

Colombia

January - June 2024

In the first semester of 2024, UNHCR contributed to the **4th verification survey¹** that found that **internally displaced persons (IDPs)** remain the most vulnerable population among the vulnerable; and **75% of them do not plan to return to their places of origin**. UNHCR works for their local integration.

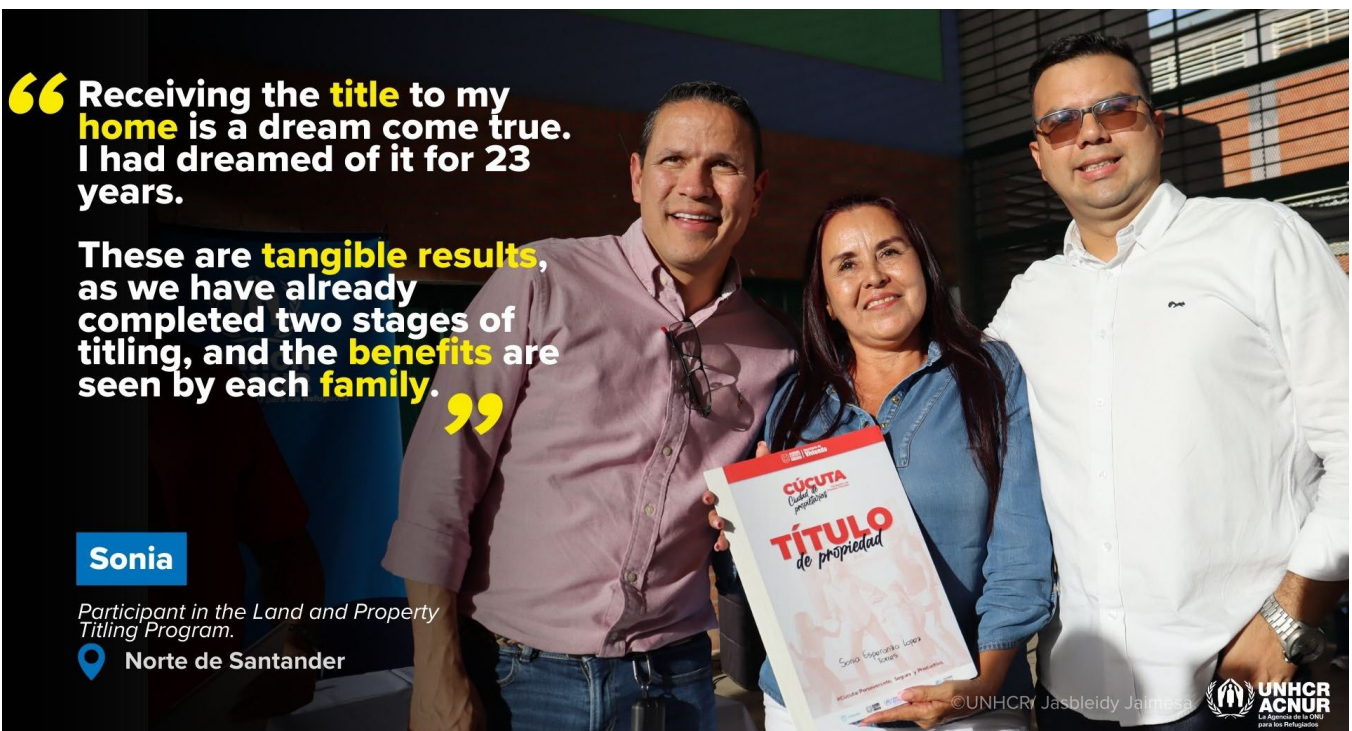
To mark the 40th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration, Latin American and Caribbean countries launched the **Cartagena+40 Process**. These countries are working on a new regional plan for displaced persons: **the Declaration and Action Plan of Chile 2024-2034**. UNHCR, in alliance with the Colombian and Chilean Governments, finalized this process in Bogotá in June.

In May, UNHCR, alongside the Constitutional Court and Los Andes University, organized an **international conference marking the 20th anniversary of Decision T-025**, a landmark milestone supporting internally displaced persons in Colombia. The event gave a platform to victims and experts from around the world to discuss solutions to forced displacement.

CONTEXT

Colombia is the **third country hosting the largest number of refugees** and other people in need of international protection, receiving over 2.9 million Venezuelans. Colombia is also the **third country with the highest number of internally displaced persons in the world**: 6.9 million IDPs in need of support and reparations.

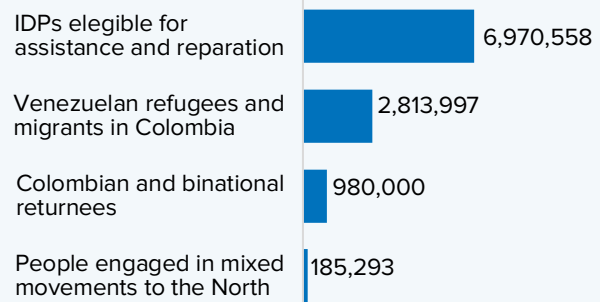
The **humanitarian situation worsened in the first half of 2024**, with more than 95,000 people affected by emergencies, including large-scale displacements and confinements. Both the frequency of these events and the number of affected individuals increased compared to the same period in 2023, signaling a deterioration in the humanitarian landscape. This escalation was not only observed in traditionally affected areas but also in **newly impacted regions**.



¹ For further information (available in Spanish): [La persistencia del estado de cosas inconstitucional a veinte años de la Sentencia T-025 de 2004: IV Encuesta Nacional de Verificación de Goce Efectivo de Derechos de la Población Desplazada por el Conflicto Armado en Colombia.](#)

PEOPLE FORCED TO FLEE

Colombia is affected by **armed conflict and internal displacement**, hosting **refugees** and migrants, receiving **returnees** (980,000 Colombian and binational returnees) and confronted with **complex mixed movements** of people aiming to cross the dangerous Darién jungle and reach North America. In the first semester of 2024, more than 185,000 refugees and migrants transited through Colombia towards Panamá through the Darién, a 2% increase compared to the crossings recorded during the same period of last year. Most people who crossed in 2024 are from Venezuela (65%), others from Ecuador (7%), Colombia and Haiti (6%).



**UNHCR also assists people at risk of statelessness and people of various nationalities who need international protection.*

Response: main activities

Throughout 2024, UNHCR promoted **access to rights**, provided **lifesaving assistance** and strived to find **solutions** for all the people with and for whom it works: **internally displaced persons (IDPs)**, **confined communities**, people **affected by armed conflict**, Venezuelan **refugees** and migrants, people with international protection needs caught up in **mixed movements**, Colombian **returnees**, people at **risk of statelessness**, as well as their **host communities**. Here are some highlights of UNHCR's work.

Protection



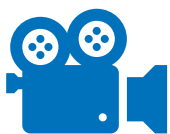
Humanitarian agencies and public organizations gathered to provide orientation and assistance for refugees and migrants in Villavicencio, Meta. 2024 ©UNHCR/ Tatiana Santafe.



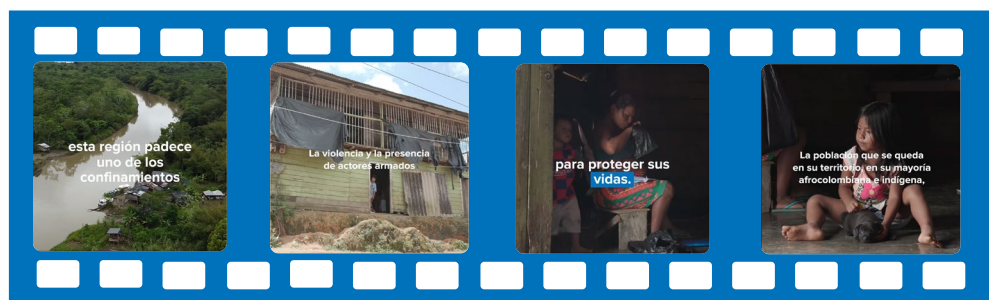
- UNHCR is supporting the implementation of a **new Special Stay Permit for parents and caregivers** of children with a Temporary Protection Permit (*PEP Tutor* in Spanish) so that they can also regularize their stay in Colombia and ensure family unity.

- UNHCR supports the Constitutional Court’s Monitoring Chamber in its work on Ruling T-025, which will become instrumental in delivering **a new ruling to protect those forcibly displaced by climate events**. This ruling responds to the preexisting significant gaps in **legal frameworks for environmental forced displacement**. The ruling establishes a transformative precedent and clears the path for addressing future cases of a similar nature.
- **314,023 people received information and guidance on how to access rights and services** in 25 departments and 139 municipalities. 39% of them sought to access protection services, 22% were oriented on how to access to the Temporary Protection Permit (PPT in Spanish) and the asylum system, 20% needed to access to healthcare.
- **58,064 Venezuelans** accessed information, legal assistance and support receiving their PPT.
- **5,465 civil servants** in **20 departments** and **114 municipalities** received training and technical assistance in protection (specifically on international refugee law, victims’ rights).
- UNHCR carried out its **pro bono legal services program** for people forced to leave their homes. **29 legal clinics in top universities** across major cities (23 cities) have directly impacted **7,816 individuals**, providing personalized information on protection rights and services. The clinics enhance legal support accessibility.
- In partnership with Opción Legal, Probono Foundation, and the Legal Clinics project, UNHCR is **developing a strategic litigation initiative to mobilize lawyers and provide legal assistance** in remote areas for those in need of international protection and victims of the armed conflict.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Affairs— including the National Ombudsperson’s Office, Attorney General’s Office, and local public defenders— **conducted three humanitarian missions to La Guajira, southern Bolívar, and Bajo Cauca in Antioquia**. These missions aimed to spotlight the dire humanitarian conditions faced by displaced populations in these conflict-affected regions. Working closely with local governments, UNHCR identified critical protection gaps and barriers to accessing rights, paving the way for a comprehensive intervention plan.
- UNHCR **designed an institutional strengthening program** to support local governments in their Development Plans, ensuring that displaced populations are guaranteed protection, have access to services, are recognized, and receive the assistance they need. UNHCR signed agreements with newly elected governors and mayors.

Video: Chocó: Confined Paradise



WATCH THE VIDEO



Assistance

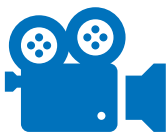


Distribution of school kits to boys and girls at the Historic SAUYEE'PIA WAYUU School in Uribia, La Guajira. 2024. ©UNHCR



- UNHCR has **78 Information and Orientation Centers** (PAO in Spanish) throughout Colombia, which provide information, orientation, legal assistance and referral mechanisms on refugee status determination procedures, temporary protection status, regularization processes, and access to basic rights and services to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, internally displaced persons, and Colombian returnees. Throughout the first semester of the year **74,375 people received information and were referred for assistance services.**
- **55,272 individual cases with specific and heightened protection needs** (including 3,481 children at risk, and 1,352 survivors of gender-based violence).
- **Complementary humanitarian assistance in emergencies** (i.e. large-scale displacement events and confinements). Over **6,206 people benefited from cash-based interventions**, and 2,500 people received an emergency response by the provision of **1,986 Core Relief Items (CRI).**

Video: CBI Arauca



WATCH THE VIDEO



Community empowerment

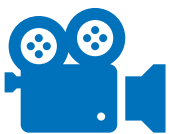


Santa María de Pangala indigenous community participating in a community empowerment activity in San Juan, Chocó. 2024. ©UNHCR



- UNHCR is **strengthening the capacities of 85 Venezuelan-led and IDP organizations; and 57 communities (including ethnic authorities)** in Colombia. UNHCR provides targeted support and training to empower these organizations and communities to participate in advocacy activities and replicate protection activities with people forced to flee.
- UNHCR promoted the **participation** of women, children, youth, and LGBTQI+ people in community processes.
- **4,429 children, caretakers, parents, and public servants** received training in human rights and peaceful coexistence, benefited from protection interventions to prevent child recruitment (sports for protection and artistic projects).
- UNHCR supported a network of **community outreach volunteers** to identify and support people facing heightened protection risks.

Video: Gathering in Montería: Exchange of knowledge and intercultural dialogues



WATCH THE VIDEO



Durable solutions



A woman resident of the Brisas de los Andes neighborhood receives the title of ownership of her home in Cúcuta, Norte de Santander. 2024. ©UNHCR/Mónica Peñaranda



- In the first semester of 2024, **13 regional workshops were conducted with the Ministry of Housing, City, and Territory** to strengthen the capacities of 415 officials from 49 municipalities. This initiative aims to enhance urban legalization policies, **leading to continuous progress in legalizing informal settlements**. This helps displaced populations move towards securing their rights to land, adequate housing, and basic services (water, electricity, sanitation, access roads, transportation, healthcare, and education).
- **970 entrepreneurs in 26 municipalities and 16 departments** received technical assistance to create or develop small businesses; and over **822 people received training and job certification**.
- While data on the number of Venezuelans who obtained **formal employment** was not available during the reporting period, based on UNHCR's extensive engagement and advocacy with the private sector, a significant increase in the number of Venezuelans accessing formal employment was noted.
- In the framework of the Safe Mobility Program, supported by the Government of the United States, **UNHCR Colombia referred over 20,000 Venezuelan, Cuban and Haitian citizens to the United States** Refugee Admissions Program, to be considered for resettlement.



Read about
 entrepreneurs from
 the UNHCR program

Public information

In February, the **UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award** for Elizabeth Moreno Barco was celebrated in Quibdó, Chocó. The event garnered national and international media attention, showcasing her over 20-year fight for Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities in the neglected regions of the Colombian Pacific.

In April, UNHCR, in partnership with the Cartagena Mayor's Office, held a workshop on journalism and xenophobia for local media and institutional journalists in Bolívar.

On June 20, UNHCR Colombia marked **World Refugee Day** with events throughout the country, among which a series of film forums across Bogotá, Buenaventura, Cali, Cúcuta, Medellín, Pereira, Riohacha, and Quibdó.

External relations

- **16 donor missions** to the field were carried out in the first semester of 2024 to showcase UNHCR's protection and solutions' work in the field.
- Over 17 **protection products** were published in UNHCR's Colombia **Operational Data Portal** (factsheets, reports, maps).
- **4 newsletters** showcasing UNHCR's latest publications, field stories and donor missions were sent.
- **72 tweets** were published in social media X mentioning and thanking our top donors.

UNHCR team



Staff: 552 (56% women, 43% men, 1% non-binary).

491 National staff (including interns).

61 International staff (including deployees).

UNHCR teams in the field during a visit to the border area of Paraguachón, La Guajira. 2023. ©UNHCR/Undraa Bayanaa



Interagency

- In December 2022, Colombia was chosen as one of four pilot countries for the **Flagship Initiative**, leading to the creation of the Community Participation Thematic Group (GTPC) under the Protection Cluster. Throughout 2023, the GTPC organized a National Forum on community engagement in humanitarian action and developed the **Manifesto for Transformation**, which outlines principles and recommendations from community leaders and grassroots organizations on participation.
- The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Colombia has reinforced community participation as a strategic priority, with 17 Protection Cluster partner organizations signing and adopting the manifesto.
- In 2024, the Community Participation subgroup, guided by the Protection Cluster, drafted a set of **Recommendations on Community Participation**, which not only reinforce the guarantee of community participation but also emphasize the centrality of community-based protection in the planning and implementation of humanitarian actions.
- The GIFMM conducted data collection for the **Eighth Round of the 2024 Joint Needs Assessment (JNA)**. This needs identification exercise surveyed 2,032 travel groups consisting of people in transit and involved in cross-border movements, as well as 3,313 households intending to remain long-term. The findings from the RMNA will inform the Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants (RMRP) for 2025-2026, which will be presented in December 2024.
- In response to Venezuela’s presidential elections, the national and local GIFMM teams evaluated the response capacities of partners, developed interagency contingency plans, and ensured coordination with authorities’ plans. Periodic monitoring reports on the border situation were also produced.



Working with partners

Fourteen (14) partners support UNHCR throughout Colombia in materializing its protection and solutions mandate through partnerships with local NGOs, international NGOs and UN agencies.

A special thanks to each of them:

Local Partners (9):



International Partners (5):



UNHCR and partners reached **30 departments** and **297 municipalities** in 2024, providing protection, assistance and paving the way for durable solutions.



Financial information

UNHCR thanks its donors for their contribution to fulfil its **Operation Plan**:

UNHCR thanks the donor countries that contribute to Colombia and to global programs with flexible funds:



United Nations funds:



Private donors:



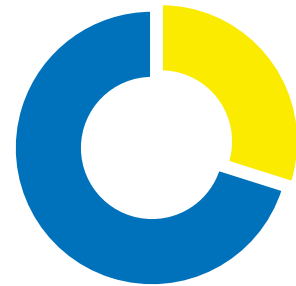
and to other private donors in Spain, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Sweden.

FUNDING (as of 30 June)

USD 122,1 million

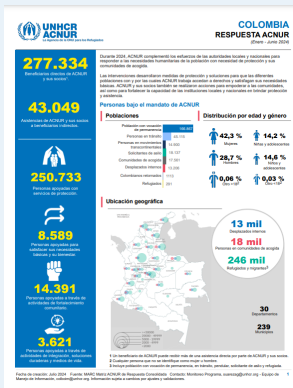
requested for the Colombia Operation.

Gap
85,591,369
70%



Funded
36,467,831
30%

Spotlight: Publications



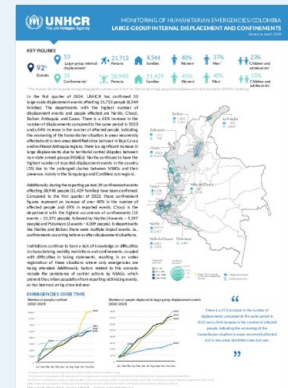
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2024



Monitoring of humanitarian emergencies
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