



2.4. State response

Transparencia Venezuela reported that information published by security agencies about security operations is discretionary and inconsistent, and that authorities withhold data such as budgets and execution of budgets, annual plans, completed goals, ongoing programs, evaluations, procurement records, staffing numbers, recruitment and dismissal procedures, and information on complaints filed against them.[608](#) Regarding extortion, for example, security agencies do not publish official statistics or patterns.[609](#) The National Office Against Organized Crime and Financing of Terrorism (ONCDFT, Oficina Nacional Contra la Delincuencia Organizada y Financiamiento al Terrorismo), the governing body responsible for designing and implementing public policies and strategies against organised crime and the financing of terrorism, does not publish information on its activities.[610](#)

According to Transparencia Venezuela, it is 'very difficult' for a Public Ministry prosecutor to investigate a crime independently without receiving counter-orders from superiors or political authorities.[611](#) Regional and municipal police forces also face severe budget constraints due to central-government cuts, which are often used as a form of political control, making policing an unattractive profession.[612](#) The lack of job stability for prosecutors and the absence of judicial independence fuel impunity and corruption.[613](#)

On 23 April 2026, Diosdado Cabello stated that more than 12 000 police officers had been dismissed for corruption as part of a broader cleanup of Venezuela's justice and security system, citing widespread extortion, severe delays in judicial processes, overcrowded detention centres, and schemes in which detainees had to pay for court transfers.[614](#) Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of this report.

In April 2023, Cabello also indicated that government intervention in the prison system has led to the dismantling of prison-gang structures led by *pranes*.[615](#) In September 2023, authorities raided the Tocarón prison, considered the main sanctuary and operations centre of Tren de Aragua, although most of the gang's leadership had long departed and the remaining inmates were transferred to other prisons without incident.[616](#) Sources reported that, although the authorities have weakened the pranato structure within prisons, the extortion scheme has effectively been assumed by prison officials, who now administer it directly.[617](#) At the same time, several senior pranes left the facilities without resistance to continue operating outside the prison system, in some cases after collecting their personal belongings, and none has been apprehended to date.[618](#)

According to local residents in border and mining areas, state officials, guerrillas, and criminal groups all commit abuses, but the region's remoteness means most mistreatment goes

unnoticed.[619](#) InSight Crime reported that Venezuelan military officers stationed along the border often decide whether drug shipments can move by land and may provide protection, particularly around clandestine airstrips in Zulia, Apure, and Táchira, which are used for cocaine flights to Central America and the Caribbean.[620](#) The military also facilitates illicit flights by manipulating air-defense radar, with officers allegedly taking payments to switch off radar or issue codes that make flights appear legal.[621](#) Humanitarian sources consulted by International Crisis Group indicated that the government does not acknowledge problems such as forced displacement, violence by state agents, and child labour.[622](#) Humanitarian organisations must obtain permission from local officials and approval from criminal organisations in order to operate in the field.[623](#) The control of border regions by illegal armed groups is facilitated by the protection of Venezuelan authorities.[624](#)

For additional information, see sections [1.5 Judicial system](#) and [1.6 State security forces](#).

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