Is it possible to continue to reduce the number of homicides in Colombia?

May 2018

One of the great advantages of the peace process with FARC has been the reduction of the homicide rate. Proof of this is that Colombia closed 2017 with a reduction of 24.3 per 100,000 inhabitants, the lowest in the past 41 years. However, the increased rate of lethal violence in the first four months of 2018 and the rising trend in some of the country's municipalities over the past two years are a call to the construction and implementation of a control policy that can maintain the trend towards reduction. This analysis is based on the latest data provided by the Colombian National Police.

Comparative of first four months of 2018 vs. first four months of 2017:

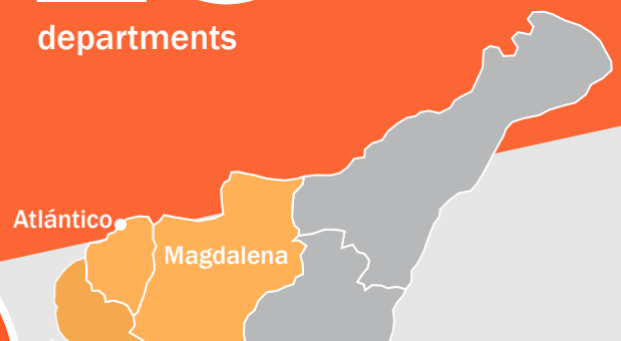
An increase in the country of

11% ↑

The increase was recorded in

19

departments



Homicide variation

CÓRDOBA

The number of homicide increased in

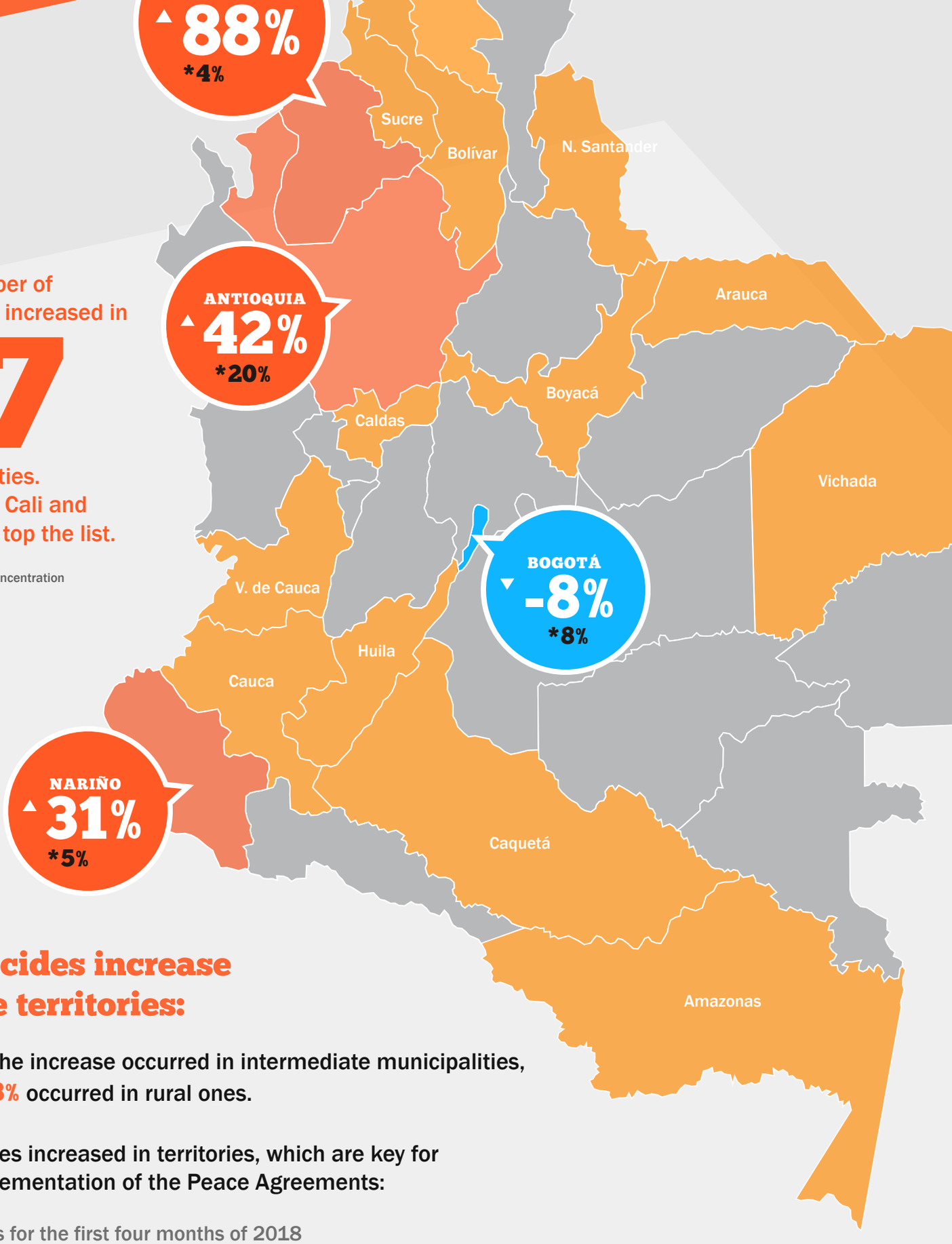
17

capital cities. Medellín, Cali and Montería top the list.

* Homicide concentration

Reduced

Increased



Homicides increase in the territories:

33% of the increase occurred in intermediate municipalities, while **28%** occurred in rural ones.

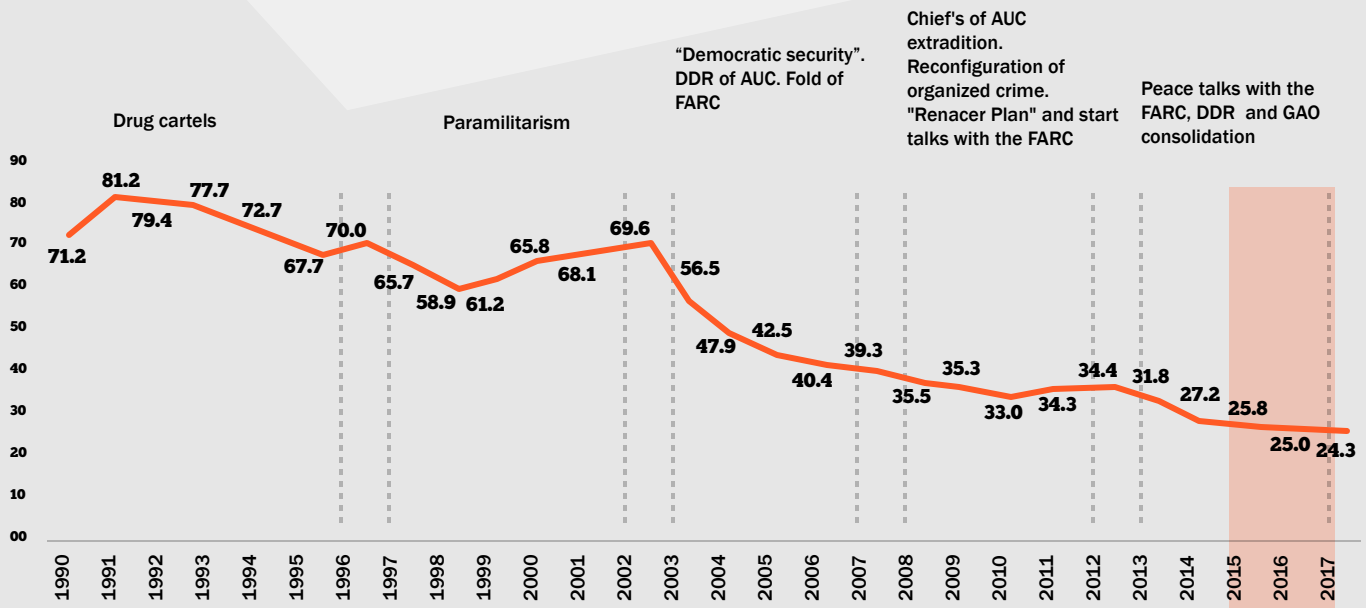
Homicides increased in territories, which are key for the implementation of the Peace Agreements:

Variations for the first four months of 2018

64.1%	45.3%	32.4%	27.7%
ETCR	PNIS	PDET	ZOMAC

Reductions are steadily contracting:

trend towards stagnation?



During the negotiations **and paramilitary demobilization** period **(2003 and 2006)**, there was a significant drop in the homicide rate. An average of **12.6%**

The beginning of negotiations with the **FARC and the ceasefire** coincides with significant decreases in the homicide rate **(2012-2014)** to an average of **7.3%**

The peace policy evidently brought with it a reduction of the homicide rate, but the downturn -over recent years- of this reduction of violent deaths, reveals the weakness of "negotiation" as a reduction strategy. **It is necessary to create a clear homicide reduction policy in order to contain the increase of homicidal violence.**

DOWNTURN IN THE REDUCTION OF THE HOMICIDE RATE

A reduction of the homicide rate - Average

2015 -16

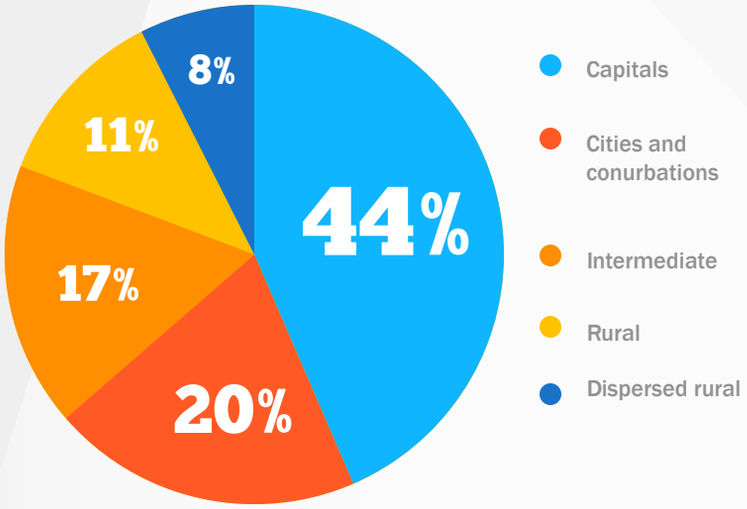
4%

2017

2.5%

Where is the homicide concentrated?

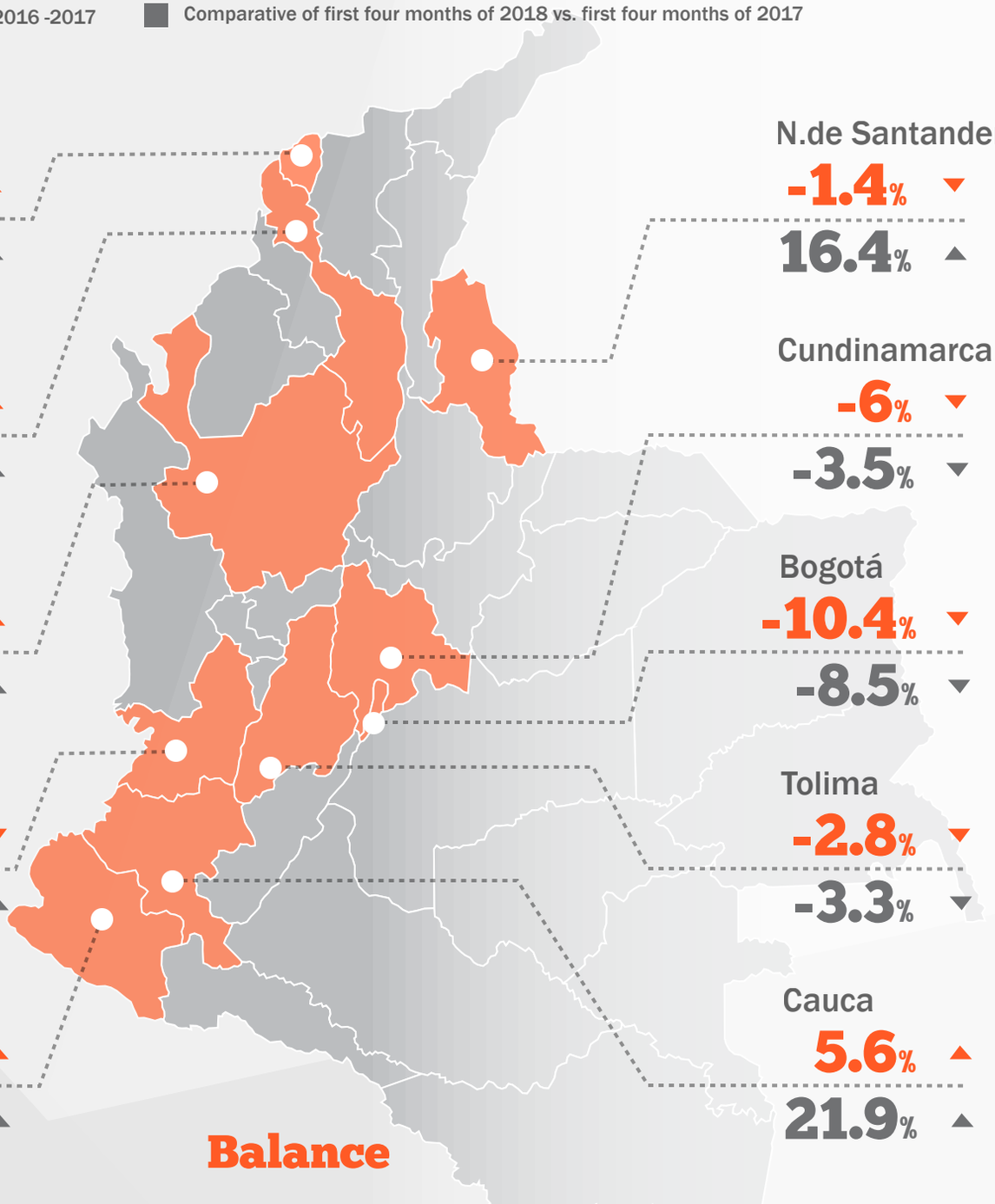
Over the past 5 years, the number of homicides has concentrated as follows:



10 departments, which concentrate the highest number of homicides

Annual changes 2016 -2017

Comparative of first four months of 2018 vs. first four months of 2017



Atlántico
0.9% ▲
3.6% ▲

Bolívar
3.9% ▲
4.8% ▲

Antioquia
2.3% ▲
42% ▲

V. del Cauca
-0.2% ▼
1.2% ▲

Nariño
18.1% ▲
30.7% ▲

N.de Santander
-1.4% ▼
16.4% ▲

Cundinamarca
-6% ▼
-3.5% ▼

Bogotá
-10.4% ▼
-8.5% ▼

Tolima
-2.8% ▼
-3.3% ▼

Cauca
5.6% ▲
21.9% ▲

Balance

Annual changes 2016 -2017

15 INCREASED

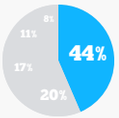
16 REDUCED

Comparative of first four months of 2018 vs. first four months of 2017

19 INCREASED

13 REDUCED

Capitals



Cali	Bogotá D.C.	Medellín	Barranquilla	Cúcuta
-3.5%	-10.4%	7.5%	-8.5%	-5.8%
8.1%	-8.5%	26.1%	0%	1.4%

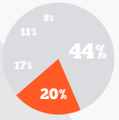
Balance

5.2% **4%**

15 INCREASED
17 REDUCED

18 INCREASED
12 REDUCED

Cities and conurbations



Tumaco	Cartago	Apartadó	Soacha	Caucasia
42.9%	56.5%	57.1%	-16.2%	45.9%
51%	10%	11%	-21%	211%

Balance

6.7% **9.2%**

43 INCREASED
38 REDUCED

36 INCREASED
36 REDUCED

Intermediate municipalities

Puerto Berrío	Tarazá	Chigorodó	Segovia	S. de Quilichao
65.2%	60%	42.3%	-30.9%	-35.1%
-46.2%	300%	-13.3%	112.5%	106.7%

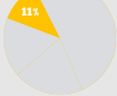
Balance

11.1% **22.6%**

101 INCREASED
132 REDUCED

104 INCREASED
88 REDUCED

Rural municipalities



Tibú	Olaya Herrera	Caguán	Tame	El Tambo
64% ▲	150% ▲	-3% ▼	-36% ▼	17% ▲
19.2% ▲	-16.7% ▼	42% ▲	125% ▲	-23% ▼

Balance

8.5% ▲ **18%** ▲

240 INCREASED ▲
227 REDUCED ▼

159 INCREASED ▲
162 REDUCED ▼

Territories with interventions

(key for the implementation of the agreement)

ETCR	PNIS	PDET	ZOMAC
34.6% ▲	29.1% ▲	15.4% ▲	9.6% ▲
64.1% ▲	45.3% ▲	32.4% ▲	27.7% ▲

Conclusions:

- So far in 2018, there is evidence of a sharp increase of homicides (the most pronounced rise of the last three years). The most probable scenario is that, as a consequence of this, the homicide rate at the end of the year will present an upward trend.

- It is evident that there is an explosion of violence in the rural and intermediate territories, despite homicide being broadly concentrated in capitals and cities. Where are the local policies of security and control?

- For the same department to show such variable behavior in terms of homicides in its municipalities (some have a greater crime rate than others), required different policies which focus on the dynamics of each of the municipalities.

- To understand, for example, the cause of the growing explosion of homicidal violence in the municipalities of Bajo Cauca in Antioquía, the territorial dynamics have to be analyzed individually.

- Homicides are increasing at a dangerous rate in a number of key municipalities for the implementation of the peace agreement.

- There is continued concern for the difference in the information presented in police reports **(11% increase)** and in reports by the Legal Medicine Institute **(5% increase)** during the first four months of 2018.

When and how?

2017

Months

Peak of violence: :

January
July
December

More homicides:

December concentrated 10%

of the total number of cases, maintaining the trend of previous years.

In general, each quarter of the year concenters 25% of the homicides. The municipalities with Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR) concentrated 32% of the cases in the last quarter of 2017, making them the most violent of the past 5 years for this set of municipalities.

Time and day

Close to

50%

of the homicides

continue to occur at weekends. The trend for cities and rural territories is similar.

Sunday

with

23%

concentrates the greatest number of cases. The trend is similar in all of the municipalities.

The timeframe

6:00p.m. -12:00a.m

concentrates 34% of the total number of homicides.

Critical points during the week:

Saturday 6pm to Sunday 6am:
concentrates **15%** of the homicides.

Sunday 6pm to Monday 6am:
concentrates **11%** of the homicides.

Victims

91.1%
were men

Homicides of children aged under 14 are distributed similarly between sexes:

60% boys

40% girls

The concentration of homicides per age group in 2017 remained stable in relation to 2016.

There were small reductions in the number of homicides in all the age groups, except for the **45 y 59** years age group, which increased to **6%**.

Age	Homicide	PCMH Rate
-14	1,2%	1.10
15-29	48,7%	45.97
30-44	32,7%	39.42
45-59	13,0%	19.38
Más de 60	4,5%	9.28

Nearly half of the victims of homicide in the country are youths between the ages of 15 and 29 years.

Although there is a decreasing trend in terms of the homicide of under 14 year olds, the figure is still considerable.

Over the past 5 years, these homicides have represented, on average **1.2%** of the total.

In **2017**, **Cali** Cali concentrated **15%** of child homicides, followed by

Medellín with **8%** and **Bogotá** with **8%**.

Nearly half of these homicides **48%** happened on public roads in general, for the group of minors, there was a slight reduction of **0.7%**. However, there was an increase of **62%** in the murder of babies between the ages of **0** and **2** years, and an increase of **1.6%** in the murder of **13** and **14** year-olds. The rest of the age ranges presented reductions.

In 2017, homicide by age in the group of minors concentrated as follows:

Age	Homicide	PCMH Rate
0-2 years	18.31%	0.99
3-5 years	13.38%	0.73
6-9 years	15.49%	0.85
10-12 years	9.15%	0.50
13-14 years	43.66%	2.41

Source: Colombian National Police

Locations

73% of the homicides took place on roads and public spaces:

Capital cities: **81%**

Rural areas: **56%**

This reveals a lack of police vigilance.

3% are committed at parties and entertainment venues:

Capital cities: **2.3%**

Rural areas: **4.4%**

Weapon used

Type of weapon	2016	2017	2018
Firearm	70.80%	72.02%	74.18%
Blade weapons	24.55%	22.42%	20.62%
Blunt object	3.43%	4.31%	3.30%

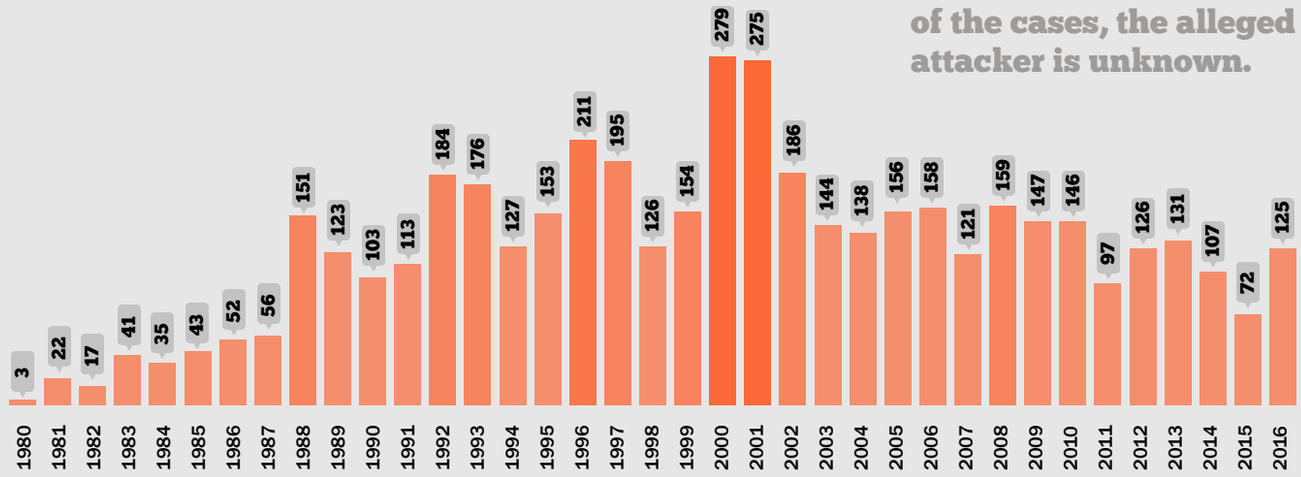
Firearms continue to constitute the most commonly used method, despite the restrictions on carrying weapons implemented in 2016.

There are slight increases in firearm use every year.

They are mainly used at night: **27%**

Killing social leaders

in **66%** of the cases, the alleged attacker is unknown.



Source: CNMH

They are a constant.

There is no clear policy to protect their lives.

There is no unified or official system that collects the data on the killing of social leaders.

Cauca, Antioquia, Valle del Cauca, Norte de Santander and Nariño are the departments where most social leaders are killed.

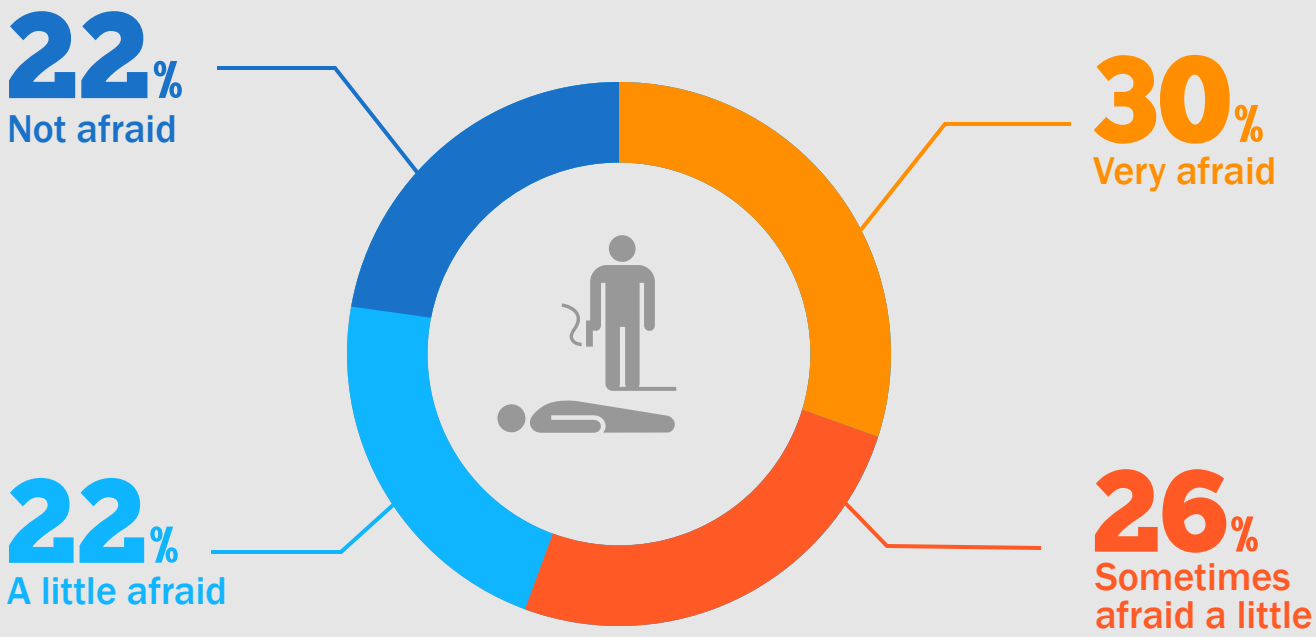
There is no clarity: **in 66% of the cases, the alleged attacker is unknown.**

In 2018 so far, the number of homicides has increased the most in San José de Uré (Córdoba), Cáceres (Antioquia), El Tarra (Norte de Santander) and Guapi (Cauca).

The fear prevails

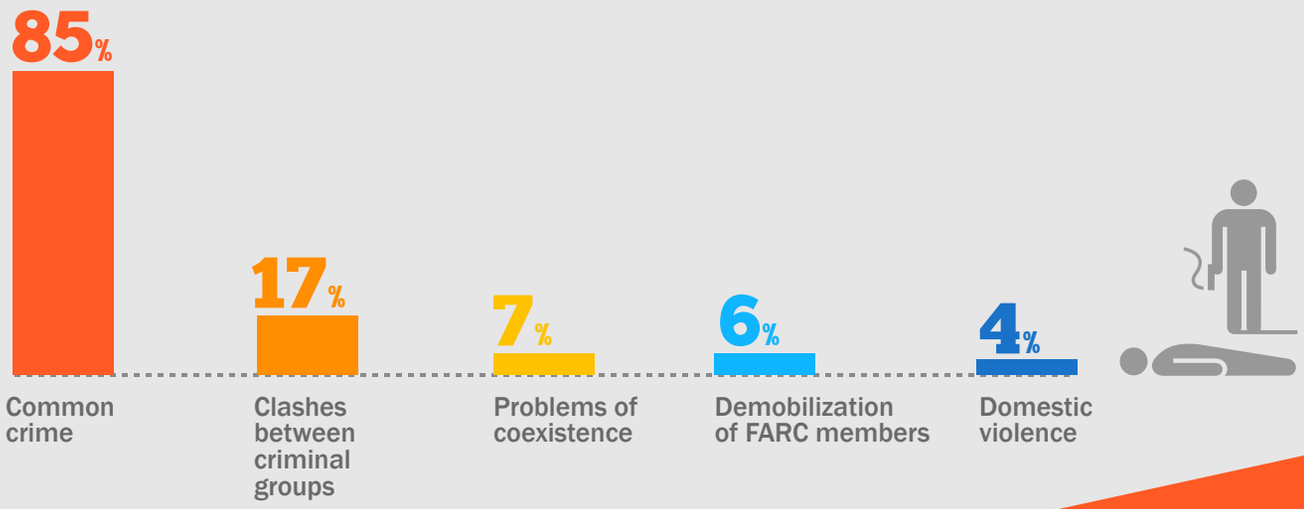
(Based on the perception survey carried out by the FIP –CNC en 2017)

Despite the significant reduction in the rate of homicides over the last two decades **78%** of Colombians are still, to some degree, afraid of being murdered.



Colombians' fear is not unfounded: how many times has a murder taken place in your neighborhood over the past 12 months?

The fear of being murdered is associated to:



There has to be a strategy to deal with the perception of fear: high levels of such a perception paralyze people, the tear the social fabric, and damaging people's sense of belonging to the territory. They also end up supporting criminal control.

Authors: Jerónimo Castillo y Silvia Ayala

Lorem ipsum

Acronym

PCMH : rate per 100,000 inhabitants.
DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.
AUC: United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia.
FARC: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.
GAO: Organized Armed Groups.
PDETS: Development Projects with a Territorial Approach.
CNMH: National Center for Historical Memory.
CNC: National Consulting Center
PNIS: National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops.
ZOMAC: Areas Worst Affected by the Armed Conflict.
ETCR: Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation.
Intermediate municipalities: are those regionally important municipalities with access to different goods and services. They are characterized by having between 25 thousand and 100 thousand inhabitants in the municipal head or that, despite having smaller municipal heads, present a high population density (over 10 inhab/km2).
Rural: are those municipalities that have smaller municipal heads (less that 25 thousand inhabitants) and present an intermediate population density (between 10 inhab/km2 and 100 inhab/km2).
Dispersed rural: are those municipalities and Non-Municipal areas (ANM) with small municipal heads and a low population density (less than 50 inhab/km2).