

Tren-ding on TikTok

How Supporters of the Venezuelan Criminal Organization Tren de Aragua Signal Identity, Violence, and Reach on TikTok

BY THE GRAPHIKA TEAM · OCTOBER 2026

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Overview

Tren de Aragua (TdA) is a Venezuelan criminal organization that [originated in the Tocarón prison](#) in Aragua state and has since expanded across Latin America and into the U.S. The U.S. government [designated](#) TdA as a foreign terrorist organization in 2025. In June 2026, the U.S. and Venezuelan governments [announced the death](#) of TdA's longtime leader, Héctor Rusthenford Guerrero Flores, alias "Niño Guerrero," in a joint operation. Given the group's transnational reach, heightened policy attention, and recent change in leadership, it's increasingly important to understand the organization's online presence.

We identified a cluster of TikTok accounts displaying textual and visual characteristics associated with TdA, such as train and pirate references, coded emojis, and references to the group's leadership and places of origin. We did not identify open-source indicators that definitively tie these accounts to TdA members. The recurring features signify at least support for TdA, if not direct association, and include content that appears to depict violence, identify individuals as targets, and recruit new members in Venezuela and abroad.

This report summarizes a sample of 100 TikTok accounts reviewed between Sept. 12 and 25, 2026. We collected this sample from seed accounts we identified by searching TikTok for common TdA indicators, such as "TDA," "Tren de Aragua," and train references. We then expanded the set through follower and following relationships and comment interactions. Of the

100 accounts, we identified 64 as being operated by identifiable individuals, while 36 promoted the organization without an identifiable individual behind them.

The results of our analysis reflect identity indicators and content patterns that together form a decentralized but recognizable content environment. Several of these indicators circulate widely in Venezuelan popular culture and [have been disputed](#) as markers of TdA membership; our assessments do not hinge on any single indicator, but a combination thereof.

Key Findings

- The identified accounts used TikTok to glorify violence and relay potential targets of harassment, intimidation, or other physical threats. Twenty-six of the 100 accounts posted violent or threatening content, including depictions of killings framed as TdA actions and posts identifying individuals as targets, which other accounts acknowledged in the comments.
- The accounts use train references – a traditional TdA signal – and pirate references, including in text, imagery, and emojis. While public and U.S. government [reporting](#) suggests that a TdA-associated group going by “Los Piratas” operates in Chile, 96 of the accounts we reviewed used both train and pirate references. Only two of these accounts used imagery or flag emojis that suggested that they were in or from Chile. The rest had indicators that suggested they were in or from Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and five other countries. This suggests that the use of pirate references is becoming widespread among TdA supporters.
- The accounts posted recruitment calls in Venezuela and other countries. Recruitment posts offered unspecified jobs, targeted audiences inside Venezuela and other countries, including the Venezuelan diaspora, and directed interested users to private messages and, in one case, a WhatsApp group.
- The accounts’ content included hostile language that reflected conflict within TdA. Forty-three accounts published posts or videos that referenced conflict with “carro azul” or “anti-tren.” Open-source [reporting](#) describes “carro azul” as a dissident TdA faction and “anti-tren” as a term for former members or rival factions.

- The accounts attempted to evade moderation through coded signals, but some operated openly. We observed accounts masking weapons and violence with emojis and spreading identity markers across images and captions. A search on TikTok in September 2026 for "tren de aragua" returned multiple accounts that had content promoting or supporting TdA.
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Methodology

- This analysis is based on a qualitative and quantitative review of 100 TikTok accounts whose profiles and posted content featured characteristics associated with Tren de Aragua (e.g., language, emojis, visuals, audio, coded identifiers). We reviewed the accounts between Sept. 12 and 25, 2026, including content they posted before that period. Open-source references, including media reporting, law enforcement documents, and prior research, informed our interpretation of the observed characteristics.
- We identified accounts using a "snowball" sampling approach. We selected initial seed accounts by searching TikTok for common indicators of TdA, such as "TDA," "Tren de Aragua," and train references. We then identified additional accounts through follower and following relationships and comment interactions. We manually reviewed each account to determine its eligibility for the sample set.
- The choice to examine 100 accounts reflects our efforts to focus the analysis while maintaining sufficient variation to identify recurring patterns. Within the sample, we analyzed how identity indicators were expressed and combined across accounts to identify recurring themes and shared content patterns.
- We classified each account as "personal" if an identifiable individual appeared to operate it, or as "general" if no identifiable individual was present and the account promoted the organization as a whole. Of the 100 accounts, 64 were personal and 36 were general.
- We determined account locations using open-source tools and by reviewing flag emojis and other location signals. Open-source tools indicated where an account was created, which may differ from where its operator is currently located.

Limitations

- The analysis relies only on publicly available TikTok data. It does not include private accounts, deleted content, direct messages, offline activity, or activity on other platforms. As a result, it does not capture less visible forms of coordination, including exchanges in private channels.
- Account identification was based on observable signals and does not constitute evidence of TdA membership, coordination, or control. Several indicators, including certain emojis and tattoos, are common in Venezuelan popular culture and have been [disputed](#) as TdA markers. No single indicator should be read as evidence of affiliation on its own.
- We were unable to verify the violent events depicted in the dataset or the ages of individuals who appear in it. We have redacted screenshots to remove personal information, such as names, usernames, and faces. We have excluded images that feature minors, although we did review this content during our analysis.
- Interpretations of slang, coded language, and faction references rely on our analysis and open-source reporting and may not reflect every community's usage.
- Location data reflects account creation information and self-reported signals, and may not indicate where account operators are currently based. Accounts created in Venezuela, for example, may be operated from elsewhere.
- The focus on a single organization limits the applicability of these findings to other groups.

Textual Indicators

Spanish-language textual indicators were among the most consistent markers across the TikTok accounts we examined. Their use is likely meant to convey identity, alignment with the organization's leadership, loyalty, and hostility toward enemies, while maintaining ambiguity and reducing exposure to platform moderators. Some of these terms also circulate in broader Venezuelan popular culture, so we assessed them in combination rather than in isolation. We observed the following patterns:

- **Train and pirate identity:** Accounts often avoided using the organization's full name, referring to it instead through two interchangeable identities: the train and the pirates.
 - Train references included "el tren" (the train), "solo tren" (only the train), "el maldito tren" (the damned train), and the onomatopoeia "chuchu" (choo-choo).
 - Pirate references included "puro piratas" (pure pirates), "sangre pirata" (pirate blood), and "el hampa de los piratas" (the pirates' underworld).
 - The two were frequently combined, as in "el tren de los piratas" (the pirates' train). In Chile, open-source reporting describes "Los Piratas" or "Los Piratas de Aragua" as either a TdA [faction](#) or a local [rebranding](#) of the organization.
 - Only two of the accounts that we reviewed used the Chilean flag in their content.
 - Our previous research into TdA identified "los piratas" as a TdA cell in Chile and the pirate flag emoji as a low-confidence signal. In our sample, 96 accounts across nine countries used train and pirate references, suggesting the pirate identity has become more widespread.



A TikTok account that combined pirate, train, and crown emojis with loyalty rhetoric, such as "un solo carril" (a single track) and "el que más corre" (the one that runs fastest). The account also referenced locations in Aragua state, including Tocarón, the prison where TdA originated. Redactions added by Graphika.

- **Frequent use of "TDA" and "NG":** These core identifiers recurred across usernames, bios, captions, and overlaid text. "TDA" is the abbreviation for Tren de Aragua. "NG" likely refers to Héctor Rusthenford Guerrero Flores, alias "Niño Guerrero," TdA's founder and longtime leader.

- **References to Aragua:** Usernames and bios referenced the state of Aragua and specific localities within it, including Tocarón, the prison where TdA originated. This signals the group's roots and territorial identity.
- **Claims of transnational reach:** Fifty-five accounts self-reported or had an identifiable location outside Venezuela, most commonly Colombia and Peru. Some accounts claimed the train is "en todas partes del planeta" (all over the planet), often reinforcing these claims with flag emojis. These references project an image of the TdA as a transnational network.

Locations Associated with Reviewed TikTok Accounts

Country	Accounts*
Venezuela	47
Colombia	31
Peru	11
Brazil	5
Ecuador	3
United States	2
Chile	2
Mexico	1
Guyana	1
Unknown	6

** Accounts may be associated with more than one country. Locations reflect findings from open-source tools, which indicate where an account was created, as well as the use of flag emojis and other self-reported signals. They may not reflect where account operators are currently based.*

- **Faction references:** Some usernames and bios referenced names that media [reporting](#) has linked to TdA factions, particularly in Peru. These include "hijos de Dios" (children of God) and "el hampa de los gallegos" (the Gallegos' underworld), which correspond to the factions Hijos de Dios and Los Gallegos. We could not confirm whether these accounts were connected to the factions.
- **References to "la casa":** Several usernames and captions referred to "la casa" (the house), including "La casa TDA" and "La Casa del Sur." Some posts shared images of specific properties as "la casa." The term likely functions as another name for the organization or its local branches.
 - One TikTok video captioned with "La casa TDA" showed a property with a pool and a distinct statue. We found a rental listing in the Country Club area of Chacao, Caracas, that matched the property, but we could not confirm a link between the property and TdA.



TikTok video that was captioned with "La casa TDA" (35.3k likes).



Casa en Alquiler

Casa Quinta Mansion En Alquiler En Country Club Chacao De 2000m2 Con Piscina

Publicado hace 3 meses
Corredora con [identidad verificada](#)

US\$ 24.000
Bs. 20.338.560

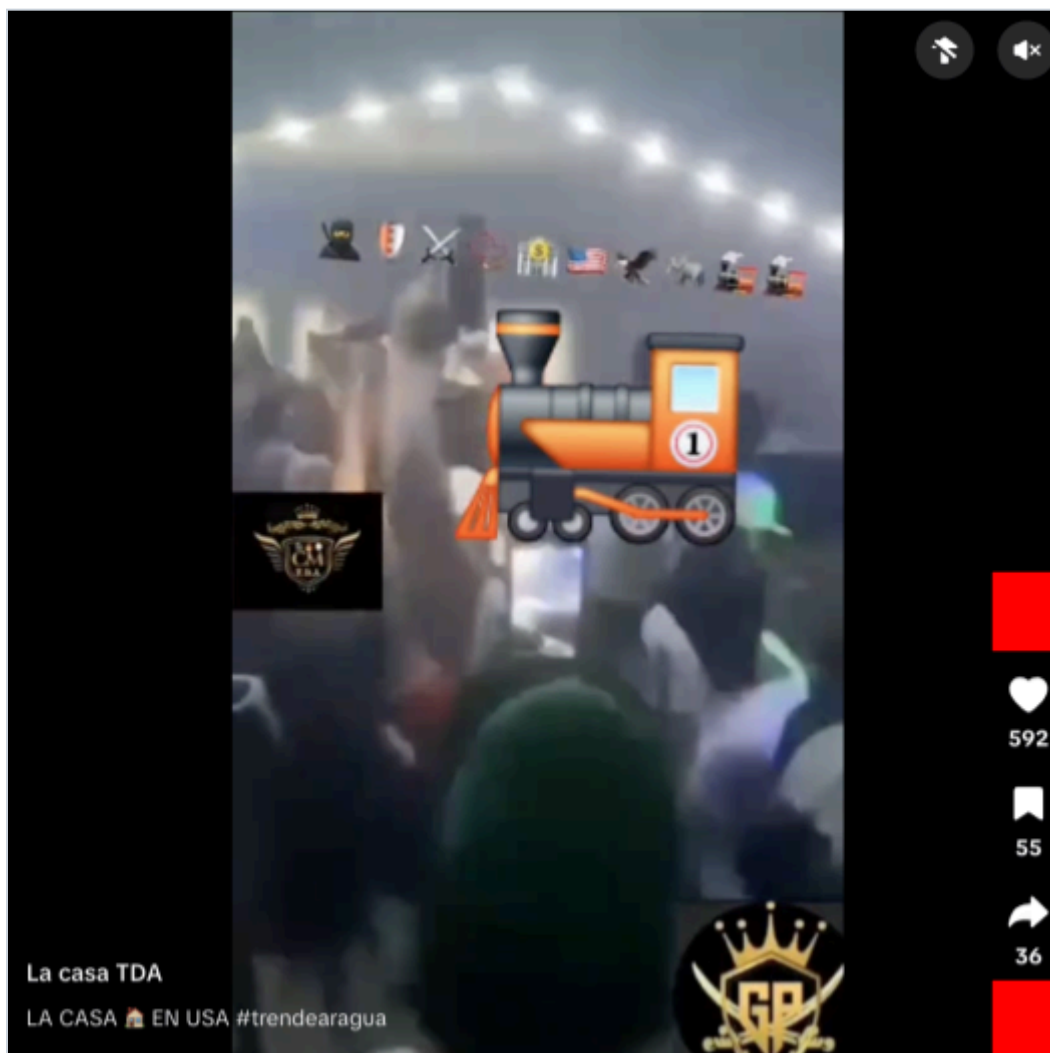
2000 m² totales
10 hab.
10 baños

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Property listing a house in Country Club, Chacao, Caracas, featuring the same distinctive curved architecture, pool, and sculpture visible in the TikTok video.

- **References to the "rey":** Eight usernames referenced a "rey" (king), including "hijo del rey" (son of the king) and "rey siempre será rey" (the king will always be king). Accounts also repeatedly used the phrase "aunque tumben el castillo, el rey seguirá siendo el rey" (even if they tear down the castle, the king will still be the king), likely alluding to a 2023 [raid](#) on the Tócorón prison.
- **Numeric codes:** The number "777" recurred across usernames and display names. We could not determine its specific meaning in this context. Triple-7s are considered to reflect luck and divine protection, and their use may echo the religious theme of "hijo de Dios" (son of God) we observed elsewhere from these accounts. Its recurrence suggests it functions as a shared in-group marker, although we could not confirm a TdA-specific meaning.
- **Loyalty rhetoric:** Phrases such as "sin freno" (no brakes), "el tren que más corre" or "el que más corre" (the fastest train / the one that runs fastest), "por la vía rápida" (on the fast track), "un solo carril" (a single track), and "el tren de la gente seria" (the train of serious people) extended the group's names into metaphors of momentum, dominance, and unity. Others, such as "no vendemos a los hermanos" (we don't sell out the brothers), "una sola cara," and "un solo rostro" (one face), emphasized loyalty among members and a rejection of betrayal.
- **Hostile language:** "Brujas" (witches) is Venezuelan [slang](#) for enemies, and terms derived from it recurred across the accounts, such as "cero brujas" (zero enemies), "anti bruja" (anti-enemy), and "cazadores de brujas" (enemy hunters). Accounts similarly used "sapos" (frogs), slang for informants, and refer to a rival faction as "carro azul" (blue car) and former members or opponents as "anti-tren" (against the train).



A TikTok video captioned "La casa 🏠 en USA #trendearagua" (The house in the USA), showing a crowded party in which an individual raises a pistol and fires into the air. The video was overlaid with a large train emoji, a string of emojis that included the U.S. flag, a ninja, and crossed swords. It also had crowned insignia, one bearing the letters "T.D.A."

Redactions added by Graphika.

Visual Indicators

Repeated symbolic cues across the accounts were likely intended to strengthen a sense of TdA identity and group mythology, and to present an aspirational lifestyle. We observed the following patterns:

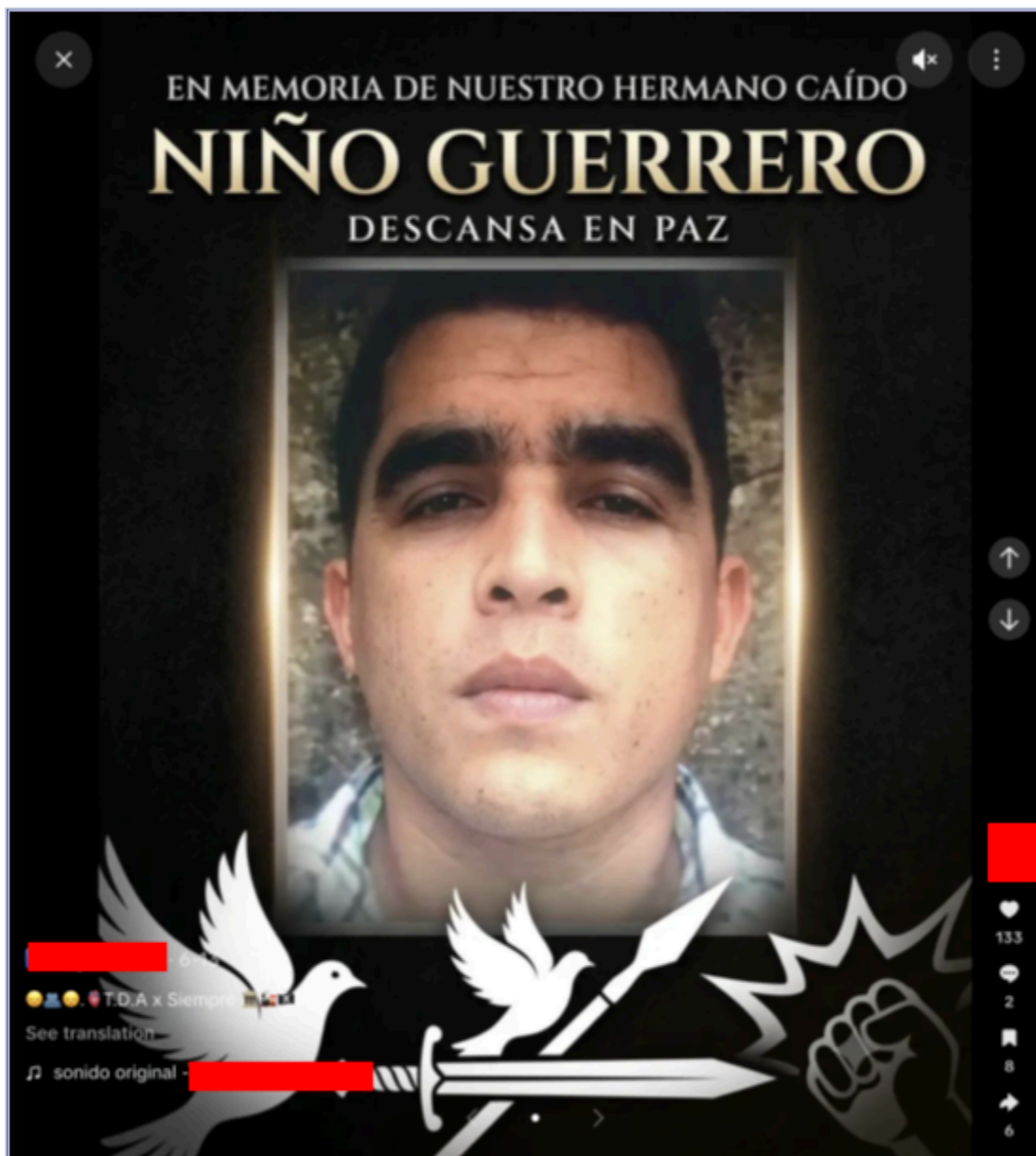
- **Emoji identity markers:** Emojis were the most frequent identity signal in the dataset. The train emoji (🚂) was the most prevalent and was often repeated in emoji strings across usernames, bios, captions, and overlaid text. Mirroring the textual pattern, accounts used the pirate flag (🏴‍☠️) interchangeably with the train, either alongside it or on its own.
 - Other recurring emojis included NG (🇳🇬), likely in reference to Niño Guerrero, as well as the crown (👑), classical building (🏛️), ninja (🥷), crossed swords (⚔️), and strawberry (🍓). The crown likely signals status or leadership, the classical building likely references "la casa," and the ninja and crossed swords likely refer to hitmen or enforcers. The strawberry also appeared in textual form, with "fresa" (strawberry) recurring in usernames and bios.
- **Dissident faction emoji markers:** Accounts identified the "carro azul" faction, and "anti-tren" more broadly, with the blue car (🚗) and [Albanian flag](#) (🇦🇱) emojis, typically combined with negation symbols in strings such as #cero 🚫💙🚗🚫🇦🇱. Media [reporting](#) listed the Albanian flag emoji among markers used by TdA members in 2024. In our investigation, accounts consistently used it in negated combinations, suggesting it likely represents the organization's opponents rather than TdA itself. Neither the reporting nor our investigation could determine why the Albanian flag is used.
 - Some posts also depicted the conflict visually, including AI-generated images of a train destroying a blue vehicle. The frog emoji (🐸), representing "sapos" (informants), appeared in similar negated combinations, such as 🐸🚫.



An AI-generated image showing an armed train flying the pirate flag and crushing a blue SUV, likely representing the dissident "carro azul" faction. The image was overlaid with text reading, "El tren de los piratas" (the pirates' train) and included a caption with the hashtag #🚫🚗🏴‍☠️. Redactions added by Graphika.

- **Tattoos:** Twenty-one of the 100 accounts posted images that showed a rose or rosary tattoo, typically on a hand or arm. Tattoos of crowns and clocks also appeared, although less frequently.
 - These designs are common in Latin America and are not, on their own, evidence of TdA affiliation. Lawyers and defendants in the U.S. have also [disputed](#) that the presence of crown and clock tattoos represents TdA affiliation.
- **Hand gesture signaling:** Fifty-seven of the 100 accounts posted images that displayed one of two recurring hand poses: two extended fingers or a single extended finger forming a pistol.
 - Because these gestures are also common in social media content more broadly, their prevalence may reflect shared youth and street culture rather than a specific TdA signal. They possibly function as in-group markers when combined with other indicators, although we could not identify a specific meaning.

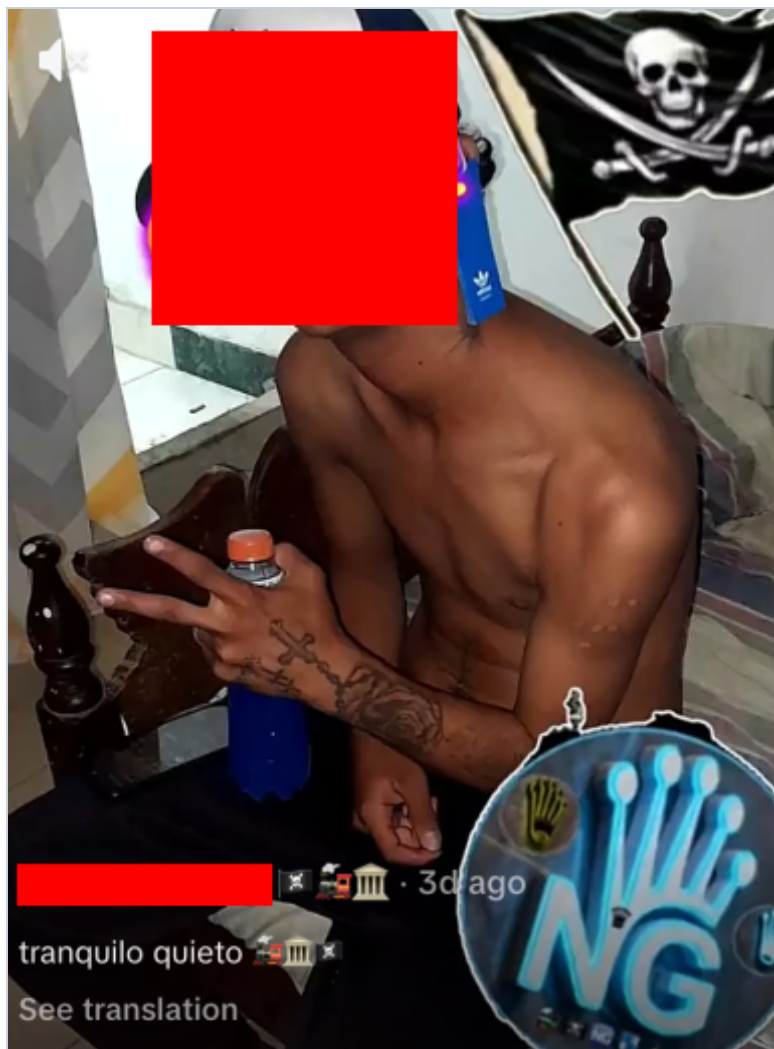
- **Glorification of leaders and fallen members:** Posts featuring images of Niño Guerrero, or "NG" logos, likely contribute to a cult of personality around the organization's leader. After his [reported](#) death in a joint U.S.-Venezuelan operation in June 2026, accounts posted memorial content presenting him as a fallen "hermano" (brother). Similar posts commemorated other fallen members, likely reinforcing narratives of loyalty, death, and sacrifice.
 - Accounts also glorified other prominent criminal figures, such as [Carlos Luis Revete](#), alias "El Koki," the late leader of a Caracas-based gang.
 - We observed images of the horror-film doll Chucky, which were possibly references to José Enrique Martínez Flores, alias "[Chuqui](#)," a senior TdA leader in Bogotá who was extradited to the U.S. in 2026. However, "Chucky" is a [common alias](#) among members of other non-TdA criminal groups across Latin America, including in Mexico and Ecuador. As a result, this imagery is not, on its own, a TdA-specific marker.



A TikTok memorial post for Niño Guerrero, reading "En memoria de nuestro hermano caído, Niño Guerrero, descansa en paz" (In memory of our fallen brother, Niño Guerrero, rest in peace), with the caption "T.D.A x Siempre" (TDA forever) followed by the classical building, train, and pirate flag emojis. Redactions added by Graphika.

- **Prison-themed pop culture:** Accounts frequently posted characters from "Cárcel o Infierno" (Prison or Hell), a Venezuelan series [depicting](#) life inside the country's prisons. This content likely reinforces the organization's origins in the Venezuelan prison system and presents prison life as part of the group's identity and mythology.

- **Weapons, drugs, and lifestyle display:** Forty-four of the 100 accounts posted photos or videos featuring firearms, drugs, parties, or luxury settings, often presented as taking place in "la casa." This content likely projects armed capability, impunity, and an aspirational lifestyle, while reinforcing claims of territorial presence.
- **Apparent involvement of minors:** Six accounts in the sample featured individuals who appear to be minors displaying TdA identity markers, including train and pirate emojis and recurring hand gestures. However, we could not verify these individuals' ages. The presence of minors in content promoting or supporting TdA raises concerns about the exposure and potential recruitment of young people.



A TikTok post showing an individual making a two-finger hand pose, with rosary and rose tattoos on the hand and forearm, a pirate flag graphic, a crowned "NG" logo, and the emoji string 🏴‍☠️🏠 in the username and caption.

Redactions added by Graphika.

Textual and Visual Indicator Presence Across Examined Accounts

Indicator	Accounts
Both train and pirate references	96
Hand signals	57
Weapons, drugs, or lifestyle display	44
Internal conflict references	43
Violent or threatening content	26
Rose or rosary tattoos	21
Apparent minors	6

Violence, Threats, and Targeting

Twenty-six of the 100 accounts posted violent or threatening content, making explicit violence a prominent feature of the dataset. We were unable to verify the authenticity, date, location, or the identities of the perpetrators of the violent events depicted. However, the way this content was framed and circulated likely served as an attempt to intimidate rivals, dissident factions, and communities, and to reinforce group identity. We observed the following patterns:

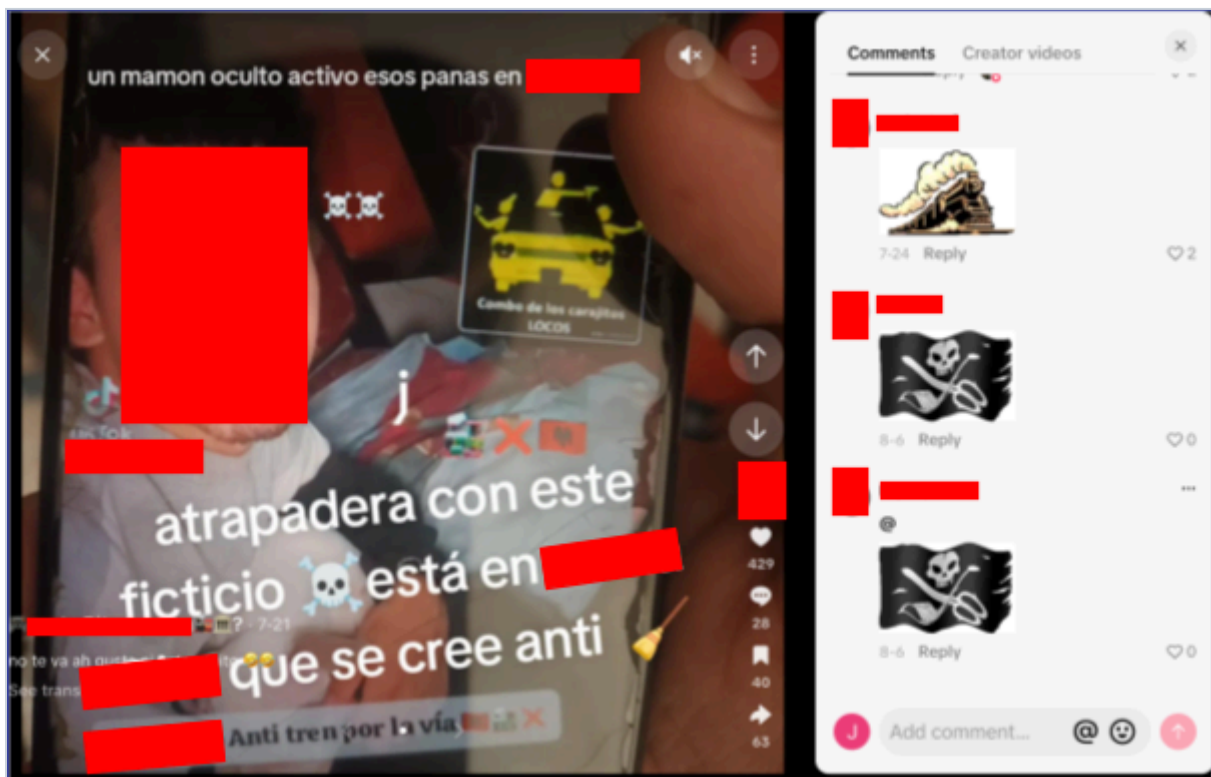
- **Internal conflict:** Forty-three accounts expressed hostility toward "[anti-tren](#)" (against the train), a broad label for those who oppose or have broken away from the organization, and frequently toward "carro azul" (blue car), a [dissident TdA faction](#), using calls such as "choquen el carro" (crash the car).
 - Not all of these accounts posted violent content, and many referenced the conflict only through hostile slogans or emoji strings in bios and captions. This suggests that much of the hostility and violence in the dataset likely reflects internal conflict within the TdA ecosystem rather than rivalry with outside groups.

- **Depictions of killings:** Accounts posted videos and photos that appeared to show killings attributed to TdA, as well as the moments leading up to them and their aftermath, including images of bodies.



A TikTok video showing an individual shooting at a taxi with a person inside, captioned "Es el tren de cazadores de brujas" (It's the enemy hunters' train) and overlaid with "Es el hampa, te lo hacemos realidad" (It's the underworld, we make it real for you). The video received more than 2k likes. Redactions added by Graphika.

- **Violence set to music:** Two specific audio clips recurred across several posts, both appearing to have sounds of individuals presented as TdA members attacking or attempting to kill a victim. The accounts posted videos that remixed these clips with [changa tuki](#), an electronic music genre that emerged in working-class neighborhoods of Caracas. These remixes likely help violent content circulate while turning it into entertainment.
- **Announced targeting:** Some posts identified specific individuals as targets, combining direct calls to locate or harm them with symbols signaling an intent to kill. Replies tagging other accounts suggest that these posts likely served not only as public threats but also as a channel for relaying targeting information among individuals presenting as members.



A TikTok post identifying an individual as a target, describing him as "un mamón" (an annoying person) who "se cree anti" (thinks he's anti-tren), with a call for his "atrapadera" (catch) marked with skull emojis 🦴, which very likely signaled an intent to kill. The post received 28 comments, including replies consisting of train and pirate flag images. Redactions added by Graphika.

- **Comment-section acknowledgment:** Replies to targeting posts and other violent content frequently consisted of the pirate flag emoji or brief acknowledgments. These replies likely signaled approval or in-group affiliation and extended the content's reach through engagement.

- **Displays of explosives:** One video we observed showed a grenade rigged to a door as a booby trap, likely intended as a display of lethal capability and intimidation. Grenades have [featured](#) in attacks attributed to TdA, including a 2024 grenade attack in Bogotá linked to the group's extortion activities.



A TikTok post showing a police officer lying on the ground, with text and emojis presenting him as killed by the TdA. A news report published in November 2025 reported that the officer was killed by criminals. Both the TikTok account and the news [report](#) are from Ecuador. Redactions added by Graphika.



A TikTok post showing a grenade rigged to a door as a booby trap, overlaid with "pendiente con las puertas q abres, hoy en día no todo son confiable" (watch which doors you open, nowadays not everything is trustworthy), alongside a crown graphic. The account's username combined a pirate reference with the [NG](#) and crossed swords emojis. Redactions added by Graphika.

Obfuscation and Adaptation

Explicit keywords, direct references to known organizations or individuals, and uncovered depictions of weapons or violence all increase the likelihood of detection by platform moderators. The operators of the accounts we examined appeared to be aware of these risks as they partially concealed sensitive content and spread TdA-related signals across multiple

elements of a post, keeping them legible to intended audiences while limiting their visibility to automated detection and outside observers.

These obfuscation techniques were not universal, however. Some accounts openly referenced the organization, and a search for "tren de aragua" on TikTok in September 2026 returned multiple accounts using the name. We observed the following patterns:

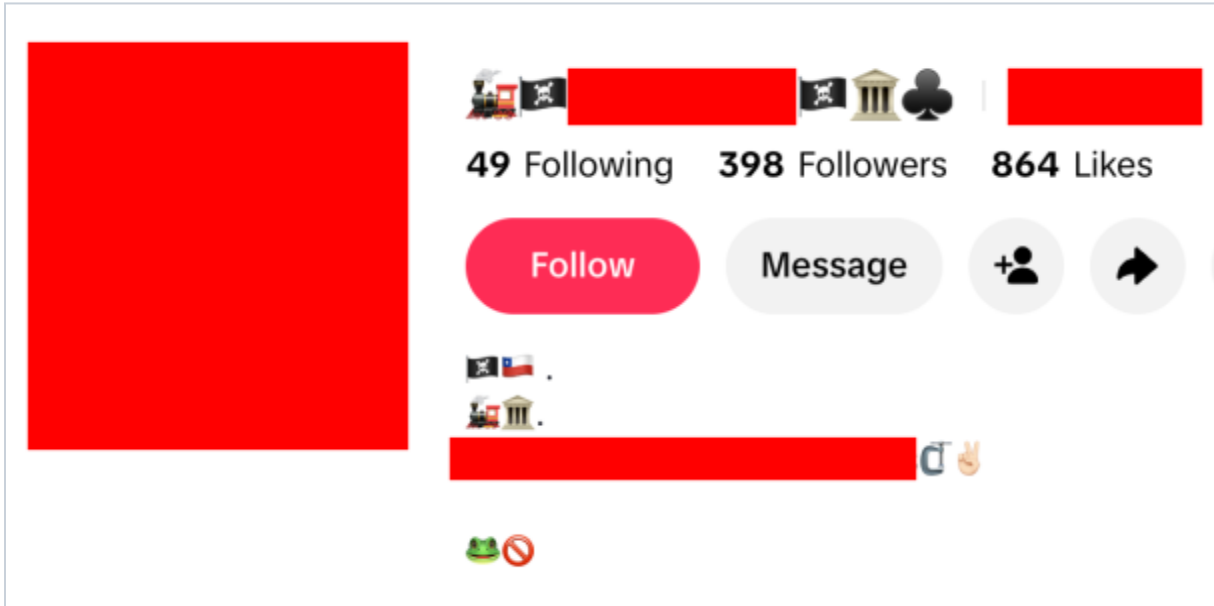
- **Emoji masking of sensitive content:** The accounts partially covered visuals of weapons, drugs, violence, or apparent killings with emojis. The masking leaves the nature of the content recognizable to viewers while reducing the likelihood of automated detection.
- **Face concealment:** Faces in selfies and group photos were commonly covered with emojis, reducing the chance of personal identification while still allowing individuals to display gestures, tattoos, and other identity markers.
- **Distributed signaling:** Identity markers were rarely concentrated in a single field or element of an account or piece of content. For example, a single post may have combined emojis in the username and caption, a sticker-style logo, and an overlaid graphic, none of which name TdA explicitly. Spreading signals across these layers lets the overall affiliation remain clear while each element appears innocuous.



A TikTok post showing a handgun and drugs, partially covered by a skull-and-crossbones sticker and overlaid with pirate flag, ninja, train, and ogre-mask (👹) emojis. Redactions added by Graphika.

- **Media-embedded markers:** Text, logos, and symbols were often overlaid on images and videos rather than in bios or captions, likely reducing exposure to text-based detection tools.
- **Keyword-free hashtags and captions:** Some hashtags and captions consisted almost entirely of emojis, such as the negated faction strings described above, making them harder to surface through keyword searches or text-based moderation.
- **Location signaling:** Accounts signaled their presence in specific countries by using flag emojis. This conveys geographic presence without writing place names.

- **Blending with platform norms:** Coded elements were integrated into ordinary selfies, lifestyle posts, and mainstream TikTok formats, often alongside casual captions. Some accounts also used common TikTok trends, such as "mi WhatsApp necesita gente nueva" (my WhatsApp needs new people), to share contact details, making it difficult to distinguish recruitment from ordinary social use.



A TikTok profile that used the pirate flag emoji alongside the Chilean flag emoji to signal a presence in Chile. The bio was composed mostly of emojis, including the train, pirate flag, and classical building emojis, and the negated frog 🐸🚫, which likely signals hostility toward "sapos" (informants). Redactions added by Graphika.

Recruitment Indicators

Some accounts posted recruitment calls, framing participation as work, membership in a brotherhood, or collective arrival in a new country. We observed the following patterns:

- **Employment-style framing:** Recruitment posts presented participation as work while leaving the nature of the job unspecified. They used phrases such as "necesitamos gente" (we need people), "trabajar" (to work), and "gente seria" (serious people).
- **Brotherhood framing:** Some recruitment posts presented joining as entry into a family or brotherhood rather than a job, drawing on the loyalty rhetoric described above, such as

"hermanos" (brothers), "no vendemos a los hermanos" (we don't sell out the brothers), and "un solo carril" (a single track).

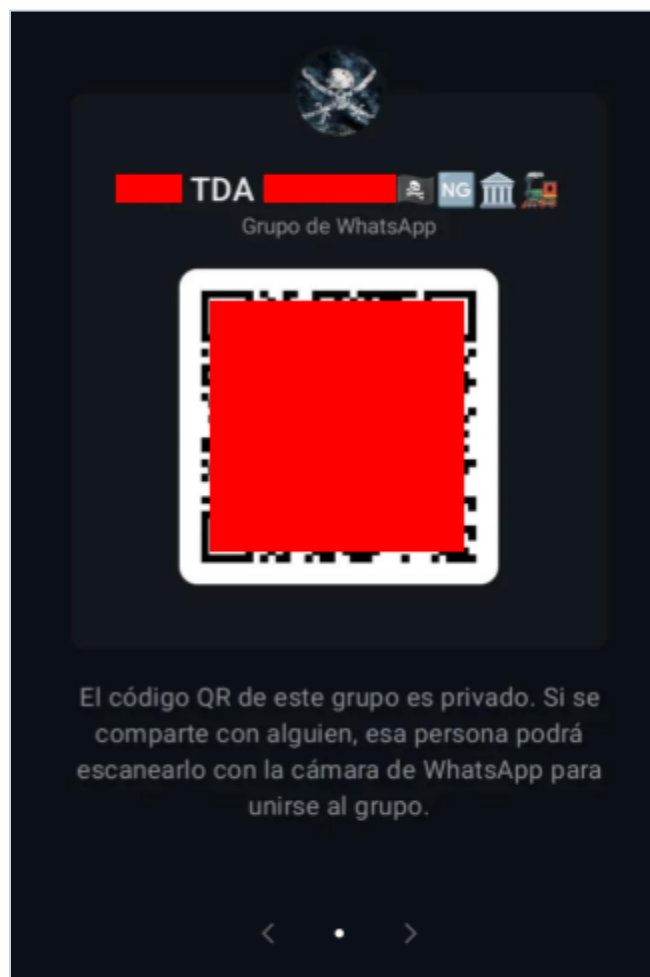


A TikTok post stating, "necesitamos gente para trabajar en el Zulia, hablé pa' ve, gente seria" (we need people to work in Zulia, get in touch, serious people only). The post received 264 comments and more than 1k likes. Commenters expressed interest, shared their locations, and asked how to join. Redactions added by Graphika.

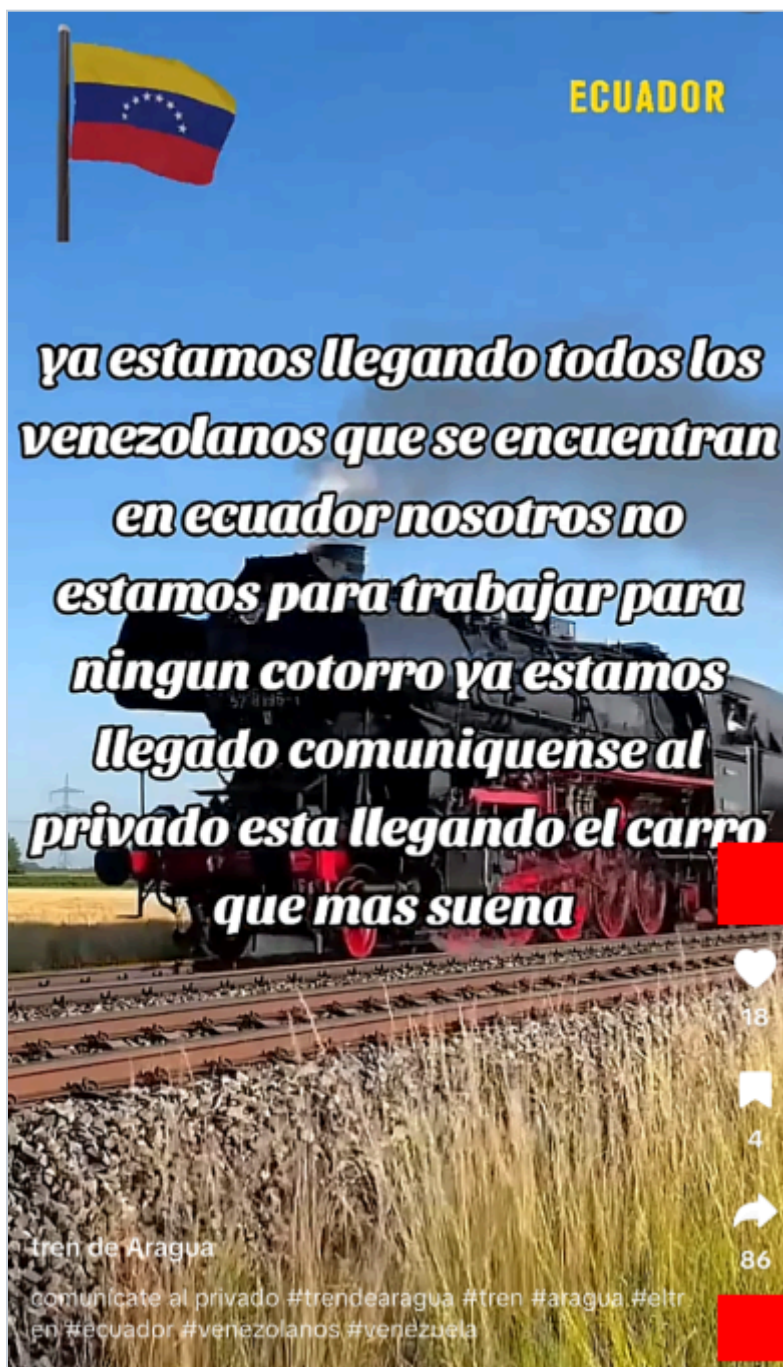
- **Geographic and diaspora targeting:** Posts named specific states within Venezuela and other countries, indicating location-specific outreach at home and abroad. Some addressed Venezuelans living in other countries directly, framing recruitment around the group's arrival and presence abroad rather than around employment.
- **Off-platform pathways:** Recruitment posts consistently pushed interested users toward private communication methods, using phrases such as "comuníquense al privado" (contact us privately), typically referring to TikTok direct messages. Some accounts also shared

WhatsApp group invitations through links or QR codes, moving further communication to non-public channels.

- **Mobilization of existing members:** Some posts addressed already-affiliated individuals rather than potential recruits, calling on members to report in for jobs or other opportunities. This suggests the platform is likely used to attract new members and mobilize existing ones.
- **Audience response:** Recruitment content can draw high engagement. Comments we observed included questions about what the work involves, the requirements, and how to get in touch. We could not assess commenters' intent, but the volume and nature of these replies suggest the posts reached a receptive audience.



A TikTok post that shared a QR code to join a self-described TdA-associated WhatsApp group. The group's name includes the pirate flag, NG, classical building, and train emojis. Redactions added by Graphika.



A TikTok post addressed to Venezuelans in Ecuador, overlaid on train imagery with the Venezuelan flag, announcing the group's arrival and directing interested users to private messages. Redactions added by Graphika.

Appendix: Observed Indicators and Interpretation

Category	Indicator Type	Observed Indicators	Description/Analytical Value
Textual	Core identifiers	TDA, NG, el tren, solo tren, chuchu, el carro, el maldito tren	Likely convey TdA identity without explicit naming; among the most consistent markers across the dataset
Textual	Pirate identity	piratas, puro piratas, sangre pirata, el hampa de los piratas, el tren de los piratas	Used interchangeably with train references as equivalent names for TdA
Textual	Geographic identity	Aragua, Maracay, Tocarón, and other Aragua localities	Likely signals the group's roots and territorial identity
Textual	Transnational claims	references to countries including Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, the United States, and Chile; "en todas partes del planeta"	Likely projects an image of the organization as a transnational network
Textual	Faction references	hijos de Dios, el hampa de los gallegos	Correspond to TdA factions identified in open-source reporting; connection to the accounts unconfirmed
Textual	References to "la casa"	La casa TDA, La Casa del Sur, la casa en USA	Likely another name for the organization or its local branches
Textual	References to the "rey"	usernames such as "hijo del rey" and "rey siempre será rey" (8 accounts); repeated use of the phrase "aunque tumben el castillo, el rey seguirá siendo el rey"	Likely frames Niño Guerrero as an enduring leader and members as his heirs or loyalists
Textual	Numeric codes	777	Recurring in usernames and display names; likely signals

			luck or divine protection; TdA-specific meaning unconfirmed
Textual	Loyalty rhetoric	sin freno, el tren que más corre, el carro que más suena, un solo carril, por la vía rápida, el tren de la gente seria, no vendemos a los hermanos, una sola cara, un solo rostro	Likely projects momentum, dominance, and unity, and reinforces loyalty among members
Textual	Hostile language	cero brujas, anti bruja, cazadores de brujas, sapos, carro azul, anti-tren, choquen el carro	Signals hostility toward enemies, informants, and dissident TdA factions
Visual	Emoji identity markers		Express TdA identity without words; the train is the most prevalent marker,  likely refers to Niño Guerrero,  likely signals status or leadership,  likely references "la casa,"   likely refer to hitmen or enforcers, and  also appears textually as "fresa"
Visual	Dissident faction emoji markers	 combined with  ; AI-generated imagery of the train destroying a blue vehicle	Signal hostility toward the "carro azul" faction, "anti-tren" more broadly, and informants
Visual	Hand signals	two-finger pose, finger-pistol pose (57 of 100 accounts)	Widespread gestures that possibly function as in-group markers in combination with other indicators; not specific to TdA on their own

Visual	Tattoos	rose or rosary (21 of 100 accounts); crowns and clocks (less frequent)	Recurring marker in combination with other indicators; not evidence of affiliation on its own
Visual	Glorification of leaders and fallen members	images of Niño Guerrero, "NG" logos with crowns, memorial posts, images of El Koki, and Chucky imagery	Likely contributes to a cult of personality around TdA's leader and reinforces narratives of loyalty, death, and sacrifice
Visual	Weapons, drugs, and lifestyle display	firearms, drugs, parties, luxury settings, content presented as "la casa"	Likely projects armed capability, impunity, and an aspirational lifestyle, and reinforces claims of territorial presence
Visual	Apparent involvement of minors	individuals appearing to be minors displaying identity markers	Raises concerns about the exposure and potential recruitment of young people
Visual	Prison-themed pop culture	characters from the Venezuelan series "Cárcel o Infierno"	Likely reinforces the group's prison origins and identity
Violence	Internal conflict	carro azul, anti-tren, choquen el carro (43 of 100 accounts)	Likely reflects conflict with a dissident TdA faction and former members
Violence	Depictions of killings	videos and photos appearing to show killings attributed to TdA, the moments before them, and their aftermath, including bodies	Likely intimidates rivals, dissident factions, and communities
Violence	Violence set to music	two recurring audio clips appearing to capture individuals presented as TdA members attacking or	Likely aids circulation while turning violence into entertainment

		attempting to kill a victim, remixed with changa tuki music	
Violence	Announced targeting	posts identifying individuals as targets, direct calls to locate or harm them	Suggests use of the platform to issue threats and relay targeting information
Violence	Comment-section acknowledgment	👍 replies and brief acknowledgments	Likely signals receipt, approval, or in-group affiliation, and extends content reach
Obfuscation	Emoji masking	emojis partially covering weapons, drugs, and violent footage	Keeps content recognizable while likely reducing automated detection
Obfuscation	Face concealment	emojis covering faces	Likely reduces personal identification while preserving other identity markers
Obfuscation	Distributed signaling	markers spread across usernames, captions, stickers, and overlays	Affiliation remains clear while each element appears innocuous
Obfuscation	Media-embedded markers	text, logos, and symbols within images and videos	Likely reduces exposure to text-based detection tools
Obfuscation	Keyword-free hashtags	emoji-only hashtags and captions	Likely harder to surface through keyword search or text-based moderation
Obfuscation	Location signaling	flag emojis	Conveys geographic presence without place names
Recruitment	Employment-style framing	"necesitamos gente," "trabajar," "gente seria"	Frames participation as work while leaving the job unspecified
Recruitment	Brotherhood framing	references to "hermanos" and loyalty rhetoric in recruitment posts	Frames participation as membership in a brotherhood rather than a job

Recruitme nt	Geographic and diaspora targeting	Venezuelan state and foreign country references; posts addressing Venezuelans abroad	Suggests location-specific outreach at home and abroad, including toward the Venezuelan diaspora
Recruitme nt	Call to action	"comuníquese al privado," WhatsApp group links	Moves users toward private communication channels
Recruitme nt	Audience response	comments asking about requirements and how to join	Suggests posts reach an audience receptive to recruitment calls

Estimative Language Legend

Assessments of Likelihood

Graphika uses the following vocabulary to indicate the likelihood of a hypothesis proving correct. If we are unable to assess likelihood due to limited or non-existent information, we may use terms such as “suggest.”

Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Real Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain(ly)
1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%

Confidence Levels: Indicators of Sourcing and Corroboration

Graphika uses confidence levels to indicate the quality of information, sources, and corroboration underpinning our assessments.

Low Confidence	Medium Confidence	High Confidence
Assessment based on information from a non-trusted source and/or information we have not been able to independently corroborate.	Assessment based on information that we are unable to sufficiently corroborate and/or information open to multiple interpretations.	Assessment based on information from multiple trusted sources that we are able to fully corroborate.

About Graphika

Graphika is the Decision Intelligence Platform for complex digital environments. Powered by its proprietary AI World Model, Graphika structures fragmented digital activity into a connected understanding of narratives, actors, communities, relationships, and momentum as they evolve. Through Deep Research and Decision Agents, Graphika helps organizations understand what is happening, who is driving it, how it is spreading, and why it matters.

Building on this foundation, Graphika's analysts combine deep investigative expertise with advanced analytical methods to uncover meaningful patterns, assess emerging risks and opportunities, and explain the forces driving change. Their work gives organizations the context and clarity to prioritize what matters and make more informed decisions. Graphika supports organizations around the world across the public and private sectors, including technology, media and entertainment, financial services, strategic communications and marketing, and government.

For more information or to request a demo, [visit](#) our website, and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Bluesky](#), and [X](#) for timely insights between reports.

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