MONITORING OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES/COLOMBIA
LARGE-GROUP INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AND CONFINEMENTS

(January to December 2023)

KEY FIGURES

217[1] Events

144 Large-group internal displacement[2]
58,469 Persons
23,203 Families
39% Women*
31% Men*
29% Children and adolescents*

73 Confinements[3]
100,402 Persons
27,820 Families
37% Women*
34% Men*
29% Children and adolescents*

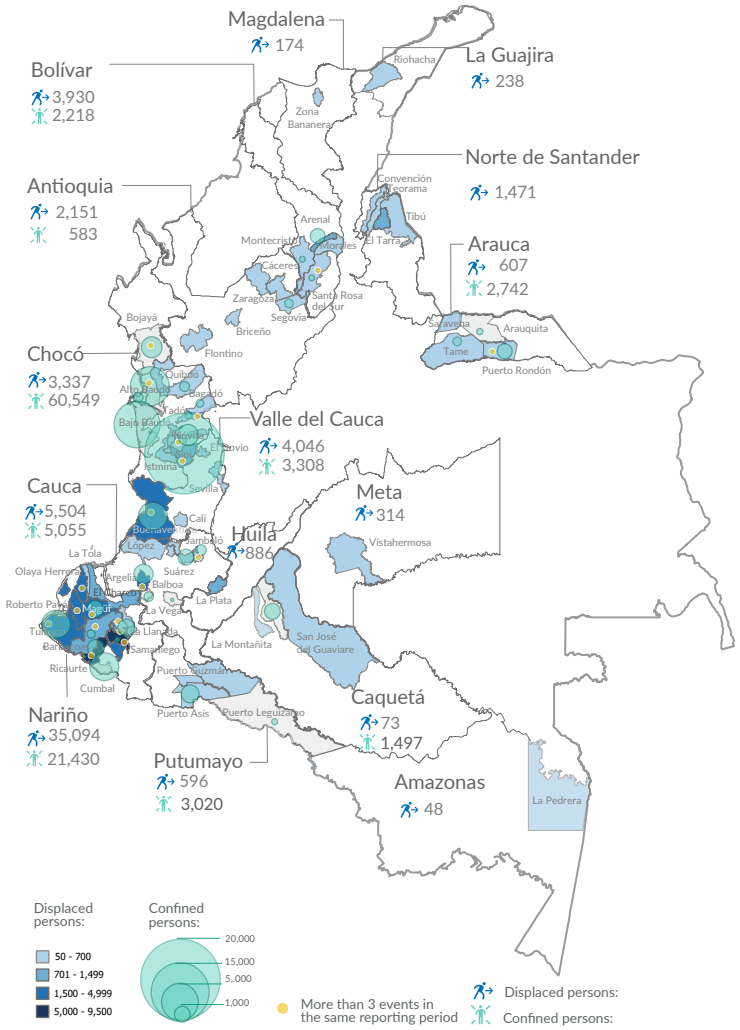
*The response rate for the gender and age disaggregation question was 48% of the total number of large-group internal displacement events recorded in UNHCR's monitoring..

Between January and December, UNHCR has confirmed 144 large-scale displacement events affecting 58,469 individuals (23,203 families). Emergencies in December occurred in Juradó (Chocó), Samaniego (Nariño), and Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca), affecting 1,818 individuals (553 families). There is an 18% decrease in the number of events and a 14% decrease in affected individuals compared to the same period in 2022.

The departments with the highest number of events and individuals affected by displacement in 2023 are Nariño, Cauca, Valle del Cauca, Bolívar, and Chocó. There's a decrease in Norte de Santander and an increase in the Northeast of the department of Antioquia.

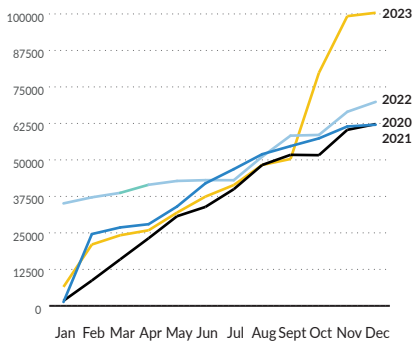
Additionally, 73 confinement events affecting 100,402 individuals (27,820 families) have been confirmed in the reporting period. In December, over 1,156 individuals were affected in an event in Juradó (Chocó) due to clashes between Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) and widespread threats to the population. Compared to the same period in 2022, there is a 43% increase in the number of affected individuals, making 2023 the year with the highest impact on record since UNHCR started consolidating records.

According to UNHCR´s monitoring in its areas of coverage, 2023 is the second year, after 2022, with the highest displaced population in large-scale displacement events due to conflict-related causes since the signing of the Peace Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP in 2016.

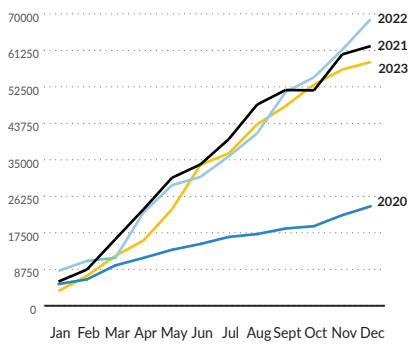


EMERGENCIES OVER TIME

Number of people confined (2020-2023)



Number of people displaced in large-group displacement events (2020-2023)



> It is important to highlight two key developments: first, the ongoing situation in areas with recurrent emergencies, and second, the territorial expansion of the conflict into new regions. Since last year, this has been reported in Bolívar and Magdalena, and in 2023, it has extended to additional departments including Huila, Caquetá, Meta, Amazonas, and La Guajira.

[1] Emergency events are constantly being verified and validated; therefore figures are subject to change
[2] The confinements and large-group internal displacement in the infographic and monitored by UNHCR correspond only to the departments in the areas covered by the field offices
[3] Confinement is understood as a situation of violation of rights in which a community loses mobility as a result of the actions of Non-State Armed Groups, thus preventing access to goods essential for survival

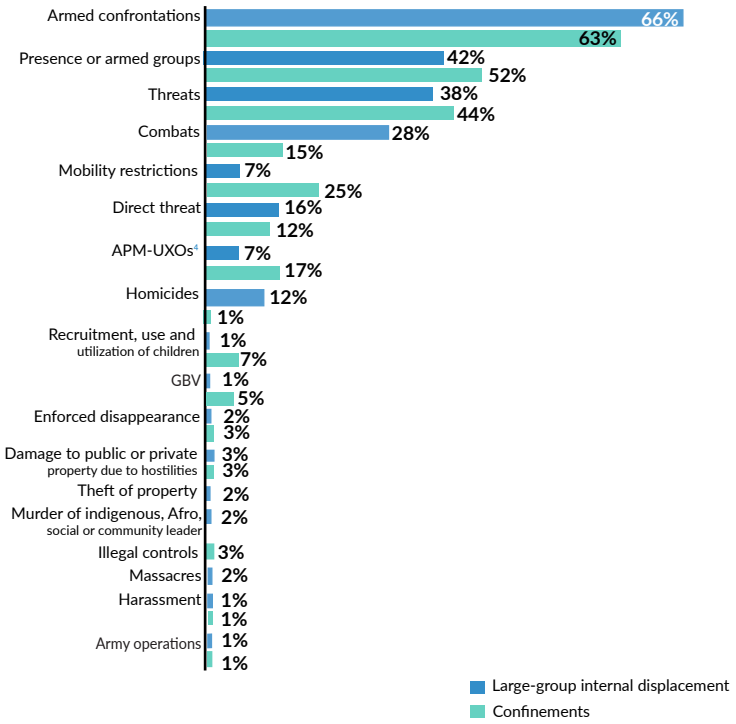
Note: This document was produced with the support of the European Commission's Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Data cut-off: December 2023 Source: UNHCR Contact: colboim@unhcr.org

Despite the decrease in events and people affected by mass displacements, as has been highlighted, the increase in individual displacements must be taken into account, as well as the continuity of control scenarios by GANE, intimidations against the civilian population so that they can declare the facts, which results in the high underreporting of mass events in areas with high affectations and protection risks for the civilian population.

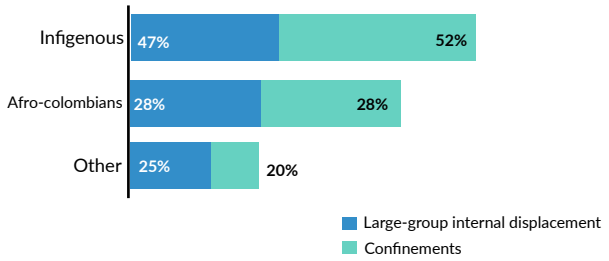
CAUSES OF EMERGENCIES*

Clashes between Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) were the primary cause of displacements this year (66%), accounting for 96 identified cases, and 47 reported confinements (63%). Similarly, the presence of a GANE in the territory caused 52% of these cases.



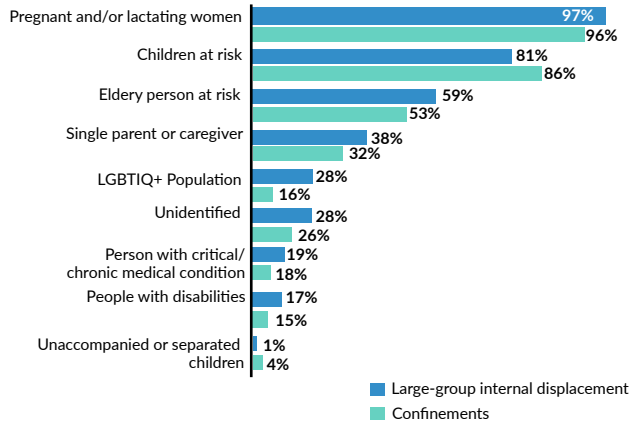
ETHNICITY

Afro-Colombian and Indigenous populations constituted almost 75% of the total affected by large-scale displacements and over 80% of those confined. This disproportionate impact on ethnic groups mainly occurred in the Pacific region, where there are Indigenous reservations and Afro-Colombian Community Councils.

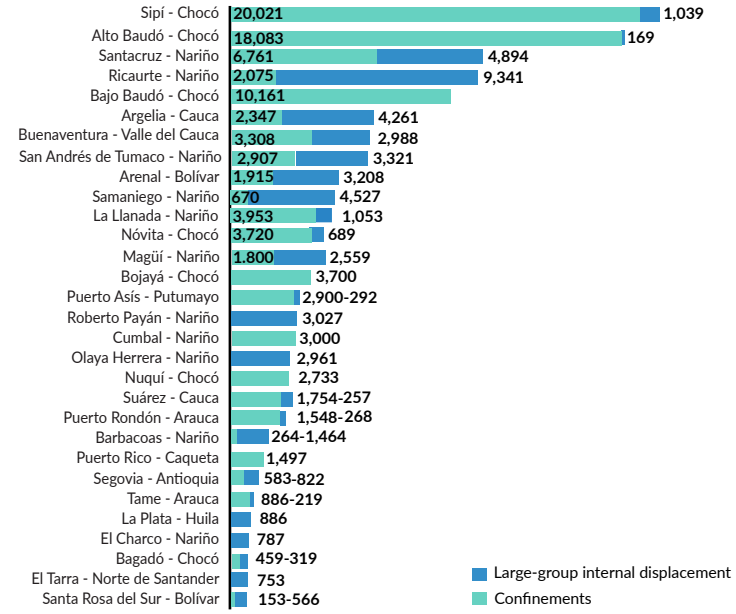


PROTECTION PROFILES IDENTIFIED

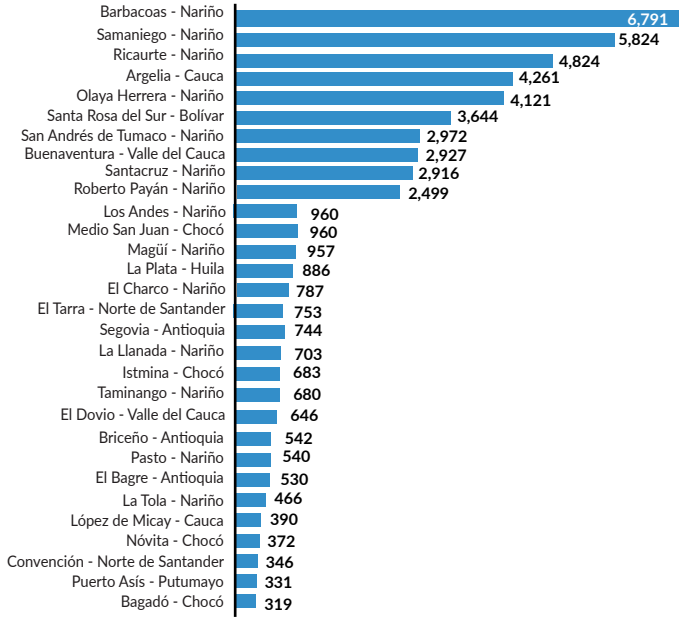
The most affected by displacement in 2023 included children and adolescents (20%), older persons (15%), pregnant women (15%), lactating women (14%), and single parents with young children (9%). Other less affected groups include LGBTI individuals, unaccompanied children, people with physical disabilities, and those with critical or chronic medical conditions.



TOP 30 | PEOPLE AFFECTED BY EMERGENCIES BY MUNICIPALITY



TOP 30 | MUNICIPALITIES RECEIVING DISPLACED POPULATION

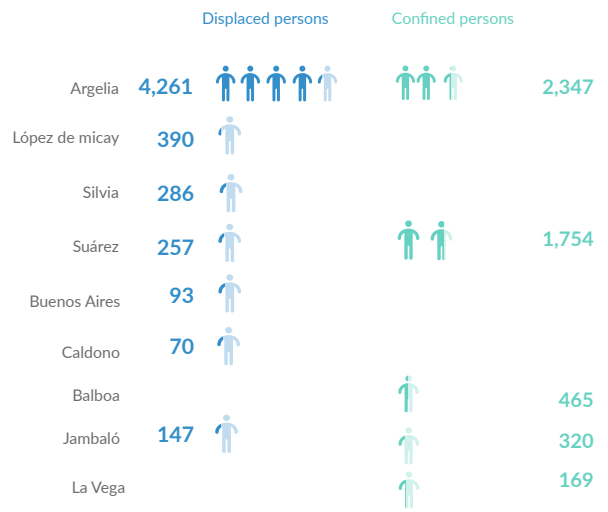


[4] Contamination by anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance (AP-UXOs).
*Percentages add up to more than 100% because the same displacement event can have more than one cause.

ANÁLISIS REGIONAL

CAUCA

VICTIMS BY MUNICIPALITY



In 2023, the Victim´s Unit (UARIV) reported a total of 16,911 people displaced (individually and collectively) in the Cauca[5] department. According to UNHCR monitoring, about 15 large-scale displacement events affected approximately 5,504 people/2,672 families, with 60% of the events recorded in Argelia.

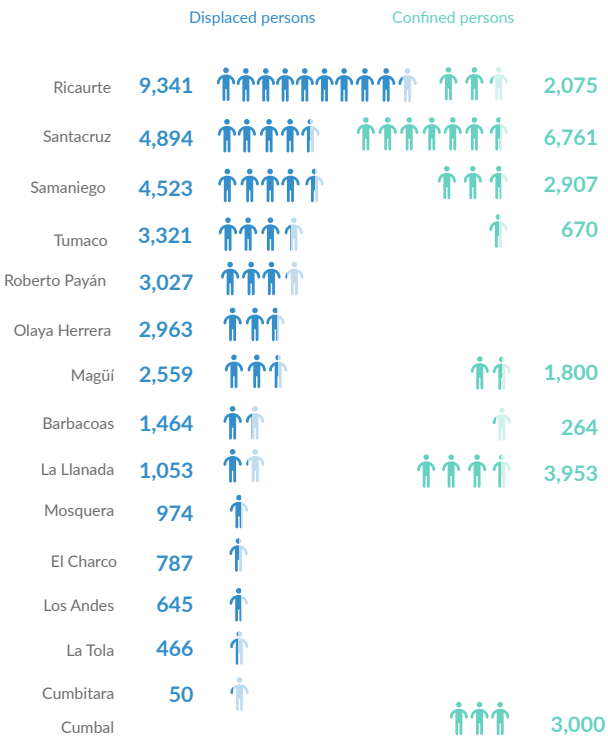
Additionally, according to the Ombudsperson's Office (Regional Cauca), 32.5% of displacement victims in the department were individual displacements, and of the total individual displacement declarations taken by the Public Ministry, 55.7% of the victims came from southern Cauca, especially Argelia.

The main causes of displacement identified include threats, landmine presence or accidents, forced recruitment, and use of children and adolescents, with the Ombudsperson's Office documenting over 227 cases of child recruitment.

According to UNHCR monitoring, 10 confinement events in 2023 affected more than 5,555 people (2,072 families). The territorial dispute by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) often prevents victims from declaring and accessing comprehensive care, leading to significant underreporting.

NARIÑO

VICTIMS BY MUNICIPALITY



According to UNHCR monitoring, since 2020, Nariño has ranked first in the occurrence of events and people affected by displacement in the country. This trend continued in 2023, with 63% of the displaced population concentrated here.

The impact on ethnic groups in the department has been disproportionate, with an estimated 57% of the displaced being Indigenous. This year, armed conflict and intense clashes between NSAGs extended to the municipalities of Samaniego, Andes, La Llanada, and Santacruz in the mountainous region.

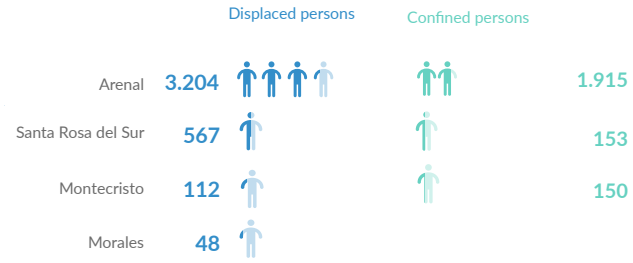
The humanitarian situation has been complex due to the large-scale displacements and confinements affecting peasant and Indigenous Awá and Pastos communities in Samaniego, where over 4,500 people were displaced. Similarly, in Santacruz, approximately 4,800 people were displaced and confined due to clashes and landmine contamination. In other municipalities like Ricaurte, displacements affected around 9,000 people. The main causes of displacements and confinements in the region are clashes over territorial control between NSAGs.

[5] Para más información ver: https://cifras.unidadvictimas.gov.co/Cifras/#!/hechos

ANÁLISIS REGIONAL

BOLÍVAR

VICTIMS BY MUNICIPALITY

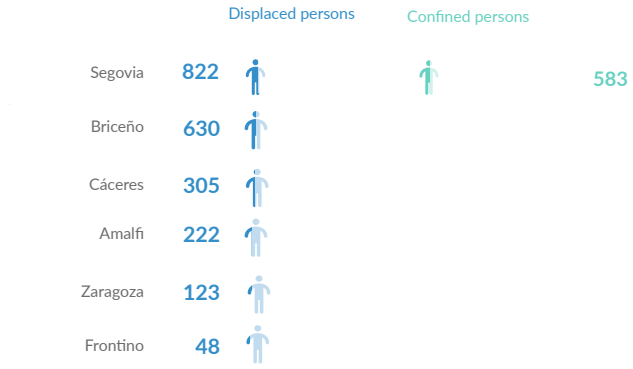


The humanitarian situation in southern Bolívar has worsened since mid-last year due to the presence, expansion, and consolidation of NSAGs in the area, as warned by the Ombudsperson's Office in Early Alert 034-23. Municipalities such as Arenal, Montecristo, and Santa Rosa del Sur have been the most affected by displacement and confinement.

This year, around 3,900 people were displaced in 7 large-scale events, and 2,200 people were affected by confinement. The magnitude and recurrence of emergencies overwhelmed the response capacities of these municipalities. The situation in the area is related to the armed conflict and violence in the Bajo Cauca and Northeastern Antioquia regions.

ANTIOQUIA

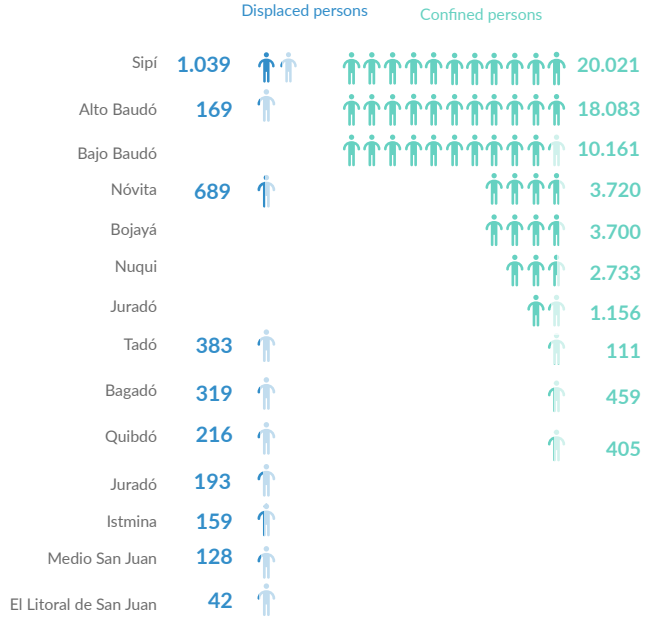
VICTIMS BY MUNICIPALITY



In 2023, the North, Northeast, and Bajo Cauca regions became epicenters of intense disputes as NSAGs fought for control over strategic corridors that connect the department to key routes for illicit economies. This situation led to a complex humanitarian crisis in municipalities considered strategic for illicit crop development and illegal mining, such as Segovia, Cáceres, and Briceño, where large-scale displacement events increased, often accompanied by other crimes like massacres, social leader murders, forced disappearances, sexual and gender-based violence, selective homicides, recruitment, threats, and mobility restrictions. The number of people affected by displacement increased by 300% compared to the previous year.

CHOCÓ

VICTIMS BY MUNICIPALITY



According to UNHCR monitoring, the department of Chocó accounted for 60% of the population affected by confinement in 2023. This situation is characterized by sustained restrictions on the free movement of the population due to the presence and actions of NSAGs, significantly impacting the ethnic-territorial rights of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian peoples. Repeated and prolonged confinements challenge institutional response capacities.

The territorial and population control actions by NSAGs have worsened the humanitarian situation for communities along the Atrato, San Juan, and Baudó rivers and the northern coastal area in Nuquí, Bahía Solano, and Juradó. This is illustrated by large-scale displacements in Sipí, Nóvita, Medio San Juan, and Bagadó, as well as confinements in Istmina, Bagadó, and Alto and Bajo Baudó. In Alto and Bajo Baudó, confinements in 2023 affected over 10,000 people, nearly a fifth of the municipality's total population. The main causes include clashes among NSAGs, threats to leaders, landmine presence, gender-based violence, and forced recruitment.