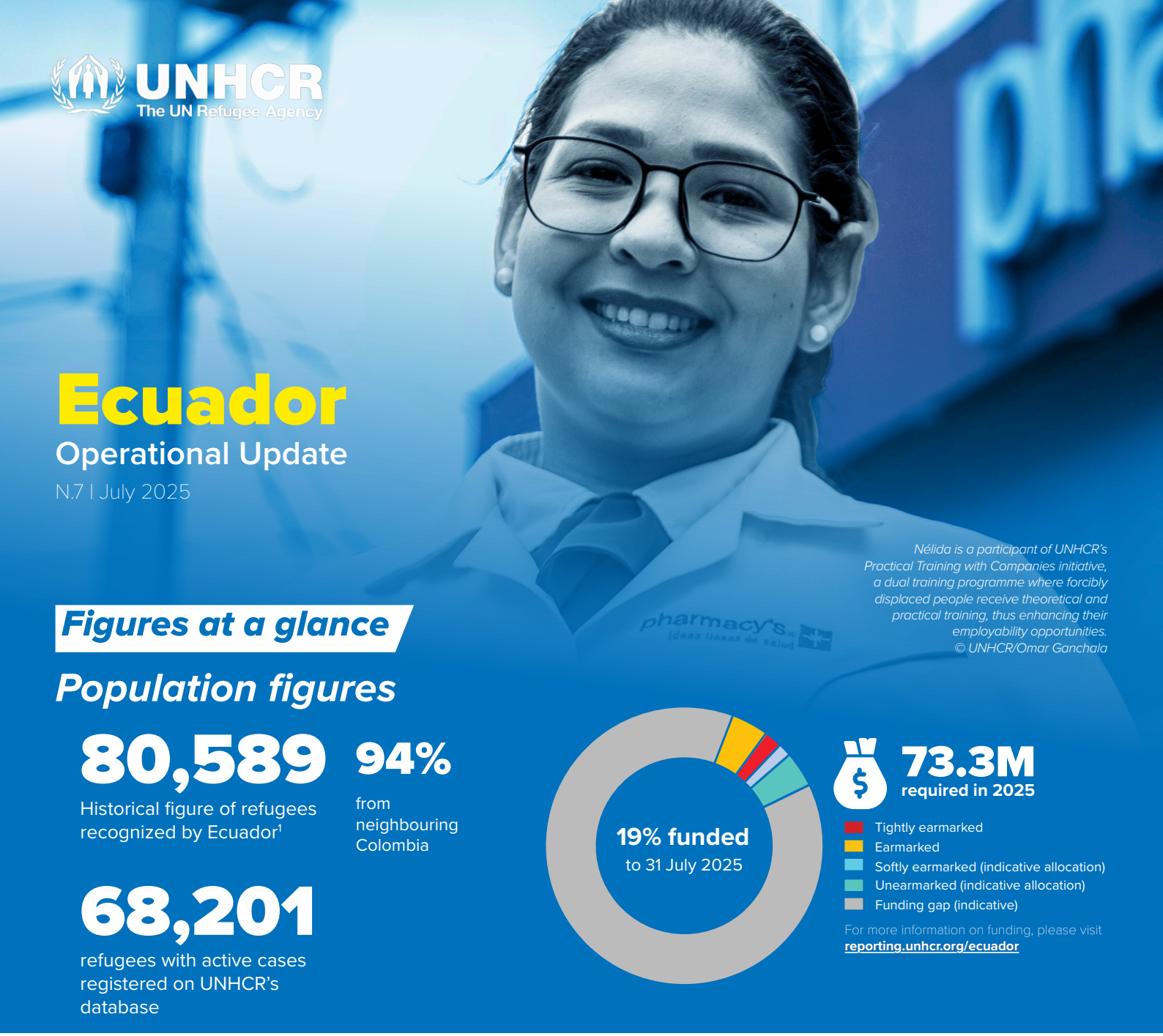
UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Ecuador

Operational Update

N.7 I July 2025



Nélida is a participant of UNHCR's Practical Training with Companies initiative, a dual training programme where forcibly displaced people receive theoretical and practical training, thus enhancing their employability opportunities. © UNHCR/Omar Ganchala

Figures at a glance

Population figures

80,589
Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador[1]

94%
from neighbouring Colombia

68,201
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

31,124*
refugees and other displaced people supported and registered in proGres as of the end of July 2025

17,161
people received orientation and assistance to access asylum services

6,268
people supported with collective emergency shelter

480
people supported with child protection services

2,577
people supported with community - based protection services

2,652
women and girls survivors of violence supported

6,021
people assisted to cover their basic needs and protection[2]

7,550
people supported with mental health and psychosocial support

3,606
people received hygiene kits

304
people provided with technical or skills certification

688
people linked with a decent employment opportunity

1 Historical figure registered by the government since 1978 to the end of July 2025. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres. Figures to the end of July 2025.
2 Preliminary data
*Figure includes people supported through other services beyond those described below.

Operational context

In July, Ecuador continued to experience important developments shaping forced displacement and human mobility. Recent proposals to reform the Human Mobility Law highlight efforts to improve registration and adopt a gender and human rights approach, though some provisions have raised concerns among academics and civil society regarding potential impacts on access to services and due process guarantees. At the same time, new requirements for transit visas, including for Venezuelan nationals, are part of broader government initiatives to strengthen migration management and ensure orderly mobility, though raise concerns in terms of additional barriers faced by forcibly displaced people in accessing territory. These measures take place against the backdrop of wider state reforms aimed at reducing the number of ministries and optimizing public administration.

Population movements remain dynamic, but relatively stable in Ecuador. Movements of Venezuelans and Colombians continue to dominate entries and exits from the country, with just over 1,000 asylum claims lodged by both nationalities in July. Venezuelans remained the largest group entering Ecuador in July 2025, though arrivals dropped by 23% compared to June, averaging 652 daily entries. With departures also declining at the same rate, Ecuador saw a modest net increase of 1,701 Venezuelans staying in the country – a trend observed since earlier this year. UNHCR continues to monitor population movements closely, to understand new risks, needs and vulnerabilities requiring articulated responses.

Environmental and weather-related challenges are further affecting mobility and stability. Illegal mining in northern Ecuador continues to pose risks to local population, including health and environmental risks, such as mercury contamination. Meanwhile, landslides and erosion in Napo and Sucumbíos are disrupting connectivity, with serious impacts on rural communities. Cross-border health cooperation is also advancing, with Ecuador and Peru agreeing to strengthen malaria prevention in their shared border area.

In this evolving context, UNHCR works with national and local authorities, as well as with civil society, to strengthen protection and advance durable solutions. This includes supporting access to documentation, services, and safe spaces, while fostering opportunities for social and economic inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers. By working with institutions, communities, and international partners, UNHCR contributes to Ecuador's long tradition of solidarity and seeks to ensure stability and long-term integration, in line with the country's own priorities for security, development, and social cohesion.

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

Colombians

According to Government data, 306 Colombians sought asylum in Ecuador in July 2025 (2,515 so far in the year), a 22% increase as compared to the previous month. This number accounts for 37% of those registered in 2024. 62% 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.

2,515 Colombians who have sought asylum in Ecuador in 2025[2]

306 were registered in July

Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador

58% access to housing[4]

54% Access to food[4]

46% access to employment[4]

Venezuelans

Venezuelans continue to lead in numbers of arrivals in Ecuador, though in declining numbers. 19,558 people entered Ecuador in July 2025 (23% less than the previous month), with a daily entry average of 652 Venezuelans. 17,857 people left the country, a 23% decrease as compared to the previous month, leaving a balance of 1.701 people who entered and remained the country during the reporting period. According to Government data, 703 Venezuelans sought asylum in Ecuador in July 2025 (3,449 so far in the year), an 85% increase as compared to the previous month. 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 Ecuador[2]

45% estimated to be between 18 and 45 years old[3]

25% estimated to have a higher education degree[3]

Main needs

82% access to food[3]

67% access to housing or shelter[3]

57% access to livelihoods or employment[3]

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

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. 108,0000 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.

Latest trends in displacement

Ecuador is going through a critical moment in terms of human mobility and protection, marked by increasing humanitarian needs, the impact of violence, organized crime, and natural disasters that disproportionately affect the most vulnerable people. Despite these challenges, the country continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to hosting and protecting refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and internally displaced persons, albeit with increasingly limited resources. UNHCR's 2025 National Trends Report provides a detailed overview of this reality and issues an urgent call to the international community and society at large to step up efforts in support of Ecuador and those who have been forced to flee. Read more here.

HUMANITARIANS AT WORK

My name is María Grazzia. I am a lawyer and humanitarian worker. For eight years, I have dedicated my life to defending the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced people.

My story began in 2017, in Guayaquil. I accompanied people fleeing conflicts in their countries, guiding them through asylum applications, accessing documentation, and supporting the creation of community spaces that are still running today.

Read the full story

DELIVERING PROTECTION

MANTA

Strengthening protection for people forced to flee

In Manta, UNHCR, UNICEF, HIAS and RET carried out a training session with the Cantonal Board to strengthen the response to people displaced by force. During the meeting, they shared information on asylum, protection, and referral pathways, fostering better institutional coordination to benefit those who require support and timely access to their rights. This initiative was implemented with the support of ECHO.

IMBABURA

Empowering women entrepreneurs with more protection tools

At the Entrepreneurship School, UNHCR, the Prefecture of Imbabura and the Warmi project held a workshop on referral pathways in cases of gender-based violence and a self-care session, strengthening women entrepreneurs' capacities for their protection and overall well-being. This project was carried out thanks to the valuable contribution of the Republic of Korea.

GUAYAQUIL

Coordination to protect internally displaced people

In Guayaquil, UNHCR participated in the inter-institutional Working Group convened by the Ombudsperson's Office to coordinate responses addressing the urgent needs of internally displaced people. This was made possible with the support of ECHO.

PROMOTING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

TULCAN

Training for an inclusive health system

In Tulcán, UNHCR trained 25 staff members of Luis G. Dávila Hospital on self-care, inclusion, and non-discrimination, using the Allies for a Possible World toolkit. This contributes to more inclusive health services that are sensitive to the needs of people displaced by force. This work was supported by UNHCR´s donors committed to the protection and access to basic services of forcibly displaced people.

MANABI

Legal orientation and access to rights in El Carmen

In El Carmen, UNHCR and the Public Defender's Office launched the Route of Rights, providing legal advice and information on access to documentation, education, health, and the process of applying for refugee status in Ecuador. This was made possible with the support of the Government of Japan and ECHO.

CARCHI

Supporting the health system in the northern border

In El Chical and Tulcán, UNHCR donated 800 masks and 20 tents to strengthen the local health system's capacity, improving conditions of care and protection for both health personnel and people in need of medical services. This was made possible thanks to the generous support of UNHCR donors from both the public and private sectors.

PROMOTING SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

CUENCA

Job fair promotes inclusion of people forced to flee

In Cuenca, UNHCR and the Cuenca Chamber of Commerce organized a job fair with workshops on CV writing, interviews, and networking spaces with companies. Refugees and members of the host community participated, strengthening their access to employment opportunities. This was carried out thanks to the valuable contribution of the Republic of Korea and Japan.

LAGO AGRIO

Youth with more opportunities in Sucumbíos

In Lago Agrio, UNHCR held an Employability Fair that connected 70 young people with 11 local companies. Twenty vacancies were offered, and the private sector's commitment to fostering the labor inclusion of people displaced by force was strengthened. The was made possible thanks to the contributions of public and private donors committed to the protection and inclusion of people.

GUAYAQUIL

Entrepreneurship that fosters self-reliance

In Guayaquil, UNHCR and Impaqto supported the installation of a Purchase with Purpose shelf at Vitrina 593, enabling displaced and vulnerable people to sell their products and move towards economic self-reliance. The support of the Government of Japan made this work possible, strengthening solutions for displaced communities.

PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

GUAYAQUIL

Sports for integration and protection

In Guayaquil, UNHCR and the group "Young People Building Community" promoted sports activities to create safe and inclusive spaces, strengthening child protection and fostering coexistence free from fear and discrimination. This was made possible with the support of our private sector donor LivGolf.

MANABI

Planting hope

In Manta and San Eloy, UNHCR supported women displaced by force and from the host community in a horticulture and self-care circle, where they shared goals and symbolically planted a mango seed as a symbol of hope and unity. This project was carried out thanks to the valuable contribution of the Republic of Korea.

SAN GABRIEL

Holiday activities fostering integration in San Gabriel

In San Gabriel, UNHCR and FUDELA organized holiday activities for 80 children, who enjoyed games, cooking, swimming, and activities with their caregivers, strengthening bonds and promoting community integration. This was made possible with the support of our donors.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Nélida found a new future among customers and medications

Nélida is a participant of UNHCR's Practical Training with Companies initiative, a dual training programme where forcibly displaced people receive theoretical and practical training, thus enhancing their employability opportunities.
© UNHCR/Omar Ganchala

MANTA

Nélida Díaz left Venezuela when she was 22 years old. Her dreams and hopes were cut short when, along with her son, she had to get on a bus in search of a clearer future for her family. Like many forcibly displaced people, Nélida had to interrupt her university studies to find a better future for herself—but mainly for her son, who was only 2 years old when they arrived in Ecuador.

"In addition to my studies, I worked as an administrative assistant in a shoe store. But I had to leave all of that behind. I left with tears in my eyes and a suitcase full of dreams," says Nélida when asked what she brought from her country.

After five days on a bus, almost without stopping, Nélida and her son arrived in Ecuador, in Manta. Some relatives who had come earlier welcomed her, and with their support, she began looking for work. "My mom cried when I told her I was washing 200 to 300 dishes a day, but I needed the job and the money to move forward with my son," she says.

But after some time, her life changed for the better. Thanks to social media and community groups, she found out about some pharmacy-related courses. It was part of the Dual Training programme, a UNHCR initiative implemented with support from Humboldt Zentrum and Difare. Coincidentally, this was a subject she had always wanted to study, so she didn't hesitate and enrolled.

In this course, she learned all the theory related to pharmaceuticals, as well as customer service training. Later, she was able to work in this field thanks to the internships offered by the program. "By a stroke of luck, a vacancy opened at the pharmacy where I was working, and I asked my boss if I could apply. After a while, my boss called me, and I got the position at that pharmacy."

Nélida is very grateful to Ecuador not only because it opened its doors to her, but also because here she has been able to fulfil one of her dreams. "If I hadn't been part of that course, I'd probably still be cleaning houses or working as a waitress in some restaurant," Nélida says. "And it's not that those jobs aren't valid, but it's always better to get trained and work in something you love. Here, besides supporting my family, I have time to see my son and spend time with him," she adds.

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

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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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