



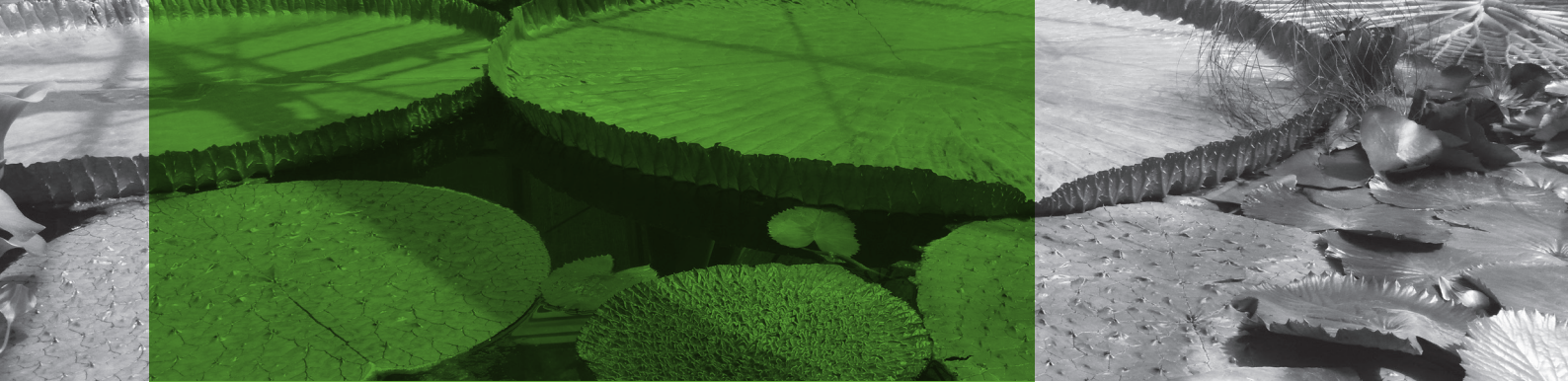
FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE  
SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA

# MAPPING OF THE VIOLENCE IN THE AMAZON REGION

SUMMARY OF THE PRELIMINARY  
DATA AND RESULTS

PARTNERSHIP





# PRESENTATION

The Brazilian Forum on Public Safety (BFPS), with the support of the Institute for Climate and Society (iCS) and a partnership with researchers from the Research Group of Emerging Territories and Resistance Networks in the Amazon (TERRA), of the University of the State of Pará – UEPA, is developing the project “Mapping of the Violence in the Amazon region.” This aims, in summary, to cross-reference and analyze data regarding unlawful actions, criminality and public security in the Amazon with the socioenvironmental debate. The project integrates the idea that the Amazon is one of the main strategic assets of Brazil, which places it at the center of the geopolitical discussion of the global climate. It paves the way for a frank debate involving the connections and interfaces between some of the main problems of the region.

For the BFPS, it is understood that the standing forest is a significant national natural heritage that is capable of integrating the country in a relevant manner in the discussions about the green future and mechanisms of governance that are being outlined by the major nations in early November 2021, at COP26, in Glasgow. However, in order to face the posed challenges, the socioenvironmental debate needs to consider that the flourishing of the green economy includes a scope that is the strengthening of security as a fundamental right and compliance with the law,

but no longer in terms of the defense of the state, but in the promotion of citizenship for the population of the region. This is because a large part of the destruction of the forest in the region is the result of illegal activities, which are fueled by complex national and transnational criminal chains that operate across different economies - from wood to minerals, through real estate speculation, the laundering of assets and other crimes such as the trafficking of people or wild animals.

Therefore, it is no longer feasible to speak in isolation of the threats to national sovereignty and/or the militarization of the region without beforehand connecting these aspects to the dynamics of the criminal governance of the territory and to the premises of the coordination of spheres of government and public policies for the construction of social and environmental justice.

On the one hand, focusing exclusively on the dimension of national defense excludes the risks of deterioration of the internal control of the territory by the state, at its multiple levels and branches of government.

On the other hand, the numbers referring to the violence in the Amazon show that it makes no sense to separate urban and rural and/or city and forest. The phenomena are distinct but they are intrinsically interconnected to the dynamics of the territorial control by armed groups. The preservation of the Amazon involves the coordination of different instances and actors so that the public policies and social justice take over the areas now occupied by organized crime.

In the Amazon, different modes of transport are used in organized crime and there is a territorial overlap of diverse unlawful actions and violence. Drug trafficking, deforestation, land grabbing and illegal mining are the types of unlawful actions that, in the formal



world, would demand the attention of different inspection and control agencies, including the police. However, they are not operating in an integrated manner and there are frictions between the federal and state agencies. It is not surprising that many of the points identified as the focus of environmental crimes are exactly those locations and municipalities with the highest rates of intentional violent deaths. In the dispute over who has the legal competence to act in the territory, what we are seeing is that gaps are being created through the lack of governance and coordination. And these gaps have been used by the networks of unlawful actions that, very often, are connected and act in a coordinated manner.

In short, the findings of the project allowed us to formulate 3 arguments:

- i) The intense presence of organized crime factions and the disputes between them over the national and transnational drug routes that cross the region contribute to the increase in the rates of intentional homicides/violent deaths in its states, placing them above the national average. The deficits in the governance and structure of the public security apparatus, especially with respect to the criminal investigation of crimes/offenses committed in the region, and justice leave the region hostage to alliances and conflicts of the dynamics of organized crime and its overlap and exchanges with environmental crimes (deforestation, illegal mining and land grabbing, etc.);
- ii) Between 2018 and 2020, the dynamics of lethal violence in the Amazon region differentiated itself from the rest of the country, especially due to the accentuated internalization of the violence. There is a reduction of urban homicides at a more heightened pace than in the rest of Brazil. Simultaneously, homicides in the rural and intermediary Amazon municipalities are increasing, while the homicides in similar municipalities in the rest of

the country are decreasing. This phenomenon points to the importance of agrarian conflicts and environmental crimes, which coexist and intertwine in the territory with the dynamics of the criminal factions.

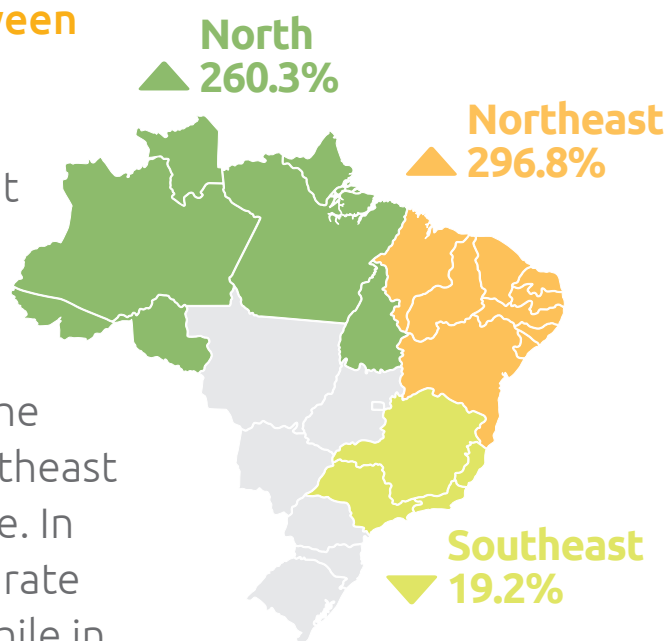
- iii) In the Amazon municipalities under pressure from deforestation, we found homicide rates higher than the national rates and those of the Legal Amazon region, reinforcing the previous argument.

Consequently, the mere militarization and/or deployment of security forces from outside the region to meet specific demands for command and control is not only extremely expensive but also has little effect. It is necessary to invest in the strengthening of the integrated mechanisms of command and control that connect the federal and state spheres and, in particular, the different agencies and government branches (civil police, military police, public defenders, IBAMA, ICMBio and the judiciary, among others). To guarantee sovereignty and development, the logic that will allow the reduction of crimes and violence must be the construction of institutional capacities and not the militarized and temporary occupation of the territory.

# HOMICIDES IN THE LEGAL AMAZON REGION<sup>1</sup>

■ Changes in the national pattern of dissemination of lethal violence from the 1990s: data from SIM/Datasus indicates that, if in **1997 approximately 43%** of homicides occurred in the capitals, in **2007 this figure fell to 34.6%** and to **22.3% in 2019.**<sup>2</sup> This process does not signify, however, a reduction in the violent mortality rates in the country.

■ **The analysis of the variation between 1980 and 2019 indicates that the homicide mortality rate increased by 85% in Brazil** during the period, but with very different results over the years in each region. While in the southeast region the increase occurs during 1990s, from the beginning of the 2000s onwards, it is the north and northeast regions that have the greatest increase. In the southeast, the homicide mortality rate fell 19.2% between 1980 and 2019, while in the north there was an increase of 260.3% and a 296.8% rise in the northeast.

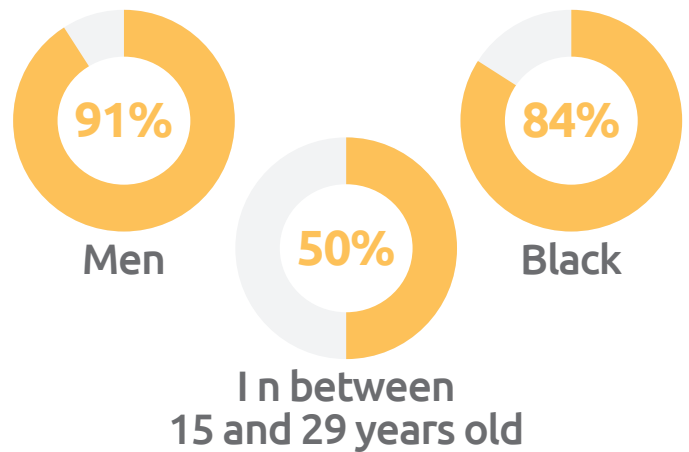


<sup>1</sup> Complementary Law 124, dated January 3, 2007, determines that the Legal Amazon "covers the states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Mato Grosso, Rondônia, Roraima, Tocantins, Pará and of Maranhão in its portion west of the 44° Meridian." Available at: <https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/leicom/2007/leicomplementar-124-3-janeiro-2007-548988-norma-pl.html>

<sup>2</sup> Analyses based on data from the health system, available at SIM/DATASUS, which has a longer historical series and a higher level of breakdown.

■ In other words, the numbers reveal that, at least **since the 2000s**, the spread of homicidal violence in Brazil changes. Previously concentrated in the large urban centers, it starts to spread to the smaller towns, in the interior, described by several authors as **a phenomenon of the internalization of violence**.

■ In 2020, **8,729 intentional violent deaths<sup>3</sup>** were reported in the municipalities that compose the Legal Amazon. The profile of the victims does not differ from that seen in the rest of the country: 91% of those killed were male, 50% between 15 and 29 years old and 84% were black.



■ In 2020, the states in the Legal Amazon had higher rates of lethal violence than the national average. While **in Brazil, the rate is 23.9** intentional violent deaths (MVI) per 100,000 inhabitants, in the states of the **Amazon region it is 29.6**. It is even higher in states such as **Amapá (41.7), Acre (32.9) and Pará (32.5)**.

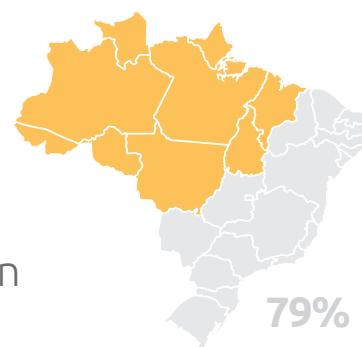
■ At least two factors appear to contribute directly to the increase of lethal violence in the Legal Amazon region: an intense **presence of organized crime factions** and the disputes between them over the national and transnational drug routes that cross the region; and the advance of deforestation and the **intensification of land conflicts**, which also result in the increase of lethal violence.

<sup>3</sup> According to data from the Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security, Year 15, 2021. The category of Intentional Violent Deaths (MVI) was created by the Brazilian Forum on Public Safety (BFPS) in 2013 with police records as its main source. The category corresponds to the sum of the victims of intentional homicide, robbery and bodily injury followed by death, and deaths resulting from on- and off-duty police interventions (in some cases, counted within intentional homicides, according to the UF methodology). Therefore, the MVI category represents the total number of victims of violent deaths with a defined intention in a specific territory.

Using the municipal classification proposed by IBGE to categorize towns between urban and rural, we ascertained that, between 2018 and 2020, the dynamics of lethal violence in the urban areas of the Amazon region had a similar pattern to that seen in the rest of the country, **but in the rural/forest areas of the Amazon the evolution of homicides is different.**

### MVI in urban municipalities

66%



79%

■ While in Brazil, excluding the states of the Legal Amazon, 79% of the MVI are concentrated in urban municipalities, in the Amazon region this percentage falls to 66%. Furthermore, **it is noted that in this region a higher proportion of the MVI occurs in rural municipalities** (21%) and intermediary areas (12%) than in the rest of the country.

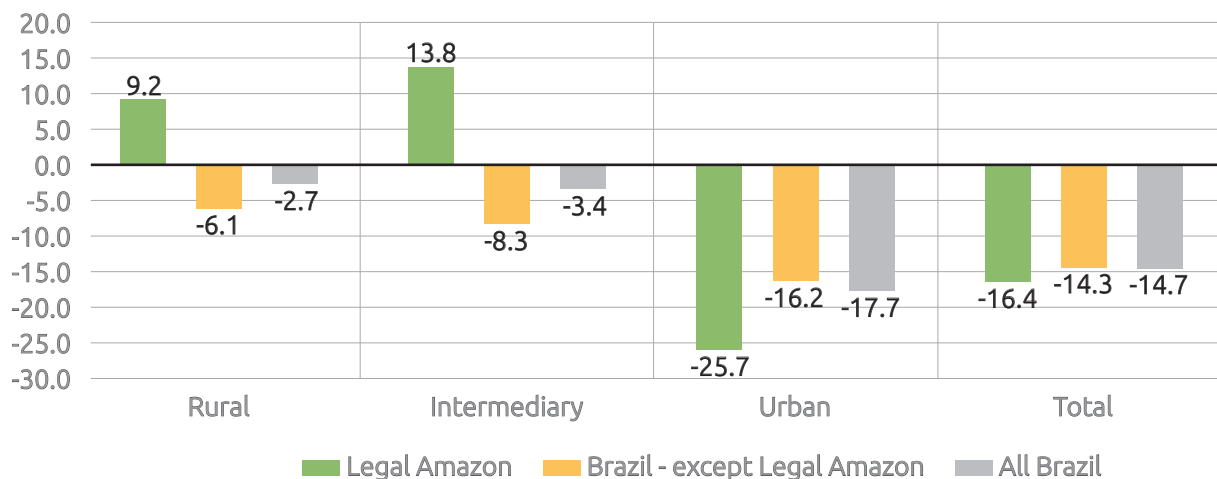
■ The violent mortality rate in the urban municipalities of the Amazon was 32.0 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2020, which is well above the national average (except for the municipalities of the Legal Amazon), which was 22.0 per 100,000 in the same year. Even so, **both in the Amazon region and in the rest of the national territory, there was a reduction of lethal violence in urban municipalities between 2018 and 2020**, with a fall of 25.7% in the Legal Amazon, 16.2% in the other municipalities and 17.7% if we consider the aggregate throughout the national territory.

■ The rate of lethal violence in the rural/forest areas of the Amazon region experienced a **9.2% increase** between 2018 and



2020, which was the opposite of what has happened in the rest of the Brazilian municipalities, where there was a **fall of 6.1%**. In the intermediary municipalities, the trend also differed from that seen in the rest of the country, with a **13.8% increase** in the same period.

**Variation in the MVI rate between 2018 and 2020, by type of municipality**  
*Legal Amazon and Brazil*



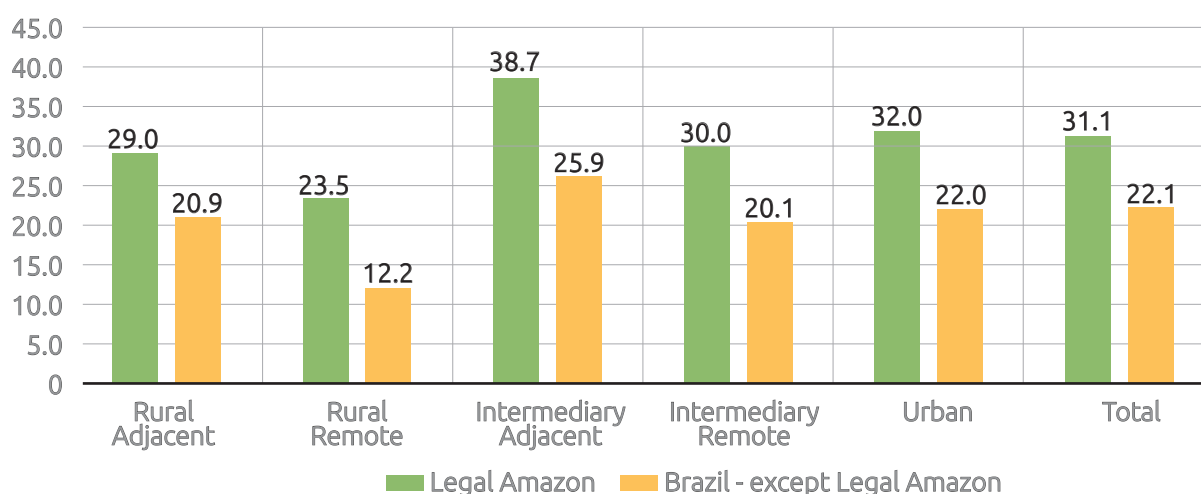
**Source:** State Departments of Public Security and/or Social Defense; IBGE; Brazilian Forum on Public Safety (BFPS).

■ The comparison of the rates of intentional violent deaths shows that, despite the serious situations of violence recorded in the country, the rates for all types of municipalities, according to the IBGE classification, are higher in the Amazon region in 2020. **The average rate of lethal violence in the region is 40.8% higher than the rate in other Brazilian municipalities (excluding the Legal Amazon).**



### Rate of intentional violent deaths, by type of municipality

*Legal Amazon and other Brazilian municipalities, 2020*

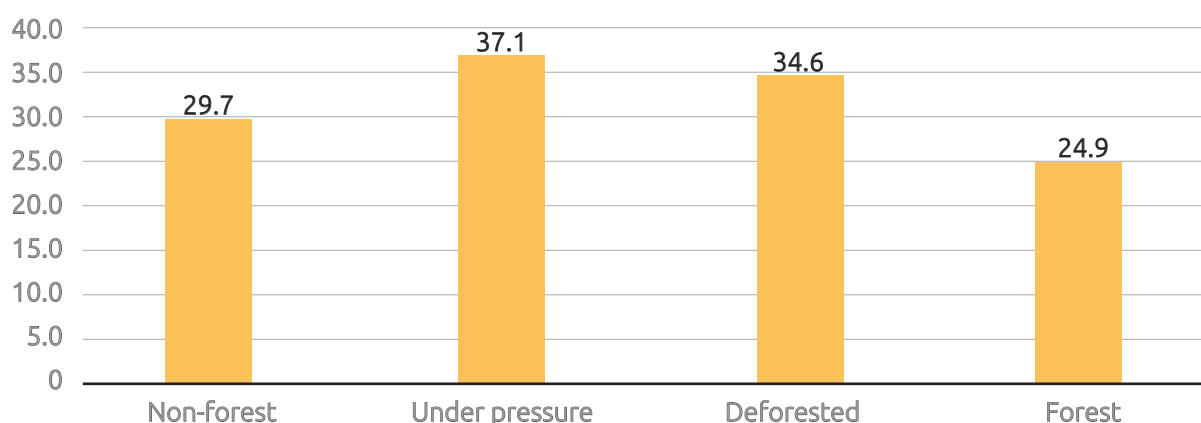


Source: State Departments of Public Security and/or Social Defense; IBGE; Brazilian Forum on Public Safety (BFPS).

Reinforcing the above evidence, an exercise to analyze intentional violent deaths according to the classification proposed by Imazon<sup>4</sup> to divide the areas of the municipalities of the Amazon region shows that, in 2020, most murders were concentrated in the areas classified as “deforested” (36%) and “non-forest” (33%). In 2020, when comparing the rates of intentional violent deaths by occupation zones, it was seen that the group of **municipalities with the highest rates are those under pressure of deforestation (37.1 per 100,000 inhabitants)**, followed by deforested municipalities (34.6), non-forest municipalities with a rate of 29.7, and finally forest municipalities with the lowest rate of violent lethality, of 24.9 per 100,000.

<sup>4</sup> For Imazon, the Amazon can be classified into four major areas: 1) the “non-forest” areas, which are those regions covered by “cerrados” and fields, where the main activities are extensive cattle breeding and agriculture; 2) the “deforested” areas, which are the regions that were covered by forests, but already have more than 70% of their area deforested; 3) the “under pressure” regions, which are those that are in the new frontiers of the deforestation and occupation of the Amazon and, therefore, are areas with the greatest current risk of deforestation. 4) Finally, the “forest” areas, which are the most conserved regions, with only 5% of the area deforested. CELENTANO, Danielle; VERISSIMO, Adalberto. O avanço da fronteira na Amazônia: do boom ao colapso. Institute of Man and the Environment of the Amazon, Belém, 2007. Available at: [https://imazon.org.br/PDFimazon/Portugues/estado\\_da\\_amazonia/o-avanco-da-fronteira-na-amazonia-do-boom-ao.pdf](https://imazon.org.br/PDFimazon/Portugues/estado_da_amazonia/o-avanco-da-fronteira-na-amazonia-do-boom-ao.pdf)

Rate of MVI per 100,000 inhabitants, by occupation zone of Imazon (2020)



Source: State Departments of Public Security and/or Social Defense; Imazon; IBGE; Brazilian Forum on Public Safety (BFPS).

Available studies demonstrate that violence in rural areas is associated with a series of factors including the illegal exploitation of natural resources, land conflicts involving the possession and ownership of lands, and the construction of large projects – such as the building of the Belo Monte power plant, in Pará -, as well as the development of other illegal activities such as the smuggling of wild animals and drug trafficking, among others.

**In other words, the advance of deforestation and the intensification of land conflicts also result in an increase in the lethal violence.** Considering recent data disclosed by the organizations that work on the environmental agenda, the increase of the rural violence in the Legal Amazon region is consistent.

The 2020 report by MapBiomas,<sup>5</sup> for example, points to an increase in deforestation in the six Brazilian biomes, in 2020, resulting in the loss of 24 trees per second. Specifically, **in the Amazon, the increase is 9%,** and MapBiomas calculates that **99.4% of the deforested areas have signs of irregularity,** i.e., they are the result of illegal actions. The Deforestation Warning System

5 <https://mapbiomas.org/pais-perdeu-24-arvores-por-segundo-em-2020>

(SAD) of Imazon<sup>6</sup> shows that deforestation in the Amazon increased 9% in 2020 when compared to the previous year, and 99.9% of the warnings had signs of illegality.<sup>7</sup>

■ The latest report from the CPT<sup>8</sup> shows that 2020 was the year with the highest number of conflicts in the field since 1985. According to the organization, **there was an 8% increase in the number of conflicts in the field across the country in 2020**, when compared to 2019. The report also shows that **the Legal Amazon region concentrated 62.4% of the land conflicts in Brazil in 2020**.

## Institutional structure of the security forces in the Legal Amazon

■ Of the 6 Brazilian states with police and firefighters that total less than 10, 000 personnel, 4 are in the Amazon. All the 9 states in the region have civil police with less than 3,000 personnel, who are essential in the investigation of crimes. **On average, the states of the region have 3.9 military police for each civil police member.**

■ Mato Grosso, Tocantins and Acre have the most balanced ratios between the military police and the civil police, with, respectively, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 military police for each civil police member, which in theory indicates a greater focus on the criminal police. Maranhão and Pará have 6.0 and 5.7 military police for each civil police member, respectively, which is a sign that in these states the priority is for ostensive policing.

6 <https://imazon.org.br/imprensa/amazonia-perdeu-area-de-forest-maior-do-que-4-mil-campos-de-futebol-por-dia-em-setembro/>

7 [https://s3.amazonaws.com/alerta.mapbiomas.org/infograficos/V2\\_MBI-desmatamento-infografico-1-amazonia.jpg](https://s3.amazonaws.com/alerta.mapbiomas.org/infograficos/V2_MBI-desmatamento-infografico-1-amazonia.jpg)

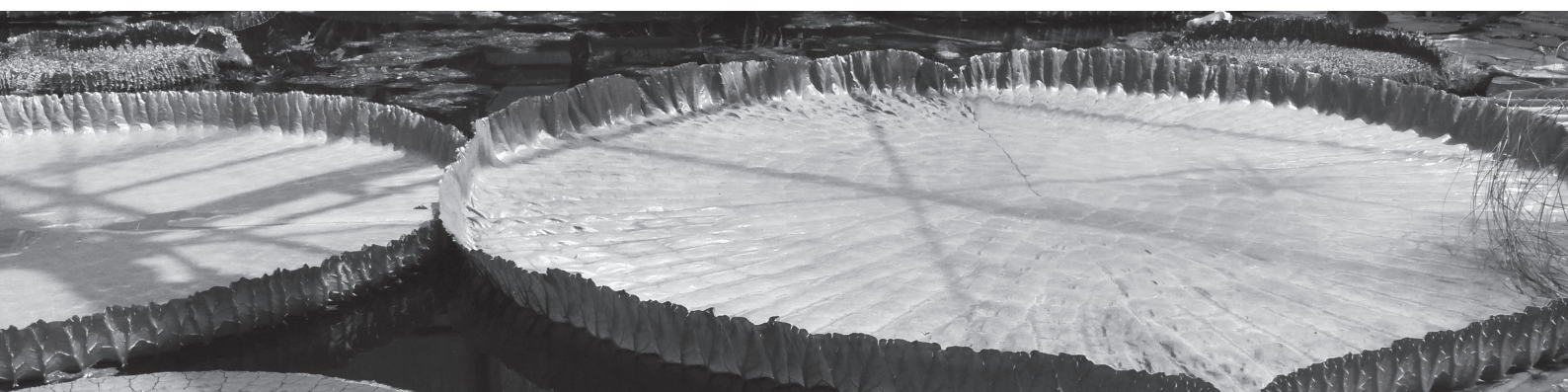
8 <https://www.cptnacional.org.br/downloads?task=download.send&id=14242&catid=41&m=0>



■ However, if we consider work schedules, days off, vacations and leave, we have, on average, low numbers of civil and military police available per shift in the region. These police need to attend to urban and rural incidents; occurrences of domestic violence, fights between factions and several other conflicts or crimes. **Amapá, for example, has only 780 military police and 260 civil police per shift to serve the population. Larger states, such as Pará, have 3,800 military police and 673 civil police per shift.** However, the issue is that the police activity depends on positions with specific duties and not only the total number of police who are actively working.

■ **Acre**, where there are at least 3 mapped groups linked to the drug trade, **there are only 80 police chiefs to handle all the incidents in the state** and to assess whether to transform these incidents into enquiries, as well as to head investigations (which signifies that the state has only about 20 police chiefs per shift).

■ As an example of the dissociation between local police activity and the incidence of crimes in the territory, **the rates of police reports for incidents of drug trafficking in 8 of the 9 Amazon states are below the national average**, even though the region is a strategic route for this merchandise.





## Operations by the GLO and the National Force of Public

■ Operations by the National Force of Public Security (FNPS) and/or the Guarantee of Law and Order – GLO appear to have had little effect on the indices of lethal violence in the region and, therefore, on the reversal of the scenario of crimes committed in the interior of the region and in the forest areas. **Between 2018 and 2021, there were 108 FNPS operations in the Amazon, of which 41 were in Pará.** In the whole of Brazil, of 246 FNPS operations in the same period, only 31 supported border actions and/or involved IBAMA, FUNAI and ICMBio;

■ Between 1992 and 2021, there were 144 GLO operations involving the armed forces nationwide. **Between 2018 and 2019, there were 5 exclusive GLO operations in the Amazon, including the Verde Brasil 1 [Green Brazil I] operation, which cost R\$ 124.5 million.** If we add to this amount the cost of the Verde Brasil II and the Samaúma operations, which took place between 2020 and 2021, and according to a recent report<sup>9</sup> cost R\$ 460 million, the Federal Government has spent R\$ 584.5 million during the management of Jair Bolsonaro with GLO operations in the Amazon and yet failed to reduce the violence and environmental crimes or to retake territories from the factions in the remote forest areas.

9 <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ambiente/2021/10/militares-na-amazonia-custaram-r-550-mi-e-nao-baixaram-desmatamento.shtml?origin=folha>

## Criminal factions

- In **Acre**, four groups operate to control the entry of drugs through the borders with Peru, namely the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), IFARA (Irmandade, Força Ativa e Responsabilidade Acreana), Comando Vermelho (CV) and Bonde dos 13 (B13);
- In **Amazonas**, which is the state that gave rise to the Família do Norte (FDN), there is now the FDN, the CV and the PCC, which operate in the Solimões River region. Furthermore, there are groups of pirates who intercept the drugs being transported along the rivers in the Coari region, known as the Coari Family, making the conflicts between the factions even more complex in this state, which is the main gateway for cocaine into Brazil;
- In **Amapá**, two local factions are highlighted, the União Criminosa do Amapá (UCA) and the Família Terror do Amapá (FTA), with the latter being allied with the PCC. This region is strategic for the trafficking of the drugs that pass through Amapá towards the Guyanas and Suriname, as well as being notorious for smuggling and human trafficking;
- In **Mato Grosso**, there is the CV, the PCC and the B13. In this state, the dispute is over the supply of cocaine from Bolivia and marijuana from Paraguay;
- In **Maranhão**, there are at least four main criminal factions in operation: the Bonde dos 40 (B40), the Primeiro Comando do Maranhão (PCM), the PCC and the CV. There is a dispute that involves, above all, the prison system in the state of Maranhão, with clashes that mainly involve the PCC and its allies versus the CV and its allies;

■ In **Pará**, there is evidence of the presence of the CV, which is predominant in the metropolitan region of Belém, and the PCC, which operates more in the interior, in the regions of Altamira and the surrounding areas. But there are also state factions such as the CCA, the FDN and small local factions, but with a significant influence in prison units, such as the Equipe Rex. Finally, there is also the B40 group that emerged in the northeast region, but which operates in the Amazon from Pará;

■ In **Roraima**, there are factions such as the CV, the FDN, the PCC and the Primeiro Comando Panda (PCP), and also the presence of criminal groups from Venezuela, such as the Pranato, on the borders with the Guyanas and the state of Roraima. The connection that part of this region has with the Pacific is perceptible, with the Guyanas, Suriname and Amapá in Brazil supplying illegal merchandise to Europe and the Brazilian market;

■ In **Rondônia**, there are criminal factions that dispute the drug trade on the border with Bolivia. There is evidence of the presence of the PCP, CV, FDN and B13. This region is extremely strategic for the entry of cocaine from Bolivia and Peru that crosses the state of Mato Grosso and heads towards the south and southeast regions;

■ Finally, there is the state of **Tocantins**, which represents this integration of the center-south of Brazil with the Amazon, with the presence of the PCC, CCA, B13 and some small local factions. In this state, there is a strong influence by the PCC inside the prisons, which makes it easier for the local groups to establish a relationship that provides the conditions for the São Paulo group to operate in the region.



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