UNHCR ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

Colombia

Factsheet 2025 | August

Colombia stands at the crossroads of forced displacement and confinement in the Americas. As a country with millions of internally displaced people affected by conflict, and many more seeking international protection, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is essential.

Together with communities, organizations, UN agencies, the Government, development actors, and the private sector, UNHCR works to protect and find solutions for those forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict, violence, and humanitarian emergencies.

In Colombia, UNHCR provides life-saving assistance and strengthens responses for internally displaced people, confined communities, refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, stateless persons, and others in need of international protection. Response focuses on four integrated strategic pillars: protect, respond, empower, and solve for the affected population.

Amid massive funding cuts, UNHCR's commitment and expertise in saving lives, protecting and finding solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless persons is needed more than ever in Colombia.

Key Figures

7 Million

Individuals victims of internal forced displacement in need of assistance and access to reparation measures[1]

2.8 Million

Venezuelans in need of international protection[2]

By July 2025

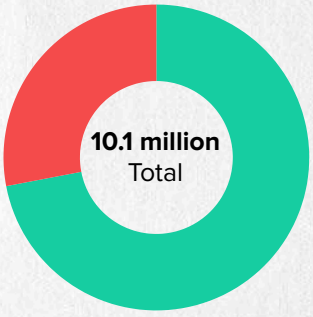
115,468

Newly internally displaced people[3]

93,558

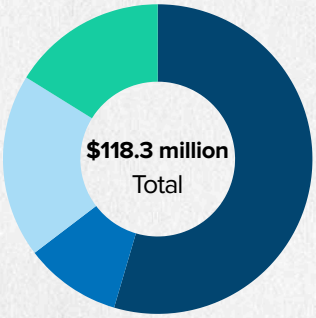
Confined people[4]

Target population



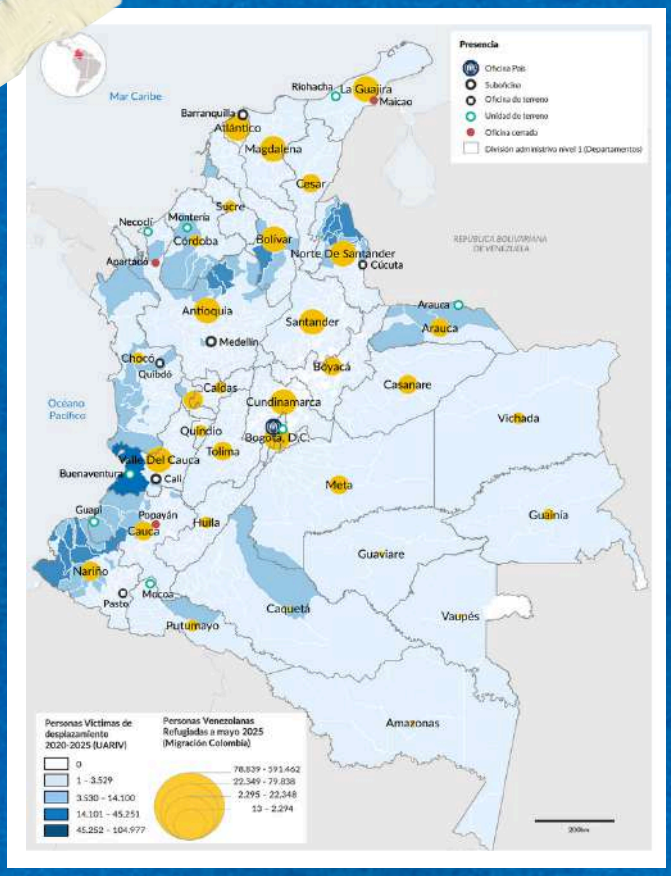
- Others needing international protection **2.8 million** 29%
- IDPs **7 million** 71%

Budget needs 2025



- Protect 54%
- Respond 19%
- Empower 10%
- Solve 16%

[1]Victims's Unit (UARIV), July 2025.
[2]Migración Colombia. Dashboard Migrantes Venezolanos en Colombia. May 2025 www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/entidad/tableau
[3]UNHCR monitoring January - July 2025.
[4]UNHCR Monitoring. January - July 2025.



Map of UNHCR's presence in Colombia. UNHCR/2025

Context

In 2025, Colombia is home to nearly 11 million people who have been forced to flee their homes. This includes over 7 million[5] IDPs, 2.8 million people from Venezuela, 500,000 Colombian returnees[6] and more than 12,000 people engaged in reverse movements from North to South[7]. The country is the fifth globally[8] hosting internally displaced population.

By mid 2025, the multi-layered context is compounded by the escalating violence and multiple armed conflicts, changes in regional displacement dynamics, the severe impact of extreme weather changes, the effects of drastic humanitarian funding cuts, and a fluid and increasingly polarized political environment nurtured by xenophobia and disinformation.

Since January 2025, escalating armed conflict between non-state armed groups triggered the worst humanitarian crisis in a decade, with a 74% increase in forced displacements and 15% increase in confinements during the first half of the year[9]. In the Catatumbo region, at the border with Venezuela, over 85,000 people were impacted since January - including 57,259 displaced and 27,868 confined - marking the most significant large displacement in Colombia's recent history[10].

> *"I lost everything. We fled in fear. I left my little piece of land behind. My family and I were separated."*
>
> *-Forcibly displaced person in Catatumbo, 2025*

Despite progress in providing regular stay to Venezuelans in Colombia, significant barriers to economic integration and employment remain. Delays in asylum decisions expose individuals to prolonged uncertainty and greater exploitation risks.

Colombia has demonstrated strong commitment to protecting displaced populations and strengthening national institutions. The country is a signatory to the 1951 UNHCR Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1984 Cartagena Declaration. Colombia plays a key role in support to the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) and leads the Cartagena +40 regional process culminating in the Chile Declaration and Plan of Action. The Government has implemented measures such as the Temporary Protection Status for Venezuelans benefitting some 1.9 million[11] Venezuelans and is developing a public policy (Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social, CONPES) to strengthen access to solutions for those affected by internal displacement.

UNHCR's Response

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has worked in Colombia since 1997 to protect and find solutions for refugees and asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless people and others in need of international protection, while supporting the communities that host them. With a solid field presence, through 25 information and orientation centres (PAOs in Spanish), and working along 14 local partners, UNHCR reaches the persons at heightened risk to protect and help them rebuild their lives. In alliance with authorities, UNHCR fosters durable solutions to end the displacement cycle, while strengthening preparedness to prevent and mitigate further forced displacement.

UNHCR works with the leadership school in Sipí, Chocó, to strengthen community initiatives and support access to education. The photo shows a group of children proudly holding learning kits. ©UNHCR/ Cristian Cárdenas.

[5]Victims Unit (UARIV) last updated 30 June 2025
[6]Migración Colombia. 2019.
[7]Migración Colombia. Informe de los flujos migratorios inversos en Colombia. January - June 2025.
[8]Global Trends 2024
[9]UNHCR monitoring of emergencies. June 2025.
[10]Equipo Local de Coordinación (ELC) Norte de Santander.
[11]Migración Colombia. Dashboard Migrantes Venezolanos en Colombia. May 2025 www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/entidad/tableau

Protect

Founded in 1997, the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó stands as a symbol of resistance and non-violence. Despite the conflict, it remains steadfast in defending both land and life, with UNHCR supporting its efforts to protect and uphold human rights. ©UNHCR/ Cristian Cárdenas.

- Expand protection monitoring in border areas and critical zones, and optimizing the National Ombudsperson's Office Early Warning System to anticipate humanitarian crises.
- Support municipal Ombudsperson offices (Personerías) — especially in conflict-affected areas — through tailored support, legal training, and case management expertise.
- Provide information and assistance to those forced to flee through the Information and Orientation Centres (PAOs).

With UNHCR's support, newly displaced people from Cauca are being trained to take part in shaping their own solutions. They are learning about the Victims' Law, emergency and contingency planning, and the ethnic decrees. Image courtesy of NRC.

- Provide orientation and information about lifesaving services.
- Respond to humanitarian emergencies by ensuring immediate needs are met through the distribution of Core Relief Items (CRIs), such as shelter materials, blankets, kitchen sets and hygiene kits.
- Respond to humanitarian needs with protection-orientated approaches within the interagency framework led by UN agencies.
- Support local governments in enhancing their emergency response capacity and in protecting the rights and dignity of those forcibly displaced.

- Work with Colombian authorities to strengthen institutional capacity — such as GIT Refugio and Migración Colombia — to support the asylum system and to expland legal stay options. For example, PEP-Tutor for caregivers of children with protection status and advance the implementation of Temporary Protection Status for eligible Venezuelans, promoting family unity and fostering socioeconomic inclusion through access to documentation, protection, health and educational services.

UNHCR, together with Migración Colombia and the Mayor's Office in Bogotá, held a session at a local school to support the pre-registration of children and adolescents for the Temporary Protection Permit. ©UNHCR/ María José Gómez

- Partner with university legal clinics, providing training and assistance with strategic litigation, to ensure forcibly displaced and stateless people receive expert case management and advocacy.
- Support the Government in registering and assisting internally displaced people and confined communities, ensuring their timely access to essential services.

Respond

UNHCR distributed Core Relief Items (CRIs), such as shelter materials, blankets, kitchen sets and hygiene kits to newly forcibly displaced people during an emergency in Chocó.©UNHCR

Empower

Accountability to Affected People (AAP) session in Cardón, La Guajira, where UNHCR worked with the community to share information, hear their concerns, and strengthen participation in decision-making. ©UNHCR

- Strengthen community-based organizations, and their leaders, to support self-protection mechanisms, emergency response and solutions.
- Encourage community leadership and expand spaces for effective community participation in planning and decision-making at local and national levels, ensuring their voices are heard.
- Protect unaccompanied children and adolescents from recruitment by armed or criminal groups, statelessness, family separation due to displacement and reduce their exposure to violence.
- Promote meaningful participation and create community safe spaces for women, adolescents and children.
- Ensure transparency and accountability to affected populations.

Solve

- Provide technical support and advocate for the legalization of informal settlements where forcibly displaced people settle, through a practical land and housing programme promoting adequate living conditions and dignified environments.
- Support national institutions in the design of a new public policy on durable solutions or CONPES[12] to promote better access to rights for IDPs.
- Support access to formal employment, entrepreneurship, self-employment, and financial mechanisms to strengthen self-sufficiency and stability.
- Advance labour and social integration of people forced to flee through campaigns and partnerships with the private sector that foster sustainable opportunities and diversity in the workplace.
- Promote complementary pathways to third countries and support life-saving resettlement for exceptional protection cases.

UNHCR supports the local integration of forcibly displaced women in an informal settlement in Cali, Colombia, promoting protection, resilience, and leadership. ©UNHCR/Daniel Alvarez.

Community empowerment process with women in an informal settlement in Montería. ©UNHCR/ Cristian Cárdenas.

UNHCR needs your support to make a difference

Without urgent financial support and sustained action, Colombia risks a deepening humanitarian crisis as funding shortfalls threaten years of progress in protecting refugees and internally forcibly displaced and stateless people.

[12]The Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (CONPES) is Colombia's main policy advisory body, issuing official guidelines for economic and social development.

How can you support UNHCR?

DONATE NOW ❤

- Financially contribute to the humanitarian response and support long-term programmes that ensure stability for those with the greatest need.
- Establish strategic partnerships and alliances for training and hiring forcibly displaced populations.
- Support awareness campaigns or social innovation projects that enhance the integration and the well-being of forcibly displaced and stateless communities.
- Raise awareness in your networks about the crisis in Colombia by sharing information.
- Promote corporate social responsibility models that facilitate the integration of forcibly displaced and refugee populations.

In 2025, UNHCR's work in Colombia is possible thanks to the contributions by:

Australian Aid · Belgium · Canada · Irish Aid · KOREA · UKaid · Internal Displacement Solutions Fund · CERF

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Interested in learning more?

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