

Security OVERVIEW



SECURITY
COLOMBIA

CARACAS

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The Security Overview – Caracas 2025 aims to carry out a statistics-based analysis of the city's security situation in order to build prospective scenarios of the security outlook in the short and medium term.

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1. Situational Analysis

Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, continues to face significant security challenges in 2024. Despite government efforts and local initiatives to reduce crime, the city is still considered one of the most dangerous in Latin America. Crime dynamics in Caracas are influenced by a combination of socio-economic, political and structural factors, which have persisted for years and continue to affect the quality of life of its inhabitants. In 2024, crime in Caracas manifests itself in various forms, including robberies, kidnappings, extortions, homicides and control of areas by organized gangs. Violent crime, in particular, remains a major concern, with homicide rates that, while showing some decline compared to previous years, remain high by international standards. Criminal gangs, known as “colectivos” or “megabandas,” operate in various areas of the city, especially in marginal neighborhoods and peripheral areas. These organizations exert territorial control, imposing their own rules and extorting money from merchants and residents. In addition, drug trafficking and illegal arms sales are activities that fuel violence and insecurity in the city (OVV, 2025).

The perception of the population of Caracas regarding security is, in general, one of distrust and fear. Citizens report feeling insecure both in public spaces and in their own communities. The lack of trust in law enforcement institutions, such as the police and the judicial system, is a factor that aggravates this sense of vulnerability. Many residents have adopted self-protection measures, such as installing security systems in their homes, hiring private security services and limiting their movements, especially at night. In addition, internal and external migration continues to be a common response among those seeking to escape violence and insecurity (Voz de América, 2025).



2. Crime Analysis

High-Impact Crimes in Caracas – 2024

Based on figures provided by the Observatorio de Violencia de Violencia (OVV), it is evident that between January and October 2024, three high-impact crimes experienced an increase.

CRIME STATISTICS IN CARACAS	YEAR 2022	YEAR 2023	VARIATION % 2022 VS 2023	YEAR 2023	JAN-OCT 2024
HOMICIDES	174	165	-5%	165	117
THEFT	106	75	-29%	75	49
COERCION	4	8	100%	8	2
KIDNAPPING	7	9	29%	9	2
THREATS	4	8	100%	8	2
TOTAL	295	265	-10%	265	172

It should be noted that these figures are a compilation by the Press Observatory of the OVV Capital Region, so they may differ from the official figures of the administration of the Mayor's Office of Caracas. Official figures are not freely available, so the OVV is the most reliable source for crime figures in the Caracas Metropolitan Area. It is also key to be clear and explicit that this statistical table contains the events counted by the OVV, however, there are more victims and they are analyzed in the following section.

Resource: Own elaboration with information from the Observatorio de Violencia de Venezuela (OVV).
Note: Figures subject to change based on updating processes of the source.

2.1 Theft from persons

In 2024, robberies in Caracas showed a 17% rate of occurrence in the first four months, according to the Observatorio de Violencia de Venezuela (OVV), with an increase to 30% in December (8 of 24 reported events). Although it is not specified whether these include robberies to individuals, they include extortive kidnappings, such as the case of a family robbed in El Cementerio, where the criminals demanded \$45,000 and released the victims after police pressure (OVV, 2024). Official CICPC figures report reductions in homicides (national rate of 3.49 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2024). ([Infobae](#), 2025).

Robberies

30%

increase in
December



2.2 Theft in different modalities

Vehicle and commercial robberies in Caracas during 2025 will present varied methods, although with recurring patterns. In the case of vehicles, criminals employ tactics such as booking their victims as they arrive at their homes or frequent locations, taking advantage of personal information to plan the crime. In addition, they use technological methods to deactivate modern security systems, although no technical details are specified in the available records ([Venezolana de Televisión](#), 2025).

For commercial robberies, violent kidnappings stand out, such as the one that occurred in December 2024 near El Cementerio market, where criminals stole \$45,000 and released the victims after police pressure ([OVV](#), 2025).



2.3 Land Piracy

Cargo thefts in Caracas during 2025 are articulated through coordinated strategies that take advantage of the heavy transport crisis and logistical vulnerabilities. Criminals block key routes such as the Autopista Regional del Centro or the Barcelona-Cumaná highway with physical obstacles (trunks, logs) to force vehicles to stop, then threaten drivers with firearms to steal goods ([Unión Radio Noticias](#), 2025).

This modus operandi is facilitated by the paralysis of 55% of the national fleet due to prohibitive replacement costs and the absence of insurance to cover losses ([Unión Radio Noticias](#), 2025). Although the INTT maintains controls at strategic points such as Tazón to restrict traffic schedules, extortion by officials who demand goods in exchange for not sanctioning transporters persists ([Gobierno Bolivariano de Venezuela](#), 2025).



2.4 Homicides

48,2
homicides



per

100.000
inhabitants



in
2024

Available data does not provide specific figures on homicides in Caracas for 2025, but projections and trends for 2024 indicate that the steady decline will continue, albeit with persistent challenges. In 2024, the national homicide rate in Venezuela was 4.1 per 100,000 inhabitants, according to the CICPC ([Infobae](#), 2024). In Caracas, the violent death rate (which includes homicides, police interventions and cases under investigation) was 48.2 per 100,000 inhabitants, with a specific homicide rate of 8.9 ([OVV](#), 2025). Although there are no official statistics for 2025, the Observatorio de Violencia de Venezuela (OVV) reported in 2024 that violence was shifting to the domestic sphere, with 41% of crimes committed by family members or acquaintances, and a decrease in street confrontations, attributed to gang neutralization and migration ([OVV](#), 2025). The lack of updated data for 2025 prevents confirming whether this trend continues, but the historical context and national figures (which have shown a decline since 2016) suggest that Caracas could continue to experience a decrease, although interpersonal violence and the lack of transparency in statistics will remain critical factors ([El Nacional](#), 2025).



2.5 Extortion, threats and kidnapping

In 2025, Caracas experiences an increase in extortion and political repression, with police and military officials playing a central role. According to newspaper reports, in September 2024, state agents extort merchants and citizens, including during security operations, taking advantage of institutional impunity ([Infobae](#), 2024). In January 2025, Foro Penal documented 83 political arrests, among them the kidnapping of Rafael Tudares (son-in-law of Edmundo González) and the detention of activist Carlos Correa, whose whereabouts are still unknown ([Infobae](#), 2025). The NGO Human Rights Watch recorded extrajudicial executions and disappearances associated with operations against armed groups, with torture and forced recruitment of minors ([HRW](#), 2025). Although specific figures on extortions in 2025 are not available, *El País* reported that Chavismo has increased military patrols and searches in the streets and on public transport, creating an atmosphere of intimidation ([El País](#), 2025).



In March 2025, two officers of the Cuerpo de Investigaciones Científicas, Penales y Criminalísticas (CICPC) were arrested for extorting money from citizens, highlighting systematic corruption. These facts reflect institutionalized violence, in which official security becomes a tool of control and exploitation.

3. Risk Generating Factors

3.1 Micro-trafficking and criminal groups

Distribution of GDO and GDCO in Caracas

In Caracas, gangs operate with hierarchical structures that dominate specific territories, mainly in popular neighborhoods and marginalized areas. These organizations, known as megabandas or colectivos, engage in criminal activities such as kidnapping, extortion and robbery, in addition to imposing social control in the areas where they operate. Drug micro-trafficking is one of their main sources of income, with distribution networks ranging from fixed points in neighborhoods such as Petare, La Vega and El Valle to street sales in central areas. According to various non-governmental organizations, approximately 60% of homicides in the city are related to confrontations between gangs for the control of territories or drug trafficking routes. The scarce presence of the state in these areas allows the gangs to impose their own rules, generating continuous cycles of violence.

In 2025, Chavista collectives in Caracas function as civilian paramilitary groups that combine tasks of social control, political repression and armed defense of Nicolás Maduro's regime. Based in key neighborhoods such as “23 de enero”, where the remains of Hugo Chávez rest, and Petare, these groups collaborate with state security forces to dissuade opposition protests, using hooded motorcycles, firearms and intimidation tactics (La Nación, 2025). Their financing comes from both legal (social programs) and illegal sources (extortion, drug trafficking), which allows them to maintain territorial control in popular areas where crime is low, but political repression is high (Swissinfo, 2025). Although some leaders, such as Damaris Mujica of the Warairarepano collective, defend their role as “guardians of peace”, international organizations and local witnesses describe them as tools of state terrorism that hinder opposition mobilization through fear (Swissinfo, 2025).

Distribution of the Main Criminal Gangs in Caracas

- “Wilexis” ●
- “Los Pitufos” ●
- “El Conejo” ●
- “El Cagón” ●



3.2 Social Unrest



Social protest in Venezuela, especially in Caracas, has become a key way for the political opposition to the Chavista regime to express its demands and concentrate its influence on the political scene. In view of the restrictions imposed by the government of Nicolás Maduro on the exercise of opposition politics, it is not unusual that, in the face of important events or situations affecting the population, demonstrations by broad sectors arise. An example of this occurred throughout 2024, when several social movements protested against the results of the presidential elections. In these demonstrations, the opposition demanded the government to guarantee a fair vote count after Maduro's victory. International organizations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) have documented police repression in these protests, denouncing acts of violence and irregular procedures against demonstrators ([HRW](#), 2024). Also, at the beginning of 2025, there were new opposition demonstrations against Maduro's inauguration as president, in which opposition leader María Corina Machado was arrested by pro-government forces, although she was later released ([BBC](#), 2025).



4. Risk Level





Risk Analysis

The risk level analysis aims to identify the areas where, according to institutional statistics, there is a higher likelihood of violence scenarios and the occurrence of high-impact crimes. In the case of this Security Overview - Caracas, the characterization will be based primarily on the security and crime statistics from the Observatorio de Violencia de Venezuela (OVV). The next step will be to outline the most problematic areas of the city using two indicators: homicide cases and the presence of organized criminal groups.

Map of Caracas – Risk Level by Municipalities



Resource: Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia.

Analysis of Risk Dynamics in Caracas for Companies to Assess 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 micro-trafficking phenomenon on common and organized crime, leading to the development and strengthening of hitman networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public trust • Decrease in local and foreign investment in the city • Impact on small and medium-sized businesses • Decline in tourism potential • Increase in reports of extortion, threats, and homicides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible disruptions in the supply or value chain due to criminal infiltration • Non-compliance with services or contractual obligations • Personnel infiltration with harmful intent within 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 sectors • Increase in poverty and inequality • Money laundering activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in foreign investment in the city • Low wages • Labor informality • Inflation • Limited and improper use of public space • Low business creation • Increase in recruitment by criminal groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in demand for services and products • Decrease in income • Increase in costs due to phenomena such as inflation • Limitation of operational capacities 	Medium-high
 <p>Social Unrest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfied communities • Failure to fulfill agreements between citizens and the government • Insufficient government management and lack of public resources • Repression by State institutions against segments of the population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government destabilization • Interruption of economic activities • Increase in public spending • Increase in violence • Resurgence of social conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial losses • Disruptions in the supply chain • Unfavorable business climate • Loss of business opportunities 	Medium-high
 <p>Political instability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption • Widening inequalities • Lack of trust in institutions and in the security forces • Actions by security forces aimed at intimidating the population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polarization • Social conflict • Strengthening and growth of organized groups • Low productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in foreign clients due to political uncertainty • Reduction in income caused by periods of inflation and recession • Uncertainty in developing long-term plans and projects 	High

5. Foresight Design

In 2025, security in Caracas remains a complex challenge, marked by high levels of crime and violence despite efforts by the government and security forces. Structural factors such as socioeconomic inequality, institutional corruption, and the presence of organized criminal groups limit the effectiveness of public policies. Initiatives like increased patrolling in critical areas, modernization of surveillance systems, and social programs in vulnerable neighborhoods have shown only modest results. Although collaboration with international organizations and civil society has been crucial in responding to emergencies, the root causes of insecurity have yet to be addressed. The main strategy has been militarized control, with operations such as “Escudo Bolivariano,” prioritizing repression over citizen guarantees. While gangs like “Wilaxis” in Sucre have been neutralized, pockets of violence persist in popular neighborhoods, whereas municipalities such as Chacao and Baruta continue to maintain low crime rates. The institutional crisis deepens with laws that restrict the work of NGOs and human rights defenders, making independent monitoring increasingly difficult.

In the short term, a relative stabilization is expected in priority areas, although spikes in violence may occur due to the economic crisis or political tensions. The expansion of transnational criminal networks, such as drug trafficking and illegal mining, could increase conflict in certain regions. In the medium term, the future of security in Caracas will depend on the State’s capacity to implement comprehensive reforms, including investment in police intelligence, strengthening the judicial system, and job creation. If progress is made, the city could gradually reduce its crime rates; otherwise, the fragmentation of territorial control between gangs and security forces could worsen insecurity, especially in urban outskirts. Political and economic uncertainty will remain a key factor. In the medium term, Sucre could continue to be an epicenter of violence if structural causes are not addressed, while prison overcrowding and “differentiated treatment” policies for inmates may trigger a prison crisis. International cooperation and moderate political dialogue will be essential to reduce tensions, although the current model suggests that security will likely remain focused on territorial control rather than social policies.

Find the full version of this document here:















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6. Recommendations

-  Always maintain a high level of situational awareness to identify risks or threats arising from external situations in the places or areas you travel through.
-  Based on the Risk Level description provided in this document, identify the municipalities and parishes with a high risk level. This is in order to anticipate security and self-care plans.
-  When traveling in a private vehicle, analyze your route and have alternative routes available to handle any unexpected issues along the way.
-  Try to make your trips during daylight hours.
-  For the movement of expatriates or foreign individuals within Caracas, assess the possibility of having systems in place to remotely monitor their movements from a Command Center.
-  If you are in crowded places such as restaurants, shopping centers, or bars, always stay alert to protect your personal belongings and avoid engaging in conversations with people who suddenly ask for favors or try to approach you.
-  Avoid storing detailed or sensitive information about your family members or your workplace on your mobile phone.
-  Be cautious about what you share on social media, keeping in mind that lower privacy settings increase the risk of extortion or kidnapping.
-  If you are a victim of a phone extortion attempt, do not hang up. Try to take notes, do not provide your name or ID number, and if possible, record the call.
-  In case you are threatened in any form, contact the authorities immediately and do not comply with the demands of criminals.
-  If possible, get trained in defensive and evasive driving to increase your ability to protect your life and your family's in the event of a street assault.
-  If you find yourself in a highly vulnerable situation and are likely to be a victim of robbery or express kidnapping, do not resist.

Note. 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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