

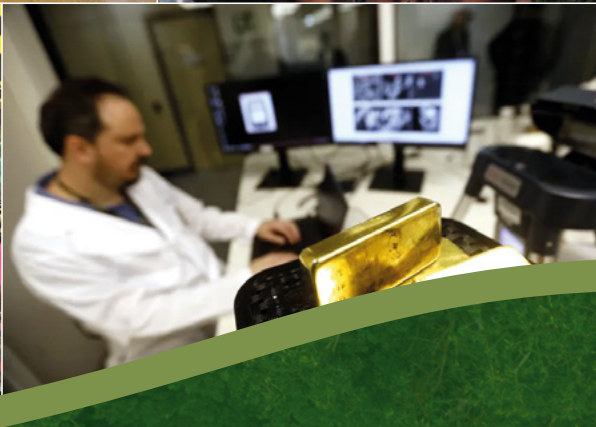
Cartographies of
Violence in the Amazon



Promising experiences in crime and violence prevention and response in the Brazilian Amazon

1st edition

November 2025



Cartographies of Violence in the Amazon



FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE
SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA



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Introduction

This supplement aims to clarify that, despite the enormous challenges posed by organized crime and public security to the Amazon, there are solutions, and we need to value them. In the context of governance of complex scenarios and problems, this publication aims to highlight initiatives that have the potential to generate positive and effective impacts on crime control, violence prevention, and the promotion of rights for territories and populations in the region. The premise behind this document is that there is no single magic formula, no scalable and foolproof recipe. On the contrary, the practices detailed below are, in essence, examples of federal or subnational initiatives that consider the characteristics of the territory and the local challenges they pose for the formulation and implementation of public policies.

From this perspective, we have selected and detailed eight public security and territorial protection initiatives in the Brazilian Amazon. The document describes the **Integrated River Bases of Amazonas (Base Arpão Coari) and Pará**. These aim to combat drug trafficking, environmental crimes, and river piracy with permanent state presence and interagency integration. It also covers **specialized programs such as Ouro Alvo**, which uses forensic science to track illegal gold, and **Operation Curupira**, which monitors and combats deforestation in Pará. Additionally, it examines the **Integrated Force for Combating Organized Crime (FICCO)** within the context of the Amazon; the initiatives of the **Public Prosecutor's Office of Acre, (such as *Feminicidômetro*, *Proteja Mulher*, and *Txai Project*)** that address gender violence; the complex structure of ***Casa de Governo*** established for the Yanomami Indigenous Territory; and the diverse **indigenous self-protection strategies** against external threats.

The security initiatives in the Amazon documented in this report share substantial challenges in terms of logistics and institutional sustainability, seeking to overcome them through inter-agency integration, strategic use of geography and diversification of funding sources.

Perhaps one of the greatest examples of such challenges is the “Amazon cost,” which becomes more explicit when described in its financial dimension.

Based on a rough estimate, if we compare the cost of traveling 500 km in an armored speedboat in the interior of Amazonas with that of a standard vehicle on highways in the Southeast region, we find that, in fuel expenses alone, an armored boat operating on Amazonian rivers costs on average between R\$ 6,000 and R\$ 7,000. By contrast, a road patrol vehicle in the Southeast requires something like R\$ 260 to travel the same distance. **In other words, policing in the Amazon is 25 times more expensive in fuel alone than policing on highways in the Southeast.** And this estimate does not include other expenses such as daily allowances or overnight stays, since traveling that same distance by boat takes many more hours than by road vehicle.



Protecting the Amazon comes at a cost, and the State, across its multiple levels and branches, must decide whether it is willing to bear it. The Amazon cannot be viewed as merely a place for replicating institutional models and arrangements that have worked elsewhere. While it is certainly possible to draw inspiration from successful practices in other regions, it is essential to develop local solutions that derive their primary identity from the specific characteristics of the territories and the populations that inhabit them. The region needs to foster innovation and new federative and governance arrangements that articulate public security, justice, rights, and sovereignty in relation to the climate agenda and the development of new bioeconomies.

To this end, the climate agenda must incorporate the issue of organized crime and the safeguarding of the rule of law as strategic pillars of its programs and actions. It is no coincidence that, since 2020, the Brazilian Forum on Public Security has sought to compile a wide range of data and evidence on the connections between organized crime, violence, sovereignty, and the climate agenda. And as a common thread, our research highlights the growing expansion and influence of criminal groups known in Brazil as *facções* - organizations that initially emerged from drug-trafficking networks and routes but are now expanding their military and financial power through symbiotic links with environmental crimes and both legal and illegal markets.

The increasingly intense capture of territories, economies, and markets by drug-trafficking organizations is a phenomenon affecting not only Brazil but several countries across the Amazon region. Nearly all global cocaine production is concentrated in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. Brazil, in particular, is the world's second-largest consumer market for cocaine and a major distribution hub to other continents. As a result, trafficking routes overlap with multiple layers of vulnerability across the region's forests and cities - among them the historical violence endured by Amazonian peoples.

In summary, the Amazon, its peoples, and its territories now occupy a central place in the main themes of the international geopolitical and strategic agenda: security, energy, mining, and the green transition.

Yet rather than benefiting from this position, the region faces immense and complex threats, particularly those stemming from the new socio-economic, political, and environmental configurations driven by the expansion of transnational criminal organizations. The growth of organized crime - led by prison-based *facções*, intertwined with the illicit structures that sustain environmental crimes, and exploiting the weaknesses of public security and justice systems - must be placed at the heart of strategies designed to foster new socio-bio economies and to also ensure rights and justice.



This supplement was possible thanks to the support of the governments of Amazonas and Pará, which, through their Public Security Secretariats, enabled the FBSP team to accompany and report on the field activities described here. We thank the Public Prosecutor's Office of Acre, leaders of the Ouro Alvo program and FICCO within the Federal Police, and the Government House in Roraima. Special thanks to the Climate and Society Institute and the Itaúsa Institute for their financial support of the project. We also acknowledge the researchers who produced this edition in record time. We share the conviction that, by focusing on practices such as those gathered here, the Amazon — its people, forests, and cities — forms an essential part of the solutions needed to build a new and sustainable model of development for Brazil.

Samira Bueno
Renato Sérgio de Lima
November 2025



Initiative 01

Arpão Coari Integrated River Base (AM) with the use of police sniffer dogs

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TECHNICAL SHEET

	Initiative name: Arpão Integrated River Base (Coari/AM) ¹
	Main implementing agency: Amazonas Public Security Secretariat (SSP-AM)
	Year of creation: 2020
	State of operation and territorial coverage: State of Amazonas - Solimões River, near the municipality of Coari.
	Partnerships: Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP), Amazonas Military Police (PM-AM), Amazonas Civil Police (PC-AM), Technical-Scientific Police Department (DPTC), Amazonas Military Fire Brigade (CBMAM), National Force, and Brazilian Navy.
	Current status: Operational



¹ Previously, the base was called Base Arpão I, a name that corresponded to the kind of vessel used in the program. Later, the government launched one more base. They named it Base Arpão II. In March 2025, due to deterioration, the vessel was replaced by a more modern one, called Base Arpão III. To avoid having to change names as the technology advanced and the eventual confusion with numbers indicating the expansion of the program and the technology upgrades, the Secretariat of Public Security opted to not use numbers and use the name of the location where the program is located, Coari. Thereafter, the program began to be called Base Arpão Coari.





Summary: The Arpão Integrated River Base, established in August 2020 on the Solimões River, near the municipality of Coari (AM), was created to strengthen the fight against drug trafficking and environmental crimes in the Amazon. Located approximately 24 hours by boat from Manaus, the base was designed to operate autonomously for up to 30 days and houses up to 60 professionals from various security forces, including members of the Military Police, Civil Police, Fire Department, Navy, National Force, and environmental agencies. Its facilities include housing units, a cafeteria, a gym, a kennel, and a monitoring center, as well as armored boats and sniffer dogs. The teams conduct compulsory vessel inspections and mobile strategic operations focused on preventive and repressive actions against drug trafficking, piracy, biopiracy, environmental crimes, and human trafficking. The Arpão Base's operational model has shown significant results and demonstrates strong potential to become a reference in integrated public security. Its success has inspired the creation of three additional river bases in strategic locations across Amazonas, expanding the presence of the State and making it harder for organized crime to operate in hard-to-reach areas.

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE PROBLEM

Transnational criminal organizations have strategically exploited the geographical characteristics of the Brazilian Amazon to consolidate drug trafficking routes. The region's extensive river network, which serves as both the primary—and in many cases, the only—means of transportation and development for local populations, also functions as a widely used logistical corridor for trafficking drugs, weapons, and other illicit goods².

With 3,870 kilometers of shared border with three narcotics-producing countries—Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela—and a complex hydrographic network that crosses national borders, the Amazon is a particularly favorable territory for establishing and maintaining these routes. In this context, the so-called “Solimões Route”³ has established itself as one of the main routes for the entry and distribution of drugs—especially cocaine and *skunk*⁴ marijuana—from the Andean countries, destined for both domestic consumption and export to international markets⁵. Technically, this route begins in Tabatinga (AM), at the triple border between Brazil, Peru, and Colombia, and extends along the entire course of the Solimões River to the Atlantic Ocean, reaching the cities of Belém (PA) and Macapá (AP). Along this route, Manaus and Santarém play a strategic role, as they are home to important ports and airports with national and international connections, which facilitate the flow of cargo and the transit of people and goods.

2 GOMES, I. E. F., FIORI, D. D., & FERREIRA JUNIOR, E. I. (2025). Infraestrutura, Economia e Segurança Pública no Amazonas: O Papel das Hidrovias na Dinâmica Social e Criminal. *Cuadernos De Educación Y Desarrollo* - QUALIS A4, 17(4), e8163. <https://doi.org/10.55905/cuadv17n4-146>.

3 The Solimões Route originates outside Brazil, in the coca-producing regions of Colombia and Peru, and uses the extensive hydrographic network and navigability of the Solimões River and its main tributaries—the Javari River, the Içá River (also known as Putumayo), and the Japurá River (or Caquetá)—to transport drugs. The route enters Brazilian territory through the state of Amazonas, in the Upper Solimões region, near Tabatinga. Approximately 1,700 km long within Brazil, the Solimões River flows to Manaus, where it becomes known as the Amazon River, continuing its course towards Santarém (AM), Amapá, and Belém (PA), until it empties into the Atlantic Ocean.

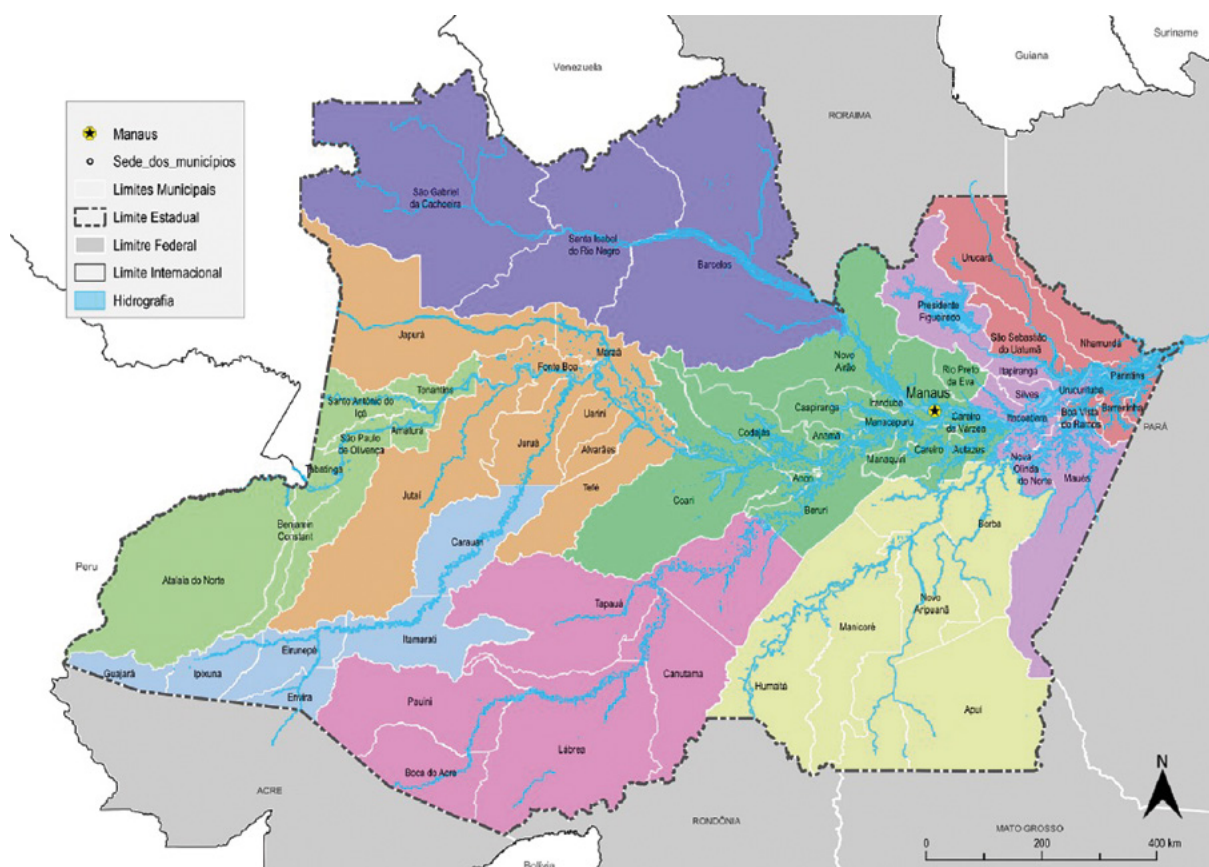
4 Skunk is a cannabis strain known for its high THC content, the plant's main psychoactive component, which produces a more potent and longer-lasting effect. It gets its name from its strong, pungent, and characteristic smell, similar to the odor released by a skunk.

5 FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA. Cartografias da violência na Amazônia. Vol. 3. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2024.



Map 1

State of Amazonas, division of municipalities by sub-region



Source: State Secretariat for Economic Development, Science, Technology, and Innovation - SEDECTI, 2023.

Associated with drug trafficking, river piracy has emerged as a direct and violent threat to riverside and indigenous populations, creating an environment of insecurity that compromises economic and social life and the implementation of public policies⁶. At the same time, systemic environmental crimes—often tolerated or socially legitimized—such as deforestation, illegal mining⁷, illegal logging, and predatory fishing are often linked to drug trafficking networks, forming integrated criminal economies that exploit institutional weaknesses and the low state presence in the region.

The vast, hard-to-access territories, low population density⁸, and structural lack of public resources significantly limit the ability to control and monitor this complex scenario⁹. The shortage of personnel, equipment, and infrastructure poses significant challenges to the continuity of police operations in remote areas, which necessitate a high level of logistical coordination. Added to this is the difficulty of retaining qualified professionals and the persistent institutional fragmentation between different levels of government and security forces.

6 OLIVEIRA DE QUEIROZ, K. Da fragilidade do espaço à vulnerabilidade do território: a pirataria fluvial no rio Solimões no estado do Amazonas. *Ateliê Geográfico*, Goiânia, v. 18, n. 3, p. 204–228, 2025. DOI: 10.5216/ag.v18i3.76794.

7 FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA. *A nova corrida do ouro na Amazônia*: garimpo ilegal e violência na floresta. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2024.

8 2.23 inhabitants per square kilometer.

9 LIMA, Renato Sérgio (coord.). *Governança e capacidades institucionais da segurança pública na Amazônia*. São Paulo: FBSP, 2022.



The initiative seeks to establish a permanent state presence at strategic points, promote enforcement actions, prevent crime, and protect vulnerable populations. Its main objective **is to confront, in a coordinated and continuous manner,** drug trafficking, river piracy, and environmental crimes in the main river channels of the Amazon, dismantling criminal organizations and increasing the sense of security among riverside communities.

Given this scenario, the creation of Integrated River Bases emerged as a systemic response to the challenges posed by transnational drug trafficking routes and other associated illicit activities. The initiative seeks to establish a permanent state presence at strategic points, promote enforcement actions, prevent crime, and protect vulnerable populations. Its main objective is to confront, in a coordinated and continuous manner, drug trafficking, river piracy, and environmental crimes in the main river channels of the Amazon, dismantling criminal organizations and increasing the sense of security among riverside communities.



Arpão Coari Integrated River Base (AM). **Photo:** Image provided by the Amazonas Public Security Secretariat.

The project's design and implementation process was collaborative, requiring more than a year of joint planning between the Amazonas State Government and the Federal Government, through the Secretariat of Integrated Operations (SEOPI) of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP). This coordination was crucial in ensuring that the initiative was integrated into broader national public security programs, which ensured its political and financial viability.

At the state level, Base Arpão has established itself as one of the main pillars of the Amazonas Mais Seguro (Safer Amazonas) program, becoming a benchmark in strengthening regional public security. At the federal level, it became part of the National Border and Boundary Security Program (VIGIA) and its operational arm, Operation Horus. Through this program, the federal government supports state forces by donating equipment, implementing systems, and providing per diems to deployed police officers, thereby encouraging the joint mobilization of state and federal

forces in integrated operations¹⁰. In 2024, Operation Horus was restructured and renamed the National Program for the Protection of Borders, Frontiers, and Biomes (Protetor), expanding its scope to encompass actions focused on environmental protection and public safety in border areas and state borders.

The Arpão Integrated River Base, located in Coari, was specifically designed to facilitate mobility and provide accommodation for state and federal personnel¹¹ involved in operations to combat crime on the main routes used by drug traffickers in the region, ensuring adequate working conditions. The success of the model led to its consolidation and replication in other areas of the state, as well as in other states, such as Pará, so that the integrated river bases were progressively incorporated into the fixed structure of public security, becoming fundamental instruments for ensuring the continuous presence of the state and permanent monitoring of the rivers. More than just enabling occasional operations, the program's ambition is to establish systematic state control over the major river arteries of the Amazon, hindering the logistics of illicit markets and producing cascading effects on the entire crime structure, with the expectation of positive repercussions, even in reducing violence in urban centers.

MAPPING OF ACTORS AND GOVERNANCE

The institutional design of the Arpão Integrated River Base in Coari is characterized by the integration of various security forces under the coordination of the Amazonas Public Security Secretariat (SSP-AM), through the Integrated Border and Boundary Management Office (GGI-F).

Among the state forces involved, the Amazonas Military Police (PMAM) stands out, responsible for patrolling and routine approaches, with the support of specialized units such as the Specialized Policing Command (CPE), the Cândido Mariano Ostensive Patrols (Rocam), and the Independent Dog Policing Company (CIPCães), whose work with sniffer dogs is essential in detecting narcotics.

The Amazonas Civil Police (PC-AM) is responsible for conducting judicial police procedures, including drawing up reports of crimes caught in the act and initiating investigations, with the assistance of police chiefs and clerks. The Technical-Scientific Police Department (DPTC) maintains a small laboratory on board, enabling on-site forensic investigations, including the analysis of narcotics and seized materials, which results in faster and more robust evidence production. The Amazonas Military Fire Brigade (CBMAM) contributes with specialized teams, especially divers responsible for underwater inspections—essential for checking for drugs attached to the hulls of vessels—in addition to participating in search and rescue operations.

At the federal level, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP) plays a strategic role, providing financial resources and ensuring the payment of per diems to police officers on board. The National Public Security Force

¹⁰ PAIVA, Anézio Brito de; MANSUR, Carlos Alberto; COSTA, Carlos André Viana da; PEREIRA, Jonas Santos; GRECO, Rogério; MACHADO, Ualame. **Combate ao narcotráfico nas calhas dos rios amazônicos: análise dos principais efeitos do modelo de base fluvial integrada no combate ao narcotráfico nas calhas dos rios amazônicos**. 2024. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (MBA Executivo em Gestão e Governança em Segurança Pública) – Fundação Getúlio Vargas – FGV In Company, Rio de Janeiro, 2024. Orientador: Prof. Dr. Marco Túlio Fundação Zanini.

¹¹ Although the base was designed to integrate various state and federal security agencies, direct action in crime-fighting operations is mainly carried out by state police forces, with federal collaboration playing only an institutional support role, without direct participation in day-to-day operations.



reinforces its workforce, especially in protecting vessels, with its presence formalized by MJSP ordinances that are renewed periodically.

The Brazilian Navy is also part of the Base's operational routine, acting as the maritime authority and conducting administrative inspections on board vessels to verify compliance with navigation regulations, including documentation, driver qualifications, passenger safety, and seaworthiness.

Other agencies, such as the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Ibama) and the Federal Police, participate in specific operations on an ad hoc basis, although they are not part of the permanent teams that take turns in the day-to-day operations of the Base.

Functioning as a physical hub for collaboration, the base promotes close interaction between agents from different corporations, strengthening bonds of trust, improving the flow of information, and optimizing coordination, which overcomes bureaucratic and cultural barriers that traditionally hindered cooperation between agencies.

Functioning as a physical hub for collaboration, the base promotes close interaction between agents from different corporations, strengthening bonds of trust, improving the flow of information, and optimizing coordination, which overcomes bureaucratic and cultural barriers that traditionally hindered cooperation between agencies. This governance arrangement brings together various specialties in a comprehensive operational platform, encompassing detection and enforcement, investigation, evidence collection, and referral to the judiciary. Institutional integration allows for the cohesive coordination of intelligence, resources, and competencies in a “one-stop shop” model, providing agility, assertiveness, and continuity to operations at all stages of the process.

In a survey of ten River Base managers in the states of Amazonas and Pará, Paiva *et al.* (2024)¹² highlight that 70% of respondents rate the integration between agencies as very good, and 20% as good, attributing the model's success to the clear division of competencies and the significant absence of institutional conflicts—factors that

contribute to a cooperative and efficient environment capable of generating positive results. Despite the largely favorable assessment, managers emphasize the importance of institutionalizing this integration to ensure its long-term sustainability and improve information-sharing mechanisms¹³.

12 PAIVA, Anézio Brito de; MANSUR, Carlos Alberto; COSTA, Carlos André Viana da; PEREIRA, Jonas Santos; GRECO, Rogério; MACHADO, Ualame. **Combate ao narcotráfico nas calhas dos rios amazônicos: análise dos principais efeitos do modelo de base fluvial integrada no combate ao narcotráfico nas calhas dos rios amazônicos**. 2024. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (MBA Executivo em Gestão e Governança em Segurança Pública) – Fundação Getúlio Vargas – FGV In Company, Rio de Janeiro, 2024. Orientador: Prof. Dr. Marco Túlio Fundação Zanini.

13 Although 60% consider data exchange to be very good and 40% consider it good, the study points out that there is still room for strengthening communication flows and interinstitutional cooperation practices.





Professionals working at the Arpão Integrated River Base. **Photo:** Image provided by the Amazonas Public Security Secretariat.

OPERATIONAL DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Arpão Integrated River Base in Coari is a large vessel, measuring 38 meters in length, 8.5 meters in width, and three stories in height, which operates as a continuously functioning advanced police station. It is strategically positioned in a narrow section of the Solimões River, where the shorter distance between the banks facilitates effective river traffic control and optimizes surveillance and boarding operations¹⁴.

Adapted to be self-sufficient and operate autonomously¹⁵, the Arpão River Base has a complete infrastructure that includes lodging, a kitchen, a cafeteria, storage rooms, a decompression area¹⁶, a gym, a Technical-Scientific Police laboratory, a registry office for the Civil Police, a custody sector, a kennel for police dogs, a support ferry for searches, and offices for commanders.

In addition, it has an administrative boat used to transport teams and an armored boat with a capacity for up to eight people, equipped with long-range weapons, which ensures safety during approaches and increases operational

¹⁴ The location where the base is currently located used to be an area frequently used by pirates to carry out attacks, precisely because of the geography of the river, which facilitates boarding.

¹⁵ This means that the base has generators, communications, and water and food storage capacity that allow it to operate even far from urban structures, enabling its allocation in remote locations.

¹⁶ This refers to a space designated for teams to rest, leisure, and socialise, with the aim of reducing stress. This space is essential to ensure the physical and mental health of the professionals involved and to ensure that they can recover after work.

mobility. The teams also have night vision goggles, a digital radio communication system for secure communications, and satellite internet access, which ensures permanent connectivity and support for monitoring activities.

The total capacity is 60 people¹⁷, including security personnel and an outsourced team that provides hospitality services such as cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, and general care, allowing agents to focus solely on their core activity.

The selection of onboard agents prioritizes professionals with training and previous experience in river operations, as well as specific specializations, such as handling sniffer dogs and piloting speedboats, which are essential skills for the base's inspection and security activities.

The work rotation follows a monthly schedule, consisting of teams from different institutions that depart mainly from Manaus¹⁸ and remain on board for 30 consecutive days. This rotation is considered essential for both reducing the physical and emotional strain on agents and minimizing the risk of corruption. In the case of sniffer dogs, two animals also remain on board during the operation period, taking turns in daily inspections carried out over the 30 days.

One of the main incentives for police officers willing to work at the base is the payment of daily allowances—approximately R\$335 per day—combined with the fact that accommodation, food, and services are fully provided on board, thereby reducing personal costs and making the mission more attractive.

The base operates 24 hours a day, with teams taking turns every 48 hours in uninterrupted shifts, ensuring continuity of operations and mitigating the physical and mental strain on professionals. Prolonged isolation, limited connectivity with family members, restricted leisure opportunities, and extreme weather conditions make the work particularly demanding. Occasionally, during the river flood season, teams are able to visit nearby riverside communities for brief moments of social interaction and rest, which helps to alleviate the intense routine.

The base can be relocated when necessary, although its current location is considered strategically ideal, both for the navigability of the river and for the efficient control of river traffic. The operational doctrine establishes a systematic approach to all vessels traveling down the river toward the capital, from small canoes to large ferries and ships.

In general, the drivers of commercial and passenger vessels operating in the region are already familiar with the procedures and usually prepare in advance for inspection, making radio contact to communicate their approach and receive mooring and inspection instructions. Upon arrival at the base, they dock the vessel at the support ferry and await inspection by the enforcement teams.

17 The number of police officers on board may vary, but in February 2025 there were: 23 military police officers, 3 civil police officers (1 chief and 2 investigators), 2 fire department divers, and 1 criminal expert, in addition to 8 National Force police officers. Source: https://pm.am.gov.br/portal/noticia/governo_do_amazonas_passa-18492.

18 The initial plan was for the vessel to travel to the capital once a month for resupply and personnel rotation. However, due to the time and costs involved, the rotation is now carried out on-site, with personnel transported there by speedboats — a trip that takes approximately 12 hours.





Illegal fishing equipment seized by the Arpão Integrated River Base team **Photo:** Image provided by the Amazonas Public Security Secretariat.

The approaches begin with visual surveillance of the vessels, followed by document verification and assessment of the behavior of drivers and passengers. If any evidence of irregularity is identified—whether through direct observation, intelligence information, or random selection—the vessel is subjected to a more thorough search.

Depending on the size of the vessel, all passengers and crew members disembark, taking only their carry-on luggage with them, and wait on the support ferry while specialized teams conduct thorough inspections. In these operations, the **use of sniffer dogs** is essential, given their high effectiveness in detecting narcotics even in hidden compartments. Considering the size and complexity of the areas to be inspected—the internal and external layout of the vessels, the large number of passengers, and the multiple possibilities for concealing drugs—as well as the need to ensure speed in operations (since vessels cannot remain stationary for long periods of time), the use of sniffer dogs is the most efficient method, and in many cases the only one capable of performing this type of work accurately and quickly. When necessary, divers from the Fire Department are called in to inspect the hulls and submerged areas.

If any suspicious substances are found, the material is sent to the Technical-Scientific Police, which has experts on board and equipment and reagents for immediate analysis, issuing preliminary reports¹⁹. The case is then handed over to the Civil Police, also present at the base, to draw up the arrest warrant and continue the criminal proceedings.

In addition to systematic approaches, the base maintains intervention teams that operate in armored speedboats, with a capacity for up to eight agents. These teams carry out tactical patrols and operations to pursue and intercept suspects, based on intelligence information or incidents detected during daily monitoring. The armoring of the boats provides essential protection for police officers, especially in situations of confrontation with armed criminals, ensuring greater safety in their actions.

¹⁹ In the case of drugs, the material is subsequently sent to the laboratory for reanalysis and issuance of a final report.



THE USE OF SNIFFER DOGS AT THE ARPÃO COARI INTEGRATED RIVER BASE

The use of sniffer dogs has become an essential strategy in the fight against drug trafficking, taking advantage of their exceptional sense of smell to identify illicit substances quickly and accurately. Domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*) have anatomical and physiological characteristics that make them highly efficient in detecting cocaine, marijuana, and synthetic drugs in various operational contexts.

In Brazil, Jantorno et al. (2024)²⁰ demonstrated the high efficiency of these animals based on data from the Federal Revenue Service (2010–2020): each new dog incorporated resulted in an average increase of 3.1 tons of drugs seized, accounting for 37% of cocaine seizures and 12.7% of marijuana seizures, representing losses of US\$ 1.9 billion to criminal organizations. The study also reported an average success rate of 19.75% and emphasized the importance of regular rest after approximately 30 consecutive operations to maintain optimal performance.

Inspired by these results, the Amazon River Bases incorporated sniffer dogs into their operations, becoming a national reference in the integration of river policing and canine technology. The model combines permanent presence, onboard technology, and specialized olfactory detection, significantly increasing the efficiency of surveillance of the Solimões River routes.

Animal welfare is a priority. Each mission has two dogs²¹ and four handlers, who are on board for 30 days²², with a rotation schedule between patrol and rest. The bases have air-conditioned kennels, non-slip flooring, and a complete structure for veterinary care, hygiene, and feeding. The dogs participate in recreational and aquatic activities to reduce stress and ensure motivation.

During operations, the dogs accompany the teams on vessel inspections, sniffing cargo and internal structures. When an animal signals the presence of drugs, a second dog is called in for confirmation before a manual inspection is conducted. This reduces inspection time, increases seizure rates, and strengthens state control on Amazonian waterways.



Drugs seized with the help of a sniffer dog at the Arpão Coari Base.
Photo: Image provided by the Amazonas Public Security Secretariat.

20 JANTORNO, Gustavo Machado et al. Detection dogs fighting transnational narcotrafficking: performance and challenges under real customs scenario in Brazil. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, v. 11, p. 1380415, 2024.

21 Ideally, about four dogs per base would be needed so that the dogs could have alternating days of work and rest during the mission, just like the other police officers.

22 At the end of each mission, after one month on board, the dogs need extended periods of rest before returning to the river base for their next mission.



When it comes to drug trafficking, the profile of those involved is diverse. They range from “mules” — low-income individuals, generally non-violent, recruited to transport narcotics — to organized drug traffickers, mostly Peruvian and Colombian, heavily armed and operating mainly at night. These groups have access to sophisticated equipment, including satellite internet systems (such as Starlink), drones, night vision goggles, and satellite phones, which they utilize to monitor police forces and plan escape routes. At the same time, there are also river pirates who attack boats in search of valuable cargo, such as drugs, fuel, and gold, creating overlapping threats and increasing the complexity of the criminal landscape in the region.

The seasonality of river floods and droughts has a strong impact on the base’s operations. During the dry season, when water levels are lower and navigation routes become restricted, all vessel traffic tends to concentrate in the section where the base is located, creating a natural bottleneck that significantly increases the volume and intensity of enforcement work. During the flood season, however, the rise in river levels multiplies the number of navigable routes, opening up alternative paths that facilitate the movement of illicit goods and make it difficult to fully control river traffic. At this stage, it becomes necessary to adapt operational strategies, intensify patrolling, and expand the collection of intelligence information on the new routes used by criminal organizations.

During the flood season, however, **the rise in river levels multiplies the number of navigable routes**, opening up alternative paths that facilitate the movement of illicit goods and make it difficult to fully control river traffic.

The base also faces significant operational challenges, especially regarding the maintenance of vessels, both the main structure and the speedboats²³, which are subject to intense use and constant wear and tear, reducing their useful life and requiring periodic servicing. According to the agents, the ideal situation would be to have two armored speedboats to ensure the continuity of operations, even in the event of breakdowns, and to reinforce security during higher-risk actions.

In addition, the team emphasizes the need for technological improvements, specifically the acquisition of drones equipped with thermal cameras for aerial reconnaissance and monitoring, which should be permanently allocated to the base. Currently, drones are primarily used in specific operations; however, their continuous presence would enhance long-distance surveillance capabilities and reduce the exposure of agents in direct confrontations.

COSTS

The implementation of the Arpão Integrated River Base in Coari was the result of a joint effort between the federal and state governments. The initial investment for the construction of the first unit was R\$17 million, financed by the Federal Government²⁴, and currently, the estimated cost for implementing a river base of similar size is approxi-

²³ There was a report of a recent confrontation that damaged parts of one of the boats, but immediate replacement or maintenance is not possible.

²⁴ Access: <https://www.gov.br/pt-br/noticias/justica-e-seguranca/2020/08/ministerio-da-justica-entrega-primeira-base-fluvial-do-programa-vigia>.



mately R\$20 million, which includes the metal structure, electrical and hydraulic systems, operational equipment, furniture, and embedded technology.

The main vessel has an estimated useful life of approximately 30 years, provided that regular preventive maintenance and periodic inspections are carried out, such as those required to obtain the Navigation Safety Certificate. This certificate requires an ultrasonic examination of the hull every ten years. The estimated cost of a complete structural renovation is approximately R\$8 million, varying according to the degree of corrosion and the level of structural compromise.

The armored boats accompanying the base have variable costs, depending on the model and level of protection, with values ranging from R\$1.95 million for 26-foot units to approximately R\$3.4 million for models with closed cabins, which offer greater safety to police officers in situations of armed confrontation.



Armored boat from the Amazonas Public Security Secretariat. **Photo:** Image provided by the Amazonas Public Security Secretariat.

The monthly operating cost of the base is estimated at R\$1.65 million, of which 82% (about R\$1.35 million) is financed by the state government. This amount covers fuel expenses (R\$560,000), employee salaries (R\$266,000), nautical management (R\$396,000), troop transportation (R\$54,000), and boat maintenance (R\$50,000).



Table 1 Monthly cost of the Arpão Coari Integrated River Base

Details	Quantity	Amount (R\$)	Total (R\$)
Government of Amazonas			
Fuel (diesel) ⁽¹⁾	50,000	7.29	364,500.00
Fuel (gasoline) ⁽¹⁾	20,000	7.69	153,800.00
Civil servant salaries	30	...	266,636.10
Nautical management	1	...	396,000.00
Support ferry	1	...	30,000.00
Troop transport	1	...	54,000.00
Maintenance of motorboats	2	...	50,000.00
Monthly cost - Amazonas State Government			1,314,936.10
Federal Government			
Per diem	30 (x30)	335.00	301,500.00
Monthly cost - Federal Government			301,500.00
Total monthly cost			1,616,436.10

Source: Prepared internally based on data provided by the Amazonas State Secretariat of Public Security.

(1) Fuel price in Coari (AM). Different price indices have shown that fuel in the northern region is substantially more expensive than in the rest of the country²⁵.

The federal government covers approximately 18% of monthly costs, around R\$300,000, which includes daily allowances of R\$335 for up to 30 police officers on board. It should be noted that in the first half of 2025, due to resource constraints, there was a reduction in federal funding for daily allowances, resulting in delays in payment and a decrease in available resources. Currently, the funds provided by the federal government for the maintenance of police officers at the bases are 30% less than they were at the program's inception.

RESULTS OBTAINED

The results of the River Bases reveal both quantitative impacts—with significant numbers of drug seizures—and qualitative impacts, reflected in improved perceptions of security among riverine populations.

Data from the most recent edition of Cartographies of Violence in the Amazon (FBSP, 2025), based on information from state public security departments, show a significant upward trend in narcotics seizures, both in terms of marijuana and cocaine, with significant increases since 2020, when the river bases were first implemented. Graph 1 shows that, in 2019, the total amount of cocaine seized by the Amazonas police was 827 kg, growing substantially in the following years and reaching 15 tons in 2024, an increase of 1,719%. Marijuana seizures, in turn, jump from 5.7 tons in 2019 to 28.2 tons in 2024, a 389.7% increase.

The data published in this edition of Cartographies of Violence in the Amazon indicate that the total amount of cocaine seized in the nine states of the Legal Amazon in 2024 amounted to 46.9 tons, meaning that seizures made by

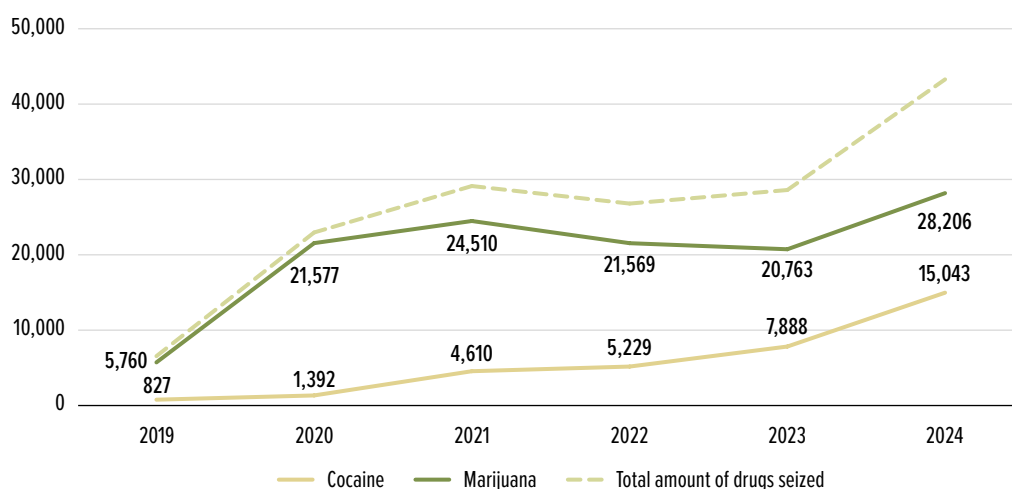
25 The North region leads the ranking of the most expensive fuel in the country. Available at: <https://jcam.com.br/noticias/regiao-norte-lidera-ranking-de-combustivel-mais-carro-do-pais/>



the Amazonas State Police now account for one-third of all cocaine seized in the region, demonstrating the impact and importance of river bases integrated into the public security strategy for the Brazilian Amazon.

It should be noted, however, that the increase in seized volumes may reflect both the positive impact of security policy—resulting from the strengthening of operational capacity, intelligence structure, and integration between security forces, driven by the new river bases—but also reflects the actual growth in the volume of drugs in circulation, resulting from increased production in Andean countries.

Figure 1 Drug seizures (in kg) in the state of Amazonas
2019-2024



Source: Amazonas State Secretariat of Public Security; Brazilian Forum on Public Security.

The table below shows the evolution of drug seizures carried out by the Coari River Base in comparison to the total seizures carried out throughout the state of Amazonas between 2020 and 2024.

In its first months of operation, while its structure and procedures were still being consolidated, the base accounted for approximately 1.69% of total seizures in Amazonas. In 2021, however, there was a significant jump, with the base accounting for 13.29% of state seizures, a result that marks the operational strengthening of the unit. In the following years, 2022 and 2023, the rates stabilized between 5.44% and 5.54%, still significant, but suggesting a possible adaptation of criminal organizations to enforcement strategies, such as route diversion or the adoption of methods to hinder detection. In 2024, there is a notable increase to 6.78%, reinforcing the strategic importance of the Coari River Base and its contribution to combating trafficking in the Amazon.

Table 2 Total drugs seized⁽¹⁾ (in kg) - State of Amazonas and Arpão Coari Integrated River Base (AM) 2020-2024

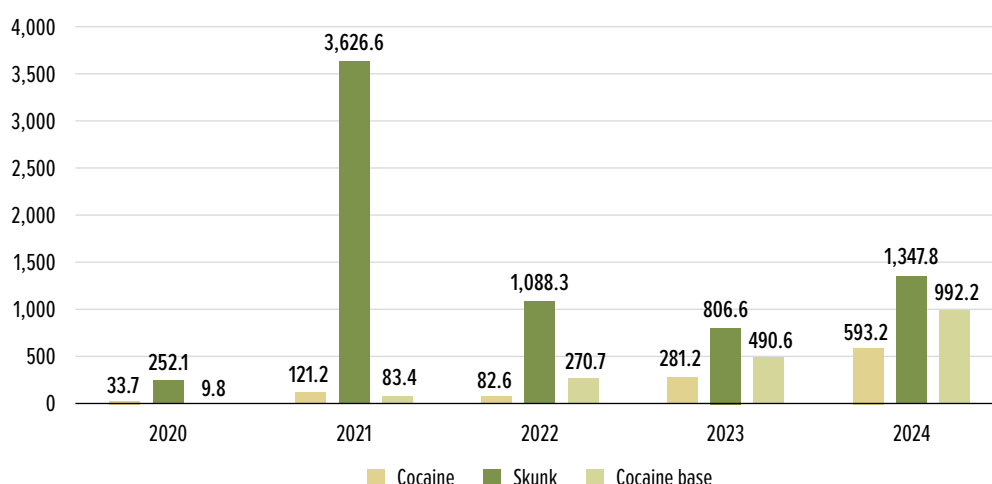
Year	Seizures in the state of Amazonas	Seizures made at the Arpão Base	Arpão Base's share (%) of total seizures in the state (AM)
	In kg		
2020	22,969	389	1.7
2021	29,120	3,870	13.3
2022	26,797	1,458	5.4
2023	28,594	1,583	5.5
2024	43,248	2,934	6.8

Source: Amazonas State Secretariat of Public Security.

(1) Total seizures of cocaine, cocaine base paste, and skunk marijuana.

The evolution of seizures by type of drug shows different dynamics over the years, reflecting both drug trafficking movements and the strengthening of enforcement actions. In the case of cocaine, there has been a progressive increase in seizures, from 34 kg in 2020 to 593 kg in 2024. In the case of *skunk*, there was a marked peak in 2021 (3,626 kg), followed by a sharp decline in 2022 and 2023, and then a rise again in 2024 (1,347 kg), suggesting both fluctuations in routes and possible adjustments by gangs to state countermeasures. In relation to cocaine base, the increase is constant and substantial, jumping from less than 10 kg in 2020 to almost 1 ton (992 kg) in 2024, indicating diversification in the type of product trafficked and increased commercial relevance for the production of derivative drugs.

Figure 2 Types of drugs seized (in kg) at the Integrated River Base Arpão – Coari (AM) 2020-2024



Source: Amazonas State Secretariat of Public Security.

The growing and consistent participation of the Arpão River Base in Coari in state seizures demonstrates the importance of river surveillance in the region, especially along the Solimões River. This waterway plays a central role as the main gateway for drugs coming from the Andean countries, functioning as a vital logistical artery for the flow of illicit goods—both to national urban centers and to international markets.

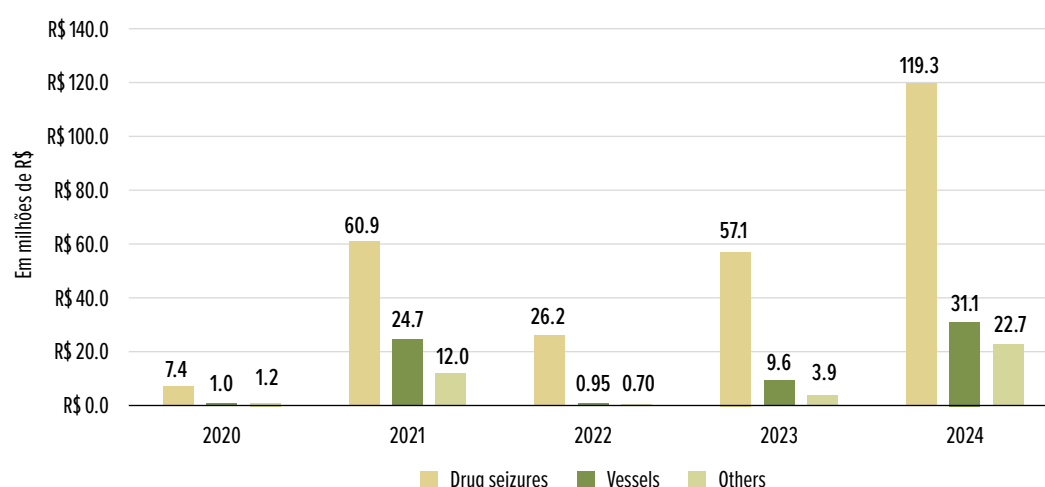


The pattern of seizures over time suggests both the positive impact of the presence and strengthening of river bases and the ability of criminal organizations to adapt to state actions. This scenario reaffirms the ongoing need for integrated strategies and the visible presence of security forces on Amazonian waterways as a way to curb the advance of drug trafficking.

It should also be noted that one of the main performance indicators used by the state is the economic damage inflicted on criminal organizations. The emphasis on the concept of “damage to crime” translates the complexity of public security actions into an indicator that is easy to understand and has a strong symbolic appeal. This approach repositions security not only as a cost to the state but also as an activity capable of generating concrete losses to the adversary, thereby legitimizing the investments made and reinforcing the logic of financially suffocating organized crime.

Data on the estimated value of seizures made by the Coari Integrated River Base reinforce the impact of its actions and the damage caused to criminal networks. According to estimates by the Amazonas Public Security Secretariat, between 2020 and 2024, **seizures made by the Base totaled approximately R\$378 million**, consolidating its role as a central instrument in the state policy of decapitalizing organized crime.

Figure 3 | Estimated value (in millions of R\$) of seizures carried out by the Integrated River Base Arpão – Coari (AM) 2020-2024



Source: Data from the productivity reports of the SSP-AM River Bases.

The most notable aspect is the seizure of drugs²⁶, which reached their highest level in 2024, reflecting the growth of operations and the efficiency of state control over the main river routes. Secondly, the value of the seized vessels is also significant, especially as they represent the logistical hub of crime in the interior of the Amazon. The removal of these vessels not only compromises the transport of drugs but also the operation of various illegal activities in the region.

²⁶ We understand that these estimates should be taken with caution, as the price per kilo of the drug can vary considerably depending on the location and purity of the material. The SSP-AM's own data show price fluctuations over time that require further explanation.

The “other” category includes valuable goods such as fuel, electronic equipment, cash, extractive products, and items linked to environmental crimes, demonstrating that the damage inflicted on crime is not limited to drugs but extends to its logistical structure and the resources essential to the functioning of illicit networks. By combining direct repression of goods and infrastructure, the river base model intensifies the financial and operational burden on criminals, making their activities more risky and costly.

Analysis of the figures shows that, although the cost of setting up and maintaining a river base is high, it is amply offset by the results achieved and the financial value of the seizures made. Considering drug seizures alone, the estimated values already far exceed the public investment made. These results demonstrate that the financial disruption imposed on drug trafficking by the base’s actions not only justifies the resources invested but also plays a strategic role in raising the cost of operating illegal activities and removing significant amounts of capital from criminal organizations.

THE USE OF SNIFFER DOGS AS A DIFFERENTIATOR: SELECTION AND TRAINING OF POLICE DOGS FOR DRUG SEIZURES

Part of the significant increase in drug seizures by the Amazonas police can be attributed to the use of sniffer dogs at river bases. The success of this strategy depends on careful selection of animals based on physical aptitude, temperament, and genetics, favoring dogs with high motivation, balance, and endurance—such as the Belgian Malinois, a breed known for its versatility and performance. From puppyhood, the dogs undergo continuous training, which includes physical conditioning, olfactory stimulation, and adaptation to different environments, ensuring stable behavior and maximum operational efficiency.

In Amazonas, training is conducted by the Independent Dog Policing Company (CIPCães), which begins training at three months of age. Between seven and twelve months, the “recruit” dogs already participate in their first missions. Learning is a continuous process, compared by handlers to the improvement of a musician, who refines their skills through practice.

For drug detection, training associates the odor of substances with toys and rewards, using vocal and body commands to ensure accuracy in searching and signaling. Simulations involve inspections of cargo, luggage, and compartments, and dogs are evaluated according to their accuracy and performance.

Onboard training is a unique feature of the Amazonian river bases. The dogs are gradually accustomed to the movement and noise of the boats, as well as the vibration, heat, and confinement, ensuring effective performance in extreme conditions. The process is playful and progressive, respecting the individual pace and prioritizing animal welfare.



Just as important as the preparation of the dogs is the training of the police officers who handle them, who undergo technical training and specialization courses in dog handling, offered by the PMAM and institutions in other states and countries, such as Argentina and Colombia.

The police officer-dog partnership is based on mutual trust and nonverbal communication, a crucial factor in determining performance in operations. According to Major Marcelo Arruda, former commander of CIPCães, “a dog can do the work of 10 to 20 military police officers,” optimizing resources and increasing operational efficiency.

Police dog training has thus become a vital component of the performance of the River Bases, accounting for 40% to 70% of drug seizures, according to Carmo Filho et al. (2025). The former commander of the Arpão Coari Base reinforces: *“We say that the real work in inspection here is practically all done by the dogs.”*

The integration of sniffer dogs into river policing is an innovative public policy that combines technique, science, and biology to tackle drug trafficking in one of the most challenging environments in the country.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CONTINUITY

The continuity of a highly complex and costly public policy, such as that of the river bases, depends on its sustainability in multiple dimensions—financial, institutional, and operational. Initially, the investment for implementing the first base was mostly funded by the federal government; however, most of the operational burden falls on the state of Amazonas. In this sense, the maintenance and expansion of the project depend, above all, on the design of the policy at the state level, and are therefore subject to possible changes in government priorities and future budgetary restrictions. The available data indicate that the model has produced excellent results in drug seizures, causing economic losses to criminal organizations that far exceed the cost of its implementation and maintenance, in addition to impacting the population’s sense of security.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the initiative is not an isolated project, but rather an integral part of broader public policies—such as the state program “Amazonas Mais Seguro” (Safer Amazonas) and, at the federal level, the National Program for the Protection of Borders, Frontiers, and Biomes (Protetor). This institutional link gives it greater formality and strategic insertion, strengthening its continuity within the public security agendas of both spheres of government. However, as it is a government policy, there is always the risk of discontinuity or depletion in scenarios of management change or redirection of political priorities.

At the operational level, overall coordination is conducted by a permanent body of the SSP-AM—the Office of Integrated Border and Frontier Management (GGI-F). With systematized processes for staff rotation and training, the project has been institutionalized and incorporated into the routines of the participating forces, ensuring its operational continuity even in the face of changes in leadership positions, as long as there is political and budgetary support.



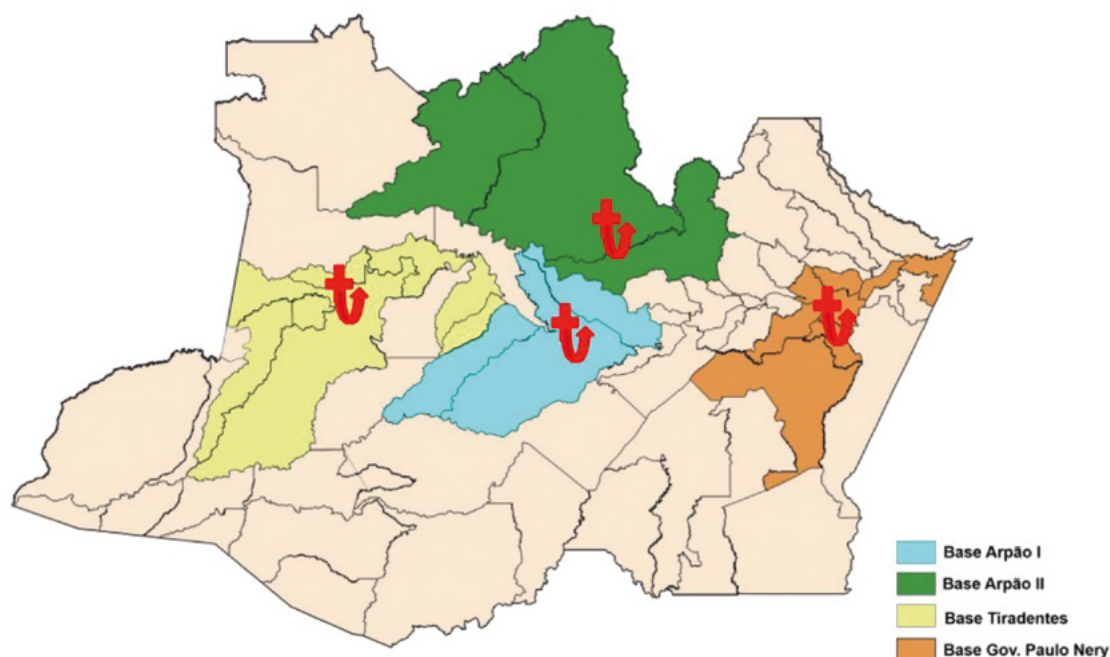
REPLICABILITY

The feasibility of replicating and expanding the Integrated River Base model has already been proven in practice within the state of Amazonas, demonstrating its capacity for expansion to other similar geographical contexts such as the Rio Negro, Rio Madeira, and Rio Japurá, thus consolidating an inspection network that covers some of the state's main river routes. There are currently a total of four integrated river bases in operation:

- Arpão Coari Integrated River Base: Inaugurated in August 2020, on the Solimões River (Middle Solimões Region) near the municipality of Coari.
- Arpão Rio Negro Integrated River Base²⁷: Opened in January 2024, it is situated on the Rio Negro, at the confluence with the Rio Branco, with the aim of serving the municipalities of Barcelos, Novo Airão, and Santa Isabel.
- Tiradentes Integrated River Base: Opened in April 2023, it is a mobile base located in Alto Solimões, currently near Tefé (as of March 2025).
- Paulo Pinto Nery River Base²⁸: Opened in early 2024, it is also a mobile base located in Baixo Amazonas, in Itacoatiara and the surrounding region, expanding surveillance on a key logistics route for vessels traveling to Pará and the Atlantic Ocean via the Madeira River.

Map 2

Location of the Amazonas Integrated River Bases



Source: Amazonas State Secretariat of Public Security.

27 This base has a National Force presence and dogs on board.

28 Previously, it was only a Civil Police base, but in 2024 it became an integrated base with the participation of other institutions.



The primary factor enabling the model's expansion is the proven success and significant results of the Arpão River Base, which have consolidated broad political and social support for the initiative. In addition, the existing integrated governance structure facilitates the adaptation and replication of the model in new units, thereby maintaining operational and coordination standards among the forces involved.

On the other hand, the main challenge to expanding the project lies in the high cost of investment and maintenance. Each new base requires significant resources for infrastructure, equipment acquisition, vessels, onboard technology, and personnel costs, which puts it in direct competition with other budget priorities. The logistical complexity of the Amazon exacerbates this difficulty, as each new unit installed in remote areas introduces additional operational challenges related to travel, supply, and maintenance.

The Arpão de Coari River Base has established itself as a benchmark model, having been replicated almost entirely at the Rio Negro River Base, the second to be inaugurated. Both are fixed bases with robust structures and permanent staff, playing a central role in blocking and policing the rivers through systematic verification of all vessels transiting their coverage areas.

However, the survey indicates that the model has not been fully replicated in the other units. The Tiradentes and Paulo Pinto Nery bases, for example, are mobile, focused on patrolling and approaching smaller vessels, but do not have dogs on board, nor the same physical structure and operational staff necessary to carry out permanent blockades. As a result, their role is more flexible and tactical in nature, and less focused on the systematic control of waterway traffic and continuous state presence on the rivers.

Table 3 | Institutional presence of Integrated River Bases

Institution	Arpão Coari Base	Arpão Rio Negro Base	Tiradentes Base	Paulo Pinto Nery Base
Military Police	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civil Police	✓	✓	✓	✓
Technical-Scientific Police	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire Department	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Force	✓	✓	✗	✗
Brazilian Navy	✓	✗	✗	✗
Sniffer Dogs	✓	✓	✗	✗
Armored Boats	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Prepared internally based on data provided by SSP-AM.

This difference in performance and operational capacity may indicate a limitation to the continued sustained growth of the bases, in addition to the risk of gradual distortion of the original model, since, in attempting to expand the coverage network without ensuring the same standards of structure, capacity, and application, there is a risk of creating units that are not as effective in combating crime and environmental enforcement, thereby undermining confidence in the model.



Nevertheless, it is essential to note that, in general, the Integrated River Base model developed in Amazonas incorporates elements that can be replicated in other regions with similar characteristics, provided that careful adaptations are made to local contexts. The concept of a permanent and integrated river police base is highly applicable to various river basins, both in Brazil and in other countries facing similar challenges of territorial control and combating cross-border crimes.

In addition, the networked governance structure, which articulates local capacities and federal resources, constitutes an effective and replicable management principle, capable of strengthening interinstitutional cooperation and increasing the efficiency of state actions, both in specific operations and in routine policing and enforcement.

The concept of a permanent and integrated river police base **is highly applicable to various river basins**, both in Brazil and in other countries facing similar challenges of territorial control and combating cross-border crimes.

CRITICAL FACTORS AND RISKS

The risk matrix associated with River Bases includes a set of factors that can impact their effectiveness, continuity, and sustainability. Among the operational risks, criminal adaptation stands out—that is, the high probability that criminal organizations will develop new routes and methods to escape surveillance, whether by land, air, or secondary river routes, or through the use of sophisticated concealment technologies, such as submersible vessels. This adaptive capacity can gradually reduce the effectiveness of the bases if the strategies and means employed are not constantly updated.

Another significant operational risk is the wear and tear on personnel and equipment. The extreme conditions in the Amazon accelerate the deterioration of materials and place high physical and psychological demands on personnel. In this regard, regular preventive maintenance programs, adequate team rotation, and ongoing psychosocial support are essential measures to preserve operational capacity and reduce the risk of institutional fatigue.

In the institutional and political arena, a critical risk is budgetary dependence. Changes in government or priorities can result in reduced resources, compromising the maintenance, modernization, and expansion of bases. To mitigate this risk, it is recommended that governance be strengthened through permanent regulatory and budgetary instruments capable of protecting the program against political cycles and specific contingencies.

Although interinstitutional cooperation is one of the model's greatest strengths, latent risks of conflict between agencies persist, arising from jurisdictional disputes, institutional vanity, or strategic differences, which can weaken coordination and joint execution of operations.

Finally, among the external risks, extreme environmental variations stand out, posing a direct threat to operational continuity. Severe droughts can compromise the navigability of rivers and temporarily isolate bases, while intense floods can alter the morphology of watercourses, reducing the effectiveness of strategic blocking and surveillance positions.



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This case study demonstrated that the Arpão Integrated River Base in Coari successfully established an operational pattern of state control over Amazonian waterways, combining a permanent presence, interagency integration, and technical and scientific capabilities to alter the incentives and costs of crime on the Solimões River routes.

This arrangement not only increased seizures and economic losses imposed on criminal networks but also re-designed the day-to-day governance of river policing by reducing institutional friction and shortening the cycle between detection, repression, and criminal prosecution. In addition, the base replaces episodic operations with continuous control over the flow of vessels on the river, taking advantage of a strategic geographical narrowing that acts as a true logistical “bottleneck,” allowing for systematic and predictable inspections.

Despite the high cost of installation and operation, the cost-benefit analysis shows that the “damage to crime” far outweighs the state investment. More importantly, there are systemic effects not captured in spreadsheets, such as the disruption of criminal logistics, the deterrent effect of unpredictability, and the protection of vulnerable communities, which increase the social return on investment and justify the maintenance, modernization, and replication of the model in other contexts with similar challenges.

The experience of the Arpão River Base in Coari demonstrates that combining territorial intelligence, appropriate technology, specialized skills integration, and sustained presence yields significant and sustainable results. For this model to be consolidated as a state policy—and not just a government policy—it is essential to institutionalize its governance, equalize resources among river units, ensure permanent financing mechanisms, and expand critical capabilities such as dog training, armoring, and intelligence. This will make state control of Amazonian waterways irreversible and turn this model into a benchmark for other strategic biomes in Brazil and Latin America.



Initiative

02

River Bases
of the State of Pará

Leonardo de Carvalho

PhD in Urban Planning from IPPUR (UFRJ) and
Senior Researcher at the Brazilian Forum on Public
Safety (FBSP)

TECHNICAL SHEET

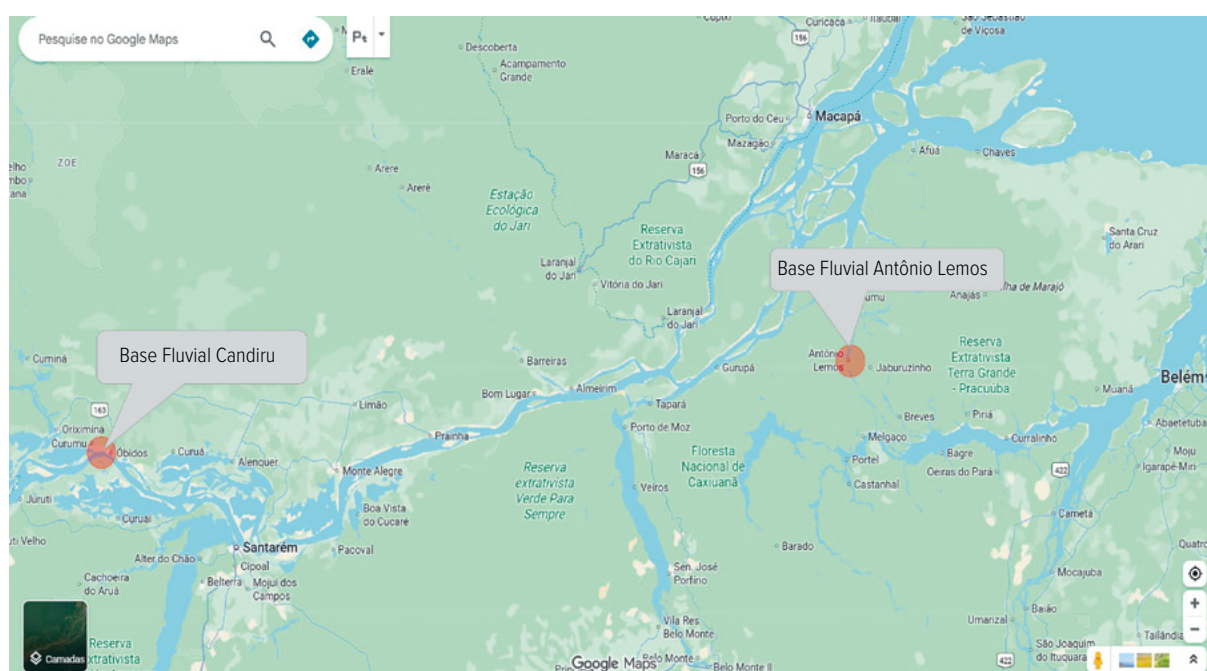
	Initiative name: River Bases
	Main implementing agency: Secretariat of Public Security and Social Defense (SEGUP) of the State of Pará
	Year of creation: → Antônio Lemos Base: 2022 → Candiru Base: 2024
	State of operation and territorial coverage: State of Pará, covering different municipalities in the Amazon waterway region, including Marajó and municipalities such as Belém, Óbidos, and Abaetetuba
	Partnerships: Military Police, Civil Police, Military Fire Department, Department of Finance, Agricultural Defense Agency (ADEPARÁ), Pará Court of Justice, Breves City Hall, and Ministry of Justice (initially).
	Current status: Antônio Lemos Base and Candiru Base are operational. A third base is under construction in the Abaetetuba region.
	Summary: The river bases are initiatives of the Pará State Secretariat of Public Security and Social Defense (SEGUP) to ensure the state's presence and combat crime in strategic regions along the state's rivers. With personnel from the security forces and the Agricultural Defense Agency (ADEPARÁ), their operations involve stopping boats in search of drugs and weapons, as well as inspecting all goods being transported. They also stop people from traveling through the region, whether in smaller boats or regular vessels.

IDENTIFICATION AND CONTEXT

The River Bases are an initiative of the Secretariat of Public Security and Social Defense (SEGUP) of the state of Pará and are part of the actions developed under Operation Safe Waters, a program of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP). The first base, located in the district of Antônio Lemos, was inaugurated in June 2022¹. Two years later, the Candiru Base² was inaugurated in the municipality of Óbidos. A third river base is currently under construction and is expected to be installed in the Abaetetuba region. To better situate ourselves, the map below shows the bases currently in operation.

Map
1

Location of the Candiru and Antônio Lemos river bases, both in Pará



Source: Prepared by the author using Google Maps.

The bases were designed with consideration for the complex Amazonian waterway system, which serves as a means of transportation for populations from different municipalities/states, using various types of vessels on trips that can last hours or days, transporting people and a range of goods. This context makes rivers strategic corridors not only for social and economic flow, but also for criminal dynamics—especially drug trafficking, which has shown significant variation in recent years. The most recent edition of *Cartografias da Violência na Amazônia* (FBSP, 2025) indicates, based on data from state public security departments, that between 2019 and 2024, cocaine seizures in the Legal Amazon grew by 574.4%, while in Pará the increase was 212.9%. 's peak seizures in the state occurred in 2020, when almost 7,000 kilograms of the drug were seized. In relation to marijuana, the volume seized in the Legal Amazon rose 62.1% between 2023 and 2024, and in Pará, 75.7%, reaching more than 10,000 kilograms—the highest record in the historical series. These data help to gauge the pressure exerted on Amazonian rivers and the need to improve river-based surveillance and territorial control strategies.

1 Source: Em três anos, Base Fluvial Antônio Lemos registra quase 4 mil abordagens e 3 toneladas de drogas apreendidas | Agência Pará

2 Source: Governo do Pará entrega nova Base Fluvial 'Candiru' e lanchas em Óbidos, no Baixo Amazonas | Agência Pará



Junior et al. (2025), when discussing risk management, governance, and innovation in public safety applied to the western portion of Marajó/PA, precisely where the Antônio Lemos base is located, comment on the need to decentralize operational bases for riverine actions. According to the authors:

River operations departing from the base in Belém have always generated high operating costs for the public security budget, especially with regard to fuel consumption for river vehicles (speedboats and boats). Here, any comparison with land vehicles (cars) is inappropriate, as a car with a 50-liter tank of gasoline can travel more than 500 km. However, an EAT-type motorboat, equipped with a 300 HP (horsepower) engine, consumes about 70 liters per hour at cruising speed, considering normal tide conditions. (Junior et al., 2025, p. 2,457)³

Based on the need to improve the system of approaches and surveillance on rivers and, thus, ensure the safety of the population, as well as carry out actions to prevent, investigate, and repress organized crime, the river base was structured based on a fully customized vessel model, with the capacity to accommodate teams from different institutions and operate on a regular basis. test that it has spaces for accommodation, meetings, rest, observation, among others.

This initiative has some features that can be considered innovative in relation to the traditional patrolling model, a topic that will be discussed in more detail later. However, the sustainability of this action over time depends on the willingness of managers to take measures to ensure the maintenance of both the physical and human resources infrastructure, in order to avoid a deterioration that would prevent it from achieving its objectives.

The river base was structured based on a fully customized vessel model, with the capacity to accommodate teams from different institutions and operate on a regular basis.

Policy costs and sources of funding

The investment made in the structure of the three river bases was approximately R\$24 million – more specifically, R\$24,479,197.01. Added to this amount is another R\$706,639.74, allocated to the equipment necessary for the operation (computer equipment, communication equipment, furniture, appliances, and consumables).

In addition to the initial implementation costs, operating river bases generates monthly expenses, including approximately R\$280,000.00 in daily payments to teams, paid by SEGUG, as well as recurring costs for maintaining physical infrastructure, such as the supply/shipping of supplies, fuel, and maintenance. To ensure the financial sustainability of the river bases, all these costs must be included in the annual budget of the responsible agencies; otherwise, the bases risk having their operations interrupted or suffering a severe reduction in their enforcement capacity.

3 JUNIOR, Dilermando Dantas; MIRANDA, Wando Dias; DOS SANTOS, Seidel Ferreira; NETTO, Roberto Magno Reis; DOS SANTOS, Leonardo Sousa; PASSOS, Sonia da Costa; COUTINHO, Eliane de Castro. Gestão de risco e desenvolvimento econômico e social: atuação da segurança pública na região do Marajó-PA. **ARACÊ**, [S. l.], v. 7, n. 1, p. 2450–2468, 2025. DOI: 10.56238/arev7n1-148. Disponível em: <https://periodicos.newsciencepubl.com/arace/article/view/2878>. Acesso em: 11 out. 2025.



Regarding the daily allowances paid to the teams, it is essential to note that initially, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security covered part of these allowances. However, due to budget cuts, the MJSP ceased to provide this support, forcing SEGUP to reduce the number of police officers on each team. According to the information gathered for this documentation, this situation is being reviewed to normalize the number of police officers on each team.

This contingency in expenses that impacted the river bases is a fact that highlights the need to guarantee the budget for actions such as this, so that they can be perpetuated over time, consolidating themselves as state policies, at the risk of witnessing “fleeting successes,” that is, actions that take off but cannot be sustained over time, with their end decreed due to lack of structure/budget.

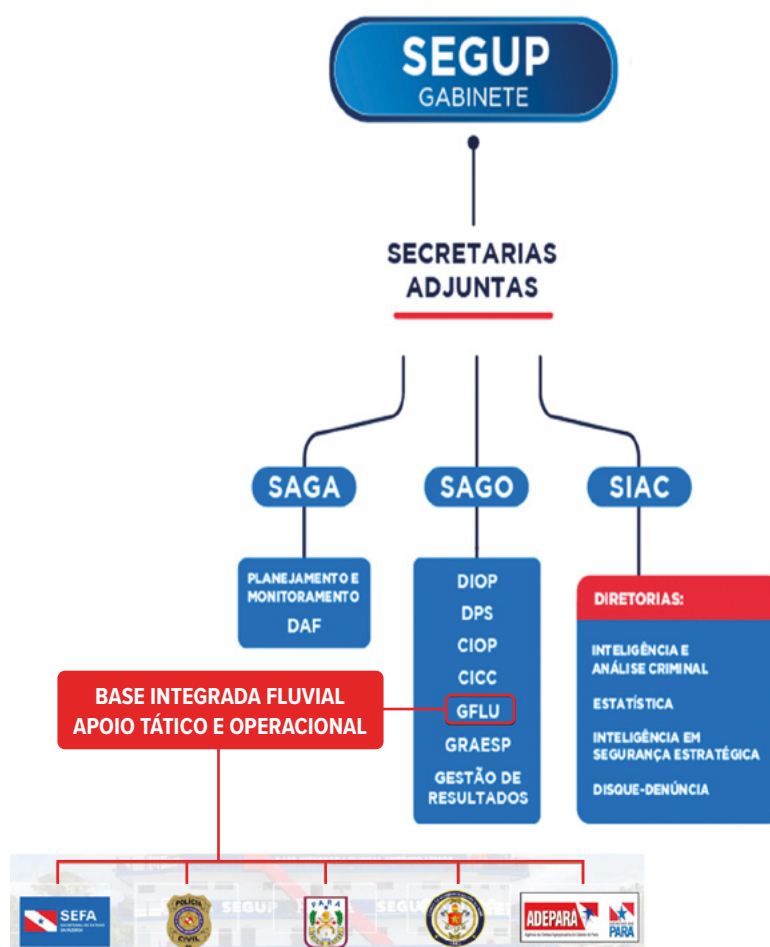
INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The River Bases are part of the River Group (GFLU - abbreviation in portuguese), which, in turn, is subordinate to the Deputy Secretariat for Operational Management, linked to the Secretariat for Public Security and Social Defense of the State of Pará (SEGUP). It is worth noting that, in the institutional model of the Pará state government, the General Commander of the Military Police, the General Delegate of the Civil Police, and the Commander of the Military Fire Brigade have a status equivalent to that of Secretary of State, all of whom are appointed directly by the governor.

The composition of the team working at the river bases also requires integration between different agencies. In the case of Pará, we see the joint action of teams from the following institutions:

- Military Police;
- Civil Police;
- Fire Department;
- Department of Finance;
- Agricultural Defense Agency (ADEPARÁ).

Figure 1 Governance model for the River Bases of Pará



Source: Prepared internally based on data from SEGUP.

The formalization of the partnership between these agencies to operate at the Antônio Lemos river base was celebrated through a Technical Cooperation Agreement (ACT) whose objective was:

Establish conditions for mutual cooperation, aiming at the development of joint operations involving prevention, control, inspection, and repression of transnational/cross-border crimes, covering the entire Marajó Integration region, to be carried out by the signatory agencies within their respective areas of institutional activity, with the logistics headquarters located at the Integrated River Public Security Base, located in the municipality of Breves/PA, called “Antônio Lemos Base⁴.”

One point that permeates this ACT is that all agencies share responsibility—and costs—for providing human, logistical, and technical resources, to a greater or lesser extent. SEGUP is responsible for the costs of operating and maintaining the base infrastructure (energy, water, communications, internet, among others), as well as managing

4 Source: acordo_de_cooperacao_tecnica_ndeg_004.2022_-_sefa_pmpa_pcpa_e_cbmpa.pdf



funds for basic and extraordinary expenses. In addition, it is SEGUP that, when necessary, activates the necessary operational support, such as the Public Security Air Group (GRAESP).

The Military Police provides personnel, including four police officers to crew the vessels and provide security, as well as a team from the Dog Operations Battalion (handler with dog) to assist in inspections and approaches carried out on the vessels. This specialized activity will be detailed further below.

The Civil Police, in turn, provides two civil police officers to crew the vessels and respond to incidents that require judicial police procedures, coordinating with police stations to refer criminal incidents. The Military Fire Department is responsible for dispatching two firefighters to conduct prevention and rescue operations.

In addition to the security forces, the River Bases rely on the regular activities of state inspection agencies, notably the Department of Finance, a signatory to the Technical Cooperation Agreement, and the Pará Agricultural Defense Agency (ADEPARÁ). The agencies send representatives to conduct routine inspection activities, with the aim of investigating tax and environmental crimes in the region.

This interagency action makes the river base a reference not only in the field of public security but also in terms of state enforcement capacity, since its actions lead to the identification and prosecution of various other irregularities. One example is the seizure of fish transported in inadequate conditions, timber, and other goods without proper documentation.

In addition to the institutional design initially formalized, it is essential to highlight the participation of other agencies that later joined SEGUP, including the Military Police, Civil Police, Fire Department, and ADEPARÁ, to carry out actions promoting citizenship. The River Base serves as a space that enables these actions. During the visit for this documentation, it was possible to see that other institutions contribute to the Base's ability to offer services to the population that did not previously exist in the region. The photograph below illustrates, for example, that one of the rooms at the base has been transformed into a Digital Inclusion Point, as per a Technical Cooperation Agreement with the Court of Justice of Pará (TJPA), the Municipality of Breves, and SEGUP. Virtual hearings are held at this location, as well as other social inclusion services, such as joint efforts to issue documents through partnerships with other agencies.



Sign for the room where the Digital Inclusion Point operates, at the Antônio Lemos River Base/PA. **Photo:** Leonardo de Carvalho/FBSP.



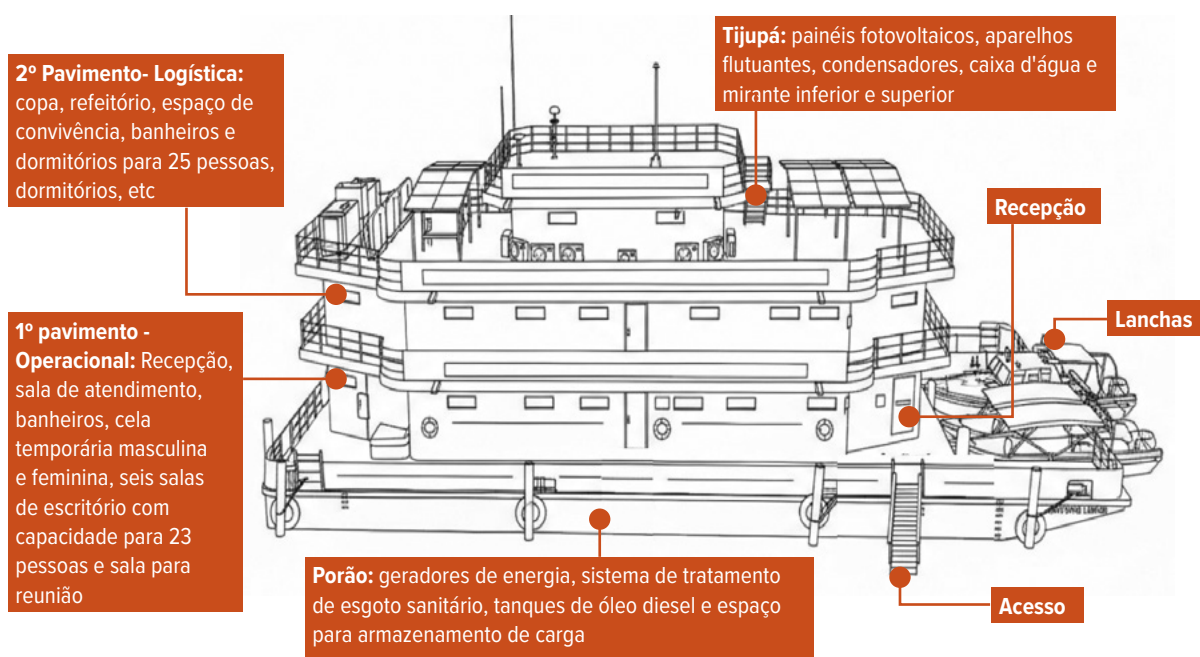
HOW THE RIVER BASES OF THE STATE OF PARÁ WORK

To understand how the Pará River Bases operate, a meeting was held with the Pará Secretary of Public Security and Social Defense, who explained the operational dynamics of the units from a strategic perspective. A documentary analysis was also carried out of the normative acts that guide the organization, operation, and procedures of the bases. In addition, in order to deepen our knowledge of the bases and their dynamics, we made a technical visit to the Antônio Lemos River Base, where we were able to talk to the public agents on duty, observe the daily operations, and gather impressions about the initiative based on the practical experience of the teams.

The river bases in Pará operate with two interagency teams, which alternate in 15-day shifts. Each of these teams is coordinated by a manager—a military police officer assigned to the GFLU—who is responsible for the overall coordination of each team, including both administrative and operational tasks. It is worth noting that initially, the daily allowances paid to the team were a contribution from the Federal Government, via the Ministry of Justice, which ceased making these payments following budget cuts. As a result, SEGUP began to bear this expense, but was unable to maintain the entire team. As a result, the River Base operates with fewer personnel than initially planned.

The figure below seeks to summarize the dynamics of the river bases in Pará, using the structure of the Antônio Lemos base as an example:

Figure 2 | Dynamics of the Antônio Lemos/PA river base



Source: Author's own elaboration.

A relevant point to highlight in this section is the documentation of the General Rules of Action for Integrated Public Safety River Bases⁵, which can be interpreted as a general protocol for the actions of agents working at the bases. The document details the duties and responsibilities of each team member, as well as regulating the patrolling procedures and equipment for each base.

Like any other policing unit, the River Base has vehicles that assist in approaches and are used for patrolling nearby rivers and tributaries. To carry out these activities, the Antônio Lemos River Base has three speedboats, two of which are armored. At the time of the photographic record made during the visit, one of the boats was undergoing maintenance after being hit by rifle bullets fired by criminals who exchanged fire with police officers from the Base during one of these patrols⁶. Thanks to the boat's armored structure, no police officers were injured.



Speedboats available at the time of the visit to the base in Antônio Lemos/PA. **Photo:** Leonardo de Carvalho/FBSP.

5 Available at: [nga_atualizada.pdf](#)

6 We were told that this was the only incident of confrontation since the base had been established.



Armored boat (undergoing maintenance at the time of the visit to the base in Antônio Lemos/PA). **Photo:** Rodrigo Pinheiro/Ag. Pará.

The maintenance and general services necessary for the base to function are outsourced, and the people hired are residents of Antônio Lemos, working in roles such as reception, cooking, and cleaning. This dynamic not only generates jobs for the local population but also helps to strengthen the bonds between the base team and the community. However, constant attention is required to ensure that contracts with the companies responsible are always in force, thereby avoiding interruptions to essential services.

Each institution present at the River Base shares its action plans with the others, which allows for integrated and coordinated action. Among the ongoing activities, one that stands out is the approach to “line” vessels, that is, boats that make regular trips between Amazonian cities. To streamline this procedure, whenever a vessel departs from its point of origin, the captain sends the Base a list of passengers, accompanied by their respective document numbers. With this information, the teams consult the available systems and, if any outstanding legal issues are identified, the person is detained at the time of boarding. On smaller vessels traveling on rivers near the Base, the request to stop is made by radio or hand signals.

In addition to search and seizure operations carried out by police forces, the Base also enables more effective enforcement by the Pará State Agricultural Defense Agency (ADEPARÁ), which inspects boats passing through the region. This has resulted in seizures of illegal timber and fish. One example was the recent inspection of a ferry traveling from Manaus to Belém. With the help of a sniffer dog, agents identified a large quantity of dried pirarucu fish among the cargo of a truck, weighing a total of four tons and being transported illegally without proper docu-



mentation. The truck's owner was taken to the Civil Police unit at the Base for the necessary procedures, while the fish was handed over to the municipal health surveillance agency. After obtaining authorization from the agency, it was donated to a local community⁷. Another point to highlight is the use of sniffer dogs, which have proven to be crucial in identifying illegal goods hidden in vessels.

SNIFFER DOGS OF THE STATE OF PARÁ

Created on October 12, 1974, the Kennel Unit of the Pará Military Police was elevated to the status of a Battalion on January 14, 2020. In addition to its human personnel, the unit's dogs are assigned according to their specific training and may operate in patrol missions, explosives detection, or narcotics identification. The animals also participate in community engagement activities, including visits to schools, hospitals, and other social initiatives.

A unique feature is that the State of Pará is the only one in the North and Northeast regions to have its own breeding center for police dogs. This allows for the selection of animals for service based on an assessment of their aptitudes. This model differs from the previous one, which relied on public procurement and did not allow for selective evaluation, since purchases were made before identifying each dog's individual skills.

These dogs and their handlers are part of the regular team at the River Base. During the technical visit, it was reported that the pairs (dog and handler) working at the river bases have remained consistent over time, which has enhanced their familiarity with operations on board vessels.

The use of sniffer dogs during inspections conducted by the river bases increases both the speed and accuracy of searches, as the animals can detect narcotics and other illicit materials hidden on boats or in transported vehicles. When not on duty, the dogs are kept in calm environments to minimize stress and ensure their physical and psychological well-being.



Dog Jay-Z during a seizure of nearly 50 kg of drugs in Antônio Lemos, Pará.
Photo: Courtesy of SEGUP-PA.



Female dog Isis during a 117 kg drug seizure at the Candiru Base, Pará. **Photo:** SEGUP-PA.

7 Ver: <https://agenciapara.com.br/noticia/71374/agentes-da-base-antonio-lemos-apreendem-4-toneladas-de-pirarucu-na-ilha-do-marajo> e Comunidades do Marajó recebem doação de pescado apreendido pela Base Antônio Lemos | SEGUP

In addition to its supervisory role, the presence of the base in a region that previously lacked regular state presence has enabled other public agencies to establish a presence in the area. We were told that since the base was installed in Antônio Lemos, new families have been moving to the surrounding area for safety reasons.

Although no cases of arrests in flagrante delicto were mentioned, it was noted that the permanent presence of public security agents in the area has deterred criminals who used to rob boats in the region⁸.

It is worth mentioning that in the week following the visit, this researcher was in Macapá and, while talking to the local population about the flow of boats, it was spontaneously mentioned that navigation between Belém and Macapá became safer after the “police set up a base in Antônio Lemos, putting an end to thefts by water rats.” As shown in the image below, this route typically passes in front of the River Base and takes approximately 36 hours.

Map 2 | Belém-Macapá river route



Source: Prepared by the author using Google Maps.

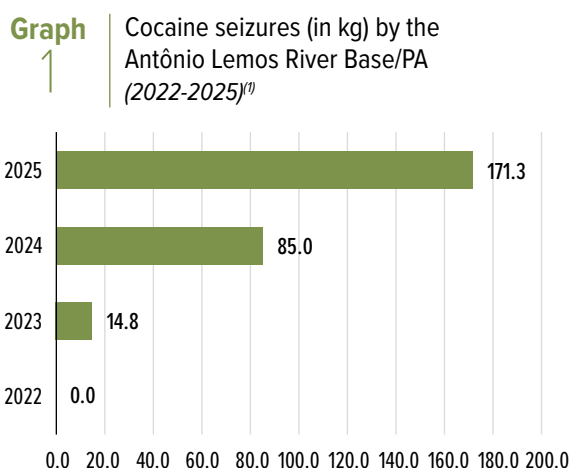
8 They are called “water rats” by the locals.

A FEW IMPACT INDICATORS

Data provided by SEGUP indicate that drug seizures carried out by river bases show different patterns depending on the type of substance and that, when analyzed together, reveal a predominance of marijuana seizures—especially of the *skunk* variety—as reported during the technical visit.

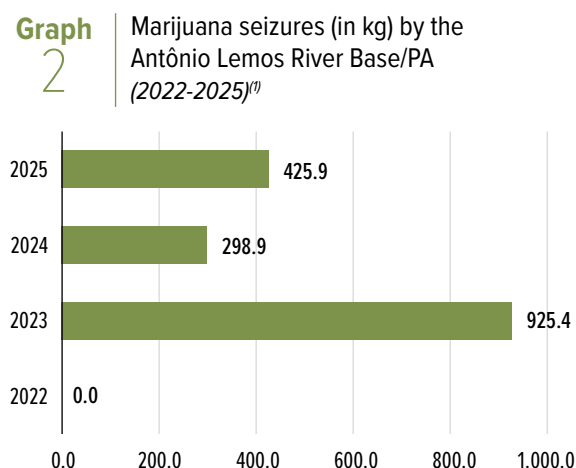
It is important to note that the volumes shown in the following graphs refer exclusively to the regular activity of the river base teams. The amount would be even higher if joint operations with other forces were factored in. However, we chose to present only the results of the exclusive activities of the river bases, as we believe that this snapshot more accurately reflects the operational routine and daily performance of these units.

At the Antônio Lemos Base, different trends can be observed depending on the type of drug analyzed. The amount of cocaine seized has been growing since 2023, while marijuana seizures peaked in the same year, declining in 2024 and rising again in the first months of 2025. A relevant aspect is that these seizures occurred in a relatively low number of records: in the case of cocaine, there were 4 occurrences in 2023, 6 in 2024, and 11 in 2025; for marijuana, there were 10, 19, and 23, respectively.



Source: SEGUP/PA.

(1) Data collected through September 2025.



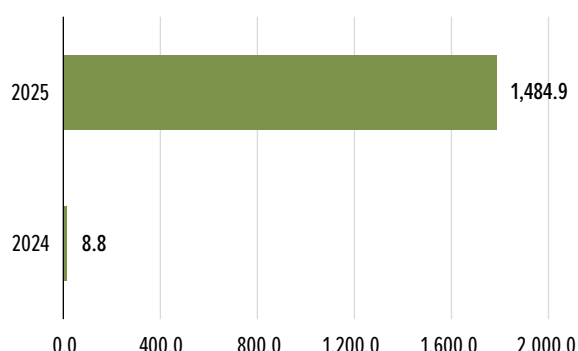
Source: SEGUP/PA.

(1) Data collected through September 2025.

Base Candiru, which began operating more recently, has a shorter time series for analysis—it was inaugurated on September 13, 2024—but already records significant volumes of narcotics seized. As observed in Antônio Lemos, the number of incidents is relatively low: for cocaine, there were 2 in 2024 and 13 in 2025; and for marijuana, 10 and 30, respectively.



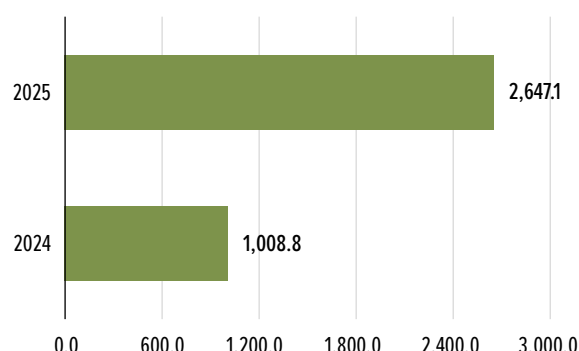
Graph 3 Cocaine seizures (in kg) by the Candiru River Base/PA (2022-2025)⁽¹⁾



Source: SEGUP/PA.

(1) Data collected through September 2025.

Graph 4 Marijuana seizures (in kg) by the Candiru River Base/PA (2022-2025)⁽¹⁾



Source: SEGUP/PA.

(1) Data collected through September 2025.

The table below, in turn, indicates that the average amount of narcotics seized in incidents is substantial, suggesting that such quantities would not fall under “possession for personal use” but rather under trafficking.

Table 1 Average quantity of narcotics seized in incidents at river bases in Pará (2022-2025)

Base/type of narcotic	Ano				
	2022	2023	2024	2025	Average for the period
ANTONIO LEMOS BASE					
COCAINE	-	3.7	14.2	15.6	12.9
MARIJUANA	-	92.5	15.7	18.5	31.1
CANDIRU BASE					
COCAINE	-	-	4.4	114.2	99.6
MARIJUANA	-	-	100.9	88.2	91.4
Grand total	-	67.2	37.9	61.4	54.8

Source: SEGUP/PA.

(-) Information not available.

CHALLENGES

One of the challenges of any recently implemented action is that, regardless of the impacts achieved, its sustainability over time must be guaranteed. To this end, it is necessary to implement regulatory measures that ensure the institutionalization of these activities, as well as their continuity over time, so that they are recognized as state policies rather than government policies. Budgetary forecasting is a fundamental element for this, as we have numerous examples in Brazil of successful measures that have been diluted to the point of becoming merely ceremonial. It is necessary to ensure the continuity of the action, taking into account the calendar of potential changes in the political context.



Another point of attention is scalability. When a new action is showing positive results, it is tempting to seek to replicate it in an attempt to increase the results obtained. However, an initial period of disorderly growth can jeopardize the continuity of the action. In the case of the Pará River Bases, we see that even after the initial results presented by the Antônio Lemos Base, there was a period of more than two years before the Candiru River Base was inaugurated. During this period, protocols were corrected and improved, and daily operations revealed new challenges and difficulties that were gradually overcome. When the Candiru River Base began operating, accumulated knowledge among the state teams had already optimized its implementation. What is expected when the third and new Base begins operating in the Abaetetuba region is that the knowledge accumulated to date will be translated into rules and procedures that will facilitate its implementation/operation.

Bringing new agencies from other spheres of government to carry out actions from the river bases is another challenge that needs to be addressed. Both the municipal and federal governments can carry out enforcement actions within their respective jurisdictions to consolidate their presence in the state and thus preventively repel territorial control strategies employed by organized crime.

A final challenge in integrated actions, such as river bases, lies precisely in the engagement of the institutions that participate and make up the teams. Each participating institution has a specific role and objective that can

be achieved through collaboration with the other institutions. Maintaining the integrated nature of river bases requires the alignment of agencies that need to allocate part of their respective budgets for recurring expenses.

These actors need to recognize the **importance of river bases** not only as instruments of public safety and assistance in crime fighting, but also as initiatives that promote a greater sense of security among the local population.

To overcome these challenges, it is essential to raise awareness among public managers at various levels, particularly those in strategic positions with decision-making authority. These actors need to recognize the importance of river bases not only as instruments of public safety and assistance in crime fighting, but also as initiatives that promote a greater sense of security among the local population, who view river bases as a visible presence of the state in regions where it was previously absent.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The implementation of River Bases in the state of Pará, starting from 2022, marks a policy of permanent state presence at strategic points, not only for public security, but also for inspections by various agencies across different fields. Acting in an integrated manner, these agencies are able to optimize and share the existing structure. This integration also enables the maintenance of the structure, as each institution bears part of the costs associated with maintaining the equipment.

It is worth noting that since its implementation, the base visited – Antônio Lemos – has been equipped to provide additional services to the community, such as the Digital Inclusion Point, through the collaboration of the Pará Court



of Justice and Breves City Hall. The social actions carried out at these bases also indicate their potential to serve as a reference for various public policies in a region that is difficult to access.

Maintaining the structure—including staff and material resources—in full working order to carry out patrols and other actions for which the River Base was designed is an ongoing challenge, at the risk of making inspections unfeasible, as well as the network of interaction that has been created over these three years of activity between the base team and the local population, which is consolidating into a relationship of trust that is fundamental for the exchange of information and for ensuring the population's sense of security.

In addition to the challenges already mentioned, it is necessary to recognize the need to create and maintain this type of structure, since the results presented are promising, not only from the perspective of public safety, but also as an action to strengthen the state's presence, which acts directly on the issue of territorial control. To this end, bringing the federal government and even the municipalities in the region to act from the river bases is a way to expand the benefits of the river bases



Initiative 03

“Ouro Alvo” Program: Forensic tracking of illegal gold in Brazil

Nivio Nascimento

Researcher and International Advisor to the
Brazilian Forum on Public Safety

TECHNICAL SHEET

	Initiative name: “Ouro Alvo” Program
	Main implementing agency: Technical-Scientific Directorate (DITEC), National Institute of Criminalistics (INC), Federal Police (PF)
	Year of creation: 2019
	State of operation and territorial coverage: Nationwide in cooperation with regional superintendents of the Federal Police and advanced bases in critical areas of the Legal Amazon.
	Partnerships: → Federal public agencies: IBAMA, ICMBio, Federal Revenue Service, ANM, COAF, and MPF. → Academic institutions: University of Brasília (UnB), University of São Paulo (USP), and Gold Rush project partners. → International organizations: UNODC, Interpol, ACTO, and bilateral cooperation with Colombia, Peru, and France. → Financing and technical support: Amazon Fund (BNDES) and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).
	Current status: Operational. Institutionalized program as a permanent policy of the Federal Police, linked to the Amazon and Environment Directorate (DAMAZ/PF) and recognized by the Ministry of Justice as a strategic tool of the Amazon Plan – Security and Sovereignty (Plano AMAS).





Summary: The “*Ouro Alvo*” Program is an initiative of the Federal Police (PF), created in 2019 as a scientific and strategic response to the expansion of illegal gold mining in the Amazon. By integrating chemistry, physics, and forensic geology, the program has developed unprecedented methodologies capable of identifying the geochemical and isotopic origin of seized gold — even after refining — transforming the metal into traceable evidence. Among its main milestones are the creation of Ouroteca and the National Bank of Gold Profiles (BANPA), which serve as pillars of a national mineral traceability system that connects science, technology, and criminal investigation. “*Ouro Alvo*” has since become a state policy, incorporated into the Amazon and Environment Directorate (DAMAZ/PF) and the Amazon Plan – Security and Sovereignty (AMAS), supporting integrated operations and intelligence efforts across the region. With concrete results — including seizures, forensic analyses, database integration, and scientific cooperation — the program has positioned itself as an instrument of sovereignty, environmental governance, and scientific diplomacy, placing Brazil at the global forefront of the fight against illegal gold.

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Police (PF) “*Ouro Alvo*” Program was launched in 2019 as an innovative response to the escalation of illegal gold mining in Brazil, especially in the Amazon region. Data from “*Cartografias da Violência*” (FBSP, 2024)¹ show that between 2018 and 2023, reports of unauthorized mineral extraction (Articles 44 and 55 of Law 9.605/98²) in the Legal Amazon increased by 12.9%. From 2022 to 2023 alone, the increase was 111.0%, jumping from 91 reports to 192. Similarly, from 2018 to 2023, Federal Police investigations specifically related to the crime described in Article 55 of Law 9.605/98 increased by 107.1%, totaling 319 in 2023.

This rise in illegal mining, driven by high global prices and weak environmental enforcement, has resulted in forest destruction, humanitarian crises—as in the case of the Yanomami—and growing involvement by criminal factions³. In addition, there was a structural void in the gold chain, historically marked by a self-declaration regime and the absence of effective traceability mechanisms. In this scenario, the central question arose as to whether it was possible to determine the geographical origin of seized gold, even after the metal had been melted down. The proposal to trace gold through its physical and chemical properties is in line with recent approaches to “follow the products” in order to understand illicit economies, transforming the metal itself into a source of information and scientific evidence⁴.

The “*Ouro Alvo*” Program began when federal criminal experts with academic backgrounds in geology, chemistry, and forensic physics took initiative. They sought to fill a persistent gap in the Federal Police’s work: determining the origin of seized gold, even after it had been smelted. This need, voiced by police and prosecutors who faced seizures with no technical proof of origin, drove a rigorous applied research effort.

1 FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA. *Cartografias da violência na Amazônia*. Vol. 3. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2024.

2 Art. 44. Extracting stone, sand, lime, or any kind of minerals from public forests or forests considered to be under permanent preservation without prior authorization. Art. 55. Conducting research, mining, or extracting mineral resources without the appropriate authorization, permission, concession, or license, or in violation of the authorization obtained.

3 INSTITUTO ESCOLHAS. *Sumário Executivo – Qual o real impacto socioeconômico da exploração de ouro e diamantes na Amazônia?* São Paulo: Instituto Escolhas, 2021. Available at: <https://escolhas.org/wp-content/uploads/Sum%C3%A1rio-Executivo-Qual-o-real-impacto-socioecon%C3%B4mico-da-explora%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-ouro-e-diamantes-na-Amaz%C3%B4nia-.pdf>. Accessed on: 20 out. 2025.

4 FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA. *Follow the Products: rastreabilidade de produtos e enfrentamento ao crime organizado*. São Paulo: FBSP, 2025. Available at: <https://publicacoes.forumseguranca.org.br/items/5c49e7c2-f01f-42c8-ae13-83d8fa9987c6>. Accessed on: 12 out. 2025.



As a result, the Technical-Scientific Directorate (DITEC/PF), through the National Institute of Criminalistics (INC), organized the “Ouroteca”—a national collection of gold samples gathered from different regions of Brazil and neighboring South American countries—and created the National Bank of Gold Profiles (BANPA)⁵, a centralized reference system cataloging the unique chemical and isotopic characteristics (specific atomic makeups and regional fingerprints) of gold. This database combines the chemical and isotopic “fingerprints” of gold, enabling authorities to track the geographical origin of seized gold with a high degree of confidence. It also allows verification of whether gold matches what is stated in tax documents, even if the gold has been refined.

“Ouro Alvo” is both a scientific innovation and a public policy. It helps place Brazil at the forefront of mineral traceability for environmental protection and the fight against organized crime.

According to the criminal expert Fábio Augusto Salvador, one of the program’s creators, “Ouro Alvo” was born from the belief that “gold retains impurities and isotopes (unique atomic variations that serve as a natural identification method) capable of revealing its geological origin even after refining.” This idea formed the basis for a program that combines forensic science and environmental prosecution. It provides the Federal Police with new scientific tools to distinguish between gold from illegal and legitimate sources. “Ouro Alvo” is both a scientific innovation and a public policy. It helps place Brazil at the forefront of mineral traceability for environmental protection and the fight against organized crime.

In 2023, the Program consolidated itself as an essential tool for the work of the newly created Amazon and Environment Directorate of the Federal Police (DAMAZ/PF), which is responsible for implementing the Amazon Plan – Security and Sovereignty (Plano AMAS)⁶. The creation of DAMAZ represented a structural reconfiguration of the Federal Police, concentrating national and international integration efforts on protecting the environment, particularly the Amazon, and enabling effective coordination among levels of government, branches of power, and countries in the Pan-Amazon region⁷. This governance structure enables “Ouro Alvo” to serve as a liaison between the technical and scientific capabilities of the National Institute of Criminalistics (INC) and the strategic planning of DAMAZ, thereby strengthening interagency cooperation and the utilization of scientific evidence in operations targeting illegal mining.

The Amazon Plan – Security and Sovereignty (Plano AMAS), established by Decree No. 11,614/2023⁸, is built on three pillars: governance (oversight and coordination mechanisms), structure (the organizational framework and resources), and operations (field actions and law enforcement). DAMAZ connects regional superintendents and state forces. It ensures that scientific programs, such as “Ouro Alvo”, align with the overall strategy of sovereignty and environmental protection in the Amazon. All relevant sectors are encouraged to engage actively, support the imple-

5 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. Revista Perícia Federal – Edição Especial “Ouro Alvo”. Brasília: Polícia Federal, 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/04/policia-federal-lanca-revista-pericia-federal-edicao-ouro-alvo>. Accessed on: Sept. 22, 2025.

6 BRASIL. Fundo Amazônia. Plano Amazônia – Segurança e Soberania (Plano AMAS). Available at: <https://www.fundoamazonia.gov.br/pt/projeto/Planos-Amas-Amazonia-Seguranca-e-Soberania/>. Accessed on: Oct. 19, 2025.

7 FREIRE DE BARROS, Humberto. Plano AMAS e a Atuação da Polícia Federal Contra os Crimes Ambientais. Revista SUSP, Brasília, v. 4, n. 1, p. 10-18, jan./jun. 2025. Available at: <https://revistasusp.mj.gov.br/susp/index.php/revistasusp/article/download/765/227>. Accessed on: 19 out. 2025.

8 BRASIL. Decreto nº 11.614, de 21 de julho de 2023. Diário Oficial da União, Brasília. Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11614.htm. Accessed on: Oct. 19, 2025.



mentation of the strategy, and drive tangible changes in Amazonian security and environmental integrity.

The Federal Police's strategy for the Amazon combines governance, regulatory modernization, and integrated operational action, also supported by the establishment of the Amazon International Police Cooperation Center (CCPI Amazônia, a facility focused on cross-border environmental security cooperation)⁹. Located in Manaus (AM) and inaugurated in September 2025 in the presence of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva¹⁰, CCPI Amazônia brings together representatives from the PF, SENASP (National Public Security Secretariat), PRF (Federal Highway Police), state security secretariats, and liaison officers from the nine countries of the Pan-Amazon region, as well as representatives from multilateral organizations. This structure strengthens the PF as a regional diplomatic and technical actor, integrating science, operations, and international cooperation into a single environmental security policy.

France, South Africa, Colombia, and other countries have developed complementary methodologies — from forensic geochemistry to electronic transaction control — that today form a global knowledge base on mineral traceability.

Established within the Federal Police's National Institute of Criminalistics (INC, the federal forensic laboratory) and coordinated with DAMAZ, the program is based on the Federal Police's Internal Regulations and on *Decree No. 9,662/2019*, which gives the institution authority for criminal investigations and scientific research. "*Ouro Alvo*" is also anchored in the Plan for Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon (PPCDAm, a federal plan for preventing forest loss), providing crucial scientific evidence for environmental crime investigations. Its isotopic (identifying unique atomic signatures) and geochemical (studying chemical composition related to diverse origins) traceability methods help to address legal gaps caused by the self-declaration system for gold origin (*Law No. 12,844/2013*, which allows miners to declare gold origin without supporting evidence). The program is also linked to legislative reforms under discussion, such as *Bills No. 836/2021 and No. 3,025/2023*, which aim to create a National Mineral Traceability System and facilitate the issuance of electronic invoices for gold. To ensure the effectiveness and ongoing evolution of "*Ouro Alvo*", it is essential that policymakers, law enforcement, and the scientific community maintain strong advocacy for robust legislation and actively participate in advancing gold traceability¹¹.

International experiences in gold tracking, as illustrated in Figure 1, demonstrate that various countries are actively enhancing their scientific, documentary, and institutional mechanisms to combat illegal mining and ensure the origin of the metal. France, South Africa, Colombia, and other countries have developed complementary methodologies— from forensic geochemistry to electronic transaction control—that today form a global knowledge base on mineral traceability. Brazil, through the "*Ouro Alvo*" Program, now joins this ecosystem, both learning from these references and contributing its own innovations, such as systematically using isotopic signatures and creating the National Bank of Gold Profiles (BANPA), which already inspires international technical cooperation. Collaboration with international partners is strongly encouraged to further improve global gold traceability and combat illegal mining collectively.

9 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. PF inaugura Centro de Cooperação Policial Internacional da Amazônia (CCPI Amazônia). Manaus: PF, 9 set. 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2025/09/pf-inaugura-centro-de-cooperacao-policial-internacional-da-amazonia>. Accessed on: 19 out. 2025.

10 BRASIL. Agência Gov. Em Manaus, Lula inaugura Centro de Cooperação Policial Internacional da Amazônia. Brasília: Agência Gov, 9 set. 2025. Available at: <https://agenciagov.etc.com.br/noticias/202509/em-manaus-lula-inaugura-centro-de-cooperacao-policial-internacional-da-amazonia>. Accessed on: Oct. 19, 2025.

11 INSTITUTO ESCOLHAS. *Rastreabilidade: tecnologias e governança para produtos de origem na Amazônia*. Versão 2. São Paulo: Instituto Escolhas, out. 2025. Available at: https://escolhas.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Rastreabilidade_SITE_PT_v2.pdf. Accessed on: 20 out. 2025.



Figure 1 | International Experiences in Gold Tracking
2018 - 2025



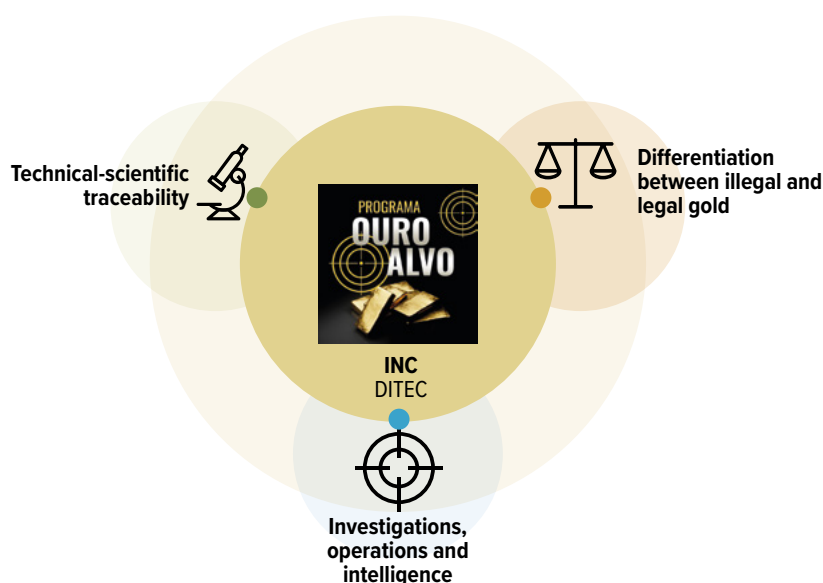
Source: Own elaboration based on BRGM/WWF France; University of Pretoria; ANM/DIAN Colombia; UNODC; Interpol (2018–2025).

Gold is an asset of universal value, serving as economic ballast, financial reserve, and industrial input—and, for this very reason, occupies a central position in the global economic order. Tracking this metal is therefore a key element of global governance. The “*Ouro Alvo*” Program fits into this scenario as an instrument of sovereignty and scientific diplomacy, connecting Brazilian expertise to international networks of control, research, and technical cooperation. While drawing inspiration from foreign models, “*Ouro Alvo*” is beginning to teach others, offering its “gold DNA” methodology to regional partners and multilateral organizations and consolidating Brazil’s position as a benchmark in mineral traceability and the fight against transnational organized crime.

OBJECTIVES

The central objectives of the “*Ouro Alvo*” Program can be summarized in three interconnected fronts:

Figure 2 | Objectives of the “*Ouro Alvo*” Program



 **Technical and scientific traceability is the central axis of the “*Ouro Alvo*” Program, enabling the development of forensic methods and tools capable of identifying the geological origin of seized or suspected gold.** The proposal involves characterizing the unique chemical and isotopic signatures of each mining region, compiling them in a national database that enables a batch of gold to be associated with its mine of origin. In practical terms, the program seeks to assign gold a kind of “geological DNA,” a natural code that remains even after refining and smelting. This traceability is based on the premise that the metal retains impurities and elemental traces—such as silver, copper, lead, and quartz—that vary according to the geological conditions of each deposit. These micro-signatures serve as markers of origin, detectable and comparable using high-precision laboratory techniques, enabling the distinction between legal and illegal gold and the verification of its origin in investigative and judicial proceedings.

 **Differentiating legal from illegal gold based on forensic evidence** is another central function of the “*Ouro Alvo*” Program. The goal is to distinguish gold of legal origin from that extracted from authorized mining titles, from illegal mines, indigenous lands, or invaded conservation units. The program aims to fill a historical gap in forensic evidence, as miners and intermediaries had long claimed it was impossible to trace the metal after smelting. “*Ouro Alvo*” refutes this claim with science. Through chemical and isotopic analyses, PF experts produce reports that indicate whether the gold under examination is compatible with the location declared in its documentation¹². These results make it possible to invalidate fraudulent records and invoices used to

12 INSTITUTO HUMANITAS UNISINOS (IHU). *Ouroteca ajuda o Brasil a combater o garimpo ilegal na Amazônia*. 12 maio 2023. Available at: <https://www.ihu.unisinos.br/categorias/628818-ouroteca-ajuda-o-brasil-a-combater-o-garimpo-ilegal-na-amazonia>. Accessed on: 11 set. 2025.



“launder” illegal gold, providing a technical basis for seizures, criminal prosecution, and strengthening traceability in the Brazilian gold market.

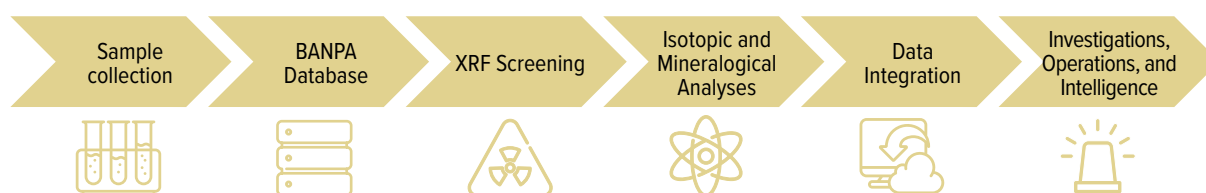


I support investigations, operations, and intelligence by providing robust forensic evidence to support police inquiries, criminal proceedings, and administrative measures related to gold crimes. This ranges from identifying gangs that finance and distribute illegal gold to assisting in asset recovery and improving public policy. In this way, “*Ouro Alvo*” allows previously scattered dots to be connected, linking illegal extraction to money laundering channels, national and international receivers, and the resulting environmental and social impacts. The knowledge generated by the program also provides input for intelligence actions by other environmental, tax, and financial agencies, making it an essential tool for breaking the cycle of impunity surrounding illegal gold, transforming it from an anonymous commodity into a traceable product subject to state control and h.

IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION

To achieve these objectives, the “*Ouro Alvo*” Program has structured a multidisciplinary operation that combines cutting-edge technology, institutional partnerships, and data intelligence.

Figure 3 | “*Ouro Alvo*” Program operation flow



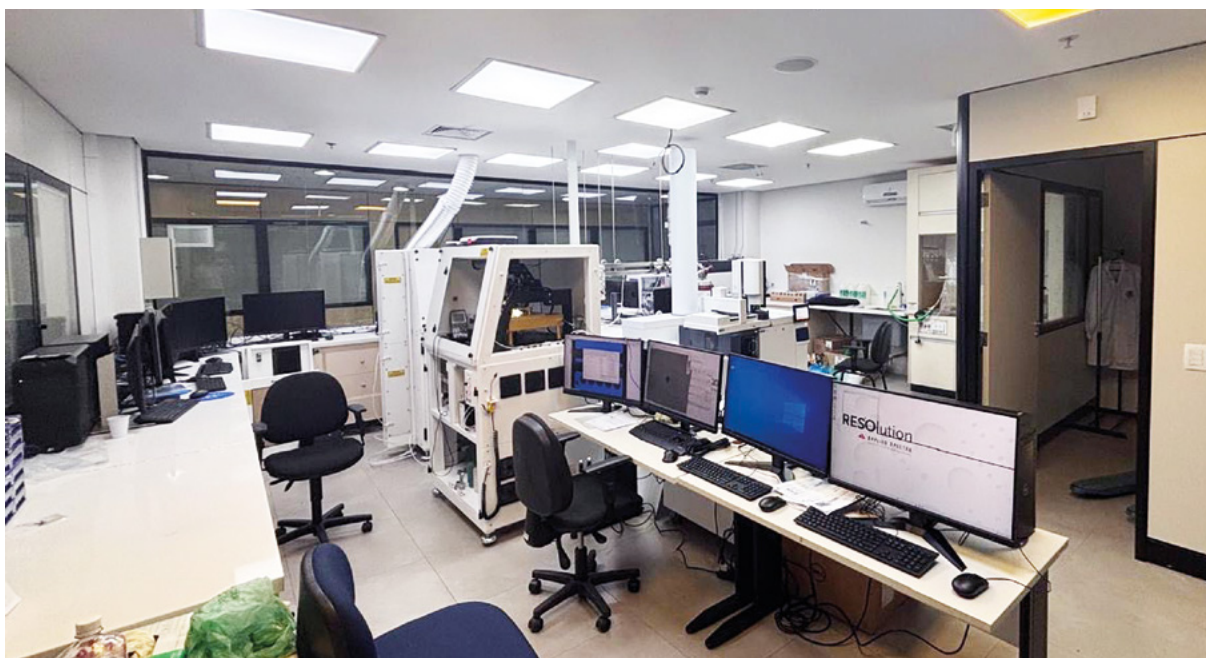
Federal Police criminal experts **systematically collect gold** from both legal and illegal mines in various regions of the country, as well as receive samples from regular mining companies and research institutions. This material is incorporated into the Ouroteca—a physical collection maintained at the INC/PF, which functions as a national reference laboratory. Each sample follows a standardized collection and transport protocol, including individual registration, sealing, and storage, to ensure traceability and integrity in accordance with the official procedures described in Official Letter No. 90/2022-DITEC/PF¹³. These procedures ensure that the seized gold retains its probative value throughout the process — from seizure in the field to chemical and isotopic laboratory analyses — and that the results can be unequivocally linked to the origin of the material. The analytical data are fed into the National Gold Profile Database (BANPA/PF), which consolidates dozens of different chemical and isotopic profiles. The database serves as a reference for identifying the geographical origin of each sample and supporting criminal investigations and legal proceedings. Recognizing the transnational nature of the illicit gold trade, the PF began to incorporate samples from neighboring countries (Guyana, Venezuela, Peru, among others) through technical cooperation and field collections — an essential step, since gold of foreign origin often circulates in the Brazilian market and vice versa, requiring an integrated regional approach.

13 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. *Ofício nº 90/2022/DITEC/PF – Informação sobre o Banco Nacional de Perfis Auríferos (BANPA/PF) e Procedimentos de Coleta e Envio de Amostras Auríferas*. Brasília, 8 jun. 2022.



The first stage of analysis employs **portable X-ray fluorescence (XRF)**, a non-destructive technique that, in seconds, reveals the elemental composition of the sample—that is, the percentage of gold and metallic impurities present. Since natural gold is rarely 100% pure (24 karats), these impurities form chemical signatures that allow for quick comparison of the profile of the seized gold with that expected for a given region. The technique has proven especially useful for immediate decisions in the field, when it is necessary to verify the compatibility between the seized material and its declared origin. The introduction of this technique represented a watershed moment for gold expertise. In addition to being non-destructive and portable, XRF analysis allows for immediate results, enabling the identification of illegal gold without the need for complex laboratory reports. This operational agility has transformed preliminary diagnosis into a strategic tool for seizures at airports and borders, reducing response times and strengthening the link between forensic science and judicial police activities.

When the investigation requires further investigation, **high-precision isotopic analyses** performed in the laboratory come into play. Suspicious gold is sent to the National Institute of Criminalistics (INC) or to partner laboratories at federal universities, where the stable isotopes present in the metal impurities are determined. This technique, which involves mass spectrometry and, in some cases, the use of particle accelerators, allows for the detection of variations in the number of neutrons in elements such as lead and silver. The proportions between these isotopes function as “geological fingerprints,” as each mineral deposit has unique formation conditions that result in a specific isotopic signature. The analyses follow internationally recognized standards of laboratory quality, with cross-validation between Brazilian and foreign partner institutions.



“Ouro Alvo” Laboratories at INC in Brasília. **Photo:** Image provided by DITEC.

By comparing the isotopes in a sample with the profiles recorded in BANPA, experts can indicate, with a high degree of confidence, the region of origin of the gold analyzed. Inspired by international experiences, such as those in South Africa, where forensic geologists applied isotopic techniques to distinguish gold from legal mines and illicit

sources, this approach was adapted to the Brazilian context, incorporating the complexity of scattered gold mines in the Amazon. Other complementary techniques include mineralogical analysis, which aims to identify quartz, sediment, or mercury inclusions in the gold, and morphological analysis, which examines the shape of the grains and nuggets. In many cases, the shape and surface characteristics of the metal also reveal the type of extraction: whether the gold came from a riverbed, a ravine, or was industrially reprocessed.

“Ouro Alvo” also relies on extensive scientific collaboration. Universities such as UnB (University of Brasília) and USP (University of São Paulo) are part of the effort through the **Gold Rush project**, a research initiative funded by CAPES, Instituto Serrapilheira, and other organizations, aimed at improving geochemical tracking methods¹⁴. Academic researchers are investigating, for example, how processing methods (amalgamation with mercury, cyanidation) can slightly alter the composition of gold, ensuring that the “primary signature” remains detectable even after refining¹⁵. The Brazilian Synchrotron Light Laboratory (LNLS/CNPq) in Campinas, São Paulo, was also involved in nanometric-level analysis of impurities associated with gold¹⁶. This cooperation results in a leap in quality by identifying parameters to track the origin, even if criminals try to mask the material, for example, by mixing gold from different sources or removing impurities through repeated refining. Such synergies enable the program to remain at the forefront of forensic knowledge and continually improve its techniques in response to new threats.

Through Delphos-Mining, it is possible to view all electronic invoices issued by a company, ANM’s Prospecting Permits (PLGs) records, and updated satellite images of environmental risk areas.

In addition to the technical-scientific axis, “Ouro Alvo” operates a data analysis axis that connects laboratory results to multiple external databases. Within the scope of the program, a specific module was structured in the **Delphos** system – the **Mining module**, an internal PF platform that aggregates information on gold production and commercialization from agencies such as the National Mining Agency (ANM), Securities Distributors (DTVMs), and state tax authorities. Through Delphos-Mining, it is possible to view all electronic invoices issued by a company, ANM’s Prospecting Permits (PLGs) records, and updated satellite images of environmental risk areas. This cross-referencing has revealed glaring inconsistencies, such as companies declaring extraction in areas where satellite images

show no activity, suggesting “fictitious production” to legitimize illegal gold. The chemical and isotopic profile of BANPA has been progressively integrated into Delphos-Mineração, allowing laboratory data to be cross-referenced with commercial records. Thus, when a DTVM declares that it has purchased gold from a cooperative, the PF can compare the chemical composition of the bars with the characteristic pattern of that region. If a significant discrepancy is detected, the system generates automatic alerts to guide further investigations and expert analysis. This

14 SCHUTESKY, Maria Emília. *Ouro ilegal: rastreamento de proveniência por meio da geoquímica isotópica*. Brasília: Universidade de Brasília (UnB) / Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES), 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/capes/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/documentos/diretoria-de-bolsas-no-pais/ciencias-forenses/MariaEmiliaSchuteskyUnB.pdf>. Accessed on: 11 set. 2025.

15 BRASIL. Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES). *Pesquisa CAPES/UnB investiga ouro de garimpos ilegais*. Brasília: CAPES, 17 ago. 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/capes/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/pesquisa-capes-unb-investiga-ouro-de-garimpos-ilegais>. Accessed on: 11 set. 2025.

16 REUTERS. *New technology aids Brazil’s crackdown on illicit Amazon gold trade*. Dec. 14, 2024. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/new-technology-aids-brazils-crackdown-illicit-amazon-gold-trade-2024-12-14/>. Accessed on: Sept. 11, 2025.



integration introduces a form of real-time traceability, in which scientific information directly informs police and regulatory activities¹⁷.

Figure
4 Forensic database axis



Source: National Association of Federal Criminal Experts (Apcf), 2025¹⁸.

The “Ouro Alvo” Program has a multidisciplinary team of about 20 experts and technicians in forensic geosciences, coordinated by the National Institute of Criminalistics (INC) and supported by regional laboratories and Federal Police superintendencies in the Amazon (AM, PA, RR, AP, AC, RO). These centers collect samples in the field, feed the Ouroteca (physical collection) and BANPA (database), and provide direct support to operations aimed at combating illegal mining.

17 Associação Nacional dos Peritos Criminais Federais (APCF). *Revista Perícia Federal – Edição nº 52: Programa “Ouro Alvo”*. Brasília, dez. 2023. Available at: <https://apcf.org.br/revistas/edicao-no-52-programa-ouro-alvo/>

18 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FEDERAL CRIMINAL EXPERTS (APCF). *Federal Expertise Magazine – Issue No. 52: Ouro Alvo Program*. Brasília, Dec. 2023. Available at: <https://apcf.org.br/revistas/edicao-no-52-programa-ouro-alvo/>. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025.



“OURO ALVO” AND THE YANOMAMI INDIGENOUS TERRITORY PROTECTION OPERATION



Agent finds illegal gold hidden inside a medicine bottle. **Photo:** Bruno Mancinelli/Casa de Governo.

Since 2023, the Federal Police has been operating in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory through enforcement and forensic actions linked to the Ouro Alvo Program. Forensic teams collected gold and sediment samples on-site, feeding data into the National Bank of Geochemical Profiles (BANPA) and enabling the traceability of seized gold. This methodology made it possible to demonstrate correlations between seized samples and clandestine deposits in the region, confirming the illegal origin of the metal and supporting Federal Police investigations. The Federal Police's actions have led to a reduction of more than 90% in illegal mining within the Indigenous Territory and the removal of 11 tons of gold from criminal networks. The work has also contributed to identifying the financiers behind the illegal gold supply chain and supporting ongoing investigations. Mercury analyses in water and human populations revealed alarming levels of contamination, underscoring the urgency of combating illegal mining.

This capillarity was decisive, for example, in Operation Yanomami (2023), when experts accompanied federal forces to collect traces of gold and mercury in deactivated areas, material that subsidized complex expert reports at the INC, with geochemical/isotopic characterization capable of supporting investigations into the origin of the metal.

At the institutional level, various sources of funding have been important in strengthening the Federal Police's actions to combat illegal mining. Under the AMAS Plan, approximately R\$151 million (2024) was allocated to expand



operational capacity in the region. Of these resources, approximately R\$49 million from the Amazon Fund/BNDES was used to modernize forensic spectrometry laboratories and other high-precision equipment. These investments streamline and enhance the technical quality of investigations related to “Ouro Alvo”, which previously relied in part on the shared use of instruments at universities, without compromising academic partnerships, which remain strategic in research, methodological validation, and training. *“We have made great progress since 2019. Today, we produce complex reports with high-tech analyses, and what used to take two years, we can now deliver in one or two months. In addition, we are developing projects with universities in Brazil, France, the United States, and Canada, including Harvard, which boasts one of the world’s largest gold collections. This raises the scientific standard of the program and reinforces its international reach,”* says POA coordinator Erich Adam.

The program also works through technical and scientific cooperation with national and international organizations and partners, including INTERPOL (GAIA Project), IDB, UNODC, universities (such as UnB and USP), and foreign geological services/scientific institutions. In the bilateral field, relevant cooperation agreements have already been signed. The agreement with France, for example, focuses on technical and scientific exchange in traceability; other cooperation arrangements have supported missions, training, and cross-validations.

Consolidated internally and networked with external partners, “Ouro Alvo” now operates as a permanent mechanism for tracking gold, integrating science, expertise, and institutional coordination to tackle illegal mining and associated criminal economies.

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RESULTS

In just over four years of existence, the “Ouro Alvo” Program has already made significant contributions and achieved impressive results in supporting police operations, legal proceedings, and investigations in the mineral sector.

Record seizures of illegal gold

“Ouro Alvo” has been contributing in an integrated manner to the production of knowledge, technical support, operational planning, and criminal accountability. On May 4, 2022, the Federal Police seized 77 kilograms of gold from a private aircraft during an operation at Sorocaba Airport in São Paulo (SP). The material, transported without proof of legal origin, was sent to the forensic laboratory to verify the origin and authenticity of the transport documents¹⁹. On September 1, 2022, another relevant case was recorded at Belém International Airport (PA), where federal agents seized more than 7 kilograms of illegally transported gold, which was also sent for forensic examination at the

19 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. PF apreende 77 kg de ouro transportados em aeronave privada em Sorocaba/SP. Brasília: Polícia Federal, 4 maio 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2022/05/pf-apreende-77-kg-de-ouro-transportados-em-aeronave-privada>. Accessed on: 11 out. 2025.

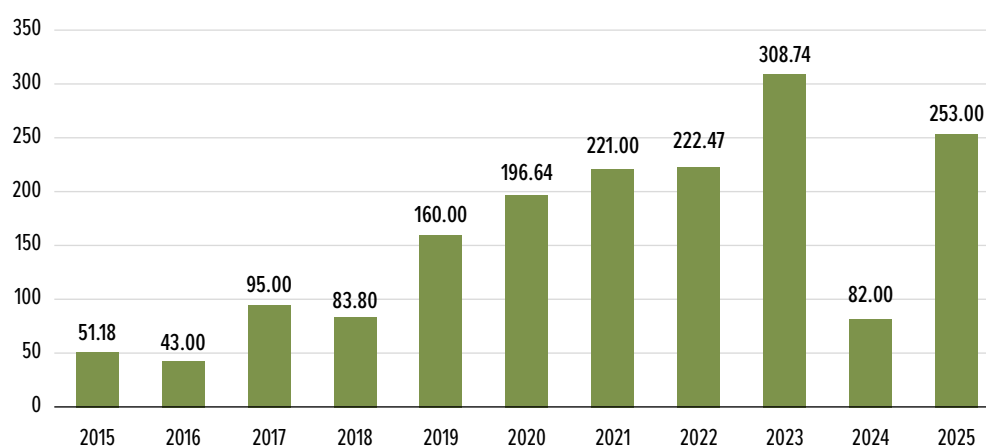


INC²⁰. On December 11, 2023, the PF announced the seizure of 47 kilograms of gold in Manaus (AM), with evidence of origin from illegal mining. The samples were subjected to chemical and isotopic analysis under the “Ouro Alvo” program, aiming to trace their geographical origin and confirm any potential illegal extraction²¹.

Graph

1

Gold seizures by the Federal Police, in kg
(2015-2025)



Source: Federal Police.

Between 2015 and 2025, the Federal Police seized approximately 1.9 tons of gold, with notable peaks in 2023 (308.7 kg) — the highest volume in the historical series — and a significant drop in 2024 (82 kg), followed by a recovery to 253 kg by October 2025. This inflection coincides with two interrelated phenomena: the extinction of the presumption of good faith in the commercialization of gold (Law No. 12,844/2013, whose interpretation was overturned by the STF in 2023 and regulated in 2024) and the consequent change in the routes and vectors of metal transportation, with a reduction in air transport via the Southeast and an increase in land and river routes through the northern Amazon, especially Roraima and Pará.

The intensification of document traceability (NF-e Ouro) and stricter control of DTVMs led to adaptations in *the modus operandi* of illegal mining operations. The migration of routes has resulted in a higher incidence of seizures on federal highways, as seen in the PRF operations in 2025, which intercepted 11.6 kg and 103 kg of gold in vehicles attempting to cross the border from Boa Vista (RR) towards Venezuela and Guyana²².

20 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. PF apreende mais de 7 kg de ouro no Aeroporto Internacional de Belém/PA. Brasília: Polícia Federal, 1 set. 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2022/09/pf-apreende-mais-de-7-kg-de-ouro-no-aeroporto-internacional-de-belem>. Accessed on: 11 out. 2025.

21 POLÍCIA MILITAR DO ESTADO DO AMAZONAS. PMAM apreende carga de ouro avaliada em mais de R\$ 15 milhões durante operação em Manaus. Manaus: Polícia Militar do Amazonas, 11 dez. 2023. Available at: https://pm.am.gov.br/porta/noticia/pmam_apreende_carga_de_ou-15824. Accessed on: 11 out. 2025.

22 BRASIL. Polícia Rodoviária Federal. PRF apreende 104 kg de ouro irregular em Roraima. Boa Vista, 21 ago. 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/prf/pt-br/noticias/estaduais/roraima/2025/agosto/prf-apreende-104-kg-de-ouro-irregular-em-roraima>. Accessed on: 17 out. 2025.





Seizure of 104 kg of illegal gold in Roraima, carried out by the Federal Highway Police (PRF) in August 2025. **Photo:** Caíque Rodrigues/G1-RR.

These changes demonstrate the adaptability of criminal networks to control and tracking policies, reinforcing the importance of “*Ouro Alvo*” as a scientific tool for deterrence and forensic evidence. By identifying the geochemical and isotopic signature of samples, the program provides a technical basis for connecting seized gold to regions of illegal extraction, supporting money laundering investigations and criminal accountability.

The Federal Police’s response to illegal mining in 2024 was robust, despite a one-off decline in gold seizures recorded during the year. DAMAZ data points to the launch of 272 operations, with more than R\$2 billion in decapitalization of criminal organizations. In June (R\$1.01 billion) and October (R\$656 million) alone, the operation resulted in the destruction of 675 dredgers in the Legal Amazon, the destruction of 978 pieces of logistical equipment, the issuance of 862 search and seizure warrants, and 136 arrests²³.

These impressive figures reflect a sophisticated repression strategy that goes beyond seizures. It involves dismantling operational structures and financially weakening criminal networks that quickly adapt to regulatory changes and control mechanisms. The “*Ouro Alvo*” program is part of this process, serving as a source of intelligence and forensic evidence, and providing technical reports, geochemical analyses, and direct support for the collection and custody of samples.

With the end of the presumption of good faith and the regulation of NF-e Ouro, the flow of metal through the South-east has become riskier, prompting a shift in routes to the northern Amazon. This logistical reorganization has also made the work of forensic experts in the preliminary stages more relevant, facilitating the action of police forces and environmental control agencies in the most sensitive regions.

23 POLÍCIA FEDERAL. Dados operacionais DAMAZ em 2024. Brasília: PF, 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/estatisticas/diretoria-da-amazonia-e-meio-ambiente-damaz/dados-operacionais-damaz-em-2024.xlsx/view>. Access on: 21 out. 2025.



Dismantling criminal schemes

GANA GOLD



Photo: Social Communication of the Federal Police.

Gana Gold, a company based in Itaituba (PA), was one of the main companies investigated in Operation Gold Rush, launched by the Federal Police in September 2021 to investigate fraud in gold mining and trading in the Amazon. The investigation revealed the misuse of ANM Utilization Guides to “launder” gold from illegal mines in Tapajós. Based on expert reports and image analysis by the Brasil M.A.I.S Program, the Federal Police demonstrated inconsistencies between the declared production and the actual capacity of the mined area. The Gana Gold case has become a symbol of the integrated application of forensic science, intelligence, and remote sensing in the crackdown on illegal mining.

FANTÁSTICO. Barões do ouro ilegal no Brasil: dinheiro movimentado às margens da lei chegou a R\$ 16 bilhões em dois anos. G1 / TV Globo, 10 jul. 2022: <https://g1.globo.com/fantastico/noticia/2022/07/10/baroes-do-ouro-ilegal-no-brasil-dinheiro-movimentado-as-margens-da-lei-chegou-a-r-16-bilhoes-em-dois-anos.ghtml>

The impact of the “*Ouro Alvo*” Program goes beyond the volume of seizures and is reflected in the reconfiguration of strategies to combat organized environmental crime. Scientific expertise, coordinated by the Technical-Scientific Directorate (DITEC/PF) and integrated with DAMAZ and DICOR, has become a crucial element in the policy aimed at dismantling criminal organizations linked to the mining sector. In 2024, operations coordinated by the Federal Police

resulted in an estimated loss of R\$5.6 billion to illicit networks — a 70% increase compared to 2023 — indicating systemic effects on illegal value chains²⁴.

Emblematic cases illustrate this transformation. Operation Emboabas, launched in September 2023 by the Federal Police Superintendency in Amazonas, dismantled a clandestine gold extraction and transportation scheme, resulting in the judicial seizure of more than R\$5.7 billion, along with the seizure of 35 kg of gold and an aircraft²⁵. A few months later, in December 2023, the Federal Police carried out a major seizure in Manaus: 47 kg of gold, an aircraft, two vehicles, and a firearm—materials sent to experts to verify their origin²⁶. In January 2024, there was a new arrest related to the case²⁷.

On the financial front, Operations Ganância, *Golden Greed*, and Comando—launched in July 2022 with a focus on gold extraction, transportation, and “laundering” networks—identified movements of R\$16 billion between 2019 and 2021 and ordered the freezing of up to R\$2 billion, in addition to the seizure of aircraft and other precautionary measures²⁸.

Complementary environmental actions conducted by federal and state agencies, such as IBAMA and security forces, in critical areas of the Amazon resulted in the destruction of aircraft and heavy machinery, hindering the immediate resumption of illegal activity and reinforcing the role of “*Ouro Alvo*” as a scientific infrastructure. By linking forensic samples to extraction regions and laundering circuits, the program provides technical and evidentiary support to investigations, adding geochemical and financial traceability to criminal analyses and consolidating an integrated approach to combating illicit chains²⁹.

Forensic tracking and consolidation of evidence of origin

The INC uses the growing number of seizures to expand Ouroteca, a sample library that allows the “isotopic signature” of each seized batch to be compared. This methodology, created under the “*Ouro Alvo*” Program, has become a recurring piece of evidence in investigations and criminal proceedings, linking confiscated bars to specific mining regions. In 2023, the Federal Police expanded the use of isotopic comparison techniques to verify the origin of seized gold, including in operations in Pará and Amazonas. Reports produced by the INC indicate compatibility

24 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. PF divulga balanço de resultados das ações de 2024. Brasília, 29 jan. 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2025/01/pf-divulga-balanco-de-resultados-das-acoes-de-2024>. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025.

25 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. PF e Receita Federal deflagram operação contra mineração ilegal de ouro (Operação Emboabas) Brasília, Sept. 20, 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2023/09/pf-deflagra-operacao-contra-mineracao-ilegal-de-ouro>. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025.

26 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. Ação conjunta entre PF e PM/AM resulta em grande apreensão de ouro (47 kg).. Brasília, Dec. 11, 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2023/12/pf-faz-a-maior-apreensao-de-ouro-em-manaus>. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025.

27 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. PF e PRF prendem investigado em ação que apreendeu 47 kg de ouro em Manaus. Brasília, Jan. 23, 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/01/pf-e-prf-prendem-investigado-em-acao-que-apreendeu-47-kg-de-ouro-em-manaus>. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025.

28 BRASIL. Polícia Federal. PF desarticula organizações criminosas voltadas à extração e comércio ilegal de ouro (Operações Ganância, Golden Greed e Comando).. Brasília, July 7, 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2022/07/pf-desarticula-organizacoes-criminosas-voltadas-a-extracao-e-comercio-ilegal-de-ouro>. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025.

29 BRASIL. Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (IBAMA). Ibama e PRF destroem mais duas aeronaves usadas em garimpo ilegal na Terra Indígena Yanomami. Brasília: IBAMA, 22 abr. 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/ibama/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2023/ibama-e-prf-destroem-mais-duas-aeronaves-usadas-em-garimpo-ilegal-na-terra-indigena-yanomami>. Access on: 11 out. 2025.



between seized samples and geological profiles of Amazonian deposits, offering a new way to attribute origin and support investigations into the misappropriation of federal property³⁰.

Increased enforcement and a decline in illicit exports

At the same time, the use of forensic techniques to identify the origin of gold is advancing. In terms of foreign trade, public sources indicate that Brazilian gold exports fell to around 77.7 tons in 2023 — information consistent with industry analysis of increased regulatory and evidentiary risk for networks seeking to “launder” gold of clandestine origin³¹. On the environmental front, mining in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory declined by more than 91% between March-August 2022 and the same period in 2024³².

Generation of strategic intelligence

The knowledge produced by the “*Ouro Alvo*” Program, coordinated by the Technical-Scientific Directorate (DITEC) of the Federal Police, has been crucial for generating strategic intelligence on illegal mining in the country. Between 2019 and 2023, more than 1.1 tons of gold seized in operations were submitted for analysis at the National Institute of Criminalistics (INC). Each sample examined is fed into Ouroteca, the national gold reference library maintained by the INC, and its analytical results are integrated into the National Gold Profile Database (BANPA) — allowing for geochemical and isotopic comparisons that help identify the origin of the seized metal.

Laboratory analyses conducted under the program have enabled the mapping of regional distribution routes and the identification of patterns of fraud in invoices and declarations of origin. Based on these findings, the PF intensified joint actions with IBAMA in critical areas of Pará — especially Itaituba, Jacareacanga, and Novo Progresso — where gold from Roraima was often “laundered” with false documentation. These operations, documented in official Federal Police reports, exemplify how the use of forensic data reinforces the crackdown on the entire illegal mining value chain, not just extraction.

At major airports, “*Ouro Alvo*” has also been helping to detect illegally mined gold destined for irregular export. Interviews with Federal Police professionals for this research indicate that Guarulhos (SP) is now one of the main points of gold seizure in the country. The seized material is incorporated into Ouroteca, expanding the set of reference samples and improving the accuracy of laboratory comparisons. Although official data broken down by airport is not available, qualitative evidence suggests that the program enhances border control, transforming each seizure into a technical input for new investigations.

30 ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DOS PERITOS CRIMINAIS FEDERAIS (APCF). Rastreabilidade isotópica do ouro. Viável e promissora. In: Revista Perícia Federal, n. 52, dez. 2023 Available at: https://apcf.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/apcf_revista_52_290x280mm_v5.pdf. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025.

31 CLIMAINFO. Exportações de ouro caem após aperto de regras contra mercado ilegal. Feb. 7, 2024. Available at: <https://clima.info.org.br/2024/02/07/exportacoes-de-ouro-caem-apos-aperto-de-regras-contra-mercado-ilegal/>. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025.

32 BRASIL. Ministério dos Povos Indígenas. Garimpo na Terra Indígena Yanomami cai mais de 91% até agosto de 2024. Brasília, 29 ago. 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/povosindigenas/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/08/garimpo-na-terra-indigena-yanomami-cai-mais-de-91-ate-agosto-de-2024>. Accessed on: Oct. 20, 2025



In summary, “*Ouro Alvo*” has established itself as a key instrument for mineral and environmental governance by combining scientific expertise, operational intelligence, and interagency cooperation.

This approach reduces the anonymity of illicit chains and expands the state’s ability to reconstruct the trajectory of illegal gold, from its origin to the attempted export.

OBSTACLES AND RISKS

1 Coverage and updating of BANPA, which depends on continuous collection campaigns to expand its geographical representation, including outside Brazil. As long as the sampling does not cover all relevant centers, there is a risk that a sample will not find an immediate match and will require additional steps. “*Ouro Alvo*”’s institutional presentation emphasizes the construction/expansion of Ouroteca and BANPA, with the cooperation of agencies and technical partners.

2 Data-laboratory integration and commercial information quality. The probative value of cross-referencing (Delphos-Mineração + Ouroteca/BANPA) improves when fiscal/commercial data is complete and standardized. The implementation of NF-e Ouro (June–August 2023) creates a mandatory digital trail for the “first acquisition” of financial gold assets, with defined layouts, business rules, and public APIs—but its effectiveness depends on the correct completion by DTVMs and continued oversight³³.

3 Dependence on regulatory adjustments. The Federal Supreme Court’s decision in April 2023, which suspended the presumption of good faith in the purchase of gold, ended the self-declaration of origin model and transferred the duty to prove the legality of the metal to the buyer — a decisive step toward the use of “*Ouro Alvo*” reports as technical evidence. Despite this progress, the regulatory framework still lacks integration between the ANM, Central Bank, Internal Revenue Service, and Federal Police. Proposals pending in the National Congress, such as *PLs* 836/2021 and 3025/2023, aim to establish a national traceability system that can cross-reference data from Ouroteca/BANPA, ANM, and Sinaflor, thereby transforming scientific traceability into legal traceability.

4 Logistics and security for collection/operations in remote areas (such as the Yanomami Territory), requiring air/river transport, enhanced security, and interagency coordination for seizures, sample collection, and chain of custody preservation. Reports of operations in the region indicate challenging terrain, the destruction of illicit infrastructure, and the need for support forces, which impact the cost and pace of actions related to “*Ouro Alvo*”.

33 BRASIL. Receita Federal. Nota Fiscal Eletrônica do Ouro Ativo Financeiro (NF-e Ouro): documento técnico. Brasília, 2023. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/receitafederal/pt-br/centrais-de-conteudo/publicacoes/documentos-tecnicos/nf-e-ouro>. Access on: 17 out. 2025.



5

Governance and continuity. The consolidation of “Ouro Alvo” depends on stable governance, with regular funding, specialized technical staff, and ongoing interagency coordination. Strengthening the program requires maintaining partnerships with geology and remote sensing agencies (such as SGB/CPRM), as well as operational integration with the Federal Revenue Service, ANM, and public universities. This structure is essential to ensure the updating of Ouroteca/BANPA, the advancement of isotopic methodologies, and the expansion of traceability to other mineral and environmental vectors.

CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION

In the last two years, Brazil has taken decisive steps to consolidate the “Ouro Alvo” Program as state policy and expand its activities. The measures involved legal reforms, institutional strengthening, and international cooperation, creating a more robust ecosystem for gold traceability and combating illegal mining.

Regulatory reforms and control instruments

The Federal Supreme Court’s decision (April 2023) to suspend the “presumption of good faith” in gold purchases marked a historic turning point. Buyers became responsible for proving the legal origin of the metal, ending the cycle of self-declaration that sustained the illegal market. At the same time, the Federal Revenue Service issued Normative Instruction RFB No. 2,135/2023, making the Electronic Invoice (NF-e Ouro) mandatory for all metal transactions, replacing the old manual receipts. As of July 2023, each transaction began to generate a digital record linked to the tax authorities, facilitating audits and cross-checking with the Federal Police’s Delphos-Mineração system. These measures reduced historical loopholes and strengthened the use of “Ouro Alvo” as a technical validation tool. The Brazilian Mining Institute (IBRAM) and COAF supported the changes, recognizing the advance in transparency and the strengthening of financial *due diligence* by DTVMs and banking institutions.

Institutional strengthening and integration into the Federal Police

In 2023, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security created the Amazon and Environment Directorate (DAMAZ), incorporating “Ouro Alvo” as a strategic program of the Amazon Plan – Security and Sovereignty (AMAS). Under the coordination of Chief Humberto Freire, the program received dedicated structure and resources, expanding the PF’s response in the Amazonian states. Regional forensic centers were established, and Ouroteca laboratories were planned in Pará and Roraima, with support from the Amazon Fund and the IDB, to decentralize analysis and expedite logistics. The PF also collaborated with the Integrated Forces for Combating Organized Crime (FICCO) – a national initiative comprising federal and state agencies – to enable the geochemical and isotopic data generated by the “Ouro Alvo” Program to be utilized in investigations of money laundering, environmental crimes, and smuggling.



International cooperation actions

Brazilian police diplomacy has expanded the reach of “Ouro Alvo” to the pan-Amazonian level. With support from the US Department of State (INL) and UNODC, the PF participated in the AURUM Project (2022–2024), developing technical exchanges with the police forces of Peru, Colombia, and Guyana to standardize analysis methods and share data. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) established a working group on gold and timber traceability, drawing inspiration from the Brazilian model. Brazil also advocates for the creation of a regional mechanism, similar to the *Kimberley Process* for diamonds, to certify gold of legal origin in the Amazon.

International projection and political sustainability

“Ouro Alvo” has been presented as an example of technology applied to environmental governance. At COPs 27 and 28, the Brazilian government highlighted the program as part of its efforts to reduce deforestation associated with gold mining. International visibility has attracted potential financiers, such as the G7 and Norway (through the Amazon Fund), interested in supporting the expansion of regional laboratories and the training of Amazonian experts.

In October 2025, Bills No. 836/2021 and No. 3,025/2023 are being advanced on an urgent basis in the Chamber of Deputies, with significant support from the federal government. Both proposals suggest the creation of a National Mineral Traceability System that is interoperable with the Central Bank and the Federal Revenue Service, an essential measure to consolidate “Ouro Alvo” as a state policy.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The “Ouro Alvo” Program has established itself as one of the most innovative experiences of the Federal Police and the Brazilian State in combating illegal mining and associated illicit economies. More than just an expert initiative, the program has been structured as a platform for continuous innovation, combining science, technology, and public governance. Its success stems not only from the accuracy of chemical and isotopic analyses, but above all from the ability to convert scientific knowledge into state policy.

Since its inception, “Ouro Alvo” has been inspired by international practices, such as mineral traceability experiences in France, South Africa, and Guyana, and has successfully translated these references to the Amazonian reality, creating its own model of expertise applied to environmental protection and economic sovereignty. The key lesson learned from this journey is that innovation and international cooperation are essential conditions for advancing traceability and control policies in critical production chains.

The program also demonstrated that traceability is a process, not a product. Each sample analyzed expands knowledge about illicit flows and strengthens the state’s ability to produce intelligence on criminal networks. This ap-



proach, known as *follow the products*³⁴, extends the reach of the traditional “*follow the money*” approach, allowing for the integration of forensic, tax, customs, and financial information. Gold ceases to be merely the object of crime and becomes a source of evidence and strategic information, capable of guiding police operations, audits, and environmental and tax control actions.

The institutional learning of “*Ouro Alvo*” confirms that science and sovereignty are inextricably linked. The existence of equipped forensic laboratories, geoscientific databases, and a qualified expert network has enabled the transformation of historical vulnerabilities into state capacity. But this progress depends on institutional continuity and legal certainty.

Today, bills are being debated in the National Congress that address the traceability of mineral products, the regulation of the gold supply chain, and the integration of electronic control systems, including the mandatory use of digital invoices, the cross-checking of commercial data, and the strengthening of the expert chain of custody. The approval of a modern and convergent regulatory framework is vital to consolidating “*Ouro Alvo*” as a state policy and extending the logic of traceability to other strategic sectors, including timber, fuels, rare metals, and high-value-added goods.

The future of the program depends on the country’s ability to maintain investment in technological innovation, scientific training, and international cooperation, thereby transforming “*Ouro Alvo*” into a living laboratory of traceability that serves public safety, environmental governance, and the formal economy. The program goes beyond the police dimension, becoming a symbol of institutional modernization and a renewed paradigm in the fight against organized crime, which recognizes the importance of scientific evidence and traceability as the foundations of national sovereignty and economic transparency.

34 FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA (FBSP). *Follow the Products: rastreabilidade de produtos e enfrentamento ao crime organizado*. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública; SICPA Brasil, 2025. Available at: <https://forumseguranca.org.br/publicacoes/follow-the-products/>.



Initiative

04

Operation

Curupira

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Safety (FBSP)

TECHNICAL SHEET

	Initiative name: Operation Curupira
	Main implementing agency: Pará State Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainability (SEMAS)
	Year of creation: 2023
	State of operation and territorial coverage: State of Pará, focusing on the 15 municipalities with the highest rates of deforestation (2019-2022), highlighting the municipalities of Altamira, Uruará, Novo Progresso, and São Félix do Xingu.
	Partnerships: Secretariat of Public Security and Social Defense (SEGUP), Military Police, Civil Police, Military Fire Brigade, Court of Justice of Pará, Agricultural Defense Agency (ADEPARÁ), municipal governments, among other state agencies linked to environmental enforcement
	Current status: Operational, having been institutionalized by decree and interinstitutional cooperation agreement.
	Summary: Operation Curupira has been ongoing since 2023 in areas with the highest deforestation rates in the state of Pará, particularly in the municipalities of Altamira, Uruará, Novo Progresso, and São Félix do Xingu. Since its launch, enforcement actions have been carried out in a continuous and systematic manner. The operation involves the State Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainability (SEMAS), which maps areas where deforestation has been detected. Based on these findings, SEMAS teams work in an integrated way with other agencies, including the Military Police, Civil Police, and Fire Department. During inspections, other types of crimes are often identified as well, allowing public security officers to take appropriate action.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the Pará Secretariat of Public Security and Social Defense (SEGUP) for authorizing and facilitating the technical visits that enabled us to observe *firsthand* how Operation Curupira operates in the municipality of São Félix do Xingu. In addition to the authorization and logistical feasibility provided, this material would not exist without the receptiveness and patience of the entire Curupira team, who presented their operating dynamics to us, sharing testimonials that highlighted the difficulties, lessons learned, and aspirations accumulated throughout the numerous phases of the Operation.

IDENTIFICATION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

Among Brazilian states, Pará has historically had the highest rates of deforestation. In the last four years, however, the state consistently reduced these rates. By 2024, deforestation was 51% lower than in 2021¹. Pará's share of overall Legal Amazon deforestation also fell, from 45% in 2021 to 37% in 2024. Although rates remain high, there is a clear trend of continuous reduction.

Among the efforts of the state of Pará, an important milestone was Decree No. 2,887, issued on February 7, 2023, by the state government, which declared a state of emergency in the 15 municipalities in Pará with the highest rates of deforestation. Together, these municipalities accounted for 76% of the state's deforestation between 2019 and 2022. This decree assigned the State Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainability (SEMAS) the task of coordinating inter-institutional articulation with other agencies and entities for integrated action in those 15 municipalities, including actions to monitor deforestation and illegal burning. According to the Decree:

The State Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainability (SEMAS) will coordinate inter-institutional articulation with other public agencies and entities to define and execute strategies to prevent and combat deforestation in the priority areas defined in this Decree, including actions to monitor illegal deforestation and burning.²

Based on this decree and the declaration of a state of emergency, a series of actions became possible. These include coordination between various state agencies to combat deforestation. From this coordination, Operation Curupira was created. Pará is the second-largest Brazilian state, with an area of 1,245,828.829 km², according to the IBGE. It is second only to Amazonas, with a large part of this territory – approximately 35% – covered by forest, which makes it difficult to move and maintain the teams responsible for combating deforestation and other environmental crimes.

Initially, Decree 2,887 had a 180-day term and was renewed until 2025. Decree No. 4,868 later declared a state of environmental and climate emergency in Pará for 180 *working* days, extendable for an equal period. Operation Curupira relies on this decree, so its continuity depends on the duration of the emergency. To guarantee Operation Curupira's permanence beyond the emergency, new and more robust normative acts are necessary.

1 Source: TerraBrasilis

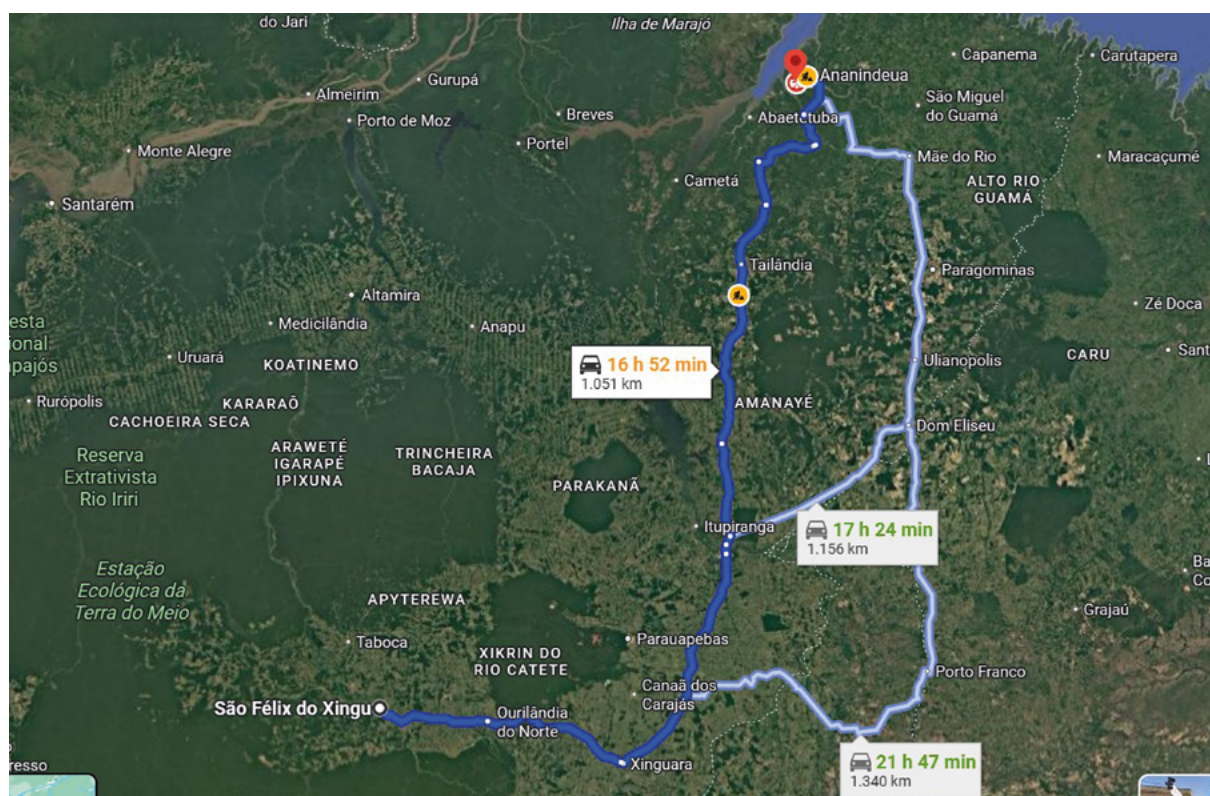
2 Source: 239012.pdf



Initially, three bases for Operation Curupira were created: in Uruará, Novo Progresso, and São Félix do Xingu. More recently, a fourth base was established in the district of Castelo dos Sonhos, in Altamira. This does not necessarily mean new physical spaces were created in these municipalities. In Curupira's context, the term “base” refers to spaces used for meetings and action planning. In São Félix do Xingu, the base operated at the 36th Military Police Battalion (BPM). To situate ourselves geographically, the map below shows the distance between São Félix do Xingu and the state capital, Belém. The distance exceeds 1,000 kilometers on a route that can take more than 16 hours by highway.

Map 1

Route, via highway, between the municipalities of São Félix do Xingu and Belém, in Pará



Source: Prepared by the author using Google Maps.

The technical visit conducted by the FBSP in São Felix do Xingu took place over two days at the end of September 2025.



INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Operation Curupira began in 2023 through a decree. It tasked the State Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainability (SEMAS) with articulating and coordinating actions, in conjunction with other state agencies, to prevent and combat deforestation in priority areas. This coordination was essential to enable actions in locations that were previously difficult to access, both due to distance and the risk to public officials.

Under the coordination of SEMAS, Operation Curupira also involves the Secretariat of Public Security and Social Defense (SEGIP), the Military Police, the Civil Police, and the Military Fire Brigade. Later, this coordination was formalized through a Cooperation Agreement³ between the agencies. The goal was to collaborate on environmental enforcement in Pará. The agreement sets guidelines for operational planning, monitoring, support, and the issuance of environmental infraction notices by agents within the State Public Security System. Additionally, the instrument enables data and system sharing among the signatory agencies.

Operation Curupira is based on the assumption of integrated action between institutions, each of which has a defined role. During the field visit to the São Félix do Xingu base, each representative highlighted the role of their institution within the dynamics of the operation:

- SEMAS: Coordinates the articulation and planning of the Operation, identifies the targets of inspections, sets the route, and issues the infraction notice when deforestation is verified.
- SEGUP: Coordinates and, when necessary, provides special resources, such as aircraft from the Pará Air Group (GRAESP) and vessels from the River Group (GFLU), to support operations.
- Military Police: They are the first to enter the site to be inspected, conduct a sweep, and ensure the safety of the team. When necessary, they destroy machinery and equipment that cannot be transported.
- Civil Police: Responsible for prosecuting other crimes that may be detected during the inspection.
- Military Fire Department: They ensure the team can reach locations that are difficult to access.

Each agency is responsible for providing the structure for its teams to operate, supplying training, equipment, vehicles, and per diem allowances. This is an important point because it requires institutional alignment, ensuring that the teams working in Curupira always have the necessary training, equipment, and support to operate in challenging, hard-to-reach areas.

3 Cooperation Agreement N° 001/2024 - Electronic Protocol n° 2024/12783. Available at: https://www.segup.pa.gov.br/sites/default/files/conv%C3%AAnios/acordo_de_cooperacao_ndeg_001.2024_-_segup_pmpa_pcpa_cbmpa_e_semas_autos_de_infraacao.pdf



THE MUNICIPALITIES WHERE OPERATION CURUPIRA TAKES PLACE

To further understand the dynamics of Operation Curupira and how institutional efforts materialize at the local level, it is necessary to briefly contextualize each of the four municipalities where the action takes place—Novo Progresso, Uruará, São Félix do Xingu, and Altamira. Each has distinct realities and commonalities that make them strategic for integrated action to combat deforestation.

This presentation was based on publicly available data collected from various sources, enabling us to gain a basic understanding of the challenges involved in conducting an operation of this type in these locations.

The municipality of Novo Progresso is located in the southwestern region of the state of Pará, approximately 1,630 kilometers from Belém. This distance can be traveled mainly via the BR-163 highway. According to the 2022 Census, Novo Progresso had a population of 33,683 inhabitants. With an area of 38,162 km², it is the seventh-largest municipality in Pará – and the 24th-largest in Brazil – with a population density of 0.88 inhabitants per km². Its main economic activity is livestock farming—it is estimated that the municipality has a cattle herd of 1,500,000 head, occupying 400,000 hectares of pasture. In addition to livestock farming, there are also mining and logging activities⁴.

The municipality of Uruará is also located in the southwestern region of Pará, approximately 1,000 kilometers from Belém, accessed mainly by the BR-230 (Transamazônica) highway. In 2022, according to the Census, it had 43,558 inhabitants and an area of 10,791 km², making it one of the largest municipalities in the state, with a population density of 4.04 inhabitants per km². Its main economic activities are agriculture and livestock, with an emphasis on grain cultivation (soybeans and corn), cocoa production, and beef cattle farming.

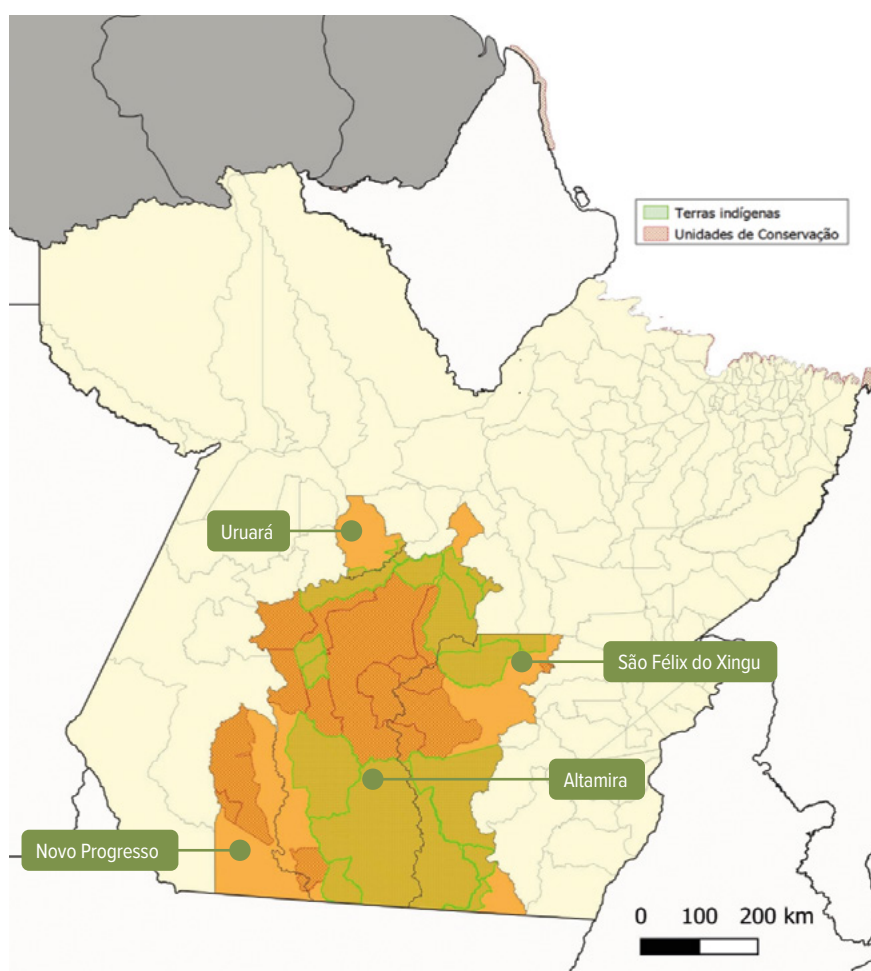
São Félix do Xingu is a municipality in the same region as the others, about 1,000 kilometers from Belém. It is primarily accessible via the BR-155 highway. In 2022, Census data showed a population of 65,418 inhabitants in an area of 84,213 km². This makes it the seventh-largest municipality in Brazil and the third-largest in Pará, with a population density of 0.78 inhabitants per km². The municipality has the largest cattle herd in Brazil, boasting over 2.5 million head of cattle.

Altamira is a municipality located in the same region as the others, approximately 800 kilometers from Belém, and is mainly accessed by the Transamazônica highway (BR-230). Data from the IBGE Census (2022) show that it is the most populous of the four municipalities mentioned, with a population of 126,279 inhabitants and an area of 159,533 km², which makes it the largest municipality in Brazil in terms of territorial extension, as well as being larger than several Brazilian states, such as Ceará and Rio de Janeiro. This area results in a population density of 0.79 inhabitants per km². Altamira is also marked by the presence of large infrastructure projects, such as the Belo Monte Hydroelectric Plant, and is home to numerous indigenous peoples and extensive areas of protected Amazon rainforest.

4 Source: About the Municipality - Novo Progresso City Hall | 2025-2028 Administration



These four municipalities share not only a strong presence of livestock farming and large territorial extension, but also a history marked by deforestation. Over time, several environmental conservation units have been created in these areas, as shown in the following map.

Map
2**Municipalities covered by Operation Curupira**

Source: Own elaboration.

Even with the demarcation of Indigenous Territories and the creation of different types of Conservation Units (environmental reserves, environmental protection areas, among others), deforestation persisted, generating conflicts between different social groups at various times.

It is also worth mentioning that, in addition to Operation Curupira, the state government of Pará has been developing Operation Amazônia Viva since 2013, which operates on an itinerant basis in areas not covered by Curupira's fixed bases, targeting specific locations detected from satellite images provided by the Integrated Center for Environmental Monitoring (Cimam) of Semas, which provides the location of illegally exploited areas for the inspection sector to check *in loco* the environmental violations pointed out in the alert issued by the imaging technology.



The goal of these actions is to combine the efforts of Operation Curupira with Amazônia Viva, enabling effective action across a large part of the state of Pará, promoting enforcement activities, and preventing environmental crimes in the state.

OBSERVING OPERATION CURUPIRA

To gain a deeper understanding of the operational dynamics of Operation Curupira, a researcher from the Brazilian Forum on Public Safety, at the invitation of the Pará Secretariat of Public Safety and Social Defense (SEGUP), made a technical visit to the municipality of São Félix do Xingu. The objective was to talk with local teams, learn about their routines, and accompany an enforcement operation in the field. Over two days, we accompanied the activities of the 66th Phase of Operation Curupira *in loco*.

In addition to the institutional acknowledgments already recorded at the beginning of this document, it is important to express our gratitude to all the people who welcomed us and patiently explained how Operation Curupira works in the field during those two intense days in which they trusted and shared with the Brazilian Forum on Public Safety the perceptions of those who make Curupira a benchmark in combating deforestation.

On the first day of the visit, a presentation meeting was held at the headquarters of the 36th Military Police Battalion in São Félix do Xingu, which serves as the base and accommodation for the military police involved in Operation Curupira. The meeting was attended by the entire team, as illustrated in the following images:



Initial meeting with the Operation Curupira team in São Félix do Xingu. **Photo:** Leonardo de Carvalho/FBSP.

After the presentations and contextualization of the Brazilian Forum on Public Safety's presence, the team kindly explained how Operation Curupira works. The narrative of the people who actually carry out the operation gives us a

unique perspective—impossible to capture through documentary analysis alone—on the operational duties of each team, which spends 16 days in the cities, dedicated exclusively to Curupira. To make this possible, daily allowances are paid to the agents who are mobilized and travel from other parts of the state to participate in the operations. Below, we present the planning and field phases of Operation Curupira, in an exercise to systematize everything we saw and heard during the technical visit:

1

Planning: The SEMAS team is responsible for identifying the areas to be inspected. To do this, three resources are used:

- DETER alerts: DETER is a real-time deforestation detection system developed by INPE (National Institute for Space Research), which uses and compares satellite images to identify patterns of change in forest cover. This identification is done by visual interpretation of the image of the area, based on five main elements (color, tone, texture, shape, and context)⁵.
- Geographic analysis: The SEMAS team participating in operations always includes a geoprocessing analyst. One of the duties of this position is to conduct a more detailed analysis of the area of operation to identify deforestation hotspots based on satellite images.
- Complaints: Although less frequent, complaints are communications that reach SEMAS reporting incidents of deforestation in the areas covered by Operation Curupira. These complaints undergo preliminary analysis, and when there is evidence of their veracity, the indicated locations are included in enforcement actions.

In addition to identifying the targets of the inspection, SEMAS is responsible for mapping the route to the areas to be inspected, which is not always easy, since many of them do not have roads, requiring travel on foot.

Before field actions, a planning meeting is held in which SEMAS reviews general information about the operation, allowing the team to prepare adequately. However, the exact location of the targets remains restricted to SEMAS and is only revealed to everyone upon arrival, as a way to prevent information leaks. In general, only data on distance and access conditions, gathered from satellite images, are shared in advance so that everyone is properly equipped and prepared for the mission.

2

The Inspection: The day of the inspection begins with a *briefing* for the teams at a prearranged location, where more information is shared. In the operation we accompanied, this *briefing* took place on the sidewalk in front of the hotel where the SEMAS team was staying, as illustrated below:

5 To learn more about the DETER methodology, see: DETER-B: The New Amazon Near Real-Time Deforestation Detection System | IEEE Journals & Magazine | IEEE Xplore.



Briefing with the Operation Curupira team. **Photo:** Leonardo de Carvalho/FBSP.

On that day, the area to be inspected was located relatively close to the urban center of São Félix do Xingu, approximately 40 kilometers away. However, there have been cases where the inspection took place in locations more than 110 kilometers from the center of the municipality, with difficult access⁶. During *the briefing*, radio communicators are also distributed, and the order of the cars in the convoy is defined.

Once the *briefing* meeting is over, each team gets into its vehicle and follows the previously defined order. At the front of the convoy is the SEMAS team, responsible for guiding the other vehicles, providing route information, and alerting them to any obstacles along the way. According to the team's report, low visibility caused by dust on side roads requires vehicles to maintain a safe distance between each other. To prevent accidents, the team leading the convoy (SEMAS) communicates constantly by radio, alerting others whenever a vehicle is traveling in the opposite direction, as a preventive measure.



Convoy moving towards target during operation. **Photo:** Leonardo de Carvalho/FBSP.

6 We were told about a recent inspection in an area near the district of Vila Central, which required an overnight stay at the site.

When the convoy is very close to the location, the SEMAS team instructs it to stop. At this point, the Military Police team enters the area, approaches any people they encounter, and, once the perimeter is secure, authorizes the rest of the team to enter.

During the inspection, we observed that the location was empty, but there were clear signs that people had been there and left shortly before the team arrived. The photo below illustrates the scene: a wooden shed containing hand tools, supplies, a table with chairs, and household items. The power grid was located near the site, ensuring a reliable power supply. Additionally, an internet connection was available via Starlink⁷. According to one of the agents, this connection probably allowed the occupants to be alerted to the team's approach and to flee before the inspection.



Shed found during operation, followed by FBSP. **Photo:** Leonardo de Carvalho/FBSP.

From this shed, there was still some distance to cover before reaching the deforested area. This journey would have to be made on foot, as there were no roads on that side of the terrain. This stage of the inspection would require time and effort from the team, as it involves traversing uneven terrain through dense forest.

Thanks to technology and the goodwill of one of the team members, this trip did not need to be made. All evidence of deforestation was documented by photographs and videos produced by a police officer using his drone. We were informed that the equipment is for the officer's personal use, who chose to utilize it during Operation Curupira to enhance the production of evidence that will support the drafting of an environmental infraction notice by SEMAS. The images below, kindly provided, allow us to visualize the extent of the deforestation that has already occurred.

⁷ It is a satellite broadband internet service from SpaceX, which offers high-speed, low-latency connectivity to remote, rural locations and areas with little or no connectivity.



Police officer operating drone. **Photo:** SEMAS/PA.



Team validating the deforested area via drone. **Photo:** SEMAS/PA.



Aerial image captured using a drone, showing recent deforestation in different stages in the area. **Photo:** SEMAS/PA.

There is also a post-field stage, when the team returns to the city. At this point, SEMAS is responsible for preparing and forwarding the necessary measures for the issuance of environmental infraction notices, including the submission of the evidence collected, such as the images obtained during the inspection. In cases where other types of crimes are identified, the corresponding police reports are also filed.

Additionally, the teams must ensure the maintenance of the equipment and vehicles used. Due to the long distances and poor road conditions, the vehicles are subject to intense wear and tear. As they operate on a loan basis, they are replaced when they malfunction; however, it was not possible to clearly understand the speed of this replacement process.

An exception is the case of the 32 vehicles delivered in November 2024 to the institutions that comprise the Operation Curupira teams⁸. These vehicles were purchased with structural modifications and additional accessories for use in difficult-to-access terrain. Because of these adaptations, the maintenance of the vehicles became the responsibility of the institutions that received them. This management model requires each agency to have its own maintenance structure, or risk having its vehicles immobilized for extended periods while awaiting repair.

The field visit enabled us to understand that Operation Curupira represents a significant step forward in combating environmental crimes in the municipalities of Pará with the highest incidence rates. We were told that in the initial stages, due to the surprise factor, the cases of deforestation found were of a greater proportion. Integrated action enables environmental enforcement in previously inaccessible areas, which has had an impact on the deforestation chain operating in the region.

Over time, with the successive phases of Operation Curupira, the groups involved in illegal deforestation became aware of the continuous nature of the inspections. According to reports, they then began to move to increasingly distant and difficult-to-access areas in an attempt to escape the radar (or satellites). Not surprisingly, the team informed us that they frequently have to travel long distances to verify and prosecute cases of deforestation identified through satellite imagery. In these situations, where agents need to stay overnight, they use their per diem allowances to cover accommodation and food expenses.

This change in the dynamics of deforestation is a significant advancement, allowing us to assume that the difficulties imposed by Operation Curupira on groups involved in illegal deforestation have a direct impact on the deforested area.

KEY INDICATORS

To analyze possible changes that have occurred since the implementation of Operation Curupira, we have compiled indicators for various aspects.

The first of these concerns the **operational results** directly obtained by the teams in the field. Throughout its 66 phases, the bases of Operation Curupira presented the following results, according to SEGUP data:

→ Firearm seizures: 215

→ Seizures of ammunition: 691

→ Arrests made: 95

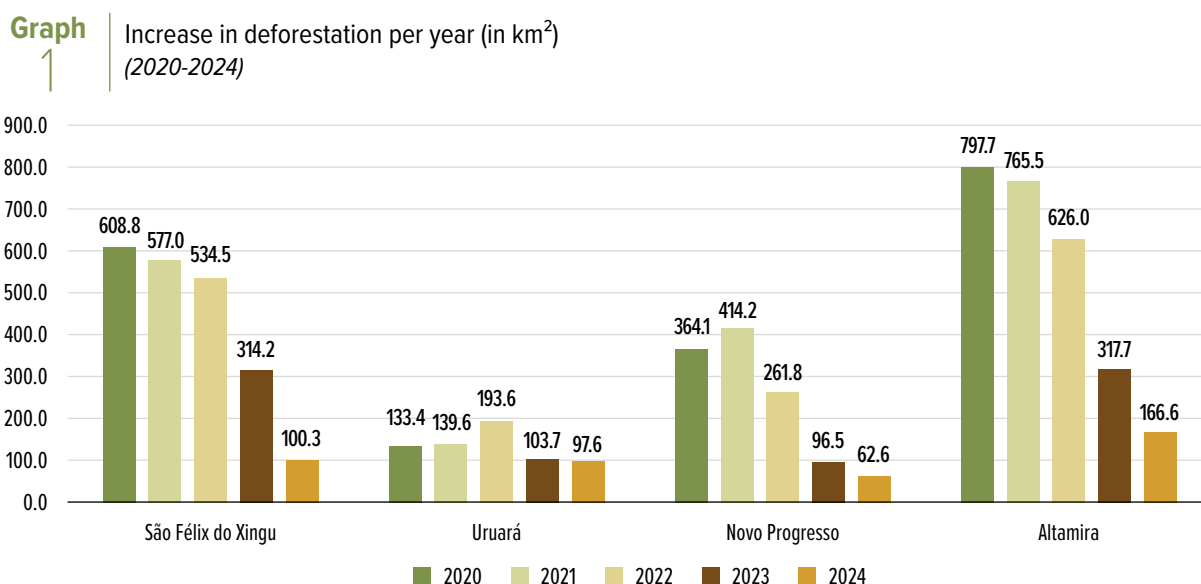
8 Source: Government delivers new vehicles to reinforce actions to combat environmental crimes in Pará | Agência Pará



- Civil police subpoenas: 180
- Raids by inspection teams: 1,792
- Tractors, loaders, excavators, and other machinery seized: 1,400

The results presented by SEGUP highlight both typical police actions and indicators more directly related to the work of environmental agencies, reinforcing the integrated nature of Operation Curupira and its ability to coordinate different enforcement fronts.

The second group of impact indicators aims to measure the primary purpose of the operation: combating environmental crimes, particularly deforestation. As shown in Graph 1, in the three municipalities where Curupira is being implemented, the period from 2021 to 2022—prior to its implementation—recorded significantly higher deforestation rates than those observed from 2023 to 2024, when the operation was already underway.

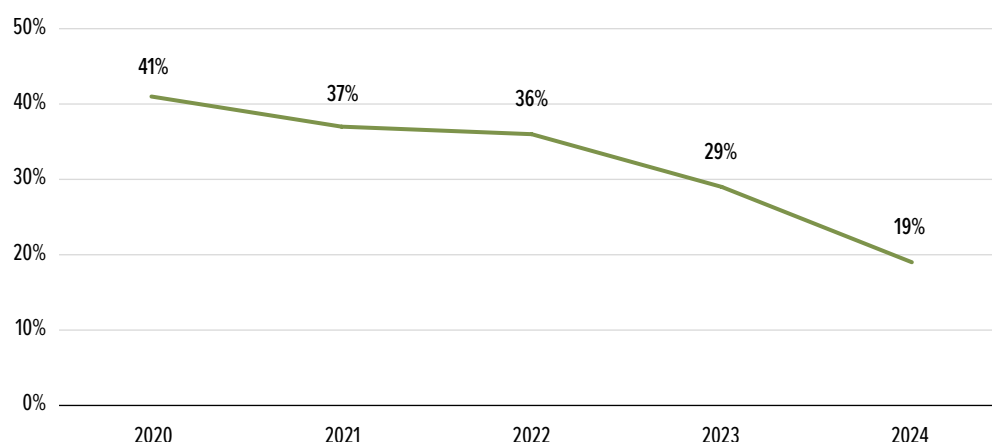


Source: <https://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/amazon/increments>.

It is worth noting that the state of Pará has implemented additional measures to combat environmental crimes/deforestation. As a result, since 2020, it has managed to reduce the rate of devastation. In this scenario, one piece of data that highlights the positive performance of the three municipalities targeted by Operation Curupira is the reduction in their percentage share of total deforestation in the state—a sign that, even within a general context of decline, these areas have been making particularly significant progress.



Graph 2 | Percentage share of municipalities in Operation Curupira in total deforestation in Pará (2020-2024)



Fonte: <https://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/amazon/increments>.

Table 1 | Increase in deforestation per year (in km²)
Municipalities in Operation Curupira – 2020-2024

Increase in deforestation per year (in km ²)					
Municipality	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
São Félix do Xingu	608.8	577.0	534.5	314.2	100.3
Uruará	133.4	139.6	193.6	103.7	97.6
Novo Progresso	364.1	414.2	261.8	96.5	62.6
Altamira	797.7	765.5	626.0	317.7	166.6
State of Pará	4,617.20	5,084.50	4,528.00	2,883.60	2,254.90

Source: <https://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/amazon/increments>.

While, in 2020, almost half of the deforested area in Pará was in Altamira, São Félix do Xingu, Uruará, and Novo Progresso, this percentage fell to 19% in 2024, demonstrating that the reduction in deforestation in these four municipalities was more intense than in the rest of the state.

Another potential impact of Operation Curupira may be related to indicators of other crimes, beyond environmental ones, as shown in Table 2. Although this is not the main objective of the operation, the hypothesis that the regular presence of teams in the municipalities could have some indirect effect on local crime dynamics was evaluated.

Table 2 | Crime rates in the municipalities covered by Operation Curupira
Absolute numbers (2020-2024)

Municipality	Crime	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Novo Progresso	Rape	1	5	6	6	3
	Rape of vulnerable person	12	17	22	28	32
	Theft	263	279	470	302	340
	Homicide	21	24	29	29	19
	Robbery with homicide	1	3	1	-	1
	Bodily injury	94	72	127	120	140
	Motor vehicle fatality	13	7	8	11	7
	Robbery	68	74	55	39	32
	Drug trafficking	60	44	33	16	26
Uruará	Rape	7	4	3	8	5
	Rape of vulnerable person	19	19	10	19	27
	Theft	290	331	338	322	267
	Homicide	23	23	36	30	24
	Robbery with homicide	1	2	1	1	-
	Bodily injury	67	82	86	101	93
	Motor vehicle fatality	10	4	5	7	9
	Robbery	115	91	77	38	52
	Drug trafficking	7	5	22	28	14
São Félix do Xingu	Rape	15	11	14	14	12
	Rape of vulnerable person	34	39	55	65	51
	Theft	298	302	340	432	401
	Homicide	42	38	43	43	33
	Robbery with homicide	-	3	1	-	1
	Bodily injury	79	58	128	169	196
	Motor vehicle fatality	9	4	9	9	11
	Robbery	97	67	113	96	88
	Drug trafficking	11	13	12	33	11
Altamira	Rape	6	2	1	17	3
	Rape of vulnerable person	23	24	45	64	57
	Theft	1489	1232	1225	1100	1246
	Homicide	49	41	63	55	32
	Robbery with homicide	1	1	2	1	2
	Bodily injury	308	300	327	401	378
	Motor vehicle fatality	587	432	559	543	592
	Robbery	692	596	442	253	158
	Drug trafficking	31	57	81	107	86

Source: SEGUP/PA, 2025.

However, the results do not indicate a significant reduction in key crime indicators since 2023, when Curupira began operating. In other words, there is no downward trend in common crimes that can be attributed to the operation. This finding is relevant for aligning expectations about the role and scope of Curupira, whose focus remains concentrated on combating environmental crimes—its original and fundamental objective.



CHALLENGES

The viability of a continuous operation focused on environmental crimes, which is essentially based on integration between agencies, is in itself a challenge. Maintaining engagement and alignment between teams is only possible if Curupira is on the priority agenda of the institutions that comprise it. This means commitment at the institutional level, which needs to translate into actions that ensure the continuity of the Operation.

This requires a budget to cover expenses, the availability of resources and equipment, and the need for constant improvement and documentation of procedures, so that, in the event of an increase in the number of bases, the accumulated knowledge can be used.

In addition to financing,
**there is a crucial need
to share data and
information** to produce
evidence that supports actions.

Furthermore, at the strategic level, it is necessary to expand dialogue with the Federal Government, as there are some financing alternatives that can ensure the sustainability of the action. In addition to financing, there is a crucial need to share data and information to produce evidence that supports actions.

In addition to fostering greater dialogue with other levels of government, establishing networks of interaction with other actors may be a way to ensure the incorporation of new technological elements that can contribute to the detection and prosecution of infractions and crimes. As we mentioned during our technical visit, the drone used

in the Operation we observed was the personal equipment of one of the agents and did not have all the features that the Operation requires, such as infrared vision⁹ and a sensor to facilitate the identification of elements critical to enforcement actions, such as fires, people inside buildings, among others. In terms of infrastructure, resources such as helicopters would be necessary for faster transportation of the team, while also being a factor that could enable the expansion of the Operation's operational radius.

The challenge of ensuring the institutionalisation of Operation Curupira and Amazonia Viva also involves creating a normative act with no expiration date, as the current enabling act¹⁰ mentions a duration of 180 working days.

Documenting the procedures and lessons learned over the course of almost three years of Curupira and Amazonia Viva is another challenge, as even efforts to train and repeat teams are hindered by staff turnover, which is a prerequisite for the continuity of actions such as these. Therefore, developing protocols is essential for training new team members.

⁹ Infrared vision in drones works through thermal sensors capable of capturing the infrared radiation emitted by all bodies, according to their temperature. Unlike conventional cameras, which record visible light, infrared sensors transform heat variations into color or grayscale images, allowing the identification of warmer or colder areas.

¹⁰ Decree 36,333 of August 20, 2025, which declared an environmental and climate emergency throughout the state of Pará for a period of 180 (one hundred and eighty) business days



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Operation Curupira is one of the initiatives developed by the State of Pará to combat environmental crimes in areas with the highest incidence, and stands out for its innovative format, which integrates environmental control and public security institutions. The multi-agency composition of the teams operating in the territories is an innovation that amplifies their supervisory role beyond the environmental aspect. The presence of police institutions, which ensures the safety of the team and acts when flagrant crimes or evidence of other crimes beyond environmental ones is found, also strengthens state action.

The impact of the 66 phases of Operation Curupira, the last of which was carried out during the technical visit for this case study, showed that, in the early stages of the operation, there were more seizures, environmental infraction notices, and identification of other crimes, since the element of surprise was still present. As the operations progressed, offenders began to understand Curupira's modus operandi and developed strategies to circumvent it, ranging from migrating to more remote areas of the same or other municipalities, communicating when teams were on the move, and even using portable equipment to avoid seizures/disabling of larger equipment.

The arrival of satellite internet in the region altered the configuration of communication dynamics throughout the Legal Amazon Region, and, in the context of Operation Curupira, provided internet access in remote areas that previously lacked this service. As a result, communication became more fluid for both agents and those engaged in deforestation.

Complementing Curupira, Operation Amazônia Viva operates on an itinerant basis, without fixed bases, moving to areas where satellite images identify deforestation, also in integrated teams composed of SEMAS and state security forces. Like Curupira, Amazônia Viva also lacks a normative act that guarantees its permanent institutionalization, since the two actions complement each other, ensuring permanent monitoring from fixed bases and also itinerant actions based on the identification of deforestation hotspots in more distant areas.



Initiative 05

Public Prosecutor's Office of Acre (MPAC): Feminicidômetro, “Proteja Mulher”, and Txai Project^{1- 2}

Isabella Matosinhos

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TECHNICAL SHEET

	Initiative name: Initiatives by the Public Prosecutor's Office of Acre (MPAC) to combat gender-based violence: Feminicidômetro, “Proteja Mulher”, and Txai Project.
	Main implementing agency: Public Prosecutor's Office of Acre (MPAC), through its technical centers CAV/OBSGênero and Natera (Center for Psychosocial Support and Care).
	Year of creation: → Feminicidômetro: 2021 → “Proteja Mulher”: 2022 → TxaiProject:2022
	State of operation and territorial coverage: State of Acre - statewide coverage, operating in several municipalities in the interior and indigenous communities.



¹ The work of the MPAC documented here originated from a field trip conducted by FBSP researcher, Isabella Matosinhos, who spent a week in the state accompanied by a team from MPAC. The objective of the field work was to empirically understand how the documented institutional initiatives materialize in daily life and contribute to confronting gender-based violence in the context of Acre. The official MPAC website (<https://www.mpac.mp.br/>) was also used as a source of information.

² This documentation would not have been possible without the collaboration of the MPAC team. I would like to thank the Prosecutor-General, Dr. Danilo Lovisário, for opening the institution's doors and providing the necessary logistics for the fieldwork, including in areas of difficult access. I equally thank Otília Amorim, administrative coordinator of the CAV, and Bruna Oliveira, administrative coordinator of the Project Txai, for their generous availability and attentive support during the field trip, introducing me to people, places, and stories that gave substance and life to this study. I also thank the indigenous leaders of Feijó and Brasília who welcomed me for a conversation: Tekahayni Shanenawá, Andreia Brandão Shanenawá, and Mairusa Jaminawa. What I heard from these encounters was fundamental to understanding the less institutional dimensions of the MPAC actions and to seeing more clearly the daily challenges of confronting violence and affirming rights in contexts marked by historical and territorial inequalities. These contributions broaden the meaning of this work.



	Partnerships: State Secretariats of Public Security, Civil Police, Military Police, Public Defender's Office, Court of Justice of Acre (TJAC), CRAS, CREAS, Municipal Secretariats (health, social assistance), Guardianship Council, Women's Policy Organizations (OPMs), indigenous and community organizations, in addition to support from parliamentary amendments.
	Current status: Operational. The Femicide Meter is an ongoing project. "Proteja Mulher" and Txai Project remain active, with new editions planned for the coming months.
	Summary: Three initiatives led by MPAC address gender-based violence and promote the protection of rights, demonstrating tangible local impact. The Feminicidômetro, implemented by CAV/OBSGênero, is a digital and public tool that ensures transparent and timely monitoring of femicide data in Acre, helping to inform services and influence public policies. The "Proteja Mulher" (which means "Protect Women") program, also implemented by CAV/OBSGênero, operates itinerantly across municipalities to diagnose local needs and strengthen networks that support women experiencing violence. The Txai Project, implemented by Natera, fosters intercultural and intersectoral actions with Indigenous peoples, focusing on gender, citizenship, and access to justice. Together, these initiatives consolidate MPAC's role as a key actor in integrating public policies and protecting rights within the Amazonian context.

INTRODUCTION

This case study reviews how the Acre Public Prosecutor's Office (MPAC) addresses gender-based violence through three main initiatives: **Feminicidômetro**, **"Proteja Mulher"**, and **Txai Project**.

Table 1 Basic informations on the initiatives⁽¹⁾

Initiative	Description	Responsible body within the Prosecutor's Office (MPAC)	Key managers and positions	Start	Area of coverage
Feminicide meter	Public research and monitoring tool that provides the population with access to non-sensitive information on femicide cases (consummated and attempted) in Acre. Its objective is to support improvements in prosecution times and the justice system.	CAV - Victim Assistance Center, through its OBSGênero front.	General coordination: Patrícia de Amorim Rêgo (Attorney General) Deputy coordination: Vanessa Macedo Muniz (Public Prosecutor) and Thalles Ferreira Costa (Public Prosecutor)	2021	It operates physically in the capital Rio Branco, but works with data covering the entire state.
"Proteja Mulher"	Itinerant project for the diagnosis and strengthening of the municipal network for the recognition and combating of domestic violence and femicide; carried out in co-management with CAOP/DHC.		Administrative coordination of CAV/OBSGênero and documented initiatives: Otília Marinho de Amorim Neta	2022	Created to cover the entire state, it operates on a traveling basis. Since its creation until October 2025, it has been carried out in six municipalities in the state.
Txai Project	An initiative aimed at promoting decisive, intercultural, and coordinated action to protect the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples, with an intersectional focus on gender-based violence. It takes the form of workshops, visits to villages, and training for public officials, with a view to strengthening trust in and the effectiveness of the justice system.	Natera - Center for Psychosocial Support and Care	General coordination: Patrícia de Amorim Rêgo (Attorney General) and Juleandro Martins de Oliveira (Prosecutor) Administrative coordination: Bruna Oliveira da Silva	2022	Statewide coverage. Since its creation until October 2025, it has reached indigenous people from 11 different tribes in four municipalities in the state.

Source: Prepared by the author based on institutional documents from the MPAC and field notes.

⁽¹⁾ The table is not exhaustive of all MPAC initiatives to combat gender-based violence, listing only those documented in this report.



In terms of its attributions, the Public Prosecutor's Office plays the role of accuser in criminal prosecution, while also acting as a guardian of the law and a defender of broader social interests, applied to specific cases in the state jurisdiction. Within this intersection of functions, the Acre State Public Prosecutor's Office (MPAC) has taken a pioneering approach among prosecutorial institutions by embracing the issue of gender-based violence as a necessary dimension of its institutional mandate.

More than simply incorporating a gender perspective into the cases it prosecutes, MPAC — through its technical units — has collected data, conducted studies, mapped and assessed the network of services addressing violence against women, and provided shelter, multidisciplinary assistance, and ultimately, access to justice and fundamental rights. This approach not only contributes to holding perpetrators criminally accountable but also strengthens MPAC's role as a rights-promoting institution aligned with urgent social demands and the specific realities of the Amazonian context.

MPAC's structured work on gender issues has not followed a linear path but has evolved progressively. Although the institution itself was created in 1963 — when Acre's administrative system was established and the Public Prosecutor's Office became part of it³ — more robust and targeted initiatives to address gender-based violence began to take shape over the past decade.

In this context, the year 2016 stands out as a significant starting point, as it marks the creation of the CAV - Victim Assistance Center, a technical center that provides shelter, assistance, and multidisciplinary support to victims of gender-based violence. In turn, starting in 2021, the creation of the Gender Observatory (OBSGênero) as a platform for CAV's activities, and within it, the establishment of the Femicidômetro⁴, consolidated the institutional commitment to producing and systematizing data and studies in this area.

In 2022, OBSGênero also began coordinating the "Proteja Mulher" project, which expanded the territorial reach of the MPAC, promoting local diagnoses and strengthening municipal networks to combat violence against women. In the same year, the gender agenda was incorporated, albeit indirectly, into the work of the Psychosocial Support and Care Center (Natera), a technical support body created in 2013 and originally focused on mental health and chemical dependency. This integration was facilitated through Txai Project, developed by Natera and focused on ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples, with an intercultural approach and attention to the specific vulnerabilities faced by indigenous women.

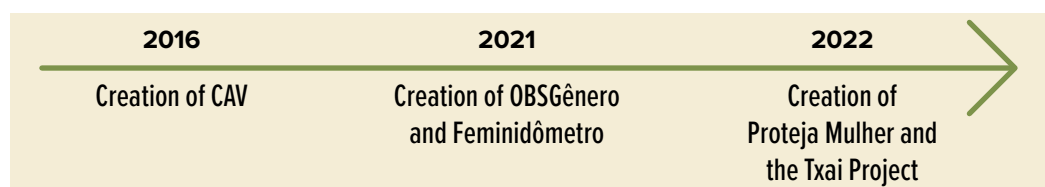
It was through the creation of the CAV in 2016 that MPAC's institutional work on gender issues began to take shape in a systematic way. From that point on, the institution developed an internal network of complementary projects and areas of action. The institutional logic guiding these initiatives follows a "from case to cause" approach: by assisting the public, the teams identify the main challenges faced by those seeking help and their connection to gaps within the protection and support network. Based on this diagnosis, MPAC's technical units act as facilitators, fostering dialogue among the various actors involved in service provision and contributing to the strengthening and integration of local networks. This evolution in MPAC's approach to gender demonstrates its growing commitment to a gender perspective, adapting its work to the specific demands of the Amazonian reality and to the multiple forms of violence present in Acre's territory.

3 See: <https://cm.mpac.mp.br/historia/>. **Acre Public Prosecutor's Office (MPAC): Femicide Meter, "Proteja Mulher", and Txai Project#-#**

4 See: <https://femicidometro.mpac.mp.br/>



Figure 1 | Timeline of the creation of MPAC centers and projects to combat gender violence



Source: Prepared by the author based on MPAC institutional documents and field notes.

The scenario of gender violence in the state of Acre

For MPAC, adopting the gender agenda is a direct response to the acute severity of gender violence in Acre. While gender violence is a nationwide issue affecting all Brazilian women, local factors—such as territorial, cultural, and historical dynamics—intensify these challenges. The region’s past, marked by entrenched power imbalances and violence against women, continues to shape current vulnerabilities and underscores the urgent need for MPAC’s focused interventions.

Episodes such as the so-called “correrias,” expeditions organized by rubber plantation owners for land purposes, in which, among other acts of violence, indigenous women were literally “caught in a lasso” and subjected to rape as a form of “taming,” seem to have contributed to leaving deep marks on the social memory (Chaves and Assis César, 2019)⁵. Even today, it is common for young women from Acre to have grandmothers who lived through this type of experience. The process of settlement and occupation of the territory reinforced this pattern: during the rubber cycle, 1904 to 1945 (Klein, 2013)⁶, men migrated to Acre and women from the region were “made available” to spend the night with them, perpetuating a logic of domination and objectification of women.

Even today, the rates of sexual violence and femicide in Acre are high, above the national average, as shown in the table below.

Table 2 | Reported rate of rape and femicide
Brazil and Acre - 2020-2024

Crime rate, by location		2020 ⁽¹⁾	2021	2022	2023	2024
Rape and rape of vulnerable persons	Rate Brazil	29.7	34.1	38.8	40.8	41.2
	Acre rate	34.4	72.1	97.7	95.9	112.5
Femicide	Rate Brazil	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4
	Acre rate	2.7	2.9	2.2	2.3	1.8

Source: FBSP, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025⁷

(1) According to the MPAC Criminal Observatory, the difference in rape rates between 2020 and other years may be related to the coverage capacity of records in the state as a whole.

5 CHAVES, Fabiana Nogueira. ASSIS CÉSAR, Maria Rita de. O silenciamento histórico das mulheres da Amazônia Brasileira. **Extraprensa**, São Paulo, v. 12, n. 2, p. 138-156, jan./jun. 2019. Disponível em: <https://revistas.usp.br/extraprensa/article/view/157418/155189>.

6 KLEIN, Daniel da Silva. **A borracha no Acre: economia, política e representações (1904 - 1945)**. 2013. Tese (Doutorado) - Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2013.

7 FBSP. **19º Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública**. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2025; FBSP. **18º Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública**. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2024; FBSP. **17º Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública**. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2023; FBSP. **16º Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública**. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2022.



Regarding femicide in Acre, the picture highlights a key point often emphasized by Public Prosecutor's Office managers: it was the behavior of the rates that triggered a more in-depth study and diagnosis of the problem. In 2020 and 2021, the state's rates—2.7 and 2.9 femicides per 100,000 women, respectively—were more than double the national average. In 2021, Acre's femicide rate was the highest in Brazil, along with Tocantins.

In this context, a shared understanding emerged within MPAC of the need to analyze the phenomenon in a more structured and evidence-based way — moving beyond the institution's traditional focus on individual cases and its accusatory role. In this context, the Public Prosecutor's Office came to recognize that limiting its work to prosecution

would amount to a form of institutional omission. It was under these circumstances that the initiatives previously mentioned, aimed at addressing gender-based violence, were developed. In 2024, for the first time in the past five years, Acre was no longer among the five Brazilian states with the highest femicide rates. It was also the first year (in the 2020–2024 comparison period) in which this rate decreased below two cases per 100,000 women.

Regarding femicide in Acre, the picture highlights a key point often emphasized by Public Prosecutor's Office managers: **it was the behavior of the rates** that triggered a more in-depth study and diagnosis of the problem.

Another key element in understanding the situation in Acre is the significant presence of indigenous populations. According to official statistics, in 2024, indigenous women accounted for 0.6% of femicide victims recorded by the police in Brazil (FBSP, 2025). In the Legal Amazon, this percentage rises to 4.3%. Even so, it is important to consider that this number may not reflect reality, given that many indigenous women, when included in the statistics, are counted as brown-skinned⁸. In the Amazonian context, this means that the violence they experience is even more invisible. These are cases

that—as with women living in riverine and rural areas—tend to occur in remote locations, with women economically dependent on their aggressors, and where protection networks and justice services are difficult to access.

In reality, the justice and violence response services available are rarely adequate for these women's reality. In this sense, the study by Iranilde Barbosa (2017)⁹, an indigenous social anthropologist, with Macuxi women in Roraima, is illustrative. Based on interviews with these women, Barbosa points out how the conventional state legal system has been unable to respond to the cultural and social specificities of violence against indigenous women. Although it takes place in Roraima, this is a pertinent example of the challenges associated with considering public safety in the Amazonian context.

This brings to light a central challenge: how to ensure effective access to justice for indigenous women, riverine women, and women living in other remote areas when the services offered do not address their sociocultural contexts? This is an issue that guides initiatives such as Txai Project, developed by Natera, aimed at protecting

8 OKAMOTO, Leandro; ANTUNES, Marta; DAMASCO, Fernando. Povos indígenas nas estatísticas oficiais: identificação étnica, recomendações internacionais e a experiência brasileira. Panorama Nacional e Internacional da Produção de Indicadores Sociais. IBGE, 2018.

9 SANTOS, Iranilde Barbosa dos. Violência contra mulheres indígenas Macuxi: de experiências narradas a soluções coletivas. Dissertação (Mestrado em Antropologia Social). Universidade Federal do Amazonas, 2017. p. 1-130.

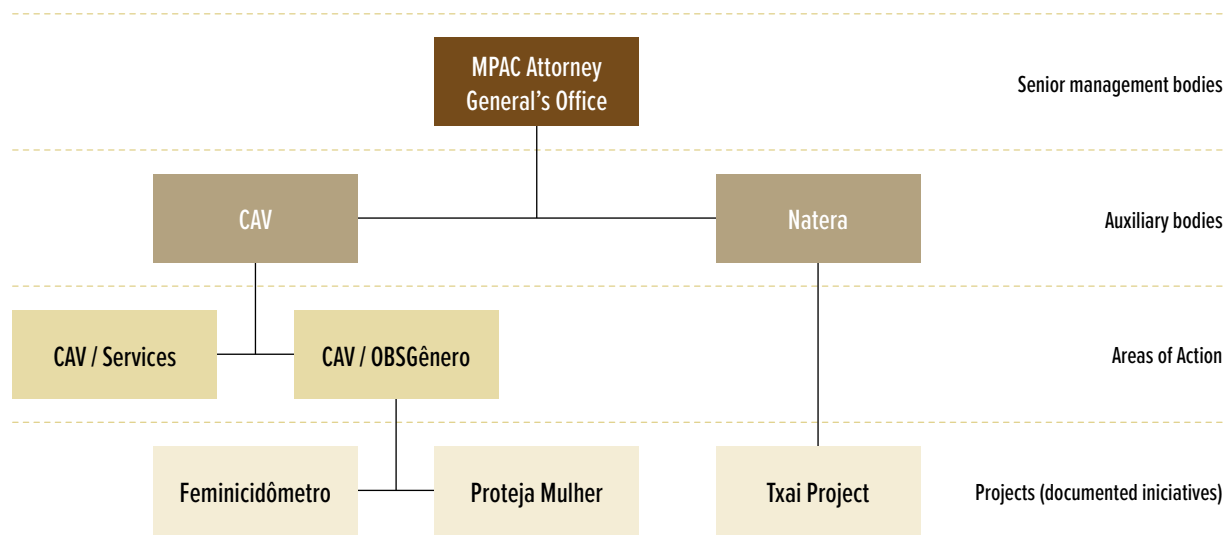


indigenous peoples and providing qualified listening to women in these territories; as well as “Proteja Mulher”, one of whose objectives is to integrate the network of care and confrontation of gender violence, in the plural! Together, these initiatives express the MPAC’s decision to expand its traditionally defendant-centered approach and also turn its attention to victims and historically invisible populations. This is an institutional shift that redefines the role of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Acre in combating gender-based violence in the state.

INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

This section will present CAV and Natera, technical auxiliary bodies of the MPAC that anchor the documented initiatives.

Figure 2 | Organizational structure



Source: Prepared by the author on institutional documents from the MPAC and field notes.

CAV – Victim Assistance Center

The CAV is an auxiliary body of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the State of Acre (MPAC), affiliated with the Attorney General’s Office of the MPAC, and was established in 2016. Its target audience is victims of gender-based violence. Among the main types of cases monitored are domestic and family violence, obstetric violence, sexual crimes against women over 18, and crimes against LGBTQIAPN+ people, without prejudice to assisting other people in vulnerable situations. The CAV operates on two fronts: CAV/Assistance and CAV/OBSGênero.

The CAV headquarters in Rio Branco is located within the MPAC building, occupying a space that comprises a multidisciplinary team room, an administrative/coordination room, a service room, and an analysis room. Its team



consists of 11 people and is composed as follows: administrative coordinator (1), psychologist (2), social worker (2), legal advisors (4), intern (1), and administrative assistant (1).

The CAV has several partners in its work. Among them: DEAM/PC, Maria da Penha Patrol/PM, Public Defender's Office, Prosecutors (capital/interior), Judiciary/TJAC, CRAS, CREAS, municipal secretariats (health, social assistance), Guardianship Council, Women's Policy Organizations (OPMs), specific partnerships via amendments/agreements, women's movements, and community organizations. Several reports on the work carried out by this body are published on its page on the Public Prosecutor's Office website.

CAV/Assistance

This front is the founder of CAV, established in 2016 in conjunction with the technical support body, and is primarily focused on the reception and multidisciplinary care of victims. Its work is reactive and coordinated, responding both to spontaneous demand—when the victim or their family members seek out the agency—and to referrals from other services (prosecutors, ombudsmen, civil society, and other service and protection channels) and active search (when the team itself identifies cases that require its intervention). Adding these three forms of intake, the CAV currently handles an average of 60 cases per month.

The workflow can be summarized in the following diagram: 1st stage: Reception and initial assessment () 2nd stage: Multidisciplinary assistance (legal, social assistance, and psychological), when they also check whether there is already a legal proceeding in progress related to the violence. In legal matters, when applicable, they act by requesting protective measures, such as custody and child support, among others. After the consultation, both in the legal area and in terms of health and social assistance, they make the necessary referrals with the victim's consent.

Reception and assistance are provided both at the CAV's physical location and at other locations. In some cases, depending on the victim's needs, the team travels to the victim's location to make them as comfortable as possible for assistance. This is the protocol for the municipalities of Rio Branco, Cruzeiro do Sul, and Brasileia, where the CAV has its physical headquarters. However, as it is a state-wide agency, it also operates in other municipalities in the interior, on demand, that is, when requested by the local district attorney's office. In these cases, there is no victim reception stage; only assistance is provided.

CAV/OBSGênero

OBSGênero is the most recent initiative of CAV, formally established in 2021 through Act No. 033/2021, with the objective of introducing a gender perspective into the work of MPAC as a whole¹⁰. To this end, they conduct analyses, studies, and research on data on gender-based violence in Acre. By systematizing evidence on violence against women, OBSGênero enhances the Public Prosecutor's Office's capacity to act strategically, informedly, and cross-cuttingly, while promoting the development of laws and the improvement of public policies on the issue.

10 See: https://www.mpac.mp.br/wp-content/uploads/ATO-PGJ-033-2021_-_Institui_o_Observatorio_de_Genero_e_Outros.pdf.



They follow the maxim that every violent death of a woman must be viewed through a gender lens, regardless of the context in which it occurs. This includes, for example, cases initially classified as conflicts arising from criminal organizations, but which, after detailed analysis, may reveal motivations and dynamics of gender-based violence¹¹. This intersectional approach seeks to understand how gender intersects with other social markers—such as race, territory, and community belonging—in the production of violence.

The physical structure of the observatory—including equipment, furniture, and operating space—was initially made possible through a parliamentary amendment, and its daily maintenance is now funded by the Public Prosecutor's Office. Even so, parliamentary amendments remain an essential source of funding, especially for the implementation of specific projects linked to the CAV and the observatory itself, such as “Proteja Mulher” (Protect Women), which will be analyzed in the following sections.

Natera – Psychosocial Support and Care Center

Created in 2013¹², the then Therapeutic Care Center was transformed in 2014 into the Psychosocial Support and Care Center (Natera), a technical auxiliary body of the MPAC. Inspired by the idea of building a Public Prosecutor's Office closer to the community, Natera initially focused on welcoming and assisting people with mental disorders and alcohol abuse problems. Over time, it expanded its scope to include homeless people, indigenous people, migrants, people with mental disorders, and their families. Although it was not originally created with a focus on gender issues, Natera has progressively incorporated this perspective, recognizing the intersections between gender, social vulnerability, and mental health.

Natera has physical headquarters in the capital (Rio Branco) and in Cruzeiro do Sul. In Rio Branco, it is located in the MPAC building, in a space consisting of three rooms (service, reception, and administrative area equipped with computers). The center also has two 4x4 trucks, which are essential for accessing remote and difficult-to-reach areas, especially for the Txai Project's activities. Its team consists of seven employees (administrative coordinator, three psychologists, legal advisor, social worker, and ministerial assistant), with logistical support from MPAC drivers and the collaboration of local prosecutors.

Natera's operating model is based on welcoming and providing individualized care to its priority audience, who access the center spontaneously, through family members, or through referrals from the network. Its strategic function is to act as a link in the protection network, making referrals and promoting integration between the public services involved (health, education, social assistance, the Public Defender's Office, and the Judiciary—especially through the Criminal Enforcement Court). Services are provided on a permanent basis in the capital and in Cruzeiro do Sul, and on an ad hoc basis in municipalities in the interior, through referrals from local prosecutors and the relevant authorities¹³.

11 Methodological guide of OBSGênero's work, with strategic operational flow, variables, indicators, as well as products, can be accessed via: https://femidometro.mpac.mp.br/storage/30/Metodologia_do_OBSG%C3%AAnero__Revisada_formatado.pdf.

12 Through Act n.33/2013 of the General Prosecutor's Office.

13 Annual reports, panel with indicators and more information about the Center can be accessed through: <https://www.mpac.mp.br/natera/>.



Natera's mode of operation is similar to that of the Victim Assistance Center (CAV): both operate on the basis of direct assistance to individuals and play a strategic role in integrating the network of public services, albeit with different target audiences.

DOCUMENTED INITIATIVES

Feminicidômetro

The primary tool for disseminating OBSGênero's analyses is the **Feminicidômetro**¹⁴, which was created concurrently with the Observatory's implementation. The development of the tool is linked to the COVID-19 pandemic period and was created with the aim of overcoming the difficulties faced by victims' families in obtaining information about the progress of criminal proceedings. The platform, which can be accessed on the MPAC website, systematizes and publishes updated data on completed and attempted femicides in Acre since 2018, providing primary data on the victim, the perpetrator, and the crime, by type of violence. In addition, by accessing the platform, the public can view the criminal proceedings of a particular case of femicide on a timeline that includes the date of the incident, the date of the complaint by the MPAC, the status of the proceedings, and the outcome (first-instance sentence, appeals, second-instance decisions, final judgment, and dismissal).

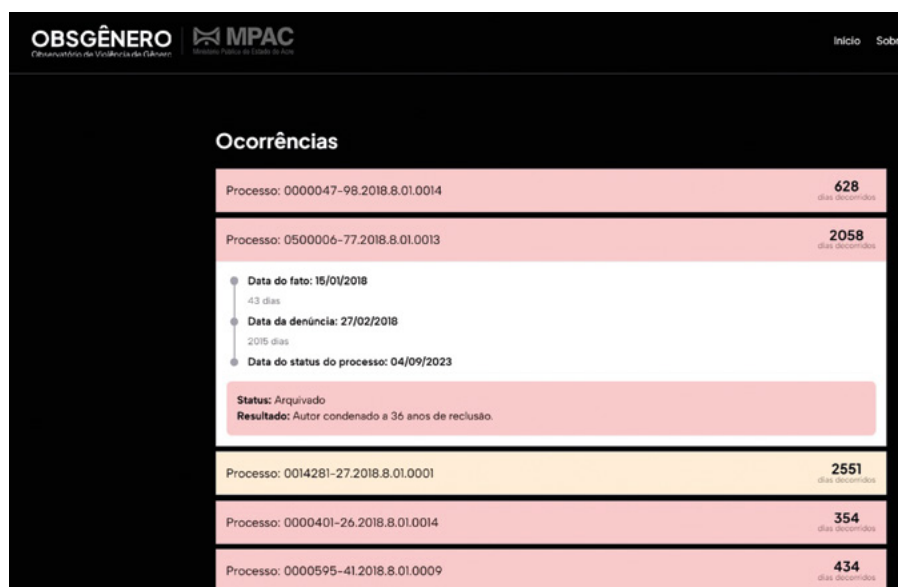
Figure 3 | Feminicidômetro Platform



Source: MPAC, 2025.

14 See: <https://femicidometro.mpac.mp.br/>.

Figure 4 | Timeline displayed by the Feminicidômetro



Source: MPAC, 2025.

The Feminicidômetro is fed by the OBGênero team, which cross-references data from police reports (BOs) with information from the Public Prosecutor's Office and court proceedings. This is made possible by the MPAC's partnership with the Acre Court of Justice, State Secretariats of Public Security, and the General Directorate of the Civil Police of Acre. Based on this integration, objective variables extracted directly from information systems are analyzed, as well as qualitative variables obtained through manual reading of the proceedings. The latter are fundamental because they often allow for the identification of nuances and contexts that reveal the gender dimension present in each specific case.

With the visibility that the tool provides, it ultimately functions not only as an instrument of public transparency but also as a mechanism for inducing policies and institutional pressure on agencies within the justice and public security system. It is a pioneering action by the MPAC that could serve as inspiration for other Brazilian states.

In terms of technological resources, the Feminicidômetro was developed using the PHP language, with the Laravel framework, integrating a MySQL database. Developed by the MPAC's Information Technology Department at no cost, the solution has an administrative panel that allows the inclusion of links to Power BI panels, which contain the relevant data.

Funding and sustainability

The creation of the Feminicidômetro, along with OBGênero itself, dates back to 2021. This year, however, these fronts continued to operate with the same team and structure as CAV/Atendimento. Starting in 2022, the expenses of OBGênero and Feminicidômetro began to be itemized separately, following the receipt of a parliamentary amendment that enabled the creation of their physical structure and the separation of OBGênero from CAV/Atendimento.



Table 3 | Joint financing of OBSGênero and Feminicidômetro
2022-2025

Year	Amount	Source of funding	Objective
2022	R\$ 255,928.63	Parliamentary agenda	Enabled the creation of the physical structure of OBSGênero and Feminicidômetro.
2023	R\$ 220,069.72	Internal resources of the Public Prosecutor's Office	Personnel expenses
2024	R\$ 526,520.42	State Annual Budget Law (LOA) 2024	Amount scheduled to be invested in strengthening OBSGênero, including the Femicide Meter.
2025	R\$ 577,564.61	State Annual Budget Law (LOA) 2025	Amount scheduled to be allocated to strengthening OBSGênero, including the Femicide Meter.
Total	R\$ 1,580,083.38		

Source: MPAC, 2025.

Table 4 | Breakdown of Feminicidômetro and OBSGênero expenses funded via parliamentary budget
2022

Item	Qty.	Unit value	Total
Notebook	4	R\$ 9,836.66	R\$ 39,346.64
Advanced workstation	3	R\$ 30,560.00	R\$ 91,680.00
A3 color laser printer	1	R\$ 33,976.67	R\$ 33,976.67
External Storage Unit (HDD)	7	R\$ 420.00	R\$ 2,940.00
Multimedia Projector (Datashow)	2	R\$ 2,703.67	R\$ 5,407.34
Smart TV - 55"	2	R\$ 3,260	R\$ 6,520
Smartphone	1	R\$ 1,207.98	R\$ 1,207.98
New vehicle	1	R\$ 74,850.00	R\$ 74,850.00
Total			R\$ 255,928.63

Source: MPAC, 2025.

“Proteja Mulher”

Created in 2022 and implemented for the first time in 2023, “Proteja Mulher” is a project developed by OBSGênero in partnership with the Operational Support Center (CAO) - Human Rights and Citizenship. Its objective is to map and diagnose the network of services for women in situations of violence in the municipalities of the state of Acre. Based on this, the project promotes workshops with representatives of the institutions that comprise the network, with a dual purpose: to raise awareness and train the professionals involved, and to align the integrated functioning of the network by reviewing the responsibilities of each agency and designing joint service flows¹⁵. Ideally, in a second phase—three months after the first stage—the project plans to return the “Proteja Mulher” team to the municipality to monitor the implementation of the integrated routines and verify the consolidation of the agreed-upon flows. Thus, the project serves as a catalyst for integrating and strengthening the network, beginning with the identifica-

¹⁵ Workshop products: workshop minute, network and flow alignment, as well as support and reception training.



tion of its members and the recognition of structural flaws in the care provided. The team responsible for the project is the same as that of OBSGênero.

“Proteja Mulher” is particularly relevant when one considers that access to justice and public services is a concrete problem in inland cities. Generally, state capitals are where public service facilities are concentrated, and Acre is no exception to this rule. Thus, the inadequacy of the service network in the interior is the first major obstacle the project faces.

A second challenge, identified both in the project’s own reports during its diagnostic phase and in field interviews conducted during the field immersion, concerns the lack of integration among the institutions that comprise the network. In many municipalities, even though service facilities exist, they often fail to coordinate with each other, which hinders the proper reception and referral of victims.

The third problem identified is the lack of technical knowledge on the part of professionals working at the “gateway” to the network—that is, in police stations, government offices, health centers, etc.—about the forms of gender-based violence and its manifestations. To date, “Proteja Mulher” has successfully addressed these three areas of weakness: it promotes continuous training, encourages inter-institutional dialogue, and structures integrated service flows, thereby strengthening the network’s role as a collaborative protection system.

To illustrate the scale of the challenge, it is worth mentioning an emblematic case that appeared in the narratives of several actors interviewed in the field. The case occurred during one of the “Proteja Mulher” workshops. On that occasion, not only representatives of the support network were invited, but also residents of the municipality. During the activity, a woman—a local resident—asked to speak. She reported that she had been raped, that she had already sought help from various agencies in the network, and even stated that her attacker was there, present at the workshop (he was a psychologist linked to the local service network). This is a shocking case because it lays bare the structural flaws in the network: whether due to the difficulty in identifying what she described as sexual violence, social and institutional barriers that discredit the victim’s word, or a lack of clarity about the role of each agency when faced with a complaint... In this specific case, the woman was immediately welcomed as soon as she told the workshop about the violence she had experienced, and the Public Prosecutor’s Office initiated a criminal investigation against the accused, with a request for preventive detention. And from that first complaint against the professional in question, other complaints emerged from other women, and the local health agency, which is often where these cases are reported, began to comply with the obligation to report cases such as this one involving sexual violence.

Although in this specific case, and for the three problems identified and illustrated in this case—insufficient services, lack of network integration, and lack of knowledge—“Proteja Mulher” has managed to make an impact, a fourth problem that emerged as very relevant from the field interviews conducted for this documentation, and which is still a limitation in “Proteja Mulher”’s work, concerns the sustainability of the actions agreed upon in the workshops. This is

“Proteja Mulher” is particularly relevant when one considers that access to justice and public services is a concrete problem in inland cities.



because the turnover of managers and civil servants still has a strong impact on the continuity of integrated routines. Local political changes – such as the replacement of mayors and commissioned teams – and the difficulty of maintaining stable technical staff, especially in small or hard-to-reach cities, compromise the durability of results. Within

the scope of “Proteja Mulher”, a potential strategy to address this problem would be to institutionalize periodic evaluations in participating municipalities, with new scheduled visits and new regular training sessions for professionals in the network. However, this strategy also requires stable funding for the project. In any case, ensuring the project’s continuity would reinforce its sustainable and transformative nature.

Funding and sustainability

The initial budget for the implementation of “Proteja Mulher” was made possible through a parliamentary amendment in the amount of R\$100,000. Since this amount would not be sufficient to carry out the project in all 22 municipalities in the state, four municipalities were initially selected based on a consultation of OBSGênero data, which identified those that most urgently needed action to address violence against women.



“Proteja Mulher” team serving the Shanenawá people. Morada Nova village, Feijó (AC). **Photo:** Image provided by MPAC.

Even so, the amount of the amendment was not sufficient to cover the return to all municipalities served in the first edition, which limited the monitoring of local implementations. Subsequently, a new phase of the project was undertaken using MPAC’s own resources. Currently, the project is expected to resume in three new municipalities in November 2025, with the support of external resources that have already been mobilized. Nevertheless, the team continues to seek new funding to ensure the initiative’s continuity and expansion. The table below outlines the progress made to date within the project’s scope.

Table 5 Details of the “Proteja Mulher” project

Municipality and Regional	Population	Distance to the capital (in km)	Date of implementation	Project stages		Resources used
				Mapping, diagnosis, and workshop	Implementation assessment	
Brasília Alto Acre Regional	28,028	234	August 2023	✓	✗	Parliamentary amendment
Feijó Tarauacá-Envira Regional	37,764	363	August to November 2023	✓	✓	Parliamentary amendment
Cruzeiro do Sul Juruá Regional	98,916	635	November 2023	✓	✗	Parliamentary amendment
Sena Madureira Purus Regional	44,049	144	November 2023	✓	✗	Parliamentary amendment
Rodrigues Alves Juruá Regional	15,560	626	September 2024	✓	✗	MPAC's own resources
Tarauacá Tarauacá-Envira Regional	46,816	409	August 2025	✓	✗	MPAC's own resources

Source: Prepared by the author based on MPAC institutional documents, field notes, and IBGE estimates, 2025.

Table 6 Breakdown of “Proteja Mulher” expenses funded via the parliamentary budget, used to implement the project in the first four municipalities

Breakdown	Approximate estimated cost
	2023
Per diem	R\$ 63,724.50
Banner	R\$ 45.00
T-shirts	R\$ 3,880.00
Airfare	R\$ 13,384.91
Fuel	R\$ 1,617.50
Total	R\$ 82,651.91

Source: MPAC, 2025.

Txai Project

Created in 2022 within the Psychosocial Support and Care Center (Natera) with the purpose of providing direct and integrated care to the indigenous populations of Acre. Since its inception, the project has partnered with OBSGênero to instill a gender perspective in all its actions. The team participating in Txai is the same as that of Natera, consisting of seven people.

The project was conceived when the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the State of Acre (MPAC) realized that the high suicide rates among indigenous peoples recorded in the previous year were associated with a set of structural vulnerabilities, such as alcohol abuse, malnutrition, and poor access to public health, education, and social assistance services. In analyzing this scenario, the MPAC identified that these weaknesses were related not only to deficiencies



in mental health care but also to the widespread exclusion of indigenous peoples from public systems of care and rights protection. Thus, Txai was initially designed to operate in three central areas—health, social assistance, and education—with the aim of promoting inclusion, citizenship, and interinstitutional integration.

As activities progressed, however, the project incorporated a fourth cross-cutting axis: public safety. This expansion occurred based on consultations with indigenous communities, which revealed the interdependence between social vulnerabilities and the dynamics of violence—including the presence of criminal factions, the recruitment of indigenous youth to join them, and gender-based violence.

In relation to Txai's work dynamics, the starting point is actively listening to indigenous populations. The Natera team visits villages and, when possible, invites their leaders to in-person meetings at the public prosecutor's office, as part of collective dialogue events. In these spaces, indigenous people share their demands, not only related to the initially defined areas, but also to a wide range of everyday issues. Many reported that it was the first time they felt heard by an institution within the justice system, which made the MPAC a trusted reference and a legitimate channel for accessing justice and citizenship.



MPAC team providing assistance in a village in Cruzeiro do Sul/AC.
Photo: Image provided by MPAC.



MPAC team providing assistance in a village in the Alto Acre region.
Photo: Image provided by MPAC.

The project's activities highlight how the dimensions of education, health, social assistance, gender, and public safety are intertwined. In Brasileia, for example, a municipality located on the border with Bolivia, approximately 234 km from the capital Rio Branco, which has a neighborhood almost entirely made up of urbanized indigenous people, the team identified that adolescents in this territory face barriers to advancing from elementary school to middle school and high school because, once they reach this stage of schooling, they have to travel to schools located in territories controlled by rival criminal factions. The indigenous neighborhood is dominated by one group, while the rest of the city is under the influence of another, exposing young people to intimidation and the risk of violence.

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In addition to listening, Txai acts as a liaison between the Public Prosecutor's Office and the public service network. Based on the identified demands, Natera mobilizes the necessary institutions to ensure that indigenous people are served, contributing to the development of service delivery flows for these services. For example, in health, the mobilization brought about by Txai enabled local indigenous populations to access regular health services, rather than relying solely on the Special Indigenous Health District (DSEI). In several municipalities, the team had to convince local managers that serving indigenous people is also a responsibility of municipal health, education, and assistance structures, thus expanding the reach and effectiveness of public policies.

Another key action of the project is "MP na Comunidade" (MP in the Community), a joint effort that brings public services directly to indigenous villages and communities. Based on the demands raised during the listening phase, the MP organizes an integrated action, which usually takes place in one day, bringing together agencies such as the Federal Revenue Service, the Civil Police, and health teams to issue documents, provide basic care, and offer guidance on rights.

In addition, since its creation, Txai has partnered with OBGênero, which is responsible for incorporating a gender perspective into its actions. This collaboration translates into roundtable discussions on violence against women and training for male and female leaders on the forms of prevention and confrontation available in the justice system. During field visits, indigenous leaders emphasized the importance of this training in strengthening internal dialogue within villages and recognizing the role of women in community spaces.

Today, Acre is home to 15 indigenous people and three isolated indigenous peoples. With statewide coverage, the Txai Project had already reached 11 ethnic groups by October 2025: Madihá, Kaxinawá, Manchineri, Jaminawá, Shanenawá, Huni Kui, Katukina, Ashaninka, Nukini, Nawas, and Puyanawa. They are distributed across indigenous territories and neighborhoods formed by urbanized indigenous people in five of Acre's 22 municipalities: Assis Brasil, Brasileia, Feijó, Sena Madureira, and Manoel Urbano.

One of the activities planned for documenting the Txai Project was a visit to one of the indigenous villages where Txai has already been implemented: Morada Nova, the main village of the Shanenawá people, in Feijó. The community is situated on the banks of the Envira River, which flows through the municipality. Although it is possible to reach it by road at certain times of the year (via an unpaved dirt road), it is primarily accessed by river.





Morava Nova Village, in Feijó/AC. **Photo:** Isabella Matosinhos/FBSP.



At the Morada Nova Village Convention Center, with representatives of the Shanenawá people and the MPAC and FBSP team. **Photo:** Isabella Matosinhos/FBSP.

Funding and sustainability

The Txai Project budget is linked to Natera, which, since its creation in 2013, has relied on MPAC’s own resources to carry out its activities, while also benefiting from parliamentary amendments aimed at expanding its projects.

The main amendments received by Natera, which ultimately impact the Txai Project, were:

- R\$700,000 (2024): purchase of a pickup truck and modernization of Natera’s infrastructure (computer equipment, telephone, and multimedia projector);
- R\$250,000 (2024): purchase of a second pickup truck and furniture, as part of the “Support for Citizenship in Rio Branco” initiative;
- R\$100,000 (2025): project “Who Are They? A look at women living on the streets,” currently in progress;
- R\$198,000 (2025): specific funding for the Txai Project (approved amount of an originally proposed total of R\$500,000). The amount will be used in accordance with the Txai Work Plan for 2026, as shown in the table below.

Table 7 | Breakdown of expenses provided for in the Work Plan for the Txai Project, funded via a specific parliamentary budget granted in 2025, to be executed in 2026

Details	Amount
Holding of five territorial dialogues (workshops) in villages located in the municipalities of Assis Brasil, Brasileia, Feijó, Sena Madureira, and Manoel Urbano.	R\$ 134,211.99
Strengthen the MPAC technical team in its work with the indigenous population, with three training sessions for six MP technicians.	R\$ 63,788.01
Total	R\$ 198,000.00

Source: MPAC, 2025.

Overall, Txai has established itself as an innovative experiment in listening, inter-institutional coordination, and the presence of the Public Prosecutor’s Office in historically marginalized territories, bringing the institution closer to indigenous communities and reaffirming its role as a guarantor of rights in the Amazon region of Acre.

IMPACTS AND RESULTS

Table 8 | Main positive impacts identified in the documented initiatives

Initiative	Impact
MPAC as a whole	Consolidation of an institution that acts simultaneously as a promoter of justice and an inducer of public policies, coordinating with different levels of government and local communities. In this way, the MPAC has been redefining its historical role: from an institution focused on criminal prosecution to a prosecutor's office focused on the structural transformation of women's conditions of vulnerability, through data, mobilization, and cooperation networks. Its impacts, therefore, are not limited to holding perpetrators accountable, but extend to the construction of new forms of state and community presence in the Amazon region of Acre.
CAV	Based on its analysis and research, combined with its service provision, CAV has been able to promote advocacy. One example is its work on the issue of protecting orphans of femicide, a cause championed by CAV. The assistance provided in such cases, together with research by OBSGênero, had an impact on the approval of the 2022 Acre law (Law No. 4,065, which established the State Policy for the Protection and Comprehensive Care of Orphans of Femicide, later amended by Law No. 4,641/2025), which preceded the federal law of 2023 (Law No. 14,717) and is considered more comprehensive because it provides not only financial benefits but also guidelines for the comprehensive protection of affected children and adolescents. This example demonstrates the agency's ability to transform daily care into institutional learning and policy formulation.
Femicide Meter	The information systematized by the project has supported judicial decisions and innovative interpretations, such as the reclassification of cases of suicide among women motivated by psychological violence from their partners as femicide or homicide by omission. This work culminated in the MPAC's participation in a public hearing of the ALEAC (Legislative Assembly of the State of Acre) in June 2025 on so-called psychological femicide, broadening the legal and political debate on the issue. In addition, a more accurate diagnosis of the problem of gender-based violence, based on crime data and victim profiles, increases the statistical visibility of the phenomenon and provides the executive branch with important data for formulating and implementing strategies that are more appropriate to the specificities of gender-based violence in the state. Among other awards it has already won, in 2025, the Feminicidômetro tool was recognized by the National Ombudsman of the CNMP (National Council of the Public Prosecutor's Office) as a good practice in the protection of women's rights in the Public Prosecutor's Office. Number of visits since its creation until October 17, 2025: 17,547.
"Proteja Mulher"	Identification of gaps in the service network in inland municipalities and in the training of local teams. The main impact is to act as a promoter of the functioning of the women's service network in inland municipalities. By fostering integration between agencies in the network that were previously unconnected, the MPAC is recognized as a catalyst for the protection network, capable of inducing intersectoral partnerships and stimulating the autonomy of local services. Number of municipalities benefitted by October 2025: 6 municipalities, with training for 276 professionals in various areas of care for victims of violence.
Txai Project	This project represents a step forward in the intersectional approach between gender, ethnicity, and territory. By promoting dialogue with indigenous peoples and fostering female leadership, the project has strengthened the institutional presence of the MPAC in communities historically removed from the justice system. In addition, encouraging the formalization of indigenous associations and supporting concrete demands, such as access to public services, reinforces the role of the MP as an agent for promoting citizenship and cultural recognition. Number of municipalities benefitted by October 2025: 5 municipalities and 11 indigenous peoples.

Source: Prepared by the author based on MPAC institutional documents and field notes.

CHALLENGES

Intersectorality and governance

The level of **institutionalization** of initiatives is one of the challenges of governance. Bodies such as CAV and Nat-era, which anchor the projects, are permanent structures created by a normative act, which gives them solidity. The Feminicidômetro shares this robustness because it is formalized in the same act that created OBSGênero.

The creation of “Proteja Mulher” and Txai Project, on the other hand, did not occur through the formal route of a specific normative act. Although the Txai Project is mentioned in PGJ Act No. 88/2022 as justification for the establishment of the Working Group for the Defense of Indigenous Peoples’ Rights, the lack of formalization for both projects creates the risk of **leadership dependence (personalization)**. In such cases, continuity and operational arrangements are subject to management changes, requiring initiatives to be able to operate independently of their coordinator or specific leadership. Today, for example, the general coordinator of these projects, who is the same person, plays a central role in mobilizing parliamentarians to secure possible parliamentary amendments.

In terms of intersectorality, the challenges manifest themselves on two levels:

→ **Maintenance of the women’s care network in inland municipalities (“Proteja Mulher”):** Following the initial stage of the project (mapping, diagnosis, and a workshop to design the care flow), a specific challenge arises in maintaining the coordination of the post-workshop care network in the beneficiary municipalities. Factors such as the regular change of managers and teams in the local network contribute to the lack of coordination. This challenge is accentuated considering that, so far, the project has only been able to return to check the implementation of the second stage in one of the six municipalities where it took place.

→ **Intercultural mediation and sectoral integration (“Proteja Mulher” and Txai Project):** Both projects deal with women in specific situations of violence: in the case of “Proteja Mulher”, its target audience includes women in rural areas of inland municipalities, where sexist practices are often deeply rooted; in the case of Txai, with indigenous women who live in a culture different from the urban one, often having their own language. These contexts require articulation between gender and culture. Added to this is the coordination that these projects aim to achieve, which is often challenging, given the public sector network (health, education, assistance, security), which is primarily characterized by multiple access points and limited integration.

→ **Conflict of responsibilities (Txai Project):** The protection of indigenous peoples involves an overlap of responsibilities between the State and Federal Public Prosecutor’s Offices, requiring constant and complex institutional negotiations. Some more complex cases become even more difficult to address because they run into conflicts of jurisdiction between state and federal agencies. This “jurisdictional check” reduces the predictability of action for communities.



Financial sustainability

Financial challenges are more associated with projects than with institutional centers. While CAV and Natera, as auxiliary technical agencies, have a consolidated structure and costs absorbed by the Public Prosecutor's Office, the projects linked to them often depend on external partnerships and fundraising, which creates operational and financial vulnerability.

→ **“Proteja Mulher”:** This project faces the greatest sustainability challenge due to its episodic and itinerant nature. Implementation in new municipalities involves essential travel costs. Of the six municipalities where it has been implemented to date, four were funded through parliamentary amendments, but the amount was insufficient to carry out the second stage in almost all of them. The lack of a continuous and permanent source of funding compromises the project's sustainability and expansion capacity, which remains dependent on unstable external resources.

→ **Txai Project:** Its implementation also requires frequent and costly travel to isolated locations. To date, the most expensive structural items required to make the project viable (the two trucks) have been funded through a congressional amendment, and the Public Prosecutor's Office has been able to absorb the travel costs associated with the project. In addition, the timely raising of funds for the next edition (the parliamentary agenda has already been received and will be used in 2026) mitigates the short-term risk; however, long-term sustainability requires the internalization or guarantee of a continuous source of funding for its essential logistics.

→ **Feminicidômetro:** The project demonstrates greater financial sustainability. As it is a non-itinerant initiative, requiring only physical infrastructure and personnel (costs absorbed and already covered by the Public Prosecutor's Office), its operating costs are significantly lower and do not depend on periodic contributions for travel.

Geography and access logistics

Located in the Amazon, Acre presents logistical and territorial barriers—such as distances, stretches of poor roads, rivers, and unstable connectivity—that constitute a structural challenge for the internalization of justice actions and public policies.

The municipality of Feijó, for example, which has already received “Proteja Mulher” and Txai, is a notable example. It was selected as a destination to be visited during the field trip for this documentation. Located 363 km from Rio Branco, with an extensive territorial area, 49% of the population in rural areas, and the largest indigenous population in the state, the trip by truck to Feijó from the capital takes 7 to 9 hours. In contexts such as this, public services must reach their audience, so that if the local network is not functional or incomplete, the population's access to rights is severely compromised, given the impracticality of relying on the capital. In contexts such as this, the logistical challenge manifests itself in three areas:

→ **Impact on implementation (“Proteja Mulher” and Txai Project):** Logistical barriers make it difficult for the team to travel from the capital to the municipality to carry out the projects and communicate in the field. In Txai Project, the challenge is more acute, as its target audience is indigenous and isolated communities, which are even more difficult to access.

→ **Impact on the design of the network's service flow ("Proteja Mulher" and Txai Project):** Access difficulties require that the service flow of the local network for combating violence be as complete and self-sufficient as possible. The logistical complexity of moving services from the capital to the interior requires that the model of action prioritize local team access to the public, decentralizing the availability of the service.

→ **Indirect impact on data quality (Feminicidômetro):** Although the Feminicidômetro is not directly affected by logistics, it is indirectly impacted in terms of data quality. Even though crimes against life (consummated and attempted femicide) are less susceptible to total underreporting, geographical barriers hinder the prompt arrival of agents and experts to isolated locations and, in the case of attempted femicide, the transfer of the victim to the hospital or police station where the report is made. Considering that the Femicide Meter not only counts cases but also analyzes them qualitatively, poor logistics impact the quality of the circumstantial data entered into the system.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This case study reveals an institutional option of the MPAC that goes beyond its prosecutorial role. In a pioneering move among state public prosecutors' offices, the agency has made combating gender-based violence a very concrete focus of its work, combining victim support, data production, diagnostics, and an active stance in promoting the integration of the network of services for women in situations of violence.

From the perspective of scalability and replicability in other states, the Feminicidômetro is a notable highlight in terms of cost-effectiveness. As it requires physical infrastructure, which can be summarized as an analysis room, it can be replicated as long as there is a minimum interinstitutional agreement between the Public Prosecutor's Office, the police, and the judiciary to integrate databases and establish data governance routines, allowing the construction of a procedural timeline for each case. It is an example of good practice that has the potential to deepen the diagnosis of gender-based violence, enabling more qualified actions by the executive branch, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and the judiciary in planning their prevention actions, and can be replicated throughout the country.

"Proteja Mulher" and Txai Project, in turn, also have the potential for replication, although they require more constant and robust investment. The replication of these projects requires that other Public Prosecutor's Offices—especially in territories with major logistical barriers and cultural diversity, such as the Legal Amazon—embrace the role of coordinators of the service network. The itinerant model of "Proteja Mulher", which diagnoses and strengthens the municipal network, and the intercultural and intersectoral approach of Txai Project have proven fundamental in ensuring effective access to justice and public services in isolated communities and historically marginalized populations.

In summary, the value of the MPAC experience lies in demonstrating that the willingness to go beyond the accusatory function, combined with the technical flexibility to adapt solutions to local realities, is central to the replicability of initiatives. Its success depends on a commitment to integrating data and services, as well as prioritizing outreach to the public in their own territory.



Initiative **06**

Integrated Forces for Combating Organized Crime (FICCO)

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TECHNICAL SHEET

	Initiative name: Integrated Forces to Combat Organized Crime (FICCO)
	Main implementing agency: Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Federal Police, and state police institutions, with emphasis on Civil and Military Police.
	Year of creation: 2023 (as a national policy).
	State of operation and territorial coverage: National, with one base in each state.
	Partnerships: State Criminal Police, Federal Criminal Police, Federal Highway Police, Municipal Civil Guards.
	Current status: Operational.





Summary: The Integrated Forces for Combating Organized Crime (FICCO) are cooperative structures promoted by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP), coordinated by the Federal Police, and operated in partnership with state and district public security forces — particularly the Civil and Military Police. Depending on their local configuration, they may also include other state, federal, or municipal agencies, such as State Penal Police, the Federal Highway Police, the Federal Penal Police, and Municipal Guards, either officially or in an ad hoc capacity. FICCO operates as a permanent task force aimed at confronting criminal factions and organizations and reducing violent crime through the integration of public security institutions and the promotion of legal and police cooperation, including international collaboration, especially in border areas. The coordinated work of professionals from different institutions, exclusively dedicated to these efforts, prioritizes the continuous monitoring of criminal organizations, the identification of their leadership structures, and the execution of in-depth investigations that support the launch of operations to dismantle and decapitalize the main criminal networks identified in the territory.

INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE



Ficco officer. Photo: Federal Police Archive.

On July 21, 2023, MJSP Ordinance No. 427, signed by the then Minister of Justice and Public Security and the Director General of the Federal Police, determined the national expansion of the Integrated Forces for Combating Organized Crime (FICCO), with the aim of stepping up the fight against criminal organizations¹. Among the main objectives of the FICCOs is to combat violent crime resulting from the activities of prison-based criminal factions, through strategies to crack down on drug trafficking, money laundering, and other types of crime.

The Ordinance was signed as part of a series of other actions announced by the Federal Government and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security under the Security Action Program (PAS)²⁻³. Until then, there were units called FICCO⁴, or similar ones⁵, in 12 states: Acre, Amapá, Ceará, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais, Paraíba, and Rio Grande do Norte. However, there was no uniformity in the work carried out in each unit. With the ordinance,

1 See: https://dspace.mj.gov.br/bitstream/1/10604/1/PRT_GM_2023_427.pdf.

2 See: <https://www.gov.br/mj/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/programa-de-acao-na-seguranca-pas-e-lancado-com-assinatura-dos-primeiros-atos-e-medidas-na-area-1/pas.p>

3 At the event held on July 21, 2023, during which the ordinance for the nationalization of FICCO was signed, decrees were also signed and measures were announced on various topics related to the public security agenda, such as the modification of rules for civilian access to firearms, the establishment of the Amazon Plan: Security and Sovereignty (MAS Plan), the promotion of actions against violence in schools, a proposal for increasing penalties for crimes against the democratic rule of law, the development of projects under PRONASCI 2, the anticipation of the transfer of funds from the National Public Security Fund, among others.

4 Reports indicate that the first FICCO units were created in the state of Minas Gerais in 2013, enabling articulated action between the Federal Police and state police forces in the fight against organized crime in five regions of the state. The adoption of the name FICCO, starting in 2023, to designate the experience on a national scale, was a tribute to the pioneering initiative from Minas Gerais. Although this research did not locate the official documentation for the creation of FICCO in Minas Gerais, there is a record of its mention in a 2015 news report, in the context of an interstate police operation acting in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. At the time, the cooperation between the Federal Police, the Military Fire Brigade of Minas Gerais, the Civil Police, the Military Police, and the State Secretariat of Social Defense of the state was highlighted. See: <https://legado.seguranca.mg.gov.br/2018-08-22-13-39-06/convenios-de-entrada/story/2756-operacao-da-ficco-desarticula-organizacao-criminosa-e-prende-3>

5 The Public Security Task Force (FTSP) is the name of a similar initiative, a task force focused on combating organized crime, cited as the precursor to the FICCO model adopted starting in 2023 with greater uniformity, on a national scale.



the installation of 15 new FICCOs was authorized, and they began to operate throughout the national territory according to the same model. The arrangement is based on the signing of Technical Cooperation Agreements (ACT), involving political and budgetary support from the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP), technical, operational, and administrative coordination from the Federal Police (PF), and operational action from state public security forces. A FICCO base was therefore established in each state, generally located in the state capital and in the Federal District. However, there are states that, in addition to their main base, have advanced bases or centers in cities or territories considered strategically important. These centers are not considered permanent structures and may exist during a specific operation or for a shorter period than the main base.

One of the legal bases for FICCO's operation is Law No. 10,446/2002⁶, which establishes the jurisdiction of the Federal Police to act when there is evidence of gang activity in more than one state of the Federation, in cases related to theft, robbery, or cargo receiving. The same law also authorizes the Federal Police to act in cases of theft, robbery, or damage against financial institutions, whenever there is evidence of involvement by criminal associations with interstate reach.

FICCOs are inspired by the task force model, and their main objective is to tackle violent crime at the local or regional level, map, understand, repress, and decapitalize criminal organizations/prison-based criminal factions, the latter being one of the main potential contributions of FICCO. The seizure of weapons and drugs, as well as arrests (including the execution of arrest warrants and/or the capture of fugitives), are also established as secondary objectives of FICCO.

In the context of Brazilian federalism, the legal and operational viability of FICCO largely depends on the **success of creating political-institutional arrangements at the subnational level that enable integrated work between federal and state public security forces.**

THE STRUCTURING OF FICCO: THE POLITICAL-INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

In the context of Brazilian federalism, the legal and operational viability of FICCO largely depends on the success of creating political-institutional arrangements at the subnational level that enable integrated work between federal and state public security forces. These alignments were built in a process that unfolded between 2023 and 2024, which can be understood as consisting of three phases, described below. The duration of each phase of this process in each state, however, varied according to local political and institutional contexts, as well as the prior existence

of Public Security Task Forces (FTSPs) or similar initiatives in the territory, which contributed to the speed of the necessary formalization.

6 See: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/2002/10446.htm.



Thus, the first phase of implementing the FICCOs involved constructing these political-institutional arrangements at the state level and in the Federal District. To this end, the MJSP and the PF held meetings with state governments to present the project and its institutional and financial arrangements, with the aim of signing a Technical Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

The second phase involved dialogue between the Federal Police and public security structures in the states and the Federal District to define each agency's contributions to the implementation of the FICCO base. The allocation of personnel, both by the PF and state police forces, was one of the most fundamental decisions. One of the main contributions of the federal government, in addition to management by the Federal Police, is the funding of daily allowances for state civil servants working exclusively or on mission/operation at FICCOs. The signing of an ACT at DC marks the formal launch of the initiative in that state or the Federal District.



Signing of ACTs between the MJSP, PF, and state governments of the Amazon.
Photo: Social Communication of the Federal Police in Amazonas.

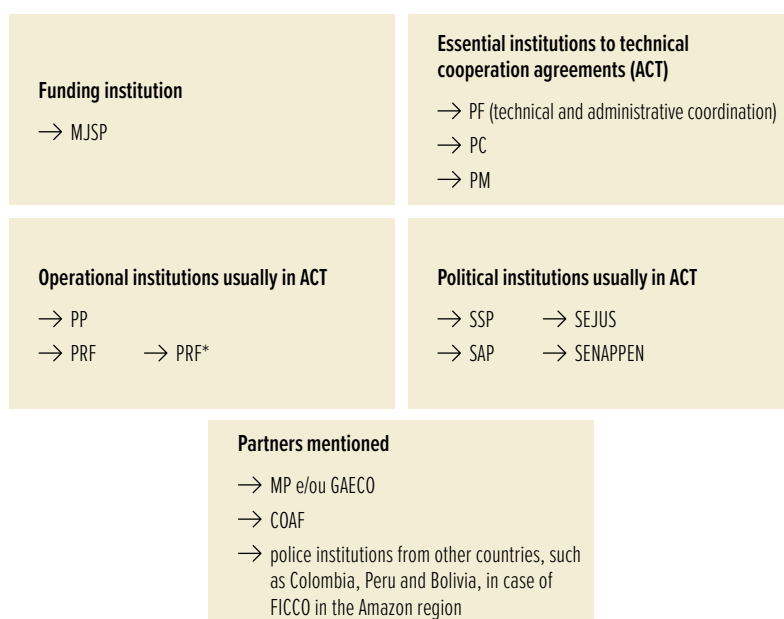
The third phase of FICCO implementation involves setting up the team and defining the base. As a general rule, the base should be located in an unmarked building at a secret location, separate from the state's Federal Police headquarters. Participating state and federal forces appoint professionals to work exclusively at FICCO. **Coordination among the PF, PC, and PM is the fundamental pillar for establishing an FICCO base. Other agencies, such as Criminal Police, Federal Criminal Police, or Federal Highway Police⁷, may participate either constantly or occasionally, depending on local coordination and the ACT's configuration. Political-institutional support may come from state secretariats of public security, social defense, prison administration, justice, or**

⁷ Since February 2025, the PRF has withdrawn from several cooperation agreements with state prosecutors and the Federal Police, such as FICCO. This move was justified by the corporation's General Directorate and the MJSP as necessary due to the "legal fragility" of the agreements, which are currently under review. More information: <https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2025/02/27/prf-cancela-parcerias-com-pf-e-mps-estaduais-para-combater-o-crime-organizado.ghtml>.



the National Secretariat of Penitentiary Police (SENAPPEN). The Federal Police intelligence sector conducts a social investigation to verify that the professional profile and conduct of the appointee align with FICCO's needs. In general, professionals joining FICCO are expected to have experience in intelligence or combating organized crime. If professionals are assigned to a municipality other than where the FICCO base is located, they receive a per diem equivalent to the federal per diem. The MJSP allocates these funds, and the PF manages them. Per diem allowances are also paid when larger numbers of personnel are mobilized for operations.

Figure 1 | Map of FICCO actors



Source: Own elaboration.

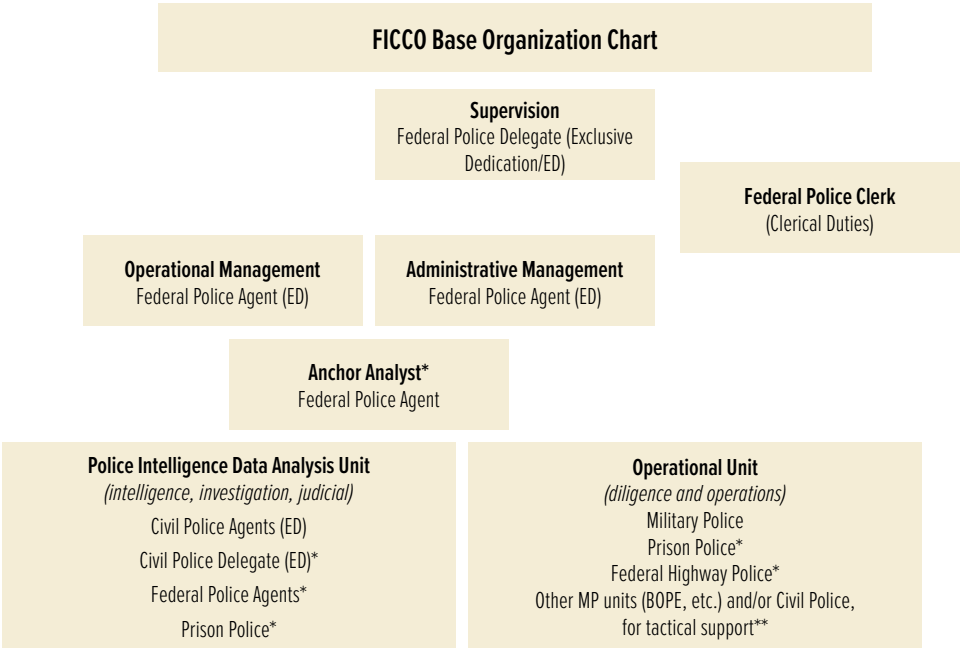
* Nowadays, the PRF is not present in any current ACT, but it has been in the past, and it is possible that it will be again.

HOW A FICCO BASE IS ORGANIZED: THE OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENT OF AN INTEGRATED/INTERAGENCY POLICY

In December 2024, the Federal Police published Ordinance DICOR/PF No. 75, which provides for the establishment, functioning, duties, and responsibilities of the Integrated Forces for Combating Organized Crime (FICCO) within the Federal Police. This document aimed to establish uniformity in FICCO's activities at the national level.



Figure 2 | FICCO Base Organization Chart



Source: Own elaboration.
* There may be.
** In operations.

The coordination of the FICCO base is typically the responsibility of a Federal Police Chief. This person acts as a Supervisor and oversees all activities, both operational and administrative. The management team consists of Operational Management, which connects to the analysis and operational centers, and Administrative Management, which handles administration. Administrative Management also maintains bureaucratic dialogue with the Federal Police and with the state corporation. Additionally, it oversees necessary procedures for per diem payments. Both management positions are held by Federal Police Officers. A Federal Police Clerk may support management roles, and a Federal Police Officer might act as an anchor analyst. This analyst serves as a link between Supervision, Management, and Centers, especially during staff turnover in state institutions. The operational areas contain two centers. The Analysis Unit is responsible for intelligence, investigation, and judicial police activities. It is often made up of full-time Civil Police Officers. This Unit includes a Civil Police Chief, who may be full-time or part-time. Other institutions, such as the Penal Police, may have full-time or part-time representatives in this unit. Finally, the Operational Unit handles investigations and launches operations. It is composed of military police officers, typically in enlisted positions, who are assigned exclusively to this work. Other organizations, such as the Penal Police and Federal Highway Police, may also contribute representatives. Their participation may be full-time or occasional, depending on local needs and requirements.

The operationalization of the work at the FICCO base begins with alignment meetings between representatives of the institutions to define priorities and strategies for action. The team’s summary of the definitions, including organizations to be mapped and main objectives and targets to be worked on, is consolidated in an Annual Activity Plan, which is submitted to the public policy governance within the Federal Police at its headquarters in Brasília.

FICCO's technical, operational, administrative, regulatory, and doctrinal subordination within the PF can be detailed as follows:

Technical and operational subordination:

→ Directorate for Investigation and Combating Organized Crime and Corruption (DICOR);

- General Coordination for the Suppression of Drugs, Weapons, Crimes against Property, and Criminal Factions (CGPRE);
 - Coordination for the Suppression of Violent Crimes, Arms Trafficking, Crimes Against Property, and Criminal Factions (CRCV);
 - FICCO Supervision (at least 27).

Administrative subordination:

→ Regional Superintendency (SR/PF);

- Regional Delegates of the Judicial Police (DRPJ);
 - FICCO Supervision (one base per state, with the possibility of additional bases or advanced centers).

Normative and doctrinal subordination in intelligence activities:

→ Police Intelligence Directorate (DIP);

- Police Intelligence Data Analysis Units (UADIP/FICCO).

The size of the dedicated team at a FICCO base can vary, depending on the political-institutional arrangement, and over time, it can range from six to 20 members from different forces, with at least four members from the PF (one delegate, two agents, and one clerk).

Within the broader logic of FICCO's operations, there is a process of "self-demand," as FICCO does not respond to the general public and does not have a collection/liability of cases that would require ongoing procedures in interface with the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judiciary. In this process, the local team, in dialogue with the central coordination of the FICCOs at the PF in Brasília, determines which actors/targets, investigations, and operations should be carried out.

Depending on the type of crime detected, investigations may be consolidated into an inquiry reported at the federal or state level, presided over by a federal or state law enforcement official, as applicable to the relevant legal jurisdiction.

Each month, each FICCO produces and submits to the PF headquarters in Brasília an intelligence report on the identification of criminal factions and the dynamics of organized crime in the area, its main members, as well as a report and accountability on operational activities, such as updates on ongoing investigations and operations in preparation and/or underway, in addition to productivity data from the FICCO base.



FICCO IN PRACTICE: ACTION IN THE AMAZON REGION

As the FBSP has pointed out in the products produced in the course of its program on public security in the Amazon, such as the four editions of *Cartographies of Violence in the Amazon*⁸ and *Governance and Institutional Capacities of Public Security in the Amazon*⁹, the region is characterized by specific geographical, social, political, and economic aspects that pose significant challenges for public security policies. Therefore, in addition to characterizing FICCO's methodology at the national level, we sought to gain a deeper understanding of two Amazonian experiences with FICCO implementation: in the states of Amazonas and Acre. These states were selected due to their relevance as border states in the transnational drug trafficking chain and because of the conditions of access to interlocutors involved in the public policy under discussion.

Amazonas: opportunities for national and international coordination and logistical challenges

At least since 2017, when what became known as the “Compaj massacre” took place—a rebellion at the Anísio Jobim Penitentiary Complex (Compaj) in Manaus that resulted in the deaths of 56 prisoners—the state of Amazonas has been prominent in the dynamics of criminal factions in the country. That year, when Brazil reached its peak homicide rate, it also marked the worsening of the conflict between the two largest national criminal organizations: the Red Command (CV) and the First Capital Command (PCC). Both originated in the prison systems of southeastern states—Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, respectively—but have expanded their presence and influence to more than 20 states, in addition to establishing connections with international criminal networks.

In the case of Amazonas, the Compaj massacre marked the beginning of a process of transformation in the control of the prison system and state territories, with the reduction of the PCC's presence and the transition of influence from the Família do Norte (FDN) – a locally based faction – to the Comando Vermelho, which gradually took center stage in the region's criminal dynamics. The scenario in 2025 shows the consolidation of this process, which culminated in the CV's territorial dominance in the prison system and in almost all of the state's relevant territories, especially the areas bordering Colombia and the so-called “Solimões route.” This route is important because it represents one of the main entry points for cocaine into Brazil, supplying both the domestic consumer market and its flow to other international markets, such as Europe, Asia, and Africa.

It is interesting to note, however, that when FICCO was implemented in Amazonas in 2023, without yet having a physical headquarters, its focus was on environmental crimes, with activities related to the destruction of illegal gold mining dredges and action against criminal networks associated with illegal deforestation. However, in September 2024, there was a change in its strategic objectives towards a more national-level approach, so that crimes involving criminal factions in the state became the focus of FICCO.

The forces that make up FICCO/AM are: the Federal Police, comprising seven professionals, with a FICCO Supervisor in Amazonas; the Civil Police, with one professional; and the Military Police, with two professionals. There

8 Available at: <https://publicacoes.forumseguranca.org.br/communities/ae73bbbc-55dd-45e0-8c3e-d351cfb96cb1>.

9 Available at: <https://forumseguranca.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/relatorio-governanca-capacidades.pdf>.



are, therefore, 11 people working exclusively at the only FICCO base in Amazonas. In addition to the permanent staff based in the capital, Manaus, there are other professionals distributed throughout the interior who can be called upon as needed to participate in specific operations. In these cases, the employees receive daily allowances corresponding to the period of travel and work. Formally, however, the organizations that make up the ACT are: Federal Police, Federal Highway Police, State Secretariat of Public Security, Amazonas Civil Police, Amazonas Military Police, Deputy Executive Secretariat of Intelligence, Secretariat of Penitentiary Administration, and Municipal Secretariat of Security and Social Defense. In relation to other coordination efforts, occasional exchanges are carried out with the Financial Activities Control Council (COAF) and international police forces, such as those of Colombia and Peru.

In terms of structure, FICCO/AM is housed in a building provided by the Federal Police, and material resources are shared by all forces, including vehicles from the Civil Police, Military Police, and the Federal Police itself. According to our interlocutors, the decision to maintain a physical headquarters with a small number of professionals is due to FICCO's operational reach throughout the state. In their assessment, it is more strategic to call on professionals who already work in the interior to participate in specific operations than to keep them allocated at the base in the capital, considering the associated costs and logistics.

Based on this configuration, during a year of operations focused exclusively on criminal factions in the state, FICCO/AM has concentrated on detecting major leaders of criminal organizations and identifying major transnational drug trafficking corridors. In this regard, FICCO/AM's experience has demonstrated the importance of the Solimões¹⁰ route, where the Comando Vermelho faction dominates. FICCO/AM has seized drugs, especially cocaine, in increasingly large quantities, and there has been an increase in confrontations with drug traffickers involved in transporting drug shipments, who are more frequently carrying weapons with greater offensive potential¹¹.

Based on this configuration, during a year of operations focused exclusively on criminal factions in the state, **FICCO/AM** has concentrated on detecting major leaders of criminal organizations and identifying major transnational drug trafficking corridors.

The drug seizure operations carried out by FICCO/AM are seen as a strategy to better understand the networks of relationships, financial flows, and products (such as weapons and drugs) that constitute the dynamics of organizations operating in Amazonas, including their interstate and international connections, based on the study of the shipment, its origin, and its potential recipients¹².

10 An analysis of how the Solimões Route is a relevant space for organized crime can be found at: <https://veja.abril.com.br/brasil/como-o- trafico-transformou-a-amazonia-na-principal-rota-de-exportacao-de-cocaina/>. Accessed on: Oct. 8, 2025.

11 There are reports of the seizure of military weapons, such as an M60 machine gun, caliber 7.62, bearing the insignia of the US Navy, during a FICCO operation. In addition, there are records of seizures of more powerful weapons in the region: https://pm.am.gov.br/portal/noticia/pmam_registra_maior_apree-19272.

12 A single shipment of cocaine may have more than one recipient, which is often indicated by marking the packages with colored tape and different numbers or acronyms, a method of controlling criminal relationships between suppliers, transporters, and recipients.



FICCO/AM analyzes organized crime from two dimensions:

-  territorial control exercised by criminal organizations, whether overt or covert (e.g., symbolic control or control that affects very substantive aspects, such as extortion, among others), and
-  drug trafficking, which is often the crime that precedes money laundering, and for this reason, the intelligence of the Federal Police is so important, especially as criminal organizations expand their geographical and territorial boundaries.

The selection of cases and actors/targets for investigation and operations to be carried out is done collectively by the FICCO/AM team, based on the articulation of the visions and functions of the different forces that comprise it, especially through field activity. In this context, intelligence activity is extremely important, as the identification of a key faction actor in a territory such as Tabatinga, a border town in the state, can help identify other actors who establish connections with the capital, including those operating nationally. The integration between representatives of state forces and federal forces within the FICCO base, respecting the legal powers and responsibilities of each, enables the exchange of information with civil, military, and federal corporations in other states in a much more agile and facilitated manner. This also occurs from an international perspective, with dialogue with professionals working in security institutions in Colombia and Peru. Whereas these exchanges used to be much more institutionalized, with the need to go through the Federal Police's own chains of command, FICCO/AM has made it possible for exchanges to occur simultaneously, collaborating in the investigation of crimes related to criminal factions from a transnational perspective.

The mapping of the CV carried out by FICCO/AM indicates that, despite structuring its activities through territorial “franchises” in neighborhoods, the organization has a “permanent council” in the state, a kind of deliberative and directive body for commercial and disciplinary issues, composed of 13 members. It is interesting to note that all of these “permanent councilors” are from Amazonas, although they do not reside in the state. Reports indicate that they are all located in Rio de Janeiro, operating remotely to facilitate Amazonas' criminal activities, which highlights the complexity of criminal relations in contemporary Brazil. The territorial control exercised by the CV relies on very detailed planning of operations and financial flows, posing a growing threat to communities and even exerting political and electoral influence. Currently, of the 62 municipalities in Amazonas, 60 are controlled by the CV, and only two are controlled by the PCC.

The integration between representatives of state forces and federal forces within the FICCO base, respecting the legal powers and responsibilities of each, enables the exchange of information with civil, military, and federal corporations in other states in a much more agile and facilitated manner.

OPERATION XEQUE-MATE, BY FICCO/AM

One of the primary operations conducted by FICCO in Amazonas is Operation Xeque-Mate. The operation began in September 2024, with the start of work to identify leaders, based on Operations Tower 1, Tower 2, Tower 3, and Tower 4. Through intelligence information, including exchanges with Colombian authorities, it was identified that the main leader of the CV in Amazonas, known as Alan Índio and recognized as the “president” of the state CV, was commanding criminal activities from Colombia, where he resided using a false identity. The investigation conducted by FICCO/AM, based on the seizure of two tons of cocaine, led to the mapping of the associated financial flows and the actors involved. This led to the identification of individuals trusted by the target of the operation who, among other activities, used cryptocurrencies¹³ to launder money from drug trafficking. After a year of investigation, it was possible to map the flow of money—in this case, digital money—and its routes, passing through Colombia, Guarujá/SP, and Rio de Janeiro.

Although the operation did not succeed in arresting Alan Índio, three other people he trusted were arrested, including Cristina Nascimento, Alan’s wife. Operation Xeque-Mate seized and confiscated R\$122 million in assets, both in Manaus, Amazonas, and Guarujá, São Paulo, related to fintechs, front companies, and cryptocurrencies, with the head of the Comando Vermelho¹⁴ playing a central role.



Operation Xeque-Mate, carried out by FICCO/AM. **Photo:** Social Communication of the Federal Police in Amazonas.

13 Tether (USDT), the world’s largest and best-known stablecoin, was the crypto asset used in these transactions.

14 More informations on the Operation can be found at: <https://www.gov.br/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2025/10/ficco-am-desarticula-nucleo-de-comando-do-crime-organizado-no-amazonas>, <https://g1.globo.com/am/amazonas/noticia/2025/10/06/chefe-de-faccao-criminosa-alvo-de-operacao-da-pf-fez-cirurgias-plasticas-para-despistar-policiais-veja-antes-e-depois.ghtml> and at: <https://g1.globo.com/am/amazonas/noticia/2025/10/06/traficantes-colombianos-enviam-drogas-para-facao-no-am-e-recebiam-pagamento-em-criptoativos-diz-pf.ghtml>. Accessed on: Oct. 17, 2025.

CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY FICCO/AM

One of the main challenges for FICCO's operations in Amazonas is the operational resources and high logistical costs involved in moving teams across the vast state territory, which makes local operations more expensive compared to other FICCO state bases. FICCO/AM estimates that travel to an operation in territories further away from Manaus, such as Tabatinga, can cost between R\$30,000.00 and R\$40,000.00 in fuel alone, depending on the characteristics of the aircraft available. This fact justifies the inclusion of an advanced center in Tabatinga in FICCO/AM's strategic planning.

Acre: from identifying leaders to tackling financial crimes

Although small, Acre is a state with a strategic geographical location for criminal activities, especially those associated with transnational drug trafficking, given its border area with Bolivia and Peru, countries with significant cocaine production. As a result, criminal groups active in the region seek to control both trafficking routes and retail drug outlets. Of the 22 municipalities in Acre, 17 have at least part of their territory within the border area. The extent of the forest, its river network, and the road network characterize some of the geographical challenges for public security in the state.

The criminal landscape in Acre is currently characterized by the significant presence of the Comando Vermelho (Red Command), but there is also evidence of activity by the Primeiro Comando da Capital (First Capital Command) and Bonde dos 13 (B13), albeit to a lesser extent, which are facing challenges in containing the growth of the CV in the region. The dispute between these different groups over recent years has intensified clashes with lethal results in the state and its capital.

With this scenario in mind, the primary objective of FICCO/AC was to contain lethal violent conflicts, with a particular emphasis on the capital, Rio Branco. To this end, the strategy adopted was to identify the main leaders of the organized groups operating in the neighborhoods, known as "neighborhood fronts" within the criminal factions, in order to implement discipline and control of drug trafficking in the neighborhoods they seek to control, which are considered important vectors for homicides. This dynamic was disrupted through the work of FICCO/AC, which involved simultaneously combating drug trafficking and tracking and mapping flows, considering the border region that Acre occupies.

With the scenario of lethal violence considered more stable, FICCO/AC is currently preparing to raise the strategic level of intelligence work and investigations, advancing from the "neighborhood fronts" to positions of greater strategic importance within criminal organizations, with a focus on financial flows.

According to FICCO/AC's mapping, the Comando Vermelho controls between 80 and 90% of Acre's municipalities, including most of the capital. Of the 36 main leaders mapped in the state, 32 are already in prison, and the other four are under some form of monitoring, such as electronic ankle bracelets, and are the subject of intelligence attention.



To achieve these strategic objectives, FICCO/AC is now based in a property that was seized during one of its operations in the state, which, with judicial authorization, has become its headquarters. The agencies that are part of FICCO in Acre are: the Federal Police, which coordinates the operation; the Military Police; the Civil Police; and the Penitentiary Administration Institute, with the Penal Police. The Public Prosecutor's Office is also an important partner, although it is not formally represented in FICCO. There is a possibility that the Federal Highway Police will return to the formal composition of FICCO/AC; however, they emphasize that even with the agency's departure from the formal structure, support and contact activities have continued throughout. In terms of human resources, there are two Federal Police professionals assigned exclusively to FICCO/AC, two from the Civil Police, and two from the Military Police, all of whom work full-time. There are professionals located within the state who provide support to operations, including two from the Civil Police and two from the Military Police.

NOTABLE FICCO/AC OPERATIONS

FICCO/AC operation in Paraíba: an example of interstate coordination

In June 2024, in an important example of inter-federative coordination, an operation by FICCO/AC, in conjunction with FICCO/RN and other corporations, led to the arrest of one of the leaders of the Comando Vermelho do Acre, who was a fugitive from justice in Acre and was located in Paraíba, where he lived a luxurious life, residing in a high-end property and owning a luxury car¹⁵. Other arrests of criminals from Acre took place in Paraíba, demonstrating significant connections in the criminal dynamics of interstate drug trafficking and indicating that there are drug supply flows between these states, operated by leaders of the CV in Acre. This case is further evidence of the increasing complexity of the national criminal landscape, which intensifies connections between state networks that transcend state, regional, and international borders. The state needs efficient and effective strategies to respond appropriately, as demonstrated by this coordinated operation.

Sufrágio Operations

Another important action by FICCO/AC was the fight against electoral crimes linked to organized crime, especially in the city of Feijó, in the interior of the state, through Operation *Sufrágio*. At the time of the 2024 mayoral election, “salves” were given by CV leaders seeking to prevent voters from casting a vote for one of the candidates in the election. The operation was conducted in conjunction with the Special Action Group for the Repression of Organized Crime in Acre (GAECO) of the Public Prosecutor's Office in Acre¹⁶. In this operation, which mobilized 50 state and federal public agents, 16 arrest warrants were executed.

15 More information can be found at: <https://ac24horas.com/2024/06/06/pf-prende-conselheiro-do-cv-no-acre-em-mansao-na-paraiba/> and <https://g1.globo.com/pb/paraiba/noticia/2024/06/06/suspeito-de-chefiar-facciao-criminosa-no-acre-e-presos-em-casa-de-luxo-na-paraiba.ghtml>. Accessed on: Oct. 18, 2025.

16 More informations can be found at: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/09/ficco-ac-deflagra-operacao-para-combater-crimes-eleitorais-em-feijo-ac>. Accessed on: Oct. 18, 2025.





Operation Suffrage, carried out by FICCO/AC in Feijó (AC). Photo: Asscom/PFAC.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR FICCOS IN THE AMAZON REGION AND IN BRAZIL: FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

An analysis of the FICCO methodology in Brazil and the experience of its implementation in two Amazonian states reveals that we are facing a significant initiative aimed at countering the increasing influence of criminal organizations, including factions and militias, in various regions of the country. The main strategy consists of coordinating the Federal, Civil, Military, and, in many cases, Criminal Police, with funding from the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, to form investigation and intelligence teams and carry out operations focused exclusively on the actions of criminal factions, with an emphasis on violent crimes and the dynamics of money laundering from drug trafficking.

The coordination of representatives from these different agencies on a territorial basis has enhanced the work that would be carried out by each of them separately, while also adding an important layer of attention to illicit financial flows. In part, the condition for conducting more in-depth investigations, which reach occupants of more strategic positions within criminal organizations, including those who control criminal operations even though they do not reside in the state, is due to the status of the specialized unit, and easier

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access to information and intelligence flows, precisely because it brings together representatives from these different institutions, with different specialties and access to different resources, networks, and databases. This model is more suitable for tackling the most complex criminal organizations currently operating in the country, which in turn are organized on an interstate and international basis, with repercussions not only on drug trafficking but also on other types of crime, in relation to formal markets, public institutions, and the political sphere.

The evidence presented, through the interstate operations highlighted and the criminal scenario mapping data cited, indicates that maintaining and expanding the policy, with cumulative action throughout the country, can contribute to transformations in the country's criminal scenario.

The main challenges can be characterized as institutional, as this policy depends largely on alignment between the federal government, through the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and the Federal Police, as well as state governments, which manage the Civil, Military, and Penal Police. These alignments are consolidated in Technical Cooperation Agreements and are financially supported by resources from the National Public Security Fund, which is managed by the MJSP. These challenges directly impact the availability of personnel to work in the field, including the qualifications of professionals and their exclusive availability.

Another challenge concerns the greater visibility of the Federal Police compared to other agencies in the context of disseminating the results of operations, which often causes friction between the agencies. One of the strategies to mitigate these problems has been to standardize communication through press *releases*, which are distributed equally among the agencies, as well as to standardize the visual communication of operations, highlighting all forces together or highlighting the FICCO logo.

Specifically in the Amazon context, logistical challenges are quite significant, especially in states with larger territories, more extensive forest areas, and a more extensive waterway network, which often necessitates the use of aircraft for operational travel, making operations difficult and expensive. As alternatives to address these challenges, strategies are being considered to establish bases or advanced centers in strategic cities, or even the dedication, exclusive or not, of professionals located in municipalities other than the location of the state FICCO base.

FICCO it has established itself as a public policy with the potential to coordinate between agencies and **improve investigative and intelligence processes**, thereby enhancing the achievement of its strategic objectives against criminal organizations and reducing indicators of violence.

It is also worth noting that, although FICCO is a relatively recent policy at the national level, it has established itself as a public policy with the potential to coordinate between agencies and improve investigative and intelligence processes, thereby enhancing the achievement of its strategic objectives against criminal organizations and reducing indicators of violence. However, it is necessary to advance in understanding the results indicators achieved at the national level, the financial investment indicators, as well as in assessing the impacts that the policy has actually had on criminal organizations.



Finally, it is important to note that the existence of an initiative that focuses on integration, that values the exchange of information, intelligence, and qualified and strategically directed investigation, with an emphasis on illegal financial flows from criminal organizations, is not trivial in a national political-institutional context marked by discourses and practices that focus solely on the military confrontation of organized crime, and the toughening of prison sentences that disregard the necessary reforms in the prison system, which together have only strengthened criminal organizations over the last 30 years.



Initiative 07

Indigenous self-protection initiatives in the Amazon: approaches to emerging initiatives

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INTRODUCTION

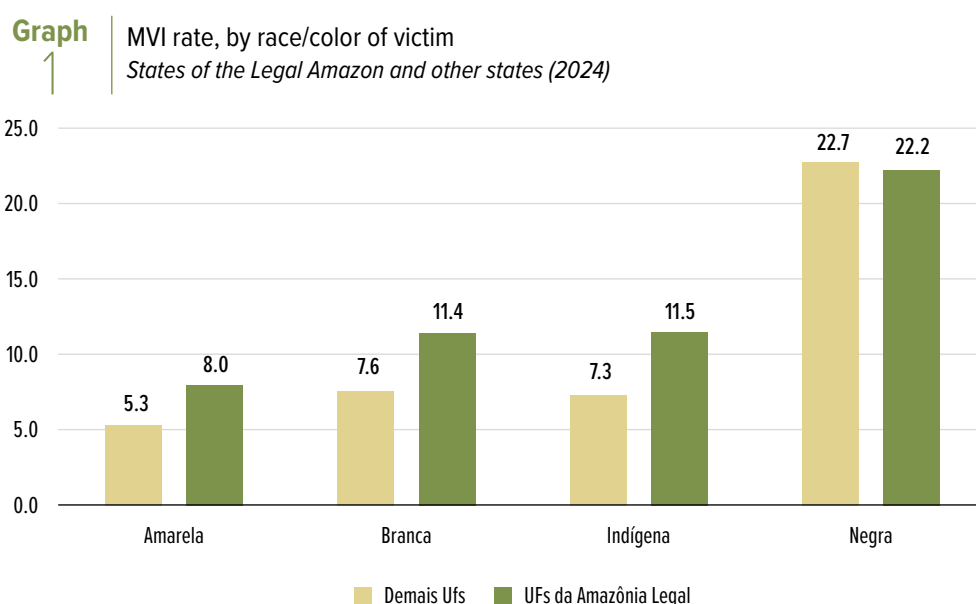
The 1988 Federal Constitution enshrined indigenous rights in Brazil's democratic history, which had been demanded by movements since the beginning of the decade. Although considered property of the Union, several traditionally occupied lands were recognized as permanent possession and exclusive use of the indigenous peoples. Identity and cultural rights were also enshrined, and the judicial participation of the Public Prosecutor's Office and indigenous communities in their defense was ensured. Until then, these individuals had been viewed from an assimilationist perspective, that is, as progressive integration into Brazilian society as a whole, having suffered from historical marginalization and the systematic denial of rights (Araújo Júnior, 2018: 176). In other words, since the transition to democracy, it has been widely recognized that indigenous people are Brazilian citizens, but they are still indigenous.

The principle of the specificity of indigenous peoples was reinforced when Brazil signed Convention No. 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989). This was ratified by Legislative Decree No. 143 of June 20, 2002, giving it the force of law. The Convention expanded the right to self-determination and socio-political organization for indigenous peoples. The rule of law has committed to creating and expanding public policies for indigenous peoples over the past two decades, particularly in areas such as public security, basic education, and primary healthcare. Yet, indigenous public safety was left out of this map.



This absence is starkly reflected in the indicators of lethal violence. Data from the latest edition of Cartographies of Violence in the Amazon, compiled from records from the Public Security Secretariats, show that in 2024, the rate of intentional violent deaths (IVD) among indigenous people in the Legal Amazon was 11.5 per 100,000 inhabitants - 57.7% higher than in the rest of the country (7.3). This is the largest disparity observed among the racial and ethnic groups analyzed. The difference reveals that, even with advances in education and health policies, indigenous peoples remain more exposed to lethal violence.

The comparison between race/color groups reinforces this picture, summarized in the graph below:



Source: State Secretariats of Public Security and/or Social Defense; Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics; Brazilian Forum on Public Security.

The field of public safety for indigenous populations is still a historical failure by the Brazilian state. Although the democratic state broadly recognizes indigenous rights, it has been slow to ensure the human, territorial, environmental, and community protection of the many ethnic groups spread across the country and concentrated in the nine states of the Legal Amazon. More than half of the 1,693,535 indigenous people in the 2022 Census (IBGE)—or 0.83% of the nation's population—live in the Amazon on lands that are often extensive and demarcated but little known and poorly protected by the State. As Manuela Carneiro da Cunha notes, in the 19th century, the so-called indigenous question shifted from labor to land (Cunha, 1987, 2012; cf. Souza Lima; Barreto Filho, 2005). Thus, these populations remain under constant threat from the exploitation of water and mineral resources, as well as agribusiness, whose political representatives act in a coordinated manner in the National Congress.

This historical shortcoming is present at various levels of public authority. Legislation and regulations are insufficient in this regard, as are the executive branch's efforts to develop public security policies that encompass indigenous territories¹. The issue has been absent from public security plans (at the federal and state levels), and there is a notable lack of coordination, guidelines, protocols, technical cooperation agreements, and training and capacity

¹ In the legislative sphere, the influence of the ruralist caucus in Congress has accelerated the passage of bills that not only deny rights but, in some cases, criminalize indigenous populations in ways that border on genocidal policies (Baines, 2015).



building for security agents. There has been a lack of transparency regarding the results of police operations and the gathering of evidence, and there is very little representation of indigenous people in the police forces in regions where these populations are very present (cf. Castro and Costa, 2023).

At the judicial level, multi-normativity or legal pluralism is either episodic or absent, and the stigmatization, if not criminalization, of indigenous individuals and communities persists in both state sectors and Brazilian society (Cunha and Barbosa, 2018). In Brazil, the understanding of the “indigenous issue” as a federal matter seems to freeze or postpone co-responsibilities at various levels of public policy for indigenous security. Federal agencies justify their actions on the basis of guaranteeing “collective rights,” which are distinguished from “individual” rights. This is a position often adopted by the courts and the Public Prosecutor’s Office, but which, as we know from the tradition of anthropological studies, makes no sense in indigenous worldviews.

In Brazil, the understanding of the “indigenous issue” as a federal matter seems to freeze or postpone co-responsibilities at various levels of public policy for indigenous security.

At the same time, indigenous communities have reported feeling lost and neglected by the state when they report persistent violence (cf. Bertuol, 2024). Leaders are often asked to produce evidence of crimes to justify the actions of public security agencies. These include the Federal Police, Civil Police, or Military Police on indigenous lands where crime is taking place. There is a clear contrast between the complexity of crime in the Amazon, as shown in recent reports, and the willingness of public authorities to implement effective security policies (Durão et al., 2024, 2025; Brazilian Forum on Public

Security, 2022a, 2022b, 2023, 2024a, 2024b, 2025; Funari, 2024; Lima, 2022, 2023; Santos et al., 2024; Unicef Brazil and Brazilian Forum on Public Security, 2025).

The structural vulnerability of these people has worsened over the last decade. Since 2015, there has been a clear rise in criminal factions expanding their activities in the Amazon region. In addition, between 2018 and 2022, the federal government reduced its support for state agencies, increasing the historical vulnerability of indigenous peoples in the face of economic expansion. For example, at the 51st Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of Roraima, a letter of demands was sent to the Brazilian government with the theme Defending the Territory is Guaranteeing the Life of Indigenous Peoples². It was declared that it was necessary for indigenous peoples to assume the role that the state should play. The murders of two human rights activists in Javari are not only an example of the escalation of conflicts in indigenous territories during this period, but also a warning to self-organized indigenous groups to prepare for defense.

From a climate perspective, tensions are rising. Climate change is drying up rivers, transforming agricultural activities, and accelerating food shortages³. Compounding this is the rise of complex environmental and extractive crime, such as deforestation, illegal mining, land grabbing, invasions, and the establishment of housing developments on

2 Source: <https://cimi.org.br/2022/03/cir-realiza-assembleia-e-lanca-carta-ao-estado-brasileiro/>. Accessed on: 10/10/2025.

3 Source: <https://g1.globo.com/am/amazonas/noticia/2024/04/25/amazonas-tem-mais-da-metade-da-populacao-vivendo-em-inseguranca-alimentar-aponta-ibge.ghtml>. Accessed on: 10/10/2025.



traditional territories, in addition to powerful drug trafficking activities that strike at the heart of indigenous villages (CIMI, 2018, 2024; CDESC, 2023; Crisis Group Latin America, 2024). Economies characterized by a high level of informality and state contributions, which is typical of the entire Amazon region (Moreira Salles, 2022), are now being joined by new forms of exploitation. Faced with this scenario, the communities themselves, in a more or less organized manner, have been creating and restoring voluntary groups for territorial, environmental, and community self-protection, which we generically refer to as indigenous self-protection groups.

PUBLIC SECURITY *BY AND FOR* INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The practices of *ethnomonitoring* and self-protection developed by indigenous peoples in Brazil have ancient roots, linked to the defense of territory, environmental observation, and the preservation of sociocultural integrity within communities. However, in the face of increasing invasions and the weakening of oversight and protection agencies over the last decade, these initiatives have been reconfigured and expanded, incorporating new technologies, institutional alliances, and surveillance methodologies. However, these phenomena are still poorly documented and relatively invisible to the Brazilian state itself. It is in this sense that we can understand the emergence of these self-protection measures as being associated with the continuing and growing human insecurity in the most diverse indigenous regions⁴.

There are no official records of the number or even the definition of indigenous voluntary self-protection groups. As such, it is difficult to calculate the true extent of the phenomenon. FUNAI itself has no information on this subject. If we consider that there are 278 distinct peoples in Brazil, speaking more than 150 different languages, it is likely that most of these peoples have a large number of locally organized indigenous defense groups.⁵ The distribution of indigenous peoples in villages and the situation of violence to which they are exposed varies according to the characteristics of the regions. For example, some peoples of the Upper Xingu may have only one main village, which concentrates the entire community. On the other hand, numerous peoples with large territories may have dozens or even hundreds of villages. The Guarani (Mbya, Kaiowá, and Nandeva), the most populous people in Brazil, have many villages scattered across several states in Brazil and neighboring countries. The Yanomami live in a vast area between Brazil and Venezuela, maintaining a large number of villages.

The Ticuna people of Amazonas, also a highly populous group, have more than 200 communities distributed along the rivers (especially in the Middle and Upper Solimões), including those on the border with Peru and Colombia (Cortés et al., 2020; Rapozo et al., 2020). The Ticuna have had a strong missionary presence, bilingual education (Almeida, 2005; Abdala, 2014), rubber tapping, and the presence of representatives of the guardian state, which for decades have been involved in the political and economic life of the communities in various ways (Pacheco de

4 When the concept of *human security* was defined in the post-war period, it was made clear that human life should be at the forefront of states' defense concerns. The concept of human security emerged after the Cold War and was promoted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It was argued that states should focus their concerns on individuals, their protection, and human development, but taking into account that individuals can also be active and dynamic actors in security, not just victims or witnesses of violence and insecurity (Rothschild, 1995; Burke, 2002; Hylland-Eriksen, 2010).

5 The data collection basis for this text is the Extension Program "MAGÜTA Community, environmental, and food security in the Upper Solimões region, Amazonas," coordinated by Susana Durão and supported by the Dean of Extension, Sports, and Culture at UNICAMP. Several extension activities have been carried out in the Ticuna villages since 2023, involving a team of 12 indigenous students enrolled in UNICAMP courses, with the special participation of Professor Cristina Larrain Manzo. The project "Magüta. Justice, Security, and Violence in the Upper Solimões" constituted the research branch of the Program, which will run until 2030, based at the Center for Public Policy Studies. We collected a series of first-hand data, including information on indigenous security policies and practices in the region. Research files were also compiled on various indigenous self-protection groups, focusing on cases in Amazonas.



Oliveira, 1987, 1988, 2015, 2021). The size of these villages varies greatly, ranging from 200 people to almost indigenous cities with more than 9,000 inhabitants, which face very serious situations of violence. Thus, the situation of indigenous communities in international border areas is more complex, especially with countries that produce cocaine for the transnational market. The Brazil-Peru-Colombia tri-border area is certainly one of the most dangerous in the country. On the one hand, the Ticuna have communities with urban characteristics and a population that continues to grow. Cross-border commercial traffic between the Ticunas is extremely intense, challenging what Ulrich Beck (2005) referred to as “methodological nationalism.” On the other hand, there are “isolated” and “recently contacted” indigenous peoples, such as those in the Yanomami and Javari Valley indigenous lands, who are at risk of disappearing from the map if external invasions of all kinds continue.

Indigenous self-protection groups operate in what we might call the infralegal sphere, in that many of them seek state recognition, even if this recognition is slow in coming. Meanwhile, in general, they organize themselves into relatively informal groups, forming self-managed indigenous associations or acting in line with indigenous policy with non-governmental support (cf. Melatti, 2007: 279).

Modalities of indigenous self-protection in the Amazon

However, building generalizable models is challenging, given the diversity of ecological, historical, and political contexts of each people and region. Despite these differences, there is growing convergence between community monitoring experiences, resulting from coordination between indigenous associations and leaders, government institutions, and civil society organizations. This coordination has favored the formation of interethnic and interinstitutional networks for territorial protection, based on the exchange of traditional knowledge and technical management tools. In a preliminary, provisional systematization, we can classify the modalities of indigenous protection into three types: i) ethno-environmental monitoring (monitoring and surveillance brigades); ii) territorial protection and legal self-defense (legal self-defense); iii) community policing and resolution of common crimes (indigenous guards). These three dimensions are often interlinked in indigenous security and territorial management practices; however, they have distinct focuses, actors, and foundations. We will differentiate the modalities analytically, but it is essential to keep in mind that they intersect and are often confused with one another⁶.

 **“Monitoring and Surveillance Brigades.”** Ethno-environmental monitoring focuses on territory and the environment. The goal is to observe, record, and protect the sustainable use of natural resources and traditional territory in the face of invasions, environmental degradation, and illegal activities (mining, fishing, logging, drug trafficking). One example is the environmental surveillance brigades that map invaded or deforested areas and record critical points for reporting and collective action. The activities often rely on surveillance and documentation conducted by indigenous people, sometimes with the support of NGOs, universities, or agencies such as IBAMA, FUNAI, or COIAB (Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon). They are based on traditional knowledge and technology (GPS, drones, georeferencing applications, participatory reports). In this regard, data and evidence are generated that strengthen indigenous territorial and environmental management, while also sup-

6 Based on this typology, the Brazilian Forum on Public Security aims to produce, throughout 2026, a comprehensive survey on the number of indigenous self-protection groups in Brazil, with an emphasis on the Amazon, and the strategies they adopt.

porting legal actions and public policies. This is preventive work and environmental care, linked to territorial autonomy and traditional management (without a policing character).



“Legal self-defense.” Territorial protection and legal self-defense focus on collective rights and the preservation of territorial integrity. The goal is to ensure the defense of the land, the community, and the rights recognized constitutionally and by ILO Convention 169. The actions involve a political and legal dimension, including territorial demarcation, contesting invasions, filing complaints with the Federal Public Ministry, and developing consultation and legal defense protocols. These may include physical protection strategies, such as community barriers, surveillance posts, and indigenous patrols, especially in areas of conflict. Legal self-defense refers to the indigenous capacity-building process of understanding and utilizing the law (constitutional, environmental, and international) as an instrument of resistance and vindication. Territorial protection actions are often coordinated with support networks, such as the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI), the Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA), and the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB), among others.



“Indigenous Guards.” Community policing and the resolution of common crimes focus on internal order and daily coexistence. The goal is to maintain internal security, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and deal with infractions and common crimes (domestic violence, theft, drug use, fights, etc.) within the community. This type of policing is carried out by indigenous community security organizations, often with associations, uniforms, their own spaces or “police stations,” and regular patrols. They perform a hybrid function between social mediation and policing: they resolve minor conflicts internally and refer serious crimes to state authorities (Civil, Military, or Federal Police). They may use their own community justice procedures, reconciling traditional values with state rules. These policing activities differ from environmental monitoring and self-defense in that they focus on day-to-day internal security, rather than territorial or legal defense.

Let us now examine some notable examples of indigenous self-protection, either due to their consistency and visibility or their enduring nature over time.

JAVARI VALLEY SURVEILLANCE TEAM (EVU/UNIVAJA) AND FOREST GUARDIANS: ANALYSIS OF TWO CASES

- Javari Valley Surveillance Team (EVU/UNIVAJA): active in a triple border region (Brazil–Peru–Colombia), where threats related to drug trafficking and illegal mining predominate;
- Guardians of the Forest (Guajajara): located in the Arariboia Indigenous Territory (MA), an area under pressure from logging and land grabbing, in an area of illicit economic expansion due to restricted land access.

Although similar in their principles—both combine ethno-environmental monitoring, the use of observation technologies (GPS, drones, satellite imagery), and community mobilization—these initiatives operate in different socio-political contexts. In the Javari Valley, the logic of territorial ethno-monitoring prevails, focusing on continuous and preventive observation of threats to ensure security. In contrast, in Arariboia, the emphasis is on active territorial



self-protection, characterized by immediate responses to invasions in the absence of the State and the particular violence of the invader.

This difference highlights a sensitive issue: indigenous self-protection often arises as a response to state omission and, in some cases, involves tensions and risks of confrontation. Thus, while expressing legitimate forms of community sovereignty and defense of life, these experiences reveal the urgency of public policies that recognize, strengthen, and institutionalize indigenous leadership in the management and protection of territories.

Javari Valley Surveillance Team of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley – EVU/UNIVAJA

The Vale do Javari Indigenous Territory (TIVJ) is the second largest IT in the country and was approved in 2001, with an area of 8.554 million hectares. The territory is inhabited by the Kanamari, Kulina Pano, Marubo, Matis, and Matsés peoples, as well as two recently contacted peoples—the Korubo and Tsohom-dyapa—and constitutes the region with the highest concentration of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation on the planet, with nine confirmed records and six under study.

The TIVJ is situated in an area of dense equatorial forest with high biodiversity, traversed by a complex hydrographic network comprising the Jaquirana, Javari, Curuçá, Quixito, Ituí, Itaquai, Jandiatuba, and Jutai rivers, among other tributaries. Located in the triple border region between Brazil, Peru, and Colombia, the territory is impacted by various illicit activities—drug trafficking, illegal mining, hunting, and fishing, biopiracy, and logging—which, often associated with each other, have devastating effects on the environmental balance, the lives of communities, and the safety of indigenous leaders, public servants, human rights defenders, communicators, and environmentalists.

The murder of indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips in June 2022 revealed to the national and international community the intensification of violence and the growing pressure of transnational organized crime on indigenous territories. Bruno Pereira, one of the main supporters of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (UNIVAJA), was a central figure in strengthening the actions of the UNIVAJA Surveillance Team (EVU), whose trajectory came to symbolize the resistance and organizational capacity of the peoples of the Javari Valley in the face of persistent threats.

Created in 2008, UNIVAJA is the main coordinating body for the indigenous peoples of the region and has consolidated a historic process of collective organization that began in the 1980s, focusing on the defense of the rights, territories, and ways of life of the Kanamari, Korubo, Kulina, Marubo, Matís, Mayuruna, and Tsohom Dyapa peoples, as well as peoples in voluntary isolation, whose presence in the territory constitutes the world's largest concentration of this population group.

UNIVAJA's history is marked by resistance to invasions, threats, and predatory exploitation of natural resources. Its work is also characterized by the formation of alliances with national and international partners, expanding its capacity for territorial protection and political advocacy. Currently, UNIVAJA is a landmark in strengthening indigenous autonomy and defending the forest, life, and the unique ways of life of the peoples of the Javari Valley.



In 2024, UNIVAJA received international recognition when it was awarded the Equator Prize, a program promoted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The award highlighted the organization's work in protecting the people of the Javari Valley and preserving their territory at a time of great challenges for indigenous communities. This recognition symbolizes UNIVAJA's relevance and ongoing dedication to defending the culture, rights, and survival of indigenous peoples.

The UNIVAJA Surveillance Team (EVU) was established in 2020 by indigenous people from the Javari Valley, with the goal of protecting the territory and enhancing local autonomy in environmental and territorial management. Since then, it has carried out more than 15 field missions, each lasting an average of 30 days, covering the Itaquai, Branco, Middle Javari, and Pardo rivers.

The EVU structure comprises six regional teams, each consisting of 16 members, as well as an operational team comprising more experienced members who serve as instructors and leaders in the field. In total, 119 people are dedicated to monitoring and protection activities in the Javari Valley.

Among the main actions of the EVU, the following stand out:

- Monitoring and cleaning expeditions of demarcation lines and control trails;
- River surveillance, using boats on rivers and lakes;
- Surveillance using new technologies, such as satellite imagery, GPS, drones, and other resources;
- Monitoring flights over areas that are difficult to access;
- Exchanges with other indigenous initiatives, strengthening cooperation networks and the exchange of experiences.

The creation of EVU was motivated by the advance of illegal activities in the Javari Valley territory, such as predatory fishing, illegal hunting, mining, logging, and the presence of transnational criminal organizations, which threaten the environmental integrity and safety of indigenous communities. EVU's work represents a milestone in the territorial defense of the Javari Valley, combining traditional knowledge, technological innovation, and organized collective action.



Table 1 Modalities of indigenous self-protection: Ethno-Environmental Monitoring Group
Surveillance Team of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (EVU)

Modalities of indigenous self-protection	
Entity	Surveillance Team of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (EVU)
Form of self-protection	Ethno-Environmental Monitoring Group
Area of territories	8,544,000 (ha)
Estimated population	6,317
Etnias contactadas	- Katukina language family: Kanamari and Tsohom-dyapa. - Pano language family: Korubo, Kulina, Marubo, Matis, Matsés.
Isolated	Isolated groups of Alto Jutai, Isolated groups of Igarapé Alerta, Isolated groups of Igarapé Amburus, Isolated groups of Igarapé Cravo, Isolated groups of Igarapé Flecheira, Isolated groups of Igarapé Inferno, Isolated groups of Igarapé Lambança, Isolated groups of Igarapé Nauá, Isolated tribes of Igarapé Pedro Lopes, Isolated tribes of Igarapé São José, Isolated tribes of Igarapé São Salvador, Isolated tribes of Jandiatuba, Isolated tribes of Rio Bóia/Curuena, Isolated tribes of Rio Coari, Isolated tribes of Rio Esquerdo, Isolated tribes of Rio Itaquai, Isolated tribes of Rio Pedra, Isolated tribes of Rio Quixito, Isolated Korubo tribes.
Main threats	Hunters, loggers, fishermen, farmers, drug traffickers, and miners.
State	Amazonas (AM)
Border area	Peru
Logistics modes	Rivers
Main logistics means	Javari and Jutai river basins
Biome	Amazon (100%)
Reference municipalities	Atalaia do Norte
Notable events	- Death of Funai employee and indigenous affairs specialist Maxciel Pereira dos Santos in 2019. - Death of indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips in June 2022, by riverine communities involved in illegal fishing and drug trafficking.

Source: Own elaboration.

Guardians of the Forest – Arariboia Indigenous Territory

The Arariboia Indigenous Territory (TIARA) is located in the state of Maranhão, covering the municipalities of Amarante do Maranhão, Arame, Bom Jesus das Selvas, Buriticupu, Santa Luzia, and Grajaú, and has been officially recognized since 1990. It is traditionally inhabited by the Guajajara (Tenetehara) people and has a confirmed presence of the isolated indigenous Awá ethnic group. Both belong to the Tupi-Guarani linguistic group. In total, there are 10,318 people distributed across 230 villages. The Guajajara are one of the most numerous indigenous peoples in Brazil and inhabit more than ten Indigenous Lands on the eastern edge of the Amazon (all in Maranhão), mainly in the regions of the Pindaré, Grajaú, Mearim, and Zutiua rivers.

The Guardians of the Forest emerged in the early 2000s as a direct response to the advance of invasions and violence within the Arariboia Indigenous Territory. After the 2007 massacre that resulted in the death of Tomé Guajajara, the leaders gathered at a meeting of Cocalitia (Council of Chiefs and Leaders of the Arariboia Indigenous Ter-



ritory) formalized the creation of the group, with the purpose of monitoring the territory, recording illegal activities, and taking action with the relevant public authorities.

Currently, the Arariboia Indigenous Territory has more than 150 villages organized into nine regions, each with about six Guardians. The collective combines traditional knowledge with modern technological resources, utilizing GPS, cameras, trackers, and communication systems to monitor and record routes used for illegal logging and timber transportation.

Between 2000 and 2019, 43 Guajajara indigenous people were murdered in Maranhão, 12 of them within the Arariboia Indigenous Territory. In 2016, according to data from the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI), 25% of all indigenous deaths in the country occurred in Arariboia, highlighting the centrality of the territorial conflict and the risks taken by the Guardians in defense of the territory.

Security and Defense Plan for Forest Guardians

The Security and Defense Plan for Indigenous Guardians is structured around eight complementary axes, which combine prevention, protection, response, and reconstruction strategies. Its objective is to guarantee the physical and cultural security of the communities, protecting the territory against invasions and external threats, while respecting the autonomy and constitutional rights of indigenous peoples. Among the planned actions are:

- a) Prevention and surveillance: creation of community barriers, audible and visual warning systems, and periodic patrols in vulnerable areas.
- b) Risk mapping: identification and recording of clandestine routes, critical points, and suspicious activities.
- c) Response to invasions: prioritization of non-violence, probative registration of invaders, and activation of public forces.
- d) Legal protection: formalization of complaints to the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office and use of legal instruments (repossession, precautionary measures).
- e) Training and technology: training in indigenous rights, first aid, the use of GPS, and drones.

Although the plan values nonviolent resistance, indigenous autonomy, and public visibility of threats, it recognizes that community organization and cohesion are the main mechanisms for territorial protection. In addition, it integrates traditional practices and knowledge, such as protective rituals conducted by shamans and spiritual leaders aimed at collective strengthening, as well as the documentation of traditions and oral narratives, which serve as forms of symbolic resistance and cultural affirmation.

In terms of recent achievements by the Guardians of the Forest, the following can be mentioned:

- Expansion of community connectivity (internet in 4 fixed and 1 mobile regional offices) – Fundo Casa.



- Organizational strengthening and structuring of regional offices – Fundo Casa.
- Implementation of the Arariboia Ethno-Environmental Support and Protection Base (BAPE) – Awá.
- Construction of the Ka'aiwar Headquarters, with support from Survival International.
- Implementation of Guardian acoustic monitoring.
- Creation of the Volunteer Forest Guardians Brigade – Fundo Casa.
- Expansion to eight regions with organized groups of Guardians.
- Participation in the Gurupi Mosaic.
- International action at the IACHR, in partnership with COIAB, resulting from complaints by the Guardians.
- Active contribution to the removal processes coordinated by FUNAI, MPF, and MPI.

Table 2 Modalities of indigenous self-protection: Territorial Protection and Legal Self-Defense
Guardians of the Araribóia Territory

Modalities of indigenous self-protection	
Entity	Guardians of the Araribóia Territory
Form of self-protection	Territorial Protection and Legal Self-Defense
Area of territories	413,000 (ha)
Estimated population	10,318
Ethnic groups contacted	Tupi-Guarani language family: Awa Guajá and Guajajara
Isolated	Isolated Awá
Main threats	Hunters, loggers, land grabbers, and squatters.
State	Maranhão (MA)
Border Strip	Not applicable
Logistics modes	Rivers and roads (MA-006, MA-122)
Main logistics means	Mearim River Basin
Biome	Amazon (93.63%); Cerrado (6.37%)
Reference municipalities	Amarante do Maranhão
Other surrounding municipalities	Arame, Bom Jesus das Selvas, Buriticupu, Grajaú, Santa Luzia
Notable events	Paulo Paulino Guajajara, 26, was killed in an alleged ambush by illegal loggers in the Arariboia Indigenous Territory in November 2019.

Source: Own elaboration.



CASES OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SECURITY IN THE UPPER AND MIDDLE SOLIMÕES

Community security of Umariáçu I and II, SEGCUM (municipality of Tabatinga, Amazonas)

SEGCUM is part of a group of indigenous groups that exist and are expanding throughout the communities of the Upper and Middle Solimões. Although SEGCUM operates locally, with almost no external support and relying on volunteers whose primary activity is agriculture, it has persisted since 2017, when it underwent reorganization. They meet every day to mediate conflicts and try to stop threats that plague the communities, and tend to be increasingly complex and frequent due to their proximity to urban areas. SEGCUM is characterized by dedicating most of its time to community safety. The cross-border region between Brazil, Colombia, and Peru is among the most dangerous regions in Brazil, with the Solimões River route being one of the largest drug trafficking networks in the world. However, highly armed factions are increasingly entering communities and transforming life and socio-family relationships, adding to the already prominent circulation of distilled alcoholic beverages and the trafficking of drugs with high toxic potential and physical dependence.

SEGCUM and other police-type groups combine aspects of the cosmological tradition of indigenous socio-political organization in villages with a history of “white” influences due to the presence of government and military officials on the border – the Solimões Border Command/8th Jungle Infantry Battalion (CFSOL/8º BIS), a Brazilian Army unit with more than 500 military personnel on permanent duty. SEGCUM is composed almost exclusively of indigenous people and works on a completely voluntary basis, with very little external support. Among many activities, the self-appointed security guards conduct regular patrols and rounds in the villages, resolve minor criminal issues, refer serious cases to the state police, and clean up and check for invasions and environmental crimes within the demarcated areas.

SEGCUM is a modern version of the former PIASOL, the Indigenous Police of the Upper Solimões. In the 2000s, PIASOL had a contingent of more than 1,500 volunteer security guards spread across dozens of villages in the Upper and Middle Solimões. Today, SEGCUM comprises 35 volunteers and conducts security activities in the village of Umariáçu. In general, the chief and his advisors collaborate with these security guards to maintain a certain social order in the villages.

Other smaller groups operate in Ticuna communities, both in municipalities in the Middle and Upper Solimões. All of them report enormous difficulty in dealing with the various forms of violence that are becoming increasingly serious in the communities as a result of the increase in drug trafficking, piracy, timber theft, and other threats. In the communities, the most vulnerable groups are young people and women.

Among the actions carried out are:

- a) Prevention and border surveillance: cleaning and checking the areas bordering the demarcated areas and restoring the demarcation signs of the indigenous land (tri-annual inspections, with the support of FUNAI);



- b) Writing reports and sending crime complaints in the communities to FUNAI;
- c) Response to the sale of alcohol and drugs in the community: prioritizing guidance, but sometimes with apprehension of the trafficker, drugs, and money, and referral to the state police.
- d) Responding to theft and robbery in the community: prioritizing guidance, but sometimes apprehending the person, with the possibility of detention for up to 24 hours and negotiation of punishment with families.
- e) Response to invasions: seeking support from FUNAI, as volunteers lack the capacity to respond directly.
- f) Organization of regular night patrols from Wednesday to Sunday and permanent occupation of the mini-police station;
- g) Use of equipment such as uniforms (created by SEGCUM), combat boots, batons, radio communicators, and flashlights;
- h) Legal protection: formalization of complaints to the Federal Prosecutor's Office;
- i) Training and technology: training with the Tabatinga Municipal Guard in preventive property security, first aid, radio use, and organizing the group into shifts and patrols.

Community protection groups with characteristics similar to SEGCUM exist in Kokama villages in the municipality of Tefé, in the Middle Solimões region, on lands that have not yet been demarcated. This is the case of the voluntary indigenous groups operating in Porto Praia de Baixo, with 600 people and 120 families. This community has a Forest Guard, a volunteer team that meets periodically to conduct environmental monitoring within the boundaries of the claimed indigenous area. In the same location, there is the so-called Indigenous Municipal Guard (GM), which is subcontracted by the city government. The group has seven security guards and deals with situations of theft, fights, and drug users caught in the act within the community. When necessary, the community's GM requests assistance from guards in neighboring communities and asks for transportation support from SESAI (Indigenous Health) health teams, which have access to ferries. Depending on the level of danger posed by the conflict or crime, the indigenous guards communicate directly with the patrol bases and the chief of police responsible for the Municipal Guard in the municipality of Tefé. The municipality of Coari is home to the Anzol base, from which the Federal Police operated in Amazonas, and the Arpão bases, which have been the focus of state governments in combating environmental crimes and drug trafficking on the river. These also often operated with support and information provided by indigenous self-protection groups.



table
3

Types of indigenous self-protection: Community policing
SEGCUM – Umariáçu Community Security

Forms of indigenous self-protection	
Entity	SEGCUM – Umariáçu Community Security
Form of self-protection	Community policing
Area of territories	4,855,000 (ha), area approved in 1998
Estimated population	8,000
Ethnic groups contacted	Majority Ticuna population Language family: Ticuna.
Main threats	Sale and consumption of trafficked drugs; violence among young people; domestic violence; fraud; theft; robbery; piracy; illegal fishing; loggers
State	Amazonas (AM)
Border area	Peru and Colombia
Logistics modes	Rivers
Main logistics means	Upper Solimões River basins
Biome	Amazon (100%)
Reference municipalities	Tabatinga
Notable events	- Deaths of Funai employees over the years. - Death of a SEGCUM volunteer in 2018 and constant threats to the lives of leaders and security guards by drug traffickers from the Comando Vermelho and other factions in Tabatinga.

Source: Own elaboration.

WHAT INDIGENOUS SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS HAVE IN COMMON

In general, the indigenous self-defense groups that have been most resilient over time have some type of infrastructure, such as headquarters, an office, or even “mini police stations,” as in the case of SEGCUM. In addition, these groups tend to be formally constituted (as associations, NGOs, etc.). Even without the proper legal framework to perform security functions, many of these groups create written regulations in Portuguese, standard operating procedures, and even systems for recording incidents and reports.

Most have an internal social structure for distributing responsibilities and a hierarchical definition of functions, just like any other association. Most self-defense groups also follow the logic of moral authority recognized in the communities. Most volunteers are men, although the presence of women in the defense of the territory and communities is increasingly noticeable. Older men, known as “family fathers,” hold a certain ascendancy and preference in occupying important positions within the groups, at least in the cases of the Ticuna and Kokama.

It is essential to note that volunteers design and create their own insignia and uniforms, and in most cases, they also carry batons, basic safety accessories, and walkie-talkies. Groups that monitor environmental crimes in large forest

areas have access to control platforms and sophisticated technological equipment to overcome the enormous difficulty and investment required for state environmental inspection and control agencies to monitor these regions (cf. Neves et al, 2016: 46). The geography of the Amazon has a high impact on the government's inability to provide security. In this context, it is essential to note that most groups seek formal recognition from the state, as well as support for training and capacity building to enhance their work.

CONTRASTS BETWEEN MODALITIES

Indigenous environmental and territorial defense organizations, in addition to having greater access to sophisticated technologies, receive considerable external support with national and international funding, as well as greater attention from the state, indigenous organizations, and human and environmental rights activists. These groups work with civil society organizations that advise them and, at key moments, can promote media coverage and political and legal negotiations.

The municipal politicization of indigenous self-protection groups may pose a risk to the autonomy of this community policing work, which the Brazilian state does not recognize and for which it has no defined alternatives.

This line of action is the one most supported by the State. It was in this spirit that the principles of Bill No. 2,936/2022 were created, aimed at regulating indigenous environmental and territorial management activities (awaiting review), authored by Joenia Wapichana (REDE/RR). The Vale do Javari Protection Plan (2024) was also activated, involving coordinated efforts between federal government agencies, FUNAI, the Federal Police, and IBAMA, among others.

Indigenous community security associations, which exist throughout the Legal Amazon, operate in extremely precarious conditions and with very limited and unstable support. They receive some support from FUNAI's Regional Coordinations. But more often than not, they are targeted by politicians, local councilors, city halls, and, occasionally, municipal security secretariats. The municipal politicization of indigenous self-protection groups may pose a risk to the autonomy of this community policing work, which the Brazilian state does not recognize and for which it has no defined alternatives.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is essential to understand how the various indigenous self-defense groups operate in the country, especially in the states of the Legal Amazon, in order to advance a mapping process that can have a real impact on the multi-situated defense of the indigenous environment, territory, and communities. The different groups aim to contain the effects of historically accumulated and ongoing violence and crime in the regions. This violence is having irreversible effects on the organization and environmental ways of life of the forest peoples. In traditional populations, and likely also among riverine and quilombola communities, community self-defense groups are organizing throughout the country to defend themselves in places where public authorities are powerless or, worse, negligent or violent.



Everything indicates that the federalization of territorial protection, on the one hand, and the ideology of a state public security system focused on urban security, on the other, have overlooked populations that tend to be more isolated in their territories. Because these areas are difficult to monitor due to their geography, hydrology, logistics, demographic voids, and the presence of armed groups, public authorities need to rely on the knowledge of indigenous self-protection groups. However, the more “indigenous” the association is, that is, with less and more limited participation or intervention by non-governmental civil organizations, the greater the risk that these groups will be criminalized or misunderstood. It often happens that indigenous self-defense groups are accused of being militias, even without their work being known.

The weaker the social support and visibility of Indigenous self-protection groups, the greater the risk of their political instrumentalization by local authorities. It is therefore essential to strengthen their monitored autonomy in exercising control over environmental, territorial, and community violence and crime. Much like the Indigenous fire brigades supported by ICMBio, Indigenous self-protection groups retain unique knowledge about environmental, territorial, and community forms of violence and crime within their territories—knowledge that no one else is equipped to capture. These local, grassroots insights are vital to preventing the escalating violence and criminality and the devastating effects that continue to afflict the Amazon and its peoples. There can be no environmental or territorial security without human security—without the preservation of Indigenous lives left vulnerable, particularly in border regions marked by narco-violence.

Indigenous self-protection groups are fundamental to safeguarding Brazilian territory. Thus, it is crucial to establish a research and monitoring initiative focused on Indigenous and forest security actors. Assigning to Indigenous peoples the sole responsibility for their own environmental and community self-defense—which is, in essence, the defense of the Amazon in Brazil—is, at the very least, a historical injustice. Expecting Indigenous security to operate without the shared responsibility of the Brazilian State and the participation of national and international public authorities is not a path consistent with a true commitment to humanity’s future.

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Initiative

08

Casa de Governo¹

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Roraima and Senior Researcher at the Brazilian Forum on
Public Safety

TECHNICAL SHEET

	Name of initiative: Casa de Governo
	Main implementing agency: Civil House of the Presidency of the Republic
	Year of creation: 2024
	State of operation and territorial coverage: States of Roraima and Pará
	Partnerships: Federal Police (PF), National Public Security Force (MJSP), Armed Forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force), Federal Highway Police (PRF), Military Police and Fire Department of Roraima, Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, Funai (National Indigenous Peoples Foundation), Ibama, ICMBio, Censipam (Amazon Protection System Management and Operations Center), Anac, ANP, ANTT, Anatel, Ministry of Health, SESAI, Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF), and Attorney General's Office (AGU).
	Current status: Operational.



1 In addition to consulting public institutional and journalistic sources, data was requested via LAI (Law on Access to Information) for the composition of this text. We also drew on Nilton Tubino's presentation at the First Seminar on Yanomami Indigenous Land: Experiences of Territorial Protection, held at UFRR, and on an interview given by the president of the "Casa de Governo" in Boa Vista, Roraima, in September 2025.





Summary: The “Casa de Governo”, created in February 2024 by Decree No. 11,930 and subordinate to the Civil House, is the main axis of federal governance to address the humanitarian and environmental crisis in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY). With centralized management in the Civil House, it coordinates 33 agencies in a unified interministerial model, integrating political, strategic, and tactical dimensions of operation. The Operation Coordination Center (CCOp) is located in Boa Vista (RR) and holds daily meetings to ensure rapid and collaborative responses in the field. The institutional arrangement has three levels: political coordination in Brasília, under the responsibility of the Minister of State for the Civil House; local operational coordination; and tactical field command. Among the forces involved are the Federal Police, National Force, Army, Funai, Ibama, ICMBio, and Censipam. Inspired by previous operations such as Marãiwatsédé and Apyterewa, the “Casa de Governo” consolidated a model of permanent state presence, which combines repression of mining, humanitarian assistance, and social reconstruction. Since its creation, active mining in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, monitored by the teams, has been significantly reduced. Current challenges include sustaining post-intrusion efforts, with continuous territorial monitoring and indigenous leadership, transforming an emergency response into state policy for the entire Legal Amazon.

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF THE INITIATIVE

President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva established the “Casa de Governo” with Decree No. 11,930, dated February 27, 2024. Minister Rui Costa (Chief of Staff of the Presidency of the Republic) coordinates the agency, which operates as a permanent interministerial command and control structure. The “Casa de Governo” coordinates and monitors actions to address humanitarian and environmental crises in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY). It also oversees up to 33 federal agencies working jointly in the territory.

Nilton Luís Godoy Tubino, Director of “Casa de Governo” in Roraima, is a public manager with expertise in intrusion prevention and interinstitutional coordination in the Amazon region. He has held roles as an advisor to the General Secretariat of the Presidency (2023–2024) and in the Ministry of Agrarian Development (2015–2016). Since the 1990s, Tubino has built a solid field record, most notably as chief strategist behind the 1993 peaceful eviction of the Alto Rio Guamá Indigenous Land, a pioneering action in Amazonian territory security.

Tubino, recognized as a leader in indigenous territorial security, has led the agency since its inception, integrating multiple agencies under one model. He emphasizes the aim of ensuring a permanent state presence and post-intrusion sustainability through ongoing monitoring, community support, and suppression of illegal activities.

The operational center of the “Casa de Governo” operates in Boa Vista (RR), sharing facilities with the Operation Coordination Center (CCOp). The CCOp houses representatives from all the agencies involved and holds daily meetings to plan, evaluate results, and define operational targets—known as the “sunset meetings,” held at 5 p.m.

The “Casa de Governo”’s area of coverage primarily comprises the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, extending to other territories included in ADPF 709, such as Munduruku (PA), Trincheira/Bacajá (PA), Araribóia (MA), Apyterewa (PA), and Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau (RO), forming a strategic axis of federal action in critical areas of the Legal Amazon.



Nilton Tubino traces the origin of the disruption model now used by the “Casa de Governo” to the Marãiwatsédé operations (2012-2013). He recalls, “No one in the government had this experience.” Field teams learned on the job, coordinated with Funai, Ibama, and security forces, and discovered that establishing coordination in the territory, near the conflict area, led to success — “problems are solved on a day-to-day basis,” he summarizes.

A key lesson emerged from that experience: unified, inter-institutional coordination is the only way to guarantee sustainable results. As Tubino describes, “there was no previous model; everything was created there,” and the method was refined in subsequent operations in the Awá (MA) and Apyterewa (PA) lands. These actions consolidated the practice of setting up joint situation rooms, establishing communication protocols between agencies, and implementing logistical containment strategies that combined the crackdown on illegal activities with the reestablishment of the state’s presence.

Structural failures in the 2023 emergency responses directly led to the creation of the “Casa de Governo” in Roraima in 2024. At that time, the federal government—including the Civil House, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples (MIP), and FUNAI—responded to the Yanomami humanitarian crisis in a fragmented manner. The Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office in Roraima warned of a lack of coordination and continuity. This motivated President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to establish a permanent structure that centralizes decisions, integrates agencies, and ensures the State’s continuous presence.

Tubino acknowledges that the design of the “Casa de Governo” was also inspired by previous experiences of regional governance, such as the “Casa de Governo” of Altamira (PA), created during the Dilma Rousseff administration to mediate the socio-environmental impacts of large-scale projects in the Amazon. The new model, however, added an unprecedented operational dimension, combining strategic planning and integrated tactical execution under a single command.

Direct negotiations between the Civil House, the Armed Forces, the Federal Police, Ibama, ICMBio, Funai, and MPI shaped the institutional design, and these groups also coordinated with the Federal Supreme Court (STF) within the scope of ADPF 709. Minister Luís Roberto Barroso, as rapporteur for the action, authorized the Armed Forces to exercise police powers within the Yanomami Indigenous Territory. This decision provided legal certainty and enabled operational agility for repressive actions.

Effective implementation began in February 2024 with the installation of the Operation Coordination Center (CCOp) and the start of Operation Catrimani II. Since its establishment, the “Casa de Governo” has achieved measurable results, overseeing the destruction of 27 illegal dredges, the closure of 19 clandestine airstrips, and the dismantling of 15 mining camps. Substantial mining equipment was seized, reducing operational capacity for illegal mining. The agency also ensured consistent humanitarian support by reactivating three indigenous health units, resulting in improved access to care and better living conditions for local residents.

Tubino defines this phase as a milestone for institutionalizing lessons learned since Marãiwatsédé, combining operational effectiveness, political coordination, and maintaining a permanent state presence to achieve lasting impact in repression, recovery, and territorial governance in the Amazon.



CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE PROBLEM

The current format of the “Casa de Governo” emerges in a scenario of unprecedented humanitarian and environmental crisis. Between 2021 and 2022, it was estimated that there were around 20,000 illegal miners within the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY) — a territory of 9.6 million hectares, equivalent to the size of Portugal, inhabited by approximately 30,000 indigenous people from the Yanomami and Ye’kwana peoples. The advance of mining has caused a health crisis, severe malnutrition, malaria epidemics, and widespread mercury contamination (), creating a situation described as “the new gold rush” in the Amazon.

The report *The New Gold Rush* (FBSP, 2024)² indicated that illegal mining in Roraima is not a recent phenomenon, but has now taken on industrial characteristics and is linked to organized crime networks, both national and transnational. The report documents the presence of criminal factions from São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro controlling drug, gold, and fuel routes, with reports of armed members acting as security guards and brothel managers within the TIY.

This convergence of illegal mining, drug trafficking, and lethal violence has contributed to a significant increase in crime rates. The municipality of Alto Alegre, the main gateway to the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, recorded an average rate of 77.5 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (2020-2022), in addition to the highest number of indigenous people murdered in the country (80 victims between 2018 and 2021). The report also records a 593.4% increase in firearms seizures in Roraima between 2018 and 2022, highlighting the militarization of mining fronts and increased conflict.

In addition to the human impact, the Yanomami crisis is linked to illicit regional economic circuits connecting Roraima, Pará, and the Guianas, with the “laundering” of illegal gold in municipalities such as Itaituba (PA), where it is possible to legalize gold extracted from Indigenous Lands through fraudulent mining titles and invoices. This precarious regulatory network, associated with the presumption of good faith in the commercialization of gold—in force until 2023—has favored the laundering of large volumes of ore illegally extracted from the Yanomami Indigenous Territory.

According to surveys presented by the “Casa de Governo” and Censipam, as of March 2024, there were 4,570 hectares of active mining and 2.6 million hectares under the direct influence of mining. By August 2025, these figures had been reduced to 136 hectares of active mining and 99,000 hectares of influence, representing a 97% drop in illegal activities.

The chronic nature of the problem is associated with structural factors typical of the Amazon: difficult access, porous international borders, dependence on air and river transport, and a historical absence of the state. These elements explain the need for a new model of interagency coordination, which materialized in the “Casa de Governo”—an unprecedented governance arrangement characterized by daily meetings, integrated planning, intensive use of technologies (drones, remote sensing, aerial radar), and direct cooperation with indigenous communities.

As FBSP (2024) points out³ overcoming illegal mining depends on continuous, integrated action adapted to the specificities of the Amazon, since “isolated operations tend to lose effectiveness over time.” In this sense, the case of

2 FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA (FBSP). **A nova corrida do ouro na Amazônia**: garimpo ilegal e violência na floresta. São Paulo: FBSP, 2024.

3 Idem.



the Yanomami Indigenous Territory has become a national reference for territorial protection policies and response to humanitarian crises, influencing subsequent actions in territories such as Vale do Javari, Munduruku, Araribóia, and Sararé, and serving as a basis for the formulation of permanent territorial monitoring and maintenance plans conducted in partnership between the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples (MPI), Funai, and UFRR.

MAPPING OF ACTORS AND GOVERNANCE

According to Nilton Tubino, the current model of interagency coordination represents the institutional maturation of more than a decade of experience in the Amazon. “Today we have a consolidated model: local coordination, with representatives from each agency, and a matrix of responsibility approved by the Supreme Court. Each institution knows what it must do. Daily meetings are essential—everyone knows their roles and problems are solved jointly.”

This integrated governance stems from the realization that fragmented actions reduced the effectiveness of operations. Tubino points out that the current success is due to the institutionalization of field practices, such as the constant presence of interministerial teams in Roraima and direct communication between different levels of decision-making. “In the Amazon, logistics is always a challenge. Often, the only way to get there is by helicopter. That is why we seek to set up bases close to the territory, with the support of the Army, to reduce travel time. Operations can involve 150 or 200 civil servants and require a minimum infrastructure for water, energy, and communication.”

In this sense, the “Casa de Governo” is the hub of federal governance in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY), coordinating 33 agencies under a single operational plan. Subordinate to the Civil House of the Presidency of the Republic, it functions as a real-time command and control center, ensuring integration between the political, strategic, and tactical plans of operations.

Government stakeholders

The institutional design of the “Casa de Governo” consists of three interdependent levels:

1

Political and Strategic Coordination, based in Brasília, under the direct responsibility of Minister Rui Costa (Chief of Staff), in coordination with the Ministries of Indigenous Peoples (MPI), Justice and Public Security (MJSP), Defense, Health, Environment and Climate Change (MMA), and Management and Innovation in Public Services (MGI);

2

Operational Coordination, based in Boa Vista (RR), headed by Nilton Luís Godoy Tubino, responsible for the execution, supervision, and evaluation of operations in the territory, presiding over the **Operation Coordination Center (CCOp)**, a nucleus that brings together representatives of the participating agencies daily in the so-called “sunset meetings”;



3

Tactical and Field Command, composed of security forces and environmental agencies that operate directly within and around the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, based on a **matrix of responsibilities agreed upon** with the “Casa de Governo”.

Among the federal and state security forces involved, the following stand out:

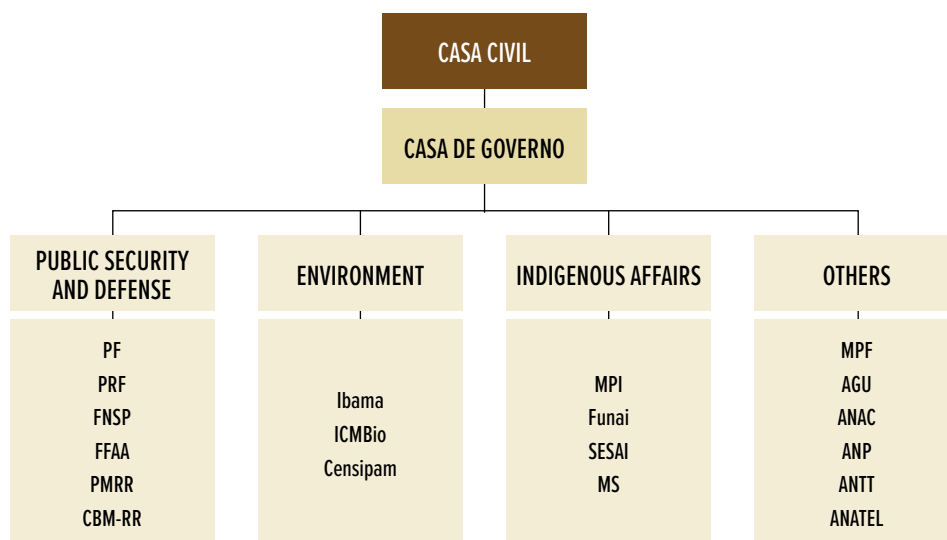
- **Federal Police (PF)** – responsible for investigating and prosecuting environmental and financial crimes, as well as destroying mining structures;
- **National Public Security Force (MJSP)** – overt policing, protection of health teams and security of Funai bases;
- **Armed Forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force)** – air and river logistics support, transportation, communications, and controlled demolition of runways and ferries;
- **Federal Highway Police (PRF)** – land blockades and interdiction of logistics routes outside the Indigenous Territory;
- **Military Police and Fire Department of Roraima** – emergency support and security in urban and riverside areas.

In addition to the security forces, the “Casa de Governo” integrates technical and environmental agencies, whose actions are essential for the sustainability of the actions:

- **Funai (National Indigenous Peoples Foundation)** – coordination of relations with communities and institutional mediation;
- **Ibama and ICMBio** – environmental control actions, destruction of equipment, and recovery of degraded areas;
- **Censipam (Amazon Protection System Management and Operations Center)** – remote monitoring, drone sensing, and mining detection algorithms;
- **Anac, ANP, ANTT, and Anatel** – oversight of the aviation, fuel, transportation, and telecommunications sectors;
- **Ministry of Health and SESAI** – reactivation of the primary care network, reinforcement of epidemiological surveillance and health logistics;
- **Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office (MPF)** and **Attorney General’s Office (AGU)** – legal monitoring of ADPF 709 and civil and criminal liability actions against offenders.



Figure 1 | Infographic showing the composition of the “Casa de Governo”



Source: 1st Seminar on the Yanomami Indigenous Land: Experiences in territorial protection, UFRR, August 16-18, 2025.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Nilton Tubino summarizes the main challenge facing the “Casa de Governo” by stating that “the biggest challenge is post-disruption: keeping the territory free. Operations last 90 days, but we need permanent maintenance plans, with the presence of the State and communities. Territorial monitoring must be built with the indigenous people themselves—they are the main source of information about the return of invaders.”

The “Casa de Governo”, through the Operation Coordination Center (CCOp), has as its central objective to comply with the provisions of ADPF 709, ensuring the removal of intruders from Indigenous Lands and the reestablishment of the State’s permanent presence in critical areas of the Legal Amazon. In this sense, post-intrusion goes beyond its initial tasks.

The immediate priority was the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY), where the collapse of sanitation and the intensification of illegal mining between 2020 and 2022 produced one of the country’s most recent humanitarian crises. Located in a triple border region (Brazil–Venezuela–Guyana), the TIY faces logistical, geopolitical, and environmental challenges that require the creation of an unprecedented model of interministerial coordination.

The purpose of the “Casa de Governo” is to reestablish state control over the territory, protect indigenous populations, and eradicate illegal activities associated with mining, creating conditions for the reconstruction of community life, the strengthening of indigenous territorial management, and the institutionalization of permanent public policies for territorial protection.

According to project managers, official documents, and reports⁴, the objectives of the “Casa de Governo” are:

⁴ Above all, the interviews that informed this report, the Allegation of Violation of a Fundamental Precept (ADPF) No. 709 of the Federal Supreme Court, and the reports provided by the Government House



1. To coordinate intelligence, command, and control actions interinstitutionally, integrating security forces, environmental agencies, and indigenous health institutions;
2. Eliminate illegal mining and other associated illicit activities—such as trafficking in fuel, weapons, gold, and drugs—until they reach residual levels;
3. Reestablish the primary indigenous health care network, with full coverage of SESAI centers and continuous supply of supplies, vaccines, and medical care;
4. Strengthen permanent territorial monitoring, based on accumulated experience and cooperation initiatives with universities and research centers;
5. Consolidate the work of the “Casa de Governo” through a methodology that can be replicated in other territories covered by ADPF 709, such as Munduruku (PA), Araribóia (MA), and Apyterewa (PA).

These objectives reflect the transition from an emergency response logic to a permanent state policy, in which the federal presence is not limited to repression, but is extended to the reconstruction of living conditions and the autonomy of communities.

POLICY FUNDING

The financing of the “Casa de Governo”’s actions was conceived as an emergency measure in direct response to the severity of the humanitarian and environmental crisis that occurred in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY) between 2022 and 2023. The budgetary and legal arrangement resulted from a set of legal and regulatory instruments that provided formal and financial support for the policy, recognizing the situation as a public calamity and a violation of fundamental rights.

The first milestone was the Action for Non-Compliance with a Fundamental Precept (ADPF) No. 709, filed by the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) and ruled on by the Federal Supreme Court (STF). In a 2022 decision, Justice Luís Roberto Barroso ruled that the federal government must guarantee medical and food assistance to the Yanomami and Ye'kwana peoples, promote the immediate removal of invaders, and ensure continuous territorial protection measures. This decision established the legal basis for mobilizing resources and creating a permanent interministerial command structure in the territory.

The resources come from a Provisional Measure of the Federal Government (Provisional Measure No. 1,209, of 2024), approved by the National Congress in the form of Law No. 14,922, of July 11, 2024. This is the primary regulatory instrument that guides the financing of the policy, intended for the various ministries that comprise the House of Representatives. The law opened an extraordinary credit line of more than R\$1 billion for the protection of the Yanomami Indigenous Territory:

Opens extraordinary credit in favor of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Agriculture, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Development and Social Assistance, Family and Combating Hunger, the Ministry



of Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship, and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, in the amount of R\$ 1,062,231,956.00 (one billion, sixty-two million, two hundred and thirty-one thousand, nine hundred and fifty-six reais), for the purposes specified therein. (BRAZIL, 2024)⁵.

STATUS OF COMPLIANCE WITH EVICTION ORDERS

In the words of Tubino, “disintegration operations only have a lasting effect when the State remains.” For this reason, the “Casa de Governo” adopts two fundamental operating principles:

- a) Integrated territorial presence – all agencies and actors involved must maintain a continuous physical presence during the execution period, avoiding gaps between repressive actions and reconstruction stages;
- b) Minimum permanence of 90 days – the time necessary to impact the logistical and financial structure of the invaders and hinder their reorganization and return to the vacated areas.

In the case of the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, both strategies required adaptations given the scale and complexity of the territory, which exceeds nine million hectares. Although there is a constant presence of federal agents—especially from the National Public Security Force, the Army, and FUNAI—at strategic points, the operational center was established in Boa Vista (RR), where the CCOp operates, due to high logistical costs and access difficulties.

The TIY intrusion removal operation has been running for over a year and eight months, reflecting the persistent nature of the threats and recurring attempts to reorganize the mining fronts. This period has enabled the consolidation of territorial monitoring methodologies, the strengthening of interagency collaboration, and the operation of analytical instruments for remote observation and integrated intelligence, now recognized as best institutional practices. However, the design of formalized protocols cannot be observed in the research conducted for this report, nor was it possible to access details about the technologies employed.

Currently, the actions coordinated by the “Casa de Governo” are concentrated on two complementary fronts:

1. Interior of the Yanomami Indigenous Territory – aimed at neutralizing mining fronts, destroying illegal structures, providing humanitarian assistance, and recovering degraded areas;
2. Surrounding areas of the Yanomami Indigenous Territory – dedicated to dismantling support logistics, with a focus on airfields, clandestine airstrips, river ports, supply stations, and access roads.

The Operation Coordination Center (CCOp), located at the former headquarters of Funasa, acts as the planning and intelligence hub for operations. Daily meetings, held at 5 p.m. and known as “sunset meetings,” bring together representatives from all participating agencies to assess the day’s results, share information, and set priority goals and targets for the following day.

5 See: Provisional Measure No. 1,209, of 2024.



This collaborative routine has consolidated a highly responsive model of interagency coordination, capable of combining tactical intelligence, territorial presence, and integrated action. The experience of the Yanomami Indigenous Territory demonstrates that disintegration is not just a military operation, but a process of social and institutional reconstruction, whose success depends on the continuity of the State and the active participation of indigenous communities.

Results of the Operation in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (2024-2025)

After 18 months of operation, it is possible to analyze some figures that indicate the results of the “Casa de Governo”. The following are indicators both for the one installed in Boa Vista (RR) for work in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory and for the disruption of the Munduruku Indigenous Territory in Pará, which operated according to the same model, although it did not have an operational base like the one in Roraima.

Table 1 Results of actions coordinated by the “Casa de Governo” under the Plan for Removal of Intruders and Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory August 2024 – August 2025

Number of pieces of equipment, materials, and goods seized	20 antennas 7 gas cylinders 153 cell phones 1 household appliance 22 electronic devices 95 light machines	8 heavy machines 3 solar panels 5 engines 8 radio communication devices 1 sorting boxes
Number of pieces of equipment, materials, and goods destroyed	113 antennas 384 gas cylinders 67 cell phones 15 dredgers 541 household appliances 348 electronic devices 880 light machines 41 heavy machines 1,167 engines	101 solar panels 15 quad bikes 64 rafts 26 radio communication devices 292 separator boxes 335 generators 114 buildings 8 large ferries 9 large dredgers
Number of vessels, vehicles, and aircraft seized	30 vessels 122 motor vehicles	24 motorcycles 6 aircraft
Number of vessels, vehicles, and aircraft destroyed	154 vessels 8 motor vehicles	15 aircraft
Number of arrests made	187 people	
Number of clandestine airstrips destroyed	60 clandestine airstrips rendered unusable	
Drug seizures, by type and quantity	0.35 kg of cocaine hydrochloride	168.00 kg of marijuana
Firearms seized, by type and quantity ⁽¹⁾	76 weapons	2,389 rounds of ammunition
Destruction of firearms, by type and quantity	15 weapons	91 rounds of ammunition
Seizure of minerals, by type and quantity	127.86 kg of gold	20,210.00 kg of cassiterite
Seizure of mercury	109.08 kg of mercury	

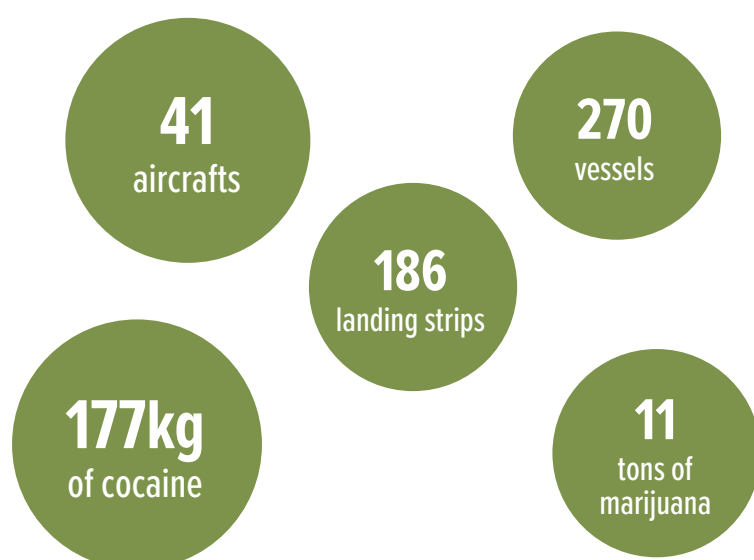
Source: Civil House of the Presidency of the Republic; Brazilian Forum on Public Security.

(1) The Special Secretariat for Coordination and Monitoring of the Civil House reported that the records do not specify the individual technical characteristics of the weapons, but most of them correspond to 16, 22, and 12 caliber rifles.

The numbers for the removal of intruders from the Yanomami Indigenous Territory are impressive: 41 aircraft were identified in the territory over an 18-month period, with 33 seized and 8 destroyed. In 2024, nearly 200 airstrips were identified within the Indigenous Territory and its surrounding area. Only 42 of them could be rendered unusable, a number that reached 60 by August 2025. The number of vessels seized and destroyed reached 270, most of which were destroyed. Although it is difficult to measure the significance of these findings from the operation, due to the lack of comparison parameters, it is possible to imagine the magnitude of illegal activities and the level of investment involved when equipment such as aircraft and boats is found in such quantities. Light and heavy machinery, engines, communication equipment, gold, cassiterite, and mercury are also among the materials found.

Evidence of the intersection of criminal activities in the TI mines, widely documented and publicized in recent years by the Brazilian Forum on Public Safety and other actors, shows that drugs and weapons were also seized.

Figure 2 | Seizures/destructions carried out by the “Casa de Governo”
August 2024 to August 2025



Source: Data from the “Casa de Governo”, received via LAI (Access to Information Act).

Technical observations

Most of the weapons seized were 12-, 16-, and 22-gauge shotguns, commonly used for security and defense in mining areas. The destruction of the logistical infrastructure associated with illegal mining caused significant operational damage to criminal networks, restricting supply flows, air transport, and communication in the region.

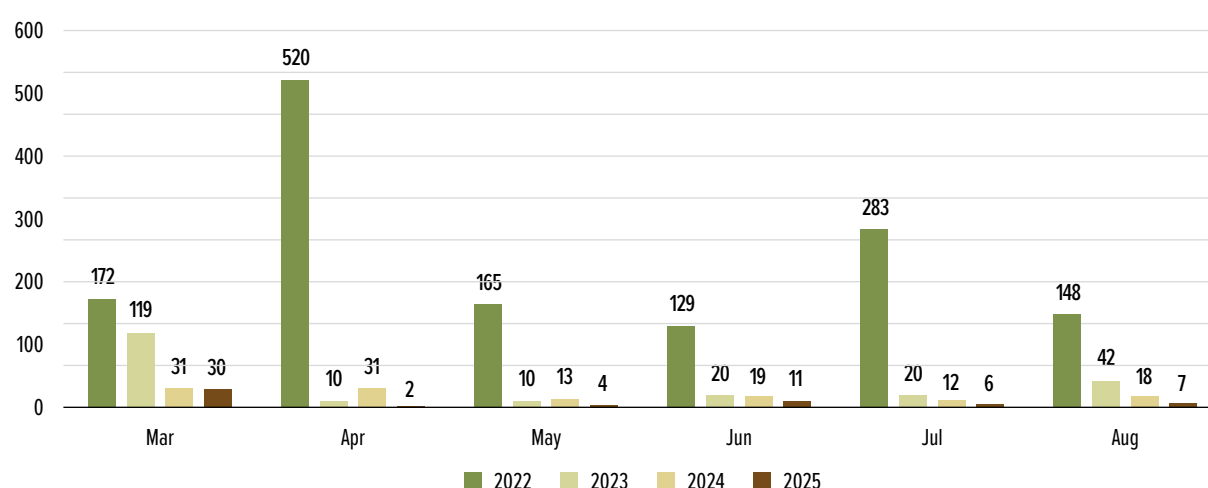
In several areas, however, the prolonged presence of mining fronts has resulted in the spread of firearms within indigenous territory, introduced through different channels: through co-optation strategies, through the abandonment and concealment of weapons in the forest during inspection operations, or through informal exchanges and negotiations between miners and indigenous peoples, including between different ethnic groups.



Another historical mechanism of co-optation and social disruption identified is the introduction and spread of alcohol consumption in communities, a practice that, over the years, has contributed to aggravating situations of internal violence, especially in contexts of vulnerability and absence of the State. In some cases, the transmission of artisanal alcohol production techniques among people in the region has also been observed, perpetuating a tragic pattern of social and health deterioration that has been repeated for decades in these territories.

Another possible comparative bias is the number of mining operations installed each month from 2022 to 2025, a methodology that accounts for any seasonality in the activity and improves comparability between years. The difference between 2022 and 2023 is already quite noticeable, with a notable decline from 1,417 mining alerts in 2022 to 221 in 2025.

Graph 1 Evolution of mining alerts (units)
March to August 2022 to March to August 2025



Source: Government Office.

OPERATIONAL DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Main interventions

- **Territorial coverage:** the entire Yanomami Indigenous Territory and its immediate surroundings, including municipalities in Roraima and Amazonas and areas bordering Venezuela;
- **Beneficiary population:** approximately 30,000 Yanomami and Ye'kwana indigenous people, as well as indigenous and non-indigenous communities operating on logistics routes affected by illicit activities associated with mining;
- **Workflows:** interagency integration under the coordination of the Operations Coordination Center (CCOp), coordinating monitoring, tactical response, health, and intelligence;



→ **Highlights among the cutting-edge technologies mobilized:**

- **Saber M60 Radar:** used to detect and track aircraft on irregular flights;
- **Nauru 500-C drone:** used in reconnaissance, surveillance, and intelligence gathering missions;
- **R-99 aircraft:** used to monitor targets through thermal imaging, night vision, and heat mapping.

Infrastructure and support points

The operation involves the mobilization of:

- **8 FUNAI bases;**
- **3 Special Border Platoons (PEF) and 3 Special Border Detachments (DEF);**
- **37 Yanomami DSEI health centers and 74 Basic Indigenous Health Units (UBSI);**
- **Installation, with support from the Armed Forces, of two Security Bases (Kayanaú and Pakilapi).**



Kayanaú Base. **Photos:** Personal Archive / Joint Operational Command Catrimani II.

Two river barriers were implemented on the Uraricoera and Mucajá rivers, with night surveillance, in addition to:

- **River, port, and road surveillance and patrolling;**
- **Control of airstrips and aircraft, resulting in 62 airstrips rendered unusable and 488 inspected;**
- **Disabling of dredgers and mining equipment;**
- **Preventive actions in areas outside the TIY to intercept illicit logistics flows;**
- **Intelligence activities focused on analyzing the dynamics of mining fronts and their camouflage strategies.**

Between March 2024 and September 14, 2025, 1,841 actions were carried out within the Yanomami Indigenous Territory and 5,316 in the immediate vicinity, consolidating a continuous operational presence.



Kayanaú Base. **Photo:** Personal Archive / Joint Operational Command Catrimani II.



New Waikás Special Border Detachment. **Photo:** Bruno Mancinelli/Casa de Governo.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sustainability and Continuity

The financial sustainability of “Casa de Governo” is based on an interministerial and multi-budgetary arrangement, supported by extraordinary credits and specific allocations from federal agencies, including the Ministries of Defense, Justice and Public Security, Indigenous Peoples, Health, and the Environment. This model is a direct result of the provisions of ADPF 709 (Supreme Federal Court), which imposed on the Union the obligation to guarantee continuous resources for the protection and assistance of indigenous peoples, giving the policy the character of a State obligation — and not just a government obligation.

In 2024, two budgetary milestones consolidated the financial structure of the “Casa de Governo”:

- R\$1.2 billion allocated to a permanent presence and structure in Yanomami territory;
- R\$1.0 billion in extraordinary credit for emergency actions related to intrusion removal, health, and territorial security.

Although the funds do not constitute an autonomous budget, their decentralized execution occurs through interinstitutional agreements and budget items. This requires constant political and technical coordination to avoid discontinuity in transfers and overlapping of responsibilities. As Tubino noted in his interview, sustainability depends less on the existence of a specific budget line and more on the “ability to keep the machine running after the emergency phase, integrating costs into the routines of the agencies that are already in the territory.”

From an institutional perspective, the “Casa de Governo” represents an advancement in interagency governance. Created by administrative act in compliance with judicial determinations, its legitimacy stems from the Union’s coordinating role on protection policies in Indigenous Lands. Even without a decree or law establishing its permanent nature, it has been consolidating operational instruments recognized by the Civil House, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, and control agencies.

Operational sustainability

This is perhaps the main challenge at the moment: institutionalizing an experience that, although designed to address an emergency situation, has achieved significant results and developed its own repertoire of operational technologies, interagency methodologies, and territorial governance practices.

The “Casa de Governo” has established itself as a space for administrative experimentation and integration between public policies, whose longevity—unusual in emergency actions—has allowed for a continuous process of institutional maturation. This exceptional duration, focused on the Yanomami emergency, has created conditions for the production of technical knowledge, the training of specialized staff, and the improvement of coordination instruments between agencies.



As Nilton Tubino observes, “sustainability in the Amazon depends less on technology itself and more on the ability to be present in the territory, to maintain the minimum structure of communication, transportation, and supply.” Based on this observation, the sustainability strategy shifts from one-off investment in equipment to the construction of a lasting state presence, with an emphasis on maintaining forward bases and integrating operating costs into the regular budgets of ministries and executive agencies.

The great challenge, therefore, is to transform a government action into a state policy, incorporating territorial monitoring and surveillance infrastructure into permanent programs for environmental protection, indigenous health, and public safety. This institutionalization is the only way to avoid the collapse of continuity that normally follows the end of extraordinary credits.

In short, the sustainability of the “Casa de Governo” depends not only on financial resources, but also on the administrative and political capacity to convert an emergency response into a permanent model of federal presence in the Amazon, one that is coordinated with local communities and integrated into the routine of public institutions.

Prospects for continuity

Initially conceived as an emergency response, the “Casa de Governo” was maintained for a longer period than expected due to persistent invasions and exceptional financing conditions. The recurrence of illegal mining, even after successive operations, suggests that the sustainability of the policy depends on the long-term institutionalization and permanent presence of the State.

According to Tubino, “the big challenge now is to make the transition from the military phase to the civilian phase—to ensure that the state apparatus continues to function regularly, that indigenous peoples are integrated into monitoring, and that invasions do not get out of control again.” To this end, the “Casa de Governo” has sought to strengthen cooperation with the MPI, FUNAI, and public universities in the Amazon, in order to build local capacities for monitoring, territorial management, and communication.

Scalability and replicability

The experiences accumulated since 2012—from the removal of intruders from Marãiwatsédé and Awá to the creation of the “Casa de Governo” in Roraima—constitute an unprecedented institutional asset for the Brazilian state. The prolonged maintenance of the structure in Boa Vista has generated a learning base on logistics, interagency integration, community dialogue, and territorial reconstruction that transcends the Yanomami case.

The diversity of peoples, the logistical complexity of the territories, the social accumulation of violence, and the different forms of vulnerability prevent the adoption of a single model of intervention. However, the experience of Roraima demonstrates that there are replicable principles and practices, including:

- Continuous interagency coordination, with territorial presence and daily information sharing;



- Systematic use of data and monitoring technologies to guide decisions.
- Integration between security, health, and humanitarian assistance actions;
- Creation of protocols based on scientific evidence for the control and prevention of illegal activities.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The experience of the “Casa de Governo” and the disruption operations offers strategic lessons on the design of public policies for the Amazon, such as:

- The importance of interinstitutional coordination with local command and daily integration of information.
- The Role of Community Engagement and Indigenous Leadership as a Condition for Sustainability.
- The need for structural and permanent policies for surveillance and territorial reconstruction that transcend the cycle of emergencies.
- And the centrality of an approach that unites security, health, and environmental sustainability under the same state guideline.

In summary, the main lesson learned is that disintegration is only the beginning of the process: maintaining the territory’s freedom requires the continuity of the State, the co-responsibility of communities, and the institutionalization of policies that convert the crisis into an opportunity for reconstruction and strengthening of the public presence in the Amazon.



APPENDIX

Annex I – Yanomami Indigenous Territory

YANOMAMI INDIGENOUS LAND

1. Identity, diversity, and territory

The name Yanomami—as with many Amerindian ethnonyms—expresses an existential dimension: it means “people” or “folk,” as opposed to everything that is considered non-human. In public and institutional usage, the term has come to designate a cultural, territorial, and linguistic group composed of interrelated groups that, although they share a common matrix, exhibit regional and micro-regional variations. It is, therefore, a plural cultural unit, marked by profound internal diversity.

Research in genetics, linguistics, and ethnology indicates that the Yanomami are descended from populations that remained relatively isolated until recently, which favored the preservation of unique ways of life, languages, and social structures. Within this macro-group, six main cultural and linguistic subgroups can be identified: Ninam, Sanõma, Yãnoma, Yanomám, Yanonami, and Yãroamë.

These groups share structural traits—such as cosmology, social morphology, political practices, and ritualistic exchanges—but maintain significant local variations. Although most communities value endogenous unions, there are networks of matrimonial, ceremonial, and economic exchange that connect different villages and regions, weaving a dense and dynamic sociopolitical fabric that extends throughout the Yanomami territory.

Geographically, the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY) covers large areas of the upper Rio Branco in Roraima and the banks of the Rio Negro in northwestern Amazonas. Cosmologically and ecologically, the Yanomami understand the territory as *urihi*, a term that can be translated as “forest-land” — a living, relational entity that integrates humans, spirits, rivers, mountains, trees, and animals into a single field of reciprocity.

For this reason, the Yanomami call their monitoring groups “Urihi Noamatima Thëpë,” an expression that roughly means “People who care for the forest land” or “Guardians of the forest land” — highlighting that the protection of the territory is, above all, a spiritual and collective practice, guided by the ethics of caring for the forest and all the beings that inhabit it.

1.1 Presence of the Ye'kwana in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory

Communities of the Ye'kwana people also reside within the Yanomami Indigenous Territory. Although they have historically been identified by others as Maiongong (in the Pemon language) or Makiritare (an Arawak term), the Ye'kwana use *soto* to refer to themselves — “people.”



The Ye'kwana language is part of the Karib family, specifically the Guianan branch. Culturally, they are experienced farmers and skilled navigators. Historically, they have played the role of mediators in interethnic exchanges, given their mobility and territorial knowledge.

In Brazil, Ye'kwana communities are located within the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, in the regions of Auaris, Waichannha, and Kudatannha. It is estimated that around 750 people live in these villages in Brazil. In Venezuela, in 2011, the Ye'kwana population was estimated at approximately 7,997 people spread across more than 60 villages.

1.2 Isolated indigenous peoples

Within the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, there are several areas registered as inhabited by isolated indigenous peoples, namely: "Isolated peoples of Serra da Estrutura," "Isolated peoples of Amajari," "Isolated peoples of Auaris/Fronteira," "Isolated peoples of Baixo Rio Cauaburis," "Isolated peoples of Parawaü," and "Isolated peoples of Surucucu/Kataroa."

Since the second National Meeting of Sertanistas (1987), Brazilian indigenous policy has adopted the principle of non-contact: intervening only in cases of risk to the life or health of isolated peoples. To implement this guideline, the General Coordination of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indians (CGIIRC) was established, currently the General Coordination of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indigenous Peoples, which covers the Yanomami Indigenous Territory as an integral part of national actions to protect isolated peoples. With the creation of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples in 2023, the Department of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indigenous Peoples (DEPIR) was established, which works to promote the rights and formulate and monitor public policies for these peoples.

Historical studies indicate that isolated peoples often maintain constant mobility, moving between seasonal or wandering camps. According to Bruce Albert (1997), before intense contact, between a third and almost half of the year they could be settled in various camps — mobility that tends to decrease as contact with white posts (health posts, missions, Funai agencies) increases.

The existence of these isolated groups substantially increases the legal, territorial, and protection challenges within the Yanomami Indigenous Territory: it is not only a matter of managing contacted populations, but also of ensuring the rights of those who have chosen to remain distant and maintain their own ways of life.

2. Main threats and ethnomonitoring initiatives

The Yanomami Indigenous Territory is under intense pressure from external interests, especially illegal mining. During the "gold rush" between the late 1980s and early 1990s, it is estimated that up to 40,000 miners operated within the indigenous territory, resulting in epidemics, environmental crimes, and indigenous mortality.



Although the Yanomami Indigenous Territory was officially recognized in 1992, the invasion by miners has never ceased. The consequences of illegal mining are manifold: forest degradation, mercury contamination (affecting water, soil, and health), pollution, ecological imbalances, loss of food and territorial culture, and direct imposition on community structures.

2.1 Yanomami Indigenous Territory Alert System

Indigenous organizations in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY) have always played a fundamental role as mediators between communities and public authorities in defending rights, protecting territory, and ensuring the physical and cultural survival of the Yanomami and Ye'kwana peoples.

With the recent **intensification of illegal mining in the Amazon**, demands for enforcement and protection measures have become increasingly urgent. In recent years, associations have been receiving **reports of invasions, contamination, threats, and other violations** almost weekly, sent directly by communities. Until recently, these complaints were made by **handwritten letters, radio messages, or risky trips** by leaders to the associations' headquarters in the cities—a process that, in addition to being slow, **exposed whistleblowers to physical risks and retaliation**.

Faced with this scenario, in **2023**, the **Yanomami and Ye'kwana Associations**, with technical support from the **Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA)**, developed an **integrated monitoring mechanism** capable of **systematizing, qualifying, and documenting the alerts** received in the villages.

The **Yanomami Land Alert System** was thus created with a **dual purpose**:

- **To serve as an official channel of communication** between communities and the responsible authorities, ensuring **rapid and coordinated responses**;
- **To constitute a historical record of rights violations**, valuing traditional knowledge and the role of **indigenous leaders as intercultural mediators** in the defense of the territory.

According to data released by indigenous organizations, the first year of operation of the System, still in its experimental phase, demonstrated high potential for use and effectiveness. Between August 2023 and August 2024, 122 alerts were recorded, of which 64% corresponded to territorial incidents, 21% to health alerts, and 15% to environmental and climate alerts, highlighting the strategic role of the System in community surveillance and rapid response to risk situations within the Yanomami Indigenous Territory.

How it works

The Alert System operates through a mobile application called ODK Collect, which allows previously trained indigenous monitors to record local incidents securely, anonymously, and autonomously.



Alerts can be recorded without internet access (offline) and include audio, geographic coordinates, and photographs. As soon as the device is connected, the form is automatically sent to the system server. Currently, connection antennas are available at most health posts in the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, which facilitates the transmission of information.

The system's technical team—made up of indigenous professionals and indigenists—accesses the server daily, screens alerts, and coordinates the flow of information with communication centers installed in the territory. These centers are responsible for analyzing, qualifying, and translating messages received from communities, consolidating them into an integrated monitoring system.

When the information is incomplete, ambiguous, or contradictory, the centers contact the region where the alert originated to confirm details and avoid misunderstandings. Depending on the severity and urgency of the situation, indigenous organizations can issue a community letter, an official letter, or a formal notification—registered in the Weekly Bulletin of the Alert System—to forward the complaint to the competent public authorities.

2.2 Monitoring Workshops

The Territorial and Environmental Management Plan (PGTA) for the Yanomami Indigenous Territory, developed between October 2015 and November 2018, defined governance and territorial protection as priority areas for action.

Based on the guidelines established by the PGTA, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples (MPI), in partnership with the Yanomami and Ye'kwana Indigenous Associations, FUNAI, PRF, IBAMA, Censipam, the Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA), the Diocese of Roraima, universities, and other institutional partners, has been implementing monitoring workshops aimed at strengthening community surveillance and indigenous territorial management.



Photo: Rodrigo Chagas/FBSP.





Photos: Ministry of Indigenous Peoples/Rodrigo Chagas.

These workshops aim to train communities in the use of technologies and methodologies for protecting their territory, including:

- Operation of the Yanomami Indigenous Land Alert System;
- Use of drones and georeferencing and participatory mapping tools;
- Creation and standardization of community safety and communication protocols;
- Integration of traditional knowledge and contemporary technologies in the observation and recording of environmental, health, and territorial threats.

These actions strengthen the autonomy of indigenous communities in land management, expanding their capacity to monitor, document, and respond to risk situations, in coordination with public agencies and institutional partners.



Table 2 Indigenous Self-Protection Modalities:
Ethno-Environmental Monitoring Group – Urihi Noamatima Thëpë

Indigenous Self-Protection Modalities	
Entity	Urihi Noamatima Thëpë
Type of Self-Protection	Ethno-Environmental Monitoring Group
Territorial Area	9,665 thousand ha
Estimated Population	31,223
Contacted Ethnic Groups	- Yanomami Linguistic Family: Yanomami Ninam, Yanomami Sanõma, Yanomami Yãnoma, Yanomami Yanomám, Yanomami Yanonami, and Yanomami Yãroamë. - Karib Linguistic Family: Ye'kwana.
Isolated Groups	Isolated groups from Serra da Estrutura, Amajari, Auaris/Border region, Lower Rio Cauaburis, Parawa u, and Surucucu/Kataroa.
Main Threats	Hunter, logger, fisherman, farmer, drug trafficker, and illegal miner.
States	Amazonas (AM) e Roraima (RR)
Border Zone	Venezuela and the Republic of Guyana
Logistical Modes	River and air transport
Meios logísticos principais	Rio Negro river basin
Biome	Amazon (100%)
Reference Municipalities	Alto Alegre (RR), Amajari (RR), Barcelos (AM), Boa Vista (RR), Caracaraí (RR), Iracema (RR), Mucajaí (RR), Santa Isabel do Rio Negro (AM), São Gabriel da Cachoeira (AM).
Eventos marcantes	- A landmark episode, occurring one year after the demarcation of the Yanomami Indigenous Territory (TIY), was the Haximu massacre in 1993, in which a group of illegal miners attacked a Yanomami encampment, resulting in the deaths of several women, children, and elders, and leaving a deep mark on collective memory. - Between 2015 and 2022, the Yanomami Indigenous Territory experienced a massive invasion of illegal miners, which caused an unprecedented collapse in the communities' health systems, economy, and social organization. This process coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic, drastically worsening the humanitarian and sanitary crisis in the territory.

Source: Author's elaboration.



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