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SUMMARY

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Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations

Colombia has been a key U.S. security and economic partner in South America for decades, although bilateral relations have grown tense over the past two years. Colombia has been among the top recipients of U.S. foreign assistance since the FY2000 launch of Plan Colombia, a counternarcotics and security initiative. U.S. assistance helped the Colombian government train and equip its security forces, regain control of territory from illegal armed groups, improve security, and compel the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) insurgency to negotiate. A 2016 peace accord with the FARC ended a half century of civil conflict and contributed to reductions in crime and insecurity. Since the FARC's demobilization, other groups have fought for control of territory used for drug trafficking, alien smuggling, and other illicit industries amid a continued lack of state presence in many rural regions.

In August 2022, Gustavo Petro, Colombia's first leftist president and head of the Historic Pact (Pacto Histórico, or PH) coalition of left-leaning parties, took office for a four-year term. Petro promised to enact reforms to combat inequality, promote inclusion, and achieve peace through negotiations with the country's remaining armed groups. The Petro government shepherded tax and pension reforms through the legislature and adopted a drug policy focused on land redistribution. In April 2025, Petro's approval rating stood at 37%, considerably lower than when he took office. Observers have attributed Petro's flagging approval to the gradual collapse of his governing coalition, scandals involving his family and cabinet officials, and rising rural violence. Petro has largely abandoned his Total Peace initiative, which involved simultaneous negotiations with several armed groups—including the National Liberation Army (ELN)—that the military is now confronting. Implementation of the 2016 peace accord has faltered and may face further setbacks in the absence of initiatives formerly funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

U.S. Policy

Between 2000 and 2024, U.S. relations with Colombia expanded from mainly counternarcotics and counterterrorism cooperation to a broad bilateral agenda that included migration, trade, and environmental cooperation. Bilateral ties began to cool during the Biden Administration, partly because of President Petro's opposition to some U.S.-backed drug policies, decision to break diplomatic ties with Israel in May 2024, and social media rhetoric that some have characterized as antisemitic. Nevertheless, President Biden designated Colombia as a major non-NATO U.S. ally in 2022 and continued to use Colombia as a major implementer of U.S. security assistance programs in other countries. Tensions have heightened under the second Trump Administration. In January 2025, the Administration threatened a variety of repercussions after President Petro initially refused to receive a U.S. military aircraft transporting Colombian deportees. Relations could remain tense in light of U.S. foreign assistance cuts, drug policy differences, U.S. tariffs, and Colombia's decision to join China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Legislative Action

The Biden Administration allocated $453.1 million in foreign assistance for Colombia in FY2023. Congress reduced U.S. foreign assistance to Colombia and placed additional conditions on that assistance in FY2024 because of concerns about President Petro's drug policies and opposition to some of his foreign policy positions. The Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47, Division F), and accompanying explanatory statement designate at least $377.5 million for Colombia, subject to certain restrictions and withholding conditions. The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), provides FY2025 foreign assistance at the same level and under the same conditions as P.L. 118-47; country allocations for FY2024 and FY2025 are not yet publicly available. The Trump Administration has yet to send a full FY2026 foreign assistance request to Congress.

The Trump Administration's "pause" on foreign assistance and subsequent cancellation of thousands of U.S. assistance awards and contracts have affected Colombia. Although certain assistance aimed at enhancing security has reportedly restarted, it is unclear whether that assistance will be as effective without complementary USAID activities. Congress may seek information about the effects of these cuts and how certain USAID programs in Colombia may now be implemented by the State Department. Such oversight activities may shape how Members approach the FY2026 budget request for Colombia.

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Introduction

Colombia has been the closest U.S. security partner in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past 25 years. The country has received significant U.S. foreign assistance and congressional attention since the launch of Plan Colombia, a counternarcotics and security assistance program that began in FY2000. U.S. assistance, totaling over $10 billion from State and Defense Department accounts between FY2000 and FY2018, helped the Colombian state—which faced potential collapse in the late 1990s—reduce homicides and kidnappings, regain control of its territory, and demobilize right- and left-wing armed groups.[1] Colombia has implemented U.S. security training programs for other countries in the region and developed sophisticated drug interdiction capacity. Despite those achievements, coca cultivation and potential cocaine production rose after 2013, and illegally armed groups have fought for control of territory used for drug and other illicit industries.

U.S.-Colombia relations have grown tense under the current leftist government of President Gustavo Petro. Since taking office in August 2022, President Petro has pursued certain policy changes—including some related to counternarcotics—that have prompted some Members of Congress to question whether robust U.S. assistance for the country should continue.[2] The Petro government has worked with the United States on issues related to security, the rule of law, and migration. Nevertheless, some Members of Congress have disagreed with what they view as Petro's antisemitic rhetoric and some policy positions, including his opposition to some U.S.-backed policies to reduce illicit drug crops.[3] During the 118th Congress, appropriators reduced the amount of funds provided to Colombia and withheld assistance until certain conditions were met. The 119th Congress may assess the second Trump Administration's approach to Colombia and consider legislative and oversight options to influence bilateral relations in the areas of foreign assistance, security cooperation, drug policy, migration, and tariffs and trade, among others.

This report provides background information on Colombia and current political and economic conditions in the country, as well as analysis for Congress on select issues in bilateral relations.

Background

Colombia's vast and varied terrain—which includes the Andes mountains, Amazonian jungles, deserts, and grasslands—has posed governance challenges (see **Figure 1**). Despite its long history of democracy, Colombia has struggled to establish state control over its territory and to overcome a legacy of political violence that began in the 19th century.[4] In the 1960s, leftist groups, some inspired by the Cuban Revolution, accused the Colombian central government of neglecting rural areas, resulting in poverty, inequality, and highly concentrated land ownership. These groups

[1] Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance*, GAO-09-71, October 2008; GAO, *U.S. Counternarcotics Assistance Achieved Some Positive Results, but State Needs to Review Its Overall U.S. Approach*, GAO-19-106, December 2018.

[2] House Appropriations Committee, "Diaz-Balart Remarks at FY24 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill Full Committee Markup," July 12, 2023.

[3] "Irrational War on Drugs, Destruction of the Amazon, Expose Humanity's Failures, Colombia's Petro Tells UN," *UN News*, press release, September 20, 2022; U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, "Petro's Backfiring Policies Imperil Two Decades of Colombian Progress," *Medium*, May 14, 2024.

[4] Violence between two major parties peaked during the War of a Thousand Days (1899-1904) and from 1948 to 1964, a period known as "La Violencia." See David Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Marco Palacios and Frank Safford, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

formed guerrilla organizations, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, or FARC) and the National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacion*, or ELN), to challenge the state.[5] In response, the Colombian government backed the creation of paramilitary organizations to protect landowners in areas without government security forces. By the 1980s, these paramilitaries had evolved into illegal armies that served private interests (landowners, ranchers, and drug traffickers).

By the late 1990s, the FARC, ELN, and rightist, paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, or AUC) used revenue from cocaine trafficking to independently fund acts of large-scale violence—including massacres of civilians. The U.S. State Department designated the FARC and the ELN as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) in 1997 and added the AUC to the FTO list in 2001.[6] The FTO designations, particularly of the FARC and ELN, may have helped maintain U.S. support for Colombia's campaign against "narco-insurgents" in the post-9/11 environment in which terrorism, rather than drug trafficking, became the primary U.S. national security concern.[7]

With U.S. antidrug and counterterrorism support through Plan Colombia, President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010) of the conservative Democratic Center (*Centro Democrático*, or CD) party rebuilt the Colombian military and weakened the FARC, although some security forces and allied paramilitaries continued to commit serious human rights abuses during his administration.[8] In November 2024, the State Department sanctioned former General Mario Montoya Uribe, former commander of the Colombian military (2006-2008) who was allegedly involved in covering up extrajudicial killings of civilians disguised as combatant deaths.[9] With the FARC and the Colombian military having fought to a stalemate, President Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) launched secret talks with the FARC, formerly the largest and most powerful insurgent group in the Western Hemisphere, in 2011 that resulted in the signing of a historic 2016 peace accord.[10]

[5] The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) is estimated to have had as many as 20,000 members and to have controlled more than a third of Colombia's territory at its peak power in 2002. The Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), generally much smaller, was estimated to have had roughly 4,500 members in 2000 but may have increased its size to 6,000 members today as it has operations in both Venezuela and Colombia. The FARC and ELN battled the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) and, from 2005 to 2009, each other for territorial control. *InSight Crime*, "National Liberation Army (ELN)," June 18, 2024; *InSight Crime*, "FARC," November 23, 2023; and James Bargent, "The FARC 1964-2002: From Ragged Rebellion to Military Machine," *InSight Crime*, March 28, 2017.

[6] CRS In Focus IF10613, *The Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) List*, by Liana W. Rosen and Shelby B. Senger; and U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs)," https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/.

[7] Michael Shifter, "Plan Colombia: A Retrospective," *Americas Quarterly*, July 18, 2012.

[8] Lindsay R. Mayka, "Delegative Democracy Revisited: Colombia's Surprising Resilience," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 27, no. 3 (July 2016), pp. 139-147.

[9] U.S. Department of State, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, "Designation of Former Colombian General for Involvement in Gross Violations of Human Rights," press release, November 22, 2024.

[10] Carlo Nasi and Angelika Rettberg, "Colombia's Farewell to Civil War," in *How Negotiations End: Negotiating Behavior in the Endgame*, ed. I. William Zartman (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Figure 1. Colombia at a Glance

Population: 53.1 million (2025, IMF estimate)

Area: 439,736 square miles, almost twice the size of Texas (CIA)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): $427.8 billion (2025, current prices, IMF estimate)

Real GDP Growth: 1.7% (2024, IMF), 2.4% (2025, IMF projection)

GDP Per Capita: $8,000 (2025, current prices, IMF estimate)

Poverty Rate: 33.0% (2023, DANE)

Ethnic Groups: Mixed (Mestizo) and Caucasian (White) (86.3%), Afro-Colombian (9.3%), and Indigenous (4.4%) (Colombian National Census, 2018)

Key Trading Partners: United States (27.0%), China (15.6%), Brazil (4.6%) (2024, total trade, TDM)

Exports: $49.6 billion total; top export partners: United States (28.9%), Panama (8.5%), India (5.4%); top exports to the United States: petroleum and crude oil, gold, coffee, and cut flowers (2024, TDM)

Imports: $60.4 billion total; top import partners: United States (25.7%), China (24.5%), Brazil (5.3%); top imports of U.S. products: petroleum and crude oil, corn, soybean oilcake, and plastics (2024, TDM)

Legislature: Bicameral Congress: 108-member Senate and 188-member House of Representatives

Sources: Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), and Trade Data Monitor (TDM).

The peace accord, now part of Colombia's constitution, enabled the demobilization and disarmament of more than 13,000 FARC fighters (roughly 800 dissidents refused to disarm) but proved controversial; its opponents included former President Uribe and Santos' successor, Iván Duque (2018-2022).[11] The accord included provisions on rural development; the FARC's demobilization, disarmament, and subsequent political participation; illicit crops and drug

[11] In October 2016, Colombians narrowly voted (50.2% to 49.8%) against approving the final peace agreement. Helen Murphy and Julia Symmes Cobb, "Colombians Reject Deal to End 52-Year FARC Rebel War," Reuters, October 2, 2016. Following additional modifications, Colombia's Congress ratified the accord on December 1, 2016.

trafficking; victims' reparations and transitional justice; and verification that programs in the accord are implemented.[12] By 2021, slow implementation of the accord's stipulations and a continued lack of state presence and poverty in many areas had contributed to a resurgence in violence and other criminal activity.[13] In 2021, the State Department removed the FARC from the FTO list but designated two FARC dissident groups that refused to demobilize—the FARC-People's Army (FARC-EP) and *Segunda Marquetalia*—as FTOs.[14]

Political and Economic Situation

The Petro Government

In June 2022, Colombian voters elected former Senator Gustavo Petro as president for a four-year term in a runoff election in which he defeated Rodolfo Hernández, a construction magnate and one-term mayor, by a 3.2% margin. President Petro is the country's first leftist president and leads a coalition of 15 leftist and center-left parties known as the *Pacto Histórico* (PH, or Historic Pact). Petro was once a member of M-19, a leftist guerilla group that demobilized in the late 1980s. He then became a leader of the political opposition and served as mayor of the Colombian capital, Bogotá (2012-2016). He ran with Francia Márquez, a prominent environmental activist who became the country's first Afro-Colombian vice president. Márquez and several other cabinet ministers resigned in February 2025 amid turmoil in the government; some of those ministers have announced that they intend to run in scheduled 2026 elections.

In 2022, Colombian voters who supported Petro did so apparently in part out of a desire for change. Such voters reportedly had tired of lackluster growth, high unemployment and inflation, inadequate social policies, and tough policing policies that quashed protest during the Duque government.[15] Petro and Márquez presented bold social programs and initiatives to achieve peace, reduce inequality, and promote a green economy; Márquez's popularity drew support from marginalized Colombians, particularly in the Pacific Coast region.[16]

Initial Achievements

Following his election, Petro, who had surrounded himself with left-leaning loyalists as mayor, surprised observers by forging a multiparty congressional majority.[17] Led by PH and including the Conservative (*Partido Conservador*) and Liberal parties, which dominated Colombian politics in the 20th century, Petro's initial legislative coalition had 77 of 108 seats in the Colombian Senate

[12] The final agreement is available in English at https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Colombia-Final-Accord-Text-in-English.pdf.

[13] See, for example, Adam Isaacson, *A Long Way to Go: Implementing Colombia's Peace Accord After Five Years*, Washington Office on Latin America, November 23, 2021.

[14] U.S. Department of State, "In the Matter of the Designation of Segunda Marquetalia (and Other Aliases) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization," 86 *Federal Register* 68293, December 1, 2021; and U.S. Department of State, "In the Matter of the Designation of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (and Other Aliases) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization," 86 *Federal Register* 68294, December 1, 2021.

[15] Will Freeman, "Colombia Tries a Transformative Left Turn," *Current History*, February 2023; and Julia Symmes Cobb, "Colombia President Announces Policing Changes as Protest Leaders Call Off Talks," Reuters, June 6, 2021.

[16] Manuel Rueda and Astrid Suarez, "Colombian Voters Elect Country's First Black Vice President," Associated Press, June 20, 2022.

[17] Camila Osorio, "The Colombian President's First Year in Five Photos: A Journey from Optimism to Pessimism," *El País*, August 8, 2023.

and 145 of 188 seats in the House. Petro also named an ideologically diverse cabinet. Opposition included the rightist Democratic Center and the Radical Change (*Cambio Radical*) parties.

In August 2022, President Petro began his term promising sweeping changes—including peace, inclusion, and environmental protection—for the disenfranchised communities who overwhelmingly supported his candidacy. Although some proposed reforms have been enacted, President Petro has yet to deliver on many of his pledges. In 2022, President Petro secured enactment of a legal framework for his Total Peace program, an initiative authorizing the government to negotiate with insurgent groups deemed to have political agendas, such as the ELN, as well as major criminal organizations (see the "Security Conditions" section). Petro also secured passage of a reform that increased taxes on the wealthy and mining and oil companies, but his government has had difficulty executing programs funded by that revenue.[18] Weak public administration also could complicate implementation of the Petro government's September 2023 drug strategy. Estimated to cost $21 billion over 10 years, this drug strategy prioritizes targeted assistance to rural communities, voluntary crop substitution, and environmental and public health objectives over drug crop eradication.[19]

Setbacks and Challenges

In April 2023, President Petro reshuffled his cabinet to put loyalists in key positions; this prompted two parties, the Conservative Party and rightist Union Party for the People (*Partido de la Unión por la Gente*, or *La "U"*), to leave his congressional coalition. Colombia's Congress still approved Petro's four-year National Development Plan focused on land redistribution and environmental protection in May 2023 and enacted a constitutional amendment recognizing peasants' land rights and creating agrarian courts to handle rural land disputes in June 2023. Nevertheless, PH-backed candidates performed relatively poorly in October 2023 local elections, even in traditionally left-leaning cities like Bogotá.

By January 2024, two additional parties had left Petro's congressional coalition; the parties in the congressional coalition after their departure hold 48 of 108 seats in the Senate and 102 of 188 seats in the House. In April 2024, Colombia's Congress rejected Petro's healthcare reform that would have expanded state control over private insurers. In June 2024, legislators passed a diluted version of a pension reform that the government had proposed as key to strengthening the state pension fund. As of May 2025, a modified labor reform package has passed the Colombian House but not the Colombian Senate. Legislators removed some Petro-government-backed provisions that would have strengthened union rights and formalized peasant workers, but kept provisions to, among other measures, create more categories of paid leave.[20]

In addition to facing pushback against some aspects of his legislative agenda, President Petro has grappled with eroding approval ratings, criminal complaints against his family and political associates, and sluggish economic growth hindered by declining investment.[21] Since 2024, prosecutors have charged Petro's son with accepting bribes from drug traffickers in exchange for

[18] Enrique Millan-Mejia and Geoff Ramsey, *Colombia's President Must Focus on Economic Stewardship in the Second Half of His Term*, Atlantic Council, May 7, 2024.

[19] Gobierno de Colombia, *Política Nacional de Drogas (2023-2033)*, September 2023, https://www.minjusticia.gov.co/programas-co/ODC/Documents/Publicaciones/Politica%20Nacional%20de%20Drogas_English%20Oct%202023.pdf; and Geoff Ramsey and Isabel Chiriboga, *Advancing U.S.-Colombia Cooperation on Drug Policy and Law Enforcement*, Atlantic Council, November 30, 2023.

[20] Yenifer Rodríguez M, "Reforma Laboral en Colombia: Cambios en el Recargo Nocturno, los Contratos a Término Fijo y las Licencias Remuneradas," *El País*, October 22, 2024.

[21] Eitan Casaverde and Sergio Guzmán, *From Ambition to Stagnation: The Road Ahead for Petro's Administration*, Colombia Risk Analysis, August 2024, pp. 5, 19.

political favors and a former cabinet minister with stealing from a disaster relief agency.[22] The interior and foreign ministers appointed in February 2025 have been embroiled in a public feud; both have been accused of involvement in a campaign financing scandal.[23]

President Petro has responded to setbacks with populist rhetoric and actions. For example, he directed government regulators to take over two major public-private health insurers after legislators rejected his proposed health reform.[24] In October 2024, President Petro dismissed the national electoral council's decision to investigate the financing of his 2022 campaign as a "coup."[25] On May 1, 2025, Petro characterized the Colombian Senate's vote against allowing a popular referendum on his labor reform that had stalled in the Colombian Congress "fraudulent."[26] Petro called for people to support the reform; labor unions responded by convening a 48-hour strike in late May to push the Colombian Senate to approve the labor reform.[27]

As Petro has faced challenges during his term, so have leading opposition figures. In April 2024, the Colombian attorney general charged former President Uribe, once a key U.S. ally, with bribery and fraud. Uribe allegedly engaged in witness tampering to prevent disclosure of his former ties to paramilitary groups responsible for serious human rights violations; he has denied those charges.[28]

2026 Presidential and Legislative Elections

Political attention in Colombia is focusing on legislative and presidential elections scheduled for March and May 2026, respectively. In April 2025, President Petro's approval rating hovered around 37%, and some analysts predicted that center-right parties could dominate the 2026 elections.[29] The left is seeking to unite behind one Petro-backed presidential candidate.[30] Early presidential contenders include Vicky Dávila, a conservative journalist; Sergio Fajardo, the centrist mayor of Medellín; and Gustavo Bolívar, the leftist former Senator and Minister of Social Prosperity under President Petro. It is yet unclear whether Bolívar is Petro's preferred candidate.

[22] "Colombian Prosecutor's Office Formally Charges President's Son," *EFE*, January 12, 2024; and Josep Freixes, "Government Official Found Guilty in Major Corruption Scandal in Colombia," *ColombiaOne.com*, April 4, 2025.

[23] James Bosworth, "In Colombia, Cabinet Drama Is Derailing Petro's Reform Agenda—Again," *World Politics Review*, May 5, 2025.

[24] Juan Diego Quesada, "Gustavo Petro Accelerates Change in Colombia to Revive His Government," *El País*, April 4, 2024.

[25] "No a la Reelección y la Violencia: Las Claves del Acuerdo Nacional de Cristo," *La Silla Vacía*, October 4, 2024; and "COLOMBIA: CNE Opens Investigation into Petro's Campaign Funding," *Latin News Daily*, October 9, 2024.

[26] "Colombian Lawmakers Reject President's Labor Reform Referendum," Associated Press, May 14, 2025.

[27] "Colombia's Labor Unions Participate in 48-Hour Strike in Support of President's Labor Referendum," Associated Press, May 28, 2025.

[28] Samantha Schmidt, "Colombia's Powerful Former President Set to Become First to Stand Trial," *Washington Post*, April 9, 2024.

[29] Mario Alejan and Mario Alejandro Rodríguez, "Gustavo Petro Repuntó en la Más Reciente Encuesta de Invamer: Nivel de Aprobación de su Gobierno Tuvo Ligero Incremento," *Infobae*, May 1, 2025; and Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), "Colombia," April 29, 2025.

[30] Adriaan Alsema, "Leftist Parties to Fuse Ahead of Colombia's 2026 Elections," *Colombia Reports*, April 15, 2025.

Security Conditions

Over the past decade, the homicide rate in Colombia has remained relatively stable at less than half the rate recorded in the 1990s, but kidnappings and extortions have risen.[31] In 2024, Colombia recorded a homicide rate of 25.4 per 100,000 people, just above the annual average recorded since 2015 but among the highest in Latin America.[32] Kidnappings, a source of revenue and means of territorial control for illegally armed groups, fell from 2015 to 2021 before rising from 2022 to 2024 to levels not seen since 2013.[33] Even with that increase, kidnapping rates still remain well below conflict-era levels.[34] Extortion, perpetrated by armed groups and common criminals, has risen since about 2010, reaching 13,000 reported cases in 2024.[35]

To date, the Petro administration's implementation of the 2016 peace accord and its Total Peace program have faced serious challenges. According to UN observers, while Petro's administration has prioritized rural land reform within peace accord implementation, violence committed by criminal groups against former combatants and vulnerable populations continued because of a lack of state presence in marginalized areas.[36] Separate negotiations with nine different armed groups under Total Peace have faced major setbacks. As military confrontations against groups engaged in negotiations declined through 2024, those groups fought each other for territorial control, massacred civilians, and carried out targeted killings of human rights defenders (see "Human Rights"). In January 2025, violence erupted in the northeastern region of Catatumbo near the Venezuelan border as the ELN, reportedly complicit with Venezuelan security forces, launched an offensive to regain coca-growing territory from a FARC dissident splinter group.[37] By early May 2025, the confrontation had caused some 117 deaths and displaced more than 65,000 people.[38]

In 2025, the Petro government's approach to security appears to be shifting from negotiations to confrontation, and his drug policy has evolved to include manual crop fumigation; some observers assert that the Trump Administration's "pause" in foreign assistance may have hindered these efforts (see "U.S. Foreign Assistance").[39] In January 2025, in addition to announcing development projects for farmers in Catatumbo, Petro ended peace negotiations with the ELN, deployed troops to the region, and declared a state of emergency in the area. In February 2025, Petro appointed a retired general as defense minister and tasked him with confronting armed

[31] UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), https://dataunodc.un.org/dp-intentional-homicide-victims.

[32] For crime data since 2005, see Government of Colombia, Ministry of National Defense, Vice Ministry for Defense and Security Policies, "Information on Crime, Operational Results and Crimes Against the Troops Themselves," p. 4, https://www.mindefensa.gov.co/content/published/api/v1.1/assets/CONTF18259187BF04D1BB534C214A55E30C4/native?cb=_cache_91f&channelToken=86fd5ad8af1b4db2b56bfc60a05ec867&download=true (hereinafter Government of Colombia, "Information on Crime"); and Marina Cavalari et al., "InSight Crime's Homicide Round-Up," *InSight Crime*, February 26, 2025.

[33] Government of Colombia, "Information on Crime."

[34] Cases of kidnapping remain well below levels recorded during the armed conflict when the FARC and ELN kidnapped people, including politicians, to earn revenue and for bargaining leverage with the government. Kyra Gurney, "Behind Colombia's Dramatic Fall in Kidnappings," *InSight Crime*, January 3, 2015.

[35] Government of Colombia, "Information on Crime."

[36] UN Security Council, *U.N. Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary-General*, March 27, 2025, S/2025/188.

[37] InSight Crime, "National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN) in Venezuela," August 8, 2024; and Human Rights Watch, *Colombia: Armed Groups Batter Border Region*, March 16, 2025.

[38] "El Conflicto Guerrillero en la Frontera de Colombia y Venezuela Deja 117 Muertos Este Año," AFP, May 7, 2025.

[39] Samantha Schmidt et al., "Trump's Aid Freeze Hampers Anti-Narcotics Programs in Latin America," *Washington Post*, March 16, 2025.

groups. In May 2025, the government arrested more than 200 suspected *Clan del Golfo* (Gulf Clan) members after the group killed 27 soldiers and police officers the prior month (the Gulf Clan is the largest criminal organization in Colombia).[40] The Petro administration has suspended negotiations with the Gulf Clan indefinitely. Amid record coca cultivation and U.S. pressure, the Petro government is also reportedly adopting drug policies it once opposed, including forced eradication and manual fumigation with glyphosate (see "Efforts Against Illegal Drugs and Organized Crime").[41]

Human Rights

Colombia has contended with politically motivated violence and human rights abuses committed by armed groups and, at times, security forces for much of its modern history. The 2016 peace accord created a system composed of several mechanisms to promote "truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition" of violations committed during the armed conflict.[42] The entities established pursuant to the accord include a Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition Commission (Truth Commission); a unit to search for persons missing because of the armed conflict; and a Special Jurisdiction of Peace (JEP) to investigate, prosecute, and sanction "the most serious and representative" crimes committed. In exchange for recognizing their responsibility and carrying out acts of reparation in victims' communities, perpetrators of certain crimes could serve reduced sentences in non-prison settings as decided by the JEP.[43] While all entities have taken steps to carry out their prescribed functions since the accord took effect, they have faced challenges that have slowed progress. Some analysts are concerned that the end of funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), formerly the largest donor supporting peace accord implementation, could further hinder progress, particularly at the JEP.[44] Selected developments related to these human rights mechanisms are discussed below:

- **Truth Commission Report.**[45] In June 2022, the Truth Commission published a report based on the testimony of some 30,000 victims of the armed conflict. The report estimated that some 450,000 people died between 1985 and 2018, 80% of whom were civilians. It attributed some 45% of these deaths to paramilitaries, 27% to guerrillas, and 12% to state agents. It estimated that more than 110,000 people were forcibly disappeared (52% by paramilitaries). The FARC reportedly perpetrated 75% of the cases of forced recruitment of children and 40% of an estimated 50,000 kidnappings. The report explores the complicated economic,

[40] The Gulf Clan, also known as the *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*, or AGC, engages in drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, and extortion and is considered an FTO by the U.S. government. "Colombia Arrests Over 200 Suspected Members of Cartel Accused of Paying Recruits $3,500 for 'Dead Police Officers,'" *CBS*, May 6, 2025.

[41] The Colombian Constitutional Court prohibited aerial spraying of coca crops with glyphosate in 2015 because of related health concerns raised by the World Health Organization. Elizabeth Dickinson, "Under Threat, Colombia Restarts Coca Fumigation," International Crisis Group, April 11, 2025.

[42] An English translation of the Peace Agreement is available at https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Colombian-Peace-Agreement-English-Translation.pdf.

[43] Clara Sandoval et al., "The Challenges of Implementing Special Sanctions (*Sanciones Propias*) in Colombia and Providing Retribution, Reparation, Participation and Reincorporation," *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, vol.14, no. 2 (July 2022), pp. 478-501.

[44] Jorge Valencia, "How Trump's Ending of U.S.A.I.D. Threatens a Nation's Fragile Peace," *New York Times*, May 5, 2025.

[45] Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition Commission, *There Is a Future if There Is Truth*, https://www.comisiondelaverdad.co/hay-futuro-si-hay-verdad. A summary of the report is available in English at ABColombia, *Truth Commission of Colombia: Executive Summary*, https://abcolombia.org.uk/truth-commission-of-colombia-executive-summary/.

political, and military interests of each of the armed groups involved in the conflict and makes recommendations to avoid such a conflict from reoccurring.

- **Search Unit for Disappeared People.** Experts estimate that nearly 90,000 people remain missing as a result of the armed conflict but that many may have been buried without identification in cemeteries.[46] Within five years of its creation in 2017, the unit located 12 people alive, recovered 766 sets of human remains, and created 23 regional search teams. Some analysts assess that a lack of funding, personnel, and forensic capability, as well as the ongoing conflict in some regions, has hindered identification efforts.
- **The JEP and Emblematic Cases.** The JEP has investigated emblematic cases including forced disappearances committed by the FARC and the "false positives" scandal in which the Colombian military and paramilitaries reportedly killed more than 6,000 civilians, most between 2002 and 2008, whom they claimed were FARC combatants.[47] In 2022, FARC leaders publicly acknowledged their role in kidnapping more than 21,000 people over two decades.[48] Similarly, some former military leaders have apologized for their roles in the "false positives" killings and have begun performing public works in affected communities.[49] Still, some critics assert that the JEP has taken too long to address crimes committed during the conflict; these critics include a former army commander accused of being involved in 113 false positives.[50]

Many of the most serious human rights abuses in Colombia today, including massacres of civilians, killings of human rights defenders,[51] gender-based violence, and forced child recruitment, are committed by illegally armed groups. In 2024, for example, a Colombian think tank, *Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz* (Indepaz), documented 76 massacres with 267 victims (**Figure 2**).[52] Similarly, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) verified 72 massacres in which 252 people were killed in 2024, the vast majority committed by illegally armed groups and criminal organizations. UN officials also verified more than 200 cases of forced child recruitment as well as widespread sexual violence, particularly in Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and migrant communities.

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[46] Julia Symmes Cobb, "Colombia's Cemeteries May Hold Answers for Families of Disappeared," Reuters, August 25, 2021. The rest of this paragraph is drawn from Julia Symmes Cobb, "Searching for the Disappeared Must Be Priority at Colombia Peace Talks: Official," Reuters, April 29, 2023.

[47] Amnesty International, *Assisting Units That Commit Extrajudicial Killings: A Call to Investigate U.S. Military Policy Toward Colombia,* April 9, 2008.

[48] Anna Myriam Roccatello, "What Does a Heart-Felt Apology from FARC Mean for Colombia?" International Center for Transition Justice, October 1, 2020.

[49] Camila Osorio, "Colombian Military Acknowledges Extrajudicial Executions in Dabeiba: 'I Became a Murderer,'" *El País*, June 28, 2023.

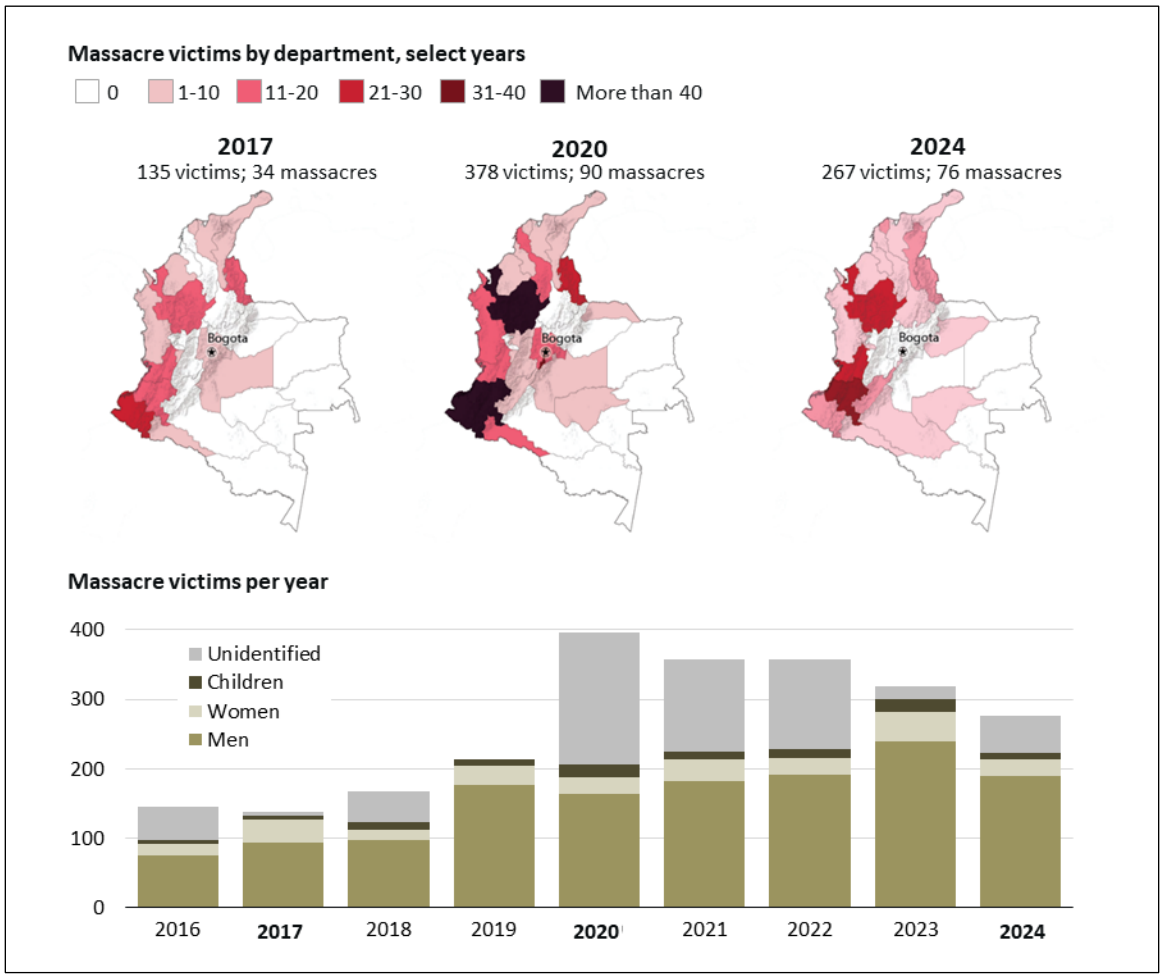
[50] Andrés Bermúdez Liévano, "Colombia's JEP Unveils Alternative Sanctions but Remains Silent on Punishment," Justiceinfo.net, April 16, 2024; and "Former Head of Colombian Army Charged in Killings of 130 Civilians," *Washington Post,* August 20, 2023.

[51] The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) defines *human rights defender* broadly to include "any person who, individually or with others, act[s] to promote or protect human rights in a peaceful manner." See OHCHR, "About Human Rights Defenders," https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-human-rights-defenders/about-human-rights-defenders. Unless otherwise noted, this paragraph draws from OHCHR, *Report of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Colombia,* February 2025 (hereinafter OHCHR, *Human Rights in Colombia*).

[52] Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (Indepaz), "Visor de Masacres en Colombia," accessed May 8, 2025, https://indepaz.org.co/visor-de-masacres-en-colombia/.

Figure 2. Massacres by Illegally Armed Groups in Colombia

(selected years since the signing of the 2016 peace accord)



Source: CRS, using data from Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (Indepaz), accessed May 8, 2025, https://indepaz.org.co/visor-de-masacres-en-colombia/.

Notes: A *massacre* is defined as a homicide of three or more innocent people by the same perpetrator at the same time and place.

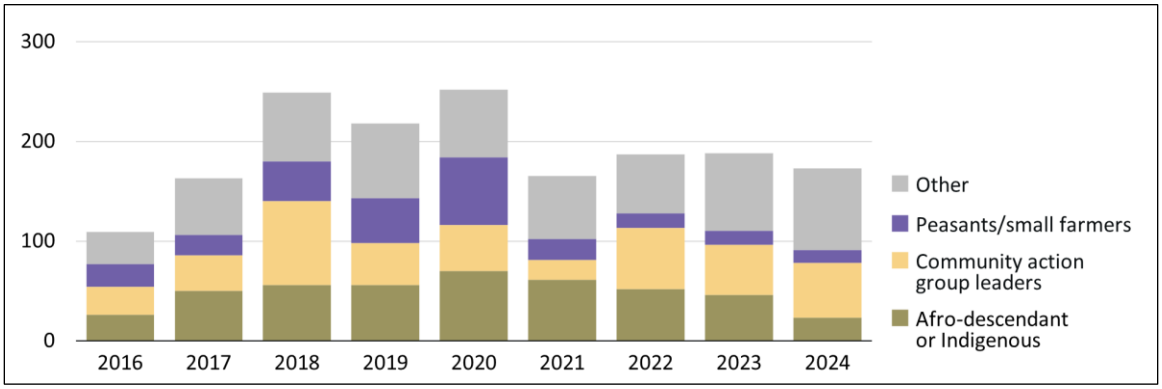
Killings of human rights defenders have disproportionately affected community action groups, ethnic leaders, peasants and small farmers, and environmental activists. In 2024, Indepaz documented 173 assassinations of human rights defenders, 31.8% of whom were from community action groups and 13.3% of whom were Indigenous (see **Figure 3**).[53] In prior years, up to 26.9% of all human rights defenders killed reportedly were peasants and small farmers, many of whom were concerned about land rights and the environment. Global Witness, a human rights advocacy group, recorded 79 killings of environmental activists in 2023, making Colombia the most dangerous country in the world for environmental activists that year.[54] Of the 105 targeted killings of human rights defenders that OHCHR verified in 2023 and 89 such killings it

[53] Indepaz, "Visor de Asesinato a Personas Lideres Sociales y Defensores de Derechos Humanos en Colombia," accessed May 8, 2025; https://indepaz.org.co/visor-de-asesinato-a-personas-lideres-sociales-y-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-en-colombia/.

[54] Global Witness, "More than 2,100 Land and Environmental Defenders Killed Globally Between 2012 and 2023," press release, September 10, 2024.

verified in 2024, members of community action groups, Indigenous leaders, and environmental defenders accounted for the largest categories of victims.[55] These killings reportedly occurred even as more than 4,600 human rights defenders received protection from the Colombian government in 2024 and more than 320 groups received collective protection measures.[56] Indepaz separately documented 31 killings in 2024 of signatories of the peace accord, bringing the total killed since 2017 (most of whom were former FARC members) to over 430.[57]

Figure 3. Targeted Killings of Human Rights Defenders



Source: CRS based on data from the Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (Indepaz), "Visor de Asesinato a Personas Lideres Sociales y Defenseores de Derechos Humanos en Colombia," accessed May 8, 2025; https://indepaz.org.co/visor-de-asesinato-a-personas-lideres-sociales-y-defensores-de-derechos-humanos-en-colombia/.

Note: According to Colombia's interior ministry, community action groups are organizations that can represent their communities when seeking infrastructure or services from the government.

OHCHR and the State Department also have documented human rights abuses by Colombian officials, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, torture, and harsh prison conditions.[58] According to the State Department, the Colombian inspector general's office opened cases against alleged abuses by 39 members of Colombian security forces in 2023. In July 2023, Colombia's attorney general indicted a Colombian National Police (CNP) colonel on homicide charges for the death of two protesters killed in large protests in 2021. These killings had prompted U.S. congressional concern about the CNP's use of force against civilians.[59] The State Department cited the "high workload" of judges, prosecutors, and investigators as barriers to additional investigations of serious offenses by government forces.[60]

[55] OHCHR, *Report of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Colombia*, March 2024; and OHCHR, *Human Rights in Colombia.*

[56] OHCHR, *Human Rights in Colombia.*

[57] Indepaz, "*Líderes Sociales, Defensores de DDHH y Firmantes de Acuerdo Asesinados en 2024 y 2025*," accessed May 15, 2025, https://indepaz.org.co/lideres-sociales-defensores-de-dd-hh-y-firmantes-de-acuerdo-asesinados-en-2024/.

[58] OHCHR, *Human Rights in Colombia*; and U.S. Department of State, *2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Colombia*, March 2024.

[59] CRS In Focus IF12181, *Colombia: Police Reform and Congressional Concerns*, by Rachel L. Martin and June S. Beittel.

[60] U.S. Department of State, *2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Colombia*, March 2024.

The Economy

Colombia, classified by the World Bank as an upper-middle-income country, has the fourth-largest economy in Latin America; mining and energy exports have fueled economic growth. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Colombia's economic growth rate slowed to 0.7% in 2023 after a strong post-COVID-19-pandemic recovery, reportedly because of an interplay of factors, including inflation, political uncertainty that reduced investment (domestic and foreign direct investment, or FDI), and high interest rates. The Colombian economy grew 1.7% in 2024 and is expected to grow roughly 2.4% in 2025.[61] Nevertheless, some analysts have raised concerns about a widening budget deficit, reduced tax collection, and a decline in FDI in 2024.[62] In April 2025, the IMF made the Colombian government's continued access to an $8.1 billion flexible credit line contingent on its completion of the IMF's policy recommendations.[63]

Colombia continues to grapple with long-standing socioeconomic challenges. Economic growth helped reduce Colombia's poverty rate from 49.6% in 2005 to 28.6% in 2018, but inequality and poverty indicators have increased since 2020.[64] The poverty rate rose to 39.8% in 2020 because of the economic and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic—which included a sharp reduction in oil exports—before declining to 32.7% in 2023.[65] Colombia remains a highly unequal society, including in the distribution of arable land; small farmers and ethnic communities often lack titles to their land, and ownership remains concentrated among large landholders.[66]

President Petro has pledged to shift Colombia's economic model toward development based on renewable energy rather than mining and oil production; his government has not approved new projects in the fossil fuel sectors. In 2024, FDI declined across most sectors (transportation, storage and communications, mining, and oil); total FDI dropped to the lowest level since 2021.[67] Domestic investment also has lagged, which Colombia's businesses association has attributed to concerns about the government's fiscal deficit and poor budget execution, insecurity, high interest rates, policy uncertainty, and the effects of wage increases and implemented (e.g., pension) and potential (e.g., labor) reforms.[68]

Humanitarian Conditions

Persistent inequality and decades of armed conflict have contributed to serious humanitarian challenges in Colombia, particularly in rural and border regions. Colombia has improved its political, economic, and social indicators in the Fund for Peace's *Fragile States Index* (first issued in 2006), although indicators associated with achieving social cohesion have lagged behind those

[61] International Monetary Fund (IMF), "World Economic Outlook Database," dataset for April 2025. See also Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Colombia Projection Note," *OECD Economic Outlook*, November 2023.

[62] CRS interview with Sergio Guzmán, Colombia Risk Analysis, May 6, 2025.

[63] IMF, "IMF Spokesperson Statement on Colombia," April 26, 2025.

[64] UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "CEPALSTAT: Population Living in Extreme Poverty and Poverty, by Area," accessed April 10, 2024, https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/dashboard.html?indicator_id=3328&area_id=930&lang=en&link=cepal.

[65] UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "CEPALSTAT: Population Living in Extreme Poverty and Poverty, by Area."

[66] Nieves Zúñiga and Manuel Pérez Martínez, "Colombia: Context and Land Governance," LandPortal.org, October 4, 2022, https://landportal.org/book/narrative/2022/colombia.

[67] Banco de la República de Colombia, "Inversión Extranjera Directa en Colombia," accessed May 22, 2025, https://suameca.banrep.gov.co/graficador-series/#/grafica/15366.

[68] La Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia (ANDI), "Balance 2024," *Perspectivas 2025*, January 8, 2025.

in other categories.[69] Nevertheless, humanitarian challenges associated with ongoing armed conflict, a continued lack of state presence in remote parts of the country, climate change, and an influx of nearly 3 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees since 2014 have persisted.[70] The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that some 9.1 million people in Colombia are in need of humanitarian aid.[71]

Following are some of the major humanitarian challenges in Colombia:

- **Supporting conflict victims.** Since 1985, some 9.5 million individuals have registered with the government's Victim's Unit as victims of the armed conflict; 90% are internally displaced persons.[72]
- **Protecting communities affected by illegally armed groups.** According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, armed conflicts displaced 117,000 individuals and 41,228 groups of 10 or more families and "confined" 88,874 individuals to the areas where they resided in 2024. Humanitarian access to serve these individuals and communities is difficult.[73]
- **Addressing food insecurity.** Some 13 million people in Colombia were estimated to lack sufficient access to food in 2024.[74]
- **Providing basic services for people who lack them.** Some 3.2 million people in Colombia lacked access to potable water, and 78% of municipalities had limited access to health services as of 2024.[75]
- **Preparing for environmental issues** Colombia is vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly flooding, which UN experts assert has been exacerbated by climate change. UN estimates indicate that some 2.9 million people are at risk of losing their livelihoods as a result.[76]
- **Addressing migration.** In addition to sheltering nearly 3 million Venezuelans, Colombia saw more than 300,000 irregular migrants pass through in 2024 to access the Darién Gap, a stretch of dense rainforest along Colombia's border with Panama.[77] In 2025, the number of migrants traveling northward has declined, but the number of migrants traveling southward has increased.[78]

[69] Fund for Peace, *Fragile States Index: 2024*, Country Dashboard: Colombia, https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/.

[70] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Humanitarian Response Plan for Community Priorities: 2024-2025*, March 2024 (hereinafter OCHA, *Humanitarian Response Plan*).

[71] OCHA, "Colombia," accessed May 6, 2025, https://www.unocha.org/colombia.

[72] In 2011, Colombia's Congress enacted a Victim's Law to establish a single registry of conflict victims, thereby unifying past databases to collect data on such victims and to inform the development of government policies to serve them.

[73] International Committee of the Red Cross, *Colombia: Humanitarian Report 2025*, April 2025.

[74] World Food Programme, "2024 Annual Country Report Overview: WFP Colombia," March 27, 2025, https://www.wfp.org/publications/annual-country-reports-colombia.

[75] OCHA, *Humanitarian Response Plan*.

[76] OCHA, *Humanitarian Response Plan*.

[77] Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), "Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela," December 2024, https://www.r4v.info/en/refugeeandmigrants. Data for the Darién Gap are available at Migración Panama, "Tránsito Irregular por Darién," accessed May 22, 2025, https://www.migracion.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/IRREGULARES-POR-DARIEN-2024-2.pdf.

[78] Migración Panama, "Tránsito Irregular por Darién," accessed May 22, 2025, https://www.migracion.gob.pa/wp-content/uploads/IRREGULARES-POR-DARIE%CC%81N-2025.pdf.

Foreign Policy

President Gustavo Petro has sought to establish a foreign policy that is less closely aligned with that of the United States and the European Union—Colombia's first- and third-ranked trade partners and largest foreign aid donors—than in the past. According to some analysts, Petro has aimed to establish a policy of "strategic ambiguity" regarding his government's foreign policy positions in an effort to elevate Colombia's global prestige as a "middle power" like Brazil, but it is not clear that this strategy has yet borne fruit.[79] As an example, Petro's government has welcomed continued investment from the People's Republic of China (PRC, or China) in infrastructure, technology, and railroads. Colombia joined China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in May 2025.[80] Some analysts assess that the Petro government has pursued closer relations with the PRC without developing a strategy that considers the privacy and national security ramifications of PRC investments in strategic sectors.[81] Petro also seeks to be a global leader on environmental issues, and Colombia hosted the 16th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October 2024. Some observers contend that the Petro government has not adequately funded environmental protection agencies.[82]

Some of President Petro's positions on key foreign policy issues aligned with those of the Biden Administration. For example, with respect to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Petro government voted for a September 2022 UN resolution defending Ukraine's territorial integrity and a February 2023 UN resolution calling for Russia's withdrawal from Ukraine. The Biden Administration also sought to use Petro as an intermediary to help convince Nicolás Maduro to accept the July 2024 presidential election results in Venezuela.[83]

Nevertheless, the Petro government's position on the Israel-Hamas conflict has differed from that of both the Biden and Trump Administrations. President Petro has severed diplomatic ties with Israel and criticized the Israeli government on social media using rhetoric that some have characterized as antisemitic.[84] Petro's decision to break diplomatic ties with Israel in May 2024 prompted criticism from several Members of Congress.[85] The Colombian military continues to

[79] Amelia Thoreson and Sergio Guzmán, "Colombia's Aspiration to Become a Middle Power Shakes Up Its Foreign Policy," *Global Americans*, August 15, 2024.

[80] Presidencia de Colombia, "'Ya Entramos a la Ruta de la Seda': Presidente Petro Tras la Firma de Histórico Plan de Cooperación con China Para Estrechar Lazos Económicos, Tecnológicos y Culturales," May 14, 2025. For more information on the BRI, see CRS In Focus IF11735, *China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative: Economic Issues*, by Karen M. Sutter and Michael D. Sutherland.

[81] Christian Heinze et al., *Understanding China's Tech Footprint in Colombia: Challenges and Opportunities*, Global Americans, December 2023; and Igor Patrick, "China Invites Colombia to Join Belt and Road Initiative, 'Exploring' Free-Trade Agreement," *South China Morning Post*, October 18, 2024.

[82] Olga L. González, "Petro's Environmental Record Is Full of Contradictions," *Americas Quarterly*, March 25, 2024.

[83] Petro, along with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula) of Brazil, refused to recognize Maduro's fraudulent claim that he won Venezuela's 2024 presidential elections and urged the Maduro government to negotiate with the opposition. Both presidents initially maintained communication with Maduro and with the opposition, led by Edmundo González Urrutia (now in exile in Spain) and María Corina Machado (still in Venezuela). Although neither government recognized the legitimacy of Maduro's third term, which began in January 2025, they have continued to work with the de facto Maduro government.

[84] Genevieve Glatsky, "Colombia to Sever Ties with Israel over Gaza War," *New York Times*, May 1, 2024; and American Jewish Committee, "Five Ways Colombia's President Is Spreading Antisemitism and Destroying His Nation's Ties with the U.S. and Israel," September 19, 2024.

[85] See, for example, Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar, "Salazar and Latino-Jewish Caucus Condemn Colombian President Petro's Decision to Cut Ties with Israel," press release, Mary 3, 2024; and Rafael Bernal, "Colombia to Cut Diplomatic Ties with Israel," *The Hill*, May 1, 2024.

rely on some Israeli-made military equipment, however, and it is unclear how, if at all, the breaking of diplomatic ties may affect the 2020 Israel-Colombia free-trade agreement (FTA).[86]

U.S.-Colombia Relations

For over two decades, Colombia has been a top U.S. ally and security partner in the Western Hemisphere. During that time period, U.S. relations with Colombia expanded from mainly counternarcotics and counterterrorism cooperation to a broad bilateral agenda that included migration and peace accord implementation, among other topics. Designated by President Biden as a major non-NATO U.S. ally in 2022, Colombia has been a regional leader in drug interdiction and a key implementer of U.S. security cooperation programs.[87] With U.S. and international support, Colombia has provided temporary residence status to many of the nearly 3 million Venezuelans in the country who have fled the multifaceted crisis in neighboring Venezuela.[88] At the same time, President Petro's rhetoric on social media, opposition to U.S.-backed policies to reduce illicit drug supplies, and decision to break diplomatic ties with Israel in May 2024 over the conflict in Gaza strained U.S.-Colombian relations during the Biden Administration.[89] Since Petro took office, Congress has reduced foreign assistance to Colombia and placed additional conditions on the assistance provided (see "U.S. Foreign Assistance").

Tensions have heightened since the start of the second Trump Administration. On January 26, 2025, President Petro initially refused to allow U.S. military aircraft transporting Colombian deportees to land but backed down after President Trump threatened to impose a range of retaliatory tariffs on Colombia.[90] Although the two countries de-escalated the crisis by the end of the day, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced travel sanctions on Colombian officials responsible for interference in the U.S. repatriation flights; it is unclear whether those travel restrictions remain in place.[91] U.S.-Colombian relations could remain tense amid cuts in U.S. foreign assistance, drug policy differences, and U.S. tariffs imposed by the Trump Administration. President Petro's May 2025 trip to China for a Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) summit and decision to join the BRI could further strain relations.

U.S. Foreign Assistance

Colombia has been among the top recipients of U.S. foreign assistance worldwide since the FY2000 launch of Plan Colombia. The focus of U.S. assistance efforts has changed over time, responding to changes in Colombia's long-running internal armed conflict and Colombian government priorities. U.S. assistance to Colombia, managed by the U.S. Department of State, has concentrated largely on counternarcotics and security support, including training Colombian

[86] Astrid Suárez, "Colombia Breaks Diplomatic Ties with Israel, but Its Military Relies on Key Israeli-Built Equipment," Associated Press, May 3, 2024.

[87] Since 2013, Colombian security officials have trained more than 50,000 police and other individuals from across the region. CRS correspondence with the Department of Defense (DOD), October 29, 2024.

[88] As of December 2024, Colombia had granted some 2.4 million residence permits for Venezuelans. R4V, "Residence Permits and Regular Stay Granted," April 2025, https://www.r4v.info/en/permits.

[89] See, for example, "U.S. Slams Colombia President's Remarks on Gaza," Reuters, October 12, 2023; and Cynthia J. Arnson, "A Growing Rift in the U.S.-Colombia Relationship," *Americas Quarterly*, August 7, 2024.

[90] Regina Garcia Cano et al., "White House Says Colombia Agrees to Take Deported Migrants After Trump Tariff Showdown," Associated Press, January 26, 2025.

[91] U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Rubio Authorizes Visa Restrictions on Colombian Government Officials and Their Immediate Family Members," January 26, 2025.

military and police and supporting humanitarian demining efforts.[92] The State Department also has supported efforts to strengthen Colombia's judicial system, diversify trade, counter terrorism, and promote human rights and democracy. Until the cancellation of most of its programs in March 2025, USAID focused on helping the Colombian government consolidate peace in formerly war-torn rural communities to foster increased investment, provide basic public services, carry out crop substitution programs, and advance citizen security. Starting in 2017, U.S. Administrations obligated more than $1.5 billion to support peace accord implementation (as of mid-2023).[93]

President Petro has criticized U.S. drug policy, adopted a drug strategy deemphasizing coca eradication, and implemented policy changes that some critics assert eroded some of Colombia's military capabilities.[94] His government has continued to work with the United States on intelligence sharing, drug interdiction, and extraditions. U.S. assistance has supported a range of institutions tasked with combating corruption and improving security and access to justice. In 2022, the Petro government asked for more U.S. assistance to help implement all aspects of the 2016 peace accord, including the Ethnic Chapter, which aims to address past and ongoing inequities against Indigenous people and Afro-Colombians and protect their rights.[95] The Biden Administration allocated an estimated $453.1 million of assistance for Colombia in FY2023 (see **Table 1**).[96] USAID obligated an additional $106.5 million in FY2023 to fund humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons, food and other aid for Venezuelan migrants and communities sheltering them, and programs to build resistance to conflict and disasters.[97]

[92] Some State Department assistance is implemented by DOD. DOD implements assistance provided through the Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training accounts.

[93] U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations With Colombia," July 10, 2023.

[94] Alfonso Camacho-Martinez, "By Weakening the Military, Colombia's Petro Imperils His Hopes for Peace," *War on the Rocks,* August 1, 2023.

[95] U.S. Department of State, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken and Colombian Vice President Francia Marquez at a Signing Ceremony to Support the Comprehensive Implementation of the Ethnic Chapter of the 2016 Peace Accord," October 3, 2022.

[96] U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Operations, Appendix 2, Fiscal Year 2025,* April 2024.

[97] U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, "Colombia: Assistance Overview," May 2024.

Table 1. U.S. Foreign Assistance to Colombia by Account: FY2020 Actual-FY2025 Request

(in thousands of current U.S. dollars)

Account	FY2020 (Actual)	FY2021 (Actual)	FY2022 (Actual)	FY2023 (Estimate)	FY2024 (P.L. 118-47)	FY2025 (Request)
DA	61,000	70,000	80,000	86,000	77,000	90,500
ESF	146,328	154,100	147,000[a]	144,000	129,000	128,500
GHP (State)	1,500	1,747	2,861	2,971	N/A	N/A
GHP (USAID)	3,000	1,970	9,000	8,750	N/A	8,750
INCLE	180,000	189,000	189,000	150,000	134,500	135,000
IMET	1,783	1,850	1,476	1,850	N/A	2,000
FMF	45,525	38,525	40,000	38,525	37,025	38,525
NADR	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000	N/A	10,000
Total	**460,200**	**478,192[a]**	**490,337[b]**	**453,096**	**377,500[c]**	**413,275**

Sources: U.S. Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification, Supplementary Tables—Foreign Operations, FY2020-FY2025; and U.S. Department of State, FY2023 estimate data, August 2023.

Notes: DA = Development Assistance; ESF = Economic Support Fund; GHP = Global Health Programs; USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development; INCLE = International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement; IMET = International Military Education and Training; FMF = Foreign Military Financing; NADR = Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs; N/A = not available.

a. This sum includes $14.8 million of ESF appropriated through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2).

b. This sum includes $15.0 million of ESF appropriated through the Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-128).

c. This total does not include GHP, IMET, or NADR allocations. P.L. 118-47 did not designate specific funding amounts for Colombia under those accounts.

The Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) Appropriations Act, 2024 (P.L. 118-47, Division F), and accompanying explanatory statement designate at least $377.5 million for Colombia, subject to certain restrictions and withholding conditions. That total is $66.5 million (15%) lower than the $444.0 million that the Administration had requested for Colombia in FY2024. It includes $129 million in Economic Support Funds, of which $25 million is for Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities and $15 million is for human rights programming, as well as $135 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement aid and $77 million in Development Assistance.[98] Prior to obligation of that assistance, the legislation requires the Secretary of State to submit reports to relevant congressional committees describing Colombia's counternarcotics strategy, how U.S. funds would support its implementation, and how the Colombian government's policies align with U.S. national interests. Additionally, the FY2024 SFOPS act requires the State Department to withhold some security assistance for Colombia until the country has met certain counternarcotics- and human-rights-related requirements.

[98] P.L. 118-47 and the accompanying explanatory statement do not specify International Military Education and Training; Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs; or Global Health Programs assistance levels for Colombia. USAID historically has managed the Development Assistance account and comanaged the Economic Support Fund account with the State Department.

The Biden Administration requested $413.3 million in assistance for Colombia in FY2025. The Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4), provides FY2025 foreign assistance for Colombia at the same level and under the same conditions as P.L. 118-47; country allocations for FY2024 and FY2025 are not yet publicly available. The Trump Administration has yet to send a full FY2026 foreign assistance request to Congress.

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order (E.O.) 14169, "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid."[99] The order sought to "pause" all U.S. foreign assistance for 90 days "pending reviews of such programs for programmatic efficiency and consistency with United States foreign policy." The Trump Administration's subsequent cancellation of thousands of U.S. assistance awards and contracts (including legislatively directed funding) and intention to close USAID as an independent agency reportedly has affected U.S. activities in Colombia focused on development, human rights, humanitarian needs, demining, and support to ethnic communities, among other programs.[100] Certain assistance aimed at enhancing security—including aviation support, counternarcotics programs, support for criminal justice entities, and training and regional security programs led by Colombia—has restarted following the pause.[101]

Still, some analysts assert that U.S. stop-work orders in early 2025 hindered the ongoing work of dozens of vetted units, aviation programs, and other security-related activities.[102] Other analysts predict that such security assistance may not be as effective without complementary USAID programming (such as land titling and crop substitution programs) and that criminal groups may proliferate in communities formerly benefitting from USAID programs.[103] Humanitarian organizations are concerned that reductions in U.S. humanitarian aid will not be easily replaced by the Colombian government or other donors; the United States reportedly provided 68% of the humanitarian aid Colombia received in 2024.[104]

Congress's consideration of what types and levels of foreign assistance to appropriate for Colombia in FY2026 and what conditions to place on that assistance could be informed by oversight efforts examining recent cuts and potential rescissions of foreign assistance. Congress may assess the effects of cuts in foreign assistance on the security, human rights, and humanitarian situation in Colombia; bilateral relations; and U.S.-bound drug flows from the country. Congress could enact legislation to authorize certain assistance to Colombia and/or continue to legislatively direct how assistance to Colombia should be spent.

[99] Executive Order 14169 of January 20, 2025, "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid," 90 *Federal Register* 8619, January 30, 2025; and U.S. Department of State, "Secretary of State Rubio Joint Press Availability," February 6, 2025.

[100] Joint status report by Global Health Council et al., Global Health Council v. Trump, No. 25-cv-402 (D.C. District Ct. February 26, 2025); Notice by Defense in Clarification by Marco Rubio et al., Global Health Council v. Trump, No. 25-cv-402 (D.C. District Ct. February 26, 2025); "USAID Terminated Awards: 2025," *Punchbowl News*, March 6, 2025, https://punchbowl.news/usaid-terminated-awards_2025-03-06_clean/; U.S. Department of State, "Briefings: Department Press Briefing," March 28, 2025; and Jorge Valencia, "How Trump's Ending of U.S.A.I.D. Threatens a Nation's Fragile Peace," *New York Times*, May 5, 2025.

[101] CRS correspondence with the State Department, April 23, 2025.

[102] Samantha Schmidt et al., "Trump's Aid Freeze Hampers Anti-Narcotics Programs in Latin America," *Washington Post*, March 16, 2025.

[103] Jorge Valencia, "How Trump's Ending of U.S.A.I.D. Threatens a Nation's Fragile Peace," *New York Times*, May 5, 2025.

[104] ACAPS, *Colombia: Anticipated Implications of U.S. Stop-Work Orders and Subsequent Cuts*, April 16, 2025.

Defense and Security Cooperation

Colombia has been one of the United States' most important defense partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. In May 2022, President Biden designated Colombia as a major non-NATO ally for the purposes of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. §§2151 et seq.), and the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. §§2751 et seq.).[105] That designation grants Colombia privileged access to U.S. military training, equipment, and cooperative research and development projects, among other benefits.[106] A July 2024 Defense Bilateral Working Group meeting addressed emerging challenges (cyber, climate change, and counter-unmanned aerial systems); improving regional security cooperation; building defense sector institutions; countering transnational criminal organizations; and strengthening information-related capabilities.[107] Border security emerged as another prominent focus of bilateral security cooperation, as irregular migration surged from 2022 to 2024 through the Darién Gap region between Colombia and Panama.

Colombia receives the bulk of all Department of Defense (DOD) training and equipment provided to Latin America and the Caribbean, and also benefits from embedded U.S. advisors working on the modernization of military personnel, intelligence, and broader institutional practices. DOD provides training and equipment, among other support, through multiple accounts, the largest of which are authorized under Title 10, Section 333, of the *U.S. Code* for building the capacity of foreign security forces. In compliance with Leahy Law vetting requirements (22 U.S.C. §2378d), U.S. agencies continue to vet individuals and units for potential human rights abuses prior to delivering training and/or equipment.[108] In FY2024, $15 million of the total $28.7 million in Section 333 funds provided to Colombia supported training for Colombian pilots and maintenance on U.S.-provided rotary-wing aircraft.[109] In addition to addressing security objectives, U.S. and Colombian forces collaborate on humanitarian programs to provide emergency assistance and infrastructure to vulnerable communities and have implemented humanitarian demining programs. DOD has donated 10 rapidly deployable emergency response bridges to help the Colombian military deliver emergency assistance rapidly in the event of a disaster.[110]

Colombia has become a key implementer of U.S. security assistance programs and a leader of multinational maritime interdiction operations.[111] Through the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation, Colombian police and military officers trained more than 50,000 police and other individuals from across the region from 2013 through September 2024.[112] In May 2025, Admiral Alvin Holsey, Commander of U.S. Southern Command, met with Colombian

[105] White House, "Memorandum on the Designation of Colombia as a Major Non-NATO Ally," Presidential Determination No. 2022-14, May 23, 2022.

[106] U.S. Department of State, "Major Non-NATO Ally Status," fact sheet, https://www.state.gov/major-non-nato-ally-status/.

[107] U.S. DOD, "Readout of the 19th Annual U.S.-Colombia Defense Bilateral Working Group," press release, August 6, 2024.

[108] CRS In Focus IF10575, *Global Human Rights: Security Forces Vetting ("Leahy Laws")*, by Michael A. Weber.

[109] CRS correspondence with DOD, October 29, 2024.

[110] CRS correspondence with DOD, October 29, 2024.

[111] In July 2024, the Colombian Navy led Operation Orion, a 62-nation, 45-day operation that resulted in drug seizures worth $4.9 billion. CRS correspondence with U.S. Department of State, October 21, 2024.

[112] U.S. Department of State, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR): Colombia*, March 2025, vol. 1, p. 27 (hereinafter U.S. Department of State, *INCSR: Colombia*, 2025).

Minister of Defense Pedro Sánchez to discuss U.S.-Colombia bilateral defense cooperation and efforts to strengthen regional security.[113]

Congress plays critical roles in designing and overseeing security cooperation programs and in evaluating whether security cooperation activities are aligned with and meet U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives.[114] Pursuant to statutory authorities, the executive branch must regularly notify relevant committees about some security cooperation activities. Congress may exercise oversight by using annual authorizing legislation to establish temporary authorities or by modifying the *U.S. Code* on an enduring basis, reviewing planned activities and obligations, mandating reports, or holding relevant hearings.

Efforts Against Illegal Drugs and Organized Crime

For decades, controlling the flow of cocaine from Colombia to the United States has been a top congressional goal, albeit one that has been difficult to achieve given U.S. demand and cocaine's role as a primary source of revenue for criminal and illegally armed groups. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cocaine contributed to an estimated 21,877 U.S. overdose deaths in 2024, down from 29,911 in 2023.[115] The U.S. State Department assesses that some 97% of cocaine in the United States originates in Colombia.[116] According to the State Department, Colombia remains a committed U.S. counternarcotics partner and a regional leader in drug interdiction, but coca cultivation and potential cocaine production in the country reached record levels in 2023 before appearing to stabilize in 2024.[117] Although coca cultivation has been increasing for more than a decade since the end of aerial spraying, the Petro government's drug policy has apparently exacerbated that trend.[118]

Other sources of illicit revenue for criminal organizations and illegally armed groups involved in cocaine trafficking include extortion, illicit mining, illegal logging, and alien smuggling. With gold prices at record levels, such groups have expanded their involvement in illicit mining, often in areas where coca crops are cultivated.[119] Illicit mining is associated with environmental destruction, human trafficking, and money laundering.[120] Illegal logging and deforestation in some regions are also closely correlated with coca cultivation; some activities conducted on

[113] U.S. Southern Command Public Affairs Office, "Colombian Minister of Defense Visits SOUTHCOM," press release, May 5, 2025.

[114] This sentence draws from CRS In Focus IF11677, *Defense Primer: DOD Title 10 Security Cooperation*, by Christina L. Arabia.

[115] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, "Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts," May 14, 2025.

[116] U.S. Department of State, *INCSR: Colombia*, 2025.

[117] U.S. Department of State, *INCSR: Colombia*, 2025, pp. 168-172; UNODC, *Colombia: Monitoreo de los Territorios con Presencia de Cultivos de Coca 2023*, October 2024.

[118] Coca cultivation rose significantly after the Colombian Constitutional Court prohibited aerial spraying of coca crops with glyphosate in 2015 because of related health concerns raised by the World Health Organization and the policy's lack of prior consultation with ethnic communities. See, for example, Luis Jaime Acosta and Oliver Griffin, "Colombia Court Upholds Conditions for Restarting Aerial Coca Fumigation," Reuters, July 18, 2019. Petro's drug policy aims to foster community agriculture projects and build infrastructure to get crops to markets. Observers have questioned whether the government can obtain the necessary domestic and foreign investment to implement its strategy and whether it has the capacity to implement such a complicated strategy involving multiple institutions. Lara Loiza, "The Opportunities and Pitfalls of Colombia's Ambitious New Drug Policy," *InSight Crime*, September 12, 2023.

[119] UNODC, *Colombia: Explotacion de Oro de Aluvión: Resumen Ejecutivo: 2022*, pp. 2, 4.

[120] Sofia Gonzalez et al., *Dirty Money and Destruction of the Amazon*, The Fact Coalition, 2023, pp. 53-54.

illegally cleared land (including cattle ranching) are used as fronts for laundering drug profits.[121] Illicit mining, logging, and drug trafficking have wrought particular damage in remote areas of the Amazon near Colombia's borders with Brazil and Peru.[122] While deforestation declined in 2023, many experts assert that the decline did not occur because of government efforts but as a result of the FARC-EMC prohibiting deforestation in areas under its control (as the FARC used to do).[123] Groups, such as the *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*, have earned billions by maintaining alien smuggling routes to and through the Darién Gap.[124]

Under the Petro government, coca eradication has declined as interdiction and other forms of law enforcement cooperation with the United States have continued. The number of hectares of coca crop eradicated declined by 79.1% from 2022 to 2024.[125] In 2024, Colombian police seized more than 960 metric tons of cocaine and cocaine base, a 13.5% increase from 2023. Extraditions of drug kingpins have continued. Colombia remains one of the "most cooperative" U.S. extradition partners, according to the U.S. Department of State.[126] In 2023, Colombia opened a U.S.-backed, multinational Joint Group Against Organized Crime unit that enables law enforcement from across South America to share intelligence and facilitate arrests. Colombia also hosts semi-annual multinational maritime interdiction operations.

Each year, Congress requires the President to identify "major illicit drug producing" and/or "major drug transit" countries (22 U.S.C. §2291j-1); a subset of these countries may be subject to U.S. foreign assistance restrictions. For FY2025, Colombia is 1 of 23 such countries identified by President Biden.[127] President Biden certified that Colombia is making adequate steps to combat drug trafficking. Colombian officials have expressed concerns that President Trump may not certify Colombia's efforts as adequate for FY2026.[128] If the Trump Administration were to determine that Colombia "failed demonstrably" to meet international and U.S. standards for counternarcotics efforts pursuant to 22 U.S.C. §2291j-1 by the end of September 2025, then it could consider whether or not to grant a national interest waiver.[129] Absent a national interest waiver, certain foreign aid to Colombia could then be prohibited pursuant to Section 706 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (P.L. 107-228, 22 U.S.C. §2291j-1).

Countering the flow of illicit narcotics from Colombia remains an important priority for the U.S. government, although opinions vary on how to achieve that end. Congress could weigh in on whether the Administration should determine that Colombia has failed to meet its antidrug commitments and whether that determination should trigger further cuts in U.S. assistance for FY2026. Congress also may reintroduce and/or consider new stand-alone bills to address other illicit activities. One example, S. 797, introduced during the 118th Congress, would have required the Administration to develop a strategy to combat illicit gold mining in Latin America.

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[121] Perla Rivadeneyra et al., "A Spatial Regression Analysis of Colombia's Narcodeforestation with Factor Decomposition of Multiple Predictors," *Scientific Reports*, vol. 13 (2023), Article 13485.

[122] International Crisis Group, *A Three Border Problem: Holding Back the Amazon's Criminal Frontiers*, Latin America Briefing No. 51, July 17, 2024.

[123] Joshua Collins, "Armed Groups as Forest Protectors in Colombia: A Risky Dynamic," *Sierra*, October 16, 2023.

[124] International Crisis Group, *Total Peace*.

[125] Unless otherwise noted, the rest of this paragraph draws from U.S. Department of State, *INCSR: Colombia*, 2025, pp. 168-172.

[126] CRS correspondence with the U.S. Department of State, October 21, 2024.

[127] White House, "Memorandum on Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2025," September 15, 2024.

[128] "Colombia Warns Trump Against Drug Blacklisting," Agence France-Presse, March 17, 2025.

[129] The term "failed demonstrably" is described in 22 U.S.C. §2291j-1.

Migration Collaboration

Colombia has received U.S. humanitarian and development assistance as it has become the destination for roughly 2.8 million of the 7.8 million total migrants and refugees who have fled Venezuela since 2014.[130] From FY2018 to FY2024, U.S. humanitarian assistance for Venezuelan migrants and Colombian host communities totaled roughly $841.6 million, with emergency food assistance prioritized and complemented by nutrition and job creation programs.[131] Colombia has also received some $250 million in U.S. development assistance to help Venezuelan migrants—approximately 2.4 million of whom have received temporary residence status in Colombia—integrate into Colombian society.[132] In September 2024, the Colombian government announced the signing of a decree that could grant legal status to up to 600,000 Venezuelan migrants who are guardians of minors living in Colombia.[133]

Colombia is working with the United States and Panama to stem irregular migrant flows. The Gulf Clan reportedly controls migrant smuggling into and through the Darién Gap, which borders a region of Colombia that lacks state presence.[134] On July 1, 2024, the Biden Administration signed a memorandum of understanding with newly inaugurated Panamanian President José Raúl Mulino's government to work jointly to reduce the number of migrants being smuggled through the Darién Gap.[135] Petro and Mulino also have agreed to combat human smuggling and other illicit activities in the region and improve humanitarian conditions there.[136] In August 2024, Colombia, Panama, and the United States reiterated their 2023 commitment to deter the flow of people through the Darién Gap; deterrence efforts have included the repatriation of some migrants by Panamanian officials.[137] In March 2025, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem signed a biometric-information-sharing agreement with Colombia's foreign minister during the first cabinet-level visit to Colombia of the second Trump Administration.

Congress in its oversight role could monitor U.S. and Colombian policies aimed at integrating Venezuelan migrants into Colombian society, preventing irregular flows through Colombia, and combating migrant smuggling by criminal groups. Congress could consider whether to increase, decrease, or maintain levels of support for such efforts, including humanitarian programs previously administered by USAID, through authorization or appropriations legislation. Congress also could consider whether or not to enact stand-alone legislation to address humanitarian conditions faced by Venezuelan migrants and the communities sheltering them, and whether or not to support migration control efforts by Colombia and other countries through which U.S.-bound migrants' transit.

[130] R4V, "Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela," December 3, 2024, https://www.r4v.info/en/refugeeandmigrants.

[131] USAID, "Venezuela Regional Crisis: Complex Emergency," Fact Sheet #4, FY2024, September 30, 2024; and CRS correspondence with USAID official, October 4, 2024.

[132] R4V, "Residence Permits and Regular Stay Granted," December 2024; and CRS correspondence with USAID official, October 4, 2024.

[133] White House, "Fact Sheet: Fourth Ministerial Meeting on the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection," September 26, 2024.

[134] Henry Shuldiner and Sergio Saffon, "Colombia's AGC Squeezes Profits from Control of Key Migration Choke Point," *InSight Crime*, April 4, 2024.

[135] White House, "Statement from NSC Spokesperson Adrienne Watson Welcoming the Agreement with Panama to Address Irregular Migration Jointly," July 1, 2024.

[136] CNN, "Interview with Colombian Foreign Minister Luis Gilberto Murillo," July 4, 2024.

[137] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Joint Statement: Trilateral on Irregular Migration," August 26, 2024; and "Panama Deports 29 Colombians on First US-Funded Flight," Associated Press, August 20, 2024.

Trade, Investment, and Tariffs

Some Members of Congress have expressed interest in strengthening U.S. trade and investment relations with countries in the Western Hemisphere as a bulwark to expanding PRC influence in the region. U.S.-Colombian goods trade has more than doubled since the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, an FTA signed in 2006 and entered into force in 2012 (P.L. 112-42). The United States is Colombia's top trading partner, accounting for 27% of its total trade in 2024; however, U.S. tariffs (discussed below) and Petro's decision to join China's BRI may affect trade flows. In 2023, the stock of U.S. direct investment in Colombia stood at $8.4 billion, 18.9% higher than in 2022.

In 2024, U.S.-Colombian trade in goods and services totaled $54.8 billion, up from $49.9 billion in 2023.[138] U.S. exports of goods and services to Colombia totaled $29.1 billion; the top-ranked merchandise exports included petroleum and crude oil, corn, soybean oilcake, and polymers of ethylene (plastics). U.S. imports from Colombia totaled $25.7 billion, led by crude oil, gold, coffee, petroleum oil (other than crude), and cut flowers. In comparison, Colombia exported $2.4 billion in goods to China and imported $14.8 billion in goods in 2024.[139]

On April 2, 2025, President Trump issued an E.O. declaring a national emergency over "a lack of reciprocity" in bilateral trade relationships and imposed a minimum tariff of 10% on most U.S. imports (including those from Colombia), effective April 5, 2025.[140] In addition to that 10% global tariff, Colombia is also subject to 25% tariffs on most imports of steel and aluminum, under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (19 U.S.C. §1862, as amended).[141] The tariffs do not appear to be constrained by the tariff elimination provisions in the FTA, under which most U.S. consumer, industrial, and agricultural goods are eligible to enter Colombia duty free.[142]

In addition to its FTA with the United States, Colombia also has concluded FTAs with the European Union, Canada, and most countries in Latin America. Colombia is a founding member of the Pacific Alliance, an initiative intended to deepen economic integration with Chile, Mexico, and Peru and to serve as an export platform to the Asia-Pacific region. In April 2020, Colombia became the third Latin American member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Colombia also participates in the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity, an initiative aimed at deepening regional economic integration, innovation, resilience, and competitiveness.[143] Some U.S. policymakers have viewed "near shoring"—the movement of manufacturing from Asia to countries closer to the United States—as a potential opportunity to expand U.S.-Colombian commercial relations.

[138] Information in this paragraph is from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Colombia – International Trade and Investment Country Facts," https://apps.bea.gov/international/factsheet/factsheet.html#204.

[139] Colombian National Customs Office, as cited by Trade Data Monitor.

[140] Executive Order 14257 of April 2, 2025, "Regulating Imports with a Reciprocal Tariff to Rectify Trade Practices That Contribute to Large and Persistent Annual United States Goods Trade Deficits," 90 *Federal Register* 15041, April 7, 2025.

[141] CRS Insight IN12519, *Expanded Section 232 Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum*, by Kyla H. Kitamura and Keigh E. Hammond.

[142] Under the free-trade agreement, the remaining Colombian tariffs on sensitive goods are to be phased out between 2026 and 2030. Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, *2025 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers*, March 31, 2025, p. 96.

[143] U.S. Department of State, "Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity," https://www.state.gov/americas-partnership-for-economic-prosperity/.

Congress could conduct oversight of U.S. tariffs imposed on Colombia and examine how those tariffs are impacting Colombia's economy and/or affecting the economic ties that have developed since the U.S.-Colombia FTA entered into force. Congress could consider a resolution to end the 10% global tariff or to end tariffs on certain countries such as Colombia. Separately, Congress could consider measures to incentivize Colombia to maintain its trade and investment ties to the United States. Congress could consider whether or not to enact legislation or appropriate funding to the Development Finance Corporation or the Inter-American Development Bank to further that end.

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