

## **Cocaine State**

### **The making of a Narco-Democracy**

*by Fernando Mora<sup>1</sup>*

For over two decades, Colombia's [far]-left political forces in Colombia have been central to the evolution of the nation's cocaine economy. While presenting themselves as defenders of the environment and indigenous rights, these movements have systematically blocked [right] governments efforts to curb coca cultivation, cocaine production, and trafficking. By framing coca farming as "cultural heritage," they claimed to protect indigenous traditions and rural livelihoods.

In practice, they empowered the criminal networks that thrive on cocaine and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

### **Sabotage and Manipulation**

Between 2018 and 2022, [far]-left groups actively sabotaged national programs to reduce coca production. They organized campaigns glorifying coca as "ancestral," pressured farmers to keep planting it, and obstructed eradication efforts. Many peasants were coerced—told to continue growing coca under false promises of compensation if they would stop.

These tactics crippled the state's ability to confront narco trafficking and restore order. When authorities intervened, armed groups aligned with the [far]-left used civilians as shields, manufacturing casualties to accuse the government of human rights violations.

### **"Total Peace": A Rebranded Strategy**

Now, with the [far]-left in power, the same strategy continues—repackaged under the rhetoric of "*Total Peace*." Under President Petro, coordination between elements of the military, armed groups, and criminal organizations persists, justified as an effort to "minimize civilian harm." Behind this narrative lies a state increasingly intertwined with the criminal economies it claims to oppose.

**Foreign Connections and Propaganda** Venezuela's Maduro has played a decisive role. As head of the *Cartel de los Soles*, Maduro's regime has supported Colombian cocaine industry and illegal exploitation of natural resources to fund armed groups such as the ELN, FARC-EP (now FARC dissidents), Hezbollah, Hamas, and both Colombian and Mexican cartels. Such Maduro's allies are now Petro's associates.

At the same time, Maduro has orchestrated vast online propaganda networks—bot armies that, for over twenty years, have attacked Colombian institutions, and governments amplifying [far]-left narratives.

Colombia's [far]-left has weaponized international alliances to manipulate global perception. Once demanding "international oversight" of coca cultivation and using foreign data to condemn past governments for failing against narco trafficking, they now pursue a different agenda. In power, President Petro and his *Pacto Histórico* coalition are pressuring these same institutions to alter the metrics that monitor the cocaine trade. Rebranding themselves as "anti-drug reformers," they aim not to dismantle the criminal networks behind the industry, but to protect and legitimize them.

### **The Picota Pact**

During the 2021-2022 election cycle, Colombia witnessed unprecedented collusion between [far]-left leaders and organized crime. Secret negotiations with imprisoned traffickers and all sorts of criminals led to the infamous *Picota Prison Pact*—an agreement between Petro's campaign (and political allies such Polo Democrático, La Alianza Verde) and incarcerated crime bosses.

This pact laid the foundation for *Total Peace*, which effectively granted immunity, territorial control, and economic freedom to insurgent and criminal groups in Colombia and Venezuela. In exchange, Petro's movement secured sweeping

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political power—capturing both Congress and the presidency.

### **Corruption and Cover-Ups**

Petro's own family has admitted that his presidential campaign received money from narcotraffickers. Further investigations revealed that *Pitufo*, among others, a notorious contraband kingpin, also funneled illicit funds into the campaign. Under Petro's government, *Pitufo* was quietly allowed to flee to Portugal, where he now enjoys state protection.

Soon after, the Petro administration awarded Portugal a multimillion-dollar contract to produce Colombian passports—a country lacking the required infrastructure, which immediately subcontracted the work to France. The suspicious deal appeared designed only for one purpose: to shield *Pitufo* from extradition.

### **The Machinery of Power**

Under the banner of peace and social justice, Colombia's [far]-left has perfected a political enterprise that merges ideology with organized crime. What began as a movement claiming to defend the poor and protect the environment has degenerated into a regime sustained by narcotrafficking, foreign alliances, and systemic deceit.

Cocaine and the illegal exploitation of natural resources have not only fueled violence and environmental destruction—it has shaped political power itself. It propelled Petro to the presidency and earlier to the mayoralty of Bogotá Individuals tied to the illicit financing of his rise—such as *Pitufo*—now live comfortably in Europe as “political refugees.”

Petro and his coalition, el Pacto Histórico, have struggled to maintain political momentum. In the recent midterm elections, they failed to secure major victories in key races for mayors and governors, and their disappointing performance extended to the youth elections, where support for Petro's movement was strikingly low.

At the same time, corruption scandals within Petro's administration—culminating in the imprisonment of the former presidents of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, along

with several other legislators—have further weakened his position. Despite these challenges, Petro and his coalition have been unable to assert control over Congress, underscoring the growing fragility of their political influence.

### **The Cocaine Effect**

This fusion of crime and politics gave rise to the so-called *Total Peace* initiative—a supposed peace process that, under the guise of reconciliation, has instead consolidated [far]-left control. Petro's movement, Colombia Humana, boasts of having 76,000 members, yet struggles to verify even 1,600—raising serious questions about the legitimacy of its membership claims and the justification for its public funding.

Meanwhile, Petro's closest allies—flush with newfound wealth—have founded new political movements, quietly channeling millions of pesos into his campaign network. The result is a political project built not on transparency or reform, but on the seamless fusion of ideology, corruption, and organized crime.

For the first time in Colombia's history, a populist leader has risen to power not through the genuine trust of the people, but allegedly through the financial backing of organized crime and illegal armed groups—much like his political twin, Maduro. Members of the international community are now beginning to acknowledge and call out this troubling reality.

Petro is far from alone. His ascent is backed by an international web of support—from Venezuela, Turkey Russia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Hezbollah, Hamas, Spain, and global cartels that feed on Colombia's most profitable export: cocaine and natural resources.

### **The Siamese Brothers: Maduro-Petro**

Maduro and Petro call themselves the *Siamese brothers*—and with reason. Their rhetoric, methods, and ambitions are mirror images. Both command vast propaganda machines built to discredit and silence opponents across the region.

Their bond runs deeper than ideology. Former Venezuelan spy chief Hugo “El Pollo” Carvajal testified that Chávez [and Maduro] have financed Petro's political career since 1999—revealing a

partnership rooted in power, money, and mutual survival.

### **Venezuela: The Repression Model**

Over the past two years, Maduro's regime has waged an unrelenting campaign against Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado. Barred from public office in 2023, her campaign convoy was attacked in 2024, and she was briefly detained in 2025. Dozens of her allies have been arrested or forced into exile, while international observers have condemned these acts as blatant political persecution.

As of April 10, 2025, Amnesty International and other human rights organizations reported 896 people arbitrarily detained for political reasons, with 62 still missing. Members of Machado's movement have been attacked—and even assassinated—in Chile and Colombia.

### **Colombia: The Replica**

In Colombia, Petro has adopted similar authoritarian tactics. He bears political responsibility for the assassination of Senator and presidential candidate Miguel Uribe, after repeatedly targeting him—over forty times—through official and social media channels.

Candidates opposing Petro and his *Pacto Histórico* coalition ahead of the 2026 elections have faced escalating threats and violent attacks. Many now live under permanent security protection, with some requiring up to fifteen bodyguards each.

Opposition leaders, journalists, and civil society figures have all reinforced their security in response to coordinated harassment fueled by Petro and the Maduro regime, which remains deeply involved in Colombian politics.

### **The Alliance of Authoritarianism**

Petro and his coalition openly defend Maduro's dictatorship and its human rights abuses. Together, these so-called *Siamese brothers* smear their opponents as criminals, fascists, and conspirators—using defamation as a weapon to weaken democracy.

Meanwhile, Petro devotes much of his presidency not to governing, but to campaigning—spending millions of dollars mobilizing paid demonstrations

in his favor. His administration is mired in political, economic, and human rights crises, yet its focus remains preserving power for himself and *El Pacto Histórico*.

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