

## Latin America and the Caribbean

---

### Andes

---

➔ **Colombia** Govt announced plans to open talks with two armed criminal groups, including Gaitanista Army (EGC), while ceasefire with ELN expired; clashes between rival EMC factions intensified.

*Govt and National Liberation Army (ELN) failed to extend ceasefire.* Ceasefire between govt and ELN 3 Aug expired, with sides unable to reach agreement to extend terms. ELN continued to insist that talks, frozen since May, can only resume when govt meets list of demands, including removal of ELN from list of “Organised Armed Groups”; insurgency rejects designation, arguing it is a political organisation. Peace Commissioner Otty Patiño 19 Aug said move would have legal consequences, while military warned it would limit their ability to use lethal force against group. ELN late Aug resumed combat against state, attacking police stations and blowing up oil pipelines in Arauca department. Meanwhile, ELN 12-19 Aug imposed “armed strike” in five southernmost municipalities of Chocó department amid threat from Gaitanista Army of Colombia (EGC) (previously Gaitanista Self-Defence Forces of Colombia), with 50,000 people experiencing some form of confinement. ELN also faced pressure from EGC and EMC in Bolívar and Arauca departments.

*Govt announced new peace dialogues with two armed criminal groups.* Govt 5 Aug made public July resolution opening dialogue with EGC, country’s largest armed criminal organisation, which could open opportunities to de-escalate regional conflicts between different armed groups. Govt 8 Aug published similar resolution dated one week earlier authorising talks with Conquistador Self Defence Forces of the Sierra Nevada (ACSN), regional outfit present along Atlantic coast. In contrast to negotiations with insurgencies that are legally considered to be political, like ELN, talks will focus on improving conditions in areas of armed group presence and working toward demobilisation.

*Clashes between EMC factions escalated.* Clashes intensified between rival factions of FARC dissident group known as EMC, notably in Tolima and Huila departments, and between faction led by Iván Mordisco and military following collapse of ceasefire in July. Mordisco 21 Aug also declared war in Amazon region on faction led by alias Calarcá (which remains in talks with govt), raising risk of clashes there (see Amazon).

➔ **Ecuador** Violence persisted in strategic drug trafficking enclaves of Ecuador, while relations with Mexico remained strained.

*Ecuador’s top court approved state of exception.* Constitutional Court 1 Aug partially approved state of exception decree issued by President Noboa in early July

on grounds of serious internal unrest rather than internal armed conflict. Noboa 8 Aug decreed new curfews in 19 cantons and one parish in Guayas, Los Ríos, Orellana and Azuay provinces – which are all facing escalating violence – as supplement measure to state of exception. Noboa 30 Aug renewed state of exception for additional 30 days; curfew will also remain in place.

*Violence continued despite efforts to clamp down on criminal activities.* Notably, Los Lobos and dissident faction Los Lobos Sao box 13 Aug clashed over control of mining area in Camilo Ponce Enriquez canton, Azuay province, killing five. Separately, five prisoners 5 Aug escaped from El Rodeo Prison in Portoviejo city, Manabí province, despite militarisation of prisons. Meanwhile, Attorney General's Office 19 Aug charged one lawyer and secretary of judicial unit in canton of Valencia, Los Ríos province, for allegedly aiding three individuals from Albanian mafia.

*Frictions between Quito and Mexico City persisted.* Mexico City 5 Aug urged Quito to grant safe passage to former VP Jorge Glas, whom authorities seized from Mexican embassy in April, requesting his transfer to third country from where he can travel to Mexico to seek asylum. Quito next day rejected request, reiterating that the granting of diplomatic asylum to Glas is illegal.

↓ **Venezuela Govt-controlled Supreme Court ratified President Maduro's victory claim in July election, triggering further outcry from foreign govts as crackdown on opposition supporters deepened.**

*Supreme Court validated Maduro's re-election.* Govt-controlled Supreme Court 22 Aug ratified President Maduro's victory claim in July poll, which pitted him against opposition candidate, Edmundo González, who also claimed victory. Court said ruling was "supported by the tally reports issue by each of the vote machines", but did not share any tallies to substantiate claims; electoral authorities, meanwhile, had not provided breakdown of results by polling station by end of Aug despite both domestic and international calls to do so.

*International outcry over election continued.* Foreign govts continued to express concern about poll, while UN Panel of Electoral Experts 9 Aug said lack of tabulated results had "no precedent in contemporary democratic elections". Supreme Court ruling failed to convince most capitals that election results were credible. Notably, U.S. and ten Latin American states 23 Aug warned ruling "lacks all credibility, given the overwhelming evidence that González received the most votes", while Organization of American States same day said electoral authorities provided numbers that "showed mathematical impossibilities". Brazil and Colombia sought negotiated solution to crisis, with Brazil even suggesting new elections, but there were no indications either Maduro or González are willing to contemplate new poll.

*Govt repression persisted.* Prosecutor's office 30 Aug threatened González with arrest warrant if he failed to appear for questioning about opposition's publication of electoral results, which it claimed proved Maduro's defeat; despite warning, González same day missed third and final summons. Meanwhile, domestic indignation at contested election continued. Maduro and other key govt figures 12 Aug dismissed opposition protests as conspiracy by "fascist oligarchy" backed by global right-wing forces. Crackdown on protests as of 31 Aug had resulted in 27 deaths and over 2,400 detentions, including some leading opposition figures

snatched off the streets, in what Inter-American Human Rights Commission 28 Aug called a campaign of “state terrorism”; journalists, human rights activists and others continued to face repression. Govt 15 Aug approved anti-NGO law, which critics fear could force many organisations to shutter.

---

## Amazon

---

➡ **Amazon**    **Intensifying conflict between military and EMC faction raised concerns about security at October COP16 Biodiversity Summit in Colombia; Indigenous groups faced violence from land invaders.**

*In Colombia, armed group violence raised security concerns ahead of COP16.* Intensifying clashes in Aug between military and faction of EMC led by Iván Mordisco, as well as threat of fighting between rival EMC factions in Amazon region (see Colombia), elevated concerns about insecurity at COP16 Biodiversity Summit in Oct in Cali city. Fears had escalated in July when EMC threatened to target summit after talks between Mordisco’s faction and govt collapsed, though Mordisco later promised not to disrupt it. FM Luis Gilberto Murillo 27 Aug said security forces have an operation in place to guarantee safety of summit participants. Meanwhile, guerrilla group National Liberation Army (ELN) 26 Aug attacked major oil pipeline in Saravena municipality, Arauca department, causing considerable environmental destruction.

*In Peru and Brazil, Indigenous groups faced violence from land invaders.* In Brazil, farmers 3 Aug attacked Guarani Kaiowá Indigenous community over land claims in Douradina municipality, Mato Grosso do Sul State, injuring eight; unidentified perpetrator next day set tents erected by Indigenous community ablaze. Attacks reflect trend of escalating violence against Indigenous groups and land invasions in Amazon region. In Peru, for example, members of Mashco Piro, an uncontacted Indigenous group, late July attacked illegal loggers encroaching on their land with bows and arrows.

---

## Central America and Mexico

---

➡ **El Salvador**    **Authorities renewed state of exception, while concerns grew over judicial independence.**

*Authorities renewed state of exception.* Legislative Assembly 8 Aug extended state of exception for another 30 days, which was first imposed in March 2022 amid high levels of gang violence, though in 29 Aug interview with Times magazine, President Bukele said govt hopes to lift measure “in the near future”. Though authorities have consistently pointed to measure’s role in reducing homicides, Attorney General’s 14 Aug report illustrated reported gender violence is growing, with 130 femicides and 8,984 cases of sexual violence documented between June 2023 and May 2024. Meanwhile, newspaper La Prensa Gráfica 15 Aug reported govt had disbanded Specialised Unit for Cases of Disappeared Persons; enquiries will now be handled by new Sub-directorate Against Organised Crime. Human Rights Institute of the

Central American University same day called move “symbolic and objective dissolution” that could hinder search for justice for families of missing persons.

*Appointment of new judges to Supreme Court risks impartiality of judiciary.* President of Legislative Assembly Ernesto Castro 13 Aug announced that parliament, where President Bukele’s party has majority, will appoint seven new magistrates to 15-member Supreme Court of Justice, despite constitutional provision that allows renewal of only one third of judiciary every three years.

➡ **Mexico Claudia Sheinbaum prepared to assume presidency in October as authorities pressed ahead with judicial reform, criminal violence persisted, and relations with U.S. remained strained.**

*Sheinbaum prepared to assume office as Mexico pushed ahead with judicial reform.* Federal Electoral Tribunal 14 Aug confirmed that Claudia Sheinbaum had received 59.7% of vote share in 2 June presidential election, validating her landslide victory and resolving challenges presented by opposition. Meanwhile, legislative commission for constitutional reform 26 Aug pre-approved judicial reform, likely to be passed in Sept when newly-elected Congress takes office; if approved, judges (including in Supreme Court) will be chosen by popular vote. Outgoing President López Obrador 27 Aug “paused” govt’s relationship with U.S. and Canadian embassies after both ambassadors 22 Aug expressed concern about impact of reform on rule of law and economic ties.

*Criminal violence persisted, including in Guanajuato and Sinaloa states.* Authorities 1 Aug found four men shot dead near Cancún city, Quintana Roo state, allegedly for providing protection to human smugglers, reflecting increased violence related to migration along Caribbean coast. Journalist Alejandro Martinez was shot dead 4 Aug in Celaya city, Guanajuato state; Guanajuato has highest number of homicides of any state in Mexico, with 18 police officers killed in Celaya in 2024, largely due to turf wars between rival gangs. Officials linked ten murders 16, 17 Aug in Sinaloa state to Sinaloa cartel infighting following late July arrest of group’s leader, Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada, in U.S. state of Texas (see below).

*Drug lord arrest continued to spark controversy.* Writing from U.S. prison, El Mayo 10 Aug claimed Guzmán López, son of former Sinaloa Cartel leader “El Chapo”, lured him into meeting with Sinaloa state officials before López kidnapped him and brought him to Texas. Mexican officials reiterated calls to U.S. to provide more information about arrest, while López Obrador 6 Aug claimed López organised arrest in pre-arranged deal with U.S. for leniency in his own criminal proceedings. Federal prosecutors 21 Aug announced charges against López for kidnapping, issuing warrant for his arrest despite his custody in U.S., 29 Aug announced investigation into possible participation of López’s brother, alias “El Ratón”, in kidnapping.

↓ **Nicaragua Regime shuttered 1,500 NGOs, marking largest number of closures in single day since crackdown began in 2018; Managua severed ties with Brasília.**

*Govt shuttered over 1,500 NGOs and intensified crackdown on Catholic Church.* In record number of closures since 2018 anti-govt protests, govt 19 Aug shut down 1,500 NGOs in single day, many of them religious; authorities next day shuttered 151 more and 29 Aug closed another 169, bringing total number shut down since 2018

to well over 5,000; UN human rights agency 20 Aug called move “deeply alarming”, warning of “severe impact of these measures on rights to freedom of association, expression [and] religion”. Earlier, regime 12 Aug cancelled legal status of Diocesan Caritas Association of Matagalpa and 14 other NGOs in diocese; govt 17 Aug also introduced new operating requirements for civil society groups, requiring them to obtain state approval for projects in effort to increase govt oversight on civil society. Meanwhile, regime 1, 2 Aug arrested 11 priests and 8 Aug exiled seven of them to Rome, 10 and 11 Aug arrested two more priests before banishing them to Rome; moves come in context of systematic attacks against Catholic Church.

*Relations with Brazil deteriorated.* Managua 8 Aug expelled Brazil’s ambassador to Nicaragua for refusing to participate in event celebrating 45th anniversary of Sandinista Revolution; Brasilia same day retaliated in kind.

---

## **Caribbean**

---

➔ **Haiti Insecurity persisted despite deployment of police officers from Kenya-led security mission, which remained hamstrung by funding and equipment shortfalls; efforts to form electoral council stalled.**

*Gang violence expanded beyond capital.* Justice and Security Minister 12 Aug raised concerns about resurgence of gang violence in several parts of country, particularly noting attacks on Ganthier Customs Office and Monfort Institute for deaf children in Croix-des-Bouquets commune north east of capital Port-au-Prince. Confrontations between members of Viv Ansanm gang alliance and civilians in capital’s Solino neighbourhood 15 Aug caused at least a dozen deaths and injuries on both sides. Prison break in Saint-Marc city 16 Aug resulted in 12 fatalities. Demonstrations 19 Aug broke out in Solino and other neighbourhoods of Port-au-Prince to demand support from police in defending their neighbourhoods. Meanwhile, U.S. 20 Aug sanctioned former president Michel Martelly for sponsoring gangs, facilitating drug trafficking and money laundering.

*Kenya-led foreign security mission faced challenges.* Kenyan police officers from multinational security mission, tasked with battling gangs, carried out more joint patrols and targeted missions. Kenyan mission chief General Otunge 12 Aug told representative of Organization of American States that full operations against gangs were expected to begin in near future, without stating exact date. PM Conille 28 Aug announced joint operation between police and Kenyan officers to oust gangs from “one of the roughest neighbourhoods of capital”, but did not provide further details. Challenges with mission persisted, however, including limited resources, uncertain funding and need for reinforcements. U.S. and France 23 Aug delivered 26 armoured vehicles and equipment.

*Efforts to form electoral council stalled amid fragile political situation.* PM Conille 7 Aug stressed in BBC interview that transitional govt is “very fragile” and in need of support from international community. He also warned it will be “extremely difficult” to hold elections before Feb 2026 without more security support and humanitarian aid. Meanwhile, Transitional Presidential Council struggled to form Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) to organise vote. Civil society groups, Catholic Church and press associations had agreed to nominate CEP representative but

internal divisions led to pushback against selected individuals, stalling CEP's formation.