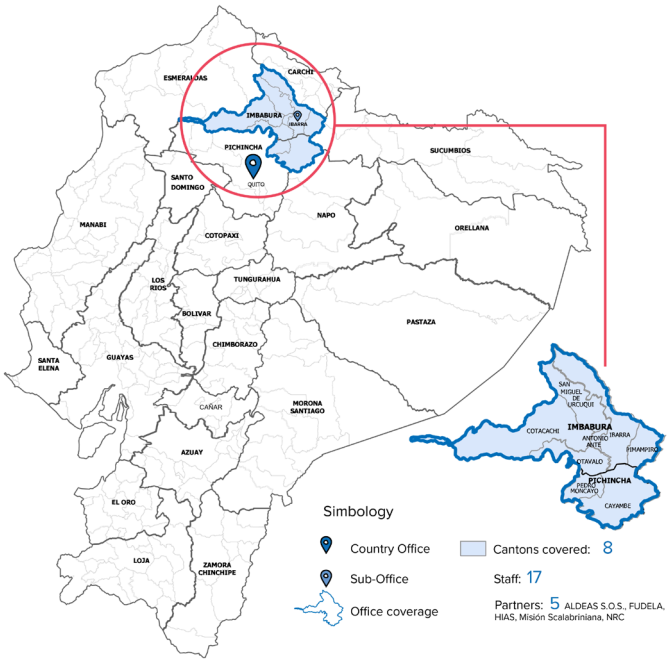
UNHCR Ecuador
Ibarra
January 2024

Operational context

UNHCR opened the Ibarra Field Office in 2000, covering Imbabura Province, as well as two cantons in Pichincha Province: Cayambe and Pedro Moncayo. Strategically located half-way between the Colombian border and Quito, Imbabura has a long tradition of welcoming refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly Venezuelans and Colombians seeking safety in Ecuador. While Imbabura is transit hub, there is also a significant number of forcibly displaced people who chose to locally integrate in the Province due to the opportunities to work in agriculture, textiles, and tourism sectors.

Despite the long history of hosting refugees, Imbabura faces high levels of xenophobia and discrimination in some communities. In recent years there have been forced evictions of Venezuelans, and public protests against people in human mobility and service providers in various cities. Peaceful coexistence remains an on-going priority for all actors. Furthermore, UNHCR continues to work on improving reception conditions, access to humanitarian assistance, education, health services, and livelihoods to promote local integration as a durable solution, while fostering community-based protection initiatives to prevent violence and promote resilience.



Key figures:

Recognized refugees in Imbabura Province
4,706 Colombians
137 Venezuelans
23 Others
**Historical figure until 31 January 2024*

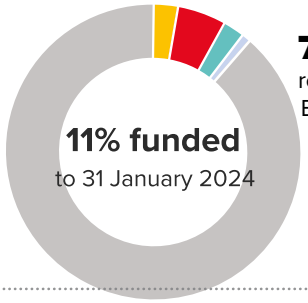
So far this year (1-31 January 2024)
378 Colombians
31 Venezuelans
5 Other

Forcibly displaced people registered by HIAS, NRC or UNHCR
5,160 Colombians
23,145 Venezuelans
1,536 Other

So far this year (1-31 January 2024)
1,048 Colombians
2,348 Venezuelans
233 Other

1,559
asylum claims of Venezuelans and Colombians were admitted for processing, 8% (130 cases) in Imbabura.
Between January 2023 and 2024

So far in 2024 UNHCR and partners delivered:
142 Hygiene kits
4,396 Cash transfers



73.3M
required for the operation in Ecuador in 2024

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

UNHCR Ecuador is grateful for the critical and generous support provided by private and public donors who contributed with earmarked and unearmarked funding so far in 2024.

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

Working with partners

UNHCR's Ibarra Field Office develops protection programmes and durable solutions directly and through its implementing partners in accordance with UNHCR Ecuador's Multi-Year Strategy and Global Protection Priorities, and the Regional Response Platform for the Venezuelan population, which it co-leads with IOM. UNHCR works with five partners: HIAS, FUDELA, Mision Scalabriniana, NRC, and SOS Children's Villages, and provides technical and capacity-building support to the Ombudsman's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Directorate of International Protection and the Cantonal Boards for the Protection of Rights. UNHCR coordinates with 50 organizations within the framework of the GTRM.

Key activities

Protection

UNHCR and partners conduct the following activities:

- Advocacy with government entities and the private sector to facilitate access to services, local integration and exercise of human rights, prevention of evictions and social inclusion.
- Registration with biometrics, case management, provision of protection information and guidance on access to asylum, migration alternatives, access to services and humanitarian assistance programmes.
- Prevention and response to survivors of gender-based violence, and provision of a comprehensive response for unaccompanied children and adolescents.
- Strengthen the refugee status determination process with authorities.
- Provide technical support for legal advice and representation of refugees and asylum-seekers through the Ombudsman's Office and the Public Defender's Office and the Cantonal Systems for the Protection of Rights (SCPD).
- Support for the Municipal and the Salesians dining halls, and Cristo Peregrino Shelter.
- Train public officials on international protection, prevention of gender-based violence, child protection, and forced displacement of LGBTIQ+ people.
- Provide technical support on international protection standards and in the design of local routes and public policy for the protection of people in human mobility to strategic actors at the local level.
- Work with civil society organizations, community leaders and municipalities to boost community networks, foster integration and promote peaceful coexistence.
- Improve infrastructure of community centres to promote integration among refugees and locals.
- Provide technical assistance to refugee organizations to promote their participation in the discussion, decision making and development of public policies.
- With support from UNAIDS, train healthcare professionals in the HIV/AIDS response to deliver inclusive health services following the principle of non-discrimination.

Livelihoods and economic inclusion

UNHCR and partners conduct the following activities:

- Coordinate with municipal and provincial authorities for the economic inclusion of refugees in the formalization of businesses, business fairs and other related activities.
- Undertake awareness-raising events with private actors, financial institutions, the public sector and host communities to promote labour inclusion.
- Coordinate with the public sector for the inclusion of refugees in their programmes, including with the national tax agency for the formalization of microbusiness.
- Advocate for the economic inclusion of unaccompanied children and people with disabilities through entrepreneurship schools.
- Develop livelihoods initiatives to prevent the recruitment of young adults and children into criminal groups.
- Foster relationships with financial institutions to help refugees open bank accounts and apply for loans.
- Implement a digital literacy programme to strengthen the use of technology for livelihoods by refugees.
- Coordinate with academic institutions to deliver technical vocational training.
- Promote livelihoods initiatives tailored to the local context, including agricultural, textile circular economy and gastronomy projects.

Durable solutions

UNHCR and partners conduct the following activities:

- Fight against xenophobia and discrimination, together with civil society organizations and public institutions, through information campaigns to promote solidarity and coexistence.
- Improving both access to education and integration, and supporting the initiatives of the Ministry of Education, through the "Respiramos Inclusión" methodology.

Coordination

- Co-leader with IOM in the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM).
- Support to the Human Mobility Roundtable of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility.
- Binational coordination with counterparts of the United Nations system (Ecuador-Colombia).

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