



2. Security situation

2.1. Armed groups

There is a wide range of criminal actors operating in Venezuela, including FARC dissident groups, the ELN, and a number of Colombian paramilitary successor organisations.^{[378](#)} Domestic structures include *megabandas*, notably the Tren de Aragua and Tren del Llano, alongside *sistemas (sindicatos mineros)*, *pranes*, and numerous regional or local gangs.^{[379](#)} Approximately 18 000 smaller gangs are estimated to operate across the country, many of which provide logistical, territorial, or operational support to larger criminal organisations, including the *megabandas*.^{[380](#)}

ACLED provides a map of the presence of armed groups in Venezuela from October 2025:

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Map 2: Presence of armed groups in Venezuela, October 2025.^{[381](#)}

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Transparencia Venezuela, The faces of extortion in Venezuela 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 17; New York Times (The), Why It's Hard to Run Venezuela, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

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Transparencia Venezuela, The faces of extortion in Venezuela 2024, March 2025, [url](#), p. 17; New York Times (The), Why It's Hard to Run Venezuela, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

- [380](#)

El Debate, La red criminal que sostiene a Maduro en Venezuela: megabandas, pandillas y cartels, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

- [381](#)

In ACLED, Q&A: How stable is post-Maduro Venezuela?, 12 January 2026, [url](#)