

# Ecuador

## Operational Update

N.5 | April 2024

Maura Guzmán, a Colombian refugee, goes out on a daily basis to collect recyclable material in the Amazonian city of Lago Agrio. Like other recyclers in the country, she faces discrimination and other difficulties in her community for the work she does. But her love for the planet and desire to work motivate her to continue going out every day from dawn to dusk to keep her new home clean.  
Photo: UNHCR/Diana Díaz

### Figures at a glance

#### Population figures

**76,265** **94%** from neighbouring Colombia

Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador<sup>1</sup>

**63,432**

refugees with active cases registered in ProGres<sup>1</sup>



#### Our 2024 response in figures

**11,490\***

refugees and other displaced people supported and registered in proGres as of the end of April 2024

\* Lower figure than reported before as there was a recalculation of the categories considered in this number. Does not reflect the sum of the figures mentioned below.

**13,146**

people received legal guidance & assistance

**5,951**

people assisted with cash for basic needs and protection

**9,959**

people supported with collective emergency shelter

**3,396**

people supported with mental health and psychosocial support

**625**

people linked with a decent employment opportunity

**1,176**

GBV survivors supported

**19**

people provided with technical or skills certification

**2,052**

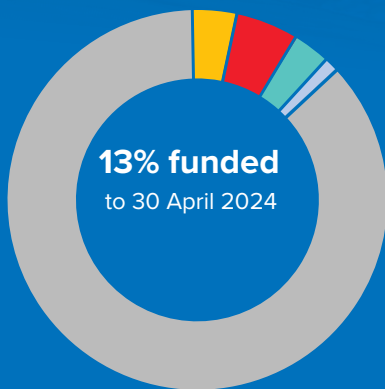
people received hygiene kits

**226**

people supported with child protection services

**2,435**

people supported with community - based protection services



**73.3M**  
required in 2024

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

For more information on funding, please visit [reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador](https://reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador)

<sup>1</sup> Historical figure registered by the government to the end of March 2024. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres. Figures to the end of April 2024.

## Operational context

The regularization process officially closed the final call to apply for the visa for Venezuelans who entered irregularly. Efforts will remain to finish processing all visa applications and ID orders (see page 3 for more details).

The number of people from Colombia seeking asylum in Ecuador continues to increase, with over 840 registered in April this year. The number of Colombians seeking asylum in Ecuador so far in 2024 (2,860) is now over half of the total registered in the entire 2023, according to Government figures.

The Popular Consultation and Referendum took place in April, when the National Electoral Council declared that ‘yes’

won in 9 questions and ‘no’ in 2; the former being related to insecurity and the state response.

The Safe Mobility initiative continues to be implemented in the country, providing eligible refugees and migrants with safe and regular pathways to the U.S. [See more here.](#)

Despite the occurrence of rainfall through April, power production was insufficient and power outages continued to be scheduled across the country. This has caused interruptions in the delivery of services to people forced to flee.

## Main populations forced to flee hosted by Ecuador and others of concern

### Venezuelans

Venezuelans continue to lead in numbers of arrivals in Ecuador. 24,486 people entered Ecuador in April 2024, with a daily entry average of 816 Venezuelans, compared to exit figures registering 23,305 and 743 daily exits on average. This represents a 33% increase in entries and an 11% increase in exits as compared to the same period in 2023. While exits continue to be significant, there is a downward trend during the first four months of the year (different to the trend observed during the same period in 2023, while entries have remained somewhat stable as compared to 2023).

**474,945** Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador<sup>2</sup>

**45%** estimated to be between 18 and 45 years old<sup>3</sup>

**25%** estimated to have a higher education degree<sup>3</sup>

### Main needs

**82%** access to food<sup>3</sup>

**67%** access to housing or shelter<sup>3</sup>

**57%** access to livelihoods or employment<sup>3</sup>

### Colombians

According to Government data, 2,860 Colombians have sought asylum so far in 2024, 841 in April, a 350% increase as compared to the same month in 2023. The number registered in 2024 accounts for 54% of the number registered in the entire 2023, and a 125% increase as compared to the first four months of 2023.

**2,860** Colombians who have sought asylum in Ecuador in 2024<sup>2</sup>

**841** were registered in April

### Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador

**77%** access to food, housing, clothing<sup>4</sup>

**10%** access to rights and services (job, education)<sup>4</sup>

**7%** access to documentation<sup>4</sup>

### Ecuadorians

The number of Ecuadorians on the run has increased in the past years, with over 86,000 having crossed the Darien jungle in 2022 and 2023 combined, being the second nationality to have [crossed the Darien](#) in those two years. By end of March 2024, over 36,000 Ecuadorians had arrived [irregularly to Mexico](#). Moreover, 46,000 Ecuadorian asylum-seekers were pending a decision on their claims by mid-2023.

<sup>2</sup> According to data estimated by the Refugee and Migrant Working Group (GTRM, by its acronym in Spanish). The GTRM is assessing a new methodology with the Government to estimate the new stock figure. Figures of asylum claims from the Government.

<sup>3</sup> Fifth R4V Joint Needs Assessment. [www.r4v.info](http://www.r4v.info)

<sup>4</sup> 2023 Protection Monitoring Report available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ecu>

# SPECIAL FOCUS: REGULARIZATION PROCESS

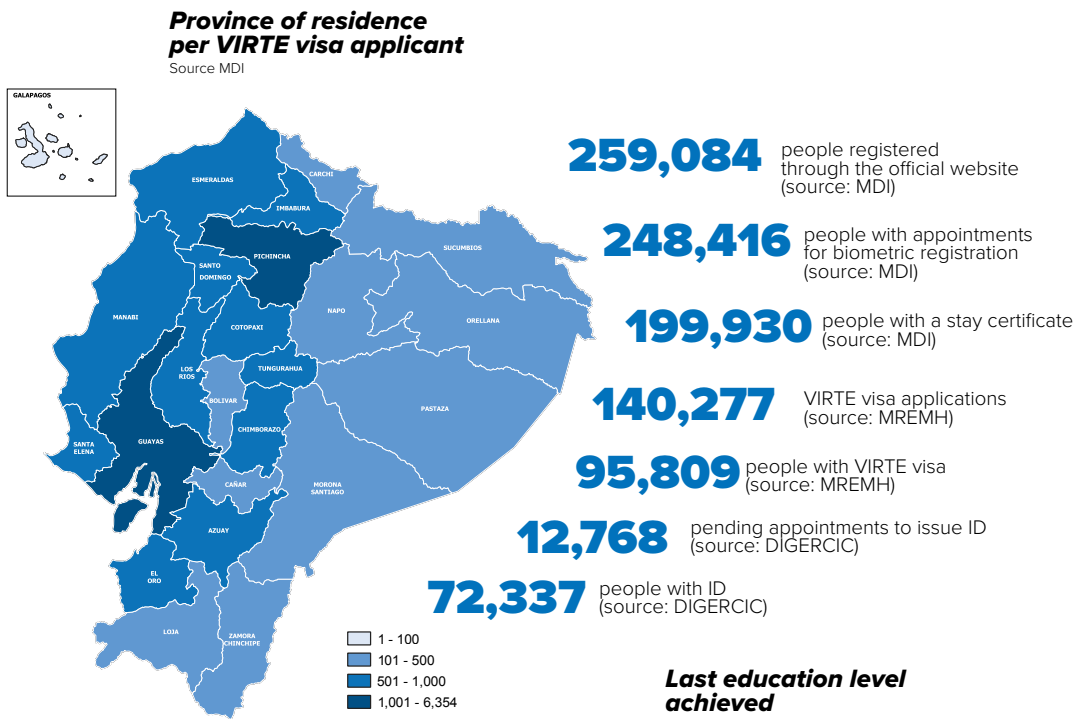
The broad Registration and Regularization exercise has been key in enabling the needs of people in an irregular status to be met and to advance solutions as part of a broader protection and socioeconomic integration strategy.

As provided by Decree 436/22, the first phase of the Registration and Regularization initiative started in 2022, with the registration of foreigners living in Ecuador with an irregular status, together with the opportunity for them to obtain a temporary stay permit (Certificado de Permanencia Migratoria) that allows for a regular stay in the territory until a regularization option is made available.

The first phase of registration started registering and regularizing all Venezuelans who entered regularly prior to

the issuance of the Decree with a VIRTE visa. Registration is also divided in phases: first, Venezuelans who entered regularly beginning on 1 September 2022; second, people of all nationalities as of 16 November 2022; and third, all Venezuelans who entered irregularly beginning on 17 February 2023. The registration phase ended on 15 August 2023.

By 13 May 2024, 140,277 visa applications had been lodged, 95,809 visas had been granted and 72,337 ID cards had been delivered, while over 199,930 people have a stay permit. With the regularization process having ended in April 2024, UNHCR and its partners are supporting those continuing in the process.



**259,084** people registered through the official website (source: MDI)

**248,416** people with appointments for biometric registration (source: MDI)

**199,930** people with a stay certificate (source: MDI)

**140,277** VIRTE visa applications (source: MREMH)

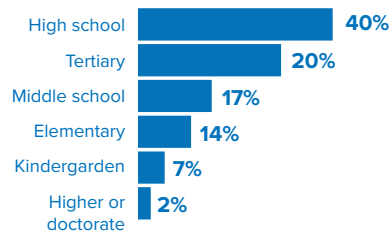
**95,809** people with VIRTE visa (source: MREMH)

**12,768** pending appointments to issue ID (source: DIGERCIC)

**72,337** people with ID (source: DIGERCIC)

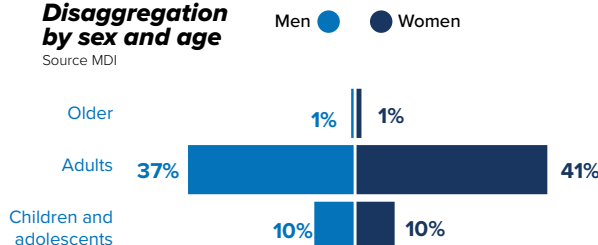
### Last education level achieved

Source: MDI



### Disaggregation by sex and age

Source: MDI



### Support staff financed by UNHCR and IOM for the regularization process

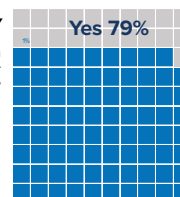
Source: MDI



### Desire to stay

Do you wish to stay in Ecuador permanently (over two years)?

Source: MDI



## DELIVERING PROTECTION

### ESMERALDAS

#### UNHCR and Ministry of Women and Human Rights visit Esmeraldas in the framework of the joint work plan



UNHCR and the Minister of Women and Human Rights held a visit to Esmeraldas as part of the joint workplan adopted in 2024, to understand protection needs and visit the spaces where work is being done to respond to and prevent gender-based violence. During the visit, they signed a symbolic agreement with a community organization led by women, as part of the localization strategy. This organization will work on the northern border carrying out activities to prevent gender-based violence and promote sexual and reproductive health. In addition, they visited the Violeta Center of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights in Esmeraldas, they met with the gender tables and with the GTRM to talk about the situation of women.

### PUTUMAYO REGION

#### Providing vital protection information to people forced to flee



UNHCR and partners traveled to the border communities of Sansahuari and Puerto El Carmen, in the Putumayo region, where information and orientation was provided to around 40 displaced families on regularization, document renewals and access to rights in Ecuador.

### BORBÓN

#### Helping families forced to flee access documental vital to their protection



UNHCR, the Ombudsman's Offices and Civil Registry traveled to the community of Santa Rosa de los Épera to provide support to 13 families of this binational indigenous community, to access documentation. Having access to documentation is vital for families to access basic rights and services.

## PROMOTING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

### NATIONAL

#### Enhancing the response to gender-based violence in Ecuador

UNHCR handed over a donation of equipment and teaching materials to the Violet Centre as part of the work plan signed with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights. These items will help survivors of gender-based violence have access to improved services across the country.



### TULCÁN

#### Delivering support to access basic services

UNHCR handed over support to the Municipal Comprehensive Assistance Centre in Tulcán to help provide improved services to families staying at the shelter. This support included infrastructure improvements, non-perishable food items, 40 mattresses, pillows and bed sheets.



### IBARRA

#### Promoting inclusion in schools helps improve access and permanence in education

In Ibarra, UNHCR began the process to transfer the Repsiramós Inclusión methodology to the Alejandro Pasquel Monge school. This process began providing tools to 13 teachers and 5 representatives of the mothers committee.



## PROMOTING SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

### MANTA & MACHALA

#### Job Fair helps refugees and migrants apply to jobs across the country



In Machala, UNHCR and partners conducted the 360 Job Fair where around 400 people were able to apply to vacancies in 19 companies from the hotel, agroindustry, restaurants and health.

In Manta, UNHCR and partners conducted an employability fair with 13 companies. Over 250 refugees, migrants and Ecuadorians were able to apply to job vacancies and access speed interviews.

### PIMAMPIRO

#### Financial services help refugees contribute to the country



UNHCR and HIAS conducted a financial education workshop for 60 women who are part of the 10 de Agosto Market in Pimampiro. Access to financial services helps refugees and other displaced people to contribute to the local economy.

## CLIMATE ACTION

### PRIORATO

#### Supporting recycling association to improve sustainability

UNHCR and Care provided counselling and supported the RECIPRI recyclers association in opening their savings account. These efforts aim to ensure the sustainability and empowerment of this group that contributes to preserving the environment in their community.



## PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

### SAN GABRIEL

#### Championing integration through sports



UNHCR and Fudela inaugurated the Community Champions process in San Gabriel with 65 refugee and local children. This programme helps refugee and local children meet in a safe space to grow and learn about sports.

### LAGO AGRIO

#### Preventing digital violence against children



UNHCR conducted a workshop to help students at the 16 de Febrero school prevent digital violence when using the internet in Lago Agrio. Apart from risks of abuse faced by children when using the internet, these workshops help children stay safe when encountering xenophobia and discrimination online.

## Stories from the field

# Refugees and migrants join forces in the fight against plastic in Ecuador

Faced with stigma and misinformation, refugees and Ecuadorians in the Amazon, the highlands and the coast have united as guardians of the ecosystem to remove recyclable materials from the streets and build resilient communities.  
Photo: UNHCR/Jaime Giménez



## LAGO AGRIO, TULCÁN & GUAYAQUIL

Maura Guzmán\* looks out the window of her house to check on the weather that morning. It had been raining for days and she was starting to catch a cold after going out to work in the pouring rain. With the clouds still far away, she put on her uniform and pushed her cart through the streets. Maura is a recycler in the northern city of Lago Agrio, located in the Amazon region of Ecuador, bordering Colombia.

"I would go out to walk along the road and immediately you would see the black trash bags, the cardboard like that, a pile of what they used to call garbage. Now we say it's not garbage, it's recycling," said the 47-year-old Colombian refugee who, together with the association she is a part of, walks the streets and businesses every day to collect plastic, paper and other materials. "If we didn't do this, the garbage dump would be like before," he added.

However, what she finds most exhausting is not spending hours and hours collecting and organizing plastic and other materials, but the level of misinformation and stigmatization that surrounds the people who dedicate themselves to this work. "At first, people shouted at us 'look, here come the garbage people, lowlife'. They despised us without knowing the service we do for them and their planet," said Maura.

Despite the nicknames, these recyclers are committed to their vocation. "We like to clean the planet because so much pollution has caused too many catastrophes," says Galo Flóres, a 44-year-old Ecuadorian who lives in Tulcán, in the Andean mountains of northern Ecuador. He and his association of refugees and Ecuadorians start the day at 6 in the morning until almost midnight to ensure that the streets and rivers are free of plastic. "We have to put up with being seen badly, but we are doing a satisfactory job," he adds. [Read more here.](#)

You can help us continue empowering community leaders who make the difference in the lives of thousands. [Donate now.](#)

## We thank the contributions of our donors

30 April 2024

**UNHCR Ecuador is grateful for the critical and generous support provided by donors who have contributed with earmarked and unearmarked funding.**



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