

THEMATIC REPORT

▶ Analyzes the patterns of violations of the rights of human rights defenders.

▶ Identifies the outstanding structural challenges, gaps, and progress to reverse this situation.

▶ Proposes recommendations to consolidate achievements and identify a priority agenda for action.

Advances to highlight

A **Recognition of the work** carried out by human rights defenders and the **extent of the violations against them.**

B **Political will to address the situation**, including the incorporation in the 2022-2026 National Development Plan of the goal to "significantly reduce the homicide of social leaders".

C **Resumption of dialogue** with human rights platforms and social movements at the national and regional levels.

D **Adoption of specific measures** to comply with the orders of **Constitutional Court Ruling SU-546.**

E Drafting of the **decree for the adoption of the Comprehensive Public Policy on Guarantees** for Human Rights Defenders.

F **Adoption of the Action Plan of the Comprehensive Program of Guarantees for Women Leaders and Defenders.**

G **Reactivation of the National Guarantees Process**, including the National Roundtable and Territorial Roundtables.

H **Efforts to address critical situations** of human rights violations in the territories.

Main concerns

1 Violence against human rights defenders has become a persistent and structural phenomenon, mainly affecting grassroots defenders with strong links to community-based organizations.

2 Non-state armed groups resort to killings, attacks, or threats to undermine organizational processes and send messages of terror and intimidation.

3 The State has not managed to reverse trends and patterns of violence, nor overcome obstacles to ensuring comprehensive protection for defenders.

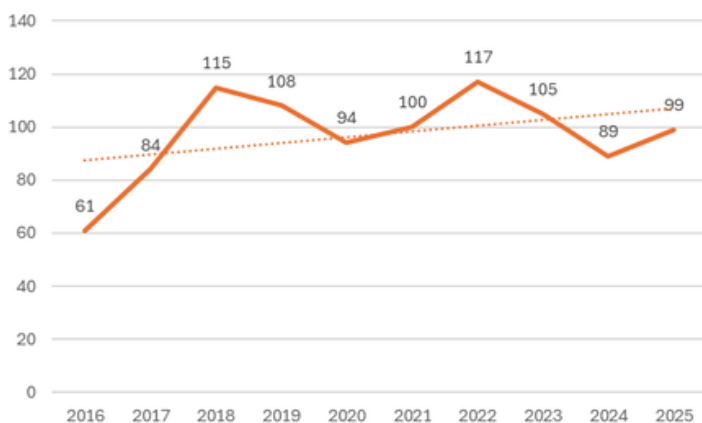
4 State responses in terms of prevention and protection remain fragmented without effective coordination between the national, departmental and municipal levels.

5 Absence of a high-level governmental body with decision-making and coordination capacity to articulate institutions at different levels for the territorial implementation of public policies on human rights.

6 The municipal level remains the weakest link in the protection system, with limited technical and financial capacity to adopt effective measures.

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN FIGURES

Killings of human rights defenders 2016 - 2025



The UN Human Rights Office documented 972 killings of human rights defenders between 2016 and 2025.

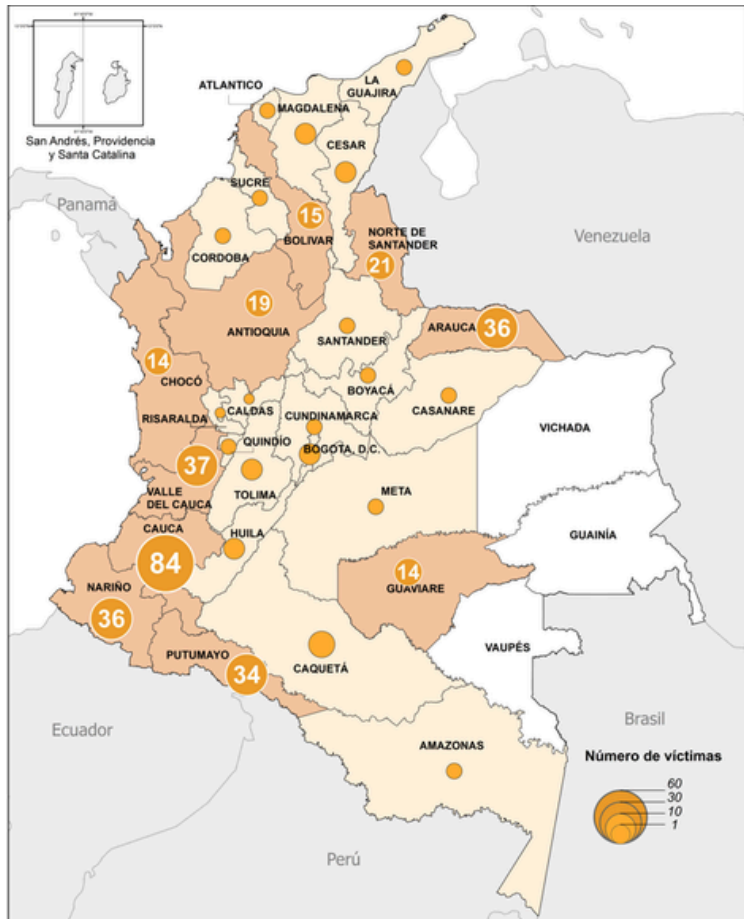
 **843** Men

 **112** Women

 **17** LGBTIQ+ people

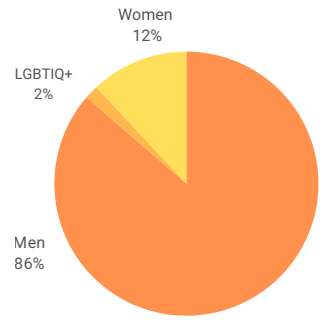
From 61 killings documented in 2016, an increase to 84 killings was recorded in 2017, and to 115 killings in 2018. In 2019, 2020, and 2021, the number of killings stabilized at around 100 killings per year, reaching the highest peak of the last decade in 2022 with 117 verified cases.

Killings of human rights defenders 2022-2025



Between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2025, UN Human Rights documented **410** cases of killings of human rights defenders.

Of these, **354** victims were men, **49** women, and **7** LGBTIQ+ persons (4 trans women, 2 gay men, and 1 non-binary person).



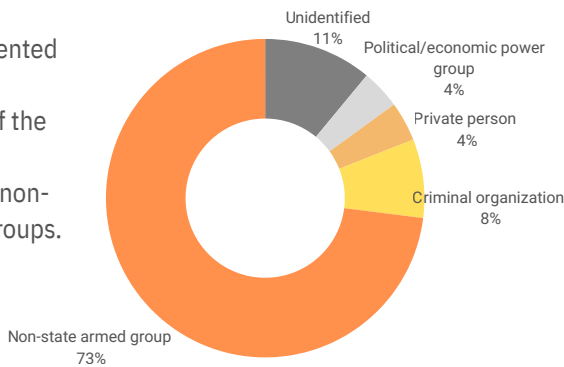
The documented cases are located in **184 municipalities across 28 departments.**

76% of the cases are concentrated in **10 departments**: Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Arauca, Putumayo, Norte de Santander, Antioquia, Bolívar, Chocó and Guaviare.

The 10 municipalities with the highest number of killings are Tame (Arauca), Tumaco (Nariño), Calamar (Guaviare), Tibú (Norte de Santander), Puerto Guzmán (Putumayo), Cali (Valle del Cauca), Santander de Quilichao (Cauca), Toribío (Cauca), Arauquita (Arauca), and Argelia (Cauca).

Violence against human rights defenders has a differentiated impact on traditional authorities, ancestral knowledge holders, traditional healers, Indigenous guards, and leaders defending collective rights, spirituality, cultural identity, autonomy, land and territory, environment, water, self-government, and Indigenous jurisdiction.

In **296** documented cases, alleged perpetrators of the killings may correspond to non-State armed groups.



23% of the victims belong to Indigenous Peoples.

Included:
22 guards
21 traditional authorities
14 ancestral knowledge holders
9 women

11% of the victims are Afro-descendant human rights defenders.

Included:
13 members of community councils
2 members of cimarrona guards

The victims of the killings belonged to **15** Indigenous Peoples: Arahua, Awá, Cubeo, Emberá, Gunadule, Hitnü, Inga, Kogui, Misak, Muina Murui, Nasa, Siona, Wayuu, Wiwa, Wounaan.

The defense of peasant rights and access to land is another area with high levels of risk. The departments with the highest numbers of killings are Arauca (13), Cauca (13), Putumayo (10), Antioquia (8), Bolívar (7), and Caquetá (6).

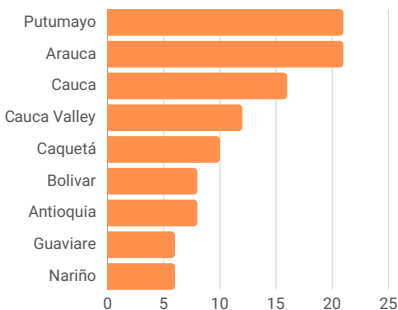
26% Of the verified cases, the victim is a defender of peasant rights.

The departments with the highest number of killings of Afro-descendant human rights defenders are Nariño (10), Chocó (8), and Cauca (8). The greatest risks for this population are related to their defense of land, territory, and the environment.

It includes **13** land claimants, **10** members of peasant reserve zones, and **5** people who promoted crop substitution.

16% of the killings correspond to defenders of land and environmental rights.

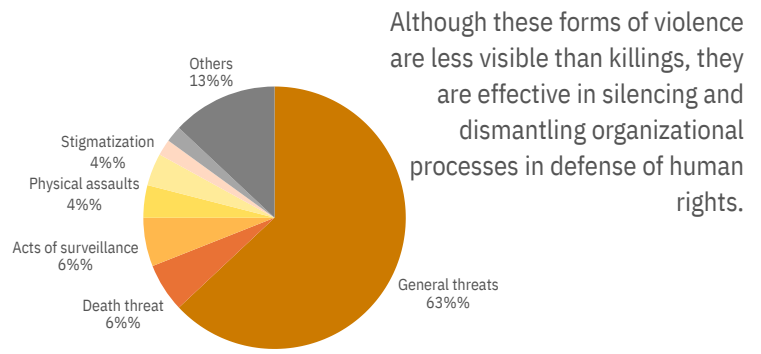
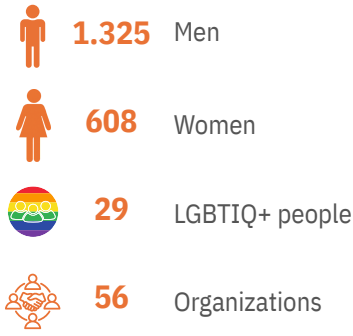
The departments with the highest number of cases are Cauca (18), Putumayo (12), Nariño (8) and Chocó (5).



The Office documented **137** killings of members of Community Action Boards (JAC), representing **34%** of the total number of killings of human rights defenders.

Threats against human rights defenders 2022-2025

The UN Human Rights Office recorded **2,018** cases of threats and attacks against human rights defenders between 2022 and 2025.



Although these forms of violence are less visible than killings, they are effective in silencing and dismantling organizational processes in defense of human rights.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopt the National Policy of Guarantees for Human Rights Defenders and accelerate its effective implementation at the national and territorial levels.

Assign a State institution to coordinate and articulate all State institutions to guarantee the work of human rights defenders; this institution must have the necessary resources, competences, and hierarchical level to carry out its function.

Incorporate the commitment to protect the lives of human rights defenders into the National Development Plan.

Continue strengthening spaces for participation and dialogue with social organizations, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities and community leaders.

Accelerate the implementation of the Policy for the Dismantling of the criminal phenomenon by consolidating it as a State policy and expanding its impact to various territories.

Strengthen coordination with mayors and governors, ensuring sufficient resources for the implementation of prevention plans at the local level.

Ensure the effective implementation of the National Policy of Guarantees for Human Rights Defenders, the Action Plan of the Comprehensive Program of Guarantees for Women Defenders, the National Human Rights Action Plan, and the relevant Constitutional Court rulings.

Design and implement public campaigns against the stigmatization of human rights defenders.

Advance in the reform of the protection model, incorporating the essential elements agreed with human rights platforms in the process of developing the National Policy of Guarantees.

Strengthen the coordination of the National Guarantees Committee, the Territorial Committees and the thematic subgroups.

Ensure that the Public Force effectively coordinates with the National Protection Unit to guarantee the implementation of collective protection measures.

Maintain close collaboration with UN Human Rights to integrate monitoring, advisory, and technical cooperation of the Office into the strategy to guarantee the rights of human rights defenders.

Combat the stigmatization of human rights defenders through a presidential decree.

Continue with the implementation of the Constitutional Court ruling in the CAJAR case.

Respond to the Constitutional Court order and adopt a strategy to articulate and rationalize public policy on prevention.

Continue to ensure that the actions of the Public Force strictly comply with international human rights standards and the principle of non-stigmatization of human rights defenders, in line with the Human Security approach.

Guarantee that, in negotiation processes with non-State armed groups and in socio-legal dialogues with criminal organizations, the end of all forms of violence against the civilian population is established as a condition of dialogue.

Non-State armed groups must refrain from attacking, threatening, stigmatizing, coercing, or involving the civilian population in the dynamics of armed conflict, in compliance with human rights and international humanitarian law.