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DEFENSE

PLAN:

**A response to one of the
greatest challenges in public
security — Urban Dominion**

Samir de Oliveira Rodrigues



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challenges in public security —
Urban Dominion.**

Samir de Oliveira Rodrigues¹

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1.

Introduction

Public security in Brazil faces growing challenges as violent crimes against property evolve, with the emergence of 'Urban Dominion – UD,' a modality characterized by the temporary takeover of municipalities and the use of paramilitary tactics. This phenomenon, which reflects one of the worst crises in national public security, calls for integrated, innovative solutions.

This paper proposes the Defense Plan as a

the Plan aims to integrate security forces and civil society in preventive, reactive, and recovery actions, providing a coordinated and effective approach.

Throughout this work, we explore the concept of 'Urban Dominion,' its social and economic impact, and how the Defense Plan can help reduce crime and preserve lives. The relevance of this study lies in its capacity to adapt to different regional contexts, offering a practical, structured alternative to traditional crime-fighting strategies.



2.

Emergence and Evolution of Urban Dominion

The phenomenon known as Urban Dominion represents a more complex and violent evolution of the so-called “Novo Cangaço,” characterized by a high degree of criminal organization, the use of military-style tactics, and the deployment of advanced technological resources to carry out large-scale robberies against financial institutions and cash-in-transit companies.

The term first appeared in specialized literature in 2018, in the book *Guerra Federal*, by Renato Júnior and Laurejan Ferraço, which described the attack that took place in Campinas (SP) on November 6, 2015, as the initial milestone of this

blocked access to the city with burning vehicles, knocked down power transformers, opened fire on police officers, and destroyed the cash-in-transit base with explosives, making off with approximately R\$30 million.

Between 2016 and 2017, at least 12 similar operations were recorded. One example that drew major attention occurred on February 21, 2017, in Recife (PE), when criminals attacked the Brinks company using burning vehicles to block roads — including major urban avenues — and .50-caliber weapons, which prevented specialized units of the



Military Police units from advancing. That same year, the practice was recorded internationally, in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, where a heavily armed group invaded Prosegur's headquarters, exchanged fire with security forces, and made off with roughly US\$40 million.

Starting in 2019, the incorporation of new technologies was observed, such as remotely detonated explosive devices. This method was first recorded in Uberaba (MG) and later spread between 2020 and 2021, a period marked by movement restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, in operations such as those in Ourinhos (SP), Botucatu (SP), and Criciúma (SC).

The attack that took place in Araçatuba (SP) on August 30, 2021, stood out for its operational complexity. In that incident, around 14 vehicles were used to besiege the city center, covering areas near Banco do Brasil and Caixa Econômica Federal, in addition to simultaneous attacks on Military Police bases. The criminals

established a layered containment perimeter, planting explosives and blocking regional highways to prevent reinforcements from arriving. Ninety-three explosive devices were seized, 32 of them capable of remote detonation, some packed inside "metalon" (a type of hollow steel tubing) and others fitted with laser sights for aiming.

Urban Dominion challenges security forces because it involves highly coordinated operations, with tremendous firepower, advance planning, and tactics that rapidly neutralize the police response. These attacks combine extreme violence, structured logistics, and speed of execution, creating a high-risk scenario for police officers and civilians alike and making it harder to regain control of the territory. This demands a structured response from public authorities, who must be able not only to act when these phenomena occur, but also to anticipate the actions of criminal groups.



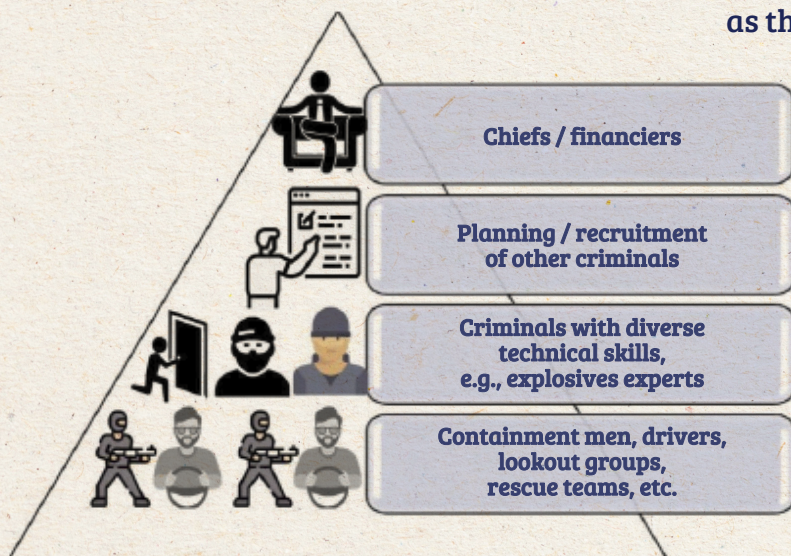
3. Knowing the Enemy

Violent crimes against property, specifically Urban Dominion, correspond to a complex criminal phenomenon, functionally structured into criminal cells.

These cells are organized into networks, where criminals are recruited for various roles, often without all of them knowing one another. This requires a significant degree of technical knowledge, specialization, and operational capacity, as well as substantial human capital in terms of access and contacts with different criminal actors. It also means that these operations are not usually carried out through the traditional model of an organized gang with consistency over time. Instead, these actions tend to be carried out by networks made up of functionally specialized cells, capable of forming and dissolving quickly.

To understand this organization, a pyramid-shaped graphic structure can be used, even though its composition falls apart quickly after the acts are carried out. The first tier is made up of the chiefs or financiers of Urban Dominion operations. Their profile generally corresponds to criminals who are better positioned within the hierarchy of the criminal world, with reputation, access to contacts, and, above all, sufficient capital to finance operations like these.

The second tier is responsible for the entire architecture of the robbery. Trusted individuals will arrange the logistical needs, recruit employees of cash-in-transit companies, and corrupt public officials. The third tier is made up of criminals who possess some technical capability. This group includes explosives experts, drone operators, and technicians of various specialties; this sector can even function as the criminals' "intelligence service."



In the last tier are the containment men, lookout groups, rescue teams, and all personnel used directly in carrying out the plan in operations that involve some type of direct confrontation with security forces and/or the capture and control of hostages, at times used as human shields during these operations.



This structure, made up of dozens of people and requiring stages of planning that can extend over months, points to the need for substantial spending on paying people, renting properties, and acquiring and renting weapons and equipment, among other expenses. In the context of Urban Dominion, it is common practice to carry out prior accessory crimes that will fund another, more elaborate crime. For example, a robbery of an armored cash-in-transit vehicle can serve to finance another robbery of a commercial bank through an Urban Dominion operation; a stolen armored vehicle may be used by criminals in the operation, just as explosives stolen from quarries, mining companies, etc., may be used as well.

In this way, money laundering stands out as one of the main characteristics of the groups that engage in this criminal modality. Intelligence data and manuscripts seized from bank robbers give us an estimate that, for every successful crime, at least 40% of the profit obtained will be used to finance a new Dominion operation, while the remainder will be invested in front companies to perpetuate new operations.



4.

Criminal Machinery

Urban Dominion is a criminal modality that differs from the “Novo Cangaço” in scale, logistical complexity, and the high level of coordination among its members.

While the “Novo Cangaço” operates in small towns with limited policing, Urban Dominion targets medium-sized and large municipalities, and even state capitals, mobilizing more than 30 criminals in decentralized, flexible networks capable of quickly reconfiguring themselves and making it harder to identify participants.

Planning can take months, involving a detailed survey of vulnerabilities, mapping of escape routes, study of police staffing levels, and even analysis of the routines of security personnel, with properties rented for surveillance and coordination. Each cell has specific functions, such as logistics, intelligence, handling explosives, driving armored vehicles, operating drones, carrying out direct attacks, and containment.

These operations employ heavy weaponry — rifles, pistols, shotguns — and vehicles adapted to withstand gunfire and explosions, in addition to explosives used to open safes or create roadblocks, including burning vehicles, caltrops, and booby traps, which isolate the perimeter and delay reinforcements. Communication combines radios with police-frequency interception and, in some cases, encryption, while drones monitor the movement of security forces in real time, allowing for immediate adjustments. After the attack, teams

protect the escape routes, and the proceeds obtained are split between financing new operations and laundering money through front companies.

This “criminal machinery” can be described as a typical chain of actions in an Urban Dominion crime. It functions as a mechanism with three interdependent phases, planned to unfold quickly and in a coordinated manner, minimizing as much as possible the chance of a response from security forces.

The first phase is to **subdue**. Here, the goal is to neutralize any immediate response from public authorities. The criminals employ extreme violence and simultaneous actions — such as roadblocks, fires, heavy-caliber gunfire, and explosions — to prevent police mobilization. At this stage, territorial control is temporary, but decisive for the success of the following phases.

With security forces contained, the second phase begins: to **rob**. This stage is carried out with the certainty that no intervention will be capable of interrupting the operation. The criminals use explosives, break-in techniques, and specialized logistics to access safes and transport the valuables.

The third and final phase is to **flee**. This movement is not improvised; it is the result of meticulous study of exit

This movement is not improvised; it is the result of meticulous study of exit routes, often involving rapid movement to other cities or rural areas.

Support vehicles and high-firepower weapons are used to protect the escape, making any attempt at interception more difficult.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION
1) SUBDUE	First, the criminals demonstrate their strength by neutralizing any and all response from public security forces, through violent, simultaneous attacks.
2) ROB	With the certainty that police forces will be overwhelmed and unable to reach the scene, the robbery itself begins.
3) FLEE	This is the third action, carried out after a meticulous prior study of escape routes conducted by a dedicated team, in which the group — or a good part of it — moves from the urban area to another city or rural area.

In Brazil, the traditional response to these incidents tends to focus on the “hot spot” of the crime — that is, the site of the attack.

This practice, although intuitive, has already resulted in the deaths of many police officers, since it places teams at the center of a scenario planned specifically to neutralize them. The proposal put forward in this report is to reverse that logic: prioritize interception along the escape

The Defense Plan advocated here seeks, first and foremost, to save lives. It is inherently preventive in nature and, in situations where it is not possible to repel an Urban Dominion action immediately, it calls for a more forceful response at the moment when the criminals are far from the civilian population.



5.

Logistics and Preparation

It is wise to distinguish the profile of the repeat offender who robs banks and similar establishments from that of other criminals.

Experience and cunning are required to join a criminal group that practices Urban Dominion, where amateur criminals are not well received.

There are clandestine, specialized companies³ that provide training in warfare and guerrilla tactics, specifically so that these groups can overpower security forces. These companies teach how to operate high-energy, high-velocity weapons, commonly known as “heavy caliber,” such as 7.62 mm and 5.56 mm rifles.

as well as cutting-edge explosive devices that can be triggered remotely.⁴ The use of the well-known .50-caliber artillery weapon is also common, with high destructive power against police vehicles.

Another point worth noting is the use of clandestinely armored vehicles, capable of withstanding rifle fire. It is essential to stress that rifles are the standard weapon of Brazilian police forces in general. Incidentally, the best weapon in ordinary policing — in other words, the most effective rifle — is, in the vast majority of cases, incapable of stopping an armored vehicle. Moreover, it is worth asking: what police force



³ See <https://www.instructorzero.com/> <https://www.apokassecurity-worldwide.com/>

⁴ <https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-jose-do-rio-preto-aracatuba/noticia/2021/08/30/explosivos-deixados-em-ruas-fazem-aracatuba-parar-apos-mega-assalto.ghtml>

in Brazil, let alone the world, has a vehicle capable of absorbing a .50-caliber artillery round or withstanding explosives? This is the main argument for convincing police officers not to engage in direct confrontation.

During the crisis, while the criminals' plan is succeeding, the State has no control over the affected area — between the containment perimeter and the site being robbed. In this context, part of the group, the fourth-tier men, ensure that police forces are repelled and cannot approach the place under attack, under threat of death for anyone who dares to get close. At the same time, police barracks and stations also become targets of lightning attacks, as happened in the Paraná city of Guarapuava.⁵ When this happens, it is a sign that the location has been taken over.

Engaging in confrontation in an urban area exposes a danger not only to police units on duty, but also to the entire population

in their homes or who may be taken hostage. Open, reactive, and uncoordinated confrontation against Urban Dominion groups is the worst possible strategy for dealing with this type of incident, and can lead to catastrophic results.

However, the accumulated experience of security personnel who deal with this type of phenomenon shows that disrupting the criminals' escape plan is a far safer and more effective response. This can only be achieved through a well-designed and well-trained Defense Plan. If carried out as planned, this plan can unexpectedly steer criminals toward rural areas, forcing them to abandon their prepared vehicles and, later, their heavy weaponry. In this way, security forces can retake the territory that was lost. The criminals' advanced organization, illustrated by their use of predetermined escape routes, calls for a Defense Plan that anticipates these movements and neutralizes them.



⁵ <https://noticias.uol.com.br/cotidiano/ultimas-noticias/2019/12/04/chefe-de-faccao-e-criminoso-mais-procurado-na-ba-e-morto-pela-policia>

6.

Carrying Out Urban Dominion

An analysis of past Urban Dominion incidents in Brazil reveals that the main window for attacks occurs between 11 p.m. and 4:30 a.m., since much of the visible policing stands down to rest and only returns the following day.

Nevertheless, criminals take advantage of the absence of specialized policing to pin officers down within their units and carry out their operations. Sunday night into Monday, or Saturday night into Sunday, are the days of the week most conducive to committing these crimes.

The duration of an operation can vary depending on the location. There are records of incidents that lasted anywhere from 40 minutes to a little over 3 hours. However, the vast majority of robberies last around 1 hour and 30 minutes — enough time to activate and carry out the Defense Plan.

Once a specific group of criminals has overpowered the local police, firing bursts into the air or toward police units, and has blocked the passage of vehicles from barracks and/or police stations, another group will be dedicated to the robbery itself. The division of roles and tasks is a hallmark of this criminal group; explosives experts on standby will set up a wall blaster (a board fitted with explosives) at the entrance of the building — whether a bank or a cash-in-transit company — and will set off successive explosions until they reach the safes.

Because of the power outage inside the building, deliberately caused by the criminals, they may use flashlights mounted on ballistic helmets for better visibility of the scene. There is a growing frequency of these devices being remotely triggered, strategically left along the roads leading to the robbery site, hampering police operations while optimizing the criminals' actions.

At the same time, another part of the group secures the operation's perimeter, at a radius of about 1.5 km. They are spread out across every corner, heavily armed. Containment men point their rifles skyward as a show of force and power, and fire in all directions in order to intimidate the population and prevent security forces from approaching. Drones fly over the entire perimeter and feed information to the "core" (those responsible for the entire operation). The use of hostages has become common; passersby near the target are turned into human shields.⁶ The criminals expose their victims in a degrading manner — the men have their shirts removed, and everyone is forced to sit or stand, made to move from one side to the other so that police will not return fire. Some hostages may be tied to the hoods or roofs of the vehicles that will also be used during the escape.

⁶ <https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2021-08-30/mega-assalto-a-bancos-em-aracatuba-faz-moradores-de-escudo-humano-e-deixa-tres-mortos.html>





Passersby near the target are turned into human shields.

The vehicles clad in solid steel remain with their engines running, driven by criminals hired solely for this function, who are responsible for taking the other members to their hideouts.

Drivers usually keep their hazard lights on in all the vehicles, in order to make it easier to identify the convoy's fleet. During the robbery itself, they may steal additional vehicles and, without time to communicate with the rest of the group, adopt this practice of "flashers on" so that new vehicles are accepted into the group, avoiding any mishap.

Successive explosions that shake the ground occur at various moments. When the criminals manage to reach the cash reserves, the first shouts of celebration can be heard, and the operation of loading the vehicles with the stolen goods soon begins. Hostages tied to the vehicles are gradually released along the escape route, precisely to delay the police response. This act of regrouping and fleeing sometimes happens slowly and in a coordinated manner, leaving behind a scene of war, fear, and state powerlessness — this is Urban Dominion in practice.

7.

Escape Routes

From the moment the criminals achieve their objectives, a decisive stage begins: the escape.

This phase is normally carried out by members of the fourth tier, responsible for leaving the crime scene and ensuring that the stolen goods reach the hands of the first tier. The direction of the getaway is usually planned in advance, prioritizing rural areas, other cities, or even different states. At this point, armed confrontation no longer matters to the group, since their core objectives have already been achieved. The focus shifts to preserving the stolen property (*res furtiva*) and the safety of those involved. To that end, routes are chosen that combine main roads and secondary access points, reducing the risk of interception.

Escape strategies vary according to the context, the resources available, and the

In “continuous withdrawal,” the criminals keep moving forward, traveling from city to city without returning to the scene of the crime. In “reversal,” there is an initial movement in one direction, followed by a vehicle swap and a return along the same route they arrived by. This method commonly involves the use of appropriated or disguised vehicles, such as ambulances, garbage trucks, and official vehicles, often wrapped to make them harder for local police to identify. “Multiple-direction escape,” meanwhile, splits the criminal cell apart right after the attack, sending each group in a different direction and occupying every possible exit from the targeted area. In any strategy, obstacles such as burning vehicles, caltrops, and explosive devices are placed at strategic points to slow the advance of police forces.

ESCAPE STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
CONTINUOUS WITHDRAWAL	The criminals are always on the move, continuing forward from city to city, without returning to the scene of the crime.
REVERSAL	The criminals initially head in a given direction, then swap vehicles and return by the same route they came from. They are often already using stolen ambulances, garbage trucks, and official vehicles, which may be wrapped (disguised) and go unnoticed by local police.
MULTIPLE DIRECTIONS	After the crime, the criminal cells disband, and the individuals flee to different locations, thereby occupying all the exits from the targeted area.

After the initial escape, the hideout plan comes into play. These locations are chosen in advance and are often prepared to shelter the group safely.

The choice takes into account criteria such as the availability of basic resources, ease of access, potential for concealment, and strategic distance from the crime scene. Among the most common types is the “camp,” improvised with simple structures such as wooden shacks, tarps, or other materials, usually set up in dense forest areas in order to avoid detection and exposure.

There is also the “advanced base,” which offers greater comfort and structure, consisting of country properties, small farms, or ranches, often purchased or rented in advance. These properties are usually located between 70 and 150 kilometers from the crime scene, allowing the group to remain there until the search

After that, the location is gradually abandoned. Another form of concealment is the “use of different cities,” mainly in continuous-withdrawal escapes, where members travel through several locations and settle temporarily in rented houses, boarding houses, hotels, and especially roadside motels, which, due to the lack of documentation requirements, offer discretion and easy shelter.

In some cases, inside or near these hideout locations, bunkers may be built — concealed structures intended to store weapons, ammunition, protective equipment, clothing used in the crime, and even stolen valuables. This level of organization demonstrates the degree of planning involved in the escape stage, which combines strategic movement, concealment, and the hiding of resources to ensure the criminal operation continues and to evade the action of security forces.

TYPE OF HIDEOUT	DESCRIPTION
CAMP	A rudimentary site, improvised with cabins or wooden shacks, tarps, or similar materials. Camps are set up in dense forest areas so as not to be exposed or, still less, located.
ADVANCED BASE	This structure is more comfortable, consisting of country properties, ranches, and farms with built houses. These are usually properties bought or rented during the planning phase and may serve as the criminals’ HQ (headquarters). They are located at an average distance of 70 km to 150 km from the target to be robbed, and the criminals occupy them until security forces call off the search for the group. Afterward, they leave the location gradually until abandoning it completely.
ANOTHER CITY	Mainly in continuous-withdrawal escapes, criminals may travel through several cities to disguise themselves, using rented houses, boarding houses, hotels, and especially cheaper roadside motels, since these establishments do not always require identification from guests, which is ideal for someone fleeing the police.



It is important to note that, after subduing and robbing, other criminals — those from the fourth tier — will carry out the action of fleeing. These escapes happen in various ways; at this point, confrontation no longer matters to the criminals, since their objectives have already been achieved.

From this point on, what really matters is ensuring that the *res furtiva* reaches the hands of the first-tier criminals. To that end, it is essential to understand how these escapes take place and where they will go into hiding.



8. The Defense Plan

The Defense Plan (DP) is conceived as a pre-ordained set of joint actions between public security agencies and civil society, with the purpose of preserving lives by disrupting the criminals' planning in highly complex or extremely violent incidents.

The DP is not limited to reacting to violent events; it anticipates potential crises, creating a safer environment. This proactive approach makes it possible to identify and neutralize threats before they materialize, thereby protecting the population. Its essence lies in the collaboration between public security forces and civil society. Community participation is vital, since it allows local information to be shared and enables citizens to play a leading role in the pursuit of security. This synergy strengthens mutual trust and the effectiveness of operations.

The plan is drawn up in a restricted setting, with representatives from each security force, where the problem is presented — the nuances of Urban Dominion — along with the solution: the entire methodology of the Defense Plan.

In drawing up the DP, law enforcement officers must go into the field to gather basic information about the municipality, identify locations of interest to criminals, and establish a network of contacts among public security agencies, private companies, and civil society

and civil society. They must also carry out studies in urban and rural settings, identifying possible advantages and/or obstacles for criminal operations.

In addition, all participants must be divided into large groups with previously established roles (activation, observation, logistics, among others). Finally, all data collected must be catalogued and recorded with images, illustrations, and other notes. After this stage, trusted and competent professionals will formalize the findings and produce a robust document, which will be forwarded in parts to the relevant agencies, in accordance with their constitutional functions. In addition, groups and subgroups will be created to act before, during, and after the critical event, all coordinated according to what is set out in the Defense Plan.

The DP is a confidential document, and only the managers of each agency will have knowledge of its structure and of their institutions' responsibilities within it. The principle of information compartmentalization applies here, which, in short, determines that access to information is granted only to those who have a functional need for it in carrying out the plan's missions.

There is also the possibility of local residents participating to carry out functions that will not involve any kind of risk

simply by being part of the DP. Their involvement will be discreet, and naturally only trustworthy volunteers will be invited to take part. This collaboration may take the form of providing information — whether by observing people acting suspiciously — or by lending goods or essential equipment that will support police operations, especially in rural settings.

This planning is essential for improving the response to crisis situations, since, at the moment an incident occurs, there is no room for improvisation. This type of strategy involves a series of steps and considerations, which include:

Interagency coordination: Establish communication channels and a cooperative approach among different security agencies, such as police, firefighters, medical emergency services, and other agencies;

Definition of roles and responsibilities: Each agency must have a clear understanding of its specific duties during an Urban Dominion event;

Joint training: Conduct exercises and simulations involving all security bodies to familiarize them with the protocols;

Risk assessment: Identify and evaluate the potential risks that may arise in given situations;

Development of common protocols: Create guidelines and procedures that all agencies can follow, ensuring uniformity in their actions;

Logistical planning: Establish resources and support logistics to ensure that security forces can operate in an integrated and sustained manner;

Community engagement: Include community members who can increase the effectiveness of operations and public trust;

Review and training: It is important to review performance and adjust defense plans as needed, learning from past experiences.

8.1 Missions of the Defense Plan

An operational Defense Plan must encompass several essential missions to protect lives, as well as ensure law and order.

It is organized into three main phases, each with specific objectives and actions. In the **Pre-Incident** phase, the focus is on prevention, seeking to reduce the likelihood of complex crimes and deter criminal actions. To this end, risk analyses are carried out, along with defense planning suited to local conditions, training and simulated exercises, the production and distribution of institutional videos, intelligence operations, patrols, and partnerships with public agencies and civil society.

The **Incident** phase, in turn, is focused on the immediate response, with the plan being carried out in the face of serious crimes or attacks. In this phase, resources such as police, firefighters, and medical services are mobilized, command and control centers are established, and crisis management operations and specific actions from the defense plan are carried out.

Finally, the **Post-Incident** phase aims at recovery, reestablishing law, order, and normalcy. It involves damage assessment, reconstruction of structures, psychological and social assistance to victims, and updating the plan for future occurrences.

PHASES	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
PRE-INCIDENT	Prevention: Reduce the likelihood of highly complex crimes occurring and deter UD-related criminal actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop risk analysis to detect potential targets of criminal actions;• Plan defenses suited to local conditions;• Drill and train local police forces;• Carry out simulated exercises;• Produce institutional videos and publicize the plan;• Demonstrate preparedness;• Conduct intelligence operations;• Carry out rural patrols and recruit collaborators;• Promote partnerships with other agencies and civil society.
INCIDENT	Response: Activate and carry out the DP in response to a UD event or other serious crimes (attacks on police officers, public officials, public institutions, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobilize resources and response teams (police, firefighters, medical services, collaborators, etc.) in a coordinated manner;• Establish command and control centers (crisis management office);• Carry out the DP's specific, confidential missions;• Carry out crisis management operations.
POST-INCIDENT	Recovery: Reestablish law and order; restore normalcy and community safety; support victims; restore the credibility of police forces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carry out damage assessments;• Repair/rebuild damaged structures (police vehicles, police stations, bank branches, water and/or power utilities, bridges, etc.);• Provide psychological and social assistance;• Update the Defense Plan.

9.

The Defense Plan: A Human Rights Policy

The human rights policy in public security must ensure that the actions of security forces respect and promote citizens' fundamental rights. This approach seeks to balance the need for security with the protection of human dignity, fostering public trust in the institutions involved.

The State guarantees the fundamental right to life, in accordance with the democratic rule of law, through the human rights guarantee system. The creation of the Defense Plan affirms this principle, since it is designed to safeguard everyone involved, from two perspectives:

9.1 Saving the Lives of Those Directly Involved:

- **Police officers:** by making them aware not to approach the scene of the incident, since the criminals are certain to be prepared for confrontation;

- **Hostages:** police not approaching the crisis site will remove the offenders' reasons for sacrificing hostages' lives, since hostages are merely a guarantee that the group of robbers will not be targeted by police, and the criminals will likewise have no reason to fight back.

- **Bystanders:** police not approaching the crisis site will also ensure that no shootout takes place in the middle of the urban area. This avoidance of confrontation will preserve the lives of those far from the crisis, including inside their own homes, since a 7.62 mm rifle round has a long range and can pierce walls and vehicles.

- **Criminals:** the group of robbers in a UD action is protected by characteristic armored vehicles; police forces'

standard-issue weapons cannot pierce the armor, and they are equipped with bulletproof vests, explosives under their control, a well-planned escape route, and reserve weapons and ammunition, among other resources. In other words, during the UD action, they hold full control of the city. It follows, therefore, that they have no reason to surrender, and there is no room for police negotiation! Therefore, the Defense Plan is capable of leading the entire criminal group into a hostile environment, one they would hardly have been able to factor into their planning, since it was the local police who analyzed this containment zone, far from the crime scene. It is a place where the criminal group is forced to abandon their powerful, gunfight-resistant vehicles, abandon much of their weapons and ammunition, leaving evidence behind, and where they will be left without the means or resources to call for support or attempt a rescue. By breaking the criminals' planning in this way, security forces regain control. Now, the offenders, finding themselves in an unplanned location, have no alternative but surrender.

9.2 Saving the Lives of Those Indirectly Involved:

In Urban Dominion, the use of explosive devices to cause blasts is common, which can result in damage and loss of life. The fire department may be called in to put out flames at a bank or cash depot that is on fire, for example. Police chiefs, along with forensic experts and fingerprint technicians, may also go to the crime scene to carry out their professional duties. In the meantime, there may be undetonated explosives beneath the collapsed area, and should another explosion occur, it will cause irreversible damage. Civil guards may cordon off the perimeter or other nearby streets around the robbery site, where the criminals may have planted remote-controlled, long-range explosives, risking the deaths of these agents as well.

The Defense Plan also saves lives by making all public agents and other professionals aware of the potential risks involved in responding to critical events. The plan must provide for a bomb squad that, after conducting a damage assessment, will render the environment sterile and safe for post-incident work.

Organized civil society may take part in working groups aimed at informing the public about the severity of an Urban Dominion event, as well as recruiting them to join the Defense Plan, carrying out voluntary, specific actions that will support security forces, whether in the pre- or post-incident periods, mainly by providing information. This involvement by law-abiding citizens will surely help save their lives as well.

10.

Defense Plan Simulations

Defense Plan simulations are opportunities to train the entire force and test civilian participation. During these training exercises, a cinematic operation is staged, in which those involved — dressed for the part, with police officers acting as the wrongdoers — act out simultaneous crimes: taking control of police forces, robbing banks and cash-in-transit vehicles at the same time, or freeing prisoners. The extras, on that occasion, perform exactly what criminals do in real actions, while the plan is activated and all of its actions — which, in theory, take place far from the scenario created by the criminals — are put into practice.

Only by carrying out these drills will the troops gain a real sense of what is actually ready and what needs to be improved in the Defense Plan: logistics, communication, and the effectiveness of the other actions. After the event ends, an institutional video must be produced containing footage of the exercise, along with statements from all of the city's security authorities, sending a clear message that, united, they will carry out prevention and/or response to UD in a coordinated manner. This way, whether officers are off duty or on duty on the day of the fateful event, each member will carry out the missions pre-established in the plan and will know what to do.

Carrying out this public training exercise is, in itself, a deterrent factor against this type of crime occurring at the site of the drill.

The intelligence networks behind Urban Dominion operations are capable of picking up on this kind of initiative, which leads to the choice of alternative locations for carrying it out, given the loss of the element of surprise for the region's police forces. Incidentally, in all the municipalities where lectures and instruction were given, drills were carried out, and defense plans were built, there have been no recorded UD incidents or even Novo Cangaço actions to date. After all, Brazil has 5,570 municipalities; what sense would it make to rob a place that has a Defense Plan? As of 2024, fewer than 100 Brazilian cities had defense plans.

Separately, a survey was conducted in three cities in Mato Grosso do Sul that received training for their security forces, where a Defense Plan was created and later validated through a drill. It was found that, in addition to recording no complex crimes, there was a reduction in common robbery in all of them⁷, as shown in the table below:

CITY	LOCATION	REDUCTION (%)
CAMPO GRANDE	MS	5.05%
DOURADOS	MS	6%
TRÊS LAGOAS	MS	35.5%

⁷ Source: SIGO – Integrated Operational Management System, <http://www.sigo.ms.gov.br/2022>, accessed November 11, 2022.

Statistics From Places That Held Defense Plan Drills

The city of Três Lagoas/MS achieved a higher reduction than the others,

due to the fact that the simulated event was widely publicized in the local and regional press. The staging of the event naturally came to the attention of ordinary criminals, who saw footage of the drill and were able to see that the security forces were integrated and united around the same purpose.

Another important piece of data worth highlighting was the incident that neutralized the group led by Bahia native Francisco José Lumes, known as “Zé de Lessa,” identified as the most wanted criminal in the state of Bahia. He met his end while attempting to rob an armored cash-in-transit vehicle in Mato Grosso do Sul on December 2, 2019.

The crime took place on highway MS-156, km 20, heading toward the city of Amambai/MS. After failing in the robbery, Zé de Lessa’s group fled. The aforementioned city had no Defense Plan; however, police officers in the region had already been trained on the DP by the Special Police Operations Battalion – BOPE of the Mato Grosso do Sul Military Police (PMMS). In other words, even without

the plan, local police forces (the Military Police, the Environmental Military Police, and the State Highway Military Police) knew what to do and took the essential steps to break up the criminals’ escape plan.

After the encirclement, these measures led police, two days after the robbery, to the criminal group’s location on a rural property, and, with a search and seizure warrant in hand, the integrated security forces carried out a major operation that resulted in the dismantling of the gang, several of whose members were neutralized during an act of resistance, thereby preserving the lives of law enforcement officers and civilians, which could have been lost in the event of an unplanned response during the incident.

Following the swift response from Mato Grosso do Sul’s security forces, drawing on the measures set out in the Defense Plan, and thanks to integrated efforts (including the Judiciary and the Public Prosecutor’s Office), no further violent crimes of this nature have been recorded. Several drills have been carried out in strategic locations, which not only reduce risks but also prepare the ground for a coordinated, effective response, minimizing damage during an incident.

11.

The Importance of Criminal Investigation and Forensic Analysis in Urban Dominion Actions

A crucial point that triggers very important developments in post-crime scenarios is the subsequent stages of investigation and forensic analysis. Forensic investigation encompasses a set of scientific techniques and methods applied to the collection, preservation, and analysis of physical evidence related to crimes. Its purpose is to gather information that helps clarify the facts and identify suspects, involving the

collection of evidence at the crime scene, which may include DNA samples, ballistics tests, blood traces, among others.

Several repeat offenders were identified in more than one UD incident, and after their arrests and the dismantling of their groups, there was a decrease in violent crime in their respective areas of operation.



12.

The Work of Police Intelligence in the Iter Criminis

The work of police intelligence in the iter criminis

— a Latin expression meaning “path of the crime” — refers to the path or process that leads to the commission of a crime, and is essential for preventing and solving offenses. Police intelligence involves the collection, analysis, and use of information to understand and act on criminal activities.

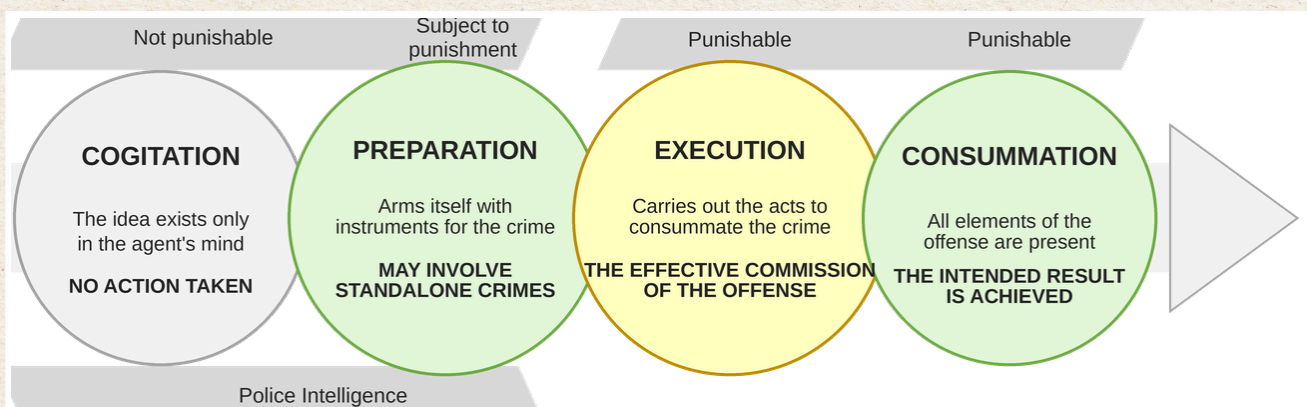
The iter criminis describes the path a crime follows from the moment the idea arises until its actual consummation. It begins with “cogitation,” the stage in which the agent merely contemplates the possibility of committing an offense, weighs circumstances, and deliberates mentally, without any external act. This stage, being purely internal in nature, is not punishable, since criminal law does not sanction thoughts.

Next comes “preparation,” when the agent begins to take concrete steps to make the crime feasible,

such as acquiring tools, drawing up plans, or seeking accomplices. Although the offense has not yet been committed, this stage already involves potential risk and may be punishable if the preparatory acts constitute standalone crimes provided for by law.

The third stage is “execution,” the point at which the agent begins acts directly aimed at committing the crime, constituting an attempt if, due to circumstances beyond the agent’s control, the crime is not consummated.

Finally, in “consummation,” all elements of the offense are completed and the intended result is achieved, bringing the iter criminis to its conclusion. This structure is fundamental for determining the point at which criminal intervention becomes legitimate and for distinguishing between intent, attempt, and a consummated crime.



Iter criminis is a Latin expression meaning “the path of crime”

Considering the above principles, police intelligence is aimed at identifying and neutralizing threats before a crime is committed, that is, between the cogitation and preparation stages (once traceable evidence already exists). At this point, the criminals will be conducting basic reconnaissance of the target location for an Urban Dominion action: the target's routines; times of higher and lower foot traffic; the number of police vehicles on the streets and their meal and rest schedules; days of the month with higher cash flow; among other actions.

It is important to stress that criminals are not ghosts — in other words, they will be seen and will leave traces during this planning stage, evidence perfectly traceable to the eyes of police intelligence, which, using highly specific techniques, is able to identify anomalies in the vicinity of the targets.

As explained, an Urban Dominion group operates as a criminal network, in which different people are “hired” to perform isolated roles. For this reason, lone individuals, posing as panhandlers, street

vendors, or job seekers, usually just observe and, in doing so, gather information that will support the planning of second-tier criminals. At this stage, the group responsible for scouting the targets is unlikely to be committing any crime; it tends to be made up of respectable-looking people who, in theory, do not draw the attention of the authorities.

It should be noted, however, that this planning, if detected at the right moment, can be preemptively dismantled and neutralized, provided it constitutes standalone crimes, thereby minimizing the risk of confrontation and the occurrence of an Urban Dominion event and, consequently, saving lives and protecting property.

The police response triggered after an Urban Dominion action is carried out in places without a Defense Plan is typically conducted amid chaos — in some cases, while fellow officers are still being mourned, and while other civilians have lost their lives, their property, and their dignity. The feeling of insecurity is distressing, and the sense of helplessness is slow to fade.

13.

The Importance of the Crisis Management Office

The Crisis Management Office (CMO) is an operational center responsible for integrating information, making strategic decisions, and coordinating actions among different institutions during critical incidents, such as an Urban Dominion event.

In cases of multifaceted crimes, such as robberies of this type, public security agencies must join forces to carry out predefined strategies and take the necessary measures on an emergency basis. Members of the Military Police, Civil Police, Federal Police (where applicable), and other public agencies should convene as needed.

On site, there should be a general coordinator responsible for leading and making strategic decisions.

It is important to set up a Crisis Management Office, preferably in a neutral location (schools, city hall buildings, private offices, etc.), where local authorities can convene to make important decisions in managing the incident. This location should be established in advance in the Defense Plan; ideally, the space should be equipped with tables and chairs, internet access, computers, a projector, etc. — the minimum resources needed to support decision-makers. There is also the possibility that,

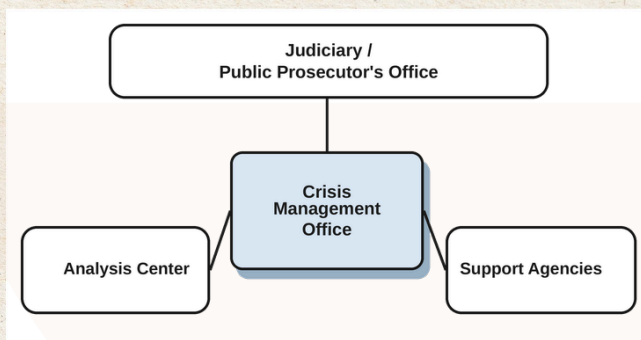


in the first few hours, the office may operate virtually, through digital platforms, since traveling to the pre-established location may still pose significant risks.

Attached to the CMO, there should be a direct channel to the Judiciary and the Public Prosecutor's Office (responsible for expediting search and seizure warrants or other legal decisions), as well as support agencies and an analysis center made up of intelligence analysts, investigators, or other professionals with the technical capacity to process all the data and information gathered in the field and direct it for processing and subsequent use by decision-makers.

In the Crisis Management Office, a structured decision-making process must take place, aimed at effectively resolving problems as they unfold. The decision-maker is responsible for determining where to set up barriers, standing down a given roadblock, authorizing a bomb squad to inspect locations attacked by the criminals, setting up a victim staging area, petitioning the Judiciary and the Public Prosecutor's Office for search and seizure warrants, coordinating the evacuation of civilians in risk situations, among other measures.

To implement these measures, the decision-maker must draw on a variety of technical resources, such as real-time monitoring software and integrated communication systems. These tools not only enable a swift response but also ensure better coordination among the teams involved.



It is of the utmost importance to build a cohesive, competent working group, since a poorly made decision can cost the lives of those under the decision-maker's command. It is prudent that the agencies represented there, on behalf of public security, choose a single spokesperson to provide all viable and timely clarifications in a technical manner. This procedure is intended to unify the chain of command and, above all, avoid image crises — whether for the Department of Public Security, the commands of the institutions involved, or the affected company.

14. Conclusion

This report presents the Defense Plan as a practical and efficient solution to the phenomenon of Urban Dominion, grounded in historical analysis and integrated strategies. The plan stands out for its innovative approach, prioritizing integration among police forces, civil society, and government agencies. Its implementation can significantly reduce high-complexity crimes.

Developing and applying this tool requires careful planning, investment in technology, and training for the teams involved. Its adaptability allows it to be used in different regional contexts and applied to a variety of complex crimes.

The main objective of this state defense mechanism is to save lives and restore law and order. In addition, simulated exercises help reduce other types of crime, as demonstrated. It has been observed that, in places without a Defense Plan but with security forces that are aware of the phenomenon, it is possible to provide an acceptable response to crimes of this magnitude.

In addition to Mato Grosso do Sul, this doctrine has been applied in other states of the federation, such as Mato Grosso, Alagoas, Piauí, Goiás, and the Federal District, where occurrences of UD have been reduced and, in some cases, eliminated entirely. Ideally, all federative entities would develop a standardized Defense Plan suited to their local realities, joining forces in Dominion situations, as occurred in Confresa/MT⁸ in 2023, to eradicate this violent form of crime. Future studies may investigate the plan's effectiveness through practical drills, as well as explore its application in dense urban areas and border regions.

Ultimately, by prioritizing the preservation of life and the restoration of public order, the Defense Plan has a positive and significant impact on the population's safety and quality of life. This approach not only ensures the protection of citizens during crisis situations but also contributes to building a safer, more stable environment, fostering community trust.

⁸ <https://www.leiagora.com.br/noticia/135816/pm-cria-gabinete-de-crise-para-acompanhar-cacada-por-criminosos-que-terrorizaram-confresa>

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