

# COSTA RICA

BASIC INFORMATION

<b>Population:</b>	<b>5,212,200 inhabitants</b>
<b>Territorial Extension</b>	<b>51,100 km<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>GDP (US\$)</b>	<b>96,058,000,000</b>
<b>GDP per capita (US\$)</b>	<b>18,429</b>
<b>Public Force Personnel</b>	<b>12,091</b>
<b>Security Budget (US\$)</b>	<b>582,910,575</b>

### The Legal Framework

#### National Legislation

Organic Law of the Ministry of Public Security (N° 5482 - 1973/12/24. Last Amendment: N° 7410 - 1994/05/26).

General Police Law (N° 7410 - 1994/05/30. Last Amendment: N° 10302 - 2022/08/24).

Organic Law of the Public Prosecutor's Office (N° 7442 - 1994/11/25).

Arms and explosives Law (N° 7530 - 1995/08/23. Last Amendment: N° 9731 - 2019/08/27).

Youth Criminal Justice Law (N° 7576 - 1996/04/30. Last Amendment: 2019/01/22).

Criminal Justice Code (N° 7594 - 1996/04/10. Last Amendment: 2013/03/05).

Law on alternate conflict resolution and promotion of social peace (N° 7727 - 1998/01/14. Last Amendment: N° 10257 - 2022/05/06).

Law creating the National Coast Guard Service (N° 8000 - 2000/05/24. Last Amendment: 2023/12/13).

Law strengthening the Civil Police (N° 8096 - 2001/03/15. Last Amendment: 2018/05/24).

Law creating the National Program of Education against Drugs (N° 8093 - 2001/03/23).

Law declaring December 1st as Abolition of the Army Day (N° 8115 - 2001/08/28).

Law on the regulation of private security services (N° 8395 - 2003/01/30. Last Amendment: 2018/05/24).

Law for the creation of the School and Childhood Police (N° 8449 - 2005/06/14).

Witness Protection Law (N° 8720 - 2009/03/04).

Law against human trafficking (N° 9095 - 2013/02/08).

Law creating the National Police Academy (N° 9552 - 2018/05/24).

Law creating the Directorate of the Air Surveillance Service as a police force attached to the MPS (N° 10061 - 2021/11/15).

Law on the budgetary efficiency and transparency of the legal entities tax to strengthen the resources directed to the security sector (N° 10460 - 2024/03/20).

### Public Security System

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graph TD
    President --> Ministry
    President --> Council
    Council --> Ministry
    Ministry --> PublicForce
    PublicForce --> AerialService
    PublicForce --> CoastGuard
    
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Advisory and assistance functional relationship

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Command reporting line

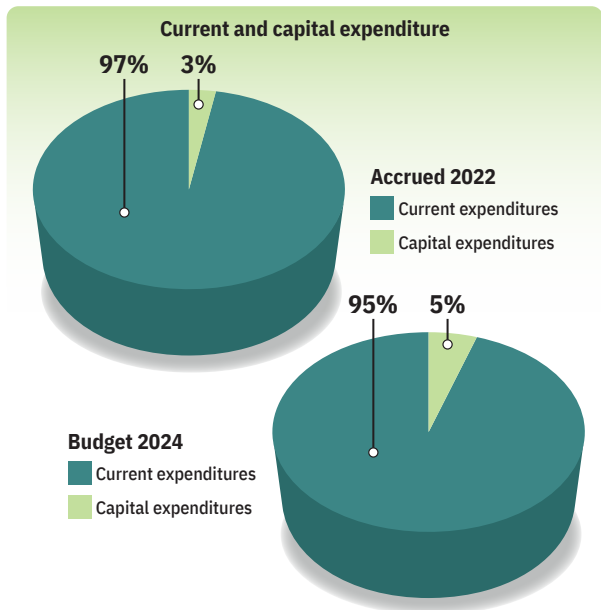
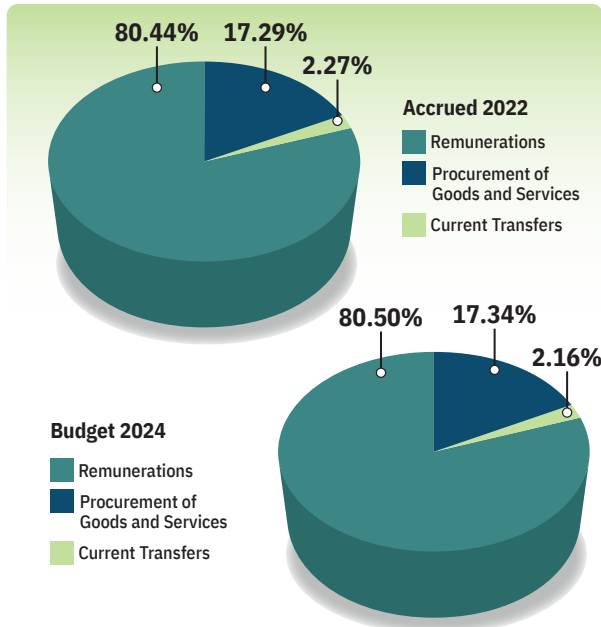
The supreme command of the Public Force, which consists of all the Police Forces in the country, is exercised by the President of the Republic. The Ministry of Public Security is responsible for ensuring maximum benefit of the human and material resources available in the Public Administration and for coordinating the entire police system.

The National Public Security Council defines the general policies for different police bodies, in accordance with the directives of the President of the Republic.

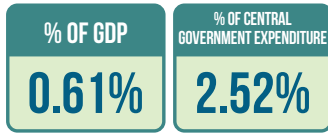
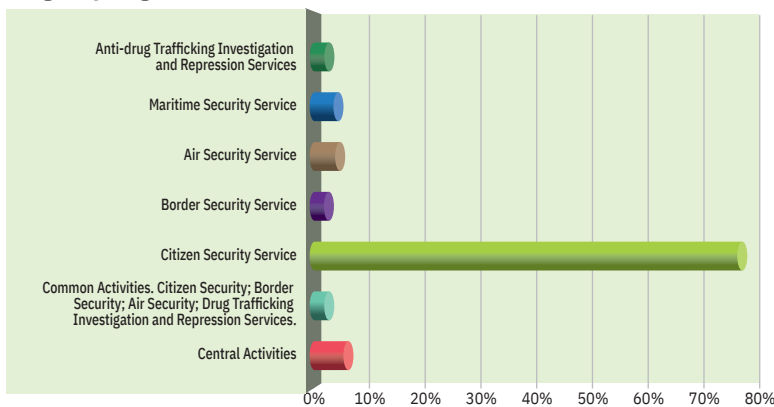
**Source:** Compilation based on Political Constitution; *Ley general de policía* (N° 7410 - 1994/05/30. Last Amendment: N° 10302 - 2022/08/24); *Ley Orgánica del Ministerio de Seguridad Pública* (N° 5482 - 1973/12/24. Last Amendment: N° 7410 - 1994/05/26).

## The Budget

Accrued 2022 and Budget 2024, Current Expenditure by Item



Budget, by Program



Budget 2024

Ministry of Public Security. Budget 2024 (in Colones)

<b>Central Activities</b>	<b>18,741,872,817</b>
Political Leadership of Public Security	16,350,409,845
Public Security Management Audit	20,616,060
Administration of the Disciplinary Regime for Personnel	78,715,866
Coordination of Support Services for Police Forces	2,292,131,046
<b>Common Activities, Citizen Security; Border Security; Air Security; Drug Trafficking Investigation and Repression Services</b>	<b>8,274,154,155</b>
Direction, Planning and Control of Police Education	1,654,830,830
Internal Educational Management of Police Education	4,964,492,493
External Educational Management of Police Education	827,415,416
Academic Research	827,415,416
<b>Citizen Security Service</b>	<b>232,100,128,251</b>
Direction, Planning and Control of Citizen Security	4,642,002,566
Police Intelligence for Citizen Security	4,642,002,565
Police Communications	4,642,002,565
Surveillance and Public Order Operations	186,840,603,242
Special Forces Operations	13,926,007,695
Tourist Security Services	4,642,002,565
Community Crime Prevention	9,284,005,130
Private Security Services Oversight	1,160,500,641
Centralized Arsenal Management	1,160,500,641
Control of Weapons and Explosives	1,160,500,641
<b>Border Security Service</b>	<b>7,692,416,632</b>
Direction, Planning and Control of Border Security	1,141,554,628
Border Security Intelligence	78,462,650
Border Operations	6,277,781,213
Prevention and Intervention in Border Communities	194,618,141
<b>Air Security Service</b>	<b>14,207,200,578</b>
Direction, Planning and Control of Air Security	994,504,041
Airport Security services	4,262,160,173
Air Support Operations	4,262,160,173
Aeronautical Maintenance	1,136,576,046
Airspace Control	3,551,800,145
<b>Maritime Security Service</b>	<b>13,284,597,086</b>
Direction, Planning and Control of Maritime Security	2,105,608,638
Training, Education and Specialization of Coastguards	1,044,169,331
Maritime Operations	8,421,106,093
Nautical Maintenance	1,713,713,024
<b>Anti-drug Trafficking Investigation and Repression Services</b>	<b>8,352,630,481</b>
Direction, Planning and Control	5,621,320,314
Investigations and Operations	2,731,310,167
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>302,653,000,000</b>

	Accrued 2022	Budget 2024
<b>CURRENT EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Consumption Expenditure</b>		
Wages and Salaries	69.4%	69.3%
Social Contributions	12.9%	13.0%
Procurement of Goods and Services	17.7%	17.7%
<b>Current Transfers</b>		
Transfers to the Public Sector	50.3%	55.4%
Transfers to the Private Sector	49.7%	44.6%
<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</b>		
<b>Capital Formation</b>		
Buildings	99.7%	100.0%
Facilities	0.3%	0.0%
<b>Acquisition of Assets</b>		
Machinery and Equipment	88.9%	93.9%
Intangible	11.1%	6.1%

Source: Compilation based on Ley 10427, de Presupuesto Ordinario y Extraordinario de la República para el Ejercicio Económico del 2024. IMF, World Economic Outlook Database (GDP, April 2024). Central Bank of Costa Rica (Exchange Rate: 1 US\$ = 519,21 Colones, January 2024).

## The Ministry of Public Security

YEAR OF CREATION\*

**1923**

Average Tenure in Office for Ministers:  
**1 YEAR AND 7 MONTHS**

### MISSION

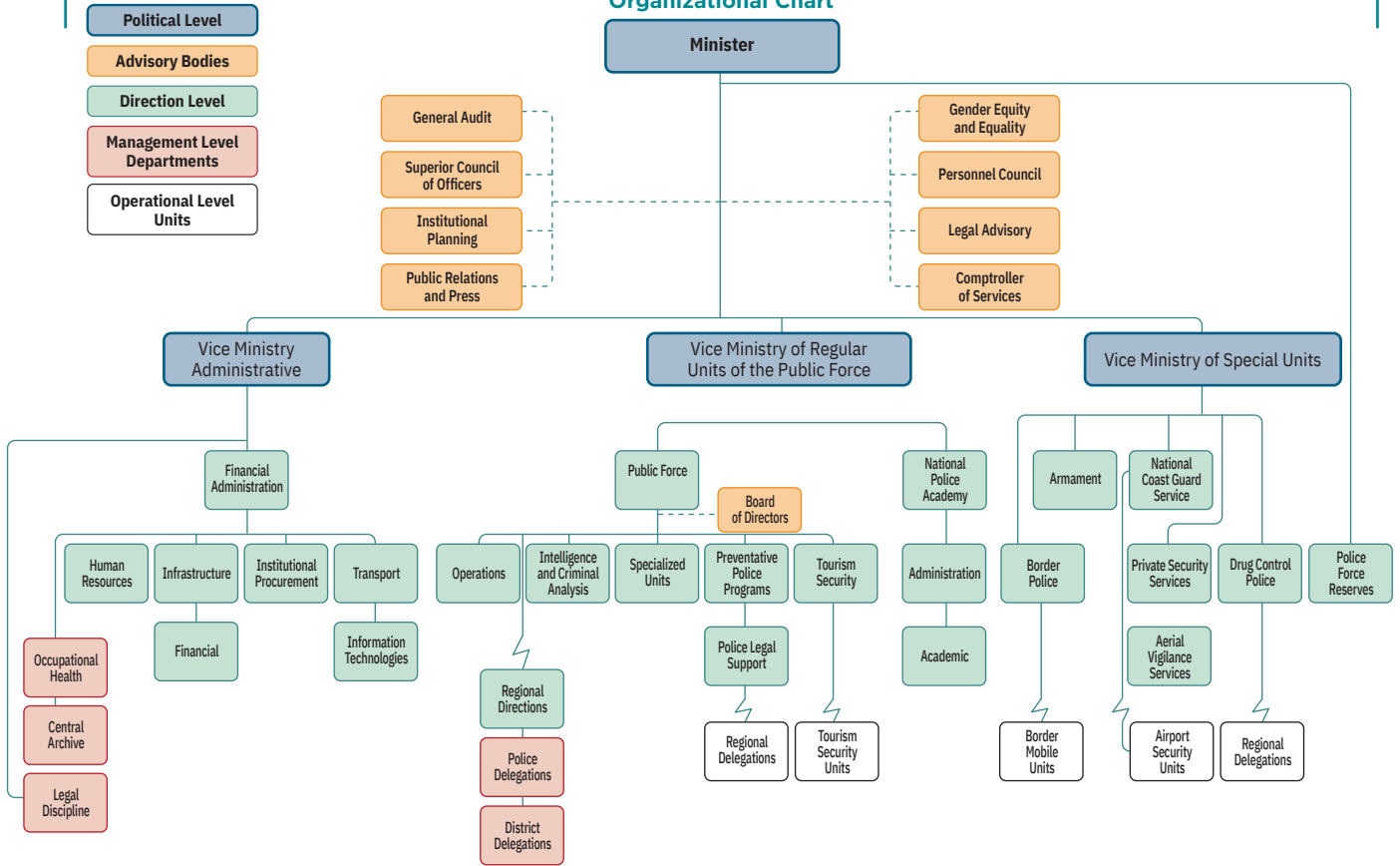
Serve and protect individuals in the enjoyment of their individual rights and guarantees, preserve Costa Rican democracy and sovereignty.

### MANDATES

- Ensure respect for the laws, treaties and conventions that guarantee the integrity of the national territory, territorial waters, continental shelf, airspace of the Republic, and the exercise of the rights corresponding to the Costa Rican State.
- Protect the exercise of and ensure compliance with constitutional guarantees.
- Monitor and maintain public order and tranquillity in the national territory, territorial waters, continental shelf and airspace of the Republic.
- Maintain security and respect for the property and rights of the inhabitants of the country.
- Comply with and enforce Court rulings and decisions and to comply with all decisions of the Legislative Assembly and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in matters within their competence.
- Provide the assistance requested by the Courts of Justice or the Office of the Attorney-General of the Republic, and to submit reports and evidence directly to the Courts or through the Office of the Attorney-General.
- Prevent and investigate the commission of crimes, misdemeanours and other punishable offences, and to apprehend criminals or indicted persons, make seizures, and make them available to the competent authority.
- Cooperate on a reciprocal basis with international Police organizations, in accordance with existing conventions, in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of crime.
- Provide relief and collaboration to communities, especially in cases of national emergency or public disturbance, as well as municipalities and public service organizations.
- Direct, manage and control the migratory movement in the country.
- Monitoring compliance with laws, regulations and transit provisions.
- Keep records of weapons and explosives and any other items essential for the performance of their duties.
- Appoint, train, assign, promote and sanction the staff of the Ministry.
- Issue, jointly with the President of the Republic, decrees, agreements and resolutions within its competence.
- Establish, organize and coordinate all the national Police Forces and authorities necessary for the performance of their duties and responsibilities.
- The other provisions of the Constitution and laws.

\*The year of establishment is the date on which the term "Public Security" becomes part of the name of the institution. The change of name to "Ministry of Public Security" was carried out in 1923, replacing the then Ministry of War.

### Organizational Chart



### Institutional Strategic Objectives

#### 1. Prevention

- Strengthening the preventive management of the Police to improve security and citizen coexistence.
- Implement the Costa Rican Police Education Policy to improve capacities in compliance with Police management.

#### 2. Combating Crime

- Strengthen the traceability of weapons to improve control over the acquisition, possession, carrying and trafficking of firearms, ammunition and related materials.
- Suppress activities related to drug trafficking, organized crime, cross-border crime and related activities in order to improve security and the coexistence of citizens on national territory.
- Articulate the Rectory of the Citizen Security and Justice Sector to improve citizen security.
- Strengthen Police action to provide a timely and effective response to the citizenry.

#### 3. Administrative management

- Transforming management models for greater efficiency.

Source: Compilation based on *Ley orgánica del Ministerio de Seguridad Pública* (N° 5.482 – 1973/12/24), and the official website of the Ministry of Public Security of Costa Rica, *Historia del MSP*.

## The Public Force

The Public Force is the main Police Force in the country and records its history in the Civil Guard that was created after the abolition of the Army as a permanent institution in 1948. The General Police Act definitively submits it to the Ministry of Public Security. The reform of this law (strengthening of the Civil Police) abandoned military-type designations for scales and grades and created internal control spaces. This practical division placed on the one hand the Police Force known in the country as the Public Force, and on the other security forces with different functions and regulations.

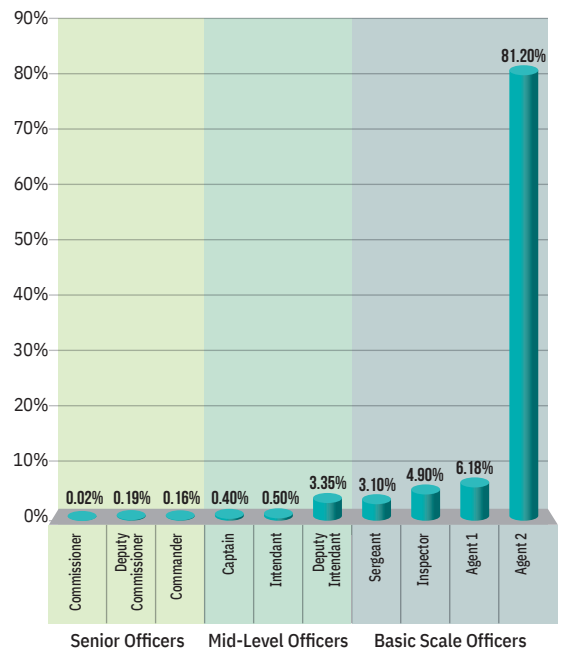
### Powers and Duties of the Public Force

- Implement policies and actions for public and national security in order to exercise and respect the Political Constitution, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and maintenance of public order.
- Ensure respect for the property, rights and freedoms of the inhabitants/s of the Nation.
- Carry out those police actions, within the scope of its competence, that are duly requested by State institutions.
- Coordinate the prompt and effective arrest or capture of persons who have escaped from prisons or who are fugitives.
- Cooperate in the prevention and punishment of crime, on the basis of reciprocity with international police organizations and in accordance with existing regulations and conventions.
- Ensure compliance with the provisions of the Weapons and Explosives Law and its amendments.

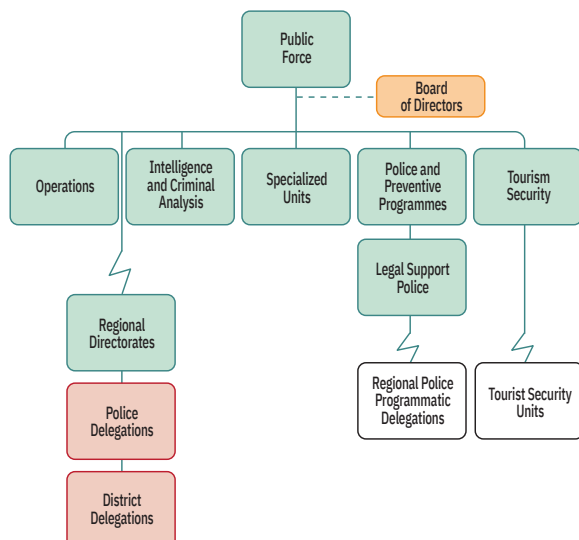
### Public Force Personnel

Senior Officers Scale	Women	Men
Commissioner	0	3
Deputy Commissioner	5	18
Commander	5	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>36</b>
↓ 46 ↓		
Mid-Level Officer Scale	Women	Men
Captain	2	46
Intendant	7	53
Deputy Intendant	40	365
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>464</b>
↓ 513 ↓		
Basic Scale	Women	Men
Sergeant	80	295
Inspector	105	487
Agent 2	427	320
Agent 1	2,353	7,465
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,965</b>	<b>8,567</b>
↓ 11,532 ↓		
<b>Total Public Force 12,091</b>		

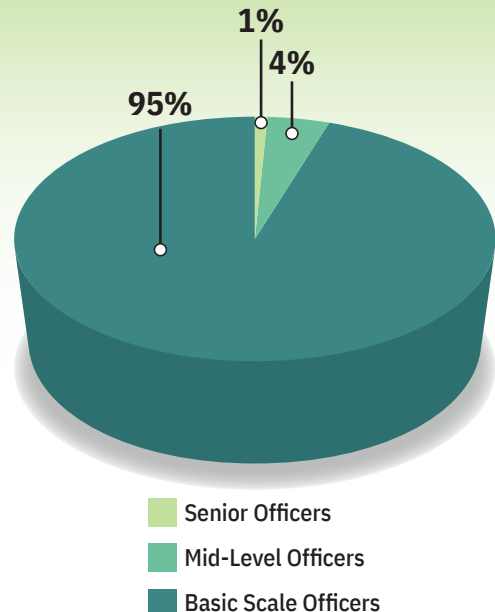
### Personnel Distribution. Public Force, 2024



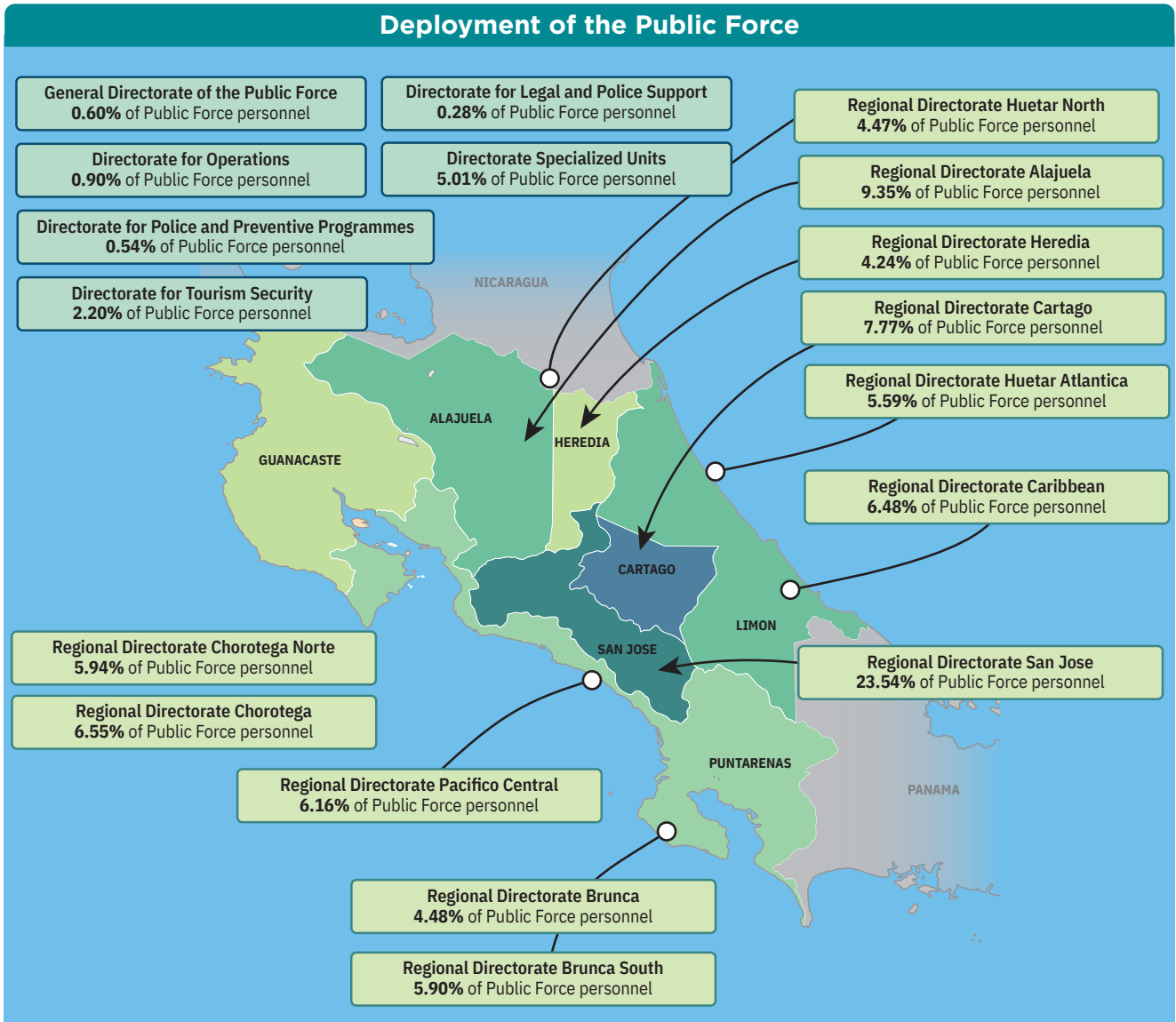
### Organizational Chart



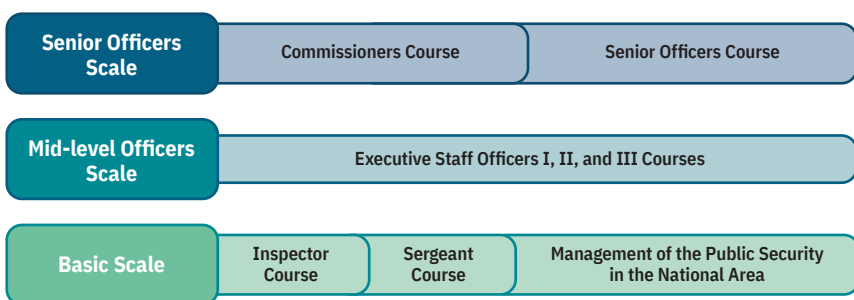
### Distribution by Rank Type



Source: Compilation based on information provided by the Ministry of Public Security, Human Resources Department; *Reglamento de Organización del Ministerio de Seguridad Pública*, N° 36366-SP; and the website of the Ministry of Public Security.



## Education



#### Technical Middle Coast Guard Course

It lasts 26 weeks and includes classroom and boat time, preparation for fitness systems and extra-curricular activities. Organized by the Academy of the National Coast Guard Service.

Ten other maritime specialty courses are also conducted on topics such as survival at sea and weapons handling, with international instructors.

**2023** { 16 personnel took the Technical Course  
160 personnel took other courses

#### Other Training Activities - National Coast Guard

They include training for people and students in the country's coastal areas, on topics such as maritime safety, protection of natural resources, turtle protection, the importance of the oceans and the Gulf of Mexico, ecosystem protection and environmental education.

**2023** { 565 trained personnel  
35 activities in different areas

#### Other Training Activities - Public Force

The Public Force conducted 62 training activities on topics such as environmental regulations, crocodile biology, waste management and carbon footprint.

**2023** { 1,160 trained personnel

Source: Compilation based on information provided by the Ministry of Public Security, Human Resources Department and National Police Academy; *Memorias institucionales del MSP 2022 y 2023*; and the official Facebook account of the Ministry of Public Security.

## Women in the Public Force



The Policy on Equality and Gender Equity (PIEG) of the Ministry of Public Security is part of the sustained effort to reform and issue documents and projects for awareness-raising on gender equality and equity as a transversal axis of the Ministry’s activities.

It was formalized by Executive Decree 43929 (PIEG - MSP 2022-2030) of September 2022.

The Office for Gender Equality and Equity is attached to the ministerial department. Its mission is to support, guide and supervise the units of the Ministry of Public Security in the application of the PIEG in labor relations, so that they allow equality and equity in opportunities and rights and in the provision of services to the citizenry, by promoting, guiding, strengthening and monitoring processes of change in the institutional culture.

**OUT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FORCE:**

- 0.08%** of Senior Officers are women.
- 0.40%** of Executive Staff Officers are women.
- 24.52%** of Basic Scale Officers are women.

**The Ministry has a Legal Disciplinary Department, also attached to the ministerial office.**

## Other Security Forces under the Ministry of Public Security

### Drug Control Police

It is responsible for the control of unauthorized drugs and related activities and for cooperating with the prosecution of drug offenses. Investigates related wrongdoing and prepares reports; also performs seizures and police actions.

### Line 1176

The Drug Control Police has a confidential, anonymous and free “Línea 1176” reporting line for users to report on the distribution, storage and trafficking of drugs.

### Border Police

Created on 15 May 2014, its function is to carry out operational actions, both in the country and in coordination with other bodies; to maintain border patrols; to prevent crime; to carry out surveillance and protection actions in humanitarian aid, and environmental protection and disaster response.

- The Directorate consists of:
- A Border Intelligence Department.
  - An Operational Department.
  - Border Mobile Units

### Air Surveillance Service

It has the mission of overseeing the Costa Rican skies, performing rescue missions and operations such as air ambulance, and anti-drug operations on sea and land. Its functions include:

- Provide transportation within and outside the country in cases of qualified exception.
- Coordinate and cooperate with related institutions in national emergency response.

The Air Surveillance Service Directorate is located at Juan Santamaria International Airport, located in the capital area of San José de Costa Rica.

### National Coast Guard Service

The Maritime Surveillance Service was established in 1976 to protect Costa Rican marine resources in the two oceans that border its territory. Additional functions were added over time, including search and rescue, anti-smuggling, and drug trafficking control. In 2000, by Law N° 8,000, it was transformed into the National Coast Guard Service, aiming to constitute a professional police unit.

- It is responsible for safeguarding the sovereignty of the State over its jurisdictional waters, natural resources and human life, in strict compliance with the legal order.
- It monitors and guards the maritime borders of the State and the maritime waters under its jurisdiction.
- Ensures the safety of port and maritime traffic.
- Develops operations necessary to rescue people or locate lost boats.
- Contributes to the protection of natural resources and the fight against illicit drug trafficking, illegal migration, arms trafficking and other illicit activities.



Source: Compilation based on information provided by the Ministry of Public Security; PIEG – MSP 2022-2030; and the official website of the Ministry of Public Security.



## Community Support

### Community and Commercial Security Programme

It seeks to organize and train the neighbors so that they can take preventive measures, prevent crime cases and improve the quality of life in the communities. It also aims to strengthen the links between the community and the police, and among the neighbors themselves.

During 2023, 148 communities received training in the regions of San Jose, Cartago, Alajuela and Heredia, as well as in the Northern Border and Southern Border Sub-Directorates. In addition, the Regional Preventive Programs Team and the community safety program heads were trained, focusing on network and commission formation.

**In 2023, it reached 2,421 people.**

### Programme Against Domestic Violence

Train members of the Public Force to be able to make an adequate intervention in domestic violence cases, and raise awareness in communities.

In 2023 the program implemented informative talks aimed at different social actors. Topics such as:

- Prevention of domestic violence, with 4,772 people participating in the Community Safety Committees.
- Masculinity for equality, which brought together 1239 participants.
- Prevention of femicide, with a focus on the dissemination of CLAIS (local committees for immediate attention and follow-up of high-risk cases of violence against women), with 225 assistants.
- Human trafficking, which involved 1,548 people

**In 2023, it reached 7,559 people**

### Gang Resistance Education and Training Program (GREAT)

This programme is implemented in several countries of the region, supported by the foundation that bears his name. Its mission is to prevent crime, youth violence and gang association in primary and middle school students by strengthening the factors that prevent their recruitment by criminal organizations.

**In 2023, it reached 11,422 children in primary and intermediate education**

### Program “My First Safety Adventure” (MPAS)

The MPAS is a safety program that provides tools and tips to help children identify and alert them about the risk situations they may encounter.

**In 2023, it reached 3,032 children at the national level.**

### Drug Abuse Resistance Education and Violence Program (D.A.R.E)

It aims to prevent the use of legal and illegal drugs by students in the country. It aims to promote decision-making skills in children and adolescents that contribute to the prevention of the use and abuse of legal and illegal drugs and violence, and to train parents to be able to carry out preventive actions in the family.

During 2023, various preventive and educational activities were carried out:

- The Week of Preventive Literacy
  - Organized by the Juvenile Criminal Court of Nicoya, Santa Cruz and Carrillo. At the same time, D.A.R.E. gave talks to 800 primary and secondary school students.
- Lazo Rojo-Siquirres 2023
  - Preventive activities were carried out, benefiting 3,000 students.
- Training was given to teachers, families and students of the Matias Sotelo Duarte School in Santa Cruz-Guanacaste.
- 50 families from the Colegio Marista de Alajuela were trained virtually on protective factors and drug use prevention
- Training was implemented in 11 educational centers, reaching 500 students in various regions of the country.

**In 2023, the programme reached 4,359 young people and students and 75 families.**

## Risk and Emergency Management

### Emergency Operations Centre

The Emergency Operations Centre operates within the framework of the National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Response, which is the body responsible for coordinating, preparing and implementing primary emergency response.

The National Risk Management System is composed of:

- The Presidential House.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MREC).
- The National Commission for Risk Prevention and Emergency Care (CNE).
- The Emergency Operations Center.
- The Technical Advisory Committee for International Humanitarian and Technical Assistance (CATAI).

It has specialized units within the Public Force and the Fire and Rescue Corps.

**The Public Force conducts annual simulated earthquake operations to improve capacities and preparedness for emergencies.**

### Protection of Coastal Marine Natural Resources

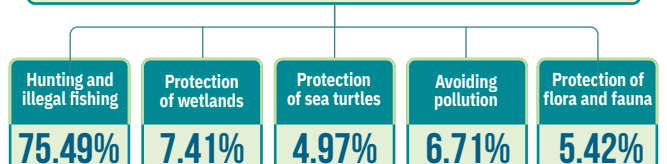
The Public Force carries out security actions for the protection of natural resources. In 2023, the following were carried out:

- Seizures of fishery products and vessels in violation.
- Protection of sea turtles and other animals.
- Complaints of illegal fishing, pollution and animal protection.



Rescue activities during heavy rains. Photo: official Facebook account of the Public Force.

In 2023, the National Coast Guard carried out 6,833 safety actions in the field of protection of natural resources and care in case of disasters or emergencies.



Source: Compilation based on the information provided by the Ministry of Public Security; *Memoria Institucional 2023*; official website of the Great Program; and the official websites of the Emergency Operations Centre and the Ministry of Public Security.

## Security Operations

### Preventive Model of Police Management of the Public Force

It is the management system of the Public Force, which contains operational processes for crime and violence prevention, and planning for the implementation, evaluation and continuous improvement of the police service. Its principles include:

- Prevalence of preventive work.
- Strengthening the police-community binomial.
- Focusing police services.
- Testing and monitoring of police services.
- Prospective analysis of crime and violence.
- The incorporation of differentiated police responses.
- Evidence-based police decision making.
- Inter-institutional and operational coordination.

The model is implemented on the basis of two strategies:

#### Comprehensive Prevention Police Strategy for Public Security "Let's Worry About Security"

It is a national strategy implemented annually by the Ministry of Public Security. Its objectives are:

- Identify and target crimes and social risks affecting the population.
- Mitigate identified issues through coordination with local governments, institutions and actors.
- Identify criminal structures.

The results of this strategy are one of the main inputs to the annual planning of preventive police programmes.

#### Police Service Targeting Strategy by Claimant Nodes

This strategy aims to locate, identify and prioritize areas with the greatest criminal activity and risk factors, so that Police efforts can be concentrated and differentiated police responses generated.

The Police Service Targeting Strategy allows for evidence to be generated for crime anticipation during the daily operations of the Police. It also allows for the constant monitoring and improvement of Police services.

### Total number of personnel trained: 1,883

In-person	Virtual
<b>633 persons</b>	<b>1,250 persons</b>
<i>Training courses conducted in person:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of force applied to firearms.</li> <li>- Police techniques and tactics for the correct handling and use of firearms.</li> <li>- Chain of custody, handling, delivery, packing of evidence and police reporting</li> </ul>	<i>Training courses conducted virtually:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal Control Act.</li> <li>- Administrative principles in Police operations.</li> <li>- Applicable law enforcement.</li> <li>- Ethical foundations that characterize Police work.</li> <li>- Police protocol for the treatment of domestic violence.</li> <li>- Police operations.</li> </ul>

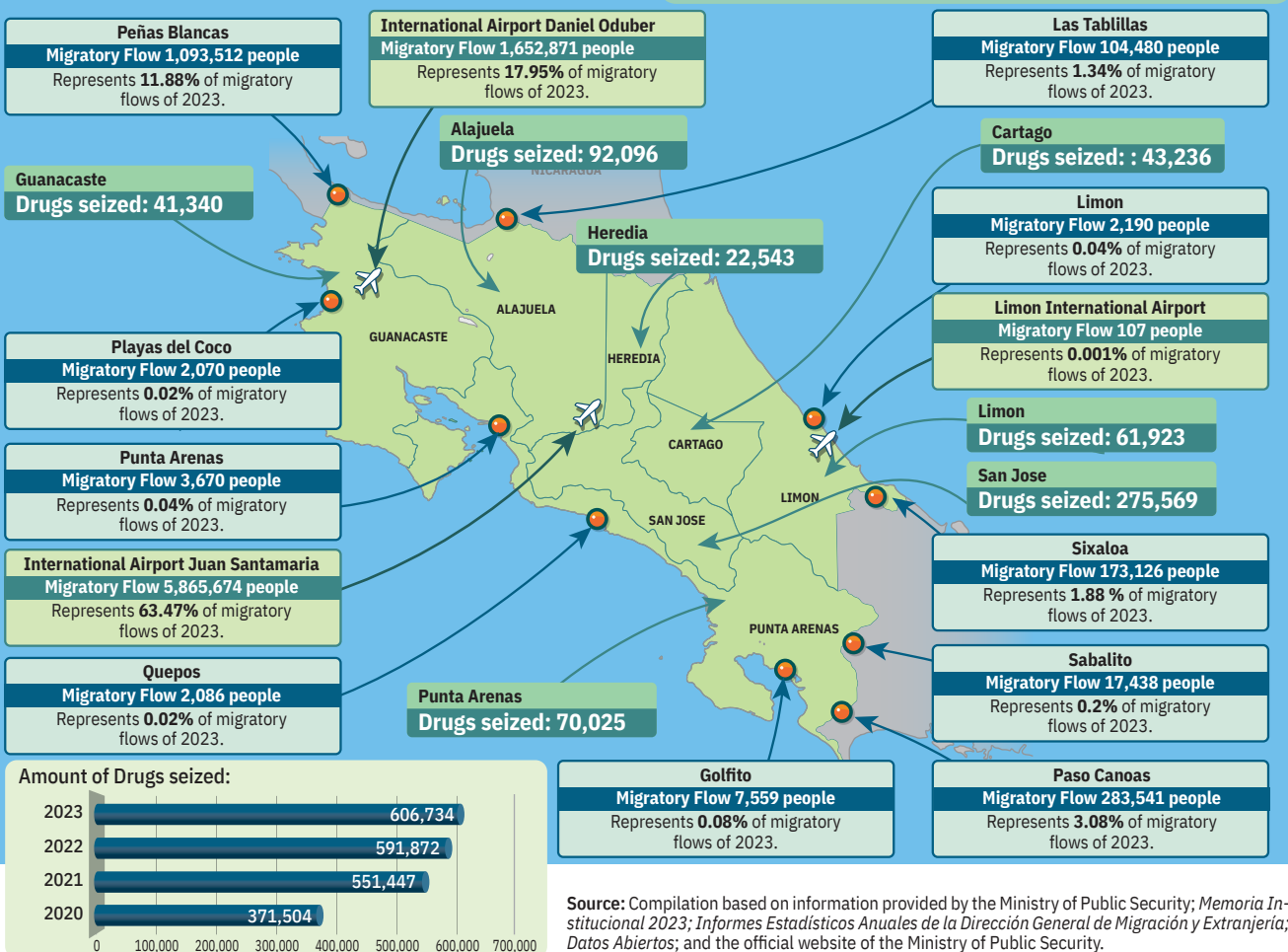
In 2023, the Public Force and the Drug Control Police conducted 438 operations and maintained continuous control at border posts, mountain areas, airports and major terminals throughout the country, resulting in:

- The dismantling of 152 drug trafficking organizations.
- The intervention of 4 laboratories with containers of illicit substances.
- Seizure of 654 vehicles and 90 firearms.
- Seizure of 104,143 grams of drugs and eradication of 86 marijuana plantations.
- The arrest of 188,316 persons.

The National Coast Guard carried out a total of 29,046 maritime security actions in 2023, of which 76.5% were conducted in the Pacific Ocean and 23.5% in the Caribbean Sea

The Air Surveillance Service carried out a total of 1,251 flights in 2023, of which 77% were for police reasons, 10% were due to the need for ambulance, and 13% were for official transfers

### Drug Seizure and Migration Control



Source: Compilation based on information provided by the Ministry of Public Security; Memoria Institucional 2023; Informes Estadísticos Anuales de la Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería; Datos Abiertos; and the official website of the Ministry of Public Security.