UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Ecuador

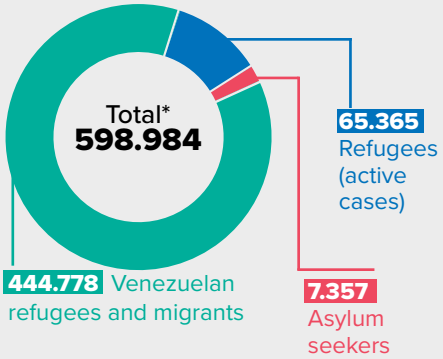
#WithRefugees

HUMANITARIAN - DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

How can development actors support the population in human mobility in Ecuador?

November 2024

Forcibly displaced people in Ecuador



*This figure includes the total accumulated balance of entries and exits of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as well as an estimated percentage of people who may have entered through informal crossings.

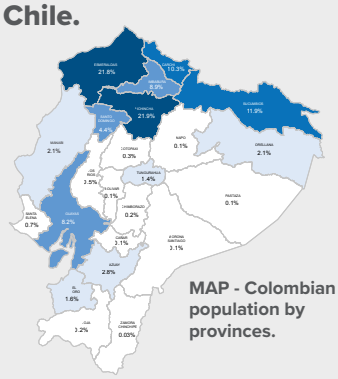
MAIN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN**

444.778

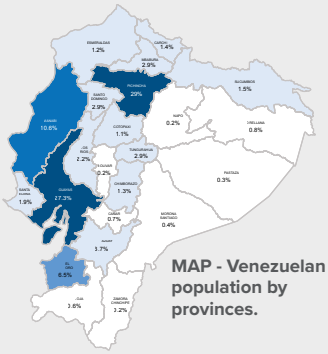
78.385***

**Including estimated figures.
***Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuadorian government.

Ecuador is the 5th major hosting country in Latin America for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, after Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Chile.



MAP - Colombian population by provinces.



MAP - Venezuelan population by provinces.

Most of the forcibly displaced people in Ecuador is concentrated in the main provinces (Pichincha, Guayas, and Manabí) and the northern border of the country. UNHCR works in 21 of the 24 provinces of Ecuador through 9 field offices.

Watch the video: **How development actors contribute to the response to forced displacement.**

Access to regularization alternatives

Between 2022 and 2024, the Government implemented a broad registration and regularization process to facilitate the social integration of refugees and migrants in an irregular status. This includes people who entered irregularly and who have completed their registration. Main achievements:

+95.800 people with VIRTE visa
+72.300 Ecuadorian IDs issued
+12.700 people with ID issuance appointments

National Development Plan 2024-2025

The vision for a sustainable response in Ecuador involves transitioning from humanitarian efforts to sustainable practices integrated into regular public policies. The National Development Plan 2024-2025 defines the country's public policies, programs, and projects. Investment and allocation of public resources follow this plan. In a joint effort, the government accepted UNHCR´S recommendations to include people in human mobility in this plan. Within its long-term vision, the government aims to strengthen national legislation and public policy with a focus on human mobility, promoting inclusion and solidarity with migrants, refugees and returning citizens. Find out more here.

UNHCR's contributions in Ecuador

HIGHER EDUCATION

As a result of an analysis conducted with INEC and the World Bank on data from the 2022 Census, we concluded that 20.1% of Venezuelans in Ecuador hold university degrees, and an additional 5.2% have technical-technological degrees. However, these foreign professionals have faced challenges in obtaining their degree recognition, as revealed by another study carried out by the World Bank and FLACSO-Ecuador with UNHCR´s support in December 2023 – February 2024.

In response, UNHCR, WB and WOCCU jointly advocated for a policy reform with the Higher Education Council (CES) and SENESCYT, providing recommendations for reforming the regulations on the recognition of degrees obtained abroad, which was issued in July 2024. Find out more here.

This reform facilitates the process and fosters a favorable environment for people in human mobility to thrive, granting them access to job opportunities more aligned with their academic background, qualifications, and experience, and allowing them to contribute to Ecuador´s economic growth.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Data from the 2022 Census: Poverty due to Unsatisfied Basic Needs affects 30.8% of the Colombian population and 32.4% of the Venezuelan population living in Ecuador. Currently, only 159,000 Venezuelans and Colombians are registered in the Social Registry database, which exhibits their limited access to government social protection programs that are targeted through this database for vulnerable households and individuals.

Strategic Partnership between UNHCR, World Bank, Social Registry Unit & MIES = provide technical assistance for the "Social Safety Net" Project until 2027.

Through this technical cooperation, the Social Registry Unit will expand the registration of people in human mobility in its database, enabling their access to some of MIES social programmes and services, such as "Growing with Our Children" and Child Development Centers, along with access to economic inclusion opportunities. This will benefit thousands of refugees and migrants in Ecuador and set a positive example for other governments on expanded national services.

SOLUTIONS - SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

WORK PLANS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

IDB & UNHCR have worked together on workplans with local governments for the socioeconomic inclusion of people in human mobility.

- In ***Manta,*** coordination is underway with ULEAM-EP, the Manta Chamber of Commerce, and the Tourism Bureau for the training and certification of labor skills for at least 250 beneficiaries.

- In ***Quito,*** support is being provided for the Management of the House of Human Mobility, connecting forcibly displaced people to a full range of services and social programmes offered by the Municipality.

PANEL WITH DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

In addition to promoting joint initiatives for the socioeconomic integration of people in human mobility with the World Bank, IDB, and GIZ, UNHCR invited these organizations to participate on a panel during an event with local governments on inclusive economic development in July 2024. This panel with development actors allowed the audience to know more about their experiences and recommendations, from a regional perspective down to a national and local view in Ecuador.

Considerations for Policy-making in Ecuador

- Long-term solutions
- Capacity Building for National and Local Institutions
- Labour Market Inclusion Policies
- Leave No One Behind

What Factors Facilitate a Sustainable Response?

Responsibility sharing and financing
World Bank and IDB have included UNHCR as a strategic partner for the implementation of their projects in the following sectors: education, labour markets, social protection, and housing.

Whole of government leadership in the response to people in human mobility
2024-2025 National Development Plan that includes refugees and migrants. MOU with local governments that include joint advocacy and project implementation with development actors.

Partnership and coordination across the HDP Nexus
Innovative partnerships between UNHCR, development actors, government, academia, and the private sector to contribute to common priorities and inclusive goals. Sharing best practices and initiatives for long-term, sustainable solutions.

Data and evidence
UNHCR´s support to gather qualitative-quantitative data for World Bank studies with FLACSO-Ecuador on the recognition of degrees and the effectiveness of training and certification programs for labor market integration. Study on people in human mobility in Ecuador according to the 2022 Census, with the World Bank and INEC.

UNHCR Ecuador welcomes earmarked and flexible contributions from donors so far in 2024.

Australian Aid · Belgium partner in development · En colaboración con Canadá · Cofinanciado por la Unión Europea Ayuda Humanitaria · Irish Aid Government of Ireland Rialtas na hÉireann · From the People of Japan · Luxembourg Aid & Development · Korea · KOICA · Cooperación Española · UKaid · ONUSIDA

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