INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION CENTERS (PAOs) FOR REFUGEES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, RETURNEES AND MIGRANTS

UNHCR ACNUR La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

OPCIÓN LEGAL

PAO FACTSHEET

COLOMBIA

2024 *(4th quarter | October- december)*

CUMULATIVE FIGURES 2024 - January to December 2024

- **71** PAOs
- **7** Mobile PAOs
- **>66,000** km covered
- **975** Mobile PAOs missions[1]
- **137,780** People reached
- **105,742** People assisted for the first time in the PAO.
- **30,558** People previously registered and reached.

At the PAO of the Cúcuta Transport Terminal, refugee and migrant children are assisted in registering their information to access State services.

PAO Terminal - Cúcuta, Norte de Santander.
2024 © ACNUR

The **Information and Orientation Centers** (Puntos de Atención y Orientación in Spanish, PAO) are a **UNHCR** initiative established since 2017 and currently implemented in 24 departments and 53 municipalities. Since 2021, this project has been implemented by Corporación **Opción Legal** with the support of UNHCR.

The **PAOs** are **physical spaces** that enable any person in need of protection to access **reliable and secure information,** and make informed decisions about their **rights, protection pathways and available services** in the territory. In this way, refugees and migrants, as well as internally displaced persons or Colombian returnees can ask questions and find answers.

The people assisted in the **PAOs** are registered in **UNHCR**'s case registration and management system (PRIMES), which allows the collection, maintenance and analysis of data and information on each person assisted. Following the identification of **specific protection needs (SPNs)**, a referral is made to specialized services to ensure an **appropriate response**.

As of May 2023, the PAO ChatBot enables the PAO project to expand its coverage and provide remote assistance and guidance throughout the Colombian territory.

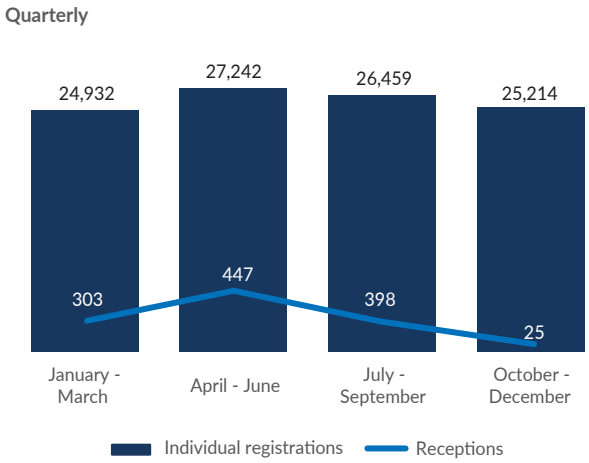
Main information and assistance subjects:

- The right to asylum and the refugee status determination procedure.
- Access to Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelan Migrants (TPS).
- Access to nationality and documentation.
- Access to employment, healthcare, and education.
- Access to legal assistance and justice.
- Institutional services to assist the displaced population.
- Protection risks and services available to people in transit.
- General information and enrollment support for the Safe Mobility Program.

Key figures (October - December 2024)

Geographic coverage of mobile PAOs[2]

Number of receptions and individual registrations[3]



Progress and results

From October to December the PAOs registered **61,842** communications. A total of **1,970** people were referred to partners and **2,467** assistances were provided.

"I felt very good with the attention provided by UNHCR at this PAO. I congratulate you on the work you do".

Venezuelan man, PAO Apartadó, Antioquia.

Image: PAO Medellín, 2024 © ACNUR

"We were treated with kindness and respect, and all the necessary information was clearly explained to us so we could accept the help and protection we need".

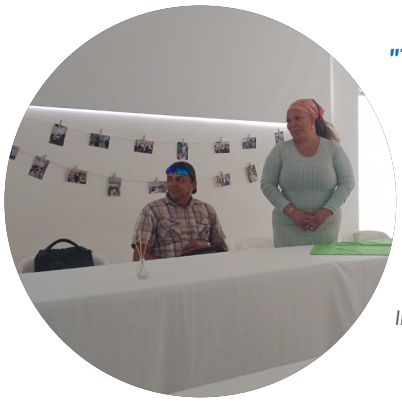
Venezuelan woman, PAO Cúcuta, Norte de Santander.

IImage: Vereda La Esperanza assistance day, Tame, Arauca, 2024 © ACNUR

Protection Monitoring

1.260 High Frequency Survey[4]

147 Protection Monitoring for Cross-Border Mobility[5]



"The attention at the UNHCR offices was very kind. They explained everything clearly and made me feel at home. Thank you for your support to Venezuelans. God bless you!".

Venezuelan woman, PAO La Alpujarra, Antioquia.

Image: PAO Medellín, 2024 © ACNUR

SPN identified and addressed

48,732
SPN identified and addressed through referrals

Legal and physical.	24,393
Serious medical condition.	2,629
Children and adolescents at risk.	1,607
Single parent household.	1,770
Women at risk.	534

Country of origin

Venezuela **72%**

Colombia **26%**

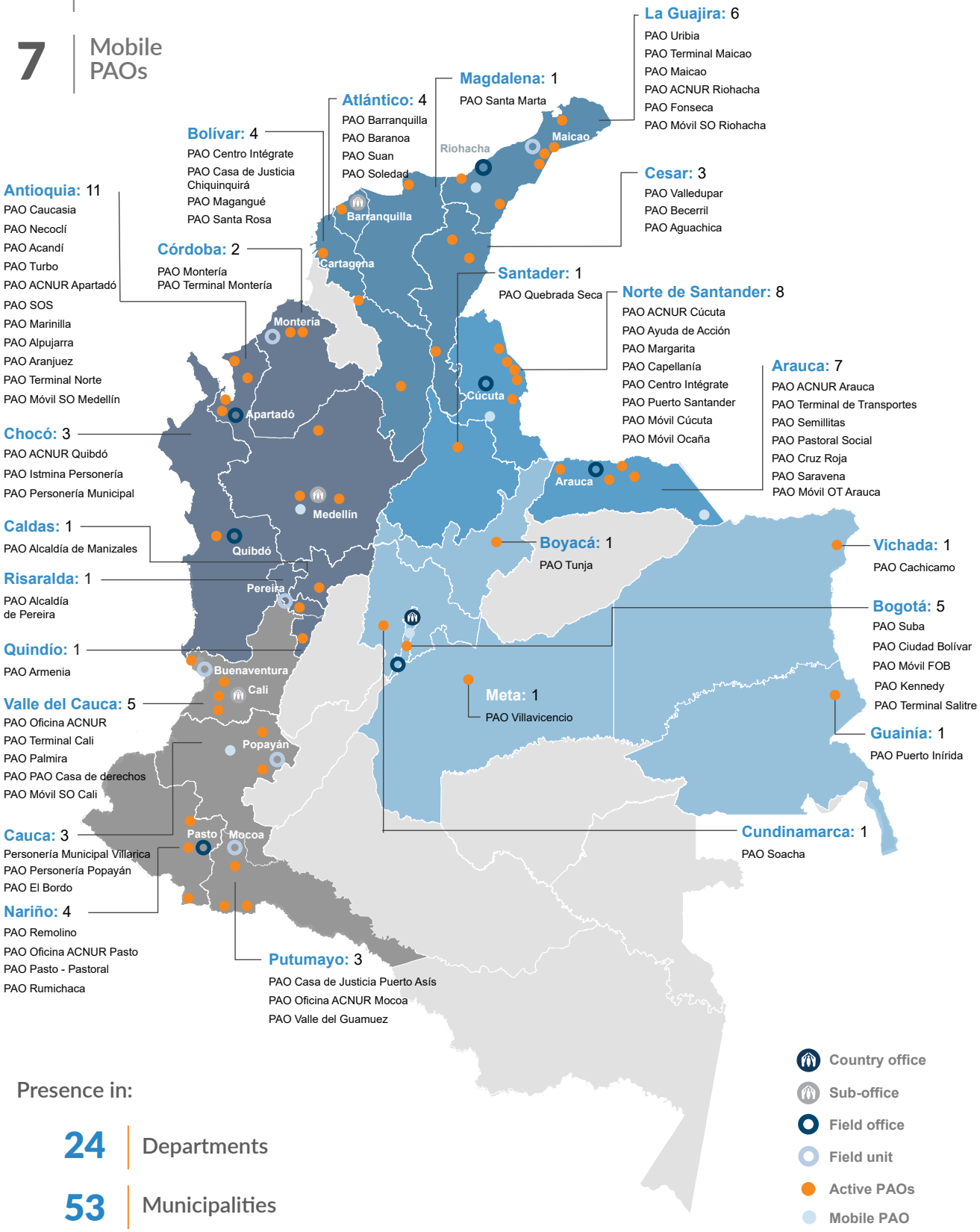
2% from other countries

The services of the **PAOs** are provided by **1** national coordinator, **5** regional coordinators, **4** support professionals, **123** advisors and **7** drivers.

[1] The Mobile PAO missions extend attention and orientation to people living in areas of difficult access, rural areas where there is no fixed PAO.
[2] The mobile PAOs do not cover all municipalities in each of the highlighted departments; mission priorities are determined by each Field Office.
[3] UNHCR prioritizes registrations, which are more comprehensive than receptions in PRIMES. The PAO project has registered a total of 399,443 people between 2019 and September 2024. This figure includes 110,194 registrations in receptions and 314,453 individuals in full registrations.
[4] The High Frequency Survey (HFS) is UNHCR's regional tool for monitoring the protection situation of Venezuelans who intend to remain in Colombia.
[5] The Protection Monitoring for Cross-Border Mobility (MPMT) identifies profiles, mobility characteristics and incidents/risks/protection concerns of people entering, leaving and transiting through Colombian territory.

71 PAOs

7 Mobile PAOs



Presence in:

24 Departments

53 Municipalities