

Ecuador

Operational Update

N.7 | July 2024



*"This was extremely difficult for me. At first, I could not take this burlap home, I felt like my whole world came down on me all over again. This burlap carries my secrets, my deepest sorrows. But it's a place where I found myself, where I can see what I am no longer experiencing." "Esperanza", Colombian refugee.
Photo: UNHCR/Diana Díaz*

Figures at a glance

Population figures

77,654 **95%** from neighbouring Colombia

Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador¹

64,182

refugees with active cases registered in ProGres¹



Our 2024 response in figures

64,831*

refugees and other displaced people supported and registered in proGres as of the end of July 2024

**Figure includes people support through other services beyond those described below*

35,194 

people received legal guidance & assistance

10,011 

people assisted with cash for basic needs and protection

17,553 

people supported with collective emergency shelter

6,725 

people supported with mental health and psychosocial support

1,218 

people linked with a decent employment opportunity

1,416 

GBV survivors supported

197 

people provided with technical or skills certification

7,670 

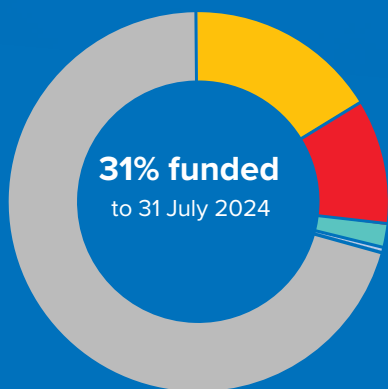
people received hygiene kits

192 

people supported with child protection services

6,422 

people supported with community - based protection services



73.3M
required in 2024

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

For more information on funding, please visit reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador

¹ Historical figure registered by the government to the end of June 2024. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres. Figures to the end of July 2024.

Operational context

Population movements to Ecuador continued, though at a slightly lesser pace, with Venezuelans still leading in movement figures and the number of Colombian asylum seekers increasing considerably. By the end of July, the latter number had already surpassed that registered in 2022, and accounts for 83% of the total registered last year.

Following presidential elections in Venezuela, uncertainty among civil society and other actors as to where it will lead prevails, with refugees and migrants engaging local and national authorities to seek support for the regularization of their status and the renovation of visas obtained during the previous regularization process. In this line, UNHCR continues to work with the government in materializing an extension of the regularization process to facilitate access to documentation of thousands of people.

July marked six months since the declaration of internal armed conflict in Ecuador. The government reported a 17% reduction in intentional homicides during this period, which is considered the primary indicator of violence. However, at the beginning of the month, the President declared a new state

of emergency in the provinces of Guayas, Los Ríos, Manabí, Orellana, Santa Elena, El Oro, and in the Camilo Ponce Enríquez canton of the Azuay province, citing severe internal unrest and internal armed conflict, for a period of 60 days.

Meanwhile, Ecuadorians have continued to embark on mixed movements northbound, facing increasing dangers while on the run. In July, the Ecuadorian government reported the kidnapping and subsequent release of nine citizens who were part of a larger group abducted in Mexico.

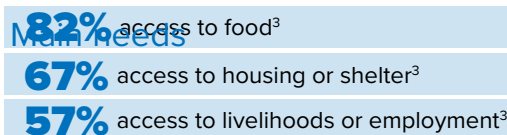
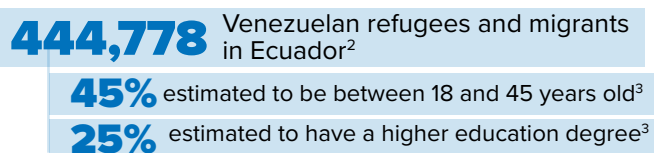
In July, UNHCR continued to work with local and national authorities, civil society, partners, the private sector and development actors, among other stakeholders, to help build a world of possibilities where all people feel safe, included and prosperous.

The Safe Mobility initiative continues to be implemented in the country, providing eligible refugees and migrants with safe and regular pathways to the U.S. [See more here.](#)

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

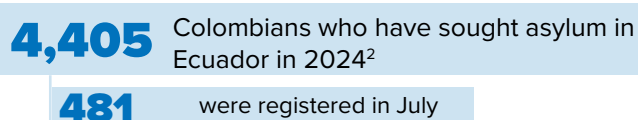
Venezuelans

Venezuelans continue to lead in numbers of arrivals in Ecuador. 18,881 people entered Ecuador in July 2024, with a daily entry average of 609 Venezuelans, compared to exit figures registering 17,620 and 568 daily exits on average. This represents a 29% decrease in entries and a 34% decrease in exits as compared to the same period in 2023.

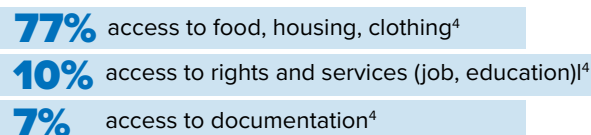


Colombians

According to Government data, 4,405 Colombians have sought asylum so far in 2024, 481 only in July. The number registered in 2024 accounts for 83% of all new asylum seekers from Colombia registered in 2023, and a 47% increase, when compared to the January to July period in 2023.



Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador



Ecuadorians

The number of Ecuadorians on the run has increased in the past years, with over 86,000 having crossed the Darien jungle in 2022 and 2023 combined, being the second nationality to have crossed the Darien in those two years. [By end of May 2024](#), Ecuadorians continued to be second nationality to be crossing this route, with over 12,000 people. Over 73,000 Ecuadorians had arrived [irregularly to Mexico](#) at the end of June 2024. By the end of April, over 43,000 Ecuadorians had traveled to El Salvador, 4,000 of whom returned home. Moreover, 66,000 Ecuadorian asylum-seekers were pending a decision on their claims by end of 2023. [Check out our latest report.](#)

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 2023 Protection Monitoring Report available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ecu>

SPECIAL FOCUS: REGULARIZATION PROCESS

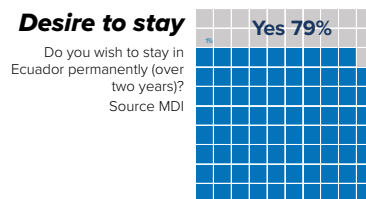
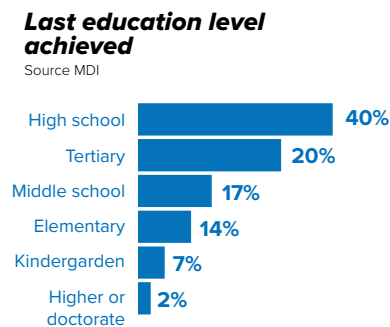
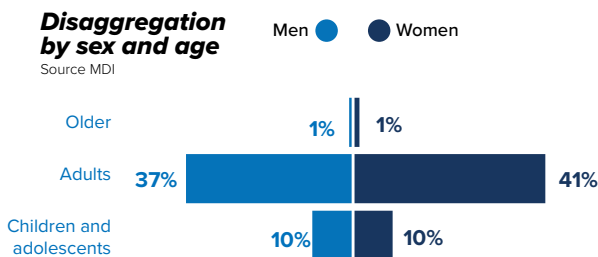
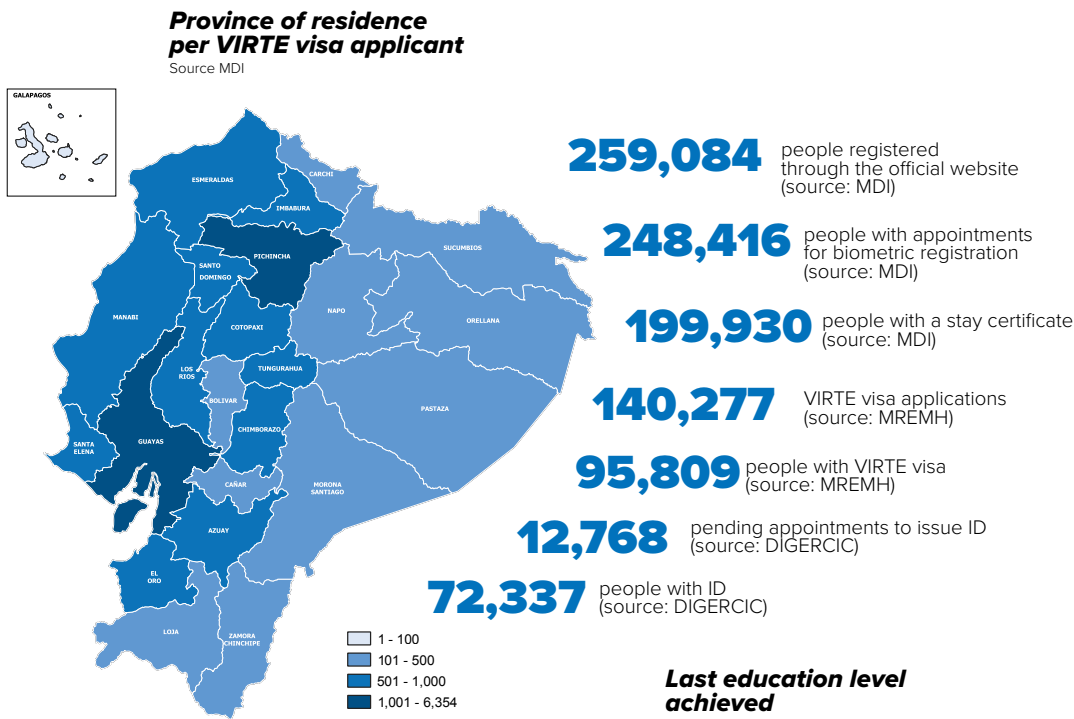
The broad Registration and Regularization exercise has been key in enabling refugees and migrants to meet their needs and to advance solutions as part of a broader protection and socioeconomic integration strategy.

As provided by Decree 436/22, the first phase of the Registration and Regularization initiative started in 2022, with the registration of foreigners living in Ecuador with an irregular status, together with the opportunity for them to obtain a temporary stay permit (Certificado de Permanencia Migratoria) that allows for a regular stay in the territory until a regularization option is made available.

The first phase of registration started registering and regularizing all Venezuelans who entered regularly prior to the issuance of the Decree with a VIRTE visa. Registration

is also divided in phases: first, Venezuelans who entered regularly beginning on 1 September 2022; second, people of all nationalities as of 16 November 2022; and third, all Venezuelans who entered irregularly beginning on 17 February 2023. The registration phase ended on 15 August.

By the end of April, when the process officially ended, 140,277 visa applications had been lodged, 95,809 visas had been granted and 72,337 ID cards had been delivered, while over 199,930 people had a stay permit. Following the announcements of the Ecuadorian Government in the framework of the Los Angeles Declaration this year, UNHCR is engaging with authorities to materialize the extension of the regularization process.



DELIVERING PROTECTION

TULCÁN

Strengthening capacities in international protection



In Tulcán, UNHCR and AVSI, in collaboration with the GTRM Protection Sub-Group launched the third phase of the “Technical Capacity Strengthening for Police and Military Personnel” program, with a focus on International Protection with 60 military personnel. This phase aims to enhance awareness and coordination for better identification, assistance, and response to people in human mobility. Additionally, a workshop on the International Protection of Refugees was conducted for 33 military personnel further promoting effective support and response strategies.

MANTA

UNHCR and partners open new information hub



UNHCR signed a cooperation agreement with the Manta Bus Terminal and inaugurated an information hub. This space will serve as a point where UNHCR and its partners provide vital information on access to services for people in human mobility and with international protection needs.

PICHINCHA

Boosting support for displaced communities in Pichincha



UNHCR has renewed its agreement with the Prefecture of Pichincha to keep supporting refugees and other displaced people in the province. This agreement focuses on working together on strategies, programmes, and projects that help protect the rights of these individuals, ensuring they have access to essential services like information, documentation, health care, shelter, education, and humanitarian aid.

PROMOTING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

IBARRA & LAGO AGRIO

Quality health begins with staff training

UNHCR and the Ministry of Public Health held a workshop on inclusive health services to strengthen the capacities of top-level health officials. This will allow workers to offer effective medical care to people on human mobility and their host communities. The training highlighted the importance of providing an adequate response to emergency situations and specific needs that people require when fleeing their home countries and the physical or mental impact displacement has during their journey.



TULCÁN

Teachers support inclusive education

In Tulcán, UNHCR, in a joint effort with the Ministry of Sports, completed the self-reflective component of the “Respiramos Inclusión” educational methodology at the Vicente Fierro School. The objective is to provide tools to promote peaceful coexistence and inclusion of people in human mobility at the educational community. 118 teachers now have tools to implement their school planning from the perspective of inclusion and non-discrimination.



PROMOTING SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

NATIONAL

Local governments commit to joint solutions for people forced to flee



In the framework of the Purchase with Purpose initiative, UNHCR held a business conference to promote the commercialization of products made by 20 refugee and Ecuadorian entrepreneurs in local stores across the Province of Manabí. Through their skills and talents, displaced people can contribute to boost the economy of their host communities. [Learn more here.](#)

QUITO

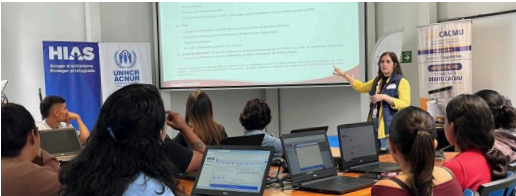
Labour integration creates opportunities for refugees



In Quito, 280 people in human mobility and their host communities connected with 17 companies at the “Empléate Pichincha” fair. They took part in discussions, presented their resumes and participated in selection processes. At this event, numerous alternatives for job inclusion of people in human mobility were also discussed, as well as the importance that companies consider the talent and skills of people who seek to rebuild their lives in a host country.

IBARRA

Labour inclusion is key to sustainable development



In Ibarra, UNHCR, within the framework of the GTRM, conducted a workshop to strengthen the professional profiles of 20 people in human mobility. They learned to use the Skill Lab tool that transforms traditional teaching methodologies into memorable experiences for users. Additionally, participants improved their resumes, cover letters, and practiced for future interviews when looking for opportunities in the local labour market.

PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

NATIONAL

The Ministry of Sports and UNHCR sign alliance to promote the inclusion of refugees



Refugees and other forcibly displaced people will participate in ‘Actívate’ and ‘Vamos a la Cancha’ programmes of the Ministry of Sports, thanks to an alliance between this institution and UNHCR. The objective of this initiative is for forcibly displaced people and locals to participate in programmes that promote physical exercise, the care of physical and emotional health, and also provide spaces for people to make friends and weave support networks. As part of the agreement, UNHCR delivered sports equipment to the Ministry of Sports to be used in ‘Actívate’ and ‘Vamos a la Cancha’ so that more people can participate in these activities throughout the country.



The first training for coaches of “Vamos a la Cancha” and “Actívate Ecuador” was held in Cuenca, in the framework of this alliance. In San Gabriel, UNHCR conducted a training on international protection for 8 instructors. This initiative will help identify individuals in need of protection.



NATIONAL

‘Revuelta a la Mitad del Mundo’ festival promoted a culture of peace



More than 900 people participated in the different theatrical performances of the ‘Revuelta a la Mitad del Mundo’ festival, which took place in Lago Agrio, Shushufindi, Muisne and Esmeraldas. Children and adolescents, as well as their parents, participated in this initiative that aimed to promote a culture of peace, mitigate xenophobia, and prevent any type of violence. Humanitarian workers from these localities also participated in a performance to raise awareness about the reality of forcibly displaced people.

MANABÍ

San Mateo has a new centre to train leaders and strengthen the community



As part of the closure of the ‘Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity’ project, UNHCR handed over the San Mateo Community Development Centre. Through the project, implemented by UNHCR, IOM, and UN Habitat, the agencies were able to promote policies for local governments to respond to human mobility, strengthen community protection spaces, train new leaders, and learn best practices to replicate in other cities. UNHCR supported peaceful coexistence activities, including initiatives involving dance, theater, and music with a focus on child protection and gender-based violence, among others.

Stories from the field

"This is a reflection of how I feel, how I felt with my children back then when I suffered so much violence, all kinds of violence. I understood that my only family were my children. This process has helped a lot. I never thought I would get out of the hole I was in," Rosa, Ecuadorian, participant of Puerta Violeta programmes.

Photo: UNHCR/Diana Díaz



Refugee and Ecuadorian women in Lago Agrio heal and build their world of possibilities through burlap art

LAGO AGRIO

In the warm surroundings of Lago Agrio, a group of courageous women, both Ecuadorians and Colombian refugees, have come together to heal through the art of burlap. This embroidery technique, which weaves together their personal stories in every stitch, offers them a beautiful and unique way to express what's often too difficult to say out loud. This is a programme run by UNHCR partner Puerta Violeta.

"It felt like the world was falling apart, but with every stitch, my heart felt a little lighter," said one of the participants, holding up her burlap, a vibrant tapestry reflecting both her sadness and the joy of healing a part of her life. This space has allowed them to rediscover themselves, discuss their fears, and honour their loved ones who, though not physically present, live on the sun they've sewn, a symbol of resilience and hope.

Creating a burlap is both a deeply personal and liberating experience. "In my burlap, I've stitched the people who are no

longer with me, but I feel their presence in every thread I used to draw the sun. It reminds me that there's always a new day ahead," says another woman. Here, each person finds the courage to share her story, to stitch de past, and start building a new future.

This group of women isn't just creating fabric art, they're also building relationships of support and solidarity. Each gathering is a chance for them to share experiences, learn together, and find comfort in the company of those who've faced similar challenges. In this space, pain turns into strength and loneliness into a solid community.

At the end of each session, these women leave with their burlaps in hand. Although each one is unique, they all shared the same message: together, they've discovered that even in the darkest days, they can stitch a path to light, a future where hope always finds its place.

You can help us continue building a World of Possibilities for thousands of women survivors of gender-based-violence in Ecuador. [Donate now.](#)

We thank the contributions of our donors

10 July 2024

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, including those in Australia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Spain.

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