

MONTHLY REGIONAL UPDATES **UPDATE**

Latin America and the Caribbean Overview: July 2026

Gang violence against civilians hit a monthly high in Ecuador, police killings in Jamaica became more lethal, and violence persisted in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

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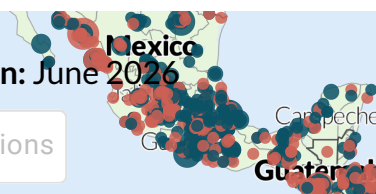
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Latin America & the Caribbean: June 2026

Political Violence

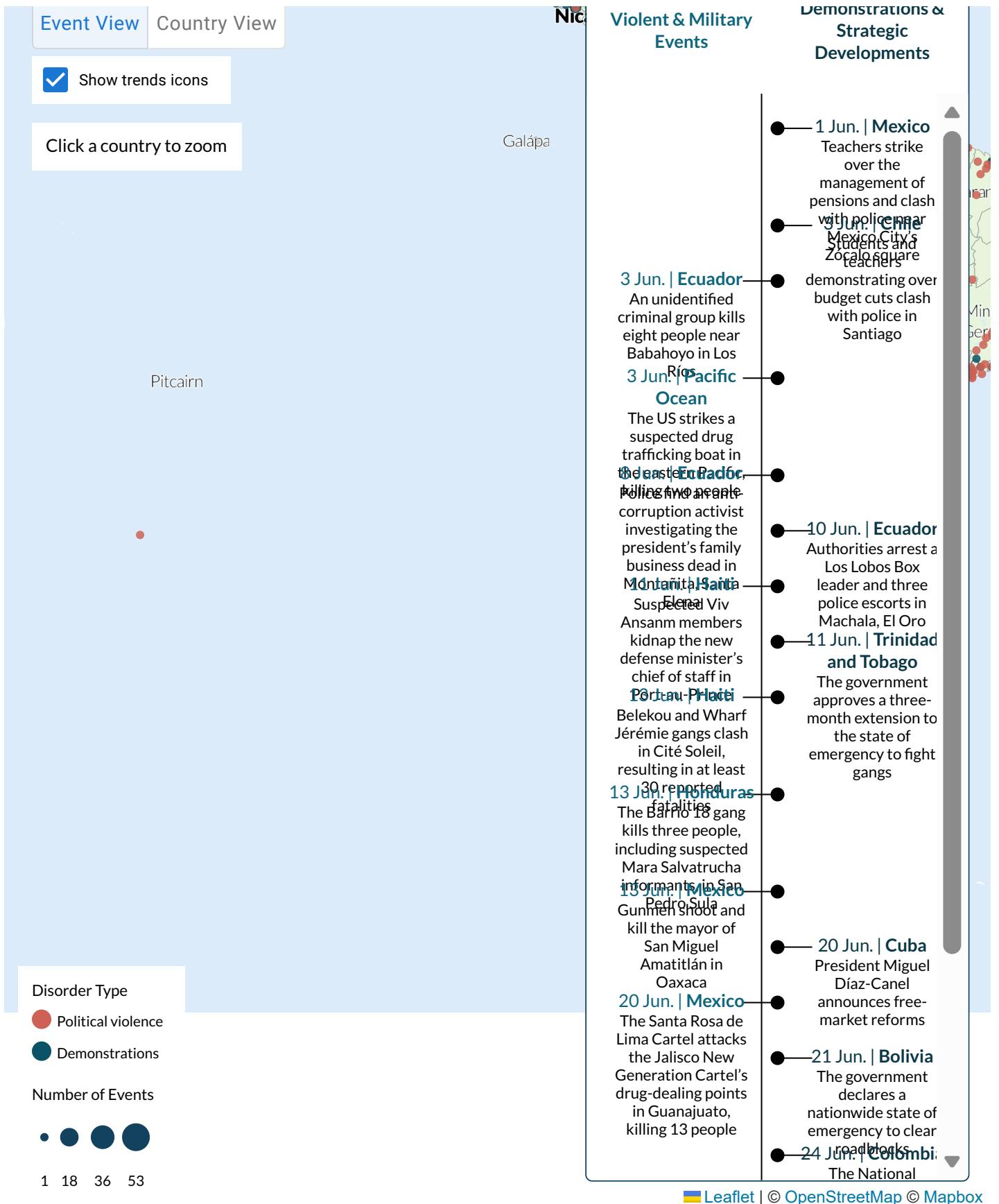
Demonstrations



Bahamas

Key Developments

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Bolivia: Anti-government mobilizations de-escalate amid a fragile agreement

On 20 June, President Rodrigo Paz [declared a state of emergency](#) to lift remaining blockades, which had severely disrupted economic activity and the movement of goods. The blockades were set as part of 50 days of [cross-sectoral demonstrations](#) sparked by the government's land reform, economic policies, fuel shortages, and other demands. The announcement came after weeks of negotiations with mobilized sectors and the signing of a 19 June agreement with a key mobilizing actor, the Bolivian Workers' Center (COB), which had already contributed to a drop in roadblocks. The state of emergency and deployment of security operations further contributed to several groups demobilizing, including in the Cochabamba department where roadblocks remained in place even after the agreement. As a result, the country saw a drop in nationwide demonstration activity, with over 40 recorded events, down from over 200 the previous month.

Aside from isolated incidents such as the use of explosives against a security officer in Llavini, fears of escalations during roadblock-clearing efforts in Cochabamba did not materialize, including in areas influenced by supporters of former President Evo Morales, whom the government [accused of coordinating and funding the mobilization](#). On 22 June, coca producers from the Trópico de Cochabamba, who are close to Morales, and the Túpac Katari Indigenous and farmer organization announced a pause in mobilization.

Nevertheless, [the truce remains fragile](#). Unrest is likely to re-emerge in the coming months due to movement fragmentation and unaddressed demands, such as fuel shortages, which remain a pressing issue. In addition, although the government set up working groups with the COB, some government-supported civic organizations and trade union members have called for the prosecution of the movement's leaders and for legislation to ban roadblocks, which directly challenge the movement's central demands. Although the government has thus far prioritized negotiations with demonstrators, it has partly framed the mobilization as a security threat, [blaming "narco-terrorists" for the unrest](#), making it susceptible to yielding to pressure for a harder line and undermining the fragile truce.

Read ACLED's latest report on the demonstrations in Bolivia: [Demobilization or pause? Bolivian cross-sectoral demonstrations ease but may re-escalate](#)

Colombia: Abelerdo de la Espriella is elected president, while violence against political figures grows

On 21 June, far-right candidate Abelerdo de la Espriella from the Defenders of the Homeland political movement [was elected Colombia's new president](#) with 49.66% of the votes in a close run-off against left-wing candidate Iván Cepeda from the ruling Pacto Histórico party. The provisional results, which Cepeda acknowledged but did not officially accept, sparked violent demonstrations involving Cepeda's supporters, mainly in the capital, Bogotá, and in Cali, where one person died in clashes with police. Nevertheless, demonstrations did not spread, and on 24 June [Cepeda accepted](#) the official results and confirmation of De la Espriella's victory.

Although no major violent incidents were reported on election day, the elections took place amid concerns about security guarantees and interference by armed groups in areas where they have a significant presence. ACLED records 17 events of violence targeting political figures in June, double the amount in May, despite the announcement of unilateral ceasefires by groups such as the [National Liberation Army](#) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia's [Central General Staff](#). On 18 June, gunmen shot at a vehicle carrying members of De la Espriella's campaign in Puerto Brasil, Cundinamarca, and on 19 June, unidentified individuals opened fire at a Pacto Histórico congresswoman and her security detail in Urrao, Antioquia. The increase in violence perpetrated by armed groups [was a main concern for voters](#) throughout the campaign, and De la Espriella's promises for a [hardline approach to security and the end of peace negotiations](#) are likely to bring heightened clashes between security forces and armed groups from the start of his term on 7 August.

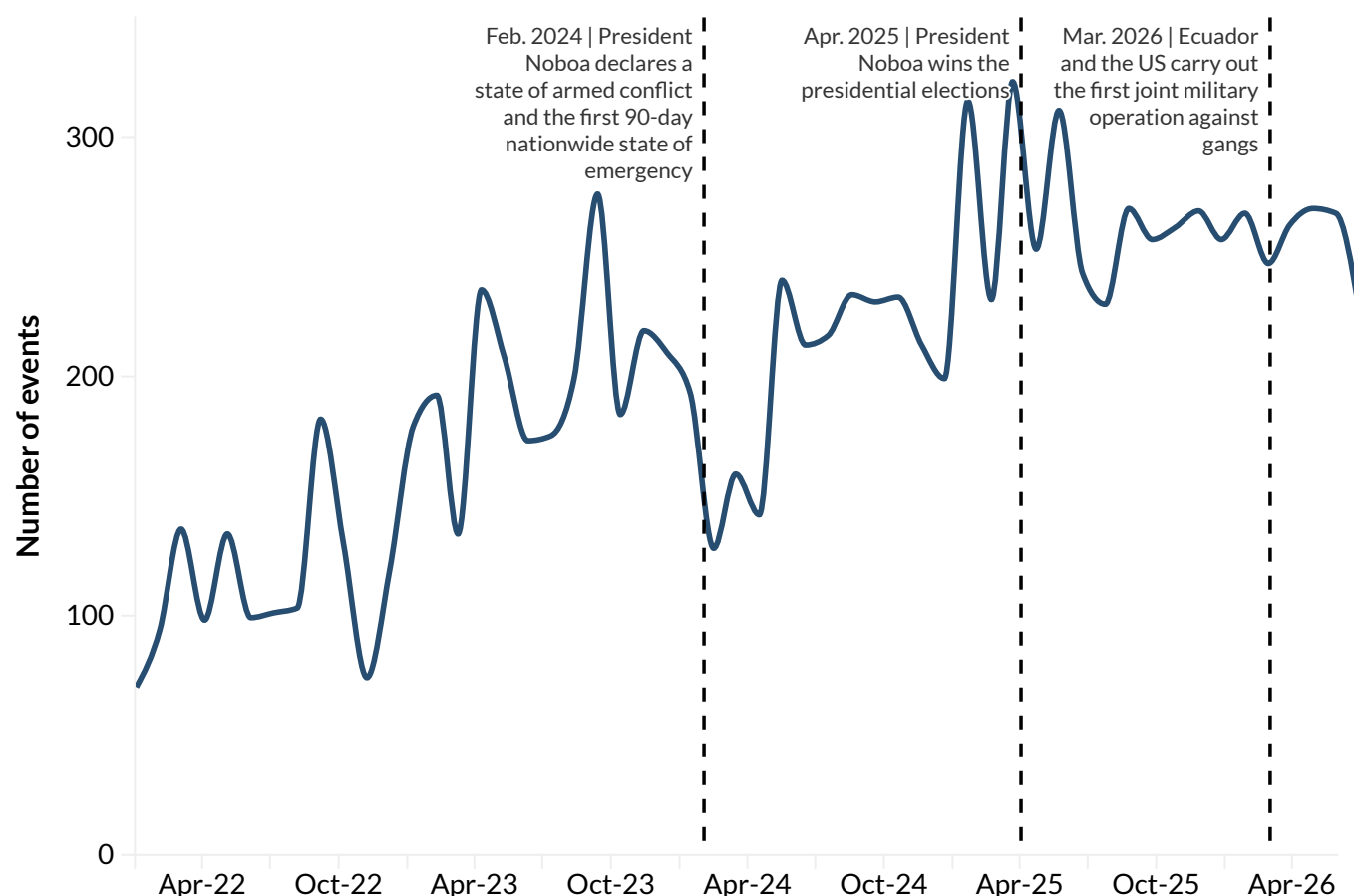
Ecuador: The public killing of a known gang leader prompts a renewed government offensive against organized crime

On 17 June, two teenage gunmen shot and killed Carlos Alberto Suástegui Villanueva, the leader of the Los Águilas gang, at the airport in Guayaquil. The incident, which took place in a highly visible space, sparked public outcry, as it exposed serious security gaps just a day after President Daniel Noboa issued a 60-day state of emergency across 10 of the country's 24 provinces. The day after the incident, Noboa [issued an executive decree](#) reiterating the existence of an internal armed conflict, allowing security personnel from partner states to participate in operations and granting them immunity for their actions. His government also signed a border security cooperation agreement with the United States days after having destroyed — with US support — a clandestine camp and equipment used to build a semi-submersible vessel to traffic drugs in the border province of Esmeraldas.

Despite the government's efforts to tackle organized crime through emergency measures and foreign support, organized crime violence in the country did not subside, particularly in the Manabí province, which is known to be a Los Choneros stronghold and a key coastal drug trafficking hub, including through the Manta and Puerto López ports. There, [a dispute between the Los Choneros and Los Lobos gangs](#) for the control of drug trafficking routes continued to escalate and reached unprecedented levels, with civilians paying a high toll. ACLED records at least 63 events of organized crime violence against civilians in Manabí province this past month, making June the most violent month for civilians since ACLED started coverage of the country's criminal violence in 2022. The escalation of violence illustrates the limits of Noboa's security strategy, which is likely to increasingly feature US-backed military operations, but has thus far failed to rein in violent crime. Enhanced pressure on gangs may produce a localized drop in violence, but is unlikely to dismantle

criminal networks. Instead, pressure in specific areas is likely to push violence into nearby cantons and contribute to the dispersion of violence, while fostering state abuses in security operations, as seen with the controversial [bombing of a civilian site in March](#).

Emergency measures and foreign support have not reduced criminal violence in Ecuador



*ACLED data as of 26 June.

✓ [On this page](#)

Jamaica: Tensions around police abuses rise as police killings in operations to fight crime increase

Between 9 and 10 June, police killed 11 suspects in several operations in Saint James, Saint Catherine, Clarendon, and Kingston, highlighting concerns among rights groups and independent oversight bodies about the increasing use of lethal force by police. In Saint James, residents denounced the killing and reported that the suspects had surrendered before being shot. The killings are the latest in over 110 fatalities that ACLED records as a result of reported clashes between state security and armed men, as well as incidents of police targeting civilians in the first six months of 2026. This represents around a 25% increase in the lethality rate of police clashes compared to the same period in 2025. Suspected abuses by state forces in the framework of

security operations, as in the Saint James incident, have prompted communities to increasingly demonstrate against the violence. Notably, the killing of a woman by police in May triggered a violent demonstration and roadblocks in Montego Bay to call for the prosecution of the officer involved. The officer was [charged with murder](#) in June after a video recorded by witnesses proved the disproportional use of force.

Despite public outcry and ongoing debates over police officers wearing body cameras, deadly clashes and police killings are likely to continue, particularly in parishes where security operations are concentrated, such as Kingston, Saint Catherine, Manchester, and Saint James. The increasing lethality of clashes between security forces and criminal groups in Jamaica is part of a wider regional trend, in which several governments have turned to a [militarized security approach and emergency measures to fight armed groups and gangs](#).

Haiti: Gang disputes and kidnappings drive persistent violence in Greater Port-au-Prince

The volatile security situation around gang disputes in Port-au-Prince failed to diminish in June, despite a reported truce reached on 7 June by Viv Ansanm gangs that had [clashed over the control of Plaine du Cul-de-Sac since April](#). Instead, new inter-gang disputes emerged in Cité Soleil. After Haiti's FIFA World Cup match on 13 June, the Belekou gang reportedly opened fire on a group celebrating Haiti's participation that included members of the Wharf Jérémie gang, prompting a clash between the two gangs. The incident led to the killing of at least 30 people and the [displacement of over 5,000 people](#), and forced Doctors Without Borders to temporarily suspend activities in Cité Soleil. Although the Viv Ansanm alliance has held together and has contributed to a decrease in gang-on-gang clashes, June's crossfire demonstrates yet again that the alliance does not operate as a monolithic bloc, and that civilians remain vulnerable to localized outbursts of violence stemming from gang-on-gang disputes.

At the same time, gangs continue to attempt to bolster their revenues and bargaining power through kidnappings and the targeting of critical infrastructure. On 9 June, members of the Ti Bwa gang forced the closure of the Electricity of Haiti commercial office in Carrefour. This follows their takeover of the power substation in late May to pressure the government into providing a continuous electricity supply to their community so they can [broadcast the upcoming FIFA World Cup matches](#) in June. This illustrates how gangs target strategic assets to extract concessions. Kidnappings for ransom also continued at a high level in June, with at least 12 reported events, mostly in Delmas, including the kidnapping of a defense minister's chief of staff. Kidnappings between January and June 2026 have increased twofold compared to the same period in 2025. Gangs' rent-seeking behavior, including kidnappings for ransom and extortionary tolls, is likely to persist through the rest of 2026 as they consolidate resources ahead of elections that have been

postponed to December and respond to heightened security operations, including initial Gang Suppression Force patrols in Tabarre.

Venezuela: US and Venezuelan security forces launch an offensive against organized crime groups involved in illegal mining

On 12 June, the US and Venezuela confirmed that a joint operation in southeastern Bolívar state [killed Tren de Aragua leader](#) Héctor Rusthenford Guerrero Flores, known as “Niño Guerrero,” in a coordinated airstrike. The killing came days after Venezuelan forces and military counter-intelligence officers [launched an operation](#) around Las Claritas in Sifontes municipality to disrupt criminal groups controlling illegal mining. The operation included the eviction of informal miners and reports of [unconfirmed aerial attacks](#). It was followed by road blockades by local communities protesting what they [allege to be human rights abuses](#). Rioters also looted properties belonging to local gang leaders.

The operation marks an about-face by the Venezuelan government on how to deal with criminal groups involved in illegal mining. Sifontes lies within the [Orinoco Mining Arc](#), where armed groups, including gangs and Colombian guerrillas, have [imposed a system of criminal governance](#), with the participation of [military officials and politicians](#). These developments follow [an April reform to the country’s mining law](#), which opened the extractive sector to foreign investment and led to the partial [easing of US sanctions](#). The operation shows Interim President Delcy Rodríguez’s willingness to provide security guarantees for foreign companies. However, symbolic, short-lived military operations are unlikely to alter local power dynamics or restore state authority in long-abandoned areas. Furthermore, the government will be unable to sustain these actions in the coming weeks, as it diverts resources to respond to the devastating [earthquakes](#) that hit the country on 24 June. Criminal groups’ activity in the immediate term is likely to continue unaltered in the Orinoco Mining Arc, and could well proliferate as armed groups seek to reassert their influence where security pressure reduces.

Read ACLED’s latest report on Venezuela: [Colombia-Venezuela cooperation on border security is necessary for investment, but unlikely in the short-term](#).

COUNTRIES

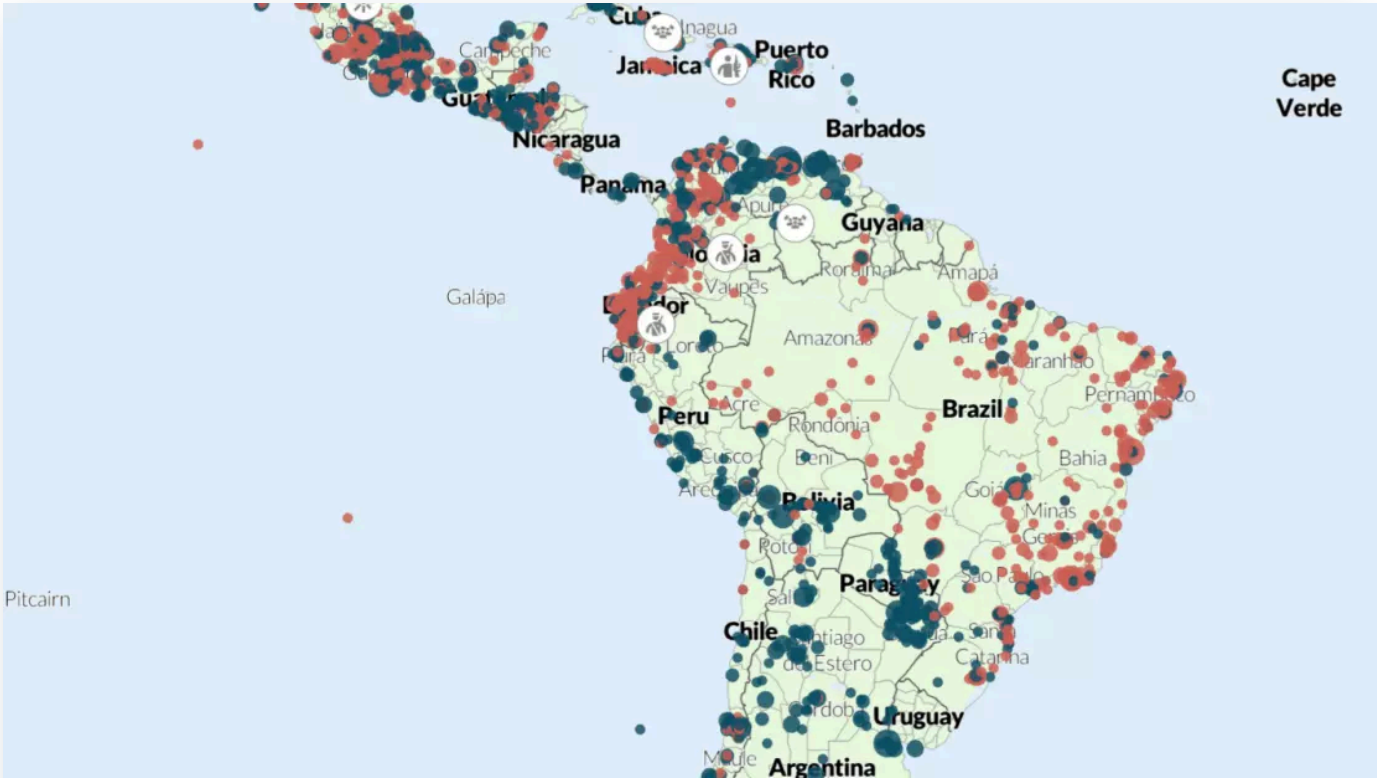
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REGION

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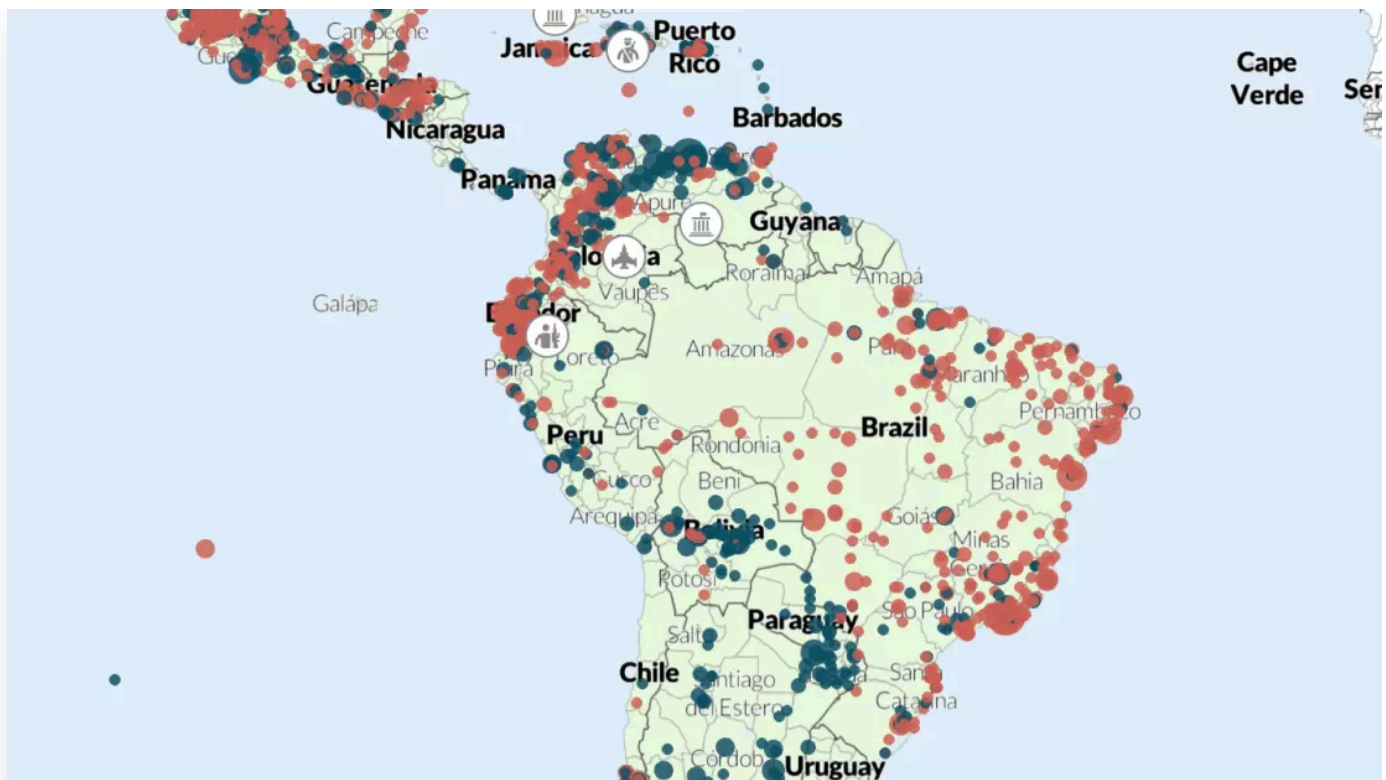


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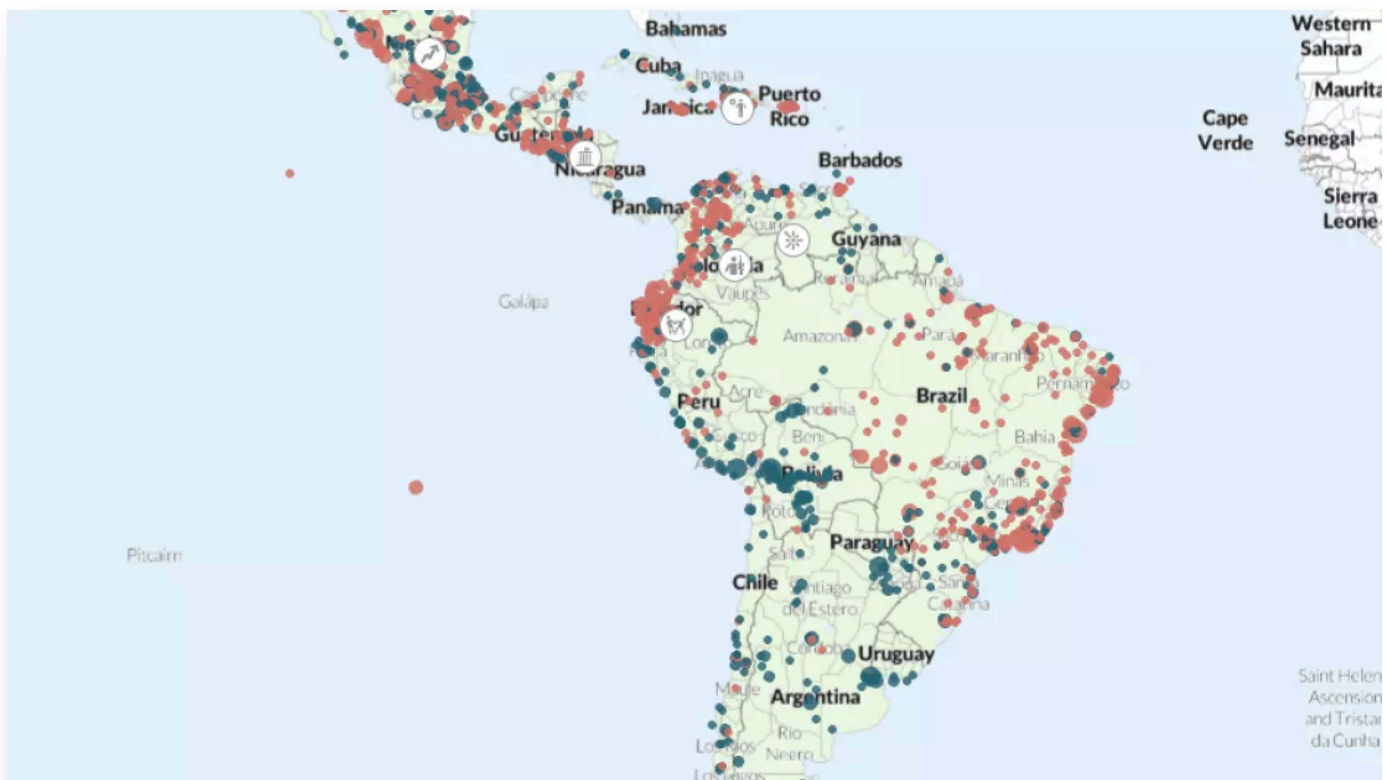
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