

CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

In 2025, armed violence in the Nueva Prosperina district of Guayaquil escalated to critical levels, with the highest increase seen in the number of homicides. Between January–August 2025, 474 homicides were recorded, representing a 112% increase compared to the 223 cases in the same period in 2024 (MDI accessed 09/10/2025 a; MDI accessed 09/10/2025 b).

This escalation is driven by the fragmentation of organised criminal groups (OCGs) and the resulting territorial disputes in an area with limited state presence (Primicias 13/06/2025). The percentage increase in homicides in Nueva Prosperina is more than double the rise seen across Guayaquil (nearly 51.3%), with nearly 1,800 cases in total, and Guayas province (over 43.4%), which reported more than 2,800 cases for the same period, establishing Nueva Prosperina as one of the most violent areas in the country (MDI accessed 09/10/2025 a; MDI accessed 09/10/2025 b). Nueva Prosperina is situated in the parish of Tarqui in the northwest of Guayaquil, in Guayas province. Nueva Prosperina encompasses six circuits: Flor de Bastión, Fortín, Monte Sinaí, Nuevo Guayaquil, Nueva Prosperina, and Paraíso de la Flor (Ministry of Government accessed 20/10/2025). The escalation has manifested in targeted killings, such as the 6 March 2025 massacre in the Socio Vivienda neighbourhood, in which 22 homicides were reported (CDH 22/03/2025). Other recent attacks, such as on 15 September in Flor de Bastión and 3 October in the Guerreros del Fortín cooperative, highlight the continuing violence across multiple circuits (Primicias 16/09/2025 and 03/10/2025). These violent incidents form part of a broader pattern of rising violence in 2025, not only in Nueva Prosperina but across Ecuador (Primicias 22/10/2025).

The impact on the civilian population is severe and multifaceted, including increasing protection risks, displacement, and limited access to basic services. The Socio Vivienda massacre, which resulted in 217 people being displaced, exposed residents' acute vulnerability to violence (CDH 22/03/2025).

Significant information gaps exist regarding Nueva Prosperina, with most of the available data relating specifically to the Socio Vivienda neighbourhood. After the 6 March massacre, a high-profile press conference with government, humanitarian, and academic institutions helped Socio Vivienda gain public attention. The resulting public focus was instrumental to the 20 May court ruling that granted a precautionary measure for displaced families (KII 09/10/2025; CDH 22/03/2025). This ruling mandated a census and response plan, which in turn generated crucial data on the community's main needs and impacts. By 23 October, this census constituted the most up-to-date, publicly available information on local humanitarian needs and impacts (KII 09/10/2025; CDH 22/03/2025).

Nueva Prosperina's proximity to the port, and drug export routes as a result, means that the district holds strategic significance for OCGs (EFE 13/06/2025). The state's prolonged limited presence has created a power vacuum filled by OCGs, who now control the community's social, economic, and territorial dynamics (KII 09/10/2025). Extreme poverty, informal settlements, and a severe deficit of basic services – such as drinking water, sanitation, and electricity – heighten residents' exposure to criminal influence and hinder their ability to recover after violent events (El Comercio 08/03/2025).

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

The lack of state presence alongside the social and territorial control exercised by OCGs mean that violence in Nueva Prosperina is expected to continue (KII 09/10/2025). The crisis will likely intensify as a result of the constant shifts and fragmentation among OCGs, but information gaps make it difficult to determine how long the crisis will last and how severe it may become. Recent events, such as the massacres in Flor de Bastión on 15 September and Guerreros del Fortín on 3 October, demonstrate that the extreme violence seen earlier in the year is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a worsening trend (Primicias 16/09/2025 and 03/10/2025). These attacks highlight that OCG territorial disputes, stemming from fragmentation and competition for control, remain active. As these groups compete for dominance over strategic routes and communities in Nueva Prosperina, violence will likely persist (EFE 13/06/2025; Ecuador Chequea 07/03/2025).

Since the Government declared an 'internal armed conflict' against OCGs in January 2024, the response has primarily focused on militarisation, but with limited effect regaining territorial control and addressing the root causes of the crisis (ACLEDE 03/06/2025; InSight Crime 11/03/2025). The absence of a comprehensive social intervention to tackle poverty, unemployment, and the lack of basic services allows OCGs to maintain their influence and recruitment capacity (Ecuador Chequea 07/03/2025). Broader national issues, such as economic instability and social protests linked to rising fuel prices since 22 September, are also likely to further erode the state's already limited presence in Nueva Prosperina, leaving communities increasingly exposed to criminal governance (DW 30/09/2025).

CRISIS IMPACTS

Protection

The escalation of violence in Nueva Prosperina has generated severe and multiple protection risks for the population, including homicides, displacement, the recruitment of children and adolescents, kidnapping, threats, extortion, the use of explosives, and gender-based violence (GBV), reflecting an erosion of civilian protection and state control in the district.

Homicides represent one of the most visible expressions of the escalation of violence. Of the 474 homicides recorded between January–August 2025, the highest number occurred in the Nueva Prosperina circuit, with 139 cases (29.3%), followed by Paraíso La Flor with 104 (21.9%), Fortín with 76 (16%), Monte Sinaí with 61 (12.9%), Flor de Bastión with 59 (12.4%), and Nuevo Guayaquil with 35 (7.4%) (MDI accessed 09/10/2025 b). March 2025, the month in which the Socio Vivienda massacre occurred, recorded the highest number of monthly homicides, with 114 cases (24.1%) (MDI accessed 09/10/2025 b).

Homicide victims are predominantly young men (87.8%) aged 18–35, and firearms are the primary weapon used (MDI accessed 09/10/2025 b). Although city-level data shows that Afro-Ecuadorians comprise about 7% percent of Guayaquil's total population, qualitative reports indicate they are one of the groups most affected by the crisis (INEC accessed 09/10/2025). According to a key informant, these populations, who already face the most precarious living conditions due to institutional racism, are also actively and publicly stigmatised as responsible for the rise in criminality (KII 09/10/2025). This combination of social exclusion and negative stereotyping aggravates their exposure to violence and restricts their access to protection mechanisms.

The 6 March massacre in Socio Vivienda caused the displacement of 217 people, which resulted in widespread family separation and inadequate housing conditions. Displaced people sought refuge in different locations, but no information is available on where they fled (CDH 22/03/2025). The lack of safe accommodation increases protection risks, as overcrowding and lack of privacy for women and girls heightens GBV threats and the risk of child and adolescent recruitment by OCGs in the area (KII 09/10/2025; CDH 22/03/2025). This has also created a strategic vacuum that OCGs exploit to expand their control. For example, in the Sueño Guayaquileño housing complex, OCGs have taken over abandoned homes and imposed extortion demands of up to USD 50,000 on developers (Primicias 12/03/2025).

Women-headed households, representing about one-third of the families displaced from Socio Vivienda after the 6 March massacre, are likely to be disproportionately affected by the loss of livelihoods and protection threats following displacement (CDH 22/03/2025). Without stable support networks and income, these women face additional hardships, such

as increased exposure to violence and economic dependency, limiting their ability to recover.

Children and adolescents face an increased risk of recruitment by OCGs, especially when family members are involved in these groups (KII 09/10/2025). OCGs use children as informants to monitor the activities of rival groups, collect extortion payments, and courier drugs and weapons (ACAPS 11/08/2025 and 11/12/2024). In Guayaquil, authorities have discovered OCG-run training centres established to prepare boys for combat roles (ACAPS 11/12/2024). In Nueva Prosperina, OCGs have converted around ten houses in Nuevo Guayaquil into recruitment and training centres (Primicias 06/06/2024).

Kidnapping also remains a significant manifestation of insecurity. Between January–September 2025 in Guayas province, there were 654 kidnapping cases, 701 extortion-related kidnapping cases, and six simulated kidnapping cases. Of these, 997 cases occurred in Guayaquil, representing over 73.2% of cases in the province and over 37.3% of cases nationwide (FGE accessed 20/10/2025). In the Costa region, where Nueva Prosperina is located, fear of kidnapping is the highest in the country (61%) (OECO 24/04/2024).

On the other hand, between January–September 2025, there were over 4,600 reported cases of threats in Guayas province and over 3,000 in Guayaquil, accounting for around 64.8% of the cases in the province and 17.8% of cases across the country (FGE accessed 20/10/2025). These patterns reflect OCGs' systematic use of coercion to enforce control over communities, businesses, and authorities.

There were also more than 4,400 reported cases of extortion in Guayas between January–September 2025. Of these, more than 3,200 took place in Guayaquil, representing around 80.2% of the provincial total and 26.5% of the national total (FGE accessed 20/10/2025). Extortion has become a primary tool for social and territorial control, undermining economies and deepening community fear (ACAPS 11/08/2025). Of the 10% of businesses that gave in to extortion, 8% are located in the Costa region (OECO 24/04/2024). In Nueva Prosperina, extortion has increased sharply, with a 521% increase in cases between 2018–2020 (OECO 24/04/2024). Extortion, kidnapping, and threats disrupt daily life, suppress local commerce, and deepen community fears.

Alongside facing widespread economic coercion, women and girls also face heightened risks of GBV, including sexual violence and sexual exploitation, by OCGs. This has prompted women and girls to adopt displacement and confinement as self-protection strategies, restricting their mobility and access to services (UNHCR 30/05/2025).

While quantitative GBV data for Nueva Prosperina is unavailable, a key informant reported that, in Socio Vivienda, girls are at risk of sexual exploitation by OCGs and their families face severe reprisals, such as intimidation and displacement, if they refuse or attempt to report abuse (KII 09/10/2025).



Sexual violence against children also remains widespread across Guayas province, with heightened risks in areas with an OCG presence and weak protection mechanisms. Between January–September 2025, there were 1,125 reported cases of sexual violence against children, 706 of which occurred in Guayaquil, accounting for over 62.7% of total cases in the province (FGE accessed 20/10/2025).

The proliferation of unauthorised or prohibited firearms, ammunition, and explosives further aggravates protection risks. Between January–September 2025, there were 280 cases involving unauthorised or prohibited firearms, ammunition, and explosives in Guayas province. Of these, 203 occurred in Guayaquil, which corresponds to 72.5% of provincial cases and nearly 29.8% of national cases (FGE accessed 20/10/2025). By 16 October, no district-level data on the use of explosives was available, but the widespread use of weapons was contributing to crossfire, targeted attacks, and a climate of fear and intimidation.

Food security and livelihoods

Although information on the specific impact of armed violence on food security in Nueva Prosperina is limited, displacement and loss of livelihoods caused by insecurity are likely to undermine households' ability to purchase food. At the provincial level, projections for the period between September 2024 and March 2025 indicated that Guayas was expected to report the highest number of people facing food insecurity, with approximately 910,000 individuals affected, as a result of widespread drought and the rising cost of basic goods following the removal of fuel subsidies (IPC 07/11/2024). There is an information gap regarding how violence and extortion specifically affect food access and availability in the Nueva Prosperina district.

While specific data for Nueva Prosperina is unavailable, provincial-level statistics for Guayas indicate that, by 2024, 12.7% of children under five were suffering from chronic malnutrition and 23.3% from anaemia (INEC accessed 20/10/2025). These figures are likely significantly higher for crisis-affected families. Displacement disrupts livelihoods, while OCG control restricts mobility and reduces purchasing power through extortion. Both factors further undermine households' ability to access or afford nutritious food, critically compromising child nutrition.

Extortion, kidnapping, and threats are aggravating already precarious livelihoods in Nueva Prosperina. In 2023, OCG control led to a drop in sales of up to 70% in Guayaquil, a city highly dependent on commerce (Primicias 01/08/2023). This situation aggravates unemployment, directly affecting households' ability to generate income.

According to a key informant, Nueva Prosperina's economic vulnerability has deep roots. Many communities, such as Socio Vivienda, were created through government relocations in 2010, affecting the population's cultural and economic ties to traditional livelihoods, as the majority were Afro-Ecuadorian populations who lived near a river. These families were moved without an economic sustainability plan, leaving them in a state of precarity that has facilitated OCG influence and control (KII 09/10/2025; Primicias 21/02/2020).

In 2024, while the official unemployment rate in Guayas was 2.8%, 51.5% of the population worked in the informal sector, highly exposed to extortion and violence (INEC accessed 20/10/2025).

Health

Criminal violence in Nueva Prosperina has placed a severe strain on the local health system, collapsing access to primary care and placing extreme strain on hospitals. By 9 October 2025, in Socio Vivienda, the two existing health centres were unable to provide care as a result of insecurity and lack of personnel, leaving residents without access to basic healthcare (KII 09/10/2025).

This collapse at the local level has shifted the burden to hospitals such as Monte Sinaí, one of the biggest of the country, located in the centre of Nueva Prosperina, which now serves nearly 1,000 patients daily, including individuals injured in shootings and those linked to criminal incidents. The hospital is also facing theft of medical supplies, corruption, and administrative instability (Ministry of Public Health accessed 22/10/2025; Primicias 03/09/2025). This demonstrates how violence dismantles service delivery, deepening the health crisis.

Cases of extortion and intimidation targeting healthcare workers risk their safety and disrupt the provision of health services. In June 2025, the Flor de Bastión 2 health centre faced threats against its staff, followed by similar incidents at the Nueva Prosperina subcentre, with direct threats sent via WhatsApp (Extra 04/06/2025).

This situation is aggravated by broader structural failures within Guayaquil's healthcare system, including shortages of medicines and supplies, suspension of cleaning and security services as a result of unpaid wages, and inadequate working conditions, including abuse and mistreatment of staff (El Universo 11/08/2025). Hospitals have been severely affected, with a lack of essential drugs forcing some emergency patients to be redirected to other facilities (El Universo 11/08/2025).

Constant exposure to violent events has generated widespread fear, stress, and anxiety. Without access to mental health and psychosocial support services, many residents are left

to cope with trauma on their own, representing a silent and critical dimension of the health crisis (CDH 22/03/2025).

Education

In Nueva Prosperina, insecurity, poor infrastructure, and inadequate services mean that children and adolescents face precarious learning environments and constant interruptions to their studies (KII 09/10/2025).

There are 25 schools registered in the parish of Tarqui, where Nueva Prosperina is located (Ministry of Education accessed 07/10/2025). By 9 October, Socio Vivienda's two educational institutions were operating under precarious conditions, as inadequate infrastructure led to classes being held in metal containers (KII 09/10/2025). These schools are referred to as 'camps', as they were initially intended to be temporary facilities (KII 09/10/2025). Inside, students and teachers endure extreme heat, and the bathrooms are in such poor condition that girls, in particular, fear using them (KII 09/10/2025). The surrounding areas lack public lighting as a result of systematic destruction by OCGs, thereby restricting children's safe access to parks and other public spaces (KII 09/10/2025). This highlights the need for safe infrastructure and protection-sensitive learning environments that ensure children's access to education while mitigating exposure to violence.

There is limited information on the specific impact of violence on education and school dropout rates in Nueva Prosperina district. Still, available data indicates that, by 22 March, children displaced after the Socio Vivienda massacre were showing low enrolment rates and limited educational continuity in places of refuge as a result of lack of school vacancies and unsafe mobility (CDH 22/03/2025). By June 2025, in Durán, Guayaquil, and Samborondón, 28 teachers had reported threats and four educational institutions were operating remotely because of security concerns (Ministry of Education 12/06/2025).

While regional attendance rates appear high (86%), school dropout is a significant concern, as over 60,000 students left school in Ecuador's Costa region between 2023–2024 (PADF 06/2025). Key factors influencing student dropout rates include poverty, lack of opportunities, and internal displacement, which increase the risk of child recruitment and exploitation by OCGs in violence-affected areas such as Nueva Prosperina (PADF 06/2025).

Shelter

Displacement within the district, particularly in Socio Vivienda, has led to informal and precarious shelter arrangements, exposing families — especially women and children — to increased risks. This situation is further compounded by the fact that displacement has only

recently been documented and made visible, and adequate preparedness measures have yet to be established (KII 09/10/2025). There is a lack of official figures on the total number of people displaced by violence in Nueva Prosperina and whether they have left the district or remained within it.

According to a key informant, after the 6 March massacre, civil society, including several universities, organised collection centres for displaced families — a response previously only seen for natural hazards. This initial effort was not followed, however, by a robust institutional programme. In the absence of official shelters, displaced families have been forced to seek refuge in the homes of relatives or in precarious and overcrowded rented rooms, as they do not have the resources to secure better alternatives (KII 09/10/2025). Such a situation often leads to increasing protection risks, such as sexual violence, especially for women and children (CDH 22/03/2025). Some displaced families also do not hold ownership titles for their original homes in Socio Vivienda or have formal rental contracts in their new locations, increasing the risk of secondary displacement and exclusion from housing assistance (CDH 22/03/2025).

Finding affordable housing is further complicated by an already strained rental market in Guayas, where a large Venezuelan migrant and refugee population (over 67,400, 29.1% of the Venezuelan population in the country) also faces housing precarity (14.4% of individuals experience overcrowding) (GTRM 24/10/2024). In this context, increased competition for limited rental options is a potential consequence in Nueva Prosperina, further aggravating the housing crisis for displaced and low-income residents.

WASH

Lack of access to WASH services aggravates the humanitarian crisis in Nueva Prosperina. By 2023, nearly 100,000 of the district's 363,000 residents lacked access to potable water and sewage systems, forcing most households to rely on expensive and often unreliable water tankers (El Comercio 08/03/2025). In many areas, the piped water supply, where it exists, lasts for only about ten minutes a day, leaving even multi-story buildings without water (Primicias 12/03/2025).

The scarcity is compounded by severe water quality concerns, heightening exposure to waterborne disease. From 2023–2024, in Guayas province, 26.9% of water sources were contaminated with E. coli bacteria, posing a significant public health risk in Nueva Prosperina, where safe drinking water is already extremely limited (INEC accessed 20/10/2025). The severe lack of WASH services and infrastructure continues to entrench poverty and marginalisation in a context already beset by violence.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Humanitarian constraints

Humanitarian access in Nueva Prosperina is severely restricted and indirectly controlled by OCGs (KII 09/10/2025). Entry into neighbourhoods, such as Socio Vivienda, is only possible through the mediation of community defenders, who act as intermediaries with OCGs to obtain permission for entry (KII 09/10/2025). This dynamic further complicates operations and underscores the limitations faced by humanitarian organisations, likely resulting in delays in assessment, programming, and aid delivery.

OCGs are deeply embedded within the communities they control, with many members having familial and social ties to these communities. This creates a complex dynamic in which people are unwilling to speak openly about violence, displacement, or other protection risks out of loyalty or fear of reprisal (KII 09/10/2025). This information vacuum, combined with the lack of official granular data for Nueva Prosperina district, makes it extremely difficult to assess the full scale of the crisis and design a safe and effective humanitarian response.

Funding and response capacity

In Guayaquil, the local government has responded to rising violence by reinforcing the role of the Cantonal Board for Comprehensive Rights Protection through a coordinated approach that provides psychological support and legal assistance to victims (Guayaquil Municipality 17/07/2025). There is a gap in detailed information regarding the coverage of these services, however, as well as whether they adequately reach all those affected by the crisis.

The Government has granted housing to over 200 police officers in the Sueño Guayaquileño residential development in Nueva Prosperina as part of efforts to strengthen the security presence in the area and compensate police officers for their service (General Secretariat for Presidential Communication 10/06/2025). A new community police unit has also been installed within the district to enhance local policing and improve community safety (General Secretariat for Presidential Communication 10/06/2025).

This fragmented approach is undermined by significant political tensions between the municipal and national governments, which have hindered collaborative and effective action, as seen in the lack of coordination regarding the Socio Vivienda crisis (KII 09/10/2025).

By 22 March, The Regional Cooperation Table for Development in Guayaquil, which includes a diverse group of NGOs, foundations, churches, development organisations, universities,

business corporations, and social organisations, raised concerns about the violence and its effects, especially regarding displacement (CDH 22/03/2025). On 21 March, it was announced that several local universities – including UARTES, Universidad Católica, and ESPOL – had opened collection centres following the massacre in Socio Vivienda in order to gather essential supplies, such as non-perishable food, medicine, diapers, and personal hygiene items (CDH 22/03/2025). The grassroots collective Socio Vivienda por la Defensa de la Vida Digna is also working to uphold the right to adequate housing and social security for displaced families affected by violence (AI 24/09/2024).

The Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights has been central to advocacy efforts, securing a landmark court ruling in May 2025 that formally recognised the forced displacement and mandated public institutions to provide a comprehensive response within six months, including humanitarian and protection assistance plans for those forcibly displaced from Socio Vivienda, as well as an integrated plan to facilitate the voluntary return of displaced families (KII 09/10/2025; CDH 22/03/2025).

According to a key informant, by October 2025, humanitarian organisations were not yet operational within Nueva Prosperina because of security constraints. Some organisations, however, including the Norwegian Refugee Council, IOM, UNHCR, other UN organisations, and the Association of Volunteers in International Service, are exploring ways to expand humanitarian assistance in response to displacement in Socio Vivienda (KII 09/10/2025). This highlights a critical gap in the current capacity to meet the severe and growing needs of the affected population, particularly in terms of protection and assistance.

Access to information

Access to official information and data in Ecuador is particularly challenging, especially for specific districts such as Nueva Prosperina. Most available data is limited to the national or provincial levels, often only covering the province of Guayas or the city of Guayaquil, resulting in a heavy reliance on unverified media reporting. The systemic data gap affects the capacity of humanitarian organisations to accurately assess the scale of the crisis, identify specific humanitarian needs, support early warning efforts, and plan effective responses, while simultaneously limiting situational awareness and obscuring the full scope of violence.

At the same time, many residents have relatives or social ties to OCG members and, as these groups are deeply embedded within the neighbourhoods they control, fear of reprisal leads to significant underreporting (KII 09/10/2025). This dual limitation – stemming from both institutional data scarcity and social silencing – impedes accurate analysis, obscures the true scale of violence, and hampers the design and implementation of effective humanitarian interventions.

DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS

Illegal economies and OCG fragmentation

Ecuador is a key transit hub for international drug trafficking (InSight Crime 03/12/2024). The port city of Guayaquil plays a central role in the export of cocaine to Europe and North America, where OCGs have established links to transnational drug-trafficking networks (InSight Crime 03/12/2024). In Nueva Prosperina, OCGs have created strongholds, exploiting the district's informal settlements, limited state presence, and strategic location to control drug trafficking routes and shield their operations (EFE 13/06/2025; Ecuador Chequea 07/03/2025).

Between January–September 2025, Guayas province recorded over 2,200 cases of illicit trafficking of substances (FGE accessed 20/10/2025). In Guayaquil, this figure was over 1,500, accounting for nearly 67.7% of the region's cases (FGE accessed 20/10/2025). This dynamic makes Nueva Prosperina district a focal point for violent disputes over the lucrative illegal economies fuelling cycles of extortion, displacement, and community fragmentation.

The main OCGs present in Nueva Prosperina are Los Tiguerones, Los Lobos, and Los Choneros (KII 09/10/2025; Primicias 13/06/2025). The fragmented structures of these groups make it difficult to assess the full extent of their influence over communities and clearly identify the perpetrators of criminal activities in the district (KII 09/10/2025).

Between October–December 2024, Los Tiguerones splintered into different rival factions after the arrest of its leader in Spain, with the 6 March 2025 massacre in Socio Vivienda being a direct consequence of this breakdown and ensuing power struggle (Primicias 30/09/2025; InSight Crime 19/05/2025).

The focus on capturing or extraditing high-level leaders, such as in the case of the main leader of Los Choneros in July 2025, has successfully weakened the central command of major OCGs but also inadvertently fuelled more chaotic and unpredictable violence (Primicias 30/09/2025). This shows how the Government's focus on dismantling the leadership of major OCGs, without addressing the underlying social and economic conditions, has contributed to further fragmentation and escalating violence, increasingly exposing the population to homicides, displacement, child and adolescent recruitment, kidnapping, threats, extortion, and GBV (InSight Crime 19/05/2025).

COMPOUNDING/AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Economic and political instability

Nueva Prosperina is deeply embedded within the broader national context and, as such, is also affected by Ecuador's economic and political instability. In 2025, Ecuador has been striving to recover from a severe economic crisis, facing challenges such as fiscal constraints and fluctuations in oil prices (WB 10/10/2025). In response to some of these economic pressures, the Government decided to eliminate the diesel subsidy, raising the price from USD 1.80 to USD 2.80 per gallon (Extra 15/09/2025). This controversial move sparked widespread protests, beginning on 15 September 2025. Transporters, including heavy-duty truck drivers and urban transport workers, voiced concerns that this increase would not only drive up their operating costs but also lead to higher prices for essential goods, further straining the economic situation (Extra 15/09/2025).

The demonstrations marked the third wave of major protests since 2019, involved significant violence, and led to two reported deaths, underscoring continuing social tensions related to economic and social policy (LR 16/10/2025). By 15 October, the Government and indigenous leaders announced the end of the strike and agreed to start a dialogue (LR 16/10/2025). Similar instances following strikes in 2019 and 2022, however, resulted in agreements that indigenous movements reported had never been fully implemented (Primicias 22/10/2025). By 22 October, reflecting this distrust, some indigenous communities in Cotacachi had already stated their intention to continue resisting regardless of negotiations (Vistazo 22/10/2025). While the immediate risk of instability may be reduced, the outcome of dialogue remains highly uncertain — both in terms of effectiveness and whether further mobilisations will follow, which could further aggravate the crisis in Nueva Prosperina.

Climate and natural hazards

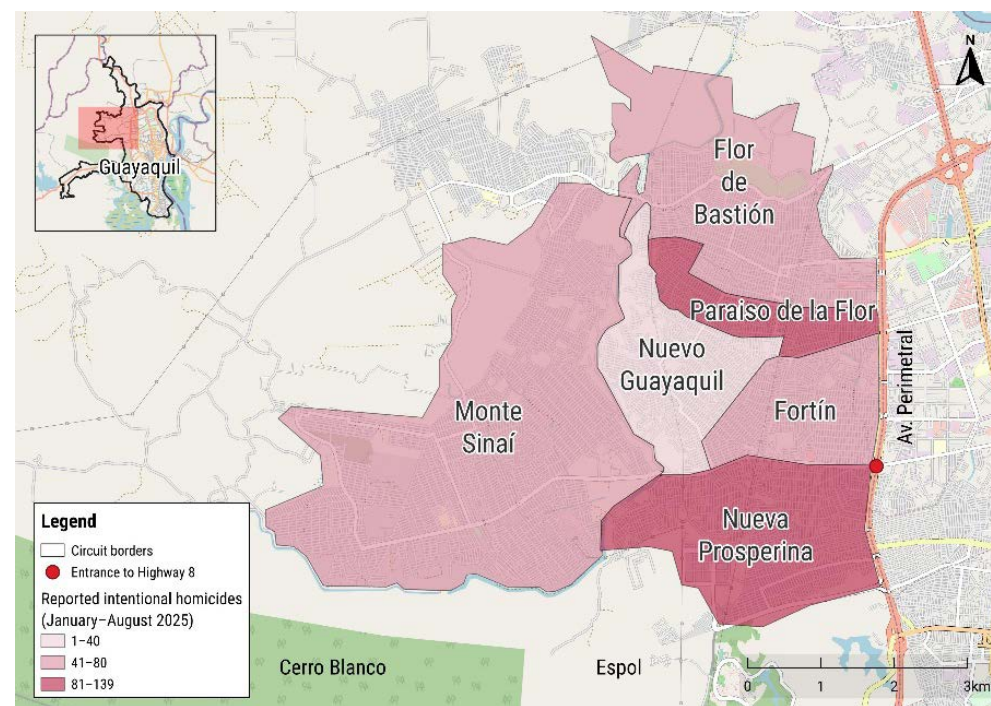
By 14 October 2025, La Niña conditions were present and favoured to persist from December 2025 to February 2026 (NOAA 20/10/2025). In Ecuador, La Niña typically brings drier-than-normal conditions, particularly to the Amazon and Inter-Andean regions, increasing the risk of drought (El Universo 02/06/2024; CCKP accessed 17/10/2025).

Seasonal forecasts for November–December 2025 anticipate below-normal precipitation, particularly in the Costa region, where Guayas province is located, and a moderate probability of above-normal temperatures across eastern provinces (WMO accessed 17/10/2025). The combination of dry conditions and above-normal temperatures may delay the sowing of barley, maize, and rice, which typically starts in December, leading to poorer yields in 2026.

(FAO 28/04/2025). These forecast conditions are also likely to extend and intensify urban water stress, disrupting the critical water replenishment period that typically follows the long May–September dry season (ACAPS accessed 22/10/2025).

High temperatures are also likely to accelerate evapotranspiration, potentially aggravating dry conditions and increasing the risk of wildfires. In Nueva Prosperina, the combination of increased heat and reduced rainfall could lead to water scarcity, further worsening access to basic services. These weather patterns could also reignite an energy crisis akin to 2024, when prolonged drought and low water levels in hydroelectric reservoirs led to power outages and electricity rationing across the country (WB 10/10/2025). Such rationing disproportionately affects low-income areas such as Nueva Prosperina, as households often lack the financial resources to access alternative power sources such as generators and are more vulnerable to disruptions to essential services, including water pump failures (BBC 15/11/2024).

Map 1. Homicides in Nueva Prosperina



Sources: ACAPS using data from INEC (accessed 14/10/2025); MDI (accessed 09/10/2025 b); Primicias (18/09/2023)

Note: In Ecuador, districts and circuits are non-administrative divisions established primarily to facilitate the management and delivery of basic services (SNAPP accessed 20/10/2025). The boundaries and designations shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by ACAPS.