entry for cocaine trafficking.¹⁴³ Clandestine flights trafficking cocaine into Brazil on small planes are often detected in this region, and this modality appears to have increased recently, likely as a reaction by traffickers to obstacles in using other channels impacted by restrictions related to COVID-19.¹⁴⁴ However, cocaine also enters Brazil through the northern states of Amazonas (bordering Colombia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) as well as Peru) and Roraima (bordering Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in addition to Guyana).^{145 146} The northern parts of Brazil are difficult to police, with large expanses of tropical jungle, while transportation along the rivers is inexpensive;^{147 148} seizures in this region are potentially under-represented in comparison with the extent of trafficking. According to Colombian law enforcement, 7.7 tons of cocaine *en route* to Brazil were seized over 2020–2021. The region of Guaviare (Colombia) appears to be key in the supply channel across the Colombia-Brazil border. Moreover, the area around the triple intersection of the borders of Brazil, Colombia and Peru is also affected by various other types of criminal activity, including trafficking in persons, wildlife crime and illegal mining.¹⁴⁹

According to the Brazilian Federal Police, over the period 2014 to August 2021, 65 per cent of incoming clandestine flights (carrying drugs) detected in Brazil originated in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, followed by Paraguay

(17 per cent), Peru (8 per cent), Colombia (6 per cent) and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (4 per cent).¹⁵⁰

Some of the cocaine reaching Brazil serves to supply its substantial domestic market; however large quantities are further trafficked towards destination markets^{151 152} such as Europe, notably in containerized shipments via the numerous seaports along Brazil's Atlantic coast.¹⁵³ Large quantities of cocaine are seized both at Brazilian seaports and at seaports in destination countries, having departed from Brazil,¹⁵⁴ especially in Europe. Indeed, seizures at seaports have defined the overall trend in aggregate seizures in Brazil over the period 2014–2020 and exceeded half of the total seizures in Brazil in 2019 and 2020.¹⁵⁵ Based on reporting by customs authorities of countries in Western and Central Europe to the World Customs Organization, in 2021 Brazil was the second most prominent (by weight, after Ecuador) country of departure¹⁵⁶ among cocaine seizures reported to the Regional Intelligence Office for Western Europe.¹⁵⁷ Recently, a diversification of the Brazilian ports used has been observed, with the total share seized in the ports of Santos (São Paulo) and Paranaguá (Paraná) decreasing while other ports, such as Salvador (Bahia), Ilhéus (Bahia) and Joinville (Santa Catarina) registered increases.^{158 159} Diversification is also visible in terms of the destination of cocaine trafficked from Brazilian ports; the number of known destination countries identified from seizures

143 UNODC and CoE Brazil, 'Cocaine Insights 4'.

144 Ibid.

145 Interview #15.

146 Interview #36, interview by UNODC, 2022.

147 Interview #15.

148 Interview #36.

149 Policía Nacional de Colombia, 'Rutas y Destinos Del Tráfico de Sustancias Ilícitas, 2021'.

150 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

151 Interview #15.

152 Interview #36.

153 UNODC and CoE Brazil, 'Cocaine Insights 4'.

154 Ibid.

155 Based on data from Brazilian Federal Police.

156 The point of departure represents the location from which the shipment containing the seized drug was dispatched, based on the details of (declared) itineraries available to Customs Officers.

157 WCO RILO (Regional Intelligence Liaison Office) Western Europe.

158 UNODC, 'Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2021'.

159 UNODC and CoE Brazil, 'Cocaine Insights 4'.

in Brazilian ports grew from 7 in 2018 to 20 in 2019 and 21 in 2020. The main destinations in 2019 and 2020 were Belgium and Netherlands, followed by Spain.^{160 161}

In Brazil, the organized crime group *Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC)* reportedly dominates most of the international cocaine trafficking routes through Brazil to Europe and Africa¹⁶², and appears to be the primary interlocutor for European groups sourcing cocaine supplies from Brazil,¹⁶³ notably the Italian OCG *'Ndrangheta'*.¹⁶⁴ The foremost traditional rival of the PCC, the *Comando Vermelho*, reportedly also has international drug trafficking links to source countries.¹⁶⁵ Another important group which has emerged recently is the *Familia do Norte*, especially active close to the triple border of Brazil, Peru and Colombia. These three major groups are in competition for the dominance of the drug trade in the area around the triple intersection of the Amazonian borders of Brazil, Colombia and Peru.^{166 167 168}

A channel which has recently gained in importance is the “southern cone” route which goes from Peru and Bolivia (Plurinational State of) towards the River Plate estuary on the Atlantic coast of Argentina or Uruguay, frequently through Paraguay, and typically relies on the Paraguay-Paraná Waterway, often used in combination with clandestine flights.¹⁶⁹

Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru share a land border, and some cocaine trafficking¹⁷⁰ occurs from Peru into Bolivia (Plurinational State of),¹⁷¹ including via clandestine flights.¹⁷² Peruvian authorities linked clandestine airstrips in the regions of Ayacucho, Huánuco, Junín, Madre de Dios, Pasco, San Martín and Ucayali to trafficking by air to the Plurinational State of Bolivia (and onward to Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil). While flights from Peru into Brazil were an emerging trend as of 2020 – leaving mainly from the region of Loreto – clandestine airstrips in Peru were concentrated in the contiguous regions of Huánuco (45 per cent), Pasco (45 per cent) and Ucayali (8 per cent).¹⁷³ The Peruvian authorities further estimated that, as of 2019, clandestine flights to Bolivia (Plurinational

State of) and Brazil accounted for 37 per cent of the outgoing flows of cocaine-type drugs from Peru.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, they assessed that increased seizures of coca paste (PBC) in several regions¹⁷⁵ were possibly linked to trafficking eastwards for further processing in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Paraguay, Brazil or Europe.¹⁷⁶ Bolivian authorities seized 50 clandestine laboratories manufacturing cocaine hydrochloride (“crystallization” laboratories) in 2019,¹⁷⁷ 36 in 2020¹⁷⁸ and 26 in 2021.¹⁷⁹

Paraguay is an important transit country which receives cocaine predominantly across the shared border with Bolivia (Plurinational State of),^{180 181 182} and whose role has recently been highlighted by detections of large quantities of cocaine trafficked across the Atlantic. For example, in February 2021, 16.2 tons of cocaine were seized in Hamburg (Germany), having been shipped from Villeta port in Paraguay (on the Paraguay River, close to Asunción).¹⁸³ The main points of entry into Paraguay are the north (Chaco Paraguayo) and northeast (departments of Concepción, Amambay and San Pedro) of the country, and clandestine flights are an important modality used.¹⁸⁴ To a lesser extent, cocaine enters Paraguay through the land border with Bolivia (Plurinational State of) – both at official checkpoints and by means of irregular passage.¹⁸⁵ In 2019, Paraguayan authorities seized 302 kg of incoming cocaine trafficked by air and 458 kg by land.^{186 187}

From the landlocked countries of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Paraguay, cocaine trafficking towards the Atlantic Ocean proceeds along two major routes:¹⁸⁸ eastward through Brazil; or southward towards the River Plate ports of Argentina and Uruguay (along the “southern cone” route), via a combination of waterborne and airborne con-

160 Data from Polícia Federal, Brazil.

161 UNODC and CoE Brazil, ‘Cocaine Insights 4’.

162 UNODC, ‘Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019’.

163 Interview #36.

164 UNODC and Europol, ‘Cocaine Insights 1’.

165 UNODC, ‘Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019’.

166 Ibid.

167 Interview #15.

168 Interview #36.

169 This route does not include trafficking through Chile.

170 Throughout this report, the term “cocaine” refers to any of the forms of cocaine, including cocaine salts (such as cocaine hydrochloride) as well as products containing cocaine in its base form, such as coca paste (PBC), refined cocaine base, “crack” cocaine.

171 UNODC, ‘Plurinational State of Bolivia, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2018, 2019, 2020’, n.d.

172 Policía Nacional del Perú, ‘Tendencias de las redes criminales del Tráfico Ilícito de Drogas en Perú’.

173 Ibid.

174 Ibid.

175 Ayacucho, Cusco, Loreto, Junín, Pasco, San Martín and Ucayali.

176 Policía Nacional del Perú, ‘Tendencias de las redes criminales del Tráfico Ilícito de Drogas en Perú’.

177 UNODC, ‘Plurinational State of Bolivia, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019’, n.d..

178 Fuerza Especial de Lucha Contra El Narcotráfico, ‘Resultados Obtenidos en la Lucha Contra El Narcotráfico’, felcn.gob.bo, 2020. “Recycling” laboratories are not included.

179 Fuerza Especial de Lucha Contra El Narcotráfico, ‘Resultados Obtenidos en la Lucha Contra El Narcotráfico’, felcn.gob.bo, 2021. “Recycling” laboratories are not included.

180 UNODC, ‘Paraguay, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019’..

181 Paraguay, ‘Responses to the CRIMJUST “Illicit Flows” Questionnaire’, 2022.

182 Interview #34.

183 UNODC, ‘Drugs Monitoring Platform’, n.d.

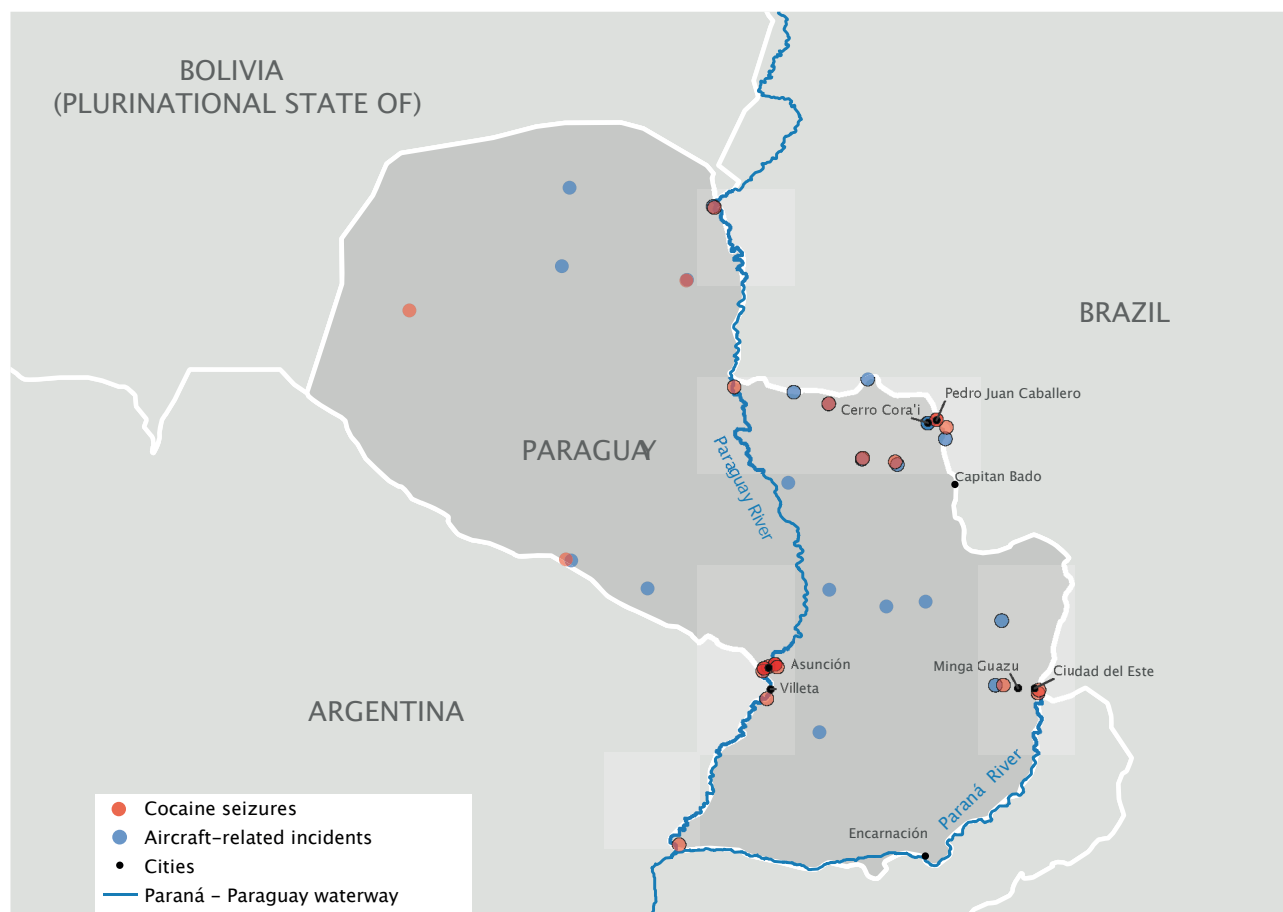
184 Interview #34.

185 Ibid.

186 UNODC, ‘Paraguay, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019’.

187 The corresponding information for 2020 was not available.

188 In addition, trafficking from Bolivia (Plurinational State of) into Chile also occurs. In its response to the UNODC Annual Report Questionnaire for 2020, Chile identified Bolivia (Plurinational State of) in third place (after Colombia and Peru) as a country of departure for cocaine hydrochloride reaching its territory, and in first place for the reporting category “coca paste/refined cocaine base”. However, the latter likely represents coca paste (PBC) likely intended for the domestic market; as of 2020, the lifetime prevalence of use of coca paste (PBC) among the general population was estimated at 2.6 per cent, and past-year prevalence at 0.3 per cent.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
 Note: Some aircraft-related incidents involve a seizure of cocaine.
 Source: UNODC Drug Monitoring Platform.

veyances. The Paraguay-Paraná Waterway is a key channel enabling the latter route.

The Paraguay-Paraná Waterway (*Hidrovia Paraguay-Paraná – HPP*) consists mainly of two fluvial branches which merge into one, namely: a section of the Paraná River – from Foz de Iguazú (at the triple border of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay) downstream to the confluence with the Paraguay River (near Corrientes) and all the way to the estuary at the Atlantic Ocean; and most of the Paraguay River – from Puerto Cáceres (Brazil) downstream.¹⁸⁹ In addition, the Tamengo canal, an 11km long stretch of water along the border between Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Brazil flowing into the Paraguay River, is also considered to be part of the Paraguay-Paraná Waterway.¹⁹⁰ The different branches of the *HPP* amount to around 4,100km of navigable waterway of crucial importance for the movement of goods, connecting more than 200 ports and docks of 5 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay) to the River Plate estuary (close to Buenos

Aires, Argentina and Montevideo, Uruguay), and hence to the Atlantic.¹⁹¹

This channel for legal trade has increasingly been exploited to traffic cocaine towards destination markets outside South America. Argentina receives significant shares of incoming cocaine across the borders with Bolivia^{192 193 194 195} or Paraguay^{196 197 198} via different modalities. The main entry point for cocaine has in the past been its northwestern border (provinces of Salta and Jujuy) a hotspot for contraband.¹⁹⁹ The border with Paraguay in the northeast was predominantly used for trafficking of cannabis originating in Paraguay into Argentina.²⁰⁰ In recent years, however, the cannabis trafficking routes have been increasingly used to traffic cocaine.

189 Comité Intergubernamental de la Hidrovia Paraguay-Paraná, 'Informe de la Secretaría Ejecutiva del CIH' (Comité Intergubernamental de la Hidrovia Paraguay-Paraná, 2018).

190 Ibid.

191 Honorable Cámara de Diputados de la Nación Argentina, 'Proyecto de Resolución, Expediente 5386-D-2019', hcdn.gov.ar, 4 December 2019.

192 UNODC, 'Argentina, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2016'.

193 Interview #19.

194 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

195 Argentina, 'Responses to the CRIMJUST "Illicit Flows" Questionnaire', 2022.

196 Interview #19.

197 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

198 Argentina, 'Responses to the CRIMJUST "Illicit Flows" Questionnaire', 2022.

199 'Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets'.

200 Ibid.

Traditional and emerging inland cocaine trafficking routes towards the southern Atlantic



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Sources: UNODC, annual report questionnaire; UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform; Official National Publications; UNODC CRIMJUST Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets, Girardot, Colombia, November 2021; and UNODC and CoE Brazil, *Brazil in the regional and transatlantic cocaine supply chain: The impact of COVID-19*, Cocaine Insights 4, UNODC, Vienna, July 2022

²⁰¹ ²⁰² The same criminal groups that had been providing logistics for cannabis now use their infrastructure for cocaine as well.²⁰³

Some of these incoming flows into Argentina likely feed into the domestic market. The available anecdotal evidence on maritime consignments seized in destination countries suggests that the waterborne segment of itineraries having transited the HPP often begins further upstream, in Paraguay. Over the period February 2020–July 2022, at least 10 instances were documented of large

quantities of cocaine (500 kg or more) seized in maritime ports in Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain which appear to have departed from Paraguay and reached the Atlantic Ocean via the Paraguay-Paraná waterway.²⁰⁴

The Paraguayan cities and ports along the Paraguay River, such as Asunción and nearby Villeta, are key points of transit and trans-shipment. In October 2020, 2.9 tons of cocaine were seized in Villeta Port from a containerized shipment which was meant to travel downstream along the Paraguay River and on to the Atlantic Ocean, Europe

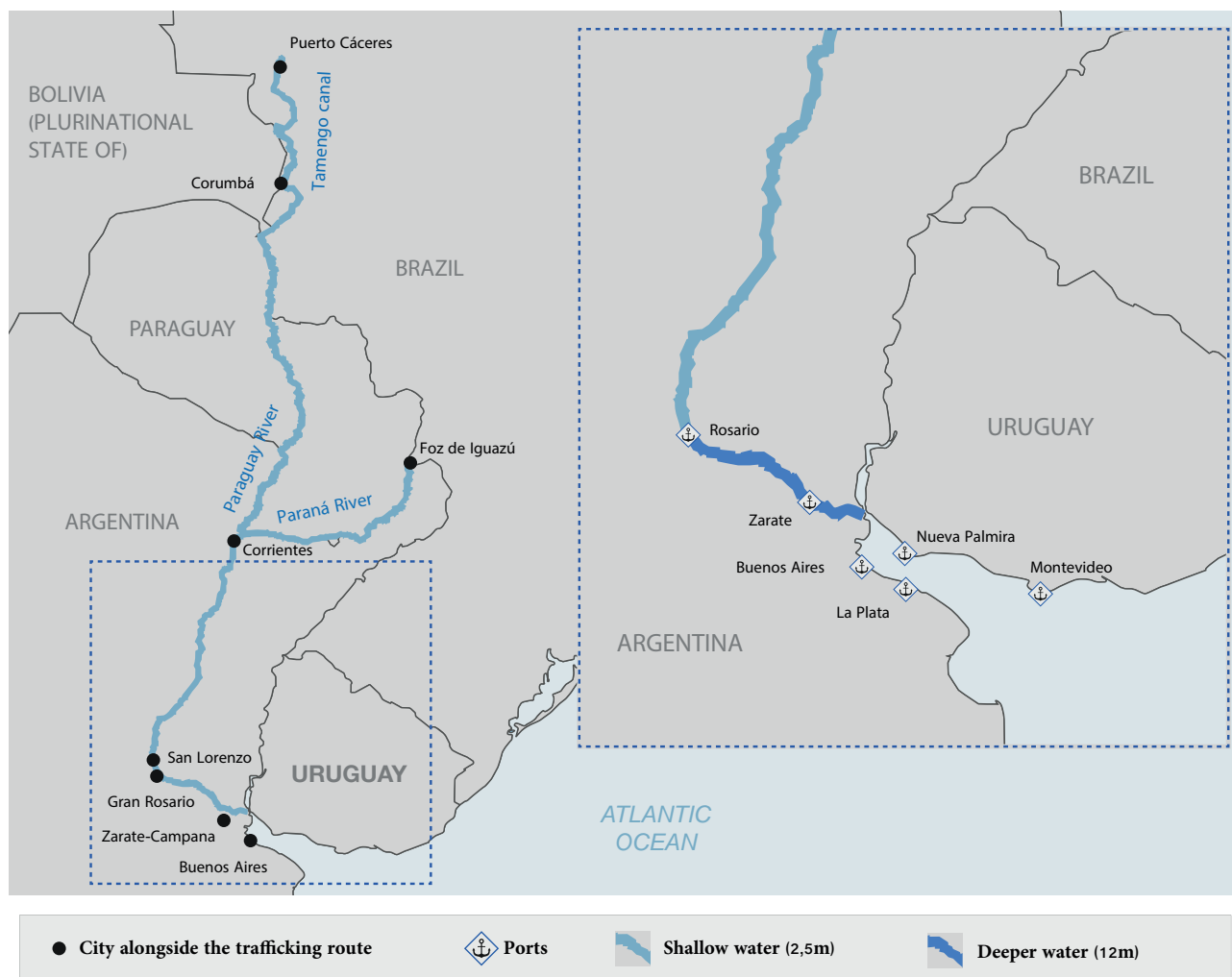
²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Interview #19.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ UNODC, 'Drugs Monitoring Platform', n.d.

The Paraná-Paraguay waterway



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Sources: Comité Intergubernamental de la Hidrovía Paraguay-Paraná. Informe de la Secretaría Ejecutiva del CIH, 2018; Argentina, Ministerio de Economía- Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca, *Hidrovía Paraná-Paraguay*.

and subsequently Israel, including a stop in Belgium.²⁰⁵ Several of the seizures (mentioned above) made in Europe after having transited through Paraguay, displayed links to Asunción or the nearby Villeta port. This included a seizure of 11 tons of cocaine in Antwerp (Belgium) in April 2021 and a seizure of 16.2 tons of cocaine in Hamburg (Germany).²⁰⁶

While the waterborne segment of the trafficking itinerary often begins in Paraguay, logistics necessitate that shipments are trans-shipped between vessels further downstream, in Argentina or Uruguay. Not all vessels can navigate all parts of the HPP; big ocean-going vessels cannot navigate all the way upstream because the waterway becomes too shallow. Upriver the waterway may be no more than 2.5 metres deep²⁰⁷ (depending on the rain season in the Amazon basin and the status of the gates in

the hydroelectric dams); hence the cargo in these places must be shipped on barges (typically joined together on barge “trains”) propelled by tugboats. One barge train can consist of up to 36 units and may carry up to 54,000 tons, thus simplifying concealment and making detection through the HPP transit route difficult.²⁰⁸ The waterway widens downriver and deepens to over 12 metres by the time it reaches the River Plate estuary.²⁰⁹

Cargo destined to be shipped on ocean vessels must be trans-shipped at some point on the HPP (or the River Plate estuary where the HPP meets the Atlantic). Large ocean-going vessels, such as those with Panamax hulls, can only sail up the Paraná River up to Rosario and nearby San Lorenzo, where the depth is still no less

205 Ibid.

206 Ibid. Ultima Hora, ‘Fiscalía allana firmas en investigación de envíos de droga a Bélgica’, Ultima Hora, 13 April 2021.

207 Ministerio de Economía Argentina, ‘Hidrovía Paraná-Paraguay’ (Ministerio de Economía Argentina, n.d.).

208 Ibid.

209 Comité Intergubernamental de la Hidrovía Paraguay-Paraná, ‘Informe de la Secretaría Ejecutiva del CIH’.

than 10 metres.^{210 211 212} Thus, San Lorenzo and the ports downstream from it, such as Rosario, Zarate-Campana, Buenos Aires, Nueva Palmira and Montevideo, are the places where transshipment of cargo – and any cocaine consignments concealed therein – must occur. One such instance came to light in the seizure mentioned above of 16.2 tons of cocaine seized in Hamburg (Germany), which, having been shipped from Paraguay, was trans-shipped at Buenos Aires (Argentina).²¹³

Aside from consignments reaching the ocean through the final stretches of the Paraná River in Argentina, the “southern cone” route may include shipments which are loaded on to ocean-going vessels directly at the ports at the mouth of this river, such as Montevideo (Uruguay). For example, in December 2019, 4.4 tons of cocaine were seized in the port of Montevideo from containers destined for Lome (Togo). The cocaine had been transported from a ranch in the department of Soriano, where an additional 1.5 tons were also seized.²¹⁴ Cocaine shipments are sometimes consolidated within Uruguay before being shipped out of its port.²¹⁵

During the period September 2018–December 2019, media sources documented at least five instances (including the one above) of large quantities of cocaine (all in excess of 400 kg) seized in maritime ports in Germany and Uruguay, from containerized shipments departing or transiting from Uruguay, with destinations in Africa or Europe.²¹⁶

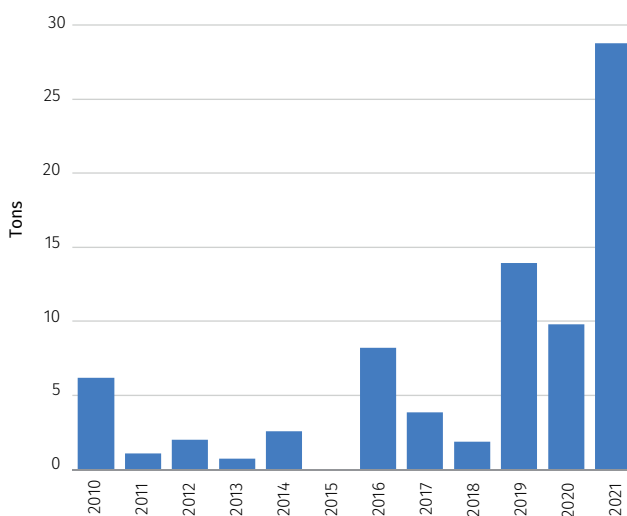
Clandestine flights are reportedly the foremost modality for inbound trafficking into Uruguay; Uruguayan authorities assessed that slightly more than three quarters of cocaine hydrochloride seized during 2020 had been trafficked by air.²¹⁷ Clandestine flights into Uruguay deliver cocaine both by landing on airstrips or by air-dropping the consignment, without landing, to be picked up by accomplices;²¹⁸ as of 2020, the points of entry for such flights included the northern departments of Artigas, Salto and Paysandú.²¹⁹

In summary, the “southern cone” route includes a crucial waterborne segment which begins at some point on the Paraguay-Paraná waterway or the estuary of the river Paraná at the latest (before continuing to the Atlantic).

However, before the waterborne segment, clandestine flights across diverse land borders are used to facilitate the movement towards the Atlantic.

The extent of trafficking along this route is difficult to quantify based on official national data, which is typically available at the aggregate level (and thus does not provide a clear association with a specific trafficking channel). However, seizures recorded in the Drugs Monitoring Platform which can be linked to the HPP or the River Plate estuary yielded 42 instances occurring over the period January 2010–April 2021, and a temporal analysis of these instances indicates a distinctly increasing trend.

Quantities of cocaine seized in individual cocaine seizures linked to the Paraguay-Paraná waterway or the River Plate estuary, by incident and country of seizure, 2010–2021



Note: A seizure was considered to be linked to the HPP or the River Plate estuary if its itinerary (actual or planned) included a stretch or a port on the HPP or the River Plate estuary.

Sources: UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform.

Clandestine flights are harder to associate conclusively, on a case-by-case basis, to the “southern cone” route, because the link typically depends on the intended (future) itinerary, which is (in contrast with containerized shipments) not declared and not always known to law enforcement. However, 125 aircraft-related incidents occurring over the period 2011–September 2022 could be documented along the southern cone route. In most cases, the incidents involved cocaine products such as cocaine hydrochloride or coca paste (PBC); however, 9 incidents involved cannabis, while the nature of the drug was unclear in 16 other incidents.

Once more, increases can be noted both in terms of the number of incidents and the quantity of cocaine seized over the period 2011 to 2020.

210 Supermaritime Group, ‘Supermaritime San Lorenzo’, supermaritime.com, n.d.

211 Comité Intergubernamental de la Hidrovía Paraguay-Paraná, ‘Informe de la Secretaría Ejecutiva del CIH’.

212 Ministerio de Economía Argentina, ‘Hidrovía Paraná-Paraguay’.

213 UNODC, ‘Drugs Monitoring Platform’, n.d.

214 Ibid.

215 Ministry of Interior (Uruguay), ‘Responses to the CRIMJUST Questionnaire’, 9 November 2020.

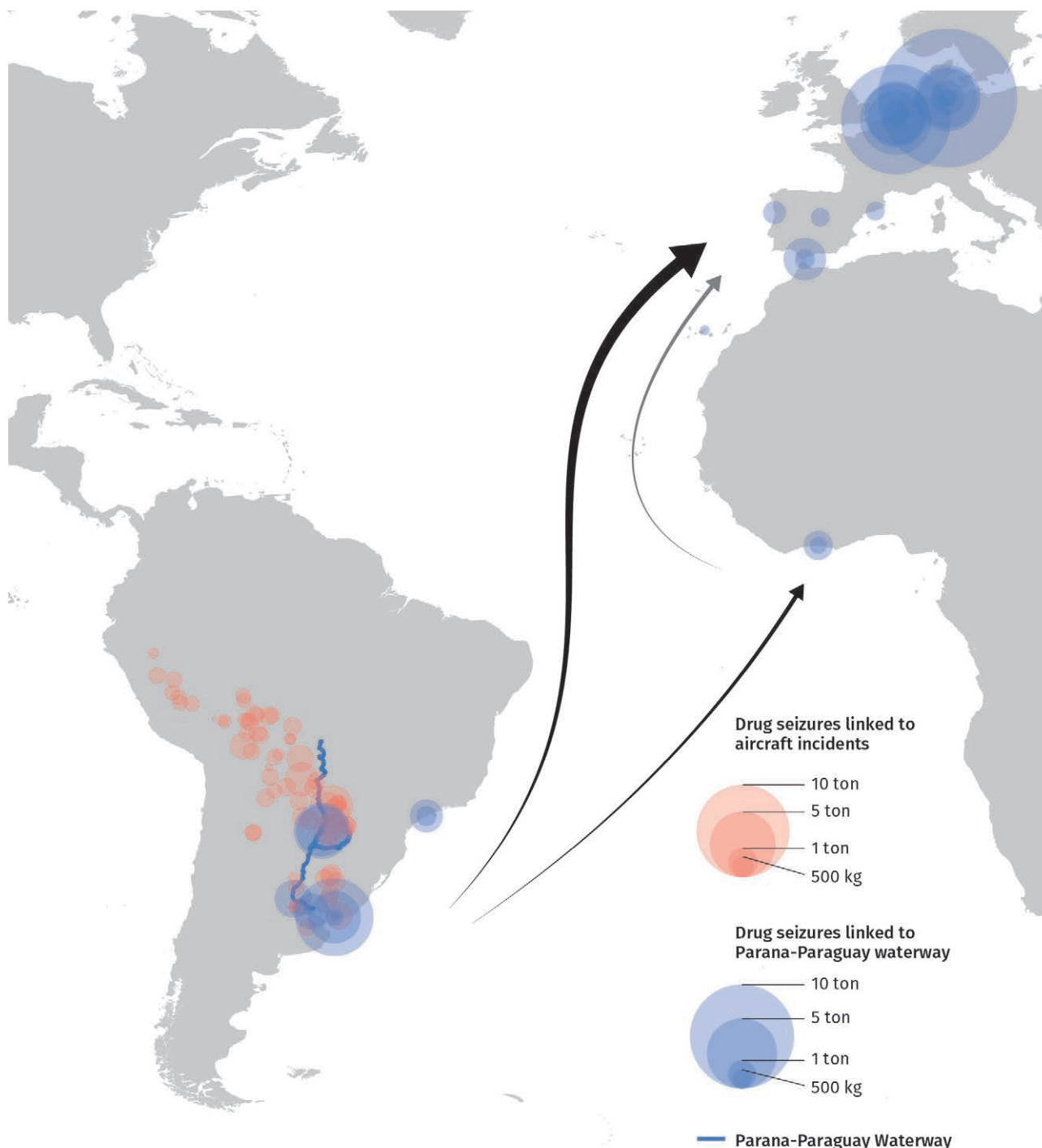
216 UNODC, ‘Drugs Monitoring Platform’, n.d.

217 UNODC, response to the Annual Report Questionnaire for 2020 from Uruguay.

218 Ministry of Interior (Uruguay), ‘Responses to the CRIMJUST Questionnaire’, 9 November 2020.

219 Poder Judicial (Uruguay), ‘Responses to the CRIMJUST Questionnaire’, 7 November 2020.

Seizures linked to the Paraná-Paraguay waterway or the River Plate estuary, and aircraft-related incidents along the Southern Cone Route, 2017–September 2022



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Notes: A seizure was considered to be linked to the Paraná-Paraguay waterway or the River Plate estuary if its itinerary (actual or planned) included a stretch or a port on the HPP or the River Plate estuary. Aircraft-related incidents linked to drug trafficking include episodes where the circumstances suggested that, at the moment of detection, drugs had just been, were about to be, or were being transported on an aeroplane. Not all of the aircraft-related incidents represent physical apprehensions of the relevant aircraft by law enforcement. See Methodological Annex for details.
Sources: UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform. .

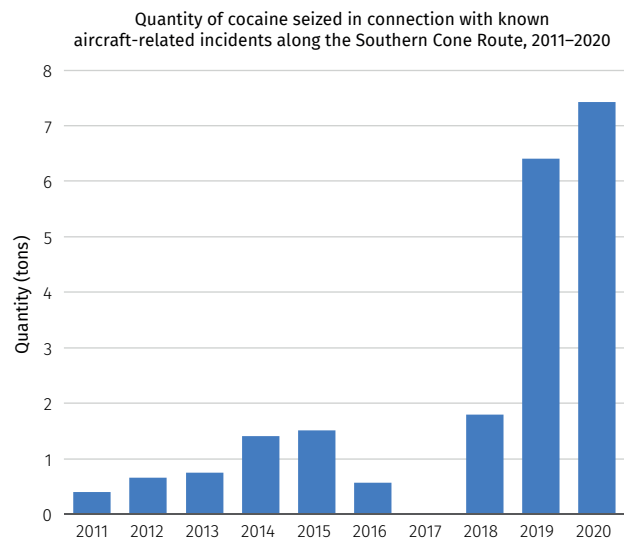
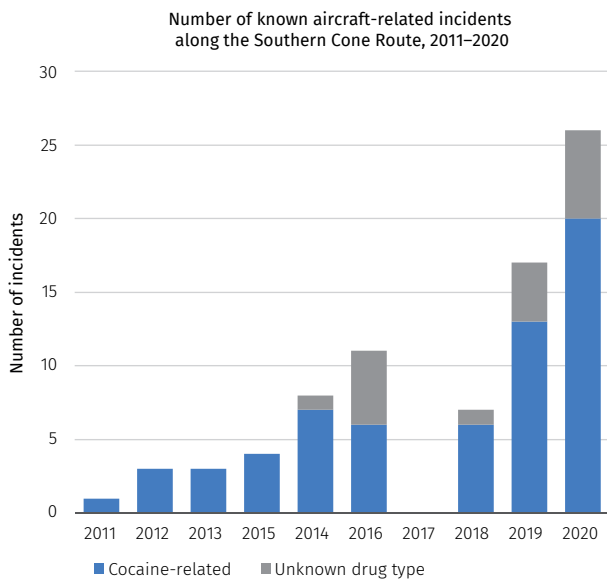
Domestic markets in Central and South America and the Caribbean

The consumption of cocaine via smoking is particularly pronounced in South America and some countries in Central America and the Caribbean; indeed a variety of forms of cocaine known by terms such as *pitillo* (Plurinational State of Bolivia), *merla* (Brazil), *mono* (Chile), *basuco* (Colombia and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), *paco*

(Argentina and Uruguay), *baserolo* (Ecuador), *pay* (Peru), *chespi* (Paraguay), as well as more generic names such as “crack” and *pasta base*, are widely smoked by consumers in these countries.²²⁰

220 UNODC, ‘Cocaine Insights 2’.

Known aircraft-related incidents along the Southern Cone route , 2011- 2020



Note: Based on incidents detected in Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru. Aircraft-related incidents linked to drug trafficking include episodes where the circumstances suggested that, at the moment of detection, drugs had just been, were about to be, or were being transported on an aeroplane. Incidents involving cannabis are not considered. Not all of the aircraft-related incidents necessarily represent physical apprehensions of the relevant aircraft by law enforcement.
Sources: UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform.

While the exact composition and nature of such products is hard to determine conclusively and comprehensively across these countries, an important characteristic is that they are smoked, and their presence and relative importance in the domestic market is a hallmark of cocaine consumption in this region.

The country with the largest domestic market in this region is Brazil. As of 2012, past-year prevalence of cocaine insufflation was estimated at 1.7 per cent among the general population aged 14 or over, and 0.8 per cent in the case of smoking.²²¹

A separate study²²² based on the network scale-up method considered the concept of “regular use” – defined as having used the substance of concern on 25 days or more in the previous six months²²³ – and estimated the number of regular users of “crack” or other similar smokeable forms of cocaine (thus excluding cocaine salts) in 2012 in the Brazilian state capitals alone at approximately 370,000, or 0.81 per cent of the entire general population (of all ages). Among these, 50,000 users were below the age of 18. A parallel exercise, based on time location sampling,²²⁴ on the profile of regular

users indicates that the population of adult regular users concentrates towards the younger age categories, a pattern that is even more pronounced outside the state capitals. In addition, the proportion of males among these users in Brazil was estimated in the range of 76–81 per cent.

Combining the results of these studies, UNODC estimates suggested that the prevalence for regular use in the Brazilian state capitals reached almost 1.7 per cent of the general population aged 23 to 29. It is important to note that this does not include snorting of cocaine powder.

While the available data do not allow a reliable analysis of the evolution of the trend in the prevalence of use since 2012, several indicators suggest that the availability of cocaine in Brazil has increased in recent years, and this may have also translated into an expansion of the domestic market and increased levels of use. Supply-side indicators, such as seizures²²⁵ and purity levels indicate a turning point in the period 2015–16. This occurred in parallel with the trend in the levels of coca bush cultivation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and – which together account for significant flows of cocaine into Brazil,^{226 227} as borne out, for example, by the fact that, over the period 2014 to August 2021, 90 per cent of incoming clandestine flights (carrying drugs) detected in Brazil

221 Renata Rigacci Abdalla et al., ‘Prevalence of Cocaine Use in Brazil: Data from the II Brazilian National Alcohol and Drugs Survey (BNADS)’, *Addictive Behaviors* 39, no. 1 (1 January 2014): 297–301.

222 Secretaria Nacional de Políticas sobre Drogas (SENAD), Ministério da Saúde Brasil, and Ministério da Justiça Brasil, ‘Estimativa do número de usuários de crack e/ou similares nas Capitais do País’ (Secretaria Nacional de Políticas sobre Drogas (SENAD), 2013).

223 This likely captures a significantly smaller set of users than annual prevalence.

224 Secretaria Nacional de Políticas sobre Drogas (SENAD), Ministério da Saúde Brasil, and Ministério da Justiça Brasil, ‘Perfil dos usuários de crack e/ou similares’ (Secretaria Nacional de Políticas sobre Drogas (SENAD), 2013).

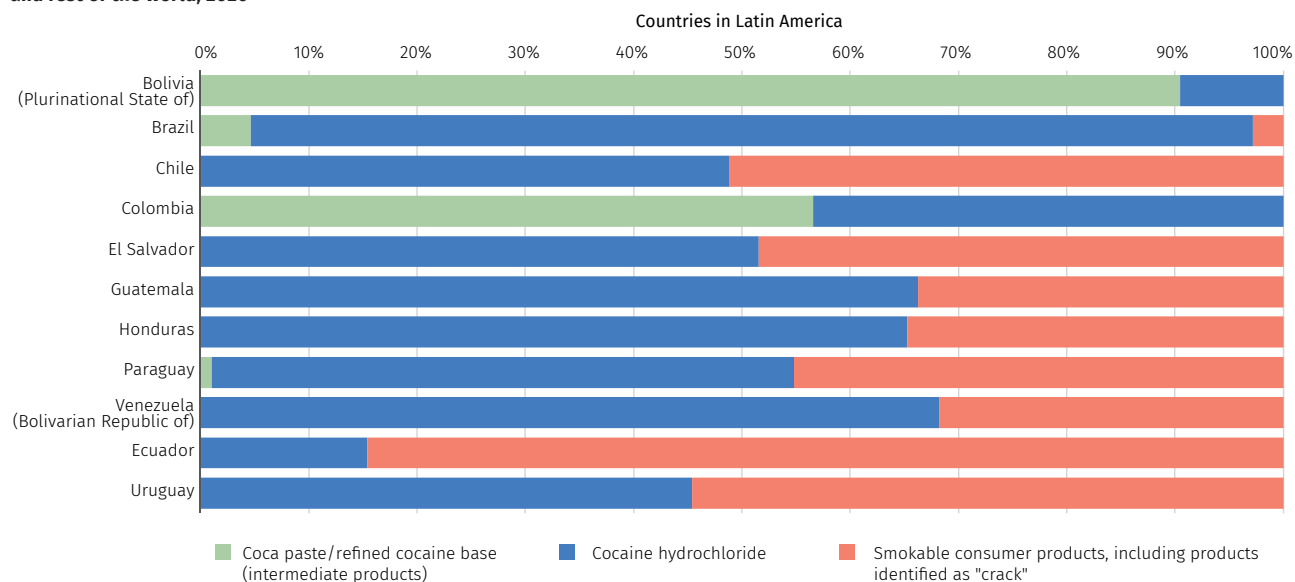
225 See section “Trafficking within and from South America to other markets” in this chapter.

226 UNODC, ‘Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2019’.

227 UNODC, ‘Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2020’.

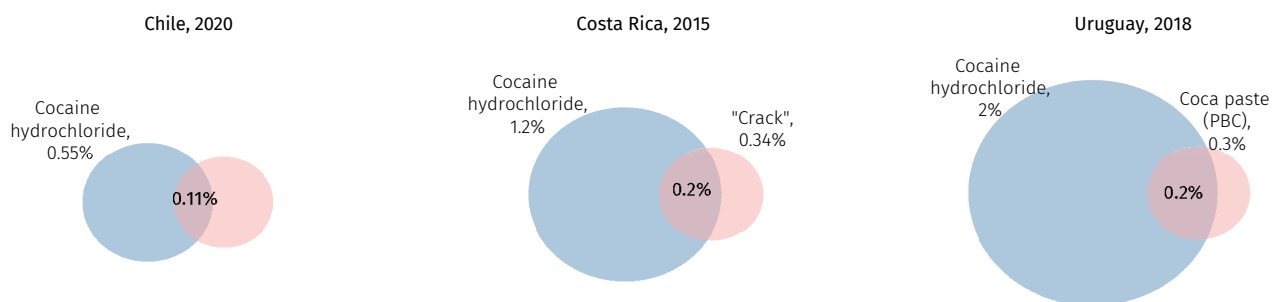
228 UNODC, ‘Brazil, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2021’.

Distribution of reported number of seizures of cocaine products, by broad category of products, comparison between Latin America and rest of the world, 2020



Note: Reliable distinctions between different cocaine products depend on forensic analysis, which is not always carried out systematically, in addition to recording and reporting practices, which do not always contemplate the entire spectrum of cocaine products.
Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire, responses for 2020.

Prevalence of use of cocaine hydrochloride in relation to smokable cocaine products, selected countries in Latin America (latest available data)

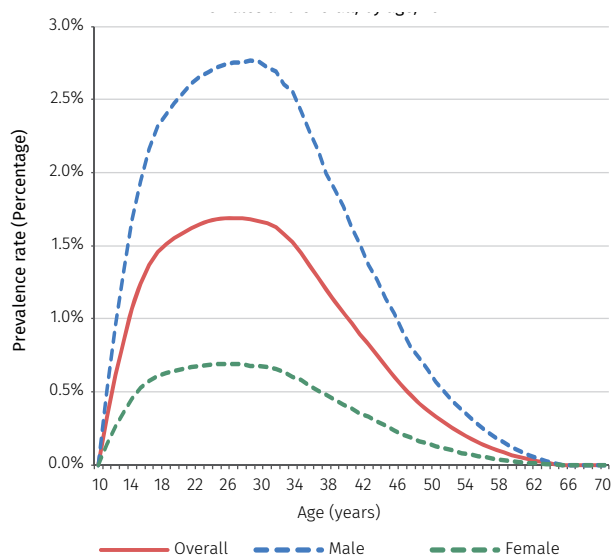


Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

originated in one of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Paraguay or Peru.^{229 230}

Demand-side indicators in Brazil are also indicative of a long-term expansion of the domestic cocaine market and raise the possibility of potential recent increases in levels of cocaine consumption.²³¹ Mortality data in particular also show a turning point in 2016; one possibility is that the increase in availability may have spilled over into more intensive use patterns (of people already using cocaine) or more widespread cocaine use (individuals initiating use). It should be borne in mind however that

Estimated prevalence of regular* use of “crack” and similar drugs in Brazilian state capitals, among males, females and overall, by age, 2012



*“Regular” use is defined to be use on 25 days in the previous six months.
Note: The above estimations assume that the breakdown of regular adult users of crack and similar drugs in the Brazilian state capitals into age groups, established via Time Location Sampling (*Perfil dos usuários de crack e/ou similares*, SENAD, Brazil, 2013), is consistent with the number of adult regular users in the Brazilian state capitals established separately via the Network Scale-up Method (*Estimativa do número dos usuários de crack e/ou similares nas Capitais do País*, SENAD, Brazil, 2013). The estimations approximate the male-female breakdown within individual age categories by a constant ratio, independent of the age category.
Sources: UNODC estimates based on drug use data from Secretaria Nacional de Políticas sobre Drogas (SENAD), Brazil and census data for 2010 for the Brazilian state capitals from Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Brazil, adjusted using 2010 and 2012 population data from the United Nations Population Division.

229 However, other modalities – such as fluvial routes used in the north – are also important, and the available data do not allow an accurate determination of the overall shares of cocaine entering Brazil from each Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia and Peru. Seizures in the regions of Brazil bordering Colombia (state of Amazonas) are limited in comparison with states of Brazil further south on its western borders, such as Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul and Paraná, reinforcing the evidence that an important component comes from Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru (collectively). However, this geographic breakdown may not necessarily reflect incoming flows in a proportional fashion. Since wholesale purity levels are in turn a reflection of seizures, it is possible that the overall picture emerging from these supply-side indicators is somewhat skewed towards the segment of the market supplied from these two source countries. Nevertheless, it is clear that Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru together account for a significant proportion of cocaine entering Brazil.

230 ‘Meeting of Strategic Analysts on Cocaine Trafficking and Markets’.

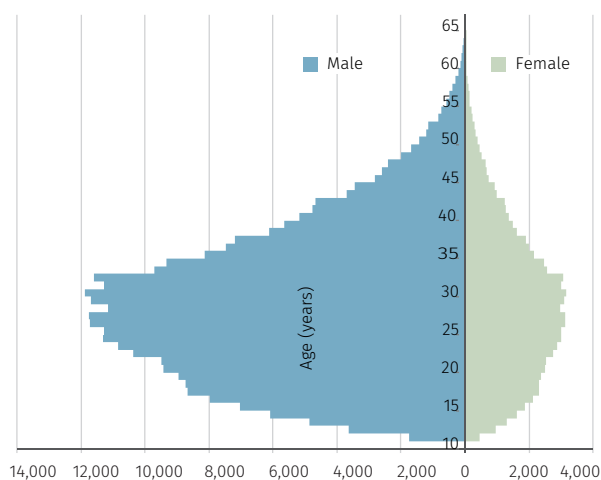
231 Measured in overall quantities consumed, rather than number of users.

cocaine users (including users of “crack” cocaine) may also use other drugs.

Aside from coca leaf cultivation in Peru and Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the link between mortality data and incoming flows is notable (in statistical terms) when comparing the trend in mortality to seizures data, especially when specifically considering seizures in states of Brazil bordering Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru.

The fact that the trend in mortality mirrors that of the supply-side indicators mentioned above, especially the extent of coca leaf cultivation in the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Peru,²³² also point to the possibility that the supply channel from Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (as opposed to Colombia) may be particularly important in supplying the Brazilian domestic market (while the incoming flows from Colombia would contribute to a lesser extent, being routed predominantly towards Europe). This also ties in with the internal trafficking routes affecting Brazil, as described by Brazilian Federal police,²³³ which suggest a certain convergence of the routes from Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Paraguay towards the state of São Paulo, where

Estimated number of regular cocaine users in Brazilian state capitals, by age and gender (population pyramid), 2012

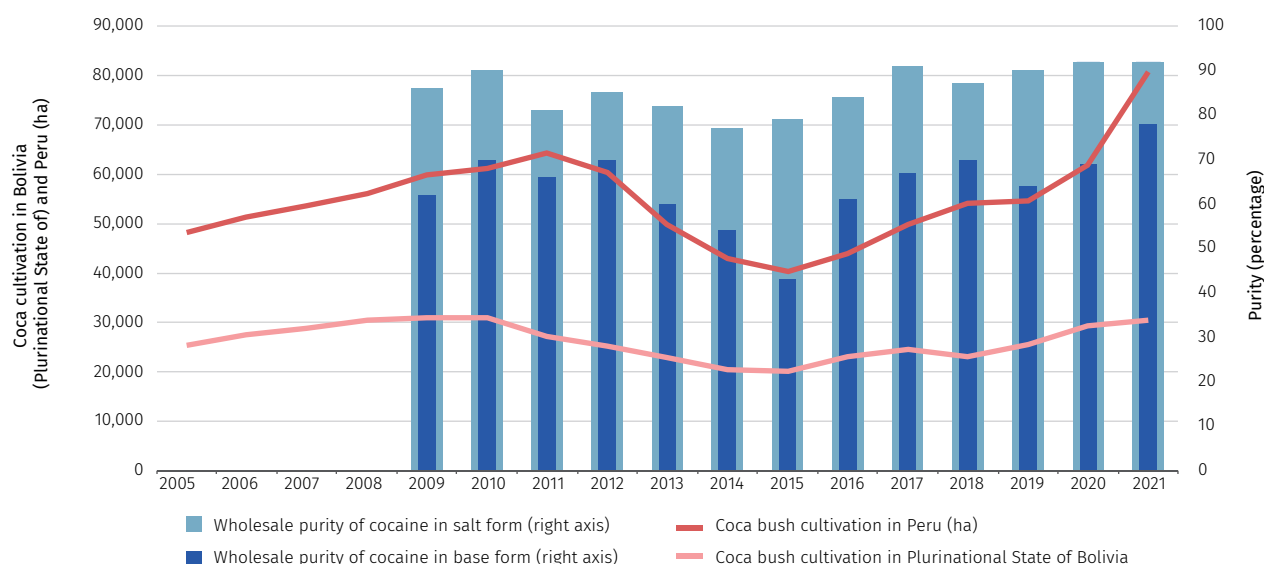


Note: “Regular” is defined to be 25 times in the previous six months. The above estimations assume that the breakdown of regular adult users of crack and similar drugs in the Brazilian state capitals into age groups, established via Time Location Sampling (*Perfil dos usuários de crack e/ou similares*, SENAD, Brazil, 2013), is consistent with the number of adult regular users in the Brazilian state capitals established separately via the Network Scale-up Method (*Estimativa do número dos usuários de crack e/ou similares nas Capitais do País*, SENAD, Brazil, 2013). The estimations approximate the male-female breakdown within individual age categories by a constant ratio, independent of the age category.
Sources: UNODC estimates based on drug use data from Secretaria Nacional de Políticas sobre Drogas (SENAD), Brazil and census data for 2010 for the Brazilian state capitals from Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), Brazil, adjusted using 2010 and 2012 population data from the United Nations Population Division.

232 Coca leaf cultivation in Colombia followed a rather distinct trend from Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru. In Colombia, both coca leaf cultivation and estimated potential production of cocaine hydrochloride bottomed out in 2013.

233 ‘CRIMJUST Annual Meeting – Africa: Strengthening Criminal Investigation and Criminal Justice Cooperation along Trafficking Routes’ (CRIMJUST Annual Meeting – Africa, Ghana, 23 November 2021).

Coca bush cultivation in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru, in comparison with purity levels in Brazil, 2005–2021



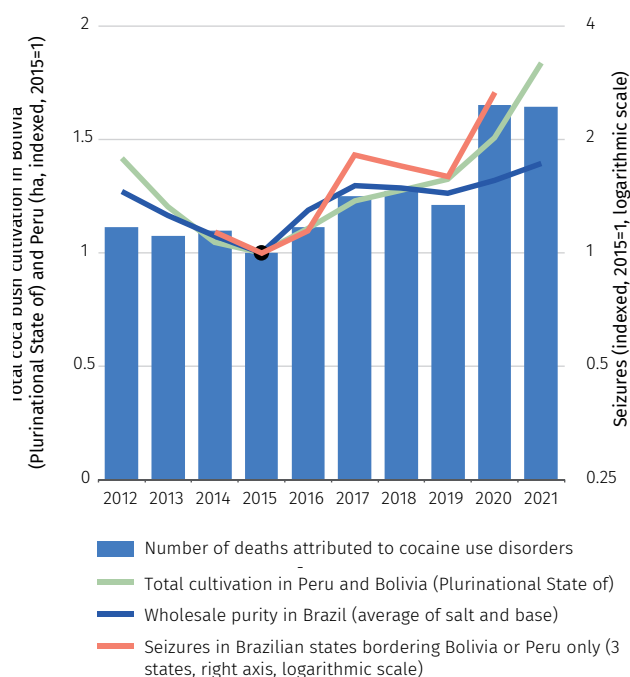
Note: The figure for coca bush cultivation in 2021 in the Plurinational State of Bolivia has not been agreed by the Government of Bolivia.

Sources: Purity: Centre of Excellence for Illicit Drug Supply Reduction and UNODC SIMCI, “Dinâmicas do mercado de drogas ilícitas no Brasil, Análise Comparativa dos preços de maconha, cocaína e outras drogas em quatro estados,” 2022; Cultivation: Coca bush cultivation surveys carried out in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru in 2020 and previous years.

cocaine may be consolidated and distributed onwards towards the ports as well as to the areas of consumption, and also depict some routes from the state of Amazonas (bordering Colombia) directly towards the northern Atlantic coast of Brazil.²³⁴

In 2020, coinciding with the onset of COVID-19, the number of deaths attributed to cocaine use disorders spiked abruptly, rising by 36 per cent over the level in 2019 – the largest year-on-year change (in relative terms²³⁵) since 2010. Based on preliminary data, the increased levels were sustained into 2021.²³⁶

Trend in number of deaths attributed to cocaine use disorders in comparison with selected indicators of cocaine supply in Brazil, 2012–2021



²³⁴ In addition, the hypothesis that the domestic market in Brazil is disproportionately (in relation to quantities flowing into Brazil) supplied via the flows from Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia is indirectly corroborated by the following observations: (1) the population in Brazil is overall more concentrated in the south rather than the north (2) the waterways of the Amazonas are particularly remote and provide a relatively “safe” route directly to the Atlantic coast (3) cocaine in base form is particularly well suited to cater for the demand for smokable cocaine products, especially “crack”, in Brazil, and the limited evidence of trafficking of coca paste (PBC) and similar products points in particular to the route Peru-Bolivia-Brazil (5) forensic analysis, while not comprehensive, indicates that Colombia continues to be the predominant country of origin for cocaine seizures in Europe, despite the fact that it receives significant quantities through Brazil.

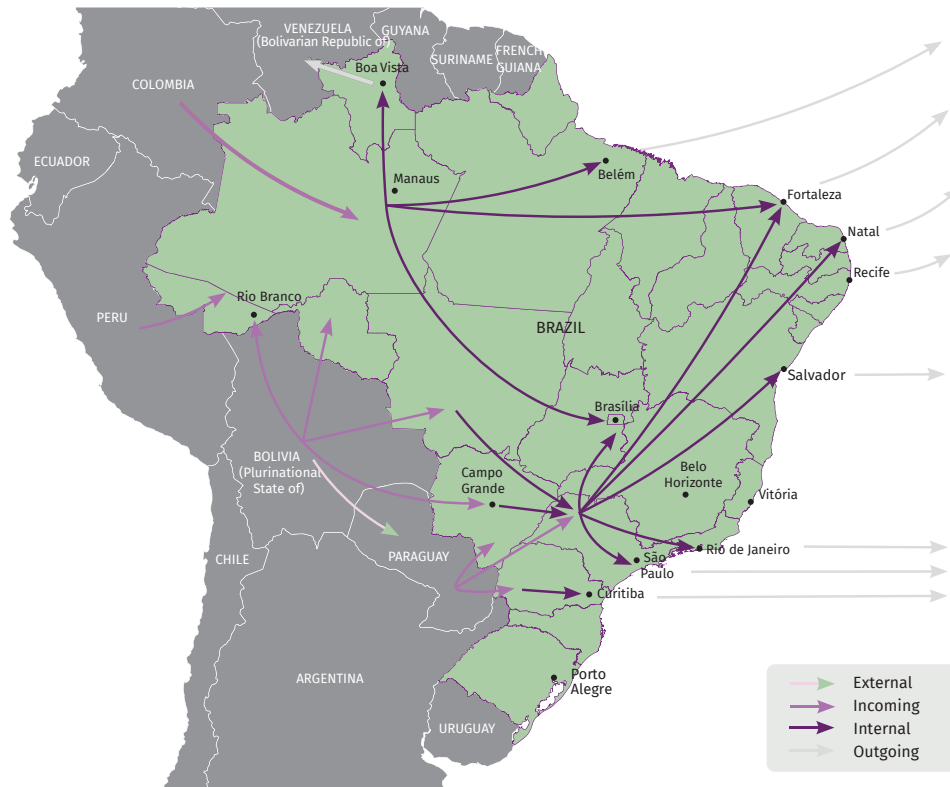
²³⁵ And the biggest on record (since 1996) in absolute terms.

²³⁶ Ministério da Saúde Brasil, ‘Ministério da Saúde Datasus’, saude.gov.br, n.d.

Note: Data on deaths attributed to cocaine use disorders based on deaths registered under ICD-10 code F14 (Mental and behavioural disorders due to the use of cocaine). Identification procedures for this categorization vary and may include self-reported data, analysis of blood and other body fluids, characteristic physical and psychological symptoms, clinical signs and behaviour, and other evidence such as a drug being in the patient’s possession or reports from informed third parties. Therefore, these data need to be interpreted with caution.

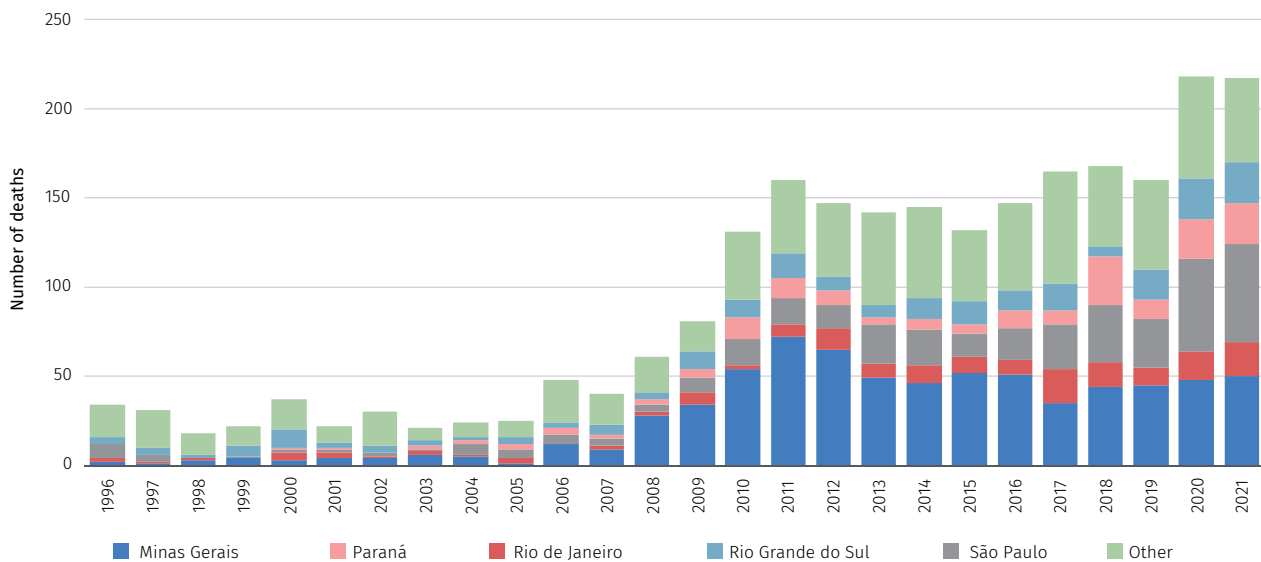
Sources: Purity: Centre of Excellence for Illicit Drug Supply Reduction and UNODC SIMCI; “Dinâmicas do mercado de drogas ilícitas no Brasil, Análise Comparativa dos preços de maconha, cocaína e outras drogas em quatro estados,” 2022; Cultivation: Coca bush cultivation surveys carried out in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Peru in 2020 and previous years; Seizure data: Brazilian Federal Police; Deaths: Brazil Ministry of Health, DATASUS data portal.

Main cocaine trafficking routes affecting Brazil



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. **Note:** This map, reproduced from a visualization by the Brazilian Federal Police, captures the main routes from the international perspective as well as the most important internal routes. A more detailed map can be found in: Centre of Excellence for Illicit Drug Supply Reduction, *COVID-19 and drug trafficking in Brazil: the adaptation of organized crime and the actions of polices during the pandemic*, December 2021. Available at: <https://www.cdebrasil.org.br/boletins/> **Source:** Brazilian Federal Police; reproduced from UNODC and CoE Brazil, "Brazil in the Regional and Transatlantic Cocaine Supply Chain: The Impact of COVID-19", Cocaine Insights 4 (Vienna: UNODC, July 2022).

Deaths attributed to cocaine use disorders in Brazil, by federal unit, 1996-2021



Note: Based on deaths registered under ICD-10 code F14 (Mental and behavioural disorders due to the use of cocaine). Identification procedures for this categorization vary and may include self-reported data, analysis of blood and other body fluids, characteristic physical and psychological symptoms, clinical signs and behaviour, and other evidence such as a drug being in the patient's possession or reports from informed third parties. Therefore, these data need to be interpreted with caution. **Source:** Brazil Ministry of Health, DATASUS data portal.

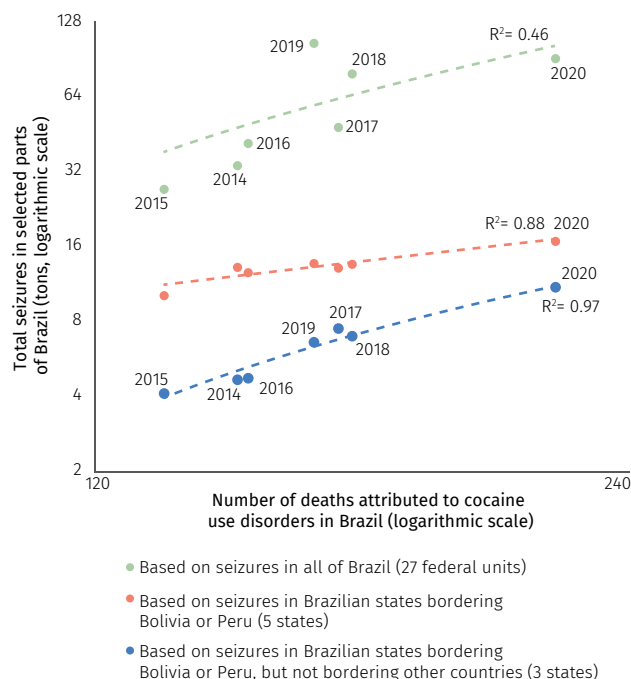
Changing trends (rates of change) in cocaine seizures in Brazil following the onset of COVID



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. **Note:** The above map is based on 3 consecutive 6-month periods: April-September 2019 (Period A), October 2019- March 2020 (Period B), and April-September 2020 (period C, immediately following the onset of COVID-19), and the quantities a, b, c seized during periods A, B, C respectively. The rate of change is considered to be increasing (rising trend) if the ratio c/b is larger than b/a , decreasing (falling trend) if c/b is smaller than b/a . **Source:** Polícia Rodoviária Federal, Brazil; reproduced from UNODC and CoE Brazil, 'Brazil in the Regional and Transatlantic Cocaine Supply Chain: The Impact of COVID-19', Cocaine Insights 4 (Vienna: UNODC, July 2022).

At the same time (in 2020), the onset of COVID-19 brought about significant, even if temporary, shifts in trafficking patterns into and through Brazil. While a number of developments in source countries and in the west of Brazil – such as fluctuations in supply, shifts in modalities and restrictions in the flows of goods and people – increased the flows of cocaine into Brazil, difficulties in internal consolidation of cocaine and its redistribution towards the Atlantic coast appear to have temporarily reduced the flows trafficked out this country.^{237 238} It cannot be excluded that this may have resulted in a surge in the availability of cocaine within Brazil, and thus intensified use patterns, with the repercussion ultimately visible in the number of deaths which were clearly attributable to cocaine use.²³⁹ However, the available data do not allow to establish this conclusively.

Cocaine seizures in selected part of Brazil versus deaths due to cocaine use disorders in Brazil, 2014–2020



237 UNODC and CoE Brazil, 'Cocaine Insights 4'.
 238 See also discussion on the impact on trafficking to Europe via Brazil in the section "Western and Central Europe."
 239 Another sign of changes in internal dynamics was the increased use of internal flights within Brazil to distribute cocaine to storage locations and consumption centres. Source: Brazilian Federal Police, presentation at "International Seminar on Illicit Drug Supply Reduction" (December 7, 2021). See also UNODC and CoE Brazil, 'Cocaine Insights 4'.

Note: Data on deaths attributed to cocaine use disorders based on deaths registered under ICD-10 code F14 (Mental and behavioural disorders due to the use of cocaine). Identification procedures for this categorization vary and may include self-reported data, analysis of blood and other body fluids, characteristic physical and psychological symptoms, clinical signs and behaviour, and other evidence such as a drug being in the patient's possession or reports from informed third parties. Therefore, these data need to be interpreted with caution. Sources: Seizure data: Brazilian Federal Police; Deaths: Brazil Ministry of Health, DATASUS data portal.

The North American consumer market

North America has for many years represented a primary cocaine consumer market worldwide; in 2020, it accounted for about 30 per cent of past-year cocaine users worldwide, and 1.95 per cent of the population aged 15–64 was estimated to have used cocaine at least once (second only to Oceania among all other regions or subregions for which such estimates were available).²⁴⁰

Various indicators suggest that the market in the United States peaked in 2017 and has contracted slightly since then. Seizures and wholesale purity levels point to a slight decline in incoming flows and in availability, while most demand-side indicators also suggest a drop in 2018 followed by stable or moderately decreasing trends. Recent declines are evident from data on people taking up cocaine use for the first time in their lives, which also show that the average age at which this happens has increased gradually. Overdose deaths involving cocaine, which need to be interpreted with caution due to the concomitant occurrence of other substances, also exhibit a recent declining trend when overdoses also involving synthetic opioids (other than methadone) are excluded.

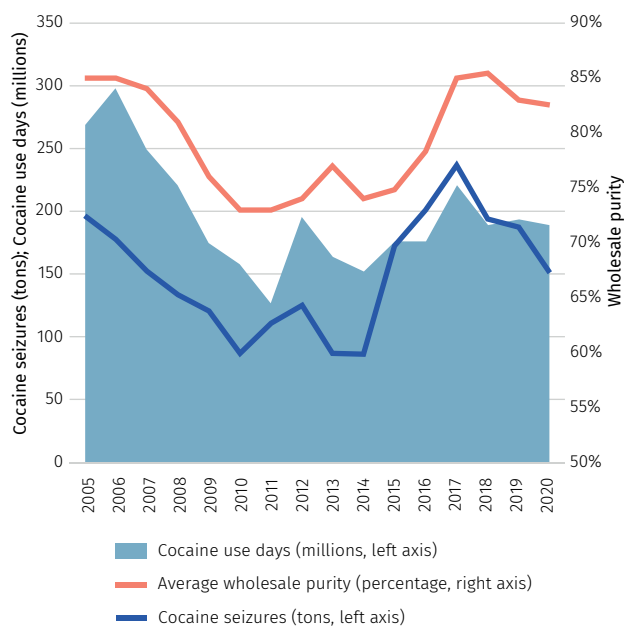
On the other hand, the best available proxy metric for trends in the quantity of cocaine consumed, namely the estimated number of cocaine use-days (based on household surveys), has remained quite stable over 2018 – 2020 (following the drop in 2018). Overall, the demand-side indicators, and to some extent the supply-side indicators, suggest that the recent slight contraction is minor in the broader, long-term picture, and the market appears to stand at levels which are above the trough of 2010 – 11, but still below the peak levels of 2005 – 06.

There also appears to have been a certain long-term divergence between users of “crack” and users of (insufflated) cocaine hydrochloride (“powder cocaine”). While “crack” users have become fewer in number, the population of “crack” users appears to have gradually gravitated to slightly more intensive use patterns. Although the available data do not allow an analogous comparison based specifically on users of cocaine hydrochloride, an opposite (declining) trend in frequency of use is already visible in the overall data for cocaine use in general (including cocaine hydrochloride as well as “crack”), implying that the underlying trend for cocaine hydrochloride is also declining, and even more pronounced.

Approximately half a million past-year users of cocaine reside in Canada. In its response to the Annual Report Questionnaire for 2021, Canada reported that the United States, Mexico and Jamaica (in that order) were the most frequently occurring transit countries observed from seized cocaine shipments.²⁴¹ However, based on developments in 2020, Canadian authorities had observed a continued rise in cocaine seizures with a European nexus, as Mexican OCGs continued to invest in working relationships with Dutch and Spanish counterparts.²⁴²

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the overall drug threat in Canada in 2020. Canadian authorities also reported that, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the overall drug market in Canada, influencing the social stress factors of drug use, affecting access to health services, and contributing to increased adulteration and toxicity in the supply of drugs,²⁴³ as well as the emergence of new synthetic opioids. In order to compensate for obstacles arising from border and travel restrictions, traffickers increased their use of commercial transport – such as commercial trucks, maritime containers, and cargo planes – as well as postal or courier services and online services, including both the surface and dark web.²⁴⁴

Selected indicators of cocaine supply and consumption in the United States, 2005–2020



Note: The number of cocaine use days is obtained by multiplying the number of cocaine past-year users aged 12 or older (as published by SAMHSA) by the average number of days these users used cocaine (as published by SAHMSA).
Sources: Cocaine use days: UNODC estimate based on *US National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2020*, Detailed Tables (SAMHSA); Purity data: ONDCP (2005–2018); and Cocaine Signature Programme (2019, 2020); Seizure data: UNODC responses to the annual report questionnaire and UNODC Drugs Monitoring Platform.

240 UNODC, 'World Drug Report 2022, Statistical Annex' (Vienna: UNODC, 2022).

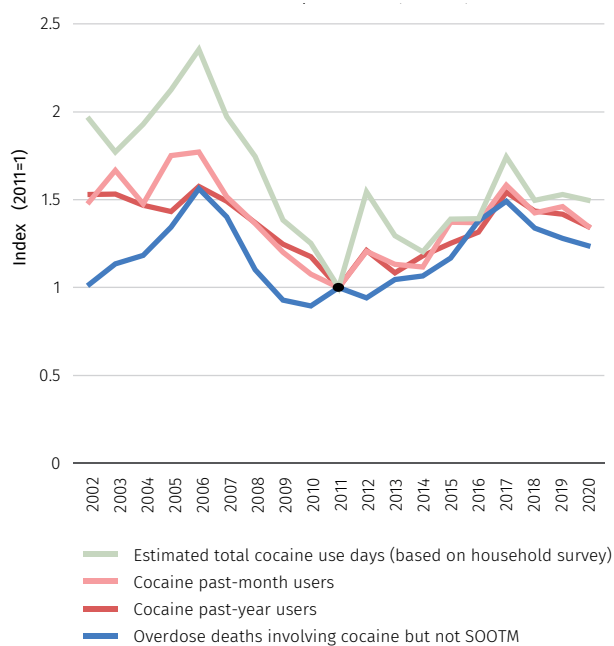
241 UNODC, 'Canada, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2021', n.d.

242 UNODC, 'Canada, Responses to the Annual Report Questionnaire 2020'.

243 Ibid.

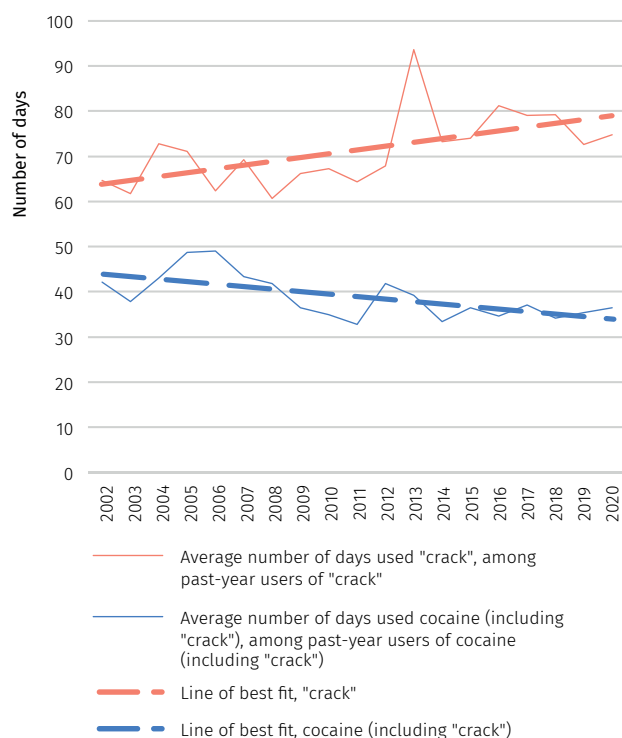
244 Ibid.

Selected indicators of cocaine use, consumption and harm, United States, 2002–2020 (indexed)



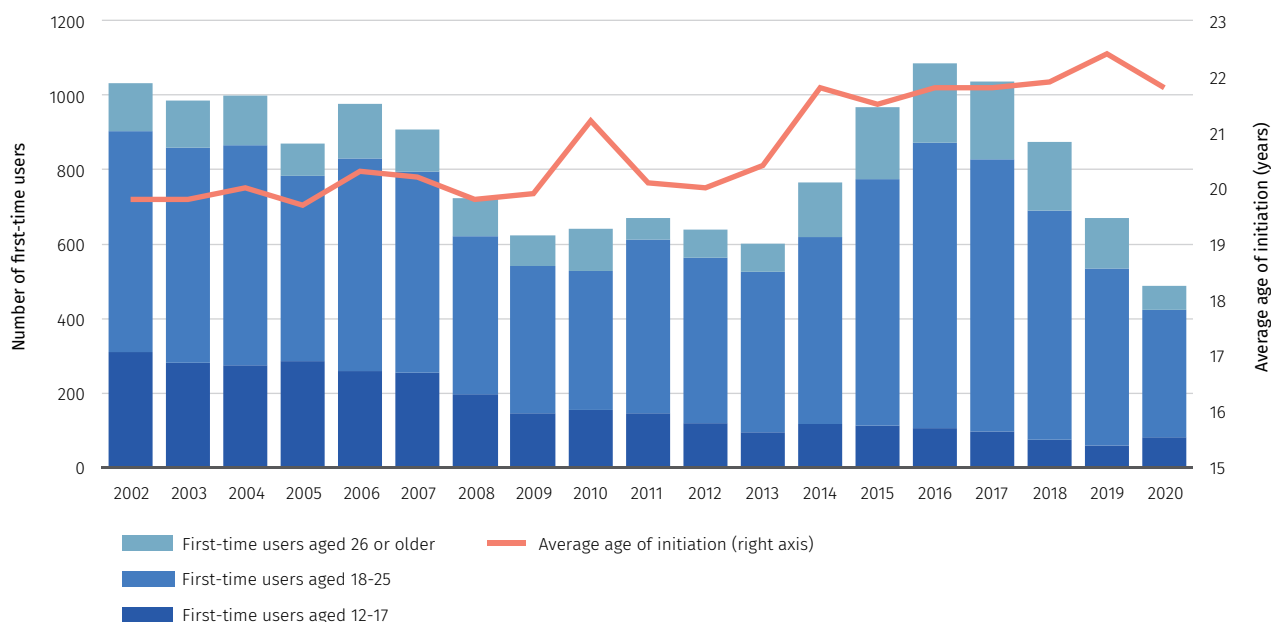
Note: SOOTM stands for synthetic opioids other than methadone.
Sources: US National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2020, Detailed Tables; US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER).

Long-term trends in the annual frequency of use among past-year cocaine users, comparison between “crack” and cocaine overall, United States, 2002–2020



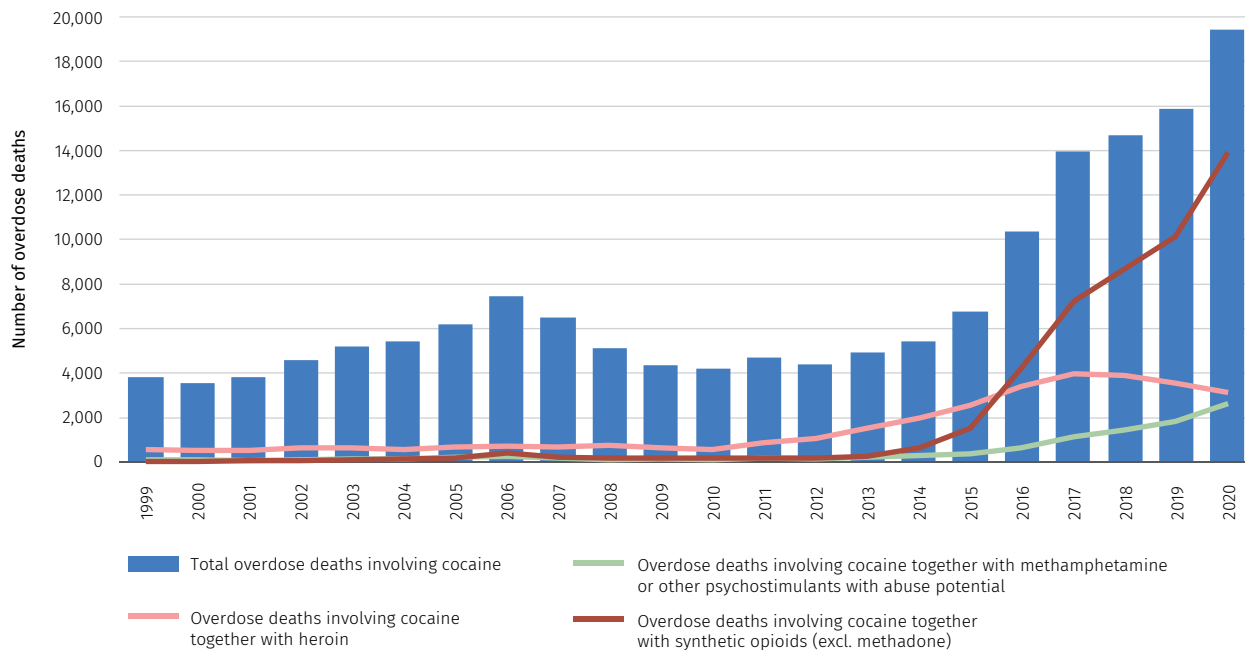
Source: US National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2020, Detailed Tables.

First-time users of cocaine, by age category, United States, 2002–2020



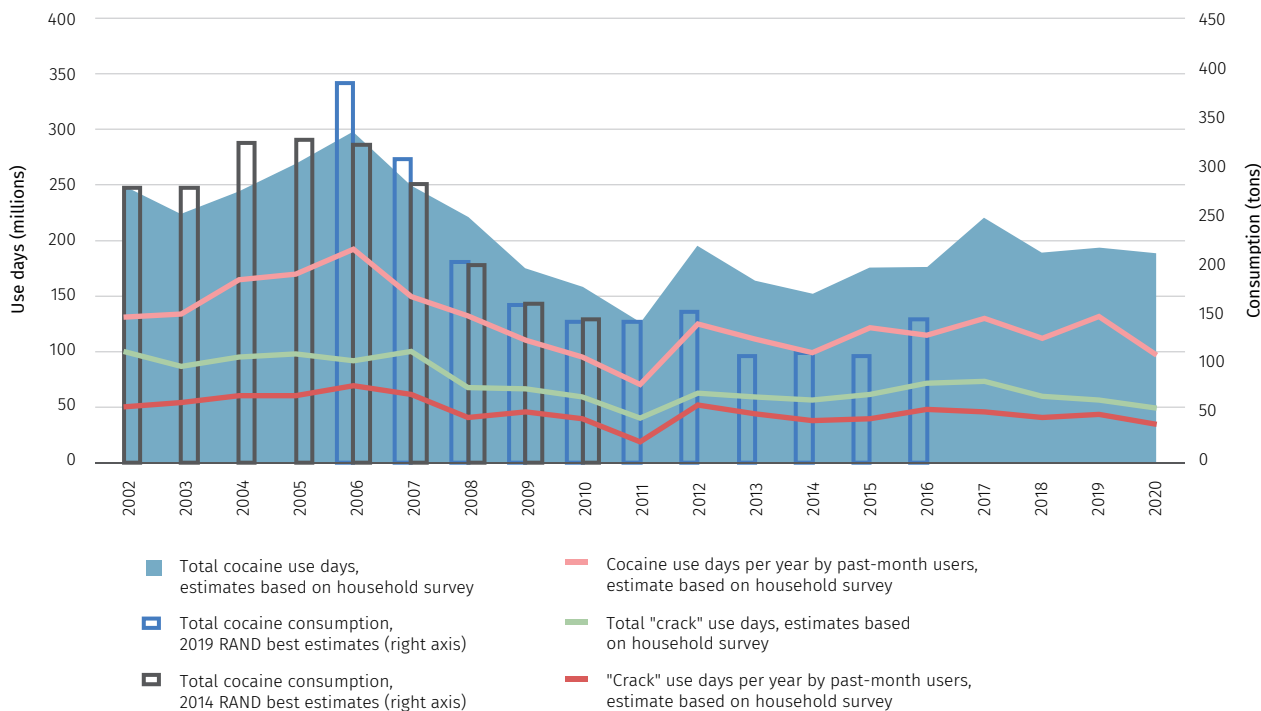
Sources: US National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2020, Detailed Tables.

Overdose deaths involving cocaine, and co-occurrence of other selected substances, United States, 1999–2020



Sources: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER).

Estimates and proxy measures of cocaine consumption in the United States, 2002–2020

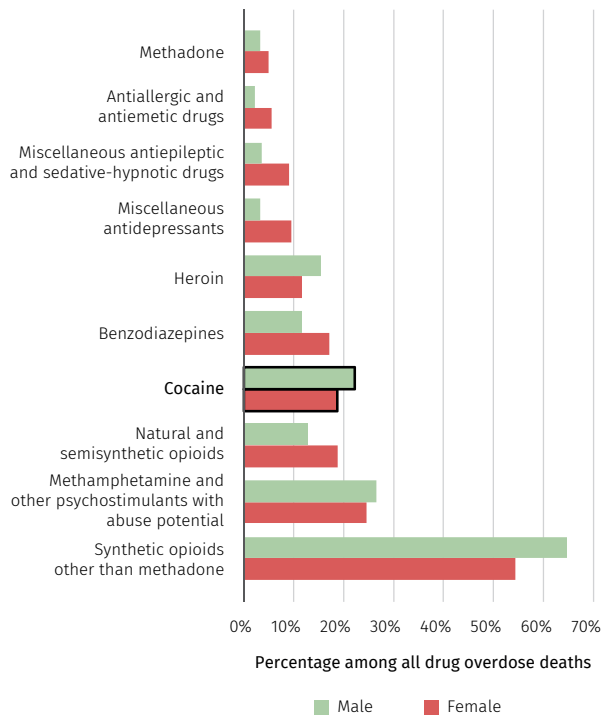


Note: "Crack" is included within "cocaine." The number of cocaine (respectively "crack") use days is obtained by multiplying the number of (past-year or past-month) cocaine (respectively "crack") users aged 12 or older (as published by SAMHSA) by the average number of days (as published by SAMHSA) that these users used cocaine (respectively "crack").

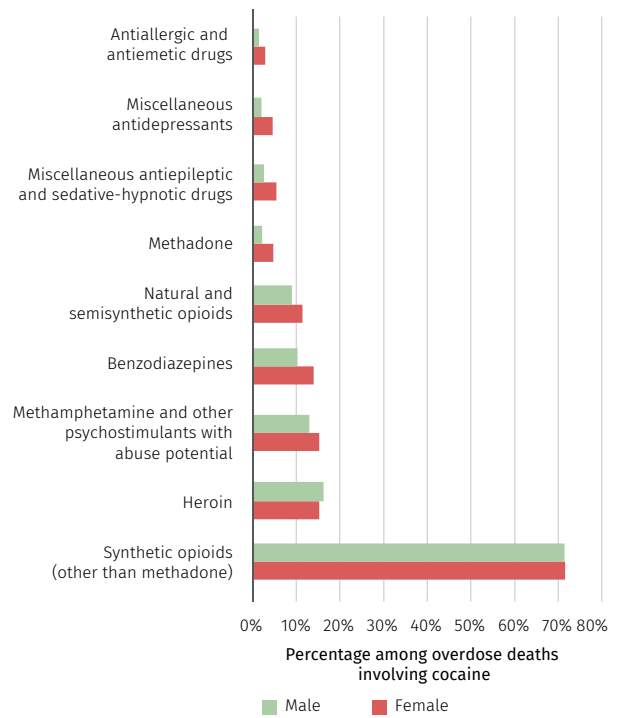
Sources: US National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2020, Detailed Tables (SAMHSA); *What America's Users Spend on Illegal Drugs, 2006–2016* (RAND, 2019); *What America's Users Spend on Illegal Drugs, 2000–2010* (RAND, 2014).

Cocaine overdoses in the United States

Substances most frequently involved in drug overdose deaths, by gender, United States, 2020

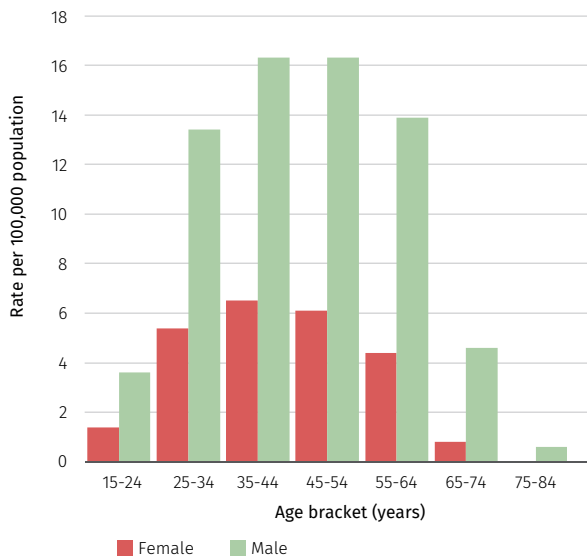


Presence of selected additional substances among drug overdose deaths involving cocaine, by gender, United States, 2020



Source: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER).

Rate of overdose deaths involving cocaine, by age category and gender, United States, 2020



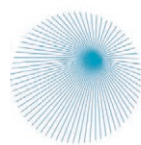
Source: US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER).



UNODC research constitutes the key global authority in the fields of drugs and crime, providing high-quality, essential evidence to inform policy-making and valuable sources of knowledge in drugs and crime domains, including in the framework of the Sustainable Development Agenda.



CRIMJUST is implemented by UNODC in partnership with INTERPOL and Transparency International. CRIMJUST seeks to enhance law enforcement and judicial strategies beyond interdiction activities and to foster transnational responses along drug trafficking routes targeting each stage of the drug supply chain. This includes the production of knowledge on the cocaine market to support evidence-based policy and strategies designed to counter the cocaine threat.



GIFP
Global Illicit Flows
Programme



Exhibit 8

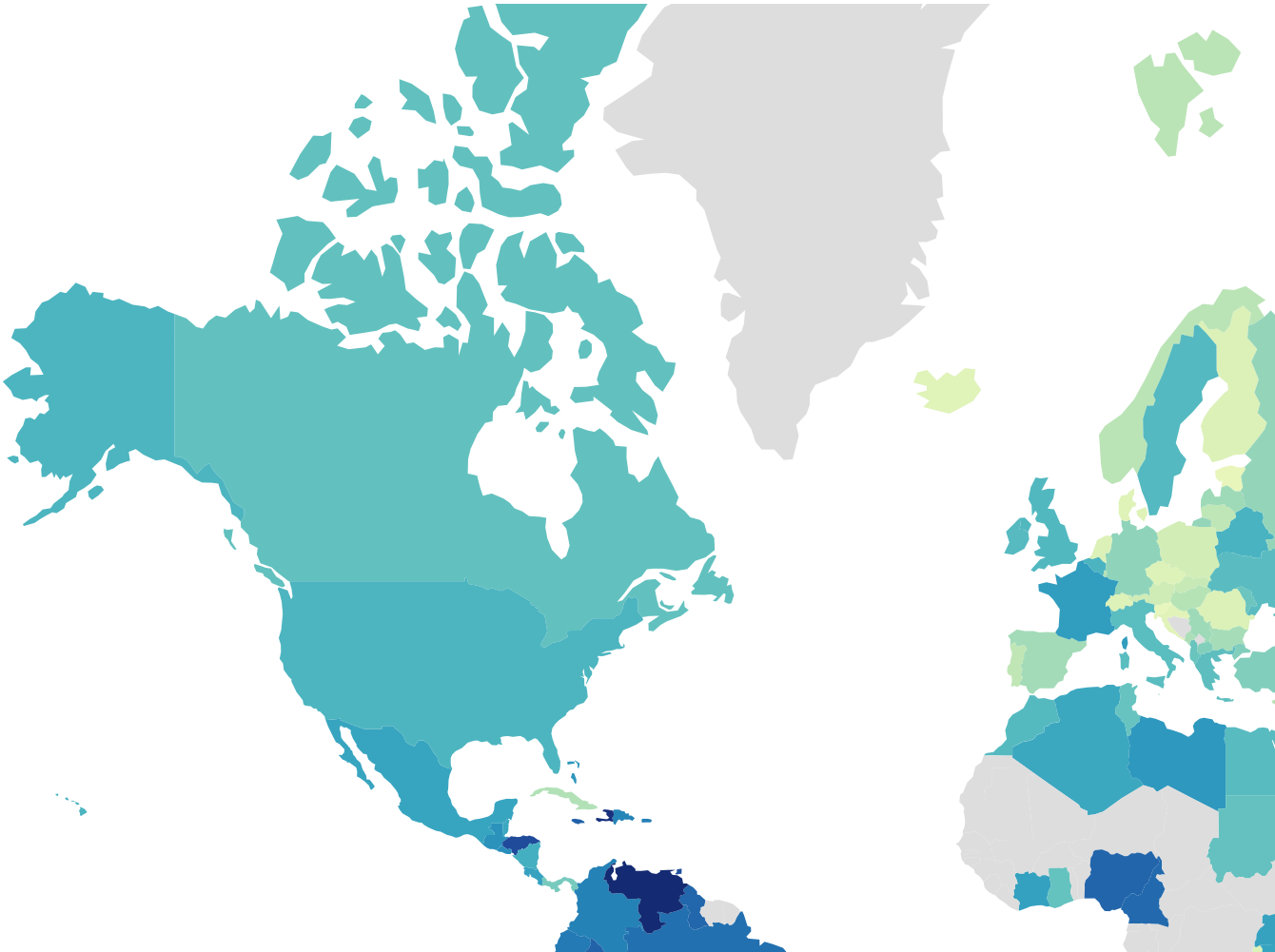
Crime Rate by Country 2026

worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/crime-rate-by-country

World Population Review

January 19, 2026

Crime



5 Countries with the Highest Crime Index



Venezuela

80.7



Papua New Guinea

80.3



Haiti

78.9



[Afghanistan](#)










75.1



[South Africa](#)

74.7

	Country	Crime Index Numbeo (1- 100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Numbeo (100-1) 2025
	<u>Venezuela</u>	80.7	19.3
	<u>Papua New Guinea</u>	80.3	19.7
	<u>Haiti</u>	78.9	21.1
	<u>Afghanistan</u>	75.1	24.9
	<u>South Africa</u>	74.7	25.3

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Honduras	72.0	28.0
	Trinidad and Tobago	70.9	29.1
	Syria	68.1	31.9
	Jamaica	67.4	32.6
	Peru	67.1	32.9
	Nigeria	66.6	33.4
	Angola	66.3	33.7
	Guyana	66.3	33.7
	Cameroon	65.5	34.5








	Country	Crime Index Numero (1- 100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Numero (100-1) 2025
	Bolivia	65.0	35.0
	Brazil	64.5	35.5
	Somalia	63.9	36.1
	Yemen	63.7	36.3
	Namibia	63.5	36.5
	Argentina	63.4	36.6
	Ecuador	62.5	37.5
	Bangladesh	61.6	38.4
	Puerto Rico	61.5	38.5

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Colombia	60.9	39.1
	Zimbabwe	60.7	39.3
	Chile	60.5	39.5
	Dominican Republic	60.5	39.5
	Mozambique	60.1	39.9
	United States Virgin Islands	59.9	40.1
	Paraguay	59.8	40.2
	El Salvador	58.6	41.4
	Guatemala	57.7	42.3

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Bahamas	56.9	43.1
	Fiji	56.6	43.4
	Libya	56.4	43.6
	Kenya	56.0	44.0
	France	55.4	44.6
	Ivory Coast	54.4	43.6
	Kyrgyzstan	54.3	45.7
	Uganda	54.1	45.9
	North Korea	54.1	45.9
	Costa Rica	54.1	45.9

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Maldives	54.1	45.9
	Tanzania	53.5	46.5
	Mexico	53.4	46.6
	Botswana	52.7	47.3
	Belize	52.7	47.3
	Algeria	52.6	47.4
	Mongolia	52.1	47.9
	Uruguay	52.0	48.0
	Cambodia	51.3	48.7

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Myanmar	50.9	49.1
	Nicaragua	50.8	49.2
	Ethiopia	50.7	49.3
	Iran	50.5	49.5
	Mauritius	50.0	50.0
	Belarus	49.8	50.2
	Belgium	49.4	50.6
	United States	49.2	50.8
	Malaysia	48.9	51.1


	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	United Kingdom	48.3	51.7
	New Zealand	48.2	51.8
	Sweden	48.0	52.0
	Morocco	47.8	52.2
	Ireland	47.6	52.4
	Egypt	47.3	52.7
	Australia	47.3	52.7
	Ukraine	47.0	53.0
	Italy	46.9	53.1

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Lebanon	46.8	53.2
	Greece	46.4	53.6
	Indonesia	46.0	54.0
	Canada	45.7	54.3
	Zambia	45.6	54.4
	Sudan	45.5	54.5
	Ghana	45.4	54.6
	Kazakhstan	45.2	54.8
	Tunisia	45.1	54.9

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Barbados	44.9	55.1
	Albania	44.7	55.3
	India	44.3	55.7
	Moldova	44.3	55.7
	Pakistan	43.7	56.3
	Philippines	43.1	56.9
	Iraq	43.1	56.9
	Malta	43.0	57.0
	Palestine	42.8	57.2

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Panama	42.7	57.3
	Sri Lanka	42.1	57.9
	Turkey	41.2	58.8
	North Macedonia	41.1	58.9
	Vietnam	40.8	59.2
	Jordan	40.0	60.0
	Germany	39.4	60.6
	Russia	38.7	61.3
	Thailand	37.3	62.7

	Country	Crime Index Numero (1- 100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Numero (100-1) 2025
	Serbia	37.2	62.8
	Latvia	37.1	62.9
	Nepal	36.7	63.3
	Spain	36.6	63.4
	Bulgaria	36.1	63.9
	Montenegro	35.4	64.6
	Cuba	34.4	65.6
	Luxembourg	34.2	65.8
	Hungary	33.7	66.3

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Cyprus	33.1	66.9
	Norway	33.0	67.0
	Kuwait	32.8	67.2
	Lithuania	32.4	67.6
	Portugal	32.1	67.9
	Azerbaijan	31.8	68.2
	Israel	31.8	68.2
	Slovakia	31.0	69.0
	Cayman Islands	30.8	69.2

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Austria	29.5	70.5
	Brunei	29.3	70.7
	Poland	29.0	71.0
	Uzbekistan	27.9	72.1
	Romania	26.9	67.7
	Netherlands	26.9	73.1
	Rwanda	26.9	73.1
	Finland	26.8	73.2
	Czechia	26.5	73.5

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Switzerland	26.5	73.5
	Georgia	26.3	73.7
	Denmark	26.0	74.0
	Iceland	25.7	74.3
	Croatia	25.5	74.5
	South Korea	24.9	75.1
	Bahrain	24.5	75.5
	China	24.0	76.0
	Saudi Arabia	23.9	76.1

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Slovenia	23.8	76.2
	Estonia	23.7	76.3
	Monaco	23.3	76.7
	Japan	22.9	77.1
	Singapore	22.6	77.4
	Armenia	22.1	77.9
	Hong Kong	21.5	78.5
	Oman	18.3	81.7
	Taiwan	17.1	82.9

	Country	Crime Index Number (1-100) 2025 ↓	Safety Index Number (100-1) 2025
	Qatar	15.8	84.2
	United Arab Emirates	15.5	84.5
	Andorra	15.3	84.7

- Crime Index and Safety Index are compiled semi-annually by statistics site Numbeo and range from 0-100.
- Lower scores are preferable in the Crime Index.
- Higher scores are preferable in the Safety Index.
- The Global Organized Crime Index (GOCI) is created by compiling data from a wide range of indicators across three subcategories: Criminal Markets, Criminal Actors, and Resilience.
- Criminal Markets, from financial crimes and cyber crimes to human trafficking, arms trafficking, environmental and drug crimes.
- Criminal Actors such as mafia-style groups, criminal networks, and state-embedded actors.
- Resilience, which includes the country's judicial system, law enforcement, and victim and witness support.
- Lower GOCI scores are preferable.

Snapshot

- Crime rates are influenced by several factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and law enforcement strictness.
- Countries like Venezuela, Papua New Guinea, and South Africa have high crime rates due to issues like corruption, economic changes, and social challenges.
- Low crime rates in countries like Switzerland and Japan are attributed to effective law enforcement and in some cases, restrictive gun laws.

Overall crime rate is calculated by dividing the total number of reported crimes of any kind by the total population, then multiplying the result by 100,000 (because crime rate is typically reported as X number of crimes per 100,000 people). Crime rates vary greatly from country to country and are influenced by many factors. For example, high poverty levels and unemployment tend to inflate a country's crime rate. Conversely, strict police enforcement and severe sentences tend to reduce crime rates. There is also a strong correlation between age and crime, with most crimes, especially [violent crimes](#), being committed by those ages 20-30 years old.

The overall crime rate in the United States is 49.2. The violent crime rate in the United States has decreased sharply over the past 25 years. Crime rates vary significantly among the states, with such states as Alaska, New Mexico, and Tennessee experiencing much higher crime rates than states such as Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Some of the world's lowest crime rates are seen in Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Japan, and New Zealand. Each of these countries has very effective law enforcement, and Denmark, Norway, and Japan have some of the most restrictive gun laws in the world.

Countries with the Highest Crime Rate

1. Venezuela Venezuela has a crime index of 82.1, the highest of any country in the world. The

U.S. Department of State has issued a Level 4 travel advisory for Venezuela, indicating that it is unsafe to travel to the country, and travelers should not travel there. Venezuela's high crime rates have been attributed to reasons including government corruption, a flawed judiciary system, and the breakdown of the Rule of Law.

2. Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea has a crime index of 80.4. In Papua New Guinea, crime, especially violent crime, is primarily fueled by rapid social, economic, and political changes. Raskol gangs engage in small and large-scale criminal activity and consist mainly of members with little education and few employment opportunities. Organized crime in the form of corruption is also common in major cities and largely contributes to the high crime rate. Additionally, the geography of Papua New Guinea makes it appealing for drug and human trafficking.

3. Afghanistan

Afghanistan has the third-highest crime rate. Crime is present in various forms, including corruption, assassinations/contract killings, drug trafficking, kidnapping, and money laundering. Afghanistan supplied [85% of the world's illicit opium](#) in 2020. The Taliban, which regained control of the country in 2021, has pledged to stamp out the opium industry, but it is such a

vital part of the country's struggling economy that it will be difficult to eliminate. Widespread unemployment adds additional fuel for many of the country's crimes, such as robbery and assault.

4. Haiti

Haiti's ongoing political instability has allowed gang violence to flourish, with an estimated 150-200 gangs controlling as much as 60-100% of the capital, Port-au-Prince. In 2023, the country saw [4,789 murders and 2,490 kidnappings](#), nearly double the previous year's figures. Firearms and drug trafficking, particularly from the United States and the Dominican Republic, fuel much of the violence. Gangs have taken control of key infrastructure, including ports and fuel terminals, further destabilizing the country. Haiti's weak border control and insufficient policing have made it a major hub for transnational drug smuggling, particularly for cocaine and cannabis.

5. South Africa

South Africa has the fifth-highest crime rate in the world. South Africa has a notably high rate of assaults, rape, homicides, and other violent crimes. This has been attributed to several factors, including high levels of poverty, inequality, unemployment, social exclusion, and the normalization of violence. South Africa has one of the [highest rape rates](#) in the world. More than 1 in 4 men surveyed by the South African Medical Research Council admitted to committing rape.

6. Honduras

With a crime index of 74.3, Honduras ranks sixth in the world in terms of crime rate. Honduras's peak of violent crime occurred in 2012, when the country experienced about 20 homicides per day, typically carried out by gun-toting gangs such as Barrio 18 or Mara Salvatrucha. Honduras is also considered to be a major drug route to the United States. Weak domestic law enforcement has made the country an easy point of entry for the illegal drug trade. The U.S. Department of State has issued a Level 3 travel advisory for Honduras, indicating that travelers should reconsider visiting the country.

7. Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago has the seventh-highest crime rate in the world at 70.8. Trinidad and Tobago's government faces several challenges in its effort to reduce crime, such as bureaucratic resistance to change, the destructive influence of gangs, drugs, economic recession, and an overburdened legal system. There is a great demand for illegal weapons as well, which drug trafficking and gang-related activities fuel. Trinidad and Tobago has a Level 3 travel advisory, meaning that travelers should reconsider travel. Visitors are typically victims of pickpocketing, assault, theft, and fraud.

8. Syria

Organized crime in Syria, a country with a crime rate of 69.1, is made worse by an ongoing civil war and revolves around the production and trafficking of Captagon – an amphetamine drug whose trade is funding many factions in the conflict. Human trafficking and arms smuggling are rampant in Syria. Militia-controlled areas also experience widespread extortion and racketeering, while the economic devastation from the war has increased smuggling of counterfeit goods and tobacco across Syria’s porous borders.

9. Guyana

Guyana has the ninth-highest crime rate worldwide of 68.8, and a murder rate of about four times higher than that of the United States. Despite a rigorous licensing requirement to own firearms, the use of weapons by criminals is common. Domestic violence happens regularly in Guyana, as the enforcement of domestic violence laws is weak. Armed robberies occur frequently as well, especially in Georgetown. Additionally, tourists are often the victims of hotel break-ins, robberies, and assaults.

10. Peru

Rounding up the list, Peru is one of the largest cocaine producers globally. Organized crime in Peru is heavily influenced by this trade, making it rank among the top in Latin America. The country sees [significant activity from drug trafficking organizations](#), particularly in coca-growing regions like the VRAEM (Valley of the Apurímac, Ene, and Mantaro rivers), where violence and criminality are rampant. Gangs such as Tren de Aragua are involved in extortion, drug trafficking, and contract killings, especially in urban areas like Lima, where over 700 homicides were recorded in 2022, many linked to organized crime.

Important Mentions of Former Top 10 Placers

Brazil

Brazil had the seventh-highest crime rate in the world in 2020 with exceptionally high rates of violent crimes. Brazil’s homicide rate was [23.6 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants](#) in 2020—and it had risen as high as 30.8 in previous years. Brazil’s most massive problem remains organized crime, as it has expanded in recent years, and violence between rival groups is common. Drug trafficking, corruption, and domestic violence are all pervasive issues in Brazil.

Jamaica

Number ten on the 2020 list of countries with the highest crime rates was Jamaica, which is still plagued by government corruption, gang activity, and high levels of violent crime, including sexual assault. The [U.S. Overseas Security Advisory Council](#) describes the Jamaican police

force as understaffed and possessed of limited resources. Travelers are advised to especially avoid Spanish Town and parts of Kingston and Montego Bay.

Sources

1. [Crime Index by Country 2024 - Numbeo](#)
2. [Criminality - The Organized Crime Country](#)

Exhibit 9

Institutional Violence and Public Security

 global.org.br/en/blog/programa/institutional-violence-and-public-security

Brazil leads the UN world ranking of homicides in absolute numbers and is the eighth most violent country in the world ([UNODC/UN](#)). According to the agency, 76% of deaths were caused by firearms. However, historically, the Brazilian State has opted for a public security policy that deepens violence and inequalities (mainly racial), with the excessive use of force by law enforcement agents, militarization, and over-incarceration, in addition to the discriminatory stance when it comes to guaranteeing the basic rights and services in *favelas* and other impoverished territories, noticeably occupied by black and/or indigenous populations.

of homicide victims are black individuals, most of them male, between 15 and 29 years old (IBGE/2019), 63.7% of persons in prisons and socio-educational systems (Depen), and 87.35% of victims of police lethality in eight states (Network of Public Security Observatories).

Thus, the Institutional Violence and Public Security program focuses on developing research and analyses that help understand and combat racism as a structuring factor in the actions of both public security agencies and the criminal justice system.

In order to confront violence caused by the State (or by private security agents approved by the State) and produce an agenda of reparation and non-repetition, Justiça Global works to combat racism and police violence; prevent and eradicate torture and other violations of the human rights of persons deprived of their liberty; promote decarceration through the revision of criminal policies and also to strengthen the capacities of organizations, social movements and families of victims of State-violence and survivors of the prison system in their fight against human rights violations and in the promotion of justice and prevention of further abuse.

The 2023 Security Yearbook reports that 6,429 people died as a result of police violence in one year in Brazil. According to data from the Network of Public Security Observatories, 65% of these victims were black. This number reflects the public security policy in Brazil, which is based on a militarized, belligerent paradigm that is incompatible with democracy.

Made visible by the business-military dictatorship and strengthened by the rhetoric of the war on drugs, the action (both direct or by omission) of criminal policies intensifies the genocide of black populations, as seen in increasingly frequent police mega-operations in favelas, peripheral communities and regions in several cities across the country. The consequences of this model are summary executions, forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, and the imposition of suffering and illness on women.

Based on that, Justiça Global monitors and reports cases, recommends policies to reduce police violence and strengthen external control over the activity of law-enforcement agencies, and works to strengthen movements against state violence, especially those led by mothers and families of

victims.

Over the last few decades, the number of persons deprived of their liberty in Brazil has increased significantly. Today, Brazil ranks third in the ranking of countries with the largest prison population in the world, with an average of 300 adult persons deprived of liberty per 100,000 inhabitants. This number is twice as high as the world average, according to the International Center for Prison Studies (University of Essex/United Kingdom).

This massive, selective incarceration of black youths — especially women — demonstrates the unbridled advancement of institutional violence that has been established since Brazil's colonial past and, since then, has made torture a perpetual practice within a criminal justice system that turns a blind eye to all types of violations of fundamental rights of persons deprived of liberty.

Given this situation, Justiça Global monitors and reports violations in places of deprivation of liberty, and advocates in Brazil and abroad to strengthen policies for preventing and combating torture; decarceration; controlling the use of force; and guaranteeing human rights in institutions of deprivation of liberty.

Since its foundation, Justiça Global's strategy has been to act in international human rights systems — in the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations (UN) — by submitting complaints and information, acting as *amicus curiae*, requesting hearings, monitoring visits, and petitioning cases.

Exhibit 10

Brazil is the 3rd most unsafe country in South America, says Global Peace Index

exame.com/mundo/brasil-e-3o-pais-mais-inseguro-da-america-do-sul-diz-global-peace-index

Rafael Balago

June 16, 2024



Brazil is one of the 50 [most dangerous](#) countries in the world, and the third worst in Latin America, according to the Global Peace Index 2024, released this week.

The study, produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), is based on 23 indicators to assess the level of security in 163 countries worldwide. The indicators are based on three axes: ongoing conflicts, security and protection measures, and militarization.

In this ranking, which lists the countries with the best safety records, Brazil appears in 131st place. In South America, **Venezuela** (142nd) and **Colombia** (146th) are in a worse situation than Brazil. **Argentina** was considered the best country in the region (46th overall), followed by **Uruguay** (52nd) and **Chile** (64th).

Worldwide, **Iceland** was named the safest country in the world, followed by Ireland and Austria. See the lists at the end of the article.

Among the worst are **Yemen** , **Sudan** , and **South Sudan** , countries plagued by civil wars. The top 10 most insecure countries include Afghanistan, Ukraine, Russia, and Israel.

In Latin America, El Salvador stood out for its improvement, showing the best progress in the index and climbing 21 positions, although it still occupies 107th place. The country saw decreases in homicide rates and an increase in the perception of safety. President Nayib Bukele, re-elected this year, adopted a hardline policy against crime, which includes the construction of mega-prisons and the erosion of civil rights.

World in conflict

“In the last decade, peace has diminished in nine out of ten years. We have reached a record number of conflicts, with increased militarization and greater international strategic competition, which negatively affect the world economy and increase the risk of new clashes, in addition to exacerbating social inequality,” says Steve Killelea, founder and president of the IEP, in a statement.

The organization points out that there are 56 active conflicts in the world, including civil wars and conflicts between different countries. At the same time, 92 countries are engaged in some form of military conflict outside their borders, the highest number since 2008.

The IEP estimates that violence generated a global impact of US\$19.1 trillion in 2023, using the purchasing power parity indicator, with the majority of this value related to military and internal security spending. At the same time, violence reduces economic activity, as in Ukraine. After the Russian invasion, the country's GDP fell by 30% in 2022. In Syria, the civil war led to an 85% drop in GDP, according to the study.

The 10 safest countries in the world

- 1 Iceland
- 2 Ireland
- 3 Austria
- 4 New Zealand
- 5 Singapore
- 6 Switzerland
- 7 Portugal
- 8 Denmark
- 9 Slovenia
- 10 Malaysia

The 10 most dangerous countries in the world


- 155 Israel
- 156 Syria
- 157 Russia
- 158 Democratic Republic of Congo
- 159 Ukraine
- 160 Afghanistan
- 161 South Sudan
- 162 Sudan
- 163 Yemen

The 10 safest countries in South America

- 1 Argentina
- 2 Uruguay
- 3 Chile
- 4 Bolivia
- 5 Paraguay
- 6 Peru
- 7 Guyana
- 8 Ecuador
- 9 Brazil
- 10 Venezuela
- 11 Colombia

Exhibit 11

Datafolha: Presence of gangs and militias affects 19% of the country's population

 [cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/brasil/datafolha-presenca-de-faccoes-e-milicias-atinge-19-da-populacao-do-pais](https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/brasil/datafolha-presenca-de-faccoes-e-milicias-atinge-19-da-populacao-do-pais)

October 16, 2025



Criminal factions and militias are increasingly present in Brazilian territory and are already part of the daily lives of at least 28.5 million people — or 19% of the country's population .

The data was released by Datafolha following research commissioned by the FBSP (Brazilian Forum for Public Security). The results of the study were based on **people who lived in close proximity to organized crime in their neighborhoods** .

Compared to last year's data, **the increase was five percentage points** , when 14% of respondents stated they had some type of contact with criminal groups.

At the time, the number represented **23 million Brazilians** , about 5 million fewer than now.

For the current research, 2,007 people over the age of 16 were interviewed in 130 municipalities across all regions of Brazil. The interviews took place between June 2nd and 6th and focused on situations of violence.

Presence of factions and militias

The Northeast region, capital cities, and large cities—those with more than 500,000 inhabitants—were reported as the main stages of activity for [criminal organizations and militias](#) .

Furthermore, distinct social classes were also analyzed. Rich and poor alike reported the presence of organized crime in their neighborhoods in a similar way.

A total of 19% of people earning up to two minimum wages (R\$ 3,036) responded affirmatively regarding exposure to crime. Another 18% of respondents, those with incomes ranging from five to ten minimum wages (R\$ 7,590 to R\$ 15,180), reported the same.

According to the research, **people who self-identify as Black are more affected by the presence of [organized crime](#)** compared to the white population.

Among black people, 23% confirm cohabitation, 10% more than the second group.

Illegal cemeteries and crack dens

Those who report suffering from organized crime also claim to live with the [presence of clandestine cemeteries in their neighborhood](#) . Furthermore, they also mention the presence of "crack dens" in the areas where they frequent daily.

According to the research, **one in four respondents (27%) say they know of clandestine cemeteries** . The proportion is 16% for the general population.

Another statistic is that **four out of ten people also say they encounter [crack dens](#) along their daily commutes**.

In both cases, the proportion of people reporting these problems **has grown since 2024**.

Violent approach by the police

Regarding the violence itself, 16% of those interviewed stated that they had witnessed [violent approaches by the Military Police](#).

The numbers are higher among young people — 25% of those aged 16 to 24 say they have witnessed cases; and among men and residents of large urban centers, with 21% reporting the occurrences.

In 2024, the number of people who answered **"yes"** to the same question **corresponded to 14% of those interviewed.**

Missing relatives

Regarding disappearances, 8% of those surveyed responded that they have had **relatives or acquaintances who are or have been [missing](#).**

This percentage corresponds to 13.4 million people.

The social classes most affected by this problem are classes D and E, considered the poorest.

Private security

The research also examines other illegal activities such as the offering of **private security services by off-duty police officers.**

One in five respondents say the practice occurs in the neighborhoods where they live. The numbers have also grown since last year, when **they went from 18% in 2024 to 21% in 2025.**

The practice of private security is prohibited in most Brazilian states.

**Under the supervision of Carolina Figueiredo*

Exhibit 12

Infiltration of factions corrodes the Brazilian State from within.

G gazetadopovo.com.br/brasil/infiltracao-de-faccoes-corroi-estado-brasileiro-por-dentro

January 26, 2026



According to a prosecutor from the São Paulo Public Prosecutor's Office, if the infiltration of criminal factions is proven, Brazil faces a silent and strategic erosion of the State's decision-making spheres, with direct impacts on the formulation and execution of essential public policies. (Photo: Infographic/Gazeta do Povo based on an image by Fernando Frazão/Agência Brasil)

As criminal factions advance unchecked across Brazil, the image of armed criminals in the middle of a poor community in some large city no longer accurately reflects reality. This image coexists with another, much more silent and even more lethal than the first: the presence of organized crime in government offices, police forces, internal affairs departments, and on the **payroll of the Brazilian state** in general.

Brazil is witnessing not only the territorial expansion of the [Primeiro Comando da Capital \(PCC\)](#) and [Comando Vermelho \(CV\)](#) , as well as dozens of other regional criminal groups, but also a true **systemic infiltration** of factions that threatens the sovereignty of Brazilian institutions.

Two of the most emblematic cases in the country's recent history involve precisely the two dominant criminal factions here, PCC and Comando Vermelho, and took place in their respective centers of origin and territorial dominance, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, respectively. From what

has been seen so far, while the PCC specializes in police and financial corruption in São Paulo, Comando Vermelho consolidates its political influence in Rio de Janeiro — **at the epicenter of the crisis is, once again, the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Alerj)** .

“

Brazil is witnessing a systemic infiltration of organized crime that threatens the sovereignty of Brazilian institutions.

”

The most emblematic recent case occurred on November 8, 2024, when Antônio Vinícius Lopes Gritzbach, later known as the "PCC informant," was executed with rifle shots at Guarulhos Airport. Gritzbach was a kind of "living archive" of the criminal faction's relations with the São Paulo police. He had knowledge of the PCC's financial inner workings and about police officers who received bribes from the faction [within the São Paulo Civil Police](#) .

In his plea bargain, approved months earlier, Gritzbach presented compelling evidence against investigators and at least one police chief from the Homicide and Personal Protection Department (DHPP) and the State Department of Criminal Investigations (Deic).

SEE ALSO:



[Even behind bars, key leaders of organized crime continue to call the shots on the streets.](#)

Police officers allegedly demanded bribes of up to R\$ 40 million.

According to investigations by the São Paulo Public Prosecutor's Office (MP-SP) triggered by Gritzbach's testimony, civil police officers allegedly acted as "operational arms" of the faction, demanding bribes of up to R\$ 40 million to divert investigations into homicides and other crimes affecting the PCC leadership.

To make matters worse, Gritzbach's execution took place under the "protection" of military police officers from his illegal private escort—police officers are, in theory, prohibited from acting as security guards even during their days off. The execution exposed the involvement of at least 27 police officers from São Paulo with the PCC and CV criminal organizations. This is what a survey by *G1* revealed, based on investigations by the Civil Police, Federal Police, and Military Police, with an investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office into the case.

At least 41 people are under investigation for suspected involvement in Gritzbach's murder or other crimes uncovered after his death. Of these, 33 are in custody, including 26 police officers, for various crimes such as homicide and corruption. Four are fugitives from justice, and four others, including one police officer, are responding to charges while free.

In December, the Military Court convicted 11 military police officers for providing illegal escort services to Gritzbach. Sentences ranged from five years and three months to seven years and five months, with the sentence initially served in a semi-open regime. Four other defendants were acquitted.

Rio de Janeiro lawmakers are being investigated for links to organized crime.

Meanwhile, in Rio de Janeiro, the unfolding events in the case of former Rio de Janeiro state deputy Thiago Motta de Souza, known as "TH Joias," are the focus of attention. Arrested in operations against money laundering by the CV (and expelled from the MDB party after his arrest), "TH Joias" is accused by the police of brokering the purchase and sale of weapons for the Rio-based faction, in addition to various actions favoring the criminal organization.

In December, the former congressman was transferred to the federal prison system by order of the Supreme Federal Court (STF) in the same action that led to the arrest of Judge Macário Ramos Júdice Neto, and which follows the arrest of the suspended president of the Rio de Janeiro Legislative Assembly, Rodrigo Bacellar — who was released days later after the Alerj deputies revoked his arrest.

Despite this, Bacellar remained removed from his position as president of the House, by decision of the Supreme Federal Court (STF), and is subject to alternative measures such as wearing an electronic ankle monitor and being prohibited from leaving his home at night and on weekends. The Federal Police (PF) had already found evidence that Bacellar was informed in advance about the operation that would arrest "TH Joias" and warned the former congressman so that he could hide evidence.

After examining Bacellar's cell phone, the Federal Police found evidence suggesting that the source of the leak was Judge Macário Ramos Júdice Neto, the rapporteur for the case. The decision to transfer "TH Joias" to a special regime within the federal penitentiary system fulfills requests from the Federal Police and the Attorney General's Office.

The Federal Police stated in their report that other suspects arrested in the same operation have already been sent to federal prisons, and that "there is a clear contradiction," since "TH Joias," classified as "one of the group's leaders and an integral part of its political core," was not included.

Attorney Fernando Augusto Fernandes, who defends Judge Macário Júdice, argued that Minister Alexandre de Moraes was misled in ordering the extreme measure and that he did not have access to a copy of the decision that decreed his arrest, thus preventing him from having a full defense.

The judge's defense filed a request for release in early January, citing health reasons, and attached a medical report, which is still under review by the Supreme Federal Court (STF). Both the defense of TH Joias and that of Rodrigo Bacellar have consistently denied the involvement of the two Rio de Janeiro parliamentarians in any type of crime or criminal organization.

Infiltration by factions weakens the guarantee of public order.

In 2024, investigations by the Regional Electoral Court of São Paulo (TRE-SP) indicated that at least 70 candidates for municipal positions throughout the state had direct or indirect links to criminal factions. The São Paulo Public Prosecutor's Office is investigating these cases under secrecy.

“There are indications of possible infiltration of public agents into schemes orchestrated by organized crime and factions,” Celeste Leite dos Santos, prosecutor for the São Paulo Public Prosecutor's Office and president of the Instituto Pró-Vítima, told **Gazeta do Povo**. “According to what has already been widely reported, investigations reveal the possible participation of civil and military police officers, both in the illegal protection and execution of the informant, exposing a level of co-optation that weakens the credibility and authority of the institutions responsible for guaranteeing public order.”

She emphasizes that this extremely serious scenario in São Paulo finds an equally alarming parallel in Rio de Janeiro. "Recent operations indicate the possibility of Comando Vermelho operating within political and judicial structures," Celeste states.

This potential infiltration by factions amplifies the institutional challenge, as the prosecutor points out. "If proven, we have a scenario where it's not just about territorial or armed conflict, but rather a **silent and strategic erosion of the State's decision-making spheres**, with direct impacts on the formulation and execution of essential public policies," she assesses.

She emphasizes that the issue still requires in-depth investigation in order to verify whether the episodes extensively reported by the press in recent times constitute a *modus operandi* of the faction or isolated cases.

SEE ALSO:



- [Everything under control: up to 61 million Brazilians live under the control of crime.](#)



- [PCC and CV expand into Africa and Asia in transnational criminal consortia.](#)



- [How organized crime acted to try to interfere in municipal elections.](#)

Exhibit 13

PCC and PGC fight for territory and advance into Santa Catarina.

g gazetadopovo.com.br/republica/guerra-faccoes-cidade-sul-tiroteios-veiculos-incendiados

October 23, 2024



PCC and PGC advance into Santa Catarina and fight for territory for drug trafficking. (Photo: Image provided by the Fire Department / Government of the state of Santa Catarina)

The government of Santa Catarina was still celebrating its title as the safest state and capital in the country, according to the [2024 annual ranking of the Safest Cities in Brazil](#) by the consulting firm MySide, released in September of this year, when Greater Florianópolis began experiencing moments of terror. Criminal factions became involved in intense armed conflicts in the fight for territory, in an escalation of violence that began last week.

The Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and the Primeiro Grupo Catarinense (PGC) are locked in a territorial dispute, and what we saw last week were scenes the state hadn't witnessed in at least six years.

Governor [Jorginho Mello](#) (PL) attempted to provide a swift response and confirmed during a press conference that it was a territorial dispute. He stated that security forces are responding strongly to the wave of violence.

Last weekend, following a series of attacks that resulted in cars and buses being set on fire in various parts of the capital and metropolitan area, a crisis management team was activated by the Civil Police.

The main criminal activities were recorded in the central region and the northern zone of Florianópolis, a city known in the tourist industry as the "Magic Island". The northern region of Florianópolis has drug trafficking areas dominated by the PCC, but which the PGC wants to control.

Residents and tourists used social media to report moments of terror, mainly between Thursday night and Friday morning (October 17th and 18th), with recurring stories. They warned that passenger vehicles, some of them stolen, buses, and other objects were placed in the middle of streets and set on fire, all to hinder the arrival of the police at conflict points between factions or in the search for fleeing criminals. Shootouts were also witnessed in these areas of the city.

On the morning of last Sunday (20) the police said that 12 people had been arrested and one suspect died in a confrontation. Amid the escalation of conflicts, the governor used social media to reassure the population of Santa Catarina.

"Our security force is one of the best in the country. We don't give bandits or criminals any slack. We have always fought criminal factions and we will continue to fight them. They set fires to intimidate. In short, here in Santa Catarina, bandits don't get any slack. We will not allow any kind of excess. There is discipline here. Santa Catarina deserves respect and has our respect," he declared.

In a statement, the Santa Catarina State Secretariat of Public Security said that security forces remain mobilized to respond to incidents reported in Greater Florianópolis. Sources within the state government affirm that Governor Jorginho Mello is not considering calling in national security forces and that everything will be resolved by the state's public security forces.

"Policing has been reinforced in the highest-risk areas, with teams from the Military and Civil Police, in addition to support from the Military Fire Department, working together on the fires recorded in some parts of Greater Florianópolis [...] Since the beginning of the incidents, several operations have been launched to contain the criminal acts, resulting in arrests. The state government reiterates its commitment to public order and the safety of citizens, and will continue to employ all necessary resources to restore tranquility to the region," adds the Secretary of Security.

The statement also says it continues to monitor the situation and will provide updates as new information emerges. However, the advance of factions in the state considered the safest in Brazil has caused concern given the scenes that were previously more common in São Paulo, due to the dominance of the PCC, and in Rio de Janeiro, due to the Comando Vermelho (CV). In general, these two factions have a direct and indirect relationship in the confrontations and conflicts recorded in Santa Catarina since last week.

How the death of a former American soldier triggered a drug war in Greater Florianópolis.

The escalation in clashes between the PGC and PCC gangs had been intensifying since September in the fight for territory, especially after a Civil Police operation targeting drug traffickers in regions dominated by these organizations. The final straw, however, was the death of David Beckhauser Herold on October 2nd. The 34-year-old music producer was nicknamed "Americano" because he lived in the United States from 2008 to 2013 and was exiled from the country during that period.

He is the son of a Brazilian woman and an American man. Upon returning to Brazil, he was arrested for drug trafficking in 2015 and joined the PGC, where, according to police investigations, he was identified as a leader of the faction. **Gazeta do Povo** was unable to contact his defense. "Americano" was facing several lawsuits, and was even convicted in 2016 for a homicide and an attempted homicide in 2014, but was serving his sentence under an open regime.

In early October of this year, "Americano" was shot and killed in São Paulo during the filming of a music video for a trap artist for whom he was a music producer. The São Paulo Civil Police reported that two men approached the filming location and fired at least 60 shots at "Americano," who died at the scene. The PGC (Primeiro Comando da Capital) began to suspect that the murder had been ordered by the PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital), although police investigations are still ongoing.

PGC and PCC: the similarities between rival factions vying for dominance in Santa Catarina.

Like the PCC, which originated within the São Paulo prison system in 1993, the PGC was born in Santa Catarina prisons in 2003 to confront the PCC's advance and dominance in the state. This is all because the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) has ambitious plans for Santa Catarina. In addition to laundering money from drug and arms trafficking through the purchase of luxury properties in the trendy coastal cities of Santa Catarina, the faction is eyeing the state's ports, such as Navegantes, São Francisco do Sul, Itapoá, Imbituba, and Itajaí.

It is through the ports that the largest Brazilian criminal faction ships cocaine camouflaged among legitimate cargo to five continents, emphasizes the public prosecutor who has been investigating the São Paulo-based faction for over two decades, Lincoln Gakiya.

In an attempt to exert dominance and prevent the PCC's advance in the state, the PGC is expanding into southern Brazil through partnerships with Comando Vermelho (CV) and the weakened Família do Norte (FDN) group, which was once one of the largest criminal factions in northern Brazil but has been declining according to police investigations. Both are rivals of the PCC.

Investigations by the Civil Police and the Public Prosecutor's Office in Santa Catarina indicate that the PCC has consolidated its power throughout the state, even with resistance from the PGC, which also wants to maintain control over the state's prison system.

Rigid and bloodthirsty, the Primeiro Grupo Catarinense (PGC) also exerts dominance through cruel attack techniques against its rivals, points out the Public Prosecutor's Office (MPSC). The Santa Catarina-based organization is expanding its actions to control prisons in an attempt to inhibit the PCC's advance over inmates, and even while imprisoned, PGC leaders determine what faction members outside prison should do, including missions such as kidnappings, extortion, and murders using cruel methods. The investigations also seek to determine if last week's attacks were ordered by imprisoned faction members.

Another point being investigated is corruption within the prison system, which is a trademark of the gang, facilitating access to phones in prisons, direct communication between prisoners and non-prisoners, and internal control of the prisons.

Federal Deputy Delegado Palumbro (MDB-SP) has been drawing attention to the escalation of violence perpetrated by the PCC and other factions. He points out that Brazil has more than 70 criminal organizations that have thrived due to the inaction of state governments, but especially due to the inertia of the federal government.

“Brazil doesn't produce drugs; they enter through the borders. Where is the federal government to combat this? A large portion of the weapons also enter through the borders; where is the federal government? The government isn't doing its homework, especially at the borders and ports used by these groups for drug trafficking,” he warns.

Santa Catarina receives nearly 3 million tourists a year; the sector could be affected.

Besides public safety, another point of concern regarding violence is the economic aspect, specifically tourism – the sector generated R\$ 2.1 billion for the state economy in 2023. Data from the Brazilian Agency for International Tourism Promotion (Embratur) reveals that the state is the fourth most visited by tourists in Brazil.

“People and families tend to visit fewer places where organized crime is present, and this raises an alert for the economy and tourism. The response in combating crime needs to be swift,” reinforces Márcio Nunes, a lawyer specializing in Economic Law.

In Greater Florianópolis and nearby coastal cities, approximately 70% of existing properties are for rent, mainly during the upcoming summer season. Annually, Santa Catarina receives approximately three million tourists. This represents an increase of almost 40% of the state's total resident population, which is 8.1 million inhabitants.

Exhibit 14

The world of crime in Santa Catarina

 fontesegura.forumseguranca.org.br/o-mundo-do-crime-barriga-verde

forumseg

October 6, 2025



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Santa Catarina, often hailed as the “safest state in Brazil,” projects an image of tranquility and order. However, this narrative hides an underlying reality of intricate organized crime. Despite public denials from state authorities, a powerful faction, the Primeiro Grupo Catarinense (PGC), emerged from within the Santa Catarina prison system and consolidated its power, challenging public perception and governmental forces. This article explores the history of the PGC, the duality between the state's stance and the faction's strength, its complex governance structure, and the implications for security in Santa Catarina.

In the not-so-distant past, the criminal landscape of Santa Catarina was dominated by major drug traffickers. Figures like Juca Galeano in the 1980s; Jarvis Chimenes Pavão in the 1990s; Júlio César Wiese and João Vitorio da Fonseca, "Baga". Following Baga's death in 2000, a violent war for control of drug trafficking in the state capital broke out, boosting names like Sérgio de Souza, "Neném da Costeira".

It was in this context of illicit markets and a precarious prison system that, in 2001, the embryo of the PGC, known as “The Group”, emerged in the Florianópolis Penitentiary. Inspired by the model of the First Command of the Capital (PCC) of São Paulo, the initial objective was to combat oppression and “unacceptable wrong attitudes in the prison system” . On March 3, 2003, the faction was officially founded as Primeiro Grupo Catarinense. Its rise coincided with the inauguration of the São Pedro de Alcântara Penitentiary (SPA) in May of the same year, which quickly became the “Tower” or “headquarters” of the faction.

The state's prison administration policy, nicknamed "stick and tram," characterized by lack of infrastructure, overcrowding, mistreatment, abuse, torture, and constant arbitrary transfers of prisoners, ironically served as a catalyst for the strengthening of the PGC. These conditions undermined the credibility of public institutions, giving the faction a role as defender of the dignity of inmates. The transfers of PGC leaders to federal prisons, although aimed at dismantling the organization, resulted in the expansion of its networks and the formation of strategic alliances, such as the one sealed with the Comando Vermelho (CV) of Rio de Janeiro.

For years, the existence of the PGC was officially denied or minimized by the authorities in Santa Catarina, in an effort not to "tarnish the state." Only in November 2010, amidst a wave of robberies, was the group's existence publicly acknowledged by the then Secretary of Public Security, who attributed the crimes to it.

The apparent peace in Santa Catarina was shaken by waves of attacks orchestrated by the PGC in the early 2010s. The turning point occurred in November 2012, after the murder of a prison officer. In a general "salve geral" (a term used to describe a general order to suppress violence), the PGC ordered attacks on buses, police stations, and vehicles in several cities, in response to alleged torture in the prison system. New waves of violence followed in 2013 and 2014, with hundreds of attacks in various cities and the intervention of the National Force.

Another milestone was the declared war against the PCC, the largest criminal faction in Brazil, which escalated between 2015 and 2018. The PGC's alliance with Comando Vermelho and the dispute over strategic international trafficking routes, especially the ports of Itajaí and São Francisco do Sul, fueled the conflict. On June 27, 2015, the PGC released an "open letter," rejecting the PCC's "baptisms" in its territory and declaring war on the "invading force." This conflict resulted in the highest homicide rates in the history of Santa Catarina, with scenes of extreme violence.

The First Catarinense Group is a criminal organization with a well-defined hierarchical structure and its own normative system, exercising vigorous criminal governance. The leadership is formed by two "Ministries": the 1st (members who are "for life") and the 2nd (rotating members). Below this, the structure branches out into geographical areas, in which the "Disciplines" act as regional managers. Other positions with specific functions ensure the operational efficiency of the faction.

The PGC's internal "legislation" is detailed in its Statute, supplemented by manuals and communications that regulate everything from the behavior of its members to criminal activities. Infractions are tiered and judged in "summary" trials – the "crime tribunals," which can apply penalties ranging from fines to "strict exclusion," that is, the death penalty. Economically, the PGC is financed by a monthly "tithe" paid by members at large, and an "off-the-books" fund collected from drug dealers in the "drug dens." There are also fees levied on certain activities and the practice of money laundering.

In a "social" aspect, the PGC seeks to legitimize itself in communities by prohibiting crimes against "disadvantaged people" (pedestrians, workers, ride-hailing drivers) and severely punishing sexual crimes. These measures aim to "protect" the population and, at the same time, guarantee the "legitimacy" of the faction and reduce police attention. The present situation in Santa Catarina is a mosaic of contrasting perceptions: the official discourse exalts the image of the "safest state in Brazil," while the reality of organized crime is described as a "bomb about to explode." The PGC has consolidated its hegemony in the prison system. This dominance allows the faction to dictate the rules in prisons, segregating prisoners into "coexistence" and "safe" groups according to affiliation or obedience.

Historically, the State's actions in relation to the PGC have been marked by the denial of its existence and by repressive responses that, paradoxically, ended up strengthening it. The transfer of leaders to federal prisons, for example, although effective in the short term, in the medium and long term expanded the faction's "network" with criminals from other regions.

The key to understanding this dynamic lies in the symbiotic relationship between the PGC and the State. State policies of repression and mass incarceration, instead of weakening, often provide the PGC with human and financial resources, as well as opportunities for recruitment and network formation. The governance of the PGC, which controls illicit markets and imposes its "laws" on criminals and civilians in areas with little state presence, can inadvertently contribute to social stability. Analysis of the scenario may suggest that the low homicide rates in Santa Catarina may

be, in part, a reflection of the hegemonic governance of the PGC, which controls violence to avoid police attention, in a phenomenon known as “Pax Monopolista” . The PGC is a multifaceted force, whose history reveals how state actions and inactions and repressive policies can pave the way for the strengthening of clandestine power. The symbiosis between crime and the State is undeniable.

The persistent discourse that “in Santa Catarina, criminals don’t thrive” is confronted by the reality that the “criminals” of Santa Catarina are extremely well-established and organized. A deeper understanding of the PGC, recognized as one of the main criminal organizations in the country, requires going beyond the surface. The book *PGC: the dark side of the “safest state in Brazil”* , which will be released soon, serves as an invitation and a warning to understand the logic, strength, and rise of the PGC. It is an urgent call to rethink public security policies, adopting efficient strategies that consider the complex interaction between the State and organized crime. Paradoxically, the security of Santa Catarina seems to balance on a thin line, influenced both by state action and by the control exercised by the PGC.

REFERENCES

The passage mentioned is a transcript of a PGC booklet, which presents the history of the faction to other prisoners, seized at the Lages Men’s Prison in 2019.

BIDERMAN, Ciro et al. Pax Monopolista and Crime: The Case of the Emergence of the Primeiro Comando da Capital in São Paulo. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 2019.

The book, as well as this article, are derived from the author's master's thesis submitted to the Professional Master's Program in Public Security at the University of Vila Velha/ES (PPGSEG-UVV), entitled "First Catarinense Group and criminal governance in Santa Catarina", under the guidance of Professor Dr. Henrique Herkenhoff, a reference in the fight against organized crime in Espírito Santo, who chaired the defense panel composed of Benjamin Lessing (University of Chicago/USA) and Cyro Blatter (MP/AL).

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Exhibit 15

Faction allied with CV and rival of PCC is targeted in operation in SC

 cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/sul/sc/facciao-aliada-ao-cv-e-rival-do-pcc-e-alvo-de-operacao-em-sc

November 19, 2025



The MPSC (Public Ministry of Santa Catarina) launched , on the morning of this Wednesday (19), **an operation against the PGC (Primeiro Grupo Catarinense), a criminal faction that operates in several cities in the state** . The police action aims to dismantle the group that has activities **inside and outside prisons in Santa Catarina** .

The organization is unique in **its alliances with other factions such as CV (Comando Vermelho) and FDN (Família do Norte)**, and is also a **kind of rival to PCC (Primeiro Comando da Capital)**. The dispute is reportedly over **control of drug trafficking in specific regions**.

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In this morning's action (19), eight preventive arrest warrants and 30 search and seizure warrants are being served **against suspects of being part of the PGC**. The court orders are being carried out in the municipalities of Lages, São Joaquim, Videira, Pescaria Brava, Rio do Sul, São José, Palhoça, Laguna, Balneário Piçarras, Santa Cecília, Correia Pinto and São Cristóvão do Sul, in Santa Catarina.

So far, **five people have been arrested in the act** , one of them for belonging to a **criminal organization and money laundering** . Three others were arrested for **drug possession** and the last for **illegal possession of a firearm**.

Investigations against the PGC

According to the MPSP (São Paulo State Public Prosecutor's Office), the investigation began with a joint operation with the Penitentiary Police, in which [crimes committed by the suspects using cell phones inside prisons](#) were identified .

The crimes committed by the criminal organization were mainly **related to drug trafficking, homicide, and other offenses**. Investigations indicate that the targets operated from inside prisons and had the participation of **individuals at large**.

Seized materials must be sent to the Forensic Police, who will conduct examinations and issue expert reports. After this process, investigations will continue to identify other possible individuals involved and to further investigate the **activities of the criminal group**.

What is PGC and how does it compare to PCC?

According to a study conducted by the Federal University of Santa Catarina, **the PGC (Primeiro Grupo Catarinense) originated in the state's prison system and follows similar models to the PCC** . The faction is believed to have emerged due to the context of overcrowding and precarious conditions in the prisons.

Like the São Paulo faction, the PGC's structure features a complex and adaptable hierarchy, which includes divisions, functions, and even an internal statute. The branches are called **First Ministry, Second Ministry, Disciplines, and Harmonies**. Another characteristic similar to the PCC is **the presence of baptism within the criminal organization**.

Regarding alliances, **the PGC is said to have formed agreements with CV and FDN**. The ties with CV reportedly began between 2008 and 2011.

As a way of identifying itself, in addition to the acronym, **[the PGC uses numbering just like the PCC](#)** . In the case of the Santa Catarina faction, **the number "1573"** would be a way of expressing the group's name. **The São Paulo faction does the same, but with the number "1533"**. The numerals indicate the position of the letters in the alphabet.

Aspects such as "tithing" to the faction and terms like "brothers" are also part of the PGC.

Christian Chacao
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