

United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime

Topic B:

"Increase of criminal violence in Latin America caused by drug trafficking and corrupt governments"

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INTRODUCTION

"Corruption is like a ball of snow, once it's set a rolling it must increase."

-Charles Caleb Colton

There is a general impression that corruption has been increasing mostly in Latin America over the past 20 years. To start analyzing this problem we need some definitions of scientific terms that are used in this context.

As defined by the Lectric Law Library, Criminal Violence is a felony and has as one of its essential elements the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another, or an offense that by its very nature involves a substantial risk that such physical strength is used in the course of committing the crime. On the other side, drug trafficking is a global illicit trade including the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws.

After this brief research, we can conclude these topics with one particular subject, the corruption that can define as dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. With all this information, we can establish that Political corruption means the abuse of political power by the government leaders to extract and accumulate for private enrichment and to use politically corrupt means to maintain their hold on power.

Along the years, Latin America has become one of the most dangerous places on Earth. In fact, according to the crime rate in 2016, Guatemala is ranked second in the list behind Afghanistan - it is considered the country in the region with the highest level of criminality in the last year. The other countries in the region included in the extreme risk list

are El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and Honduras. "These data indicate that Latin America is the region with the highest crime rate on the planet," Grant Sunderland, coordinator of the research, told BBC World.

Latin America has always been characterized as a semi-homogeneous block, with many circumstances that unite the countries of the region, such as the Spanish language and its history of independence and civil wars. In this region, more than 605 million people live, mostly in Brazil and Mexico, followed by Colombia, Argentina, Peru and Venezuela.

The issue of corruption in Latin America has been the biggest problem the region has faced. All countries have a history of corruption, and it is one of the main causes of the backwardness that exists in the region, as well as the inequality and strong populism that exists in current governments. As every year since 1995, the non-governmental organization Transparency International publishes the Corruption Perceptions Index in which, for Latin America, the falls that occurred in Central America stand out.

The following is the list of the 5 most corrupt countries in Latin America in 2017.

Panama: here the case of corruption is mainly administrative, like public officials, being recruited by agents serving personal purposes.

Argentina: although it is rated quite low, it has hopes of improving, as a result of the change of government, and with this, a change in the institutions, and therefore in the way of perceiving things.

Bolivia: 44% of Bolivians believe that corruption and influence peddling are the main problem of the government of President Evo Morales. Morales has been in power for a decade, which has been marked by several cases of corruption, including the diversion and misappropriation of resources from the Indigenous Fund.

Mexico: In this country, three factors stand out; the anti-corruption plan is not complied with, the administrations are corrupt and there is little effectiveness of justice to punish them. Recent cases of governors and federal government officials involved in national corruption scandals have caused a sharp increase in the perception of corruption in this country.

Dominican Republic: Throughout Dominican history, several Presidents have been accused of corruption, for concrete acts in their governments. Dominican democracy and institutions are very questioned, because of the corrupt exercise of the politicians in power, because only 18 of every 100 Dominican citizens consider that their democracy works well.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From the middle of the nineteenth century through the mid-1980s, Peru and Bolivia were the two principal country-suppliers of both coca leaf and of refined cocaine to the US, European and other world markets (Paul Gootenberg, 2008: 1-14 and passim). As of 1985, Peru produced roughly 65% of the world's supply of coca leaf while Bolivia grew approximately 25% and Colombia 10% or less (Bagley, 2009a: 25; Clawson and Lee III, 1998: 12-16). With the "partial victories" achieved by the US-led war on drugs in the southern Andes during the late 1980s and early 1990s specifically, US-financed crop eradication programs in Bolivia's Chapare under President Victor Paz Estenssoro after 1986 (Operation Blast Furnace) and Presidents Hugo Banzer/Jorge Quiroga from 1998 to 2002 (Plan Dignidad), along with Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori's interruption of the "air bridge" between the Alto Huallaga coca region in Peru and the clandestine cocaine laboratories located in Colombia in the mid-1990s, coca cultivation in the Andes rapidly shifted to Colombia in the mid- and late 1990s. By 2000, Colombia cultivated an estimated 90% of the world's coca leaf while production in Peru and Bolivia dwindled to historic lows (Bagley, 2009a: 29; UNODC, 2006).

In the early 1990s, Colombia's US-backed all-out war against drug lord Pablo Escobar and the Medellín cartel during the César Gaviria administration lead to Escobar's death on December 2, 1993, and the rapid dissolution of the Medellín cartel (Dudley, 2004: 195-198; Vallejo, 2007: 352-385). Subsequent plea bargaining in 1994-95 during the Ernesto Samper administration with the major drug lords of the Cali cartel, specifically the Rodríguez Orejuela brothers, catalyzed the dismantling of the Cali cartel. While some large criminal trafficking networks (e.g., the Cartel del Norte del Valle), continued to operate in Colombia in the late 1990s and early 2000s, some 300 plus smaller drug trafficking organizations (known as cartelitos) surfaced to fill the vacuum left by the dismantling of the two major cartels in the political economy of Colombia's still highly profitable drug trade. By the late 1990s, basically as an unanticipated and unintended consequence

of the demise of the country's major cartels, Colombia's leftwing Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC) guerrillas and right wing Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, or AUC) paramilitary militias took control of coca cultivation and processing throughout rural Colombia, precipitating increased drug-related violence between these two groups of armed illegal actors, each of whom sought to eliminate the other and to consolidate their own territorial control over drug cultivation regions and the peasant growers across the Colombian countryside.

As a direct result, levels of drug-fueled violence in Colombia spiraled out of control in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Indeed, during much of the first decade of the 2000s Colombia became one of the most dangerous and violent countries in the world. In July 2000, President Clinton and the US government responded by backing the Andrés Pastrana administration in its war against run away drug production and trafficking in Colombia via the adoption of Plan Colombia. In August 2002, the newly inaugurated government of Álvaro Uribe received additional drug war assistance from Washington and the George W. Bush administration in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Supported by almost \$8 billion in US aid under Plan Colombia over the course of a decade, by 2010 Colombian President Uribe and his program of "democratic security" had managed to beat back the FARC guerrillas, demobilize many – if not all – of the country's paramilitary bands, and substantially reduce the country's astronomically high levels of drug-related violence.

Despite the substantial achievements of Plan Colombia and the Uribe administration's "democratic security" policies, however, as of 2010 Colombia remained a principal source of coca leaf and refined cocaine in the Andes and drug-related violence and criminality appeared to be once again on the rise.

The 2011 UN Drug Report states that the area used for cultivating coca in Colombia decreased by an estimated 15% in 2010, leaving Colombia just a slightly ahead of Peru as the world's largest coca leaf producer. Currently, the area under cultivation in Colombia is estimated at 62,000 ha. In comparison, 2009 statistics report 73,000 ha in terms of area under cultivation. As an unintended consequence of the US-backed war on drugs in Colombia, the locus of organized criminal involvement in cocaine trafficking gradually shifted northwards from Colombia to Mexico. As the Uribe administration and the US-backed

Plan Colombia succeeded at least partially in Colombia in the war against cocaine traffickers, the major drug trafficking networks in Mexico took advantage of the vacuum left in the drug trade to take over control of cocaine smuggling operations from Colombia into the United States. As a consequence, drug-related violence and criminality shifted northwards into Mexican territory as various Mexican trafficking organizations vied for control over the highly lucrative smuggling trade from Colombia and the southern Andes into the large and profitable US market.

Thus, Mexico's current drug-related bloodbath is, in part, directly attributable to the partial victory in the war on drugs achieved in Colombia in recent years via Plan Colombia. If the US-backed Mérida Initiative presently being implemented in Mexico achieves results similar to those of Plan Colombia, it will not halt drug trafficking or end organized crime in Mexico or the region. The most likely outcome is that it will drive both further underground in Mexico while pushing many smuggling activities and criminal network operations into neighboring countries such as Guatemala, Honduras; back to Colombia and the Andes. Indeed, evidence that some Mexican drug trafficking operations (Sinaloa, Zetas) are moving from Mexico into Central America is already abundant.

CURRENT RELEVANCE

The number of cases of violence and where Latin American government officials, including armed forces and police; are involved with organized crime and traffic or benefit from illegal substances has increased. Thus, it is important to know the exact magnitude, methods and situations that the upper levels of state of power in this illegal organizations as well as their presence through corruption in distinct levels of government. It is necessary to analyze which are the actions that facilitate the acts of corruption when they interact.

Drug trafficking is one between several factor that may have predisposed Latin America to high levels of current violence, according to the Global Study in Homicide by UNODC in 2012, top five most homicidal nations on the planet are in the sector and four of those are Central American nations.

The percentage of male and female homicide victims in the Americas are 12% female and 88% male, on the other hand there are 4% convicted female and 96% male. Almost half of all female victims of murder in

2012 were killed by intimate partners or family members, in comparison to less than 6 percent of male homicide victims.

In 2017, Venezuela ranked as the most homicidal country in the region, although there are not national murder statistics release by venezuelan government for more than 10 years. But according to the Venezuelan Observatory for Violence report there is a total of 26,616 murders occurred in Venezuela during the year made up of 5,535 at the hands of security forces, Caracas is at the top list with an approximated homicide of 130 per 100,000 inhabitants followed by

El Salvador with 60 per 100,000. Honduras 42.8 per 100,000 [" political crisis will push the contested administration of President Juan Orlando Hernández to revert back to counterproductive security policies, thereby abandoning or neglecting crucial long-term reforms"]

Brazil 29.7 per 100,000 [One symptom of Brazil's security crisis is the crumbling relationship between security forces and large swathes of the population, particularly the most disadvantaged. In 2016, 4,222 citizens were killed during security operations, while a total of 453 military and police officers were also murdered. Guatemala 26.1 per 100,000.

Colombia's murder rate fell in 2017, as it was announced that the Andean nation succeeded in preserving peace with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and authorities registered a total of 10,617 murders from January until November 2017, leaving Colombia with 24 per 100,000.

Afterwards, Mexico has 22.5 per 100,000 with 2017 resulting as one of the most homicidal years in the history of Mexico according to records from two decades back. The country is seeing the expansion of a security crisis as the fragmentation of crime groups creates a disarray. "Semáforo Delictivo" creates an annual report that estimates that the percentage of organized crime-related homicides intensely increased in 2017, which means it represents about 75 percent of all murders in 2016.

All this critical issues in this region of the globe have caused severus problems within each involved country's population in different ways possible. Some of them have a great impact in the economy and the society. According to Sunderland, the company responsible for collecting the figures of each country on murders, robberies,

kidnappings, extortion, the effectiveness of the security forces and the risk that these actions and crimes have on the economies of the countries, and that throws a score. For example in Mexico, Guatemala and throughout Central America, which is classified as a region of extreme risk, crime has cost about \$ 200,000 million. The annual cost of violence and crime in Latin America and the Caribbean reaches the \$261 billion or 3.55 percent of GDP, roughly what the region invests on infrastructure and double the average cost for developed countries; this was marked by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

90% of murders in the region go unresolved, and six out of ten robberies involve extreme violence. In fact the prisons in the area are the most overcrowded in the world.

Countries that spend more on prisons do not reap the benefits of less violence. For example El Salvador, The Bahamas spend large sums of money on their penitentiary systems, however suffer from high crime rates. On the other hand, Uruguay and Argentina have much lower incarceration cost and lower crime rates.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS.

To reach a solution there must be a global union where not only the Latin American community work together reason why there is a diverse range of organizations working in getting this people safely back home for everyone; women and children. This are some examples of programs against different types of violence, crime and corruption.

The International Conference to Support the Security Strategy of Central America organized by the Pro Tempore presidency of SICA, by its initials in Spanish, was celebrated in 2011, where countries from Europe and America mainly were summoned to discuss ways to improve the security in this territory. The centroamerican presidents adopted the Declaration of Guatemala, with the purpose that, through educational programs, and with the involvement of international organizations in the matter and the social security institutions themselves, the principles and essential values of social security will be disseminated among society as a whole.

The president from Guatemala reformed a Law against Drug activity and Trafficking in October 2012. This reform is seeking to prevent and cover all of the damage this chemicals have caused since they are

both bad for the environment and health issues. Although this law has been reformed multiple times, it has helped the country.

On November 2012, President Felipe Calderón asks the OAS (Organization of American states) "to undertake a serious analysis of the impact the legalisation of marijuana would have on the region." he also requested an hemispheric study of drugs asked by the countries that previously participated in the Summit of the Americas.

On April 2016, representatives of the member countries of SICA and Dominican Republic agreed to promote the process of legislation for the fight against transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. The objective of the project is to reinforce the international and national institutions in matter of justice and security for the fight against transnational organized crime.

UN ACTIONS.

Through the Global Programme against Corruption, UNODC supports the Judicial Integrity Group, an association composed of magistrates and judges, in the development of standards and policies to strengthen judicial integrity and capacity. In 2002, the Judicial Integrity Group adopted the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, which UNODC contributes to implement.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime. It opened for signature by Member States at a High-level Political Conference convened for that purpose in Palermo, Italy, on 12-15 December 2000 and entered into force on 29 September 2003.

The Convention is further supplemented by three Protocols, which target specific areas and manifestations of organized crime: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. Countries must become parties to the Convention itself before they can become parties to any of the Protocols.

States can use the UNTOC to cooperate at both informal and formal levels using the UNTOC. Informal cooperation can be undertaken in

many ways, such as between law enforcement authorities to share criminal intelligence, between witness protection authorities to cooperate in the protection of witnesses and between financial intelligence authorities to share information concerning financial crimes.

"Cuenta 3" This initiative is a call to action for men, and young people to reduce violence against girls and adult women, to contribute to the defense of their human rights and the achievement of gender equality. The message invites men from all social strata to reflect on violence against women and girls, without blaming them. The objective is to add men as allies in the fight against this problem, exhorting them not to generate violence and support the effort initiated with the promulgation of the Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence.

POINTS TO DISCUSS

- Government actions of countries involved in order to put an end to crime and violence.
- Should there be changes in the police body to procure safety and peace where crime and violence is increasing?
 - Which actions?
- Sanctions for corrupt government officials who put in danger the economy and the wellness of the country.
- What actions should be taken in order to prevent corruption inside the government and even the police body of countries affected.
- How neighbor countries could help and support affected ones to combat drug trafficking and organized crime.
- How drug trafficking affects the economy of countries involved and safety of its citizens.
- The rise of organized crime, that brings with it insecurity, drugs and other substances that damages the health of its citizens.

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