

## Power as a Weapon: How Maduro and Petro Exploit Civilians

By Fernando Mora<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

*In this explosive exposé, the author unveils the dark alliance between Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro and Colombia's Gustavo Petro—a decades-long partnership that has mutated from ideological camaraderie into a full-fledged transnational criminal empire.*

*Disguised under slogans like “Peace” and “Revolution,” the two regimes have weaponized state power to co-govern with drug cartels, arm illegal groups, and use civilians as human shields. From rigged peace negotiations to fake anti-drug campaigns, Petro and Maduro have built a political machine fueled by narco-trafficking, propaganda, and repression.*

*Worse still, they've manipulated international perception, selling a lie of reform while civilians—especially women and children—are forcibly recruited, terrorized, and sacrificed in the name of “progress.” This isn't just political corruption. It's the criminal hijacking of democracy. And it's not just a crisis—it's a regional ticking time bomb. The silence must end. The world must pay attention.*

Dictator Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela and Colombia's authoritarian president, Gustavo Petro, have been political allies since 1994—when Petro first invited Hugo Chávez to Colombia. Since then, the ideological and operational bond between the Venezuelan and Colombian [far] left has evolved into a transnational criminal partnership, deeply rooted in narco-trafficking, armed insurgency, and the manipulation of democratic institutions.

It is no secret that FARC and ELN money—gained through cocaine trafficking, kidnapping, and arms smuggling—was instrumental in Chávez's rise to power. Since then, both Chávez and Maduro have publicly

acknowledged financing Petro's political ambitions. Today, under the guise of “revolution” and “Total Peace,” the two regimes have become indistinguishable from organized crime networks.

### A Campaign Built on Crime

During Petro's 2022 presidential campaign, the now-infamous Pacto de la Picota exposed the dark foundation of his political ascent. Petro's eldest son and a close campaign advisor—later appointed as Peace Commissioner—entered Bogotá's Picota Prison to negotiate with drug lords and criminal bosses<sup>2</sup>. This was not a peace process; it was a pact with the underworld.

That pact was symbolically reaffirmed on 4 September 2025, when First Lady Verónica Alcocer returned to Picota Prison—a quiet but telling gesture that sealed the campaign's criminal alliances. These actions confirmed what many feared: Petro's government is not merely compromised—it is entangled in systemic criminality.

### Criminal Power in Disguise

Under Maduro and Petro, illegal armed groups have expanded their influence exponentially. In Venezuela, they co-govern with the regime under the Bolivarian banner. In Colombia, the so-called Total Peace initiative has legitimized these groups as political actors—granting them territorial control and allowing them to operate with near-total impunity.

The results are staggering: Colombia is now the world's leading producer and exporter of cocaine, for the third consecutive year. This is not a failure of policy—it is the direct outcome of a criminal strategy masked as peacebuilding.

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<sup>2</sup> All Colombians saw it by TV.

Meanwhile, both regimes recycle coordinated propaganda-repeated in cabinet meetings, national addresses, state media, and international forums like the UN General Assembly.

Their narrative is clear: civilians, especially the poor and rural populations, must “resist foreign interference” by defending their governments. In practice, this means taking up arms—or being used as human shields.

### **Civilians as Pawns of War**

In both countries, armed groups embed themselves in civilian populations. They forcibly recruit minors, terrorize communities, and coerce the vulnerable into participating in operations that violate international law.

In Colombia, this tactic has become routine: civilians, often women and children, are mobilized to block military operations, shield drug traffickers, and obstruct justice.

This is not resistance—it is psychological and criminal warfare. These groups are exploiting the language of human rights and social justice to protect their operations, while committing war crimes: torture, kidnapping, child conscription, and extrajudicial killings.

Under international law, such actions violate the Geneva Conventions—specifically, Common Article 3 and Protocol II. Governments that enable or ignore these practices risk prosecution for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Petro administration, through silence and complicity, is increasingly fitting that description.

### **A Manufactured Peace, A Manufactured Narrative**

The numbers Petro and Maduro present to the international community—on cocaine confiscation, criminal dismantling, or peacebuilding—are grossly inflated or outright false. Just 0.001% of actual cocaine production

is seized by their authorities. This illusion of enforcement is a ploy straight out of the old cartel playbook: allow token seizures to placate international observers while protecting the true scale of operations.

Under Petro, this deception has become institutionalized. From budget reports to public speeches, independent audits reveal a consistent pattern: the majority of Petro's data is manipulated, if not fabricated. What began in Venezuela under Chávez has now become routine in Colombia under Petro.

### **The para militarization of Civil Society**

Today, 75% of Colombia's territory is dominated by criminal groups acting as parallel states. Backed by narco trafficking, illegal mining, arms and humans trafficking, they impose their own laws, conduct extrajudicial trials, and govern through fear.

In 2025 alone, 58 documented civilian uprisings—in departments such as Nariño, Guaviare, Cauca, Putumayo, Huila—were used to shield drug lords from capture. Allegedly civilians, often dressed in white to mimic neutrality, formed human walls to block military and police operations. In some cases, captured soldiers were tortured, burned alive, or executed—before being released in ICRC-brokered negotiations.

This shift is not accidental. From 2018 to 2022, the military rarely encountered civilians during combat with illegal groups. But that changed when Petro's allies, operating from Caracas with Maduro's support, launched a coordinated messaging campaign. Their slogan—“They are killing us”—spread globally during the 2021 Estallido Social, falsely framing security operations as attacks on innocent civilians. That lie has metastasized.

Today, it shields armed criminals who are using civilians as cover—and the same international organizations that once denounced violence have gone silent.

### **A Regional Threat, Not Just a National Crisis**

What we are witnessing is not simply political decay—it is the deliberate dismantling of democracy and the rise of criminal states. Petro and Maduro have weaponized peace, exploited the poor, manipulated public perception, and legitimized criminal empires.

The result? The state has lost its monopoly on force. Criminal groups have more arms, territory, and funding than ever. Democratic institutions are collapsing from within. Meanwhile, Petro and Maduro pay millions to lobbyists and public relations firms to maintain the illusion of reform. Their goal is not peace—it is power. And they are willing to sacrifice civilians to keep it.

This is a red line—not just for Colombia and Venezuela, but for the entire region. If the international community continues to ignore this reality, it risks legitimizing a model of governance rooted in crime, fear, and repression. The time for silence is over.