



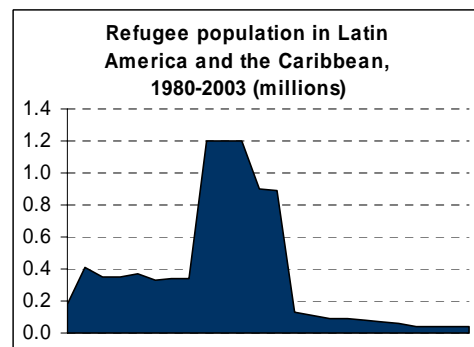
## Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Latin America and the Caribbean

### ----- Levels and Trends, 1980-2003

#### Refugees

The refugee population in Latin America and the Caribbean reached a peak in 1988-1990, when it hosted some 1.2 million refugees. Since then, durable solutions have been achieved for thousands of refugees from Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Currently, the region provides asylum to 38,300 refugees, less than 1% of the global refugee population (9.7 million). The main asylum countries are Costa Rica (13,500), Ecuador (6,380), and Mexico (6,080).



Most refugees in the region are from Colombia (15,700), Guatemala (4,400), El Salvador (3,900), and Nicaragua (3,700). Colombian refugees, who numbered only 4,400 in 1999, now form 41% of all refugees in the region.

The number of refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean has also decreased, from 175,000 in the early 1990s to 91,000 currently. The main asylum countries for refugees from the region are United States (34,300), Costa Rica (13,300), Canada (12,700), Ecuador (6,300) and Mexico (6,000).<sup>1</sup>

Refugee population by asylum country, end of 2003			
Country	Total	Country	Total
Costa Rica	13,500	Peru	720
Ecuador	6,380	Guatemala	720
Mexico	6,080	Bolivia	530
Brazil	3,190	Chile	470
Argentina	2,640	Nicaragua	300
Panama	1450	El Salvador	250
Belize	860	Colombia	190
Cuba	840	Other	200

The region hosts an estimated 1.3 million persons of concern to UNHCR, 8 per cent of the global figure of 17.0 million. Persons of concern to UNHCR include not only refugees, but also asylum-seekers, returned refugees, internally displaced persons, and others.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Canada and USA: UNHCR estimates

<sup>2</sup> See 2003 Statistical Yearbook (provisional), available at <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics>

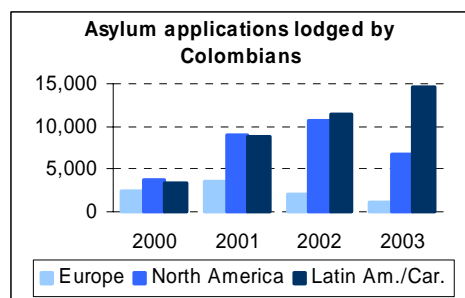
## Asylum-seekers

Since 1996, 377,100 asylum-seekers from countries in the region applied for asylum, 24% of whom were Colombians.

While most asylum-seekers from the region apply for refugee status in North America, the majority of Colombian asylum-seekers seek asylum in the region.

Region	Colombians	Others	Total
North America	32,200	247,100	279,300
Europe	16,700	32,600	49,300
Latin America & the Caribbean	39,200	7,110	46,310
Oceania	960	1,120	2,080
Others	30	80	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>89,100</b>	<b>288,000</b>	<b>377,100</b>

Recently, the number of Colombian asylum-seekers has sharply increased, from just over 2,000 in the late 1990s to more than 20,000 per year since 2001. While the number of Colombians seeking asylum in the region continues to rise, Europe and North America have received fewer applications recently.



During 2000-2003, Ecuador received 60% of all Colombians seeking asylum in the region, while 30% applied in Costa Rica.

## Resettlement departures

During 1980-2003, 105,000 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean had been resettled through UNHCR or bilaterally. Almost 50% of the resettled refugees were Cubans followed by refugees from El Salvador (25%). Only 5% of the resettled refugees are Colombians.

During the period from 2000 to 2003 13,700 refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean were resettled, most of whom were from Cuba (61%) and Colombia (36%).

Of the 105,000 resettled refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean since 1980, 57% were accepted by USA and 38% by Canada.

