

Security OVERVIEW



SECURITY
COLOMBIA

QUITO

November 2024

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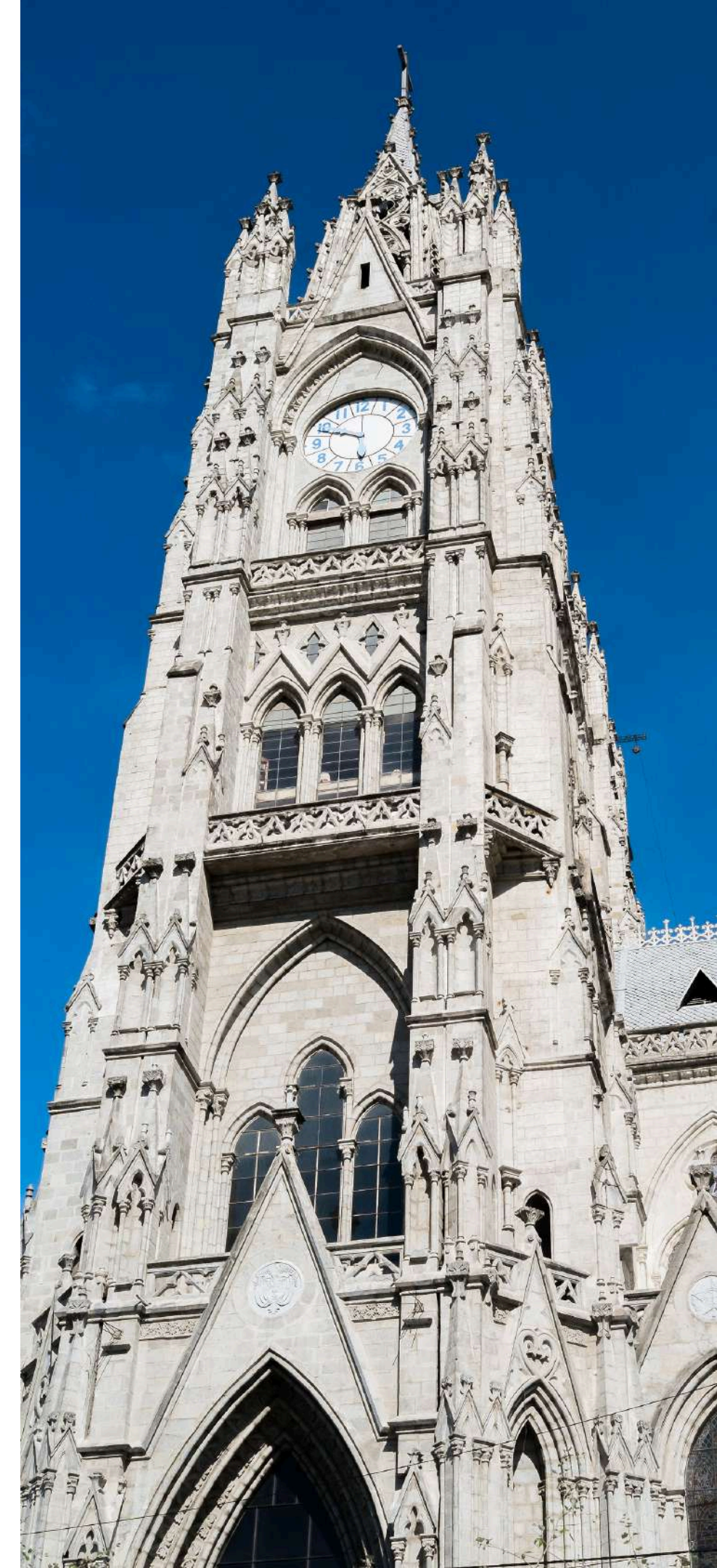
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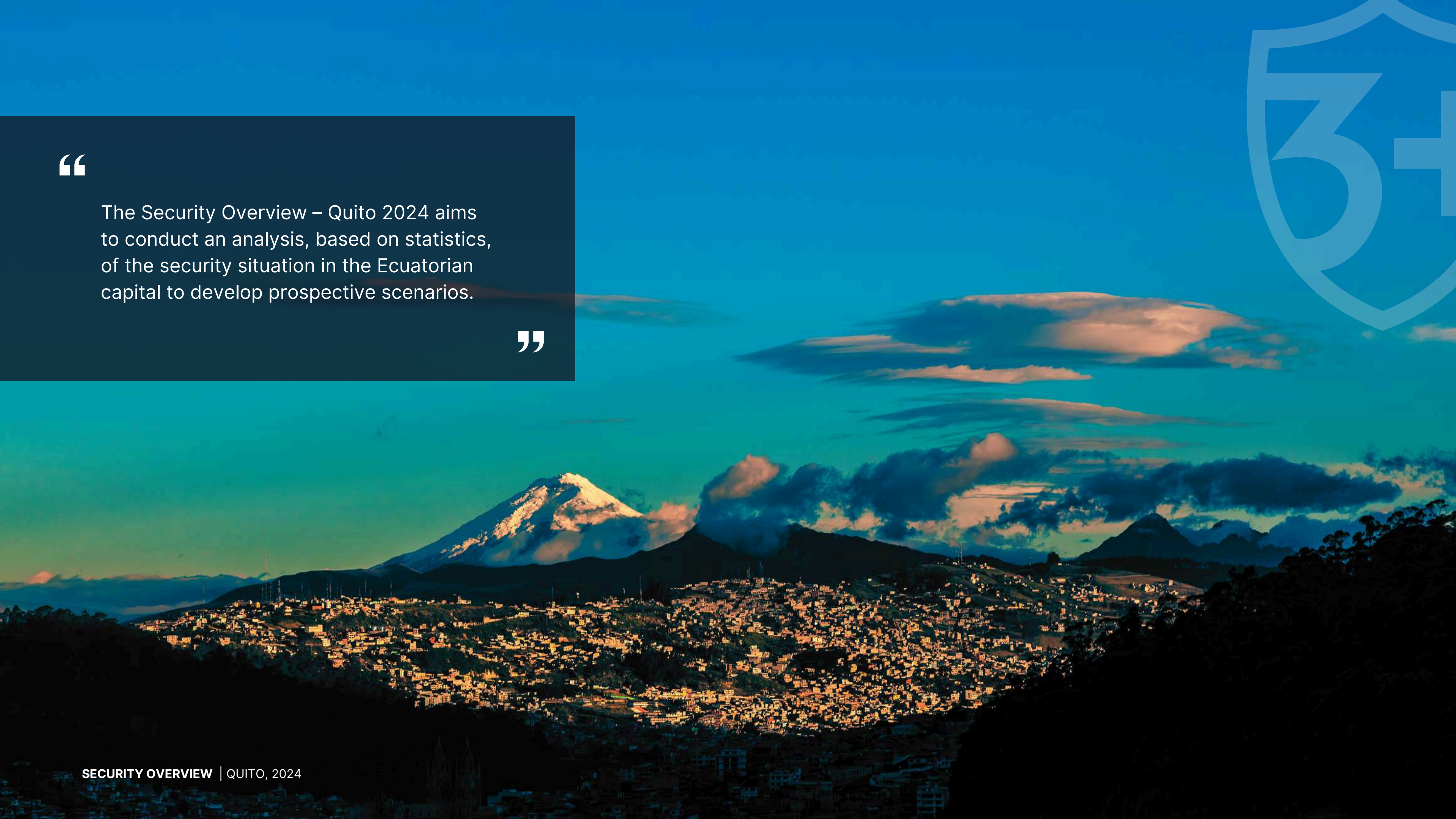
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The Security Overview – Quito 2024 aims to conduct an analysis, based on statistics, of the security situation in the Ecuatorian capital to develop prospective scenarios.

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1. Situational Analysis

From January to July 2024, Quito has experienced an 8% increase in crime levels, with a notable increase in carjackings and theft from persons. The National Police has noted that these crimes are more frequent in unprotected areas and where pro-owners leave their vehicles in secluded places. In addition, the use of street vendors as a cover for criminal activities has been a common tactic among criminals ([El Comercio](#), 2024). This state of exception allows law enforcement to conduct more aggressive operations against organized crime, which has proliferated in Quito due to the fight between gangs for control of drug trafficking. To combat insecurity, the National Police has intensified its operations and collaborations with other agencies ([El País](#), 2024).

Strategies have been implemented to improve citizen coexistence and prevent interpersonal violence, which includes cases of physical aggression and family homicides. However, despite these measures, authorities have warned that violence remains a significant threat. Despite the increase in crime, some reports highlight that Quito is still considered a relatively safe city for tourists. According to a recent analysis, the homicide rate in Quito is significantly lower than in other Latin American cities. However, public perception of safety is affected by recent violent incidents and the state of emergency declared by the government ([El País](#), 2024).



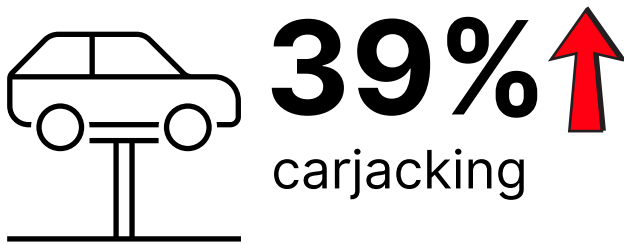
2. Crime Analysis

High impact crimes in Quito 2024

CRIME STATISTICS IN QUITO	JAN-JUN 2023	JAN-JUN 2024	VARIATION % JAN-JUN 2023 VS 2024
Homicides	148	95	-36%
Theft From Persons	2993	3121	4%
Residence Theft	657	455	-31%
Motorcycle Theft	430	532	24%
Carjacking	1852	2581	39%
Retail Theft	697	478	-31%
Land Piracy	0	0	0%
Total	6777	7262	7%

Resource. Own elaboration with information from the National Police of Ecuador.
Note. Figures subject to change based on updating processes of the source.

Based on figures provided by the National Police of Ecuador, it is possible to show that between January and June 2024, three high-impact crimes experienced an increase.



2.1 Theft from persons

According to reports from the National Police authorities in Quito, the northern areas of the city are more affected than the southern areas due to different factors such as the greater number of businesses and commercial establishments, as well as a more prevalent presence of informal commerce, which gives criminals the opportunity to commit crime ([Primicias](#), 2024). Strong criticism has fallen against the municipality of Quito since, in an effort to recover public space, it installed what it called “Safe Paths” in the city in which lighting was improved, cables were removed, and the space was beautified.

In spite of this, the inhabitants of the Historic Center area, affirm that these spaces continue to be unsafe due to the lack of collaboration with the Public Force to avoid assaults, in addition to the fact that on multiple occasions the alarm systems have failed, so the initial purpose has not been fulfilled, and a large sum of money was allocated to this action ([La Hora](#), 2024).

So far in 2024, there have been 3,121 cases of theft from persons, which means a 4% increase compared to the same period in 2023.

3.121

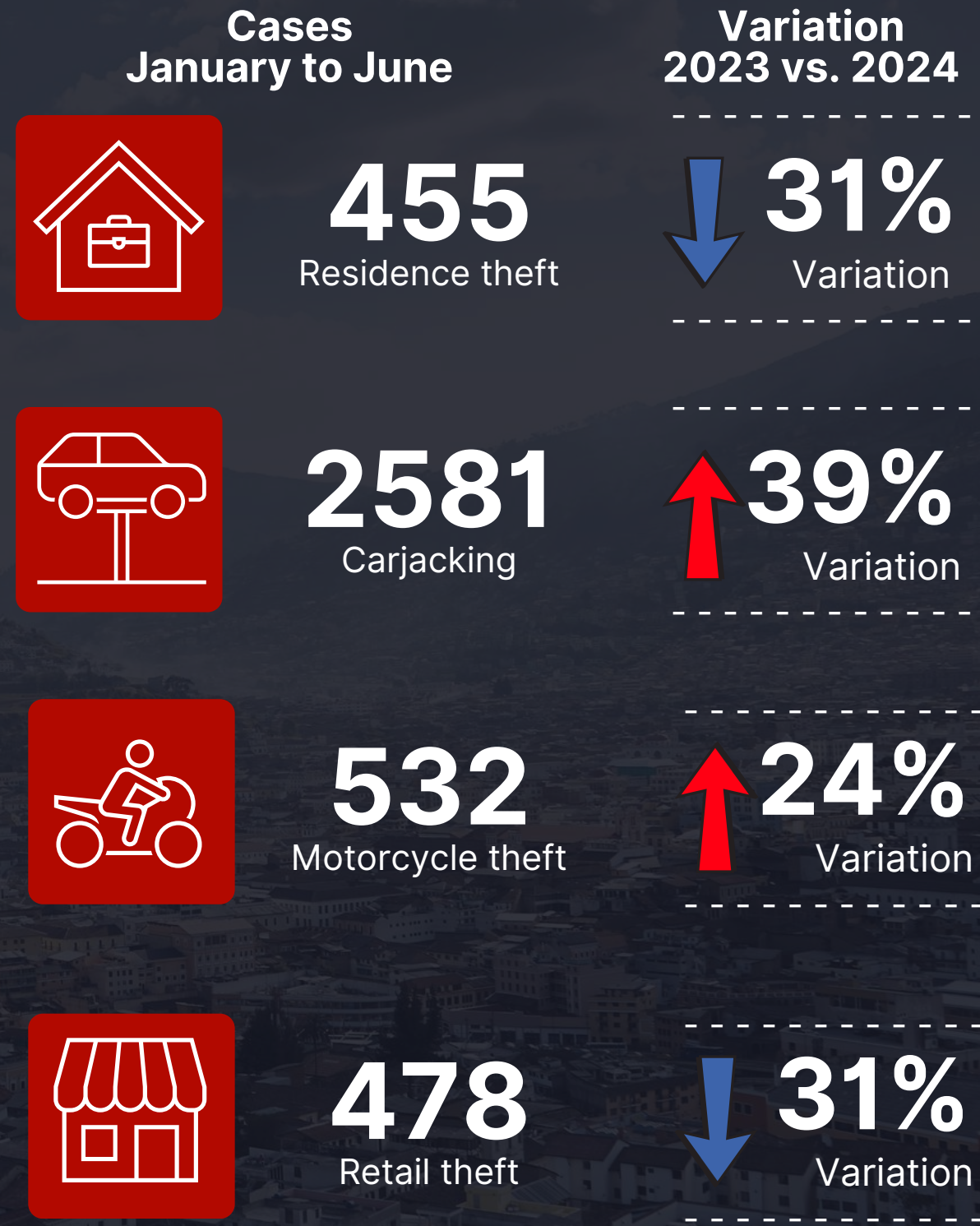
cases of theft from
persons



2.2 Theft in different modalities

In August an individual opened a vehicle and stole it in a few seconds using a “master key” in the La Carolina sector, north of Quito, leaving the owner unable to react while he was at a medical appointment. Authorities reported that in the Iñaquito district carjacking have increased by 20%. So far in 2024, 55 vehicles have been reported stolen in different ways ([La República](#), 2024).

On Monday, August 19, a man driving a white car was approached by an unconscious man who appeared to be injured and unable to move. Upon stopping to offer assistance, the driver was surprised by two more men, who threatened him and got into the vehicle. The assailants forced him into the back seat, where they threatened him with a firearm and hit him repeatedly with the handle of the gun. After several minutes of aggression, the criminals forced the victim out of the car and fled in the vehicle ([El Comercio](#), 2024).



2.3 Land Piracy

Although there are no cases of robbery on roads or highways in the city of Quito, there have been 240 assaults or kidnappings of cargo transport drivers in Ecuador. According to transporters, the most dangerous road is the one that connects Guayaquil, Quevedo and Santo Domingo, where motorcyclists intercept cargo vehicles and shoot at them to make them stop so they can steal the cargo or kidnap the driver or his assistants. Considering that the city of Santo Domingo is located three hours from Quito, and that it is on the road between the Ecuadorian capital and the port of Guayaquil, it is an issue to consider because of its importance for the country's economy and for large companies that may have operations in both cities due to the importance of being the largest population center in the country, and that it has a large number of national and international companies, with the country's main port ([Ecuavisa](#), 2024).



2.4 Homicides



95
Homicides 2024



36%
Variation
January-June
2023 vs. January-
June 2024

For authorities, the violence seen in the most recent cases of homicides in Quito is due to the relocation and growth of local gangs that fight over territories and illegal economies to maintain their operations in the country and the region. In response to the growing violence both in the city and in the country in general, in January President Daniel Noboa declared a state of emergency decree, which included the capital. In recent times, there have been cases of firearms attacks against officials of the SNAI, the institution in charge of the penitentiary system, allegedly as a form of revenge by gang members against the authorities ([El País](#), 2024).



2.5 Extortion, threats and kidnapping



In June 2024 the National Police arrested eight people who were engaged in extortion in the Solanda sector in the south of Quito. The incident occurred while the individuals were trying to extort money from the owners of a local wholesale market in the area, threatening to threaten their lives and safety if they were not handed over US\$5,000. At the time of the capture, firearms, cash and up to seven cell phones were seized with which they completed their criminal acts ([El Telégrafo](#), 2024).



3. Risk Generating Factors

3.1 Micro-trafficking and criminal groups

Distribution of major criminal gangs in Quito

Violence in Ecuador has managed to connect regions previously separated by gang control, now extending to cities that until recently seemed alien to organized crime. Quito, the capital, is a clear example of this situation, with 24 violent homicides recorded in just one month. Among these cases, an armed attack against two female employees of SNAI, the entity in charge of the penitentiary system, stands out. This worrying panorama has led the government of Daniel Noboa to include Quito for the first time in the state of exception decree, as a response to the growing insecurity that is already difficult to control. During the last four years, the inhabitants of the capital have observed an increase in violence, concentrated mainly in the cities along the drug trafficking route, which runs from the border areas with Colombia and Peru, through the Amazon and along the Ecuadorian coast to the ports from where the drugs are exported to the United States and Europe.

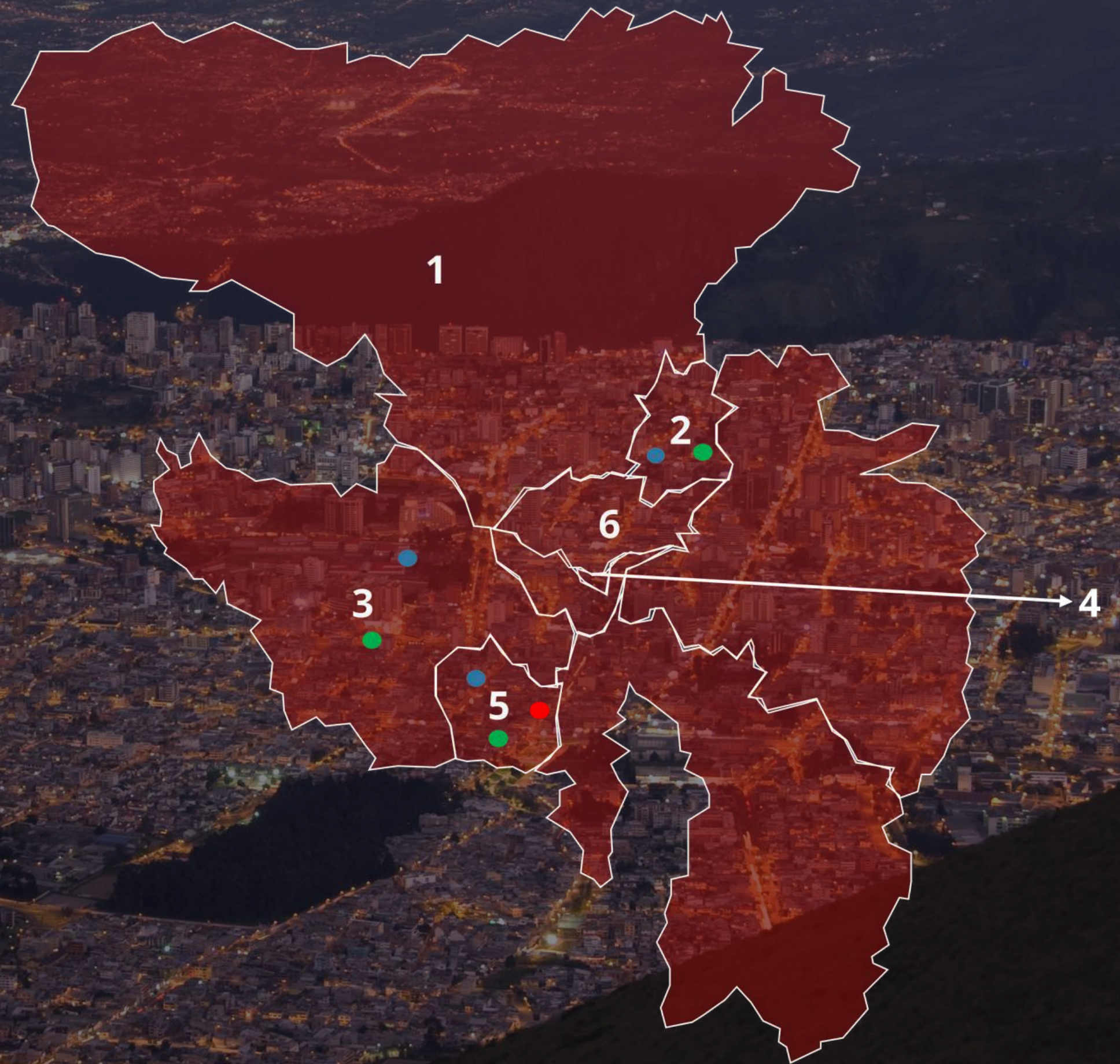
Quito, until recently, was outside of this drug trafficking map, however, in recent months, shootings have become increasingly frequent in some neighborhoods of the city, which has set off all the alerts ([El País, 2024](#)).

Carolina Andrade, secretary of security for the Municipality of Quito, says violence in the city is fueled by internal cocaine trafficking networks. “Thirty-two percent of the drugs seized are for local consumption; it is a very strong market and that encourages criminal violence,” she explains. In addition, since 2022, when the law on the carrying and possession of firearms was made more flexible, 80% of homicides and robberies are committed with firearms, a change from the predominance of Sharp weapons in the past. This situation has strengthened the presence of gangs such as Los Lobos, Choneros, Latin Kings and Chone Killers, which have taken their fight to the streets of Quito, trying to impose their control, just as they do in the coastal provinces, where neither the state of emergency nor the curfews have been able to curb violence in areas dominated by criminal groups ([El País, 2024](#)).

Distribution of the main criminal gangs in Quito

1. La Delicia (La Roldós)
2. Calderón (El Mirador)
3. Sur – Eloy Alfaro (Solanda)
4. La Mariscal
5. Quitumbe (La Ecuatoriana y Nueva Aurora)
6. Norte – Eugenio Espejo

- Tiguerones ●
- Los Lobos ●
- Choneros ●



3.2 Social Unrest



Social protest in Quito, as well as in the rest of the country, has been a tool for the population to express their discontent and dissatisfaction with certain situations. Recently, the people of Quito have demonstrated against the National Government due to the power outages the country has experienced as a result of low water levels in hydroelectric reservoirs. Citizens have perceived these measures by Daniel Noboa's government as "incompetence" on the part of the executive, prompting them to take to the streets to protest and demand solutions to this distressing situation.

On November 15, approximately 1,000 people marched from El Ejido Park in the northern part of the city to Santo Domingo Square in the historic center, where they burned tires. As a result, the police had to intervene using tear gas and stun grenades to disperse the protesters and restore order to public roads (DW, 2024).



4. Risk Level





Risk level Analysis

The risk level analysis aims to identify areas where, according to institutional statistics, there is a higher probability of violence and high-impact crimes occurring. In the case of this Security Overview-Quito, the characterization will be based on security and crime statistics provided by the National Police of Ecuador and the Metropolitan Security Observatory. The most problematic areas of the city will then be outlined using two main indicators: homicide cases and the presence of organized criminal groups.

Map of Quito Risk Level by districts

1. La Delicia (La Roldós)
2. Calderón (El Mirador)
3. Sur – Eloy Alfaro (Solanda)
4. La Mariscal
5. Quitumbe (La Ecuatoriana y Nueva Aurora)
6. Norte – Eugenio Espejo

■ HIGH
 ■ MEDIUM-HIGH
 ■ MEDIUM

Analysis of the risk dynamics in the city of Quito to enable companies to conduct evaluations in their operations (rating based on ISO 31000 and quantitative risk analysis).				
Risk	Main factors that generate risk	Consequences	Implications for private companies	Risk Level
 <p>Deterioration in the security situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment. • Consolidated presence of criminal groups. • Influence of the phenomenon of microtrafficking on common and organized crime by developing hitman networks and their strengthening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen distrust • Decrease in local and foreign investment in the city • Affectation of small and medium-sized merchants. • Decrease in tourism potential. • Increase in complaints of extortion, threats and homicides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact on the supply or value chain due to the permeability of crime. • Non-fulfillment of services or commitments. • Leakage of personnel with intentions of harming companies. • Fear of market expansion due to criminal networks. 	High
 <p>Impact on the economic and financial system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption in the public and private sector • Increase in poverty and inequality • Activities for money laundering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in foreign investment in the city. • Low salaries. • Labor informality. • Inflation. • Limitation and inappropriate use of public space. • Low company generation • Increased recruitment of criminal groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced demand for services and products. • Decrease in revenues. • Increased costs due to phenomena such as inflation. • Limitation of operating capacities. 	Medium-High
 <p>Social protest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfied communities • Failure to comply with agreements established between citizens and the government. • Insufficient government management and absence of public resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government destabilization. • Interruption of economic activities. • Increase in public spending. • Increased violence. • Resurgence of social conflicts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial losses. • Affectations in the supply chain. • Unfavorable business climate. • Loss of business opportunities 	Medium
 <p>Political instability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption. • Deepening inequalities. • Distrust in institutions and the Public Force • Incidence of Cartels in politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polarization. • Social conflict. • Strengthening and increase of organized groups. • Low productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in foreign clients due to political uncertainty. • Reduced revenues due to periods of inflation and recession. • Uncertainty in creating long-term plans and projects 	Medium

5. Foresight Design



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In recent years, Quito has experienced a significant deterioration in public safety, marked by an alarming increase in violence and criminal activity. As of October 2024, over 185 homicides have been reported, representing a notable rise compared to previous years. This surge in violence has been largely driven by the presence of criminal organizations such as “Los Lobos” and “Choneros”, which have established territorial control in various areas of the city, especially in the south, where conflicts over drug trafficking have led to an escalation in homicides and other violent crimes. The most affected administrative zones include Quitumbe, La Roldós, and Solanda, where numerous contract-style killings have been reported. The situation has prompted the government to declare states of emergency and implement police operations to try to restore order. However, these measures have yielded limited results, as a lack of resources and trained personnel has hindered an effective response to organized crime.

In the short term, Quito's security situation is expected to remain critical. Authorities have acknowledged that the resources available to combat crime are insufficient, limiting the police's ability to maintain an effective presence in the most affected areas.













Although security operations are being carried out and police patrols increased, these efforts are not enough to address the underlying causes of violence. Public perception of safety is negative; many citizens feel they cannot fully trust the institutions responsible for protecting them. This mistrust may further hinder collaboration between the community and law enforcement, which is essential for effectively combating crime. In the medium term, the future could be more hopeful if strategies designed to improve security are properly implemented. The local government's Security and Citizen Coexistence Plan has a significant budget allocated to strengthening police capabilities and improving video surveillance and patrolling systems. The key to success lies in how these initiatives are executed and whether effective collaboration between authorities and the community is achieved. It is essential to address not only the symptoms of the problem (criminality) but also its root causes, such as poverty, lack of job opportunities, and social exclusion.

Programs promoting community development and offering alternatives to young people could be crucial to dismantling criminal networks in the long term. However, if current conditions persist without significant and effective intervention, Quito could face a grim future with levels of violence that might equal or even surpass the highest in the country. Successfully implementing comprehensive policies will be essential to reversing this trend and restoring public trust in security institutions.

***Find the full
version of this
document here:***



6. Recommendations

-  Always maintain a high degree of situational awareness, which allows you to identify risks or threats arising from situations external to the place or areas where you travel.
-  Taking into account the description of the Risk Level provided in this document, identify the neighborhoods and zonal administrations with a high risk level. This in order to fore-see safety and self-care plans.
-  In the case of traveling in a private vehicle, carry out a route analysis and have alternative routes that allow you to resolve developments on the route.
-  Try to make your trips during daylight hours.
-  For the movement of expatriates or foreigners to the interior of Quito, evaluate the probability of having systems to monitor movements remotely from a Command Center.
-  If you are in a highly vulnerable situation and prone to being a victim of robbery or ex-press kidnapping, do not put up any resistance.
-  If you are in spaces with a high influx of people such as restaurants, shopping centers or bars, always remain attentive to the care of your personal belongings and avoid starting conversations with people who suddenly request favors or want to approach you.
-  Avoid having detailed or sensitive information on your mobile phone about your family members, as well as the organization for which you work.
-  Be careful with the information you publish through your social networks, taking into account that the less privacy you have, the greater your exposure to the risk of extortion or kidnapping.
-  If you are a victim of telephone extortion, do not hang up, try to take notes, do not give your name or your identification number and, if possible, record the call.
-  If you are a victim of threats in any of their forms, immediately contact the authorities and do not give in to the requests of criminals.
-  Train yourself if possible in defensive and evasive driving, increasing your ability to save your life or that of your family in the event of an assault on public roads.

Nota. The investigative work and analysis recorded in this security assessment is exclusive to **3+ Security Colombia**. Therefore, it is recommended not to disclose the document in question.



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