Committee: Security Council (SC)

Topic: Assessing the Impact of Transnational Organized Crime and Eroding Democratic Institutions on Regional Peace and Civilian Safety in Latin America

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Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

It is my utmost honour to welcome you to the 9th Deutsche Schule Thessaloniki Model United Nations (DSTMUN). My name is Zoi Triantafyllidou, I am currently an IB2 student at Anatolia College, and I will be serving as your Deputy President this year. I am genuinely excited to guide you through this year's topic and help ensure a productive and engaging conference. Whether you're a first time delegate or one with prior experience, you can rest assured that this will be a challenging, yet truly remarkable experience.

I still remember my first conference a few years ago in the GA3 Committee. I was feeling so overwhelmed by the intensity of the room and the confidence of those who had participated in other conferences before. When it was time to deliver my first speech, I thought that everything would go wrong and all the delegates would laugh at me afterwards. Then, I remember a friend that I've made there cheering me up and giving me some courage to approach the podium and speak up. That's when my public speaking path started and that's exactly what the Model United Nations is all about: intensity, collaboration and friendships that could last forever. Thus, to everyone who feels like the younger me, I would like to reassure you that our team will make everything possible for this conference to become one of your favorite experiences!

The guide contains some foundational knowledge of the topic, serving as a starting point for your own research. Try to connect the information given along as well as your own research to your delegation's policy and beliefs, so that you can prepare strong and valuable solutions for a fruitful debate.

I'm excited to work closely with all of you during the conference. Until then, if there are any questions, concerns or issues while figuring out your delegation's policy, do not hesitate to contact me at 20211044@student.anatolia.edu.gr. I will always be at your disposal and answer you as soon as possible.

Best regards,

Zoi Triantafyllidou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, Latin America has been facing challenges due to the destructive nature of the Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) and the notion of the erosion of democratic institutions. Initially, the criminal activity was localized, but quickly evolved into a multi-billion illicit form of economic development across different nations' borders, promoting drug and human trafficking as well as environmental exploitation. By financing such campaigns, illicitly compensating these unions' officials and using violence to to silence journalists and judges, the issue becomes exacerbated, with solutions not being evident without the international community's cooperation. When state institutions collapse, the legal system collapses along with them, turning stability into continuous insecurity among the citizens, leading to threatening and eliminating any type of civilian safety.

Furthermore, the scale of the crisis has transformed what was initially considered a domestic security issue into a national security threat and consequently, an international-scale issue. Accounting for less than 10% of the world's population, Latin America disproportionately suffers from multiple homicides, with over 40% tied directly to organized crime.[1] This widespread violence, along with the cross-border smuggling taking place, triggers severe human displacement issues and increases migratory pressures. Targeted intervention and coordination from the international community is essential, as criminal syndicates exploit weak borders and governance, therefore undermining the sovereignty of all neighboring countries of the continent.

For the Security Council, this crisis demands a re-evaluation of the methods that are used for mitigating and controlling the spreading of such threats to national security. Traditional military policies, such as the Mano Dura policies have often resulted in severe human rights' exploitations without dismantling the root of such criminal organizations. The role of this committee and your individual purpose, as delegates, is to discuss realistic solutions within your alliances that can rebuild institutional integrity and state security, combatting the impunity rates and eliminating any form of democratic backsliding across nations and borders. Your resolutions should aim to reconstitute states' sovereignty and protect civilian safety while safeguarding democratic governance and human rights across borders in favor of a better and more equitable future in Latin America.

[1] UK, Criminon. "Criminon International." Criminon International, 2025, https://www.criminon.org/where-we-work/latin-america/. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Arms Trafficking

"Illegal trade in weapons, especially when this involves moving them from one place to another" [Cambridge][2]

Corruption

"The abuse of public office for personal gain" [Basel Institute on Governance][3] or "dishonest or illegal behaviour involving a person in a position of power" [Cambridge][4]

Criminal Governance

"The creation of rules regulating behavior by criminal entities often with the collaboration of state actors, which poses significant challenges for democracy and the rule of law and often threatens peoples' enjoyment of fundamental rights." [Annual Review of Sociology][5]

Civil Protection (civilian safety)

"Civil protection is the protection of people, the environment and property against all kinds of natural and human-induced disasters." [European Union law][6]

Customer Due Diligence (CDD)

"Customer due diligence (CDD) is the process of verifying a customer's identity and assessing their risk level through background checks, document verification, and monitoring of their business activities to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and prevent financial crimes." [Thomson Reuters Law Blog][7]

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[2] Cambridge Dictionary. (2026, July 15). arms trafficking. CambridgeWords. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/arms-trafficking. Accessed 19 July, 2026.
[3] Basel Institute on Governance. (2025). Baselgovernance.Org. https://baselgovernance.org/about/what-is-corruption. Accessed 19 July, 2026.
[4] Cambridge Dictionary. (2019). CORRUPTION | meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary. In Cambridge.org. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/corruption. Accessed 19 July, 2026.
[5] Feldmann, Andreas E., and Juan Pablo Luna. "Criminal Governance and the Crisis of Contemporary Latin American States." Annual Review of Sociology, vol. 48, no. 1, 6 Apr. 2022, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-030420-124931. Accessed 29 June 2026.
[6] Civil protection - EUR-Lex. (n.d.). In eur-lex.europa.eu. Retrieved July 21, 2026, from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/civil-protection.html. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[7] Pimentel, Brandon. "Customer Due Diligence (CDD): An Overview." Thomson Reuters Law Blog, 12 Feb. 2025, https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/blog/customer-due-diligence-cdd-an-overview/. Accessed 22 Aug. 2026.

Democratic Backsliding/Erosion

"A phenomenon sometimes characterized as an "erosion"; the process of declining integrity for democratic values or institutions in a political system." [Carnegie Council][8]

Gang Violence

"Gang violence refers to violent acts committed by groups of individuals who regularly engage in illegal activities. These acts can target innocent people and may involve physical confrontations between rival gangs. A gang is typically defined as two or more individuals who come together with a shared identity and a common goal, often marked by a specific name or symbol." [US Legal Forms][9]

Graft

Defined as "illegal or unfair gain; the acquisition of gain (such as money) in dishonest or questionable ways" [Merriam-Webster][10]

Homicide

Homicide is defined as "the intentional killing of a person, including murder, manslaughter, euthanasia and infanticide. It excludes death by dangerous driving, abortion and help with suicide. Attempted (uncompleted) homicide is also excluded. In contrast with other offences, the counting unit for homicide is normally the victim rather than the case." [European Union][11]

Human Trafficking

"Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. Men, women and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world. The traffickers often use violence or fraudulent employment agencies and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims." [UNODC][12]

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[8] Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. "Democratic Backsliding." Www.carnegiecouncil.org, www.carnegiecouncil.org/explore-engage/key-terms/democratic-backsliding. Accessed 29 June 2026.
[9] Gang Violence: Understanding Its Legal Definition and Implications | US Legal Forms. (2025). In Uslegalforms.com. https://legal-resources.uslegalforms.com/g/gang-violence. Accessed 19 July, 2026.
[10] Definition of GRAFT. (n.d.). In www.merriam-webster.com. Retrieved July 21, 2026, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/graft. Accessed 19 July, 2026.
[11] Glossary:Homicide - Statistics Explained. (2025). In Europa.eu. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Homicide. Accessed 19 July, 2026.
[12] United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime. (2024). Human Trafficking. In United Nations. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-Trafficking/Human-Trafficking.html. Accessed 19 July, 2026.

Impunity Rate

Impunity rate (percentage) is the "systematic failure to hold perpetrators accountable through criminal or civil proceedings." [International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice][13]

Judicial Independence

"The ability of courts and judges to perform their duties free of influence or control by other actors, whether governmental or private. The term is also used in a normative sense to refer to the kind of independence that courts and judges ought to possess." [Encyclopedia Britannica][14]

Mano Dura

Mano dura translates to "iron fist" (eng) broadly defined as "strong-armed, anti-crime policies that much of Latin America has implemented over recent decades in response to massive rises in gang violence." [Democratic Erosion Consortium][15]

Money Laundering

Money laundering is the "processing of criminal proceeds to disguise their illegal origin. This process is of critical importance, as it enables the criminal to enjoy these profits without jeopardising their source." [UNODC][16]

Organised Crime

"The unlawful activities of the members of a highly organized, disciplined association engaged in supplying illegal goods and services, including but not limited to gambling, prostitution, loan sharking, narcotics, labor racketeering, and other unlawful activities of members of such organizations." [National Institute of Justice][17]

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[13] Croci, Gonzalo, et al. "Crime without Punishment: Understanding Impunity Related to Organized Crime." International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice, vol. 85, June 2026, p. 100853, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcj.2026.100853. Accessed 29 June 2026.

[14] Law, D. S. (2016). Judicial independence. In Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/judicial-independence. Accessed 19 July, 2026.

[15] "Copy-And-Paste: Why Latin America Is Using El Salvador as an Anti-Crime Template - Democratic Erosion." Democratic Erosion Consortium, 14 Nov. 2025, democratic-erosion.org/2025/11/14/copy-and-paste-why-latin-america-is-using-el-salvador-as-an-anti-crime-template/. Accessed 30 June 2026.

[16] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2024). Money laundering. In United Nations : UNODC ROMENA. https://www.unodc.org/romena/en/money-laundering.html. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

[17] Archived | the Evolution of Transnational Organized Crime | National Institute of Justice, nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/evolution-transnational-organized-crime. Accessed 22 July 2026.

Rule of Law

"The rule of law is a durable system of laws, institutions, norms, and community commitment that delivers four universal principles: accountability, just law, open government, and accessible and impartial justice." [World Justice Project][18]

State Capture

"The domination of policy making by private, often corporate, power." [Encyclopædia Britannica][19]

State Infiltration

"The strategic penetration of governmental institutions by external or internal actors."[20]; "the process [organized by the government] of secretly becoming part of a group in order to get information or to influence the way that a group thinks or behaves".[21]; this is undercover police work. "Such infiltration can occur through espionage, corruption, or the strategic placement of operatives within key governmental positions. Understanding this concept is crucial for analysing the stability and integrity of state functions in the global arena." [TRT World Research Centre][22]

Transnational Organized Crime (TOC)

Self-perpetuating associations of individuals that operate internationally for the purpose of obtaining power, influence, monetary, and/or commercial gains, wholly or in part by illegal means, while protecting their activities through a pattern of corruption and/or violence, or while protecting their illegal activities through an international organizational structure and the exploitation of international commerce or communication mechanisms. [National Institute of Justice][23]

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[18] World Justice Project. (2024). What is the rule of law? In World Justice Project. https://worldjusticeproject.org/about-us/overview/what-rule-law. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[19] "State Capture." Encyclopedia Britannica, www.britannica.com/topic/state-capture. Accessed 29 June 2026.
[20] Bakar, E. (2026, May 29). Infiltrated State Offices: Definition, Conceptual Context & Why It Matters - TRT World Research Centre. TRT World Research Centre. https://researchcentre.trtworld.com/dictionary/infiltrated-state-offices/. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[21] Infiltration | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/infiltration. Accessed 30 June 2026.
[22] Bakar, E. (2026, May 29). Infiltrated State Offices: Definition, Conceptual Context & Why It Matters - TRT World Research Centre. TRT World Research Centre. https://researchcentre.trtworld.com/dictionary/infiltrated-state-offices/. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[23] Archived | the Evolution of Transnational Organized Crime | National Institute of Justice, nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/evolution-transnational-organized-crime. Accessed 22 July 2026.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Evolution of Transnational Syndicates

The structural form of organized crime in the Western hemisphere has undergone a radical transformation. Organized crime was primarily a domestic concern, with which the state or each local police was dealing. However, during the 1990s, entities such as Colombia's Medellín and Cali cartels dominated the drug trade and transformed crime groups from domestic organized crime groups that were regional to criminal organizations, difficult to control, global and transnational in nature, increasingly networked with other criminal groups, creating networks that span around the globe, primarily originating from Latin American countries. However, organized crime is now a threat to international, not only domestic affairs and state security [National Institute of Justice].[24]

Modern syndicates, such as the *Sinaloa Cartel*, the *Jalisco New generation Cartel (CJNG) in Mexico*, and *Tren de Aragua* originating from Venezuela, operate as flexible multinational/transnational conglomerates. Contemporary transnational syndicates/ organizations leverage each state's vulnerabilities in governance or maritime power and cross-border logistics, which differ between each country, to maintain an illicit relationship between the marketer/producer and the buyer of such drugs and weaponry. They secure territorial centers, as their own hubs, exploiting the government officials through proxy gangs, such as *Los Lobos* or *Los Choneros* in Ecuador, establishing illicit corridors for transit centers across Central and Latin America as well as the Caribbean, ideal for such trade.

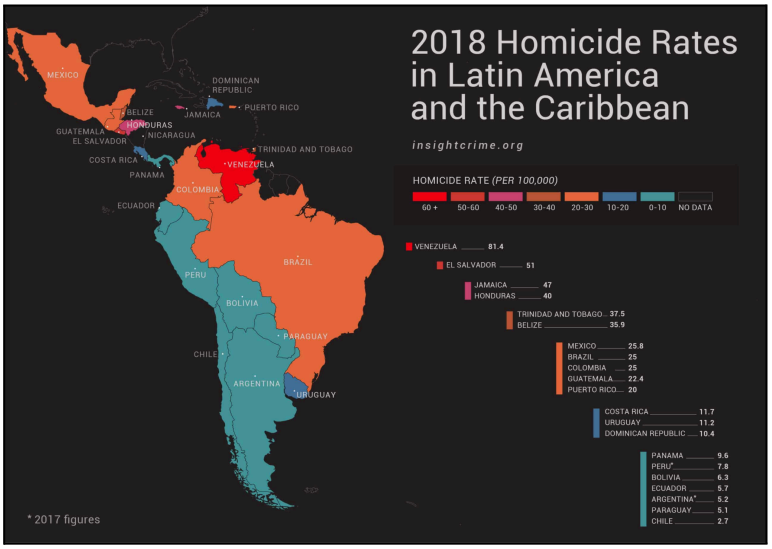


Figure 1: 2018 Homicide Rates in Latin America and the Caribbean [Insightcrime][25]

[24] Archived | the Evolution of Transnational Organized Crime | National Institute of Justice, nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/evolution-transnational-organized-crime. Accessed 22 July 2026.
[25] InSight Crime's 2018 Homicide Round-Up, insightcrime.org/news/insight-crime-2018-homicide-roundup/. Accessed 22 July 2026.

Diversification of the Transnational Illicit Economy

A main consequence of transnational organised crime is environmental degradation. Illicit economies have been related to the armed conflict and criminal governance in various countries in Latin America and especially Colombia. The development of such illegal activities, such as drug smuggling and production, human and drug trafficking, etc., had significant consequences for local economies and had impacted significantly the environment.[26] Environmental crime is defined as "the activities that breach environmental legislation and cause significant harm or risk to the environment, human health, or both". It is highly lucrative, as it can be as profitable as illegal drug trafficking, but the sanctions are much lower, and it is harder to detect. These factors make it highly attractive for organised crime groups, which exploit the natural leeways and resources, transforming the borders to hubs for illicit action. In the case of organised environmental crime, it is not uncommon for traditional Mafia-style gangs to use the same modi operandi and the same routes they use for their other activities, which makes the conditions for combatting the problem even more challenging. According to a 2011 study, 3 out of the 12 most financially rewarding transnational criminal activities are linked to environmental crime [Europol].[27]

Furthermore, in the Amazon Basin and Central American rainforest corridors, non-state armed groups extract gold using toxic mercury, severely poisoning regional water systems and displacing indigenous communities. Logging and land clearance for the cultivation of drugs, such as coca and marijuana further exacerbate the problem of deforestation. Environmental crime constitutes a rapidly rising threat to the environment, to revenues from natural resources, to state security and to sustainable development. Estimates from the OECD, UNODC, UNEP and INTERPOL place the financial value of such transnational organized environmental crimes reaching from 70 to 213 billion USD annually worldwide [Environmental Crime Network].[28]

Capitalism of Human Vulnerability (Surveillance Capitalism) is also an important part of the discussion around the dangers of organized crime. Criminal enterprises systematically monetize geopolitical instability, mass economic migration and digital surveillance platforms. Data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) underscores that migrant smuggling and human trafficking generate billions of dollars in illicit trade annually, as networks/groups such as *Tren de Aragua* exploit migrants who try to trespass corridors or borders such as the *Darién Gap*, using them for trade as "easy victims" due to their vulnerable nature as migrants. Criminal syndicates have weaponized "surveillance capitalism" technologies and methods. They utilize encrypted systems that the governmental agencies cannot trace, commercial satellite technology to control the borders and illegally used personal data for blackmailing during their trades. Therefore, syndicates

[26] 2025 María Alejandra Vélez Director Rural Development, Illicit Economies, globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Documento-tematico-CESED-54.pdf. Accessed 22 July 2026.
[27] Environmental Crime | Europol, www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas/environmental-crime. Accessed 22 July 2026.
[28] Environmental Crime Network | Grid-Arendal, www.grida.no/resources/7493. Accessed 22 July 2026.

locate local extortion targets and track any law enforcement movements instigated by the state actors, using fraud systems and undermining social security [UNODC].[29]

The financial expansion of transnational crime lies on illicit acquisition and trade of financial resources and cross-border arms trafficking, so weaponry and financial proliferation are important causes of the problem. Regarding the financial aspect, syndicates rely on trade-based money laundering (TBML), unregulated cryptocurrency exchanges and any zero-footprint exchange. Moreover, non-state criminal organizations have achieved significant arms proliferation in the sector. Investigations by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) show that up to 70% of crime-related firearms in Mexico and Central America originate from the U.S. retail markets [UNICRI]. The acquisition of such weaponry and weaponized surveillance mechanisms allows syndicates to use firepower to match security forces of the state, not becoming perceivable due to suspicious action [UNICRI].[30]

Democratic and Institutional Erosion and Political Corruption

State infiltration in Latin America is exacerbating the aforementioned challenges. Organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean is no longer a bounded “law and order” problem. It is increasingly a structural force that places sustained pressure on democratic competition and accountability. Evidence of criminal governance and repressive state responses in Brazil, Chile, and Mexico shows convergent democratic risks while also revealing important variation in the depth and form of democratic strain [Frontiers].[31] For instance, the external non-state actors have taken over the 2025 presidential election campaign in Chile, dominating it by violence and terror instead of democratic, parliamentary procedures. Historically, cartels bribed officials and law enforcement agents to secure trade routes without control. Today, though, systemic “coopted state capture” occurs when the criminal finances the municipal and parliamentary capital directly. Thus, the criminal organizations exercise control over local municipal agencies and manipulate their work for their personal profit, leading even to political assassinations, often as terrorist actions, to stabilize their power and demonstrate clearly their high position.

As illicitly acquired capital by such criminal organizations infiltrates the judicial institutions, the legal system collapses and becomes selectively enforced due to bribery. Low level offenders, minor drug traders and other marginalized citizens fame direct incarceration,

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[29] Human Trafficking And Migrant Smuggling, www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2026/Publications/Annual-Report2026_DIGITAL_FINAL.pdf. Accessed 22 July 2026.

[30] The Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism in Latin America, unicri.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/The%20Nexus%20between%20Transnational%20Organized%20Crime%20and%20Terrorism%20in%20Latin%20America.pdf. Accessed 22 July 2026.

[31] Frontiers | Criminal Governance and Democratic Erosion in Latin America and the Caribbean, www.frontiersin.org/journals/political-science/articles/10.3389/fpos.2026.1783654/full. Accessed 22 July 2026.

while more powerful syndicate leaders, who have a say indirectly, operate normally without sanctions or prosecution, showing the elimination of democratic norms. Case resolution rates for organized crime fall below 15%, such as in Mexico in 2025, in comparison to the resolution of other corruption cases, undermining the judicial system's legitimacy [Human Rights Watch].[32]

Security Implications of Over-Securitised Responses

In response to the aforementioned political and judicial insecurity, several governments have implemented a strategy called "Mano dura"in the regional context. Mano dura is defined by experts as "the stringent, hardline policies implemented by several Latin American governments to combat rampant gang violence and criminal activity. This strategy typically involves police and military presence, employing tough-on-crime enforcement laws, conducting mass arrests of the gang members, and imposing strict penalties on anyone involved in such cross-border criminal activities. El Salvador exemplifies a country that has enjoyed success on certain public safety metrics. While El Salvador's (the most prominent example of a latin american country implementing Mano Dura) experience with Mano Dura policies dates back decades and spans across multiple political parties, under President Nayib Bukele, who took office in 2019, these policies have evolved into a more centralized and authoritarian system. Moreover, the administration's declaration of a "state of exception" in Ecuador raised concerns about the validity of these tough-on-crime models, as temporary methods to suppress violence and opposition and bypass democratic processes. Despite these concerns, a large portion of the population has supported these measures, prioritizing immediate security over long-term democratic stability [CSIS].[33]

Deploying armed forces for usual domestic policing (domestic militarization) has provoked human rights vulnerabilities across the continent. Military forces trained for warfare and not civilian protection can employ excessive action on minor crimes that the prosecution or the local police would treat more lightly. According to oversight assessments by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), state-of-emergency deployments can often lead to increases in extrajudicial executions, even without permission, due to arbitrary action and detentions [OAS].[34] Abuse complaints against federal security forces increase as a result of militarization by 160%, compared to the average complaint rate in non-treated municipalities—and a temporary effect persists after military intervention [Institute of Latin American Studies].[35] Furthermore, the military involvement in

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[32] Human Rights Watch. "World Report 2025: Rights Trends in Mexico." Human Rights Watch, 8 Dec. 2024, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/mexico. Accessed 22 Aug. 2026.
[33] "Tough on the Weak, Lenient on the Powerful" | CSIS, www.csis.org/analysis/tough-weak-lenient-powerful. Accessed 22 July 2026.
[34] Organized Crime and Human Rights in the Americas Resolution No. 1/26, www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/pdf/2026/res-1-26-en.pdf. Accessed 22 July 2026.
[35] The Consequences of Militarized Policing for Human Rights: Evidence from Mexico | Institute of Latin American Studies, ilas.columbia.edu/events/consequences-militarized-policing-human-rights-evidence-mexico. Accessed 22 July 2026.

the civil law enforcement can lead to corruption in the institutions, as syndicates target military commanders with bribes so that they can avoid being caught trespassing the borders for their gangs' trades and illicit transactions.

The consequences of these criminal activities fall on the civilians, affecting them morally and physically due to their exploitation, especially of the marginalized community, by the colossal non-state actors and criminal transnational terrorist organizations. State instability makes this one of the most pressing issues that need to be resolved so that human life is not still endangered. Around 40% of the homicides in Latin America are attributed to organized criminal activity [Criminon International].[36]

Targeted interventions have shown potential in mitigating such impacts. UNODC alternative development programs that offer smaller agricultural communities economic legally-approved alternative solutions to coca cultivation, so that the small-businessmen or farmers do not get exploited by the gangs and cartels in Latin America. Neutralizing this crisis requires collaboration of all member states so that the international framework for such criminal activities and alternatives applies in every state in a similar way, without of course intervening the country's rules and regulations, maintaining each country's sovereignty.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Colombia

The Republic of Colombia constitutes the primary point for global drug supply chains and non-state action. Following the 2016 Peace Agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), power vacuums were co-opted. Cocaine production increased by 53% in 2023, reaching 2,664 metric tons, with coca cultivation covering over 253,000 hectares [UNODC].[37] This multi-billion dollar trade directly finances non-state actors, such as the "Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)", who are present and operating within hundreds of municipalities [UNODC].[38] These violent territorial disputes sustain high national homicide rates (exceeding 25 per 100,000 inhabitants) and drive systemic corruption within rural judicial institutions [UNODC].[39] Thus, by exploiting weaker borders with Venezuela, Ecuador

[36] UK, Criminon. "Criminon International." Criminon International, 2025, https://www.criminon.org/where-we-work/latin-america/. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.
[37] Colombia: Potential cocaine production increased by 53 per cent in 2023, according to new UNODC survey. (2023). In United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2024/October/colombia_-potential-cocaine-production-increased-by-53-per-cent-in-2023--according-to-new-unodc-survey.html. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[38] Colombia: Potential cocaine production increased by 53 per cent in 2023, according to new UNODC survey. (2023). In United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2024/October/colombia_-potential-cocaine-production-increased-by-53-per-cent-in-2023--according-to-new-unodc-survey.html. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[39] Colombia: Potential cocaine production increased by 53 per cent in 2023, according to new UNODC survey. (2023). In United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime.

and Peru to export drugs and import weaponry, Colombia faces severe security challenges that undermine its peace and stability.

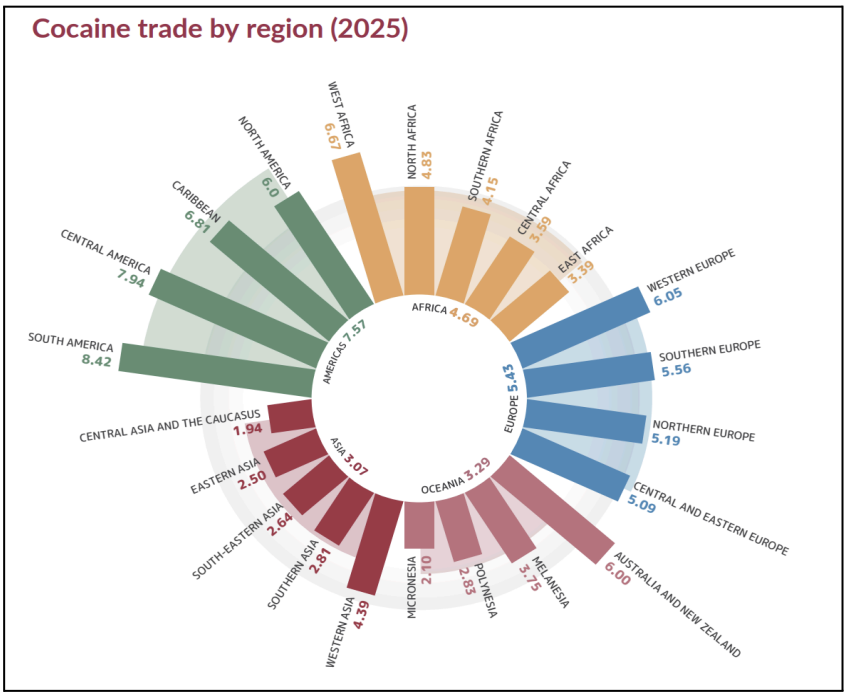


Figure 2: Cocaine trade by region (2025)[40]

Ecuador

In the Republic of Ecuador, the phenomenon of rapid security degradation and instability is highly observed, having transitioned from a historically peaceful nation to a maritime bottleneck for transnational cocaine corridors. Bordered by huge cocaine producers, Colombia and Peru, Ecuador's economy and weak port oversight, made its infrastructure vulnerable and easy to become corrupted by transnational cartels and mafia groups. Homicide rates escalate from 13.7 per 100,000 in 2021 to over 45/100,000, driven by conflicts between local gangs acting as proxies for Mexicans and other European syndicates [Human Rights Watch] [Global Initiative].[41] [42] The collapse of state control, resulting in prison massacres, along with the extortion networks, political assassinations and general instability and terrorism, prompted the government to declare an ongoing state of "internal armed conflict" in 2024. Ecuador's homicide rate reaches forty per 100,000

https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2024/October/colombia_-potential-cocaine-production-increased-by-53-per-cent-in-2023--according-to-new-unodc-survey.html. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

[40] Global Organized Crime Index 2025, ocindex.net/assets/downloads/2025/english/global-ocindex-report.pdf. Accessed 22 July 2026.

[41] Human Rights Watch. (2023). Ecuador: Events of 2023. In Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/ecuador. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

[42] Ecuador's criminal crisis. (2025). In Global Initiative. https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/ecuadors-criminal-crisis/. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

inhabitants." [Atlantic Council][43], posing a direct threat to civilian safety and maritime supply-chain security in that region and for neighboring countries.

El Salvador

The Republic of El Salvador is an example of the complexity of combatting gang hegemony through police force. For decades, the nation has been suffering from extreme gang-driven violence dominated by "Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)" and "Barrio 18", reaching climactic homicide rates of 106 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2015 [ReVista].[44] In response to a violence movement in March 2022, the El Salvadoran government enacted a "State of Exception" enabling a mass military movement. This strategy led to a detention of over 80,000 to 90,000 individuals, which drastically reduced domestic homicide rates to under 2/100,000 [Human Rights Watch].[45] Therefore, such severe democratic backsliding led to mass arrests, arbitrary action, institutional violations and prison deaths. By following the "Mano Dura" model, El Salvador attempts to preserve state sovereignty and control.

Mexico

Mexico represents a primary center for transnational organized crime and global supply chains. Driven by major syndicates such as the "Sinaloa Cartel" and the "Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG)", criminal enterprises have diversified to more unconventional means, human smuggling and illegal mining. Organized crime is dominant over an estimated one-third of Mexican territory, generating severe challenges for state sovereignty and public safety.[46] While the Mexico Peace Index reflects recent decreases in homicides, organized violence remains a persistent threat with around 70% of homicides committed using military weaponry illicitly trafficked across the borders with the U.S. [Vision of Humanity[47] Furthermore, there is an emphasis on impunity, where fewer than 16% of criminal investigations reach resolution or examination, which continues to erode democratic institutions. [Human Rights Watch][48] Mexico's strategic positions between consumer markets and delivery routes makes its law enforcement frameworks and judicial reforms essential to be followed for the success of our Security Council, targeting transnational criminal networks.

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[44] Fernández, Rafael. "Crime and Punishment in the Americas." ReVista, 2024, https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/crime-and-punishment-in-the-americas/. Accessed 22 Aug. 2026.

[45] World Report 2026: Rights Trends in El Salvador. (2026). In Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/el-salvador. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

[46] Center for Preventive Action. "Criminal Violence in Mexico." Council on Foreign Relations, 20 Feb. 2025, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/criminal-violence-mexico. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

[47] Pandit, Puja. "Mexico's Peace Challenges in 2025: Organised Crime, Institutional Decline." 13 May 2025, https://www.visionofhumanity.org/organised-crime-and-institutional-deterioration-mexicos-challenges-in-2025/. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

[48] Human Rights Watch. "World Report 2025: Rights Trends in Mexico." 8 Dec. 2024, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/mexico. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

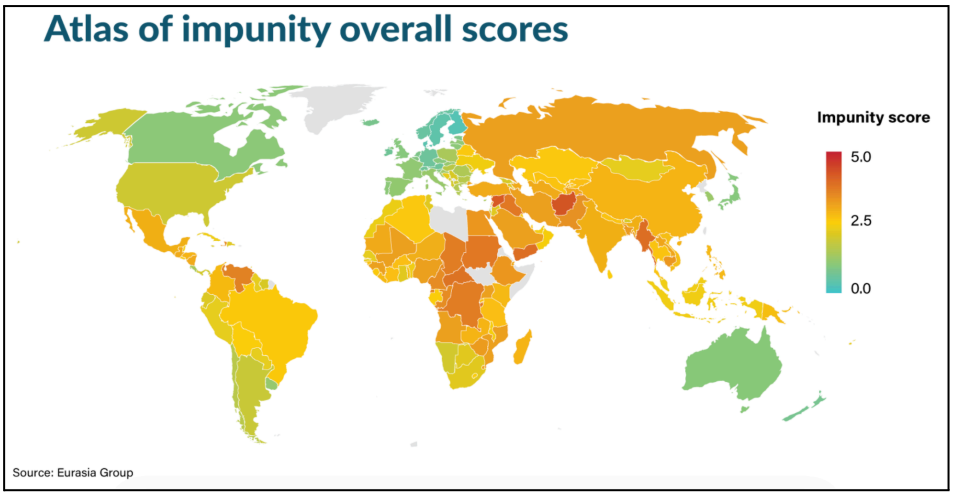


Figure 3: Atlas of impunity overall scores[49]

United States of America (USA)

The USA plays a significant role in the regional security crisis, as it operates as the main consumer marker leading organized crime and as the primary source of gun smuggling into Latin America. The massive U.S. demand for opioids and other drugs, provides multi-billion dollar profits for Mexican networks of sellers and such cartels, but it also leads to "69,973 drug overdose deaths during 2025, a decrease of almost 14% from the 81,313 deaths estimated in 2024" [CDC].[50] At the same time, the current gun laws in the U.S. make it easier for these syndicates to conduct trafficking and use such violent means in forbidden ways. Around 70% of guns used in Mexico, shared to the Caribbean and Central America as well, are produced and exported illegally by U.S. companies and retail dealers [SitePoint].[51] Because the U.S.'s domestic cartels fund the cartels mentioned above, it needs to stay accountable to the Security Council's collaboration and legal means to bring stability.

Venezuela

The systemic erosion of Venezuela's institutions has transformed the nation into a center for transnational organized crime across Latin America. Impunity remains widespread, since 98% of crimes in Venezuela fail to be prosecuted or examined.[52] While domestic homicide rates dropped from the climactic "91.8 per 100,000 inhabitants" in 2016, researchers attribute this shift to mass criminal migration and the progress of gang activity

[49] "The Atlas of Impunity Is Here – and the Rankings May Surprise You." Kofi Annan Foundation, 13 Feb. 2025, www.kofiannanfoundation.org/publication/atlas-of-impunity/. Accessed 30 June 2026.
[50] CDC. "U.S. Overdose Deaths Decrease for Third Consecutive Year In 2025." 11 May 2026, https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/releases/20260513.html. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[51] SitePoint. "Radware Page." Sre.Gob.Mx, 2026, https://re.sre.gob.mx/rmpe/index.php/rmpe/article/download/127/113/158. Accessed 22 Aug. 2026.
[52] Unit, V. I. (2017, March 27). '98% Impunity Rate in Venezuela': Opposition. InSight Crime; InSightCrime. https://insightcrime.org/news/brief/venezuela-impunity-rate-at-98-percent/. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

rather than effective state police administration [EFE] [UNHCR] [Center for Strategic and International Studies].[53] [54] [55] Transnational syndicates such as "Tren de Aragua" often exploit these migration routes for human and drug trafficking and smuggling across South and Central America. The exploitation of state and military infrastructure by paralegal groups also facilitates the transit of multi-ton cocaine shipments through maritime and aerial leeways bound to the rest of America and Europe, contributing to the expansion of the phenomenon.[56]

Organization of American States (OAS)

The Organization of American States (OAS) serves as the primary means for political discussion regarding security issues and democratic preservation in the Western countries. It combats transnational organized crime through the Department against Transnational Organized Crime (DTOC), created in 2016. This Department is part of the Secretariat of Multidimensional Security. OAS's purpose is to provide technical and legislative assistance to OAS member states, in order to confront such cases of violence and criminal activity across the countries of Latin America [Department Against Transnational Organized Crime (DTOC)].[57]

Sinaloa Cartel

Cártel de Sinaloa is a transnational organization based in Sinaloa, Mexico. It is one of the world's most powerful drug cartels and is one of the largest producers and traffickers of fentanyl and other illicit drugs to the United States. Cártel de Sinaloa has used violence to murder, kidnap, and intimidate civilians, government officials, and journalists.[58] Sinaloa Cartel is known for starting as a hub for cultivation of cannabis and poppy, two types of drugs, and the smuggling pf marijuana and heroin primarily in Mexico and later, taking over a huge part of drug trafficking in Latin America and getting involved in conflicts with other well-known drug smuggling organizations.[59]

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[53] EFE. (2016). With 28,479 killings, Venezuela takes second spot on world murder ranking. In EL PAÍS English. https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2016/12/29/inenglish/1483016769_194171.html. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[54] UNHCR. (2024). Venezuela Crisis | USA for UNHCR. In Unrefugees.org. https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/venezuela/. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[55] Muñoz-Pogossian, B., & Winkler, A. (2023). The Persistence of the Venezuelan Migrant and Refugee Crisis. Center for Strategic and International Studies. https://www.csis.org/analysis/persistence-venezuelan-migrant-and-refugee-crisis. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[56] Le Pichon, T., Pietschmann, T., Leggett, T., & Johansen, R. (2011). The Transatlantic Cocaine Market ST/NAR.3/2007/1 (E/NA). 26060–5866. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Transatlantic_cocaine_market.pdf. Accessed 20 July, 2026.
[57] Department against Transnational Organized Crime (DTOC), www.oas.org/ext/en/main/oas/our-structure/gs/sms/dtoc. Accessed 20 July 2026.
[58] Designation of International Cartels - United States Department of State, www.state.gov/designation-of-international-cartels. Accessed 21 July 2026.
[59] The Sinaloa Cartel: When It Formed, Who's in Charge, Where It Operates and What's New in 2026, insightcrime.org/mexico-organized-crime-news/sinaloa-cartel-profile/. Accessed 21 July 2026.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime.[60] UNODC's role is to improve detection of victims of online child exploitation or trafficking in person, while supporting operations seizing thousands of weapons and ammunition, facilitating the repatriation of trafficked wildlife and helping to draft new laws to effectively deter migrant smugglers.[61] It provides immediate support both towards governments and civil society organizations so that organized crime and infiltration of institutions are eliminated, giving space to safety levels to increase, especially in the previously mentioned Latin American countries.

BLOCS EXPECTED

Bloc A

In this bloc members states such as the Republic of El Salvador and Ecuador are expected to prioritise militarised law enforcement and judicial action that strengthens border security, as well as aggressive agreements and state authority to eliminate any organized crime syndicates across Latin America. Members of the bloc can generally favor practices such as "Mano Dura" for imposing control in and across state borders, emphasizing non-interference in domestic judicial matters, especially of the rest of the countries, prioritizing state sovereignty and collaboration, often making human rights oversight appear less important in front of immediate public safety for their own countries' good. The delegates could strengthen cross-border extradition treaties, securing UN validation for sovereign, state-led counter-drug strategies for bringing safety and peace.

Bloc B

The bloc, which could be formed by member states such as Mexico and the United States of America (USA), is centered on the principle of *shared responsibility*, focusing on the entire global supply chain of transnational organised crime and the bigger challenges due to drug smuggling and trafficking. It bridges the gap between major consumer or nations and the transit centers, urging balanced action against both the illegal drug trading and the illegal military use by non-state actors, which undermines institutional integrity and provokes security threats. Stricter international regulations (always careful on national regulations and sovereignty rules) on cross-border weaponry trafficking, financial anti-corruption controls through banking systems to ensure legal and state-approved flow of

[60] United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html. Accessed 21 July 2026.
[61] Transnational Organized Crime, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/toc.html. Accessed 22 July 2026.

market imports/exports along with multilateral maritime supply-chain oversight by the state organizations/committees and shared financial responsibility for stabilizing the regional area, essential following such decade-long massacres and harsh criminal activities.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
28th September 2021	An attack happened in the Litoral Penitentiary outside the city of Guayaquil, Ecuador on November 12th, when members of a group known as the Duendes (Dwarfs) attacked a rival gang, the Freddy Kruegers. The perpetrators killed at least 17 prisoners and more than a dozen injured.[62]
27th March 2022	On 27 March 2022, El Salvador's Legislative Assembly approved a "state of emergency" in response to reports of a spike in gang-related homicides (due to unprecedented number of homicides).[63]
9th August 2023	An assailant shot and killed Villavicencio in Quito, Ecuador. Due to the rise of organized crime, Ecuador's homicide rate rose from 13.7 to over 25 per 100,000 (2021-2022), the highest rate in Ecuador's history, and significantly higher than the global average of 6 per 100,000 [Human Rights Watch].[64]
9th January 2024	Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa declared an "internal armed conflict" against criminal groups, coupled with a sixty-day state of emergency, allowing for the mobilization of

[62] Jailhouse Massacre in Ecuador Illustrates Rapid Criminal Evolution, insightcrime.org/news/jailhouse-massacre-ecuador-illustrates-rapid-criminal-evolution/. Accessed 22 July 2026.
[63] El Salvador: State of Emergency Grave Threat to Rights - Amnesty International, www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr29/5576/2022/en/. Accessed 22 July 2026.
[64] Ecuador: Presidential Candidate Killed | Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/10/ecuador-presidential-candidate-killed. Accessed 22 July 2026.

	military forces to neutralize twenty-two crime groups in Ecuador.[65]
18th October 2024	Cultivation of coca bush in Colombia increased by 10 per cent in 2023 to 253,000 hectares, while potential cocaine production reached 2,664 metric tons, according to a new survey released by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC].[66]
8th April 2025	Since January 2025, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) has focused on dismantling cartel and gang networks, arresting in the process over 10,000 offenders and seizing more than 49,000 firearms and roughly 2.9 million rounds of ammunition and 31,000 illegal explosives from them 2025 report [ATF].[67]

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), which entered into force on September 29, 2003, also known as the Palermo Convention, was established in order to combat cross-border criminal organizations and set the first globally-approved definition for "organized crime". It provides a legally binding framework that allows states to cooperate on tackling criminal activity, such as human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and other illicit transactions. It is one of the most widely approved conventions globally, setting a legal framework for mutual legal cooperation. However, its broad scope (identifying the actors rather than listing every single criminal activity) can lead to inconsistent implementation across different legal systems in different countries. Therefore, it might be difficult to reach consensus on the mechanisms or policies

[65] Ecuador Has Declared 'Internal Armed Conflict' against Criminal Gangs. What's next? - Atlantic Council, www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/ecuador-has-declared-internal-armed-conflict-against-criminal-gangs-whats-next/. Accessed 22 July 2026.

[66] Colombia: Potential cocaine production increased by 53 per cent in 2023, according to new UNODC survey. (2023). In United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2024/October/colombia_-potential-cocaine-production-increased-by-53-per-cent-in-2023--according-to-new-unodc-survey.html. Accessed 20 July, 2026.

[67] ATF Reports Major Enforcement Wins Following 2025 Shift in Priorities | ATF, www.atf.gov/news/press-releases/atf-reports-major-enforcement-wins-following-2025-shift-priorities. Accessed 22 July 2026.

implemented and some countries might not adhere completely to the rules of the convention due to their own benefits/national laws.

United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which entered into force on December 14, 2005, was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 31 October 2003 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. It is one of the few global anti-corruption treaties. It covers a wide range of acts, including bribery, money laundering, and the abuse of power, while also emphasizing international coordination. The treaty is addressing both public and private sector corruption for building national anti-corruption frameworks. However, the implementation review mechanism (IRM) has faced criticism for lack of transparency, because some countries are not required to publish their full reports.

S/RES/2220 [68]

The Security Council adopted S/RES/2220 on May 22, 2015, which addresses the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation, and misuse of small arms and light weapons. Calls to strengthen national controls over the manufacture, transfer, and stockpiling of small arms and enhance cooperation to prevent their diversion to unauthorized end-users. The resolution serves as a normative tool that affirms the responsibility to protect (R2P) civilians from armed conflict and terrorism. However, the resolution is often undermined by the lack of political will among the member states and arms embargoes related to such resolutions are frequently violated.

S/RES/2699 [69]

S/RES/2699 by the Security Council authorized member states to form and deploy a Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission to Haiti (thus impacted Caribbean and Latin America) to help re-establish security and build conditions conducive to holding free and fair elections. It is part of the adoption of Chapter VII of the UN Charter and aims to apply the principle of the Responsibility to Protect to the Haitian situation. The resolution also emphasizes the need for control over ports and borders to curb arms trafficking. It calls for all national and international stakeholders to contribute to the work of MSS. Apart from its strengths, as a non-UN mission funded by voluntary contributions, it faces funding and sustainability issues and mostly depends on the success of the operational mechanisms which are often complex to implement though.

[68] Security Council Resolution 2220 - UNSCR, unscr.com/en/resolutions/2220. Accessed 22 July 2026.
[69] "The Resolution 2699 (2023) Authorizing the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSSM) Is a Significant Step toward Protecting the Haitian Population Especially Vulnerable Groups from Crimes, Atrocities and Gang's Violence, but Effective Operational Mechanisms, Key for Its Success, Are yet to Be Defined – CARDH." Cardh.Org, 9 Oct. 2023, https://cardh.org/archives/4682. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Mano Dura[70]

The *Plan mano Dura* was introduced in El Salvador on July 23, 2003. An advantage of such a *tough-on-crime* policy is the fact that incarcerations significantly suppress violent crime metrics and territorial gang presence and they disrupt the syndicates' operations in the short term. Some of its disadvantages include the suspension of due process, mass arbitrary action and detentions of the members and prison overcrowding, eroding the democratic institutions and leading to civil rights abuses. Thus, even though it was a solution that was supposed to work, it brought the opposite results, leading to the creation of bigger and more condensed prisons (mass incarceration) and more gangs meeting each other and establishing a clear hierarchy in the prisons with more networking between them, and thus, criminal work continuing as usual. The policy is often criticized for eroding democratic checks and balances, as it frequently involved the suspension of the process, which led to an increase in human abuses and violence.

Plan by Organization of American States (OAS) [71]

Founded in 1948, the OAS adopts the Hemispheric Plan of Action Against Transnational Organized Crime to enhance cross-border control and criminal asset discovery. Using rules from the United Nations as a guide worldwide, its main goal is for every country to be on the same page. Before this plan, a serious crime in one country might not be considered as one in another country and thus, these discrepancies were standing as obstacles to international security issues. This way, they can all stop money laundering and illicit trafficking, as a joined web of countries is created with the same rules and values. However, there are still some disadvantages, because the plan is voluntary, which makes it harder for the international community to get on board with the guidelines. Finally, the fear of other countries leaking internal information to their cartels leads to further lack of trust and cooperation.

The Mérida initiative[72]

The Mérida initiative, often referred to as "Plan Mexico", was a significant security cooperation agreement between the United States, Mexico, and several Central American other countries. It sought to combat the shared threats of drug trafficking, money

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[70] politicalviolenceataglance. "La Mano Dura: Lessons from El Salvador's Security Sector Reform - Political Violence at a Glance." Political Violence at a Glance, 31 May 2016, https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/05/31/la-mano-dura-lessons-from-el-salvadors-security-sector-reform/. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

[71] "Organization of American States Is Founded | Research Starters | EBSCO Research." Ebsco, 2023, https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/organization-american-states-founded. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

[72] United States Government Accountability Office MÉRIDA INITIATIVE. https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-10-837.pdf. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

laundering, and transnational crime through a partnership that provided training, equipment and intelligence/knowledge-sharing. It recognized that the illicit drug trade is a shared problem in need of finding a shared solution. It also pointed out that the supply chains in Latin America were very linked, necessitating a cooperation and shared responsibility approach. However, it had faced criticism, including concerns that the aid supported military units enhancing human rights violations and that it didn't focus much on addressing the root socio-economic causes of violence and corruption.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Community-based Intervention & Education

The goal of such programs is to stop cartels from recruiting new members and stop the criminal activities through education and reintegration. Through community and school programs, money can be spent on better education especially in the poor, inaccessible communities, where criminal rates are generally higher. When young people have real job opportunities that integrate them in the society regardless of their background, cartels lose their power to recruit members and get dismantled. Drawing on past frameworks and programs implemented by the UN, such as the initiatives within the Crime Prevention and criminal Justice Reforms initiative, the countries could invest in marginalized communities by upgrading school systems, providing vocational training to the faculty as well as implementing skill-acquisition programs (such as the UNODC's *Line Up Live Up* initiative - a youth crime prevention initiative through sport). These frameworks could teach youth how to cope with peer pressure and other social or economic challenges and resolve such conflicts and frequent delinquent actions.[73] [74] [75] Moreover, providing local job opportunities and positions could be a viable solution for citizens to be guaranteed legal alternatives for their survival and economic development instead of proceeding with criminal activities and getting involved in criminal networks. Regarding reintegration, such job training opportunities and social services can help former members of cartels who once got exploited, due to being marginalized and living in underprivileged communities, reintegrate into the society, limiting the social stigma against them. Overall, such transformative and integrative solutions could contribute to a higher quality of life in the society and avoid engagement with criminal organizations.

[73] "Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice - Global Programmes." United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/justice-and-prison-reform/cpcj-global-programmes.html. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.
[74] mli164. "Line Up Live Up." Www.Unodc.Org, https://www.unodc.org/dohadeclaration/en/sports/lineupliveup.html. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.
[75] "UNODC Crime Prevention - Youth." United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/cpcj-crime-prevention-youth.html. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

Disrupting Financial Networks

Transnational criminal organizations and cartels make billions of dollars and launder (clear) that money using fake businesses, banks and cryptocurrencies, so that the government cannot detect the transactions. Because financial anonymity and concealment is the origin of organized crime, the Security Council's strategies should revolve on tackling such transparency issues. Thus, the solution could be forcing cryptocurrency companies and banks to verify who is moving money, making it harder for cartels to be hidden. Nations could enforce anti-money laundering strategies such as Customer Due Diligence (CDD)[76] and other such initiatives. Additionally, countries could establish centralized counter-laundering authorities to share expertise, technologies, track financial networks and illicit transactions as well as train law enforcement offices through international capacity-building initiatives and seminars in collaboration with foreign authorities and member states' organizations.

Reducing State Officials-related Corruption

Cartels exploit officials and bribe them so they can operate without getting caught. The solution could be to create anonymous trial systems so judges can try leaders without fearing for their lives. This could also be connected with the violence and corruption during elections - instigated by leaders of such transnational organized crime syndicates and criminal entities, such as Sinaloa. To combat judicial intimidation and corruption, countries have historically implemented such strategies based on *faceless* court systems. In the late 1980s and 1990s, when drug cartels increased their attacks on the state assassinating dozens of judges and political figures, Colombia introduced a system of anonymous judges.[77] [78] Under this system, the identities of judges, prosecutors of such cartels' leaders were legally concealed using voice-distortion mechanisms and encrypted files to prevent cartels from tracking and targeting them. Similar emergency measures were used in Italy during major mafia members' trials. However, while anonymous trials effectively shielded judges from immediate physical danger, they kept facing criticism from international human rights bodies, such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These criticisms involved that hiding a judge's identity compromised a defendant's right to a fair trial, due process and the ability to challenge potential bias in the jury. Therefore, modern policy should focus on balancing physical protection and avoidance of exploitation or bribery of such executives/judges with constitutional transparency to uphold the judicial system's universal rules and regulations and keep all decisions fair even when anonymous.

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[76] "Customer Due Diligence." Www.Lawsociety.Org.Uk, 25 June 2024, https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/anti-money-laundering/customer-due-diligence. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

[77] Colombia's Faceless Justice: A Necessary Evil, Blind Impartiality, or Modern Inquisition? By Luz Estella Nagle :: SSRN, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1804423. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

[78] Weiner, RoBert. "War By Other Means Colombia's Faceless Courts." NACLA Report on the Americas, vol. 30, no. 2, Informa UK Limited, Sept. 1996, pp. 31–36, https://doi.org/10.1080/10714839.1996.11725738. Accessed 20 Aug. 2026.

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