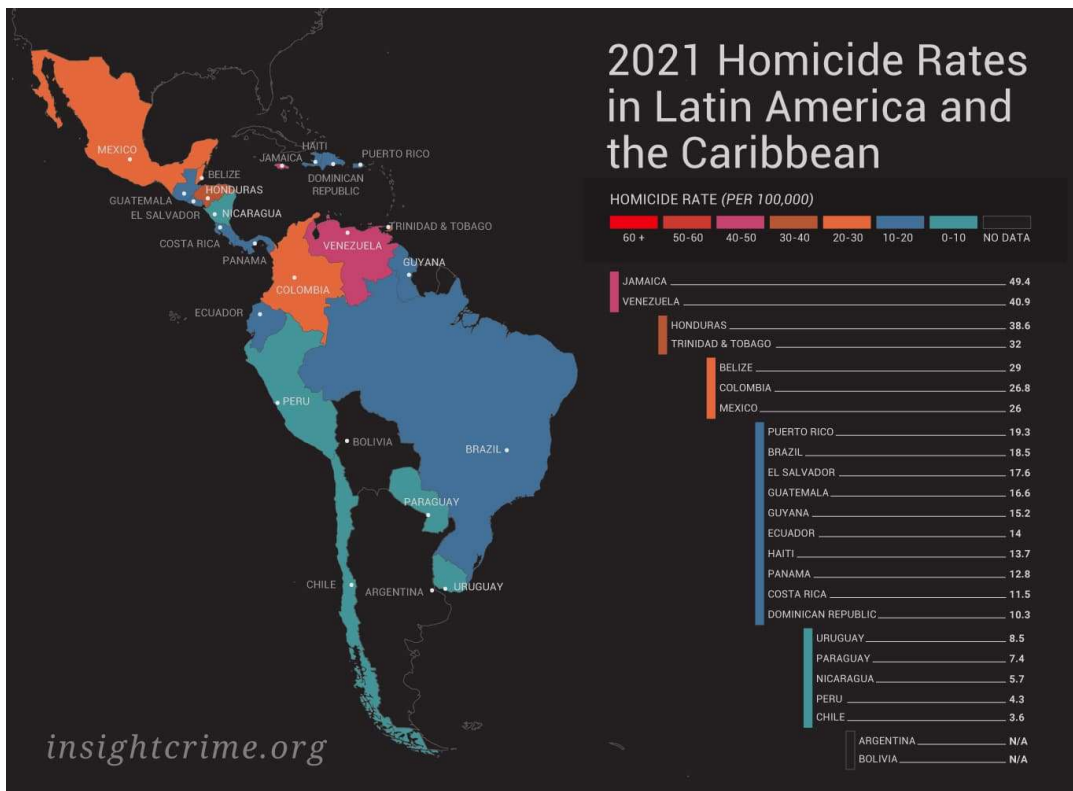




Venezuela: 40.9 per 100,000

Though homicides dropped by six percent in Venezuela, the country remained one of the deadliest in the region.

According to data from the Venezuelan Violence Observatory (Observatorio Venezolano de Violencia - OVV), the country recorded 11,081 violent deaths in 2021, 810 fewer than in 2020. The murder rate was 40.9 per 100,000 people, [according to the non-governmental organization](#), which included homicides, killings by authorities, deaths under investigation, and disappearances in its tally. Without disappearances, the country's homicide rate dips to 33 per 100,000.

Criminals killed 3,112 people in 2021, or about nine per day. Other forms of violent crime, including robberies and vehicle thefts, rose by more than 10 percent. The jump, according to OVV, may stem from thieves targeting people and stores carrying US dollars.

Caracas remained the epicenter of violence in the country. The Capital District recorded a homicide rate of 80 per 100,000 residents, according to OVV. Violence in the city was stoked when authorities took on the El Koki gang, first in the [neighborhood of La Vega](#) and then in the gang's [stronghold of Cota 905](#). The raid of La Vega left nearly [two dozen people dead](#). Six months later, nearly [30 people were killed](#) when some 800 troops laid siege to Cota 905, conducting house-to-house searches amid firefights. In both offensives, authorities were accused of [indiscriminately shooting residents](#) in their efforts to root out the gang and its leader, Carlos Luis Revete, alias "El Koki."

SEE ALSO: [El Koki's Victory – An Urban Invasion in Caracas](#)

Security forces in Venezuela were almost as deadly as the criminals, killing about six people per day. According to OVV, 2,332 homicides in Venezuela were cataloged as cases in which the victims resisted authorities, though it's unclear how that determination was made.

The four states in Venezuela that recorded the highest murder rates were Miranda, Bolívar, Delta Amacuro and Aragua. InSight Crime recently chronicled how Colombian guerrilla groups, armed gangs and security forces have [battled](#) to control illegal mining in the gold-rich state of Bolívar.

Along the Colombian border, the state of [Apure was gripped by a war](#) between the Venezuelan military and dissident Colombian fighters belonging to the 10th Front of the demobilized Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – FARC). A massive military operation that began March 21 forced thousands to flee their homes. During the conflict, which lasted [about two months](#), more than a [dozen soldiers were killed](#). Human Rights Watch, meanwhile, accused Venezuelan security forces of [summarily executing at least four people](#) who were then made up to look like guerrillas.

Venezuela's lawless border region was also the site of the killing of three top ex-FARC commanders: Seuxis Pausías Hernández, [alias "Jesús Santrich,"](#) Hernán Darío Velásquez, [alias "El Paísa,"](#) and Henry Castellanos Garzón, alias "[Romaña](#)."

Honduras: 38.6 per 100,000

Honduras maintained the ignominious title of Central America's most deadly country in 2021, with a homicide rate of 38.6 per 100,000 people.

The 3,651 killings recorded last year, according to [preliminary government figures](#), was an uptick from the 3,599 in 2020, but still below the nearly [4,000 homicides](#) in 2019.

Massacres – killings of three or more people – occurred at an alarming rate of about [one a week](#) in 2021. The 53 multiple killings were often the product of gang disputes or revenge assassinations. Criminologist Nery Ordóñez [pointed to a string of massacres](#) in the wake of large drug seizures in the northern part of the country.

The department of Cortes, which includes the city of San Pedro Sula, recorded the most massacres of any department, with [41 people killed](#) in 14 events. The country's second-largest city, San Pedro Sula, is a stronghold of the MS13. There, the street gang has come to dominate [the sale and trafficking](#) of a potent, lucrative form of marijuana.

The Francisco Morazán department's central district, which includes the capital and the nearby city of Comayagüela, [recorded the most killings](#) of any urban area, with 481.

In 2021, Honduras saw some of its worst political violence in the run-up to November's presidential elections. According to [El Heraldo](#), 68 candidates in various local and national races were killed last year. Thirty-one belonged to former President Juan Orlando Hernández's right-wing National Party, which has long been [accused of corruption and involvement in drug trafficking](#). Twenty murdered candidates had been part of the left-wing Libre Party headed by Xiomara Castro, whose win ended more than a decade of National Party rule. Members of the less influential Liberal Party were not spared. In the weeks leading up to the election, three Liberal candidates were assassinated, including a [popular mayor](#) seeking his fifth term.

President Castro has promised to [demilitarize policing](#), a break from the iron fist policies of previous administrations. Any increase in violence, however, is likely to test her commitment to that strategy.

***Trinidad & Tobago: 32 per 100,000**

Trinidad and Tobago saw a 12 percent increase in murders last year.

The island nation recorded 448 homicides in 2021, a jump from 399 in 2020, [according](#) to the press, citing the country's police service. However, Trinidad and Tobago's death toll was [below that](#) of 2019, when the country recorded 539 murders, one of the deadliest years on record.

The acting police commissioner, McDonald Jacob, tried to explain away the increase in bloodshed,