



Colombia's Security Reset Enters the Operational Phase

Funded assistance, joint task-force activity, and the shift from announced policy to executed operations against armed and criminal networks.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colombia's security realignment has moved from announcement to execution. Assistance committed earlier in 2026 is now attached to programmed activity, joint task forces are operating in contested departments, and interdiction and eradication tempo has increased against coca economies, illegal mining, and armed-group finance. The operational phase raises effectiveness expectations and, with them, exposure: intensified state pressure narrows armed-group revenue and territory, which historically produces displacement of violence rather than its immediate reduction. The next two to three quarters are the period in which retaliation risk, community friction, and infrastructure targeting are most likely to concentrate.

KEY JUDGMENTS

The transition from funded commitment to executed operations is the most consequential change since the realignment was announced; assessment should now track operational tempo and district-level control rather than policy statements.

Armed and criminal groups facing revenue compression are likely to answer sustained pressure with asymmetric attacks on police, military, energy, and transport targets rather than with pitched engagements.

Violence is more likely to displace than to disappear: pressure in Catatumbo, Cauca, Narino, and the Bajo Cauca corridor tends to relocate coca processing, mining, and extortion into adjacent municipalities and across the Venezuelan border.

Foreign-partner visibility raises the political salience of the campaign and makes U.S.-linked personnel, contractors, and facilities a more attractive symbolic target.

Commercial exposure is concentrated in pipeline and power infrastructure, road transport, extractive operations, and local workforce security in departments where the state is contesting previously ceded terrain.

Sustainability, not initial tempo, is the decisive variable; if operational intensity outpaces territorial consolidation and civil-administration follow-through, gains achieved in the first year are likely to erode.

RISK PROFILE (1-5)



Relative risk across five dimensions over the 12-month forecast horizon.

WHAT CHANGED

The realignment described in SM-2026-TA-110 established intent and funding. This assessment covers execution. Programmed assistance has begun to convert into equipment sustainment, aviation hours, intelligence support, and joint planning cells; national task forces are deployed in departments where armed groups previously operated with limited interference; and eradication and interdiction reporting has increased in both frequency and geographic spread.

Execution changes the risk calculus in three ways. It generates measurable losses for armed-group finance, it places state personnel in terrain they do not routinely hold, and it creates a visible partner signature that adversaries can exploit politically.

THREAT VECTORS TO WATCH

Improvised explosive attacks and standoff fire directed at police stations, military installations, and convoy routes in contested departments.

Pipeline valve attacks, pylon demolition, and substation sabotage timed to periods of heightened operational activity.

Extortion pressure and forced work stoppages against extractive, agricultural, and transport operators as groups replace interdicted revenue.

Targeting of social leaders, local officials, and community representatives who cooperate with consolidation efforts.

Information operations framing the campaign as externally directed, intended to reduce local cooperation and constrain the government politically.

INDICATORS AND WARNINGS

- A shift from rural ambush to urban attack in departmental capitals would indicate a deliberate escalation decision rather than local reaction.
- Coordinated multi-department attacks within a short window would indicate retained command capacity despite leadership losses.
- Sustained pipeline outage days above the 2025 baseline would signal a campaign against energy infrastructure rather than opportunistic sabotage.
- Movement of processing and mining activity into new municipalities, visible in enforcement and environmental reporting, would confirm displacement.
- Delays in civil-administration deployment behind cleared areas would be an early indicator that gains will not hold.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations with people, facilities, or supply routes in affected departments should treat the next three quarters as an elevated-tempo period rather than a normalizing one. Journey-management rules, convoy timing, site standoff, and local liaison should be reviewed against current department-level advisories, and continuity plans should assume episodic road closures, power interruption, and short-notice operational pauses.

Colombia remains subject to a U.S. Department of State Level 3 advisory, with several departments designated Do Not Travel because of crime and terrorism. Advisory changes, rather than incident reporting alone, remain the practical trigger for posture reviews.

ANALYTIC NOTE

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