UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Ecuador

Operational Update

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The Cuesaca Basket Fair is a community market led by Ecuadorian, Venezuelan, and Colombian women that brings together local products and traditional recipes to generate sustainable livelihoods, promote integration, and strengthen women's economic autonomy.

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Figures at a glance

Population figures

80,807

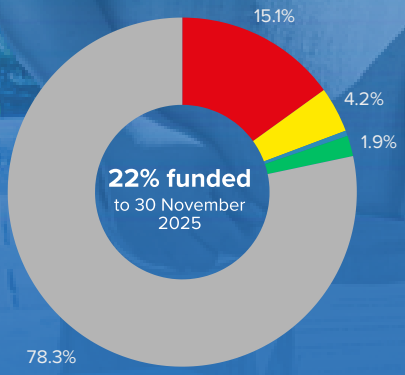
Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador[1]

94%

from neighbouring Colombia

67,817

refugees with active cases registered on UNHCR's database



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

50,032*

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

34,965

people received orientation and assistance to access asylum services

11,339

people supported with colective emergency shelter

728

people supported with child protection services

6,052

people supported with community - based protection services

4.445

women and girls survivors of violence supported

9,425

people assisted to cover their basic needs and protection

13,501

people supported with mental health and psychosocial support

6,602

people received hygiene kits

468

people provided with technical or skills certification

1.657

people linkedwitha decent employment opportunity

1 Historical figure registered by the government since 1978 to the end of September 2025. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres. Figures to the end of September 2025.

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

Operational context

Overall trends in November 2025 point to a sustained, though slightly moderating, flow of Venezuelans into Ecuador, alongside a marked uptick in Colombian asylum claims. Venezuelans continue to account for most asylum claims and a growing net balance of people remaining in the country. The conclusion of the second phase of regularization appears to be reinforcing the relevance of the asylum system for those with protection needs, despite month-to-month fluctuations. In parallel, the sharp increase in Colombian asylum applications signals an emerging trend likely linked to deteriorating security conditions in border areas.

Additionally, UNHCR supported the Quito Process meeting in a broader regional event that included Latin American and Caribbean countries, as part of the technical secretariat. In this forum, governments reaffirmed their commitment to integrate refugees and migrants into national systems, signalling that Ecuador's challenges are not just domestic, but part of a regional solidarity effort. This aligns with UNHCR's recently launched regional strategy, which aims to deepen stabilization and socio-economic integration for displaced populations across the region.

At the same time, Ecuador and the United States have finalized an agreement allowing asylum seekers from third countries currently in the U.S. to be transferred to Ecuador, where they can seek asylum and integrate. The accord was officially published in the U.S. Federal Register on November 17, 2025. Both countries will jointly develop the operational procedures and eligibility criteria for implementation, committing to a transfer process that is dignified, safe, timely, and fully compliant with international refugee protection standards.

In the meantime, November data confirms that Ecuador´s violence levels are projected to reach record highs in 2025. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), the country is on track to register the highest homicide rate in Latin America for the third consecutive year, and it is ranked as the sixth most dangerous country in the world. This classification highlights the severity of violence affecting the country and the challenges it poses for the socioeconomic integration of forcibly displaced people and their host communities.

Rising criminal activity has led to intensified law-enforcement operations. In Guayaquil, the National Police has coordinated actions across multiple districts and have seized weapons, vehicles, and other illicit materials, as the population continues to face killings, robberies, street violence, extortion, and kidnappings, particularly in areas with high levels of human mobility and informal economic activity. In Carchi province at the northern border, the Armed Forces dismantled two guerrilla camps, while the National Police arrested members of an international drug-trafficking network and seized weapons and drugs. In response, President Daniel Noboa declared a new 60-day state of emergency in several provinces through Executive Decree No. 345, reaffirming the government's security-focused approach.

Despite reductions in overall funding levels, UNHCR continues to stand by the Ecuadorian Government and host communities to deliver protection and solutions to people forced to flee conflict and violence.

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

Colombians

According to government data, 243 Colombians sought asylum in Ecuador in November 2025 (3,296 so far in the year), an 84% increase compared to the previous month. This number accounts for 48% of those registered in 2024. 67% 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 asylums claims in 2025.

3,296 Colombians who have sought asylum in Ecuador in 2025

279 were registered in November

Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador

32% access to housing

34% access to food

31% access to employment

Venezuelans

Venezuelans continue to lead in numbers of arrivals in Ecuador, 17.922 people entered Ecuador in November 2025 (3,2% less than the previous month), with a daily entry average of 597 Venezuelans. 16.443 people left the country, a 4% decrease as compared to the previous month, leaving a balance of 1.479 people who entered and remained in the country during the reporting period (6.5% more than the previous month).

According to government data, 456 Venezuelans sought asylum in Ecuador in November 2025 (5,482 so far this year), a 35% decrease compared to the previous month, 59% of people registered arrived in the country in families of two or more. The current number of Venezuelan asylum seekers accounts for 94% of the total registered in 2024. 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.

440.450 Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador [2]

45% estimated to be between 18 and 45 years old

25% estimated to have a higher education degree

Main needs[3]

82% access to food

67% access to housing or shelter

57% access to livelihoods or employment

Ecuadorians

Trends in Ecuadorian displacements have shifted, with this nationality dropping to the fifth to cross the Darien Jungle, according to Panamanian authorities. These numbers have decreased dramatically compared to the same period in previous years. 108,000 Ecuadorian asylum-seekers globally were pending a decision on their claims by mid- 2024. The Ombudspersons Office, with support from UNHCR and ECHO, launched a report on internal displacement which estimates that over 315,000 Ecuadorians had been internally displaced between 2022 and 2024. See the executive summary here.
See the executive summary here.

HUMANITARIANS AT WORK

I am Camila Tunjano, and I am the person behind UNHCR Ecuador's social media. Telling and amplifying the stories of refugees has profoundly changed me. One thing I learned very early on is that no one needs to be "given a voice"; their voice already exists. My role is to amplify it and to show what each person has to offer—their talents, dreams, and skills. Humanitarian work demands responsibility and empathy, but it also gives you a sense of purpose. It gave me a path, a life purpose, and the certainty that wherever I go, I want to keep building a #AWorldofPossibilities for everyone.

Read the full story

DELIVERING PROTECTION

CARCHI

Registration brigade helps address immediate needs of people forced to flee

In Montúfar, UNHCR carried out a registration mission together with NRC, providing information and guidance at the Interagency Office and the San Vicente de Paúl Community Kitchen. Protection monitoring was also conducted to better understand people's needs. Additionally, El Chical, UNHCR, together with NRC, FUDELA, and local authorities, supported forcibly displaced people through new registrations, data updates, and visa renewals. Registration efforts strengthen protection and integration in border areas and were made possible thanks to the support of ECHO.

GUAYAS

Wellbeing spaces for public defenders to strengthen protection services

In Guayaquil, together with HIAS, UNHCR promoted a series of self-care and mental health sessions for Public Defenders. These spaces strengthen the emotional wellbeing of those who work daily to protect refugees and ensure access to rights. This initiative was made possible thanks to the support of public and private sector donors committed to refugee protection and inclusion.

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 2025 Protection Monitoring Report available at https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ecu

GUAYAS

Orientation is vital to enhance access to protection

In Guayaquil, UNHCR, NRC, HIAS, and the Cantonal Council for the Protection of Rights of Naranjal carried out an outreach day providing assistance, guidance, and registration for forcibly displaced people to promote access to rights and protection services. An additional information session was held in the Isla Trinitaria neighbourhood, together with NRC, providing guidance on migration procedures and protection pathways. These activities were made possible thanks to the support of ECHO.

MANABI

Integration for children, adolescents, and women in safe community environments

In Manta, in the San Eloy parish, UNHCR marked the closing of the Weaving Lives Free from Violence project, a space where 200 refugee and host community children, adolescents, and women shared the outcomes of their artistic, self-care, and soft skills processes. These initiatives promote integration and provide safe, violence-free spaces, contributing to the prevention of violence and recruitment. This was made possible thanks to the support of public and private donors backing UNHCR's efforts to foster integration in safe community environments.

ESMERALDAS

Women's Networks for Protection and Resilience

In Esmeraldas, UNHCR, FEPP, and the community-based organization Mujeres Ashé promoted the gathering "Blooming Together: Resilient Women," where 55 participants from host communities, forcibly displaced populations, and community organizations shared experiences on the importance of women's networks as a first humanitarian and community response. The event highlighted the role of these networks in identifying specific protection needs and in supporting integration processes, as well as in the prevention and mitigation of violence.

PROMOTING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

CARCHI

Sleeping kits to improve wellbeing for people forced to flee

In Tulcán, sleeping kits were distributed to forcibly displaced families, including people with disabilities and single caregivers. This support helps ensure safe and dignified rest, which is essential for physical and emotional wellbeing. This activity was made possible thanks to the support of ECHO.

CARCHI

Infrastructure support improves services in schools

In Tulcán, playgrounds at Gran Colombia School, which serves 140 forcibly displaced children, were rehabilitated, strengthening child-friendly safe spaces. School supplies were also provided to support an education innovation project. This initiative was made possible thanks to the support of Japan.

PROMOTING SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

GUAYAS

Business roundtable to promote local entrepreneurship

In Guayaquil, UNHCR commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women through the Creando Juntas event, developed together with GTRM organizations to empower 50 forcibly displaced women entrepreneurs and connect them with livelihood opportunities. This initiative was made possible thanks to the support of public and private sector donors.

NATIONAL

Dual training programme enhances socioeconomic inclusion for people forced to flee:

In November, UNHCR supported the completion of a new cohort of the vocational training programme implemented in partnership with Grupo DIFARE across multiple cities, including Quito, Manta, Portoviejo, and Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas. This programme combined theoretical instruction with hands-on, in-company training under a dual education model. In total, 33 participants completed an average of 341 hours of training, including theoretical learning and practical experience, and received formal certification upon passing both evaluations. As a result, Grupo DIFARE has already hired seven apprentices across the participating cities, demonstrating the effectiveness of private-sector partnerships in facilitating access to formal employment and sustainable livelihoods for people forced to flee. These results were made possible with the support of donors such as the Republic of Korea, which continues to support labour market integration initiatives for refugees and other displaced populations in Ecuador.

PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

GUAYAS

Workshop on sports for protection for trainers help prevent violence:

In Guayaquil, a protection workshop was held for sports instructors, focusing on strengthening capacities to maintain safe spaces for young people and identify risks faced by children and adolescents. This activity was made possible thanks to the support of private sector donor LivGolf.

NATIONAL

Students Stand with Refugees in fundrasing campagin

UNHCR concluded this semester's collaboration with International Relations students from Universidad San Francisco de Quito. The initiative began in October with a class project in which students were tasked with designing a fundraising and awareness-raising initiative, including a concert, a soccer tournament, a solidarity raffle, an auction, and the sale of flowers in support of refugees. Beyond the donation amount collected, this initiative was about awareness-raising and fostering solidarity and encouraging students to understand the realities faced by displaced populations and to share that commitment within their own communities.

QUITO

Where sports and community well-being meet

Together with Universidad de los Hemisferios, UNHCR joined the Sports Coalition. As part of this initiative, and in partnership with FUDELA, a community event was held combining sports activities with a medical brigade. More than 100 community members in Quito received orthodontic and general medical check-ups and took part in sports activities, including golf. This event was made possible thanks to the support of UNHCR's private sector donor, LIV Golf.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

When unity creates strength: Women building livelihoods in Cuesaca

The Cuesaca Basket Fair is a community market led by Ecuadorian, Venezuelan, and Colombian women that brings together local products and traditional recipes to generate sustainable livelihoods, promote integration, and strengthen women's economic autonomy.

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TULCÁN

In the parish of Cuesaca, in Bolívar canton of Carchi province, a group of women transformed a common need into a collective initiative. This is how the Cuesaca Basket Fair was created, a project that makes use of local products to develop sustainable livelihoods and strengthen the income opportunities of Ecuadorian, Venezuelan, and Colombian women. "It was like a dream. At the beginning, we were afraid it wouldn't be possible," recalls Viviana Cuasquer, an Ecuadorian participant of the project.

Together with 24 other women, they decided to come together, talk, and support one another. "We started talking so that we could receive workshops to improve our knowledge and gradually make the fair a reality, so we could bring bread to our homes."

With the support of UNHCR and HIAS, and in coordination with local governments, the women received training on healthy nutrition, mental health, leadership, and the preparation of nutritious dishes using local products. These learnings strengthened both their businesses and their confidence and autonomy.

UNHCR also provided tents, chairs, and tables, enabling the group to take their first steps and grow gradually. Lorena Montenegro, from the cantonal government, explains that "this initiative began from the need of women to generate their own livelihoods. Forty percent of the population (in Cuesaca) is in a situation of human mobility."

The fair became a space where women offer local products and recipes that reflect the cultural diversity of the community, combining Ecuadorian, Colombian, and Venezuelan knowledge. Beyond selling, the space promotes exchange, integration, and mutual support. For the women involved, each earning represents a way to continue caring for and supporting their families. *"We have learned to get along with one another and to work together. To come together as women and fight for a dream," added Viviana.*

Today, the *Cuesaca Basket Fair* reflects how organization, learning, and collective effort can open pathways for women to strengthen their livelihoods and build community through solidarity.

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

31 November 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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