

Guayaquil

Field Office
January 2026

Key figures in 2025

200,000

refugees and other displaced people identified, registered and assisted by UNHCR and partners in the southern region
(the second largest concentration in the country after Pichincha)

55% Venezuelan | **34%** Colombian | **11%** others

UNHCR and partner response in Guayaquil in 2025

3,468

people received legal counselling and/or assistance

850

people received cash assistance

1,227

information and counselling on access to rights, including asylum, and basic services

6,500

Protection needs were identified for people, of whom 247 were related to violence against women

400

children and adolescents participated in peaceful coexistence activities

154

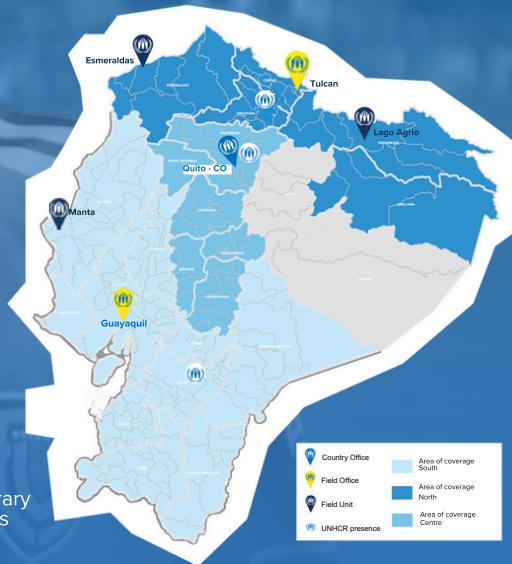
business supported and covered by refugees and migrants

54

job vacancies covered by refugees and migrants

2,471

people assisted with temporary shelters and 151 safe shelters for women strengthened



Operational context

The Field Office in Guayaquil covers three provinces of Ecuador's Southern Region (Azuay, El Oro, and Guayas), including the border area with Peru and a substantial portion of the Ecuadorian Pacific coast (Manabí). The region remains one of the most economically dynamic in the country, offering opportunities for the economic inclusion of forcibly displaced people, particularly in commerce, services, agriculture, and port-related activities. However, significant structural challenges remain, especially in urban and peri-urban areas, including limited access to rights and basic services, high levels of informality, unemployment and underemployment, and a deteriorating security environment.

Since late 2024, the Field Office has observed an increase in the arrival of Colombian refugees, driven by the continued deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in Colombia. This trend has placed additional pressure on local services, protection systems, and community coping mechanisms, already strained by ongoing displacement.

Escalating violence and insecurity in the southern provinces have progressively undermined community, neighbourhood, and family support networks, affecting forcibly displaced people. The erosion of the social fabric has negatively impacted local integration, social coexistence, and peaceful community relations, while increasing protection risks. In areas of UNHCR presence, incidents of internal displacement, mobility restrictions, homicides, extortion, and threats against community leaders, as well as the recruitment and use of children and adolescents by organized criminal groups, are reported with increasing frequency.

Despite the commitment of local and national authorities to address security challenges and advance inclusive public policies, substantial obstacles persist in ensuring effective, coordinated, and sustainable solutions.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR works with a wide range of partners to strengthen protection and solutions in Ecuador's Southern Region. Strategic partners include HIAS, CDH, CEPAM, RESA, Fundación María Amor, Movimiento de Mujeres de El Oro, ADRA, Humane, Humboldt Zentrum, ÉPICO, as well as decentralized autonomous governments (GADs). In line with its localization approach, UNHCR works closely with community-based organizations, strengthening their capacities and supporting community-led initiatives focused on protection, empowerment, social cohesion, and resilience at the local level. UNHCR also collaborates closely with State institutions, including the Public Defender's Office, the Ombudsperson's Office (Defensoría del Pueblo), and DPIN, to strengthen access to asylum, legal protection, and rights. Coordination is ensured through the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM) in Guayaquil, co-led by UNHCR and IOM.

PROTECTION & SOLUTIONS STRATEGY

UNHCR's interventions in Guayaquil are structured around two complementary strategic areas: **Protection and Solutions**, addressing immediate protection risks while advancing pathways towards stability and sustainable integration.

KEY ACTIVITIES - OUR RESPONSE IN 2025

Protection

UNHCR's Protection interventions in Guayaquil focus on preventing and responding to protection risks affecting refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons, and host communities, in the context of escalating violence and insecurity. Key actions include:

- Access to asylum, legal protection, and justice, through coordination with public institutions, legal aid providers, and referral mechanisms, including cases at the airport.
- Case management and specialized protection services for persons with specific needs, including survivors of violence, children at risk (including unaccompanied and separated children), LGBTI people, and internally displaced persons.
- Protection monitoring at borders, transit points, and urban areas, complemented by community-based protection monitoring with community leaders, who report incidents of violence, risks of forced displacement, confinement, and violence-related school dropout.
- Analysis and reporting of protection trends, informing operational decision-making, advocacy, and early warning.
- Community-based protection and social cohesion, strengthening leadership, accountability to affected populations, and peaceful coexistence initiatives, including through sports and cultural engagement.



Solutions

UNHCR advances durable solutions and pathways to self-reliance, focusing on socio-economic inclusion as a core enabler of local integration for refugees and migrants. Key solutions-oriented interventions include:

- Supporting the transition from emergency assistance to self-reliance, reducing dependency on humanitarian aid.
- Promoting employability and income generation through dual education schemes, job placement initiatives, vocational training, and entrepreneurship support.
- Advancing business formalization and financial inclusion, including access to financial services and safe market linkages.
- Strengthening partnerships with the private sector, academia, and local authorities, to expand sustainable livelihood opportunities and inclusive local economic development.



Coordination

UNHCR engages in strategic coordination with other actors, including UN Agencies, civil society and local authorities to ensure a streamlined protection and solutions response across sectors. Key actions include:

- Interagency and institutional coordination, including co-leadership of the GTRM Protection sector and capacity strengthening of national and local authorities.

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