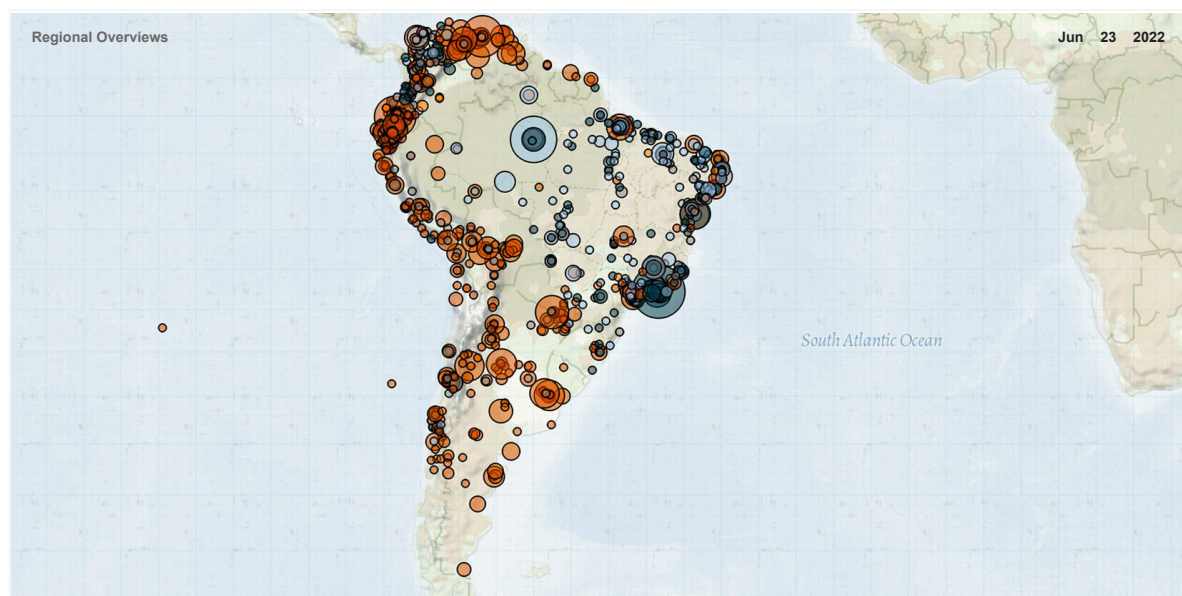




Regional Overview: South America 11-17 June 2022

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Last week in [South America](#), state forces killed a high-ranking dissident of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in Colombia. In Chile, Indigenous militias blocked highways in the Araucanía region and carried out arson attacks in the Araucanía and Biobío regions. The attacks were followed by an extension of the state of emergency in Araucanía and Biobío for 15 days. Meanwhile, the outbreak of violence during Indigenous-led demonstrations in Ecuador prompted President Guillermo Lasso to declare a state of emergency in three provinces where the demonstrations were concentrated. Lastly, in Brazil, the bodies of a British journalist and a Brazilian expert on Indigenous affairs were found in the Amazon region, in an area linked to a vast chain of organized crime.

In **Colombia**, the leader of a FARC dissident group, the Jaime Martínez front, was killed during a clash with security forces on 13 June in Suárez municipality, in the Cauca department. Leider Johani Noscué (alias: Mayimbú) was one of the highest-value military targets in Colombia and the head of the Jaime Martínez Mobile Column ([El Espectador](#), 13 June 2022). Under Mayimbú, the Jaime Martínez dissident front has prioritized illicit economic activities over any link to the FARC's political or social interests ([InSight Crime](#), 13 June 2022). As a result of its drug trafficking activities, Indigenous communities from the Cauca department have accused the Jaime Martínez front of being one of the most violent FARC dissident groups in the region ([Colombia Reports](#), 14 June 2022). Following the death of Mayimbú, FARC dissidents bombed vehicles in residential areas of the municipalities of Suárez and Corinto on 15 and 16 June, respectively. Dissidents also clashed with state forces, leaving one police officer injured.

In **Chile**, Indigenous militias blocked multiple highways in the Araucanía region last week, installing barricades and setting vehicles on fire in six different communes. A pamphlet signed by the Mapuche Malleco Resistance was left at one of the sites. Indigenous militias also perpetrated eight arson attacks in the Araucanía region and one in the Biobío region, targeting forestry workers and well-known agricultural businessmen and families of the area. These events happened the night before congress voted to extend the state of emergency in four provinces of the Araucanía and Biobío regions for another 15 days ([El Austral de Temuco](#), 15 June 2022). This measure, which was first

adopted on 12 October 2021 by former President Sebastián Piñera ([BBC, 14 October 2021](#)), was reinstated on 16 May ([Biobío Chile, 16 May 2022](#)). The further extension of the state of emergency in the Araucanía and Biobío regions aims to keep military patrolling in areas with high Indigenous militia activity due to a recent increase in violence in these areas ([El Austral de Temuco, 15 June 2022](#)). [ACLED's Conflict Change Map](#) first warned of increased violence to come in Chile in the past month. Indigenous activists who fight for Mapuche rights have claimed for decades that their territory has been illegally requisitioned by agriculture and forestry companies acting with state complicity ([Reuters, 10 July 2021](#)) (for more, see this ACLED Analysis piece: [Understanding Indigenous Conflict in Chile](#)).

In **Ecuador**, Indigenous members of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) led nationwide demonstrations last week, demanding a reduction in fuel prices and economic reforms amid rising inflation, unemployment, and poverty levels. Ongoing demonstrations, which began on 13 June, have been reported in 10 of Ecuador's 24 provinces and have since been joined by students, labor groups, and other supporters. Amid the demonstrations, multiple outbreaks of destructive activity were reported. Demonstrators blocked roads with burning tires and set up roadblocks on multiple access roads to the capital, Quito, where demonstrators also set police vehicles on fire. Moreover, demonstrators clashed with security forces, leaving at least 43 people injured and 37 arrested. In response to the violence, President Lasso declared a state of emergency on 17 June in three provinces, including the capital, Quito, enabling the deployment of armed forces to maintain order, suspend civil rights, and declare curfews ([El Comercio, 17 June 2022](#)). CONAIE has stated it will maintain the blockades until the government meets its demands ([El Comercio, 18 June 2022](#)).

In **Brazil**, the killing of a British journalist and a Brazilian expert in Indigenous affairs sparked demonstrations in several cities last week. The men's bodies were found on 15 June after they went missing on 5 June during a trip in the Javari Valley, Amazonas state. The Brazilian victim was an environmental activist and had been receiving death threats due to his work in the Amazon region, especially from illegal miners and fishers ([Ponte Jornalismo, 16 June 2022](#)). The pair were working on a book project covering the region's nature conservation efforts ([BBC, 16 June 2022](#)). Three people have been arrested for their deaths, one of whom admitted to killing them, dismembering their bodies, and scattering their remains in Atalaia do Norte municipality. Indigenous associations, forest defenders, and other activists are linking their deaths to organized criminal groups, although federal police have discarded that line of investigation ([BBC, 16 June 2022](#)). The Amazon forest has been increasingly exploited by organized criminal groups engaging in drug trafficking, the smuggling of goods, and human trafficking, as well as a variety of environmental crimes, such as predatory fishing, wood extraction, and illegal gold mining and farming ([Dialogo Americas, 31 January 2022](#)).

Meanwhile, several deadly attacks drove an increase in violence in Pernambuco state last week. In Carnaubeira da Penha municipality, military police attacked and killed an Atikum Indigenous man, while questioning him about whether he owned a shotgun, in front of his house in Olho d'Água do Padre village on 15 June. The following day, 300 Indigenous people took to the streets in Carnaubeira da Penha to protest his killing and demand justice ([Nexo, 18 June 2022](#)). Civil police have opened an investigation into the matter, with the Pernambuco Governor Paulo Câmara appointing two special chiefs of police to lead the investigations ([UOL, 17 June 2022](#)). Furthermore, at least six people were killed in Petrolina municipality when unknown shooters opened fire against 14 civilians at a private residence on 17 June. These trends contribute to the 300% increase in violence in Pernambuco last week relative to the past month flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker](#). The Subnational Tracker first warned of increased violence to come in Pernambuco in the past month.



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