Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul

Supplementary Information – A/81/227 (2026): Distinguishing organized crime from terrorism to protect human rights

I. Criminal groups listed as terrorist in the Americas

1. As of August 2026, 39 criminal groups have been listed as terrorist by 10 States in the Americas. The listings in the following eight States have legal effects under domestic law:

State	Criminal group
Argentina	Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación, Cártel de los Soles, Comando Vermelho, Tren de Aragua
Canada	Bishnoi Gang (Lawrence Bishnoi Group), Cártel del Golfo, Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación, Cártel de Sinaloa, Cárteles Unidos, La Familia Michoacana, Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), Tren de Aragua
Dominican Republic	Cártel de los Soles
Ecuador	Águilas, ÁguilasKiller, Ak47, Caballeros Oscuros, ChoneKiller, Choneros, Corvicheros, Cuartel de las Feas, Cubanos, Fatales, Gánster, Kater Piler, Lagartos, Latin Kings, , Lobos, Los p.27, Los Tiburones, Mafia 18, Mafia Trébol, Patrones, R7, Tiguerones
El Salvador	Barrio 18, Mara Mao Mao, Mara Máquina, MS-13, Sombra Negra
Guatemala	Barrio 18, MS-13
Paraguay	Cártel de los Soles, Comando Vermelho, Primeiro Comando da Capital
United States	Barrio 18, Cártel del Golfo, Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación, Cártel de los Soles, Cártel de Sinaloa, Cártel del Noreste, Cárteles Unidos, Chone Killers, Comando Vermelho, Gran Grif, Juárez Cartel, La Nueva Familia Michoacana, Los Choneros, Los Lobos, Los Viagra, MS-13, Primeiro Comando da Capital, Tren de Aragua, Viv Ansanm

2. Parliamentary declarations in the following two States have politically listed criminal groups as terrorist, without imposing binding legal consequences:

Costa Rica	Cártel del Golfo, Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación, Cártel de los Soles, Cártel de Sinaloa, Cártel del Noreste, Cárteles Unidos, La Nueva Familia Michoacana, Los Choneros, Los Lobos, MS-13, Tren de Aragua
Peru	Cártel de los Soles

3. On 24 August 2026, the President of Colombia announced an "historical shift… all illegal armed groups, regardless of their name, will be treated under a single category: terrorists".[1] There have been legislative proposals to designate groups as terrorist in Honduras since 2024 (concerning *maras* and *pandillas*) and Brazil since 2025 (concerning the domestic groups Primeiro Comando da Capital and Comando Vermelho, and international groups such as Barrio 18, MS-13, Cártel del Golfo, Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación, Cártel de Sinaloa, and Tren de Aragua).

[1] Colombian Presidency, Press Release, 24 August 2026.

II. Legal analysis of military operations against “narco-terrorism”

4. For further legal analysis of military responses to “narco-terrorism” in the Americas since September 2025, referenced in paragraphs 25 and 26 of A/81/227, see the Special Rapporteur’s Briefing Note of September 2026: “Killing ‘Narco-Terrorists’ at Sea: The Legality of Military Attacks on Criminal Groups and Drug Trafficking under International Human Rights Law and Other Applicable International Law”.[2]

[2] https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/briefing-note-killing-narco-terrorists-sea-legality-military-attacks.