

Country Report on Terrorism 2023 - Chapter 1 - Colombia

Overview: Colombian President Petro completed his first year in office August 7 and continued his administration's emphasis on pursuing a Total Peace strategy, which includes negotiations and discussions with armed groups across Colombia. In April the Colombian government published its Security, Defense, and Citizen Coexistence Policy, which prioritized the concept of human security.

In 2023 the Colombian government held multiple rounds of peace negotiations with the U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO) National Liberation Army (or ELN). The ELN and the Colombian government signed a six-month ceasefire on August 3. The United Nations Security Council voted unanimously on August 2 to expand the mandate of the UN Verification Mission to include monitoring of a ceasefire with the ELN.

The Colombian government and the U.S.-designated FTO FARC-EP began a first round of discussions on October 8 and signed a three-month ceasefire on October 17.

2023 Terrorist Incidents: In 2023, FTOs Segunda Marquetalia, FARC-EP, and ELN continued to commit acts of terrorism throughout the country, including bombings, violence against civilian populations, kidnappings, and violent attacks against military and police facilities. Although analytical methodology of studies and definitions of terrorism can vary, Colombian government data indicate a significant decline in terrorist attacks in 2023, compared with 2022. Some reports suggest this drop likely was due to ceasefires between the government and some terrorist organizations in Colombia during 2023.

The following incidents were noteworthy in 2023:

- On May 25, members of the ELN attacked a police convoy with explosives, killing two police officers and one civilian in the town of Tibú in the department of Norte de Santander.
- On August 13 the FARC-EP detonated a car bomb at a police substation in Argentina's capital city, Buenos Aires, killing a police officer.
- On September 20 a car bomb attack against a police station in Timba killed three civilians and injured five others. The government attributed the attack to the FARC-EP.
- On September 22 a car bomb attack against a police station in Jamundí injured at least three civilians and damaged homes and other vehicles.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: There were no changes in 2023.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Colombia is a member of GAFILAT (the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America) and its Financial Intelligence Unit, the Unidad de Información y Análisis Financiero, is a member of the Egmont Group. There were no significant changes in 2023.

Countering Violent Extremism: In 2023, 12,105 FARC-EP ex-combatants and former militia members who demobilized under the 2016 Peace Accord continued to participate in social and economic reintegration activities. Colombia continued to employ a modern, multi-agency approach to countering violent extremism.

International and Regional Cooperation: In November, Colombia hosted a gathering of seven regional countries and an EU delegation to discuss border security and human rights as part of its participation in the EUROFRONT initiative. Cali, Medellín, and Palmira are members of the Strong Cities Network.

