

UNHCR Ecuador

Ibarra Field Office Factsheet

September 2021

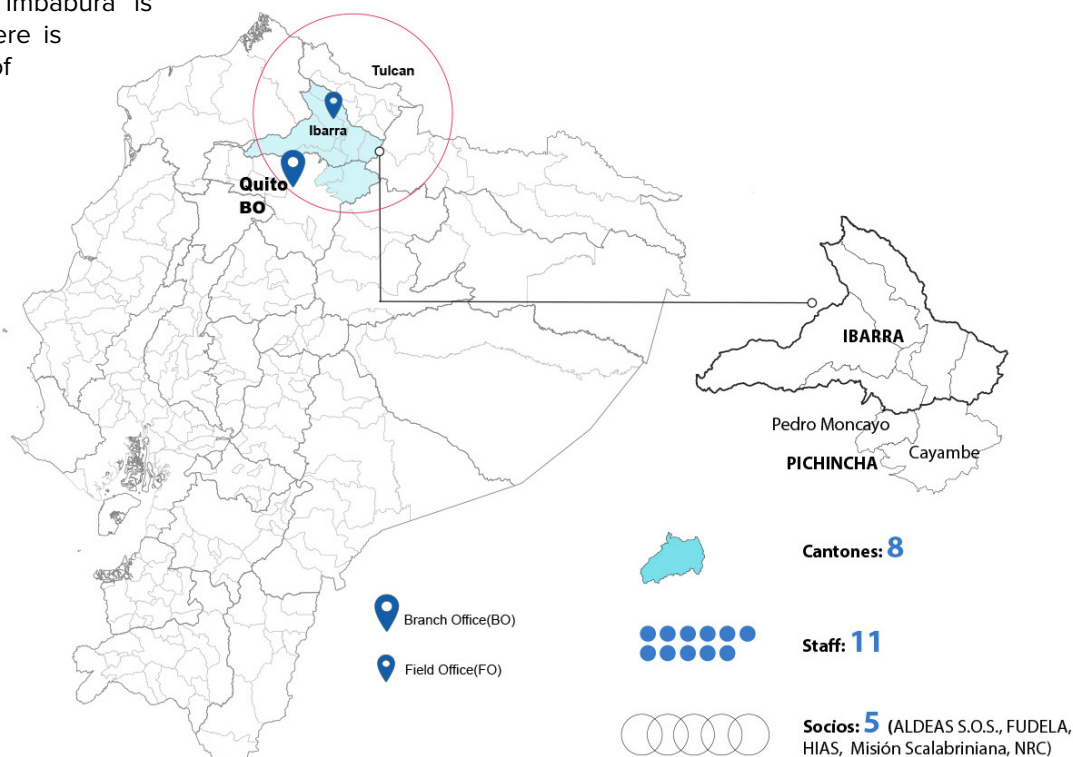


Operational context

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. Most Venezuelans and Colombians seeking safety in Ecuador cross Imbabura along the Pan-American Highway; while Imbabura is a region of transit, and there is also a significant number of People of Concern who chose to locally integrate in Imbabura due to the opportunities to work in the agriculture, textiles and tourism sectors.

Despite the long history of hosting refugees, Imbabura is a conservative region, with high levels of xenophobia and discrimination. With increased arrivals of Venezuelans, there has been forced evictions of Venezuelans, and public protests against Venezuelans and service

providers in various cities in Imbabura. Peaceful co-existence remains an on-going challenge for all actors. Furthermore, UNHCR continues to work on improving reception conditions, access to humanitarian assistance, local integration, as well as ensuring security and health in the context of COVID-19.



Key figures:

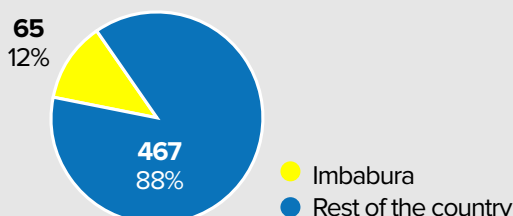
Recognized refugees in Imbabura province:

4,550 Colombians
65 Venezuelans

PoCs registered by HIAS or UNHCR:

2,770 Colombians
13,545 Venezuelans

Between January and September 2021, **532** asylum applications of Venezuelans and Colombians were admitted for processing in Ecuador, of which **12 percent** (65 cases) were in Imbabura province.



In 2021, UNHCR and its partners have delivered in Imbabura:



245
hygiene kits



1,291
cash transfers

Work with partners

UNHCR's Ibarra Field Office develops protection programs and durable solutions directly and through its implementing partners in accordance with the Multi-Year Strategy of the Operation in Ecuador, UNHCR's Protection Priorities at the global level and the Regional Response Platform for the Venezuelan population, which it co-leads with IOM.

UNHCR works with five partners: HIAS, FUDELA, SOS Children's Villages, NRC, and Mision Scalabriniana. It also provides technical and capacity-building support to the Ombudsman's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Directorate of International Protection and Cantonal Boards for the Protection of Rights. Each activity has been adapted to the context of the pandemic to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to the UNHCR team, partners, beneficiaries, and host communities.

Key activities



Protection

- Advocacy with government entities and the private sector for access to services, local integration and exercise of human rights, prevention of evictions and social inclusion in response to the pandemic.
- Coordination with the Ministry of Public Health, municipal and parish governments for the vaccination campaign, installation of refugee housing units (RHU) for triage, and delivery of biosecurity items to shelters and canteens in response to the health emergency.
- Case management/provision of protection information and guidance on access to asylum, migration alternatives, access to services and humanitarian assistance programs, in the context of the health emergency.
- Prevention and response to survivors of gender-based violence, and provision of a comprehensive response for unaccompanied children and adolescents.
- Strengthening the refugee status determination process with authorities.
- Capacity-building and technical support for legal advice and representation of refugees and asylum-seekers through the Ombudsman's Office and the Public Defender's Office of Ecuador and the Cantonal Systems for the Protection of Rights (SCPD).
- Support for the Municipal and Salesians dining halls and Cristo Peregrino Shelter in Ibarra.



Livelihoods and economic independence

- Coordination with municipal and provincial authorities for livelihood activities, and training in rural and urban sectors and improved local integration.
- Awareness-raising events with private actors and host communities for labor recruitment.
- Implementation of livelihood and socioeconomic inclusion projects with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion targeting vulnerable people in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, including youth.
- Support to academic institutions in technical vocational training and entrepreneurship innovation processes, with emphasis on textile, gastronomy, and agricultural sectors.
- Livelihood activities are closely linked to peaceful co-existence, recognizing that Venezuelans and Ecuadorians working together fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance.



Durable solutions

- Fight against xenophobia and discrimination, together with civil society organizations and public institutions, through information campaigns to promote solidarity and coexistence.
- To reduce communication gaps caused by COVID-19, UNHCR and its partners support the population with connectivity solutions for improved access to services and information.
- Improving both access to education and integration, and supporting the initiatives of the Ministry of Education, through the "We Breathe Inclusion" 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).