

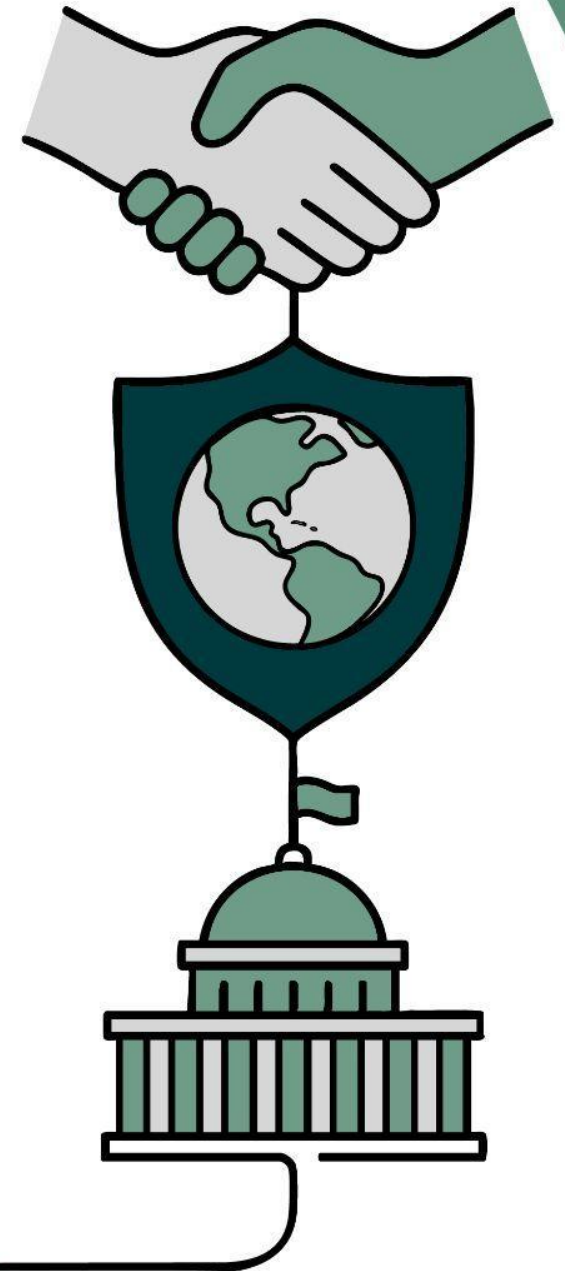
# Human Security and Regional Stability: Parliamentary Responses to Challenges in the Americas and the Caribbean

First Gathering of the ParlAmericas  
Parliamentary Network on Security

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November 27 - 28, 2025

Panama City, Panama





# Transnational Organized Crime: Coordinated Legislative Responses

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## Session 1

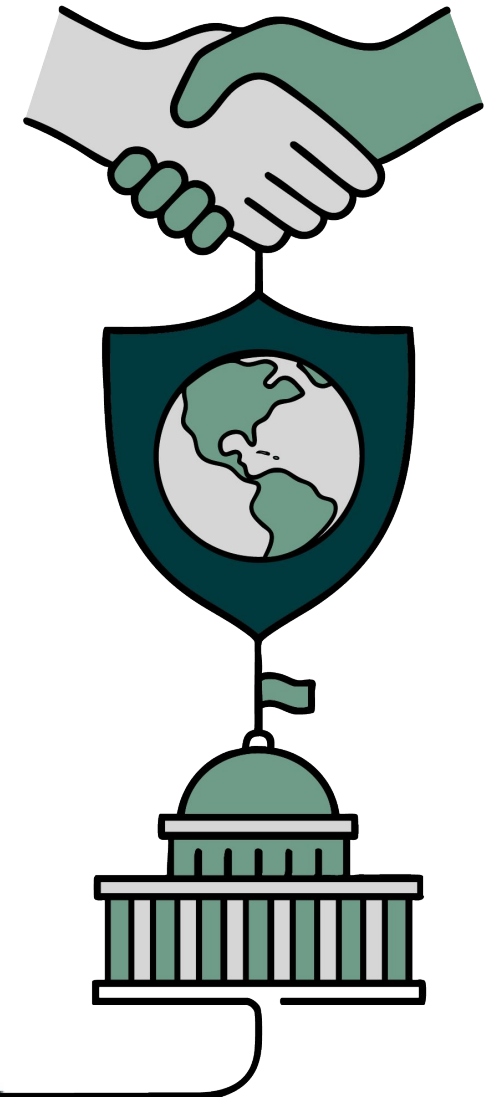




# Gabriel Juárez Lucas

Head of the Regional Representative's Office  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

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**Naciones Unidas**  
Oficina contra  
la Droga y el Delito

**First Gathering of the ParlAmericas  
Parliamentary Network on Security**

# **Current overview of transnational organised crime in the Americas and the Caribbean**

November 27-28, 2025 | Panama City, Panama

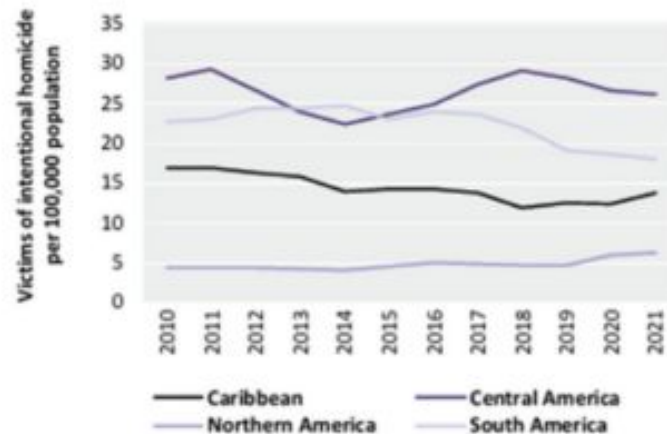


# The evolution of organised crime in the Americas and the Caribbean

*“Organised crime evolves faster than regulatory responses.”*

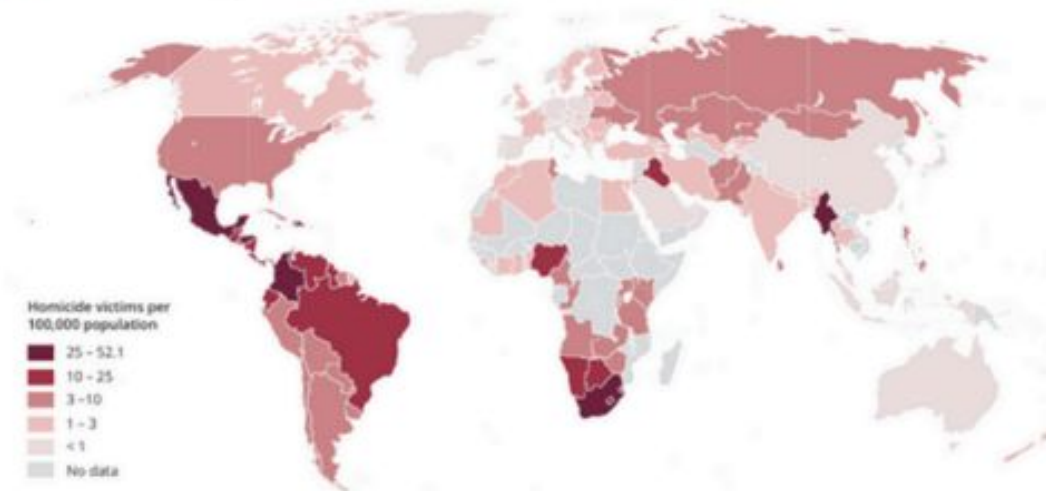
- Responsible for up to 50% of homicides in Latin America

**FIG. 12** Trends in the homicide rate in the Americas, by subregion, 2010–2021



Source: Estimates based on UNODC homicide statistics.

**MAP 1** Homicide rate by country or territory, 2021 or latest available year since 2016



Source: UNODC homicide statistics.





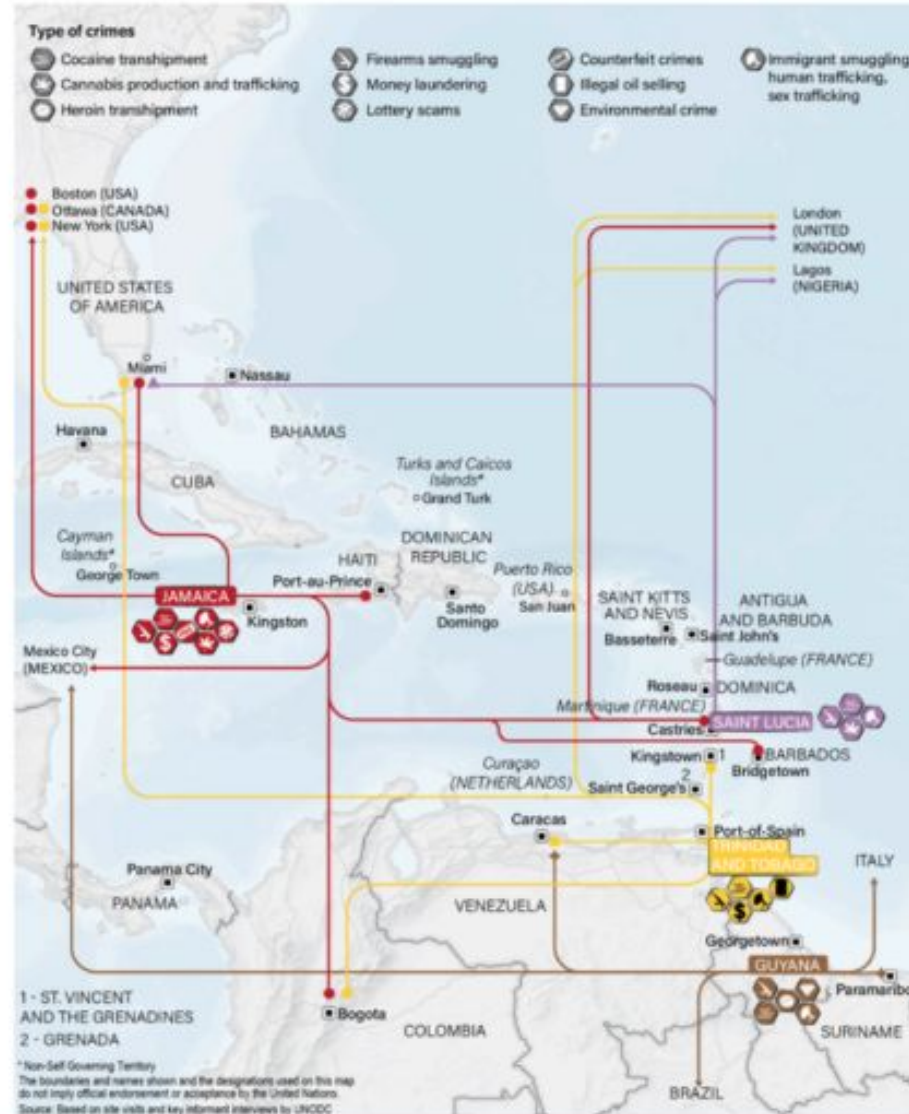
# The evolution of organised crime in the Americas and the Caribbean

*“Organised crime evolves faster than regulatory responses.”*

- The Caribbean loses between 3–4% of its annual GDP due to crime and violence.
- Central America has 65,000–200,000 gang members.



# The evolution of organised crime in the Americas and the Caribbean



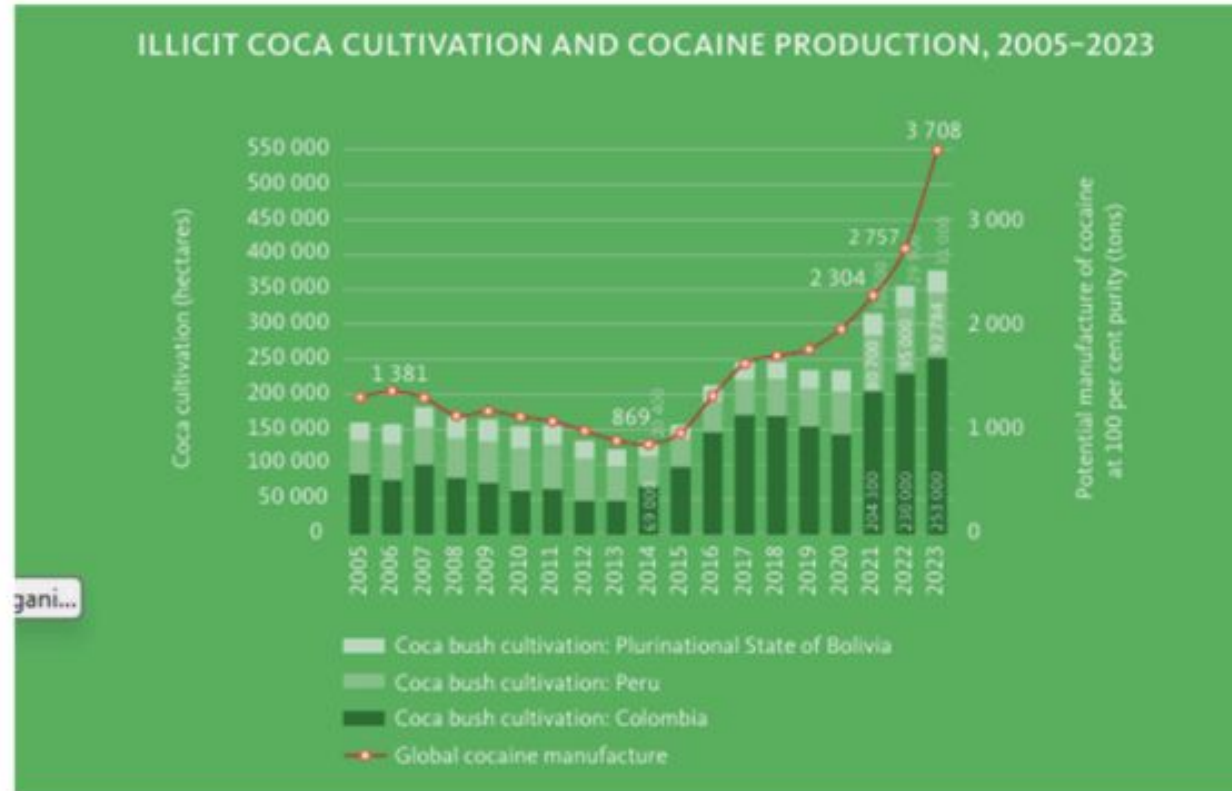
# Criminal convergence: new dynamics and markets

- OCGs operate poly-criminally: drugs, arms, trafficking, migrants, and corruption.
- Expanded use of crypto assets, the dark web, and encrypted apps. Global increase in cocaine production (+18% between 2021–2023).
- Increase in clandestine laboratories in Mesoamerica.





# Criminal convergence: new dynamics and markets



# Human trafficking, arms and emerging illicit flows

- In the Americas, 70% of trafficking victims are women and girls.
- The region accounts for 43% of global arms seizures.  
The Caribbean is affected by
- arms trafficking from the United States.
- Routes in the Caribbean used for mixed flows of migrants are controlled by OCGs.



# Key legislative recommendations

- Harmonise laws on cybercrime, digital evidence and weapons traceability.
- Regulate crypto assets, strengthen AML/CFT and beneficial ownership.
- Reforms to reduce criminalisation for minor drug offences.



- Hemispheric parliamentary cooperation and permanent multilateral committees.





**Naciones Unidas**  
Oficina contra  
la Droga y el Delito

# **MUCHAS GRACIAS**

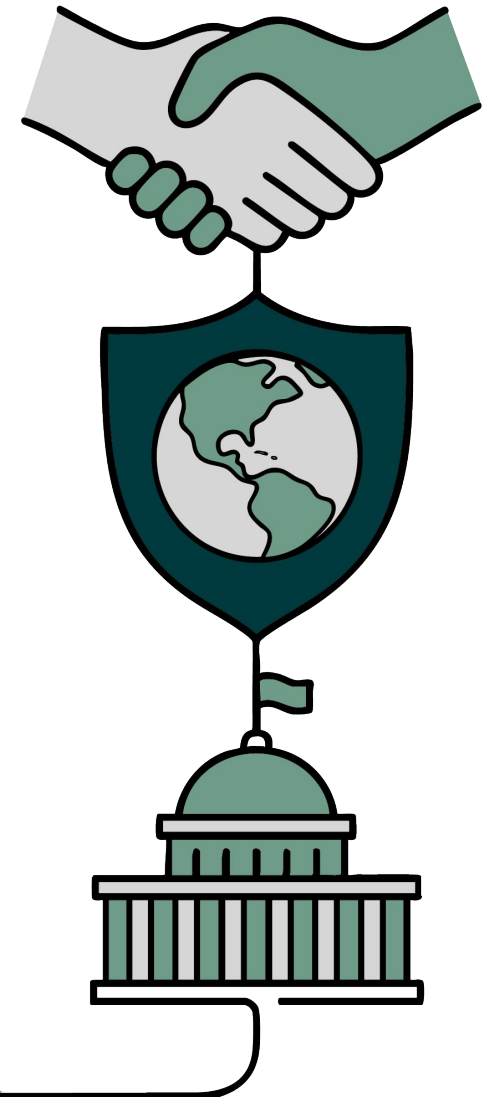




# Rufus Ferdinand

Chief Legal and Compliance Officer  
CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and  
Security (IMPACS)

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# Transnational Organized Crime in the Caribbean – Trends & Regional Cooperation *Insights from CARICOM IMPACS*

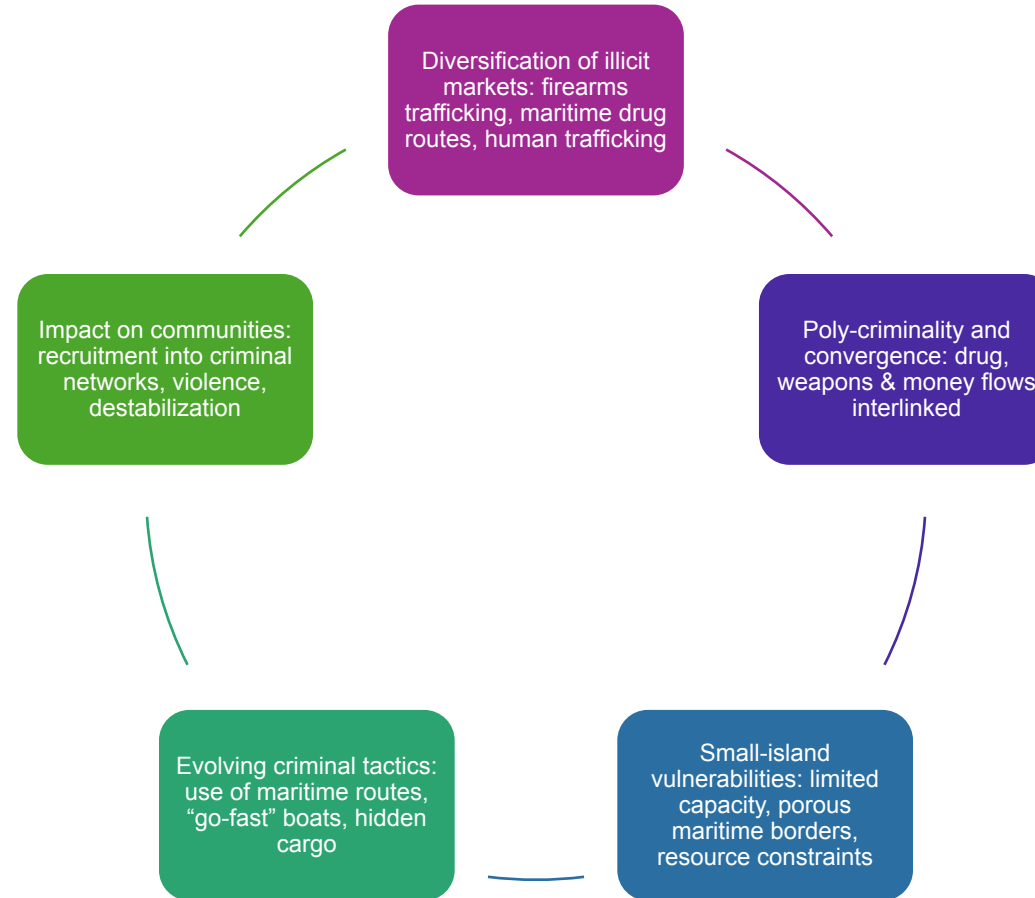
**Rufus Ferdinand**

Chief Legal & Compliance Officer

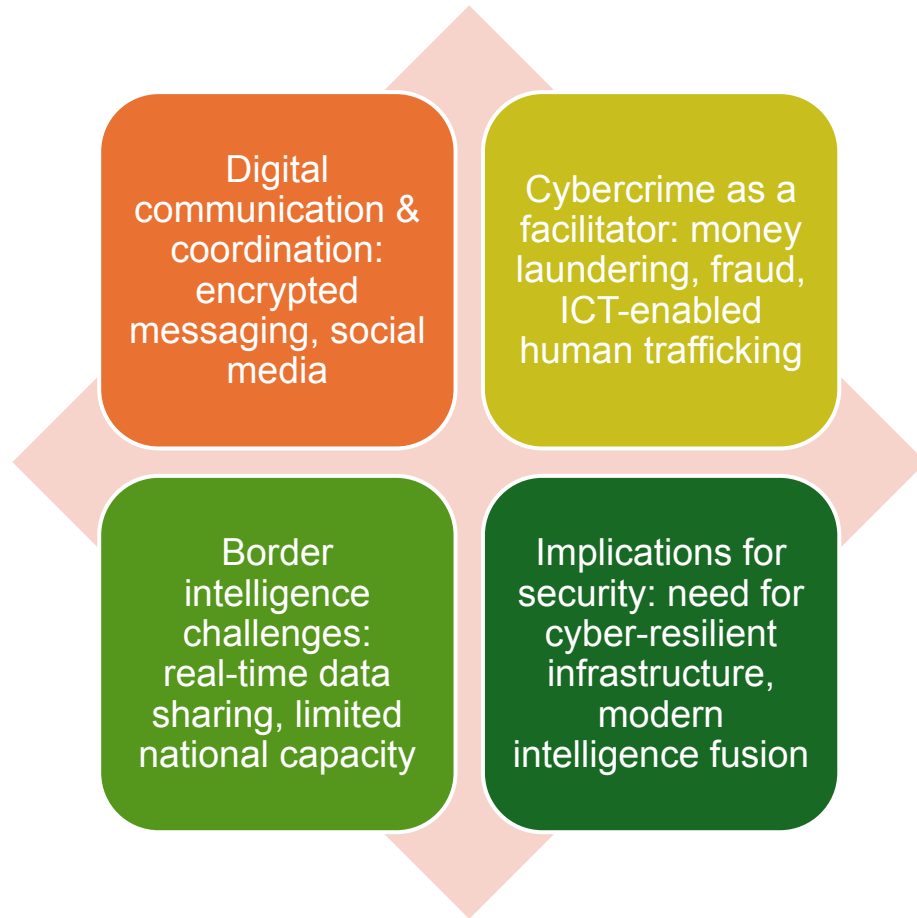
Panama City, Panama

November 27, 2025

# Key Trends in Transnational Organized Crime in the Caribbean



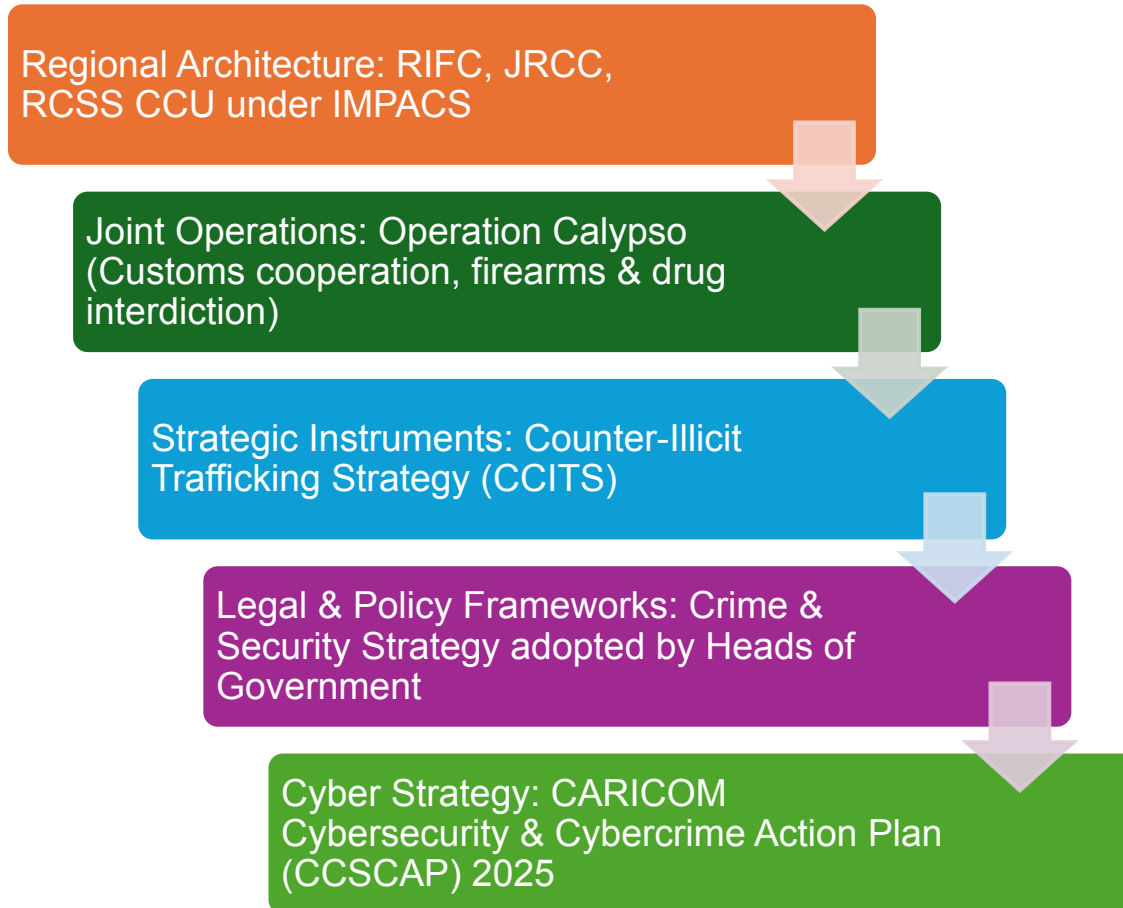
# The Role of Technology & Cyber-enabled Crime





# CARICOM IMPACS

## Regional Cooperation in Action



# Regional Legal Instruments & Policy Decisions

Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (2001):  
Basis for regional security cooperation

CARICOM Maritime and Airspace Security Agreements

Treaty on Security Assistance (2006) – “Treaty of San José”

CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty & Mutual Legal Assistance initiatives

Model legislation:  
anti-gang, anti-trafficking, firearms control, cybercrime

Major political directives by Heads of Government strengthening CARICOM’s security architecture

Establishment and mandate expansion of CARICOM IMPACS (2006–present)

# Lessons Learned & Recommendations for Parliamentarians



Political commitment is key: regional strategies need endorsement by Heads of Government



Legal harmonization: model legislation and common frameworks reduce safe havens



Institutional capacity: invest in shared intelligence platforms (RIFC, JRCC)



Resource pooling: joint operations maximize impact (e.g., Operation Calypso)



Cyber readiness: support national adoption of regional cyber-security plans



Parliamentary role: oversight, legislating enabling regulation, facilitating resource allocations



Thank You



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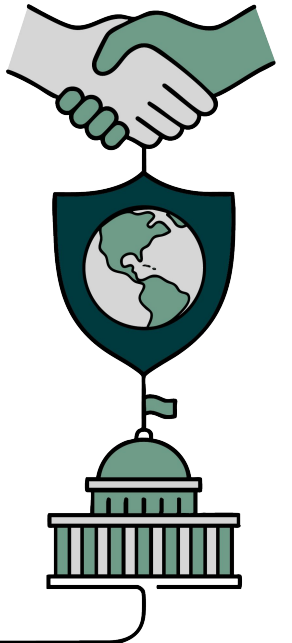




# Citizen Security: Strengthening Legislative Action on a Hemispheric Challenge

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## Session 2

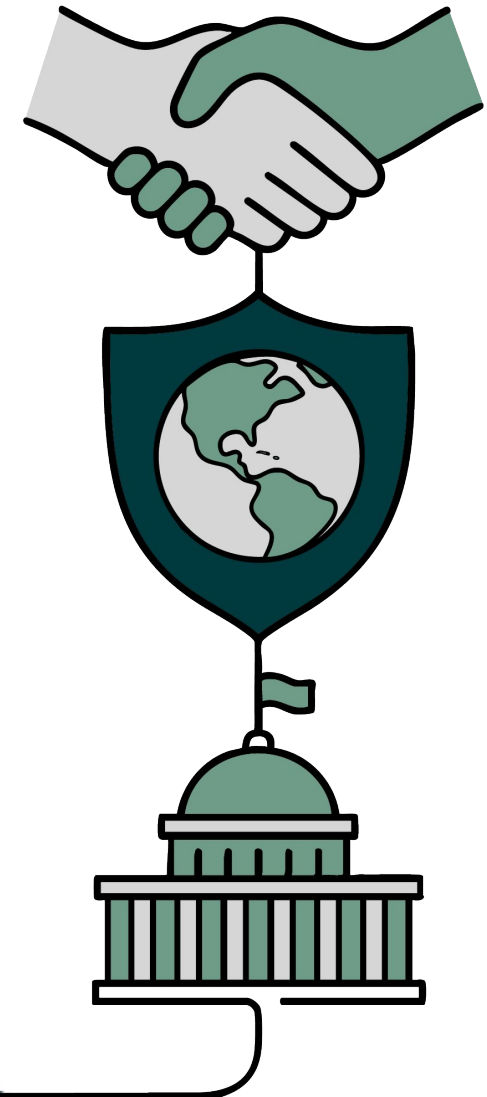




# Lea Giménez

Advisor to the Executive President  
Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean  
(CAF)

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# Main Challenges in Security and Justice

## Latin America and the Caribbean

November 2025

# Contents —



## 1 Diagnosis

**Main indicators of public security in Latin America and the Caribbean**

- Perception, fear, and evaluation of institutions
- Victimization
- Urban crime
- Violent crimes
- Transnational Organized Crime
- Costs of crime

## 2 Causes

**Security, justice, and governance**

- Rule of law
- Structural challenges
- Changing criminal paradigm
- The four development traps

## 3 CAF Approach

**Strategic framework for security and justice for development**

- Characteristics
- Key definitions
- Mobilizing vectors
- Strategic map
- Cross-cutting axes
- Programmatic pillars

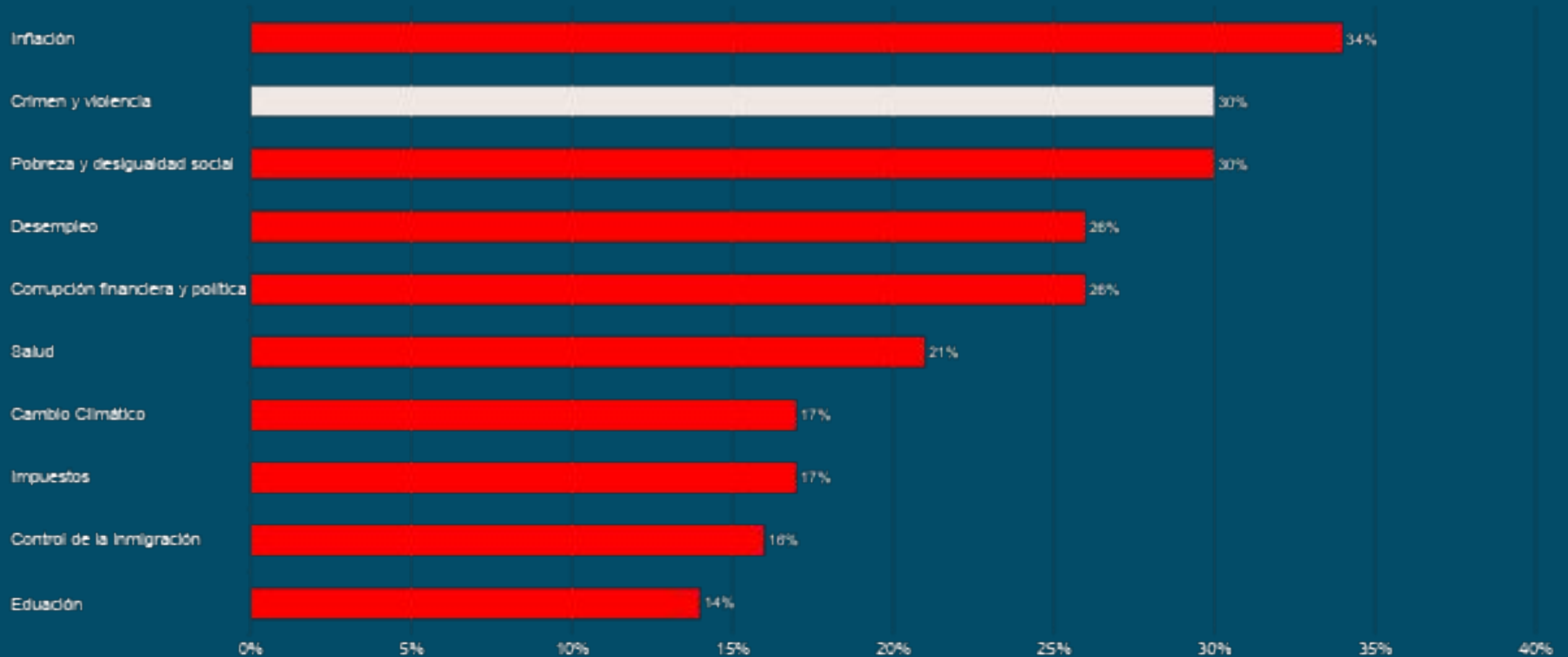


# 1 — Diagnosis

## Main indicators of public security in Latin America and the Caribbean

**Main indicators of public security  
in Latin America and the Caribbean —  
Perception, fear, and evaluation of institutions**

# Main concerns in their country — 2024



# Perception of increased crime — LAC

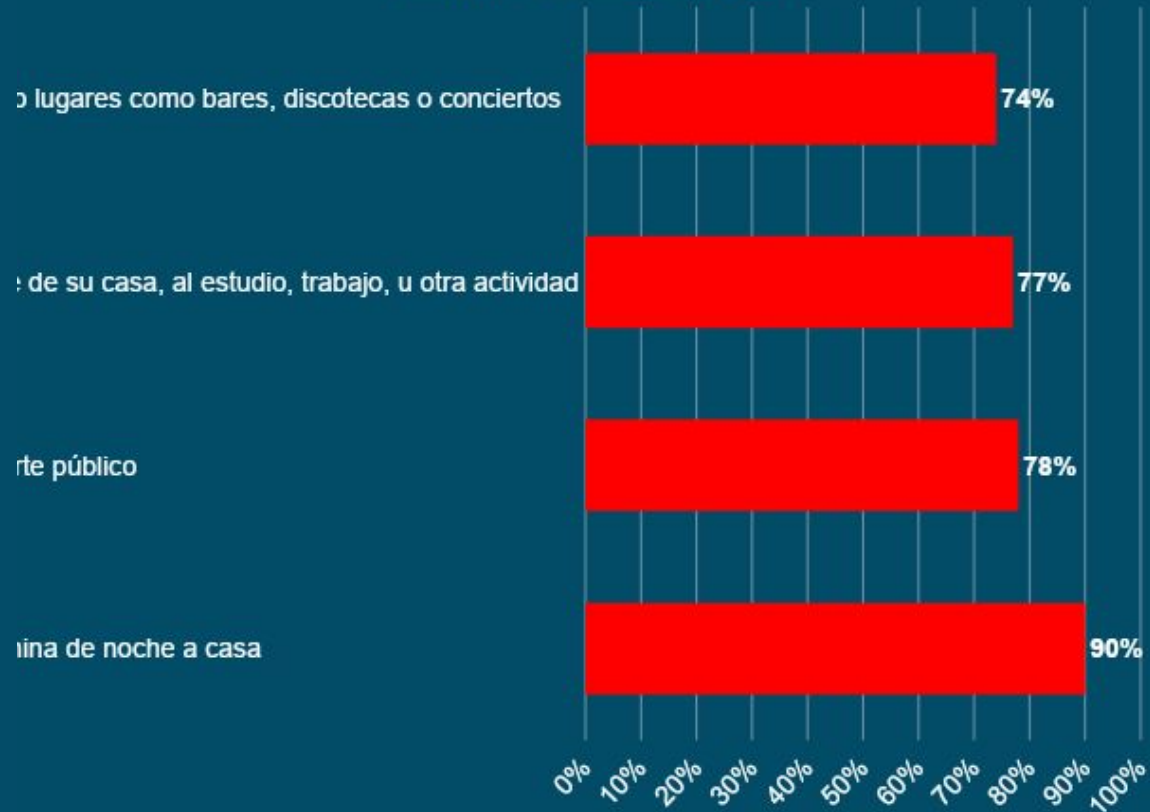


Country	Increase in crime	Vehicle theft	Drug trafficking	Vandalism	Violence against women	Gangs in the neighborhood
Chile	68%	80%	66%	72%	52%	53%
Argentina	64%	76%	72%	71%	59%	38%
Peru	64%	73%	50%	66%	63%	58%
Colombia	56%	72%	56%	65%	53%	46%
Mexico	46%	71%	58%	71%	55%	51%
Brazil	40%	68%	60%	56%	63%	38%

# Public security — gender perspective

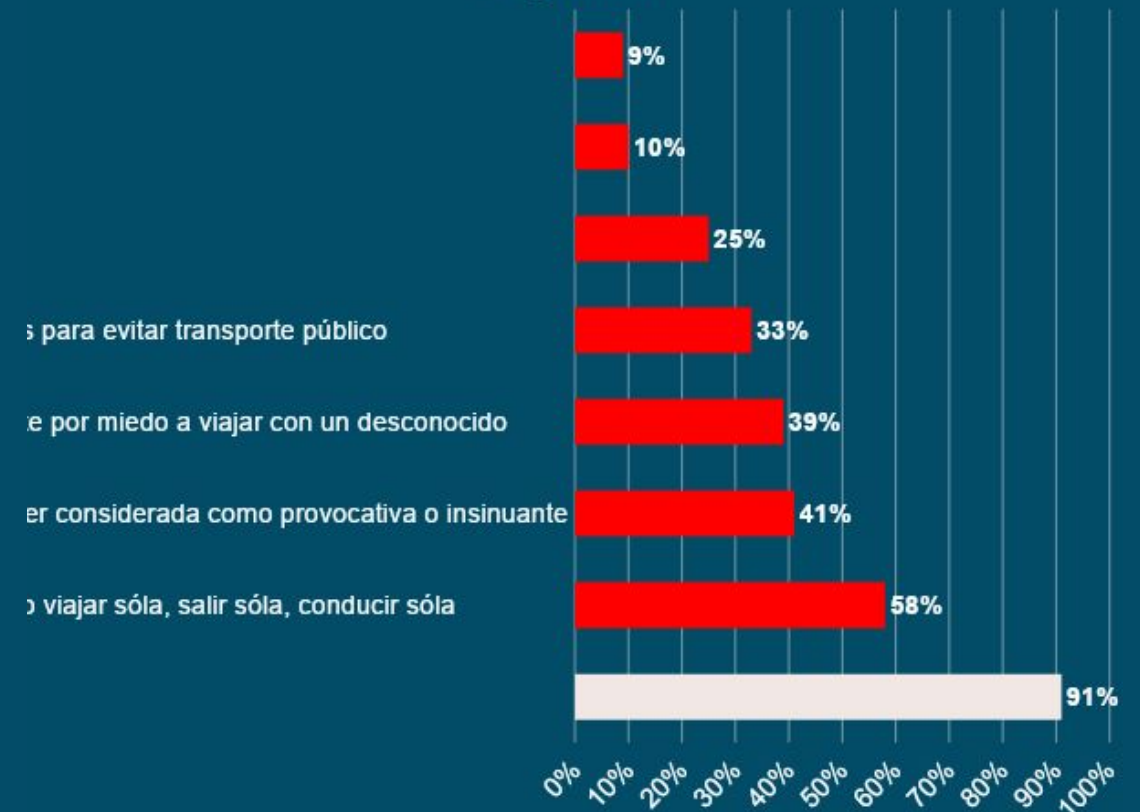


Porcentaje situaciones de inseguridad en mujeres  
(siempre o casi siempre)



Source: Ipsos 2024.

Mujeres que han tomado medida para su seguridad



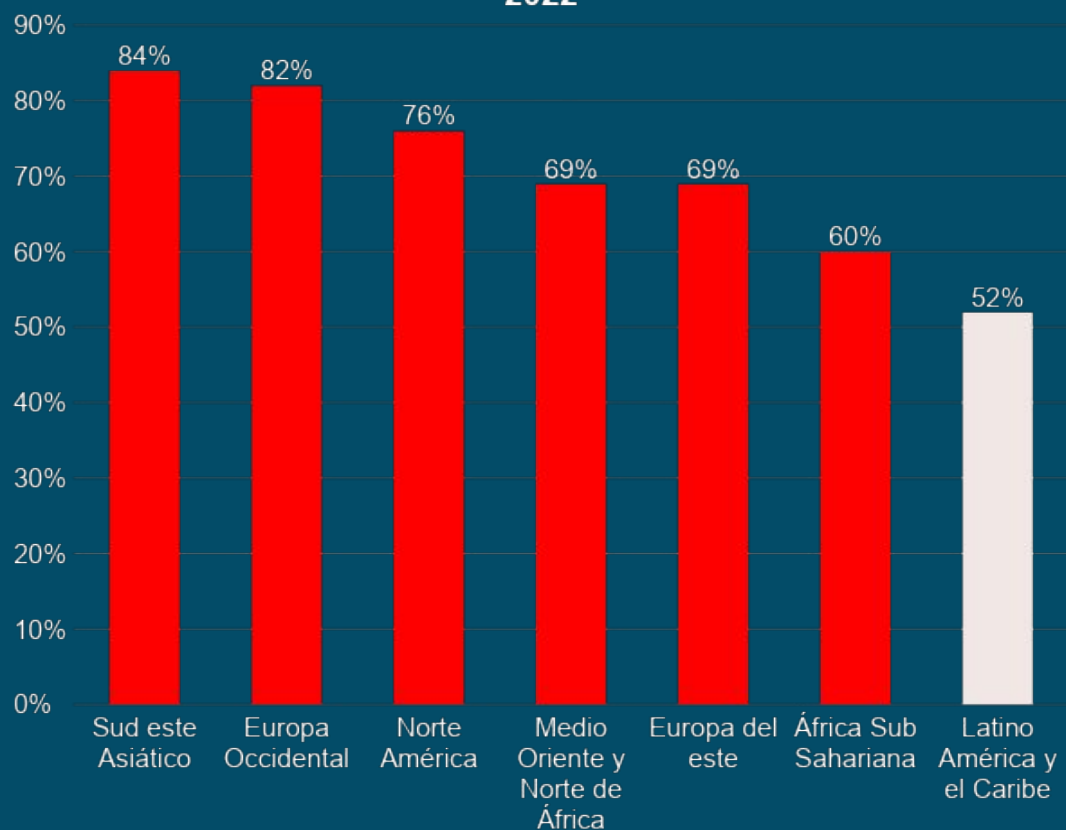
Source: Ipsos 2024.



# Trust in the police — LAC



Porcentaje de confianza en la Policía , por región año 2022



Source: Gallup 2023 and Ipsos 2023.

Confianza en que las fuerzas del orden traten a todos con respeto

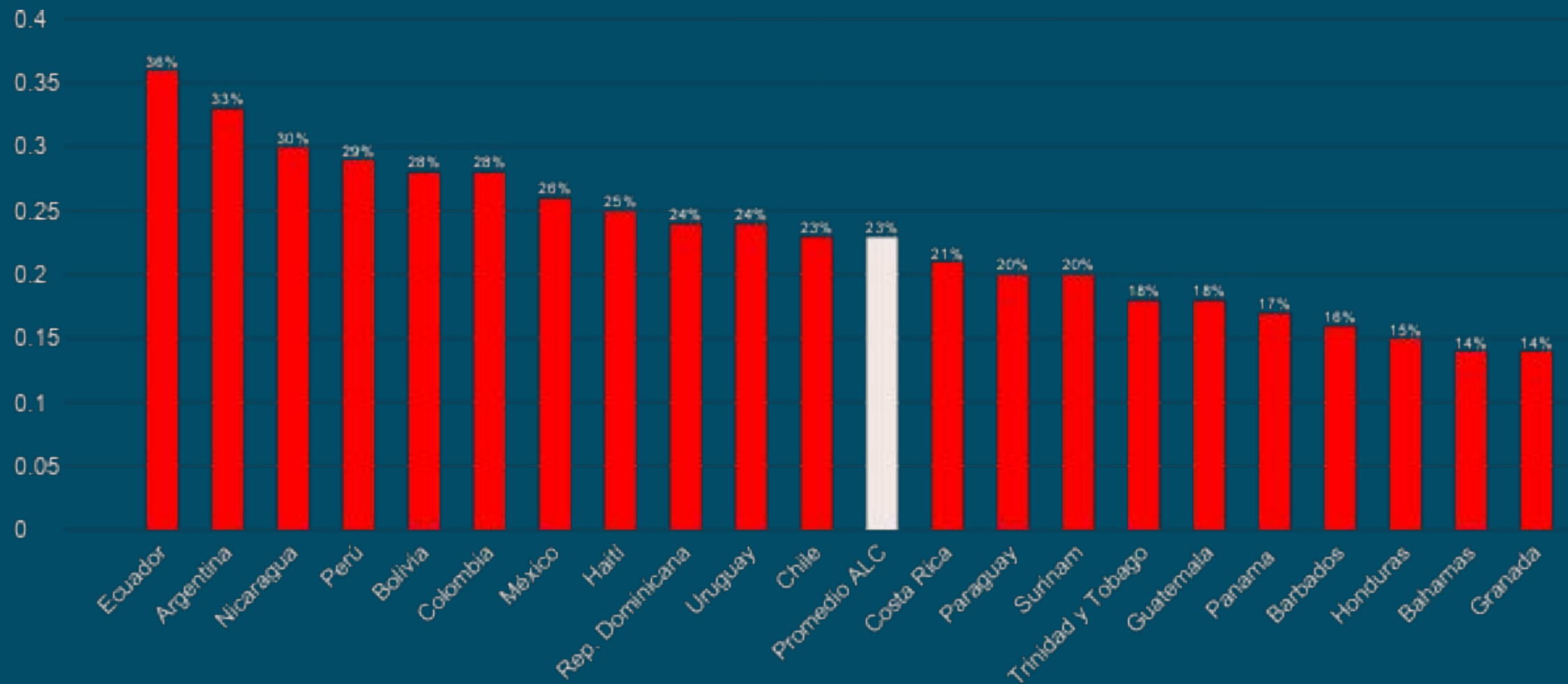


Source: Gallup 2023 and Ipsos 2023.

# Main public security indicators in LAC — Victimization

# Victimization —

## LAC 2023



Rates of people victimized by crime in the last 12 months.

# Main public security indicators in LAC — Urban crime

# Most violent cities — World



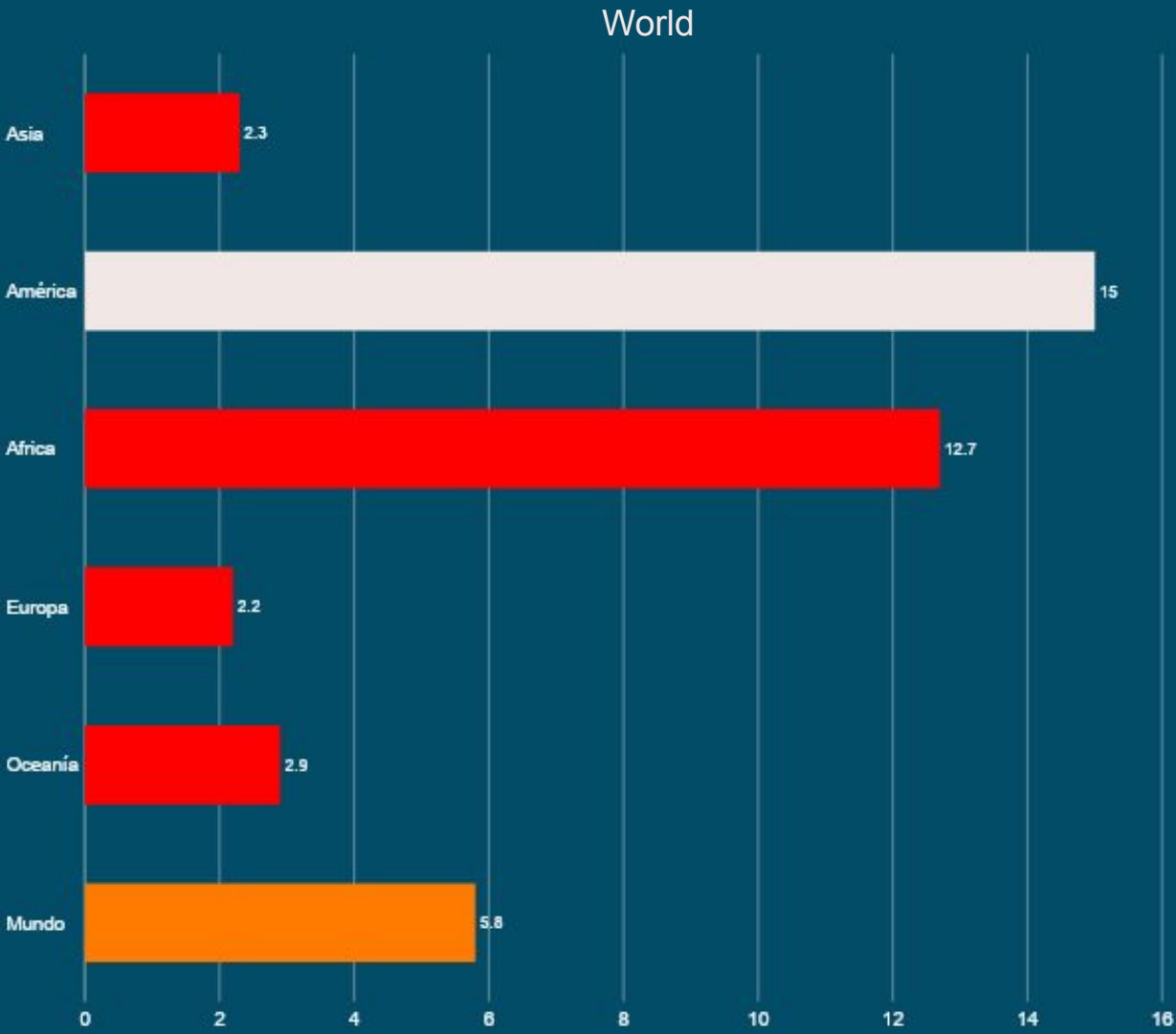
Ranking	City	Country	Homicide Rates
1	Colima	Mexico	140
2	Ciudad Obregón	Mexico	117.83
3	Port-au-Prince	Haiti	117.24
4	Zamora	Mexico	105.13
5	Manzanillo	Mexico	102.58
6	Tijuana	Mexico	91.76
7	Zacatecas	Mexico	88.99
8	Guayaquil	Ecuador	88.82
9	Mandela Bay	South Africa	78.33
10	Juárez	Mexico	77.43



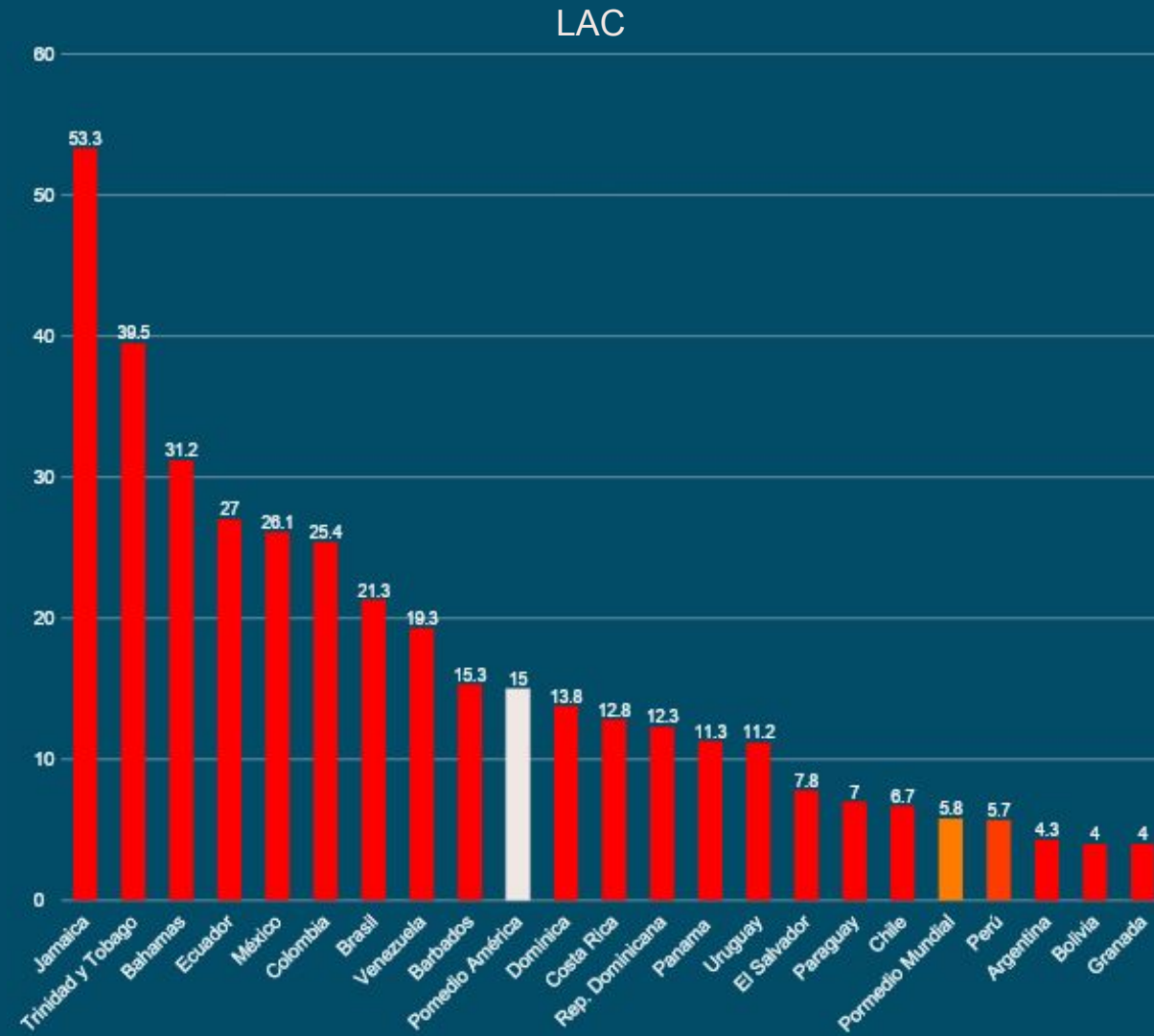
# Main public security indicators in LAC — Violent crimes

# Homicide rates —

## World 2021 and LAC 2020–2022 cada 100,000 inhabitants



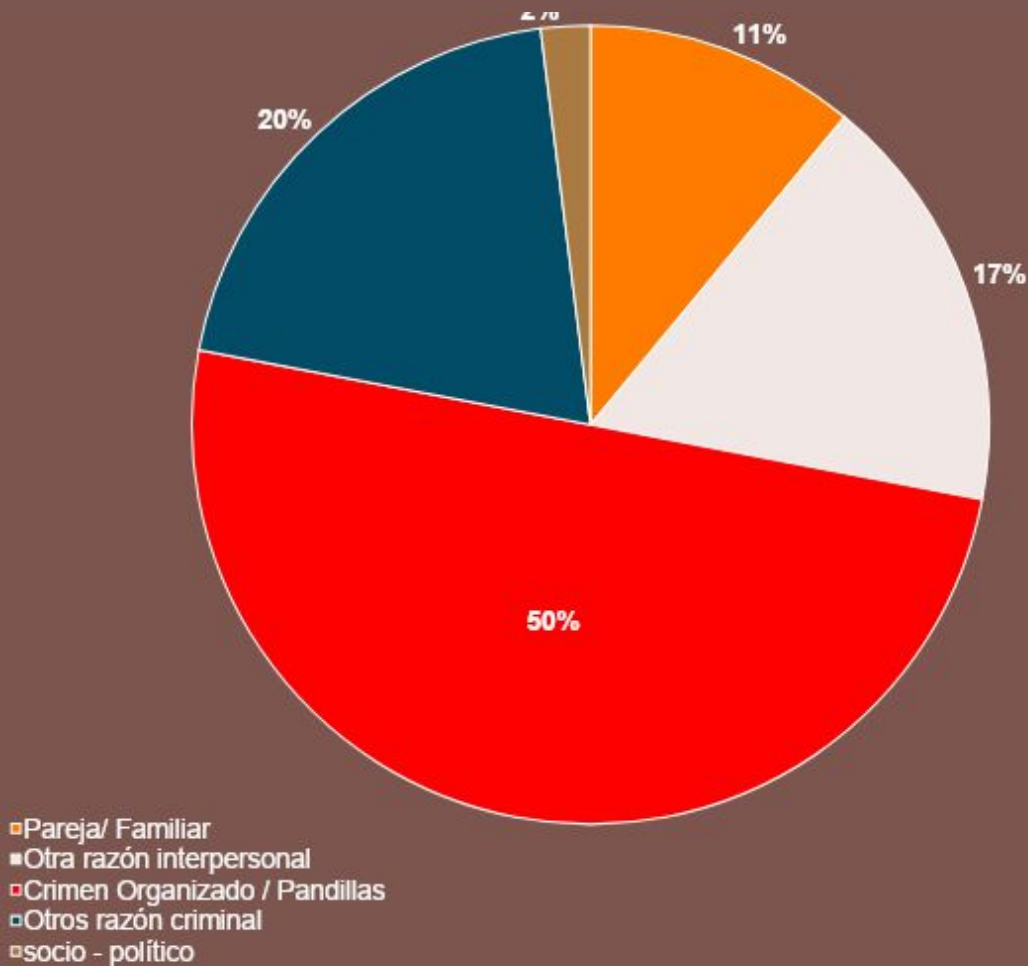
Source: UNODC 2023.



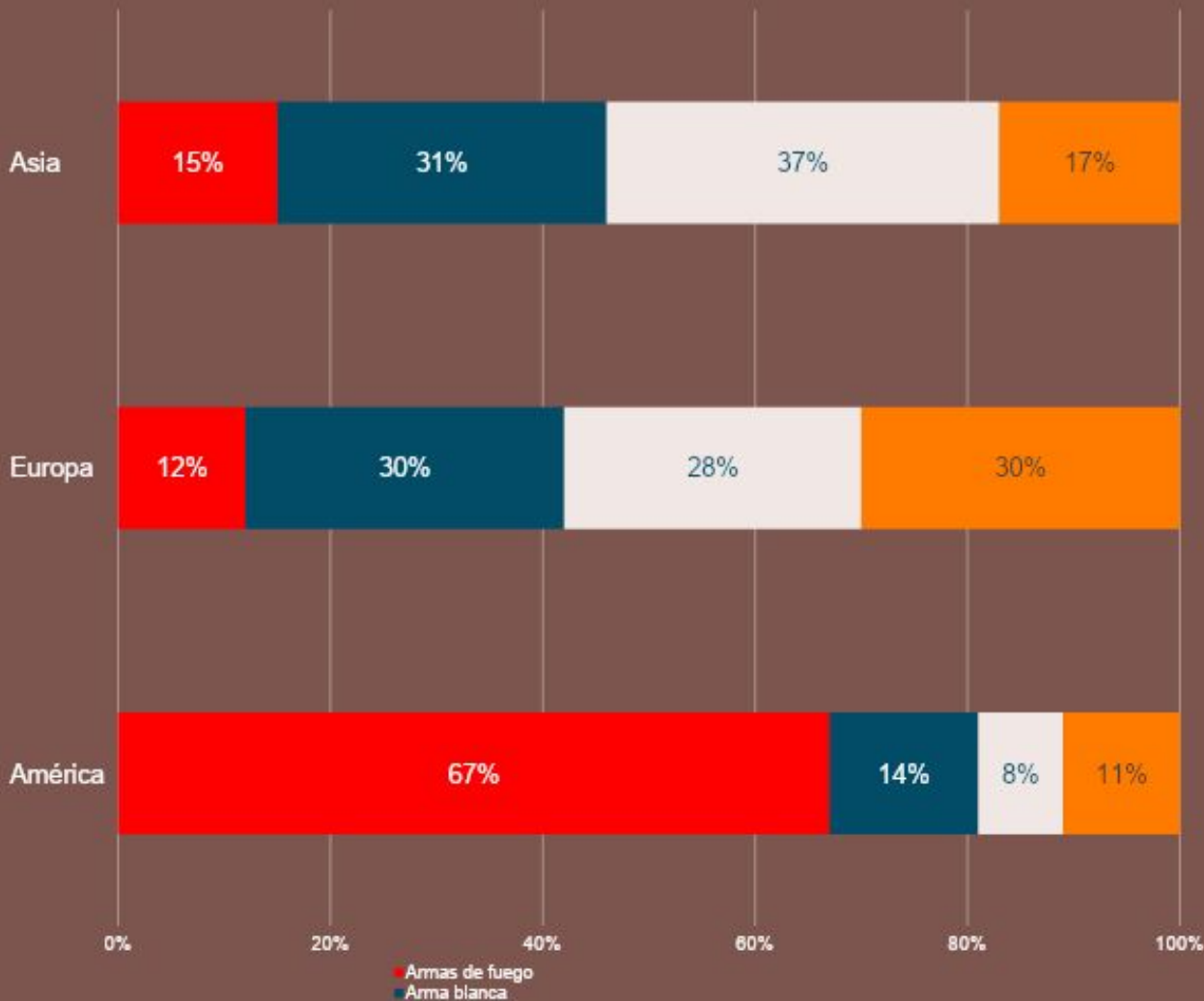
Source: UNODC 2023.

# Percentage of homicide types and weapon used —

## Americas 2021



Source: UNODC 2023.

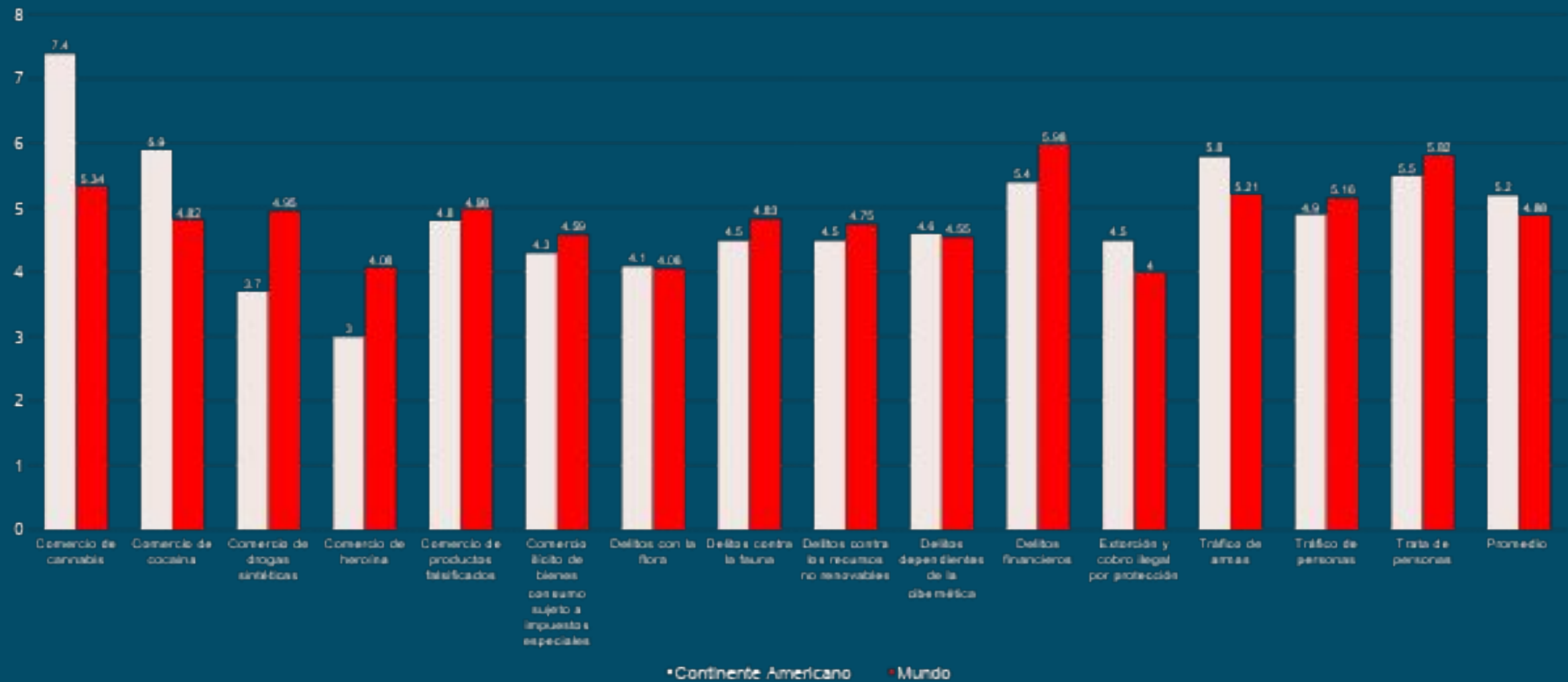


Source: UNODC 2023.

# **Main public security indicators in LAC — Transnational organized crime**

# Criminal markets —

## Averages for the Americas and the world, 2023

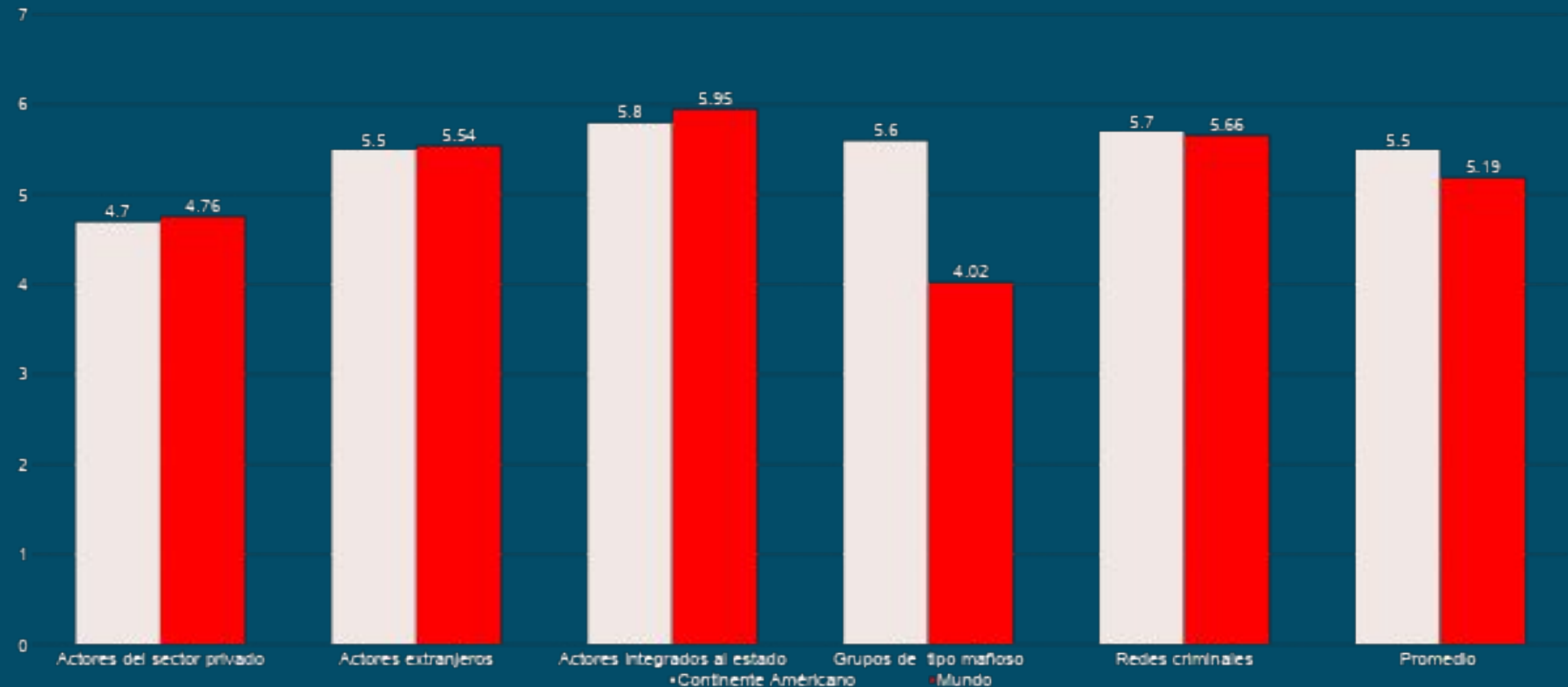


Source: Global Organized Crime Index 2023.



# Criminal actors —

## Averages for the Americas and the world, 2023

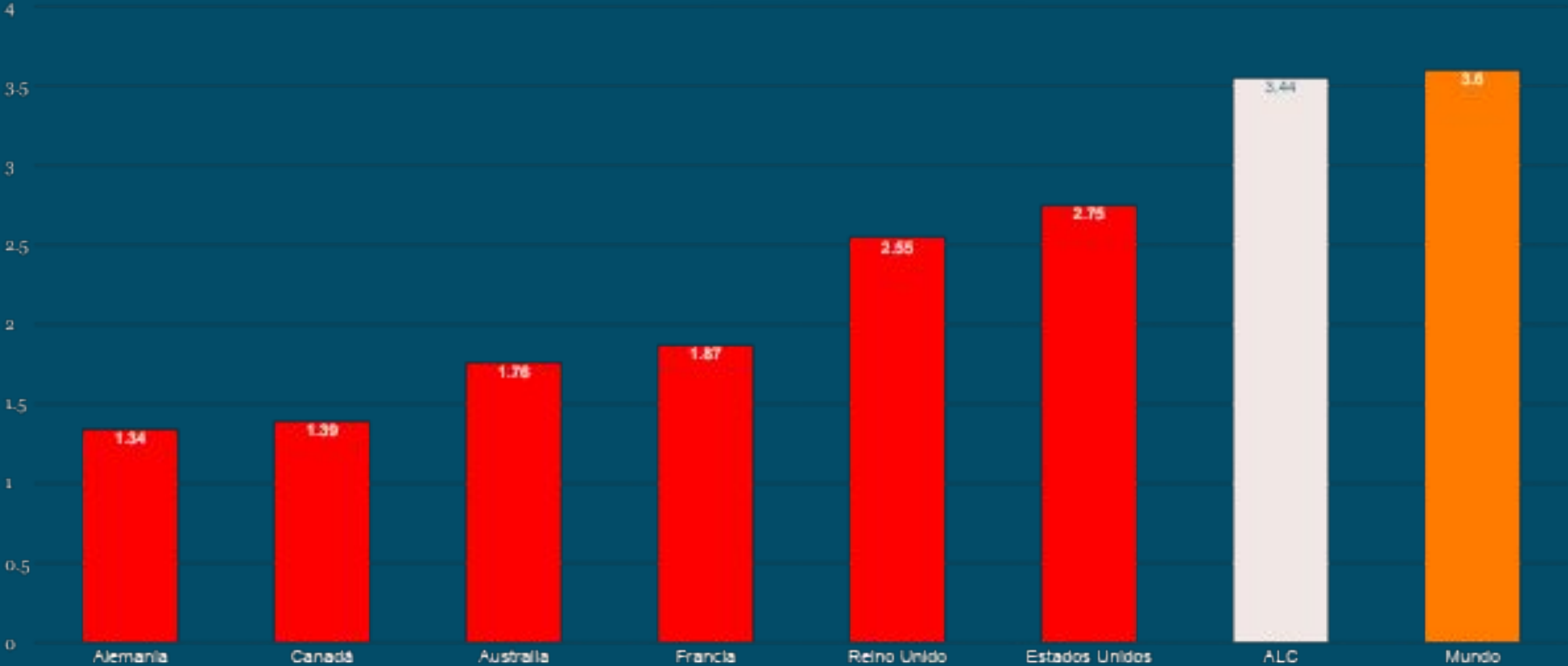


Source: Global Organized Crime Index 2023.

# Main public security indicators in LAC —

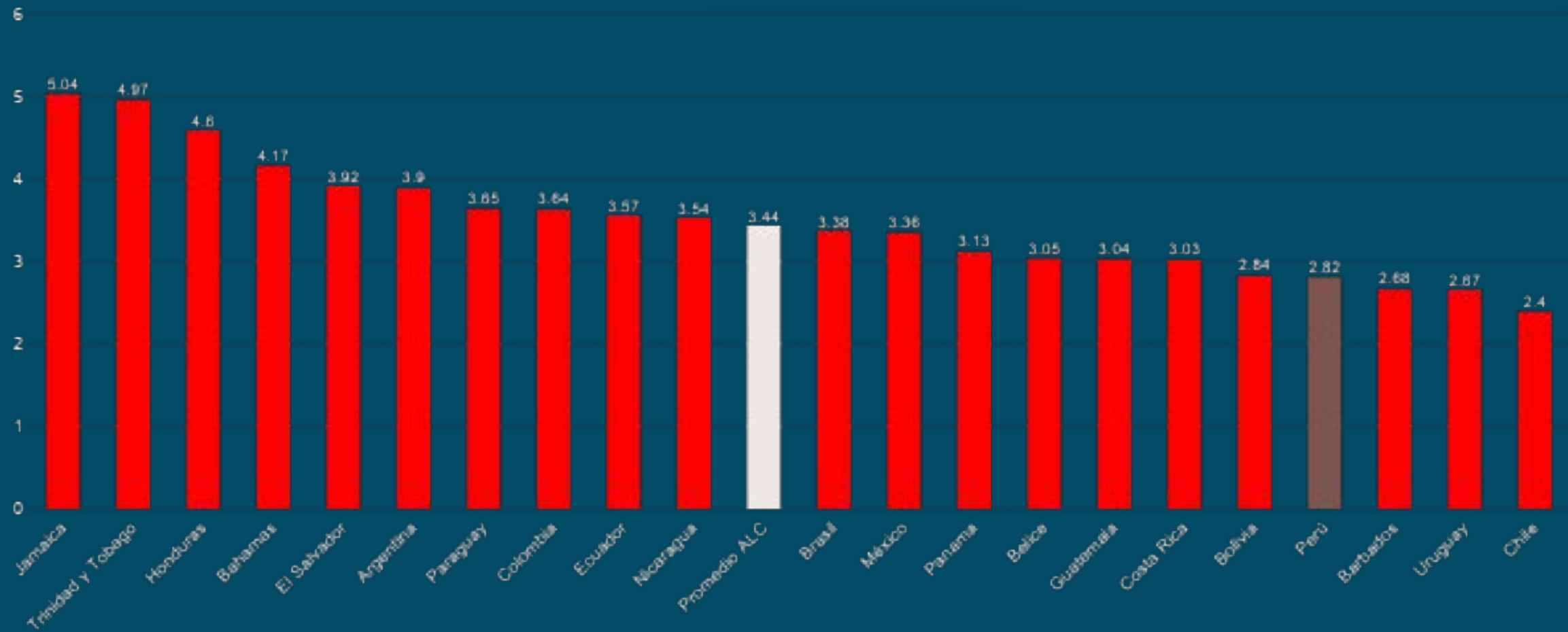
## Costs of crime

# Direct costs of crime and violence — % of GDP, World and LAC



Source: Inter-American Development Bank 2024.

# Direct costs of crime and violence — % of GDP — LAC

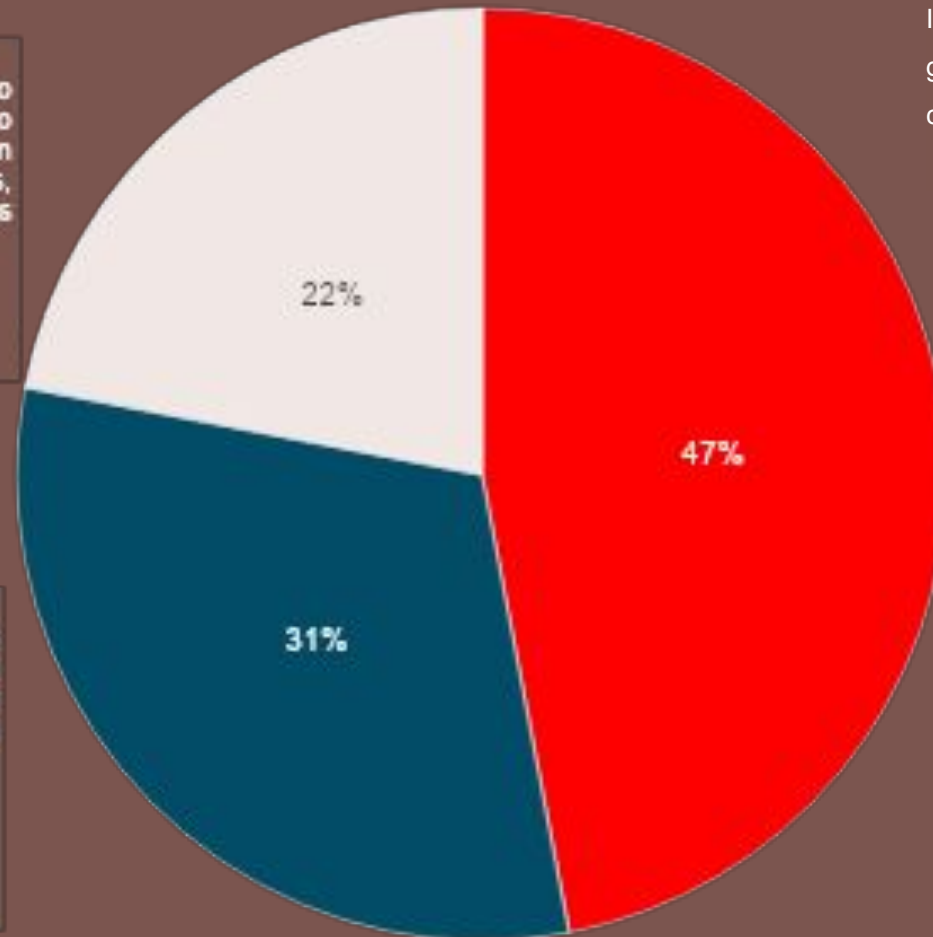


# Direct costs of crime and violence — LAC 2022



**Costos en Capital Humano:**  
Derivados de la productividad (o tiempo productivo) perdida como consecuencia de la victimización por homicidios y delitos no letales, y de la privación de libertad de las personas detenidas.

**Costos Públicos:**  
Originados en los recursos que los Estados destinan a mantener los servicios de prevención del delito, y la administración del sistema de justicia penal.



## Private costs:

Incurred by companies on goods and services for crime prevention.

■ Costos privados ■ Costo público ■ Capital Humano

# Indirect costs of crime and violence —

## 2022





## 2 — Causes

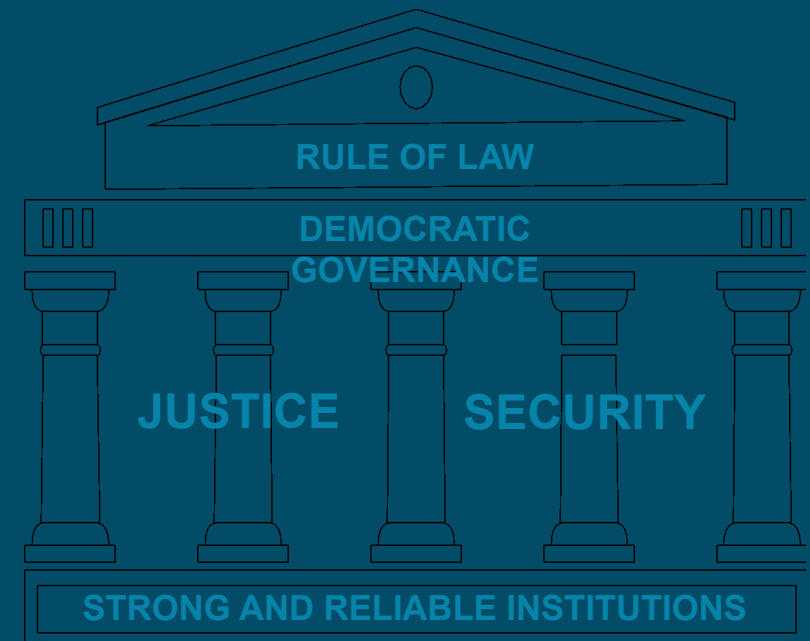
### Security, justice and governance

# Security, Justice, and Rule of Law —



Deeply interconnected

The **rule of law** is grounded in strong and **reliable institutions** that establish the framework within which **security** and **justice** can operate in a legitimate, effective, and equitable manner, with the objective of guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of citizens so they can live, make decisions, and carry out their daily activities with confidence.



# Persistent structural challenges —

## Citizens distrust institutions

### Distrust in the justice system —

Only 23% of Latin Americans trust in the impartiality of the justice system

*Latinobarómetro 2020*

63% of citizens in the region believe they are not equal before the law

*Latinobarómetro 2020*

80% of Latin Americans perceive that justice in their countries is unfair or very unfair

*Latinobarómetro 2020*

### Low effectiveness of governments —

The regional performance on the government effectiveness indicator is poor; 3 out of 4 LAC countries have experienced setbacks in this indicator between 2010–2022

*World Bank 2023*

### Distrust in the police —

1 out of 2 citizens in the region trust the police — the lowest percentage compared to other world regions

*Gallup 2023*

1 out of 2 citizens in the region say they would not file a report if they were victims of a minor crime

*Latinobarómetro 2020*

# Low growth, inequality, exclusion, and high violence —



## Warnings about the interaction of these trends...

**2019**  
**UNDP**

Echoes a devastating epidemic of crime and insecurity in LAC that is not only slowing but killing development.

**2019**  
**ECLAC**

Includes among the 8 critical nodes for inclusive development various and emerging forms of violence.

**2021**  
**UNDP**

Warns about the trap of high inequality and low development, and dedicates its fourth chapter to the links between violence, inequality, and low productivity and growth.

**2023**  
**IMF**

Emphasizes that strengthening social cohesion through stronger social protection systems and addressing insecurity derived from social tensions and violence is essential to promoting medium-term economic growth in LAC.

**2024**  
**OAS**

Warns about the alarming growth of TOC (transnational organized crime) in LAC and how it violates the human rights of citizens in the region.

# In recent years, we have reached a turning point with a marked shift in the crime paradigm



## Violent homicides linked to TOC (Transnational Organized Crime) —

Young men (ages 15–29) in LAC face the highest homicide risk: 56.3 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, more than twice the regional average and five times the global average  
(UNODC 2023)

Firearms account for 67% of homicides in LAC, compared to 12% in Europe and 15% in Asia  
(UNODC 2023)

Homicide surpasses armed conflict in terms of violent deaths, and LAC as a region is responsible for one-third of this outcome  
(UNODC 2023)

50% of homicides in LAC are linked to organized crime, compared to 22% globally and 6% in Europe  
(UNODC 2023)

## High competitiveness in criminal markets —

LAC has higher scores than the global average in the penetration of 12 out of 15 criminal markets  
(Global Organized Crime Index 2023)

# Interaction of four development traps puts the democratic social contract at risk

1

Lack of engines for sustainable, long-term growth

+

2

High and persistent inequality

+

3

Low institutional and governance capacity (CEPAL 2023)

+

4

High and persistent levels of insecurity and penetration of transnational organized crime (TOC)

=

High risk of rupture of the democratic social contract

Citizens develop alternative mechanisms to generate income (they view criminal economies as a valid alternative to get ahead), to feel safe, and to obtain justice (they join criminal groups in search of protection). Criminal groups consolidate, corrode public institutions, and the rule of law weakens.

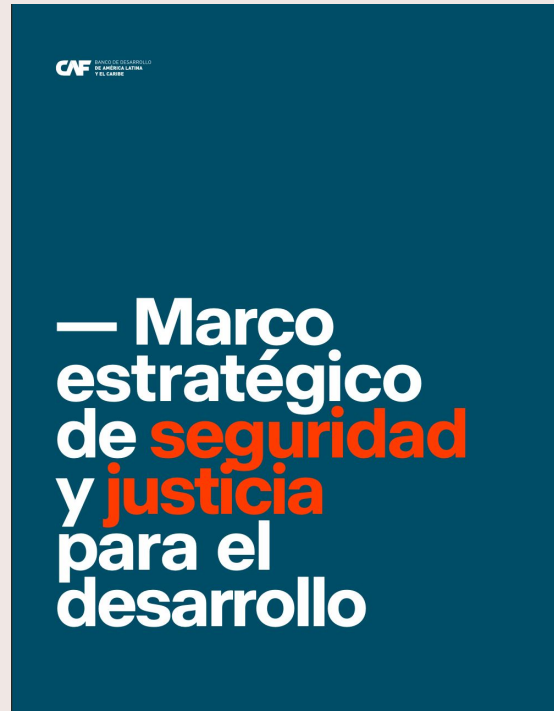
# **3 — CAF Proposal**

## **Strategic Framework for Security and Justice for Development**



# A roadmap for the region —

## Strategic framework for security and justice for development



**March 2025** —  
launch for Latin America  
and the Caribbean

**1** Integral—

**2** Systemic—

**3** Multidimensional  
action—

**4** Evidence-based and  
governance-centered—

# Security —

## 2 key definitions

### UNDP

Citizen security is the process of establishing, strengthening, and protecting the democratic civil order, eliminating threats of violence within the population, and enabling safe and peaceful coexistence.

### OAS

The OAS's multidimensional security, as defined in the Declaration on Security in the Americas (2003), encompasses traditional threats (armed conflicts, terrorism), public security (crime, violence), economic and social security (poverty, inequality), environmental security (disasters, environmental degradation), and political security (democratic stability, human rights).

# Approach —

## 3 Mobilizing Vectors

### 1

#### Multidimensional Approach —

Recognize the complex, multi-causal nature of insecurity, which requires broad and coordinated policies across multiple sectors and levels that go beyond the traditional security ecosystem and place the citizen at the center.

Promote public policies and programs focused on prevention, human development, urban development, and institutional strengthening in order to consolidate the rule of law.

### 2

#### Multilevel Approach —

Collaboration among the State, civil society, and the private sector for a comprehensive response.

Move from a focus on urban security to a broader approach that also promotes transnational, subregional, regional, and global collaboration.

### 3

#### Network-Based Work —

Promote a network-based approach that connects different actors to improve the understanding of risk dynamics and create a robust response system.

# Strategic framework for security and justice—

## Strategic map



### Challenges

**Violent and non-violent crimes / cybercrimes**

**TOC (Transnational Organized Crime)**

**High fear and distrust**



# Final reflections—

## ... beyond reaction: strengthening the State in the face of a new criminal order



1

### **From common crime to organized crime as a structural threat —**

The security paradigm has changed: today we face transnational criminal networks that surpass the traditional capacities of the State, combining violence, corruption, territorial control, and institutional capture.

2

### **Security is no longer just a matter of public order —**

The expansion of organized crime directly affects democratic governance, limits economic development, and threatens the social contract by weakening trust in institutions.

3

### **The state response requires early and visible victories (quick wins) —**

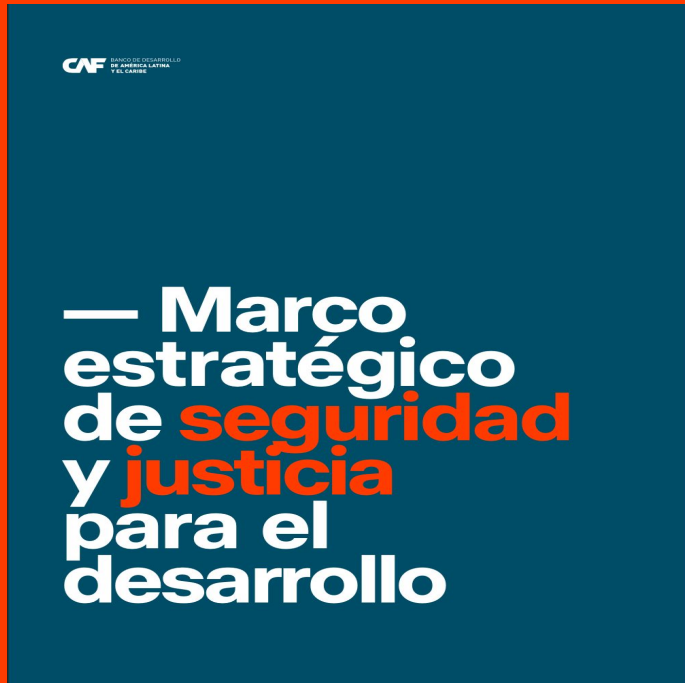
Given the urgency felt by citizens, it is essential to implement concrete and targeted measures that increase state presence, reduce fear, and reclaim spaces taken over by crime. This helps rebuild legitimacy while advancing toward deeper reforms.

4

### **But only structural changes will ensure sustainable transformations —**

It is essential to modernize the security and justice ecosystem: strengthen institutional capacities, coordinate multiple actors, make use of evidence, and align criminal policy with the objectives of human development, inclusion, and rights.

# Strategic Security and Justice Framework



**Lea Gimenez**

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# Thank you —



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