

Ecuador

Operational Update

N.4 | April 2025

"I like Guayaquil, I'm not going to leave here, I feel at home here. In fact, I feel better than in Venezuela."
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Figures at a glance

Population figures

78,629

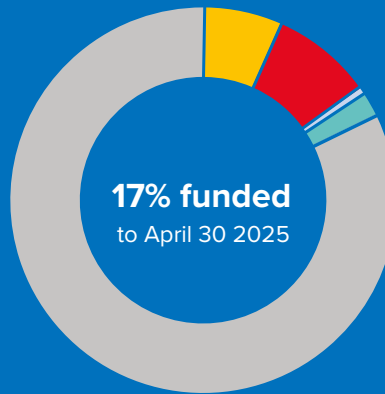
Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador¹

94%

from neighbouring Colombia

67,666

refugees with active cases registered in ProGres¹



73.3M
required in 2025

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

For more information on funding, please visit reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador

Our 2025 response in figures

19,191*

refugees and other displaced people supported and registered in proGres as of the end of April 2025



12,180

people received orientation and assistance to access asylum services



3,354

people supported with collective emergency shelter



382

people supported with child protection services



1,187

people supported with community - based protection services



1,571

women and girls survivors of violence supported



3,451

people assisted to cover their basic needs and protection



3,853

people supported with mental health and psychosocial support



2,234

people received hygiene kits



68

people provided with technical or skills certification



490

people linked with a decent employment opportunity

¹ Historical figure registered by the government to the end of December 2024. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres. Figures to the end of April 2025.

*Figure includes people supported through other services beyond those described below.

Operational context

In April 2025, Ecuador experienced compounding crises that have intensified humanitarian needs across the country. Esmeraldas province, already grappling with flooding and an oil spill, was hit by a 6.1 magnitude earthquake, injuring dozens and damaging hundreds of homes. These events have severely impacted access to basic services and livelihoods, especially for fishing communities comprised of both locals and forcibly displaced people. The overflowing of rivers in multiple cantons further exacerbated the situation, destroying infrastructure and impacting families. The Joint Environment Unit and UNDAC conducted an assessment, recommending urgent interventions in water, food security, healthcare, protection and psychosocial support. Humanitarian actors, including UNHCR, are delivering the little support relief efforts available, pending formal requests from the government and possible additional funding.

Violence and displacement continue across Ecuador, with Esmeraldas and the northern provinces of Sucumbíos and Orellana witnessing alarming trends. In Esmeraldas alone, 11 violent deaths were reported in one week, many occurring within a span of hours. Illegal mining is rising, further destabilizing the region and drawing more people into informal and often dangerous economies controlled by criminal groups. This trend coincides with a rise in child recruitment, extortion, and violence in schools.

In Sucumbíos, conflict between Colombian armed groups spills over the border, leading to the ongoing displacement of Colombians and reports of violence against women and girls. The displacement of Venezuelans also remains a pressing concern, as the country continues to witness the entry and transit of refugees and migrants amid its fragile security context. UNHCR is actively monitoring the protection needs of displaced populations, particularly in light of deteriorating conditions along the borders.

Ecuador’s presidential race resulted in the election of Daniel Noboa in the second round with 56% of the vote.

Meanwhile, public health concerns emerged as Ecuador confirmed its first yellow fever case in years, prompting vaccination campaigns and tighter border controls. The cumulative effect of natural disasters, violence, displacement, and political tensions underscores the urgent need for coordinated humanitarian and policy responses to protect vulnerable populations and stabilize the nation. As of 12 May, Ecuador will require proof of vaccination of yellow fever for travellers from Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and Brazil.

Funding cuts in 2025 have significantly impacted UNHCR’s ability to support forcibly displaced people in Ecuador, particularly new arrivals from Venezuela and Colombia. Assistance for basic needs has been reduced by nearly half, leaving at least 20 families without essential support for food and housing, every week. Additionally, livelihoods programming, opportunities for people to make ends meet, has been severely affected, with hundreds losing access to entrepreneurship and job inclusion opportunities—key tools for long-term stability. As a result, many may be forced into negative coping mechanisms, including labour exploitation, survival sex, or dangerous onward movements. These challenges are further compounded by ongoing weather-related emergencies, including severe flooding and the recent earthquake in Esmeraldas, which have placed additional strain on already limited humanitarian resources. The cumulative effect of these mounting challenges is not only increasing vulnerability among displaced populations but also threatening the stability of host communities. In this context, regular and reliable support from the international community, private sector and other actors is critical to maintain life-saving assistance, reduce protection risks, and help ensure displaced people and their hosts can build safer, more stable futures.

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

Colombians

According to Government data, 349 Colombians sought asylum in Ecuador in April 2025 (1,667 so far in the year), a 40% decrease as compared to the previous month. This number accounts for 24% of those registered in 2024. 72% of people registered this month arrived in the country in families of two or more. With 2024 registering the highest number of asylum claims filed by Colombians in Ecuador since 2014 and conditions worsening in the country of origin, including with constant internal displacements and confinements in departments at the border with Ecuador, UNHCR projects an important number of asylum claims in 2025.

1,667 Colombians who have sought asylum in Ecuador in 2025²
349 were registered in April



Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador

77% access to food, housing, and clothing⁴
10% Access to rights and services (job, education)⁴
7% access to documentation⁴

² 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.

³ Fifth R4V Joint Needs Assessment. www.r4v.info

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

Venezuelans

Venezuelans continue to lead in numbers of arrivals in Ecuador, though in declining numbers. 20,730 people entered Ecuador in April 2025 (8% less than the previous month), with a daily entry average of 691 Venezuelans. 17,730 people left the country, a 28% drop as compared to the previous month, leaving a balance of 3,000 people who entered and remained the country during the reporting period. According to Government data, 446 Venezuelans sought asylum in Ecuador in April 2025 (1,967 so far in the year), a 41% decrease as compared to the previous month and less than the number reported in the same month in 2024 (775). 63% of people registered arrived in the country in families of two or more. Since 2022, Venezuela has accounted for approximately 45–50% of the asylum claims processed in Ecuador. This underscores both the continued need for support and the sustained interest in accessing international protection. Moreover, with the conclusion of the second phase of the regularization process, the asylum system has become increasingly relevant for those with protection needs. *Population entry and exit figures have been compiled by the GTRMs in Ecuador's border areas (Tulcán, Lago Agrio, and Huaquillas) with qualitative and quantitative information on mixed movement trends. These figures are not triangulated with neighboring countries.*



444.778 Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador²

- 45%** estimated to be between 18 and 45 years old³
- 25%** estimated to have a higher education degree³

Main needs

- 82%** access to food³
- 67%** access to housing or shelter³
- 57%** access to livelihoods or employment³

Ecuadorians

Trends in Ecuadorian displacements have shifted, with this nationality dropping to the fifth to cross the Darien Jungle, according to [Panamanian authorities](#). 103,000 Ecuadorian asylum-seekers globally were pending a decision on their claims by mid- 2024.

HUMANITARIANS AT WORK



I AM ISMENIA IÑIGUEZ. I CAME TO THE UNHCR PROTECTION UNIT 6 YEARS AGO TO WORK IN ONE OF MY PASSIONS: EDUCATION. UPON MY ARRIVAL, I LEARNED ABOUT BREATHE INCLUSION, A METHODOLOGY THAT HAS BEEN THE BASIS FOR CREATING PLAYFUL TOOLS, RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPACTS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION AND XENOPHOBIA. THIS IS HOW I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO MY BIT TO CREATE "UN MUNDO POSIBLE". I HAVE FACILITATED MANY WORKSHOPS IN THESE 6 YEARS, ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING HAS BEEN THE LEARNING AND THE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE DIVERSITY OF HUMAN BEINGS: TEACHERS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, SOCIAL WORKERS, STUDENTS, ATHLETES

[Read the full story](#)

² 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.
³ Fifth R4V Joint Needs Assessment. www.r4v.info

DELIVERING PROTECTION

QUITO

Sport for safe spaces and cohesion



UNHCR organized a workshop leveraging sport as a protective space for children and adolescents. With the support of private sector donors like LivGolf, over 100 coaches from various regions were trained to foster inclusive environments free from discrimination and prejudice. Participants acquired tools to promote psychosocial well-being, encourage social cohesion, and identify signs of vulnerability among youth. Through this intervention, UNHCR enhanced community capacity to safeguard displaced and local children and reinforce protective networks for those at risk.

CUENCA

Defenders against violence in the community



With the support from the Republic of Korea, UNHCR delivered a workshop equipping 27 community promoters with skills to effectively prevent, mitigate, and respond to violence against women. Participants explored risk factors, reporting mechanisms, and survivor-centered approaches aimed at fostering safe spaces for all individuals. The training strengthened local capacities to identify misconduct, implement early warning strategies, and support survivors through protection pathways. Through this engagement, UNHCR reinforced community resilience and advanced protective measures against violence.

CUENCA

Strengthening civic protection, promoting overall protection



With the support from Japan and ECHO, UNHCR provided comprehensive training to 44 public civil servants on international protection standards and violence response protocols. The programme covered diverse forms of violence, referral pathways, and coordinated approaches for victim assistance. By fostering interagency collaboration and enhancing understanding of protection frameworks, participants gained practical skills to identify risks and activate timely support mechanisms. This initiative boosted institutional readiness and reinforced collective responsibility to safeguard vulnerable individuals, strengthening local protection systems.

PROMOTING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

TULCÁN

Supplies for' overall well-being

At a recent distribution supported by the contributions of flexible and earmarked, UNHCR provided sleeping kits—including mats, blankets, and pillows—to refugee families seeking rest and recovery. By integrating rest support into broader protection strategies, UNHCR improved mental and physical well-being, ensuring individuals could access dignified rest. This assistance strengthened community support networks and bolstered sustainable access to essential recovery services.



MONTÚFAR

Empowering families Through Supplies and Support

UNHCR delivered essential supplies—newborn kits and hygiene kits for women and men—addressing urgent health and sanitation needs. UNHCR also provided guidance to families to access the asylum system and activate protection routes, offering critical information on legal pathways. By combining delivery of vital goods with informed support and psychosocial assistance, UNHCR strengthens access to basic services, safeguarding vulnerable families and promoting dignity, security, and resilience in the face of displacement.



PROMOTING SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

EL CHICAL

Culinary Fair: Chance for more business opportunities



UNHCR facilitated a gastronomic fair in a community around the border area, inviting displaced and host-community members to share traditional dishes and exchange local products. Participants showcased culinary skills, networked with potential buyers, and explored small-scale market opportunities. Through collective cooking sessions and product stalls, UNHCR fostered social cohesion, unlocked micro-enterprise possibilities, and strengthened trust across diverse groups. This initiative laid the foundations for sustainable income generation and deeper community bonds and was made possible with the support of Japan.

MANTA

Towards women's entrepreneurship and family resilience



UNHCR delivered a hands-on workshop on entrepreneurship and household budgeting for 20 women, covering investment planning, market research, customer outreach, and digital marketing tools. Attendees drafted simple business models, practiced cost-benefit calculations, and learned to leverage online platforms for sales. By building financial literacy and e-commerce skills, UNHCR, with the contribution from the Republic of Korea, empowered participants to launch or scale income-generating activities, enhancing economic autonomy and resilience for their families.

CUENCA

Food business formalization



With the support from Japan, UNHCR trained 22 displaced entrepreneurs on obtaining official sanitary clearance for food products, detailing each compliance step, necessary documentation, and quality-assurance practices. Through practical guidance and template forms, participants learned to navigate health-regulation processes, improve food safety standards, and expand market access. By demystifying bureaucratic requirements and offering tailored support, UNHCR strengthened these micro-businesses' legitimacy and sustainability, facilitating their integration into the formal economy.

WEATHER-RELATED EVENTS

QUITO

Aid for landslide-stricken area and people

In response to recent landslides, UNHCR, with the support of flexible and earmarked donors, distributed hygiene kits and blankets to displaced families sheltered in temporary accommodations. By providing essential items such as soap, menstrual products, and warm blankets, the agency ensured immediate access to basic sanitary and thermal protection needs. This intervention helped prevent health risks associated with exposure, improved dignity, and supported recovery. Through logistics coordination and rapid deployment, UNHCR reinforced community resilience and access to critical services.



ESMERALDAS

Humanitarian response to oil spill

Confronting the oil spill emergency, UNHCR led the humanitarian response alongside local partners, ensuring affected communities received vital services. With the support of donors, the agency coordinated rapid assessments, delivered water purification supplies, and distributed sanitation materials to mitigate health hazards. By streamlining field coordination and leading protection efforts, UNHCR enhanced service delivery for affected people, including refugees, facilitating access to clean water, hygiene support, and health referrals. This integrated approach fortified local capacities to maintain essential lifesaving services.



MANABÍ

Rapid Flood Response Coordination

Aimed at heavy rains and floods, UNHCR deployed teams to support local authorities in delivering essential supplies to affected populations. By providing hygiene kits, blankets, and technical expertise, the agency enhanced logistical coordination and equitable distribution of relief items. Through collaborative response mechanisms, it reinforced community resilience and safeguarded displaced families against weather-related hazards, reinforcing protection and recovery pathways for those at greatest risk. Rapid response to emergencies is only possible with the support of private and government donors of earmarked and flexible funding.



PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

MONTÚFAR

Dismantling youth prejudices



UNHCR partnered to deliver a workshop aimed at dismantling prejudices and stereotypes among adolescents. Through interactive theater exercises, participants engaged in dialogue and reflection to challenge discriminatory attitudes and build empathy. By fostering critical thinking and mutual understanding, the training reinforced respect and peaceful coexistence within peer groups. This initiative empowered young people to become active allies against xenophobia, equipping them with practical tools to identify and counteract exclusionary behaviors in their communities. This was made possible with the support of private and government donors like LivGolf and Japan.

IBARRA

Empowering educator well-being



UNHCR closed a peaceful coexistence programme with a dedicated self-care session for educators, equipping 20 teachers with strategies to manage stress and promote safe learning environments. The workshop introduced emotional resilience techniques, peer support networks to enhance well-being and instructional quality. By prioritizing caregiver support, UNHCR, thanks to the contributions of donors of flexible funding, reinforced teachers' capacity to model inclusive behavior and nurture classrooms free from xenophobic attitudes and discrimination, ultimately benefiting students' holistic development. This was possible thanks to flexible funding donors.

QUITO & GUAYAQUIL

Scaling inclusive education



UNHCR collaborated with education authorities to train school staff and educators nationwide using the "Allies for a World of Possibilities" toolbox. Through interactive sessions, DECE coordinators and teachers learned to implement practical resources to prevent xenophobia and discrimination in classrooms. This effort, done thanks to the contributions of donors of flexible funding, strengthened protective educational spaces and promoted solidarity for displaced individuals within school communities.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Lessny's dreams were displaced with her and found fertile ground in Ecuador

"I like Guayaquil, I'm not going to leave here, I feel at home here. In fact, I feel better than in Venezuela."
© ACNUR/Omar Ganchala



GUAYAQUIL

Lessny is 46 years old and arrived in Ecuador two and a half years ago with her daughter and her pets. Coffee has always been one of her greatest passions—so much that, in her native Venezuela, this desirable bean was her livelihood. "I used to drive my truck to the farms to buy coffee. I roasted it, ground it, packaged it, and distributed it. My business grew so much that, in a short time, I no longer had to distribute it; people came to my house to buy coffee. I sold up to 150 kilos daily", she said.

However, after experiencing a kidnapping, she had to leave her country to protect her life. This event not only forced her to leave but also left lasting effects on her nervous system, which she had to cope with while searching for a place to rebuild her life with her daughter. She left behind her coffee grinder, roasting machine, and registered brand: Café Moca.

After several days traveling, Lessny arrived in Ecuador and chose Guayaquil as her new home. There, she initially found work cleaning houses, but after a few months and with the help of an Ecuadorian who assisted her, she found a coffee supplier and was able to reinvent the business she had left behind in her country. In Ecuador, she discovered a way to add value to her idea.

Lessny participated in entrepreneurship courses provided by EPICO, with the support of UNHCR and funding from the Canadian government. Through these courses, she learned to advertise on social media and improve her business strategy, which led to increased sales of her ground coffee.

Today, her business, named Mokafe in honor of the enterprise she was forced to leave behind, has regular customers and a promising future. Lessny rediscovered her passion for coffee in Ecuador and also found a new place where she could build a home filled with hope for herself and her family.

"I like Guayaquil, I'm not leaving here. I feel at home here. In fact, I feel better than I did in Venezuela. I like Guayaquil," she concluded.

You can help us continue building a World of Possibilities for thousands of displaced people and their host communities in Ecuador. [Donate now.](#)

We thank the contributions of our donors

30 April 2025

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



UNHCR Ecuador is grateful for the support from private donors



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