



Argentina

Belize

Bolivia

Brazil

Chile

Colombia

Costa Rica

Cuba

Ecuador

El Salvador

Guatemala

Guyana

Honduras

Mexico

Nicaragua

Panama

Paraguay

Peru

Suriname

Uruguay

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Latin America

The conflict in Colombia has a significant impact on UNHCR's operations throughout Latin America. UNHCR's achievements, constraints and operations in Colombia and its neighbouring countries are described in a separate Colombia Situation chapter.

Operational highlights

- UNHCR strengthened the capacity of governments and civil society to monitor and provide protection to unaccompanied minors within massive mixed migratory flows in Central America.
- Brazil ratified the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, enabling 200,000 children to acquire nationality.
- The number of asylum applications in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile increased significantly because of improved asylum procedures.
- Some 230 refugees from within and outside the region benefited from the regional resettlement programme.



Working environment

In Mexico and Central America, efforts to improve border security, guard against terrorism and counter human and drug trafficking have led to stricter control of the movements of undocumented migrants. The use of interception, detention and deportation has increased, and Mexico has reinforced its military presence in border areas. However, migration issues remain on the agenda through the Puebla Process, a regional forum on migration in which Mexico and the Central American countries participate.

Asylum-seekers and migrants from outside Latin America are found within mixed migratory flows in Central America. Thousands of unaccompanied children in these movements are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations, and are often victims of smugglers and/or traffickers.

In Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, there has been some progress with national refugee laws and decrees. The countries have established national refugee commissions to process asylum applications and find durable solutions for refugees.

In Bolivia, a new constitution and a law on the distribution of income from its natural resources have led to political strife, marked by violent protests and demonstrations.

Achievements and impact

The Mexico Plan of Action (MPA) represents a new political commitment in Latin America to uphold higher protection standards and strengthen the search for durable solutions.

In line with the MPA and UNHCR's Global Strategic Objective 1, the Office advised governments to ensure that national legislation complied with international standards. The Office also sought to ensure that asylum-seekers within mixed migratory flows have access to fair and efficient asylum procedures.

Furthermore, UNHCR promoted the adoption of refugee legislation, monitored legislative and policy-making processes, and gave legal advice to governments. It strengthened national refugee commissions in Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay to ensure fair and efficient refugee

status determination (RSD). The Office also helped Argentina and Uruguay adopt regulations and procedures that conform to international protection standards.

In Brazil, the Government ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and sanctioned a constitutional amendment to allow the registration of children born to Brazilian parents abroad. The new law requires only that such children be registered at a Brazilian consulate if they wish to acquire Brazilian nationality. It removes the threat of statelessness long faced by Brazilian children born abroad.

In 2007, 124 people were resettled within the region. Argentina received 36 refugees, Brazil 48 and Chile 40. Most were Colombian refugees in need of physical protection or unable to integrate locally in their first asylum countries.

In 2007, Latin American resettlement countries opened their doors to refugees from outside the region. The Brazilian Government approved the resettlement of the entire remaining population of Palestinian refugees in the Ruwaished camp at the border between Jordan and Iraq. This group of 109 refugees had not been allowed to enter Jordan from Iraq and had been confined to an enclosed camp for the past four years. Similarly, in

September 2007, the Government of Chile accepted UNHCR's request that it resettle some 120 Palestinian refugees who had also fled Iraq and remained in the no-man's land between Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Regional protection networks were expanded and consolidated. Two new cities in Argentina and Chile joined the network of Cities of Solidarity to support the reception and integration of resettled families. The expansion of protection networks has been crucial to improving regional capacity to deal with future crises.

Constraints

Many government officials in the region lack institutional knowledge and experience in asylum issues. At the same time, a high turnover of government officials tends to reduce the impact of training.

The poor socioeconomic situation in many Latin American countries hampers the local integration of refugees. Even in Brazil, which has seen solid economic growth, the living conditions of refugees and asylum-seekers have not improved.



UNHCR/L.F. Godinho

Palestinian refugees from Ruweished camp in Jordan were resettled in Brazil in September 2007.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** and the **Amazon region of Brazil** are described in the *Colombia Situation* chapter.

In **Mexico and Central America**, UNHCR helped refugees join the labour market through employment schemes and provision of documentation. UNHCR's programme in the region covers some 3,750 people, including long-staying refugees in Central American countries.

UNHCR's presence in Tapachula on Mexico's southern border was critical to the Office's efforts to ensure that asylum-seekers within mixed migratory flows received international protection. UNHCR is the only UN agency present in this area, and its efforts were particularly aimed at alleviating the plight of unaccompanied children. A joint survey on unaccompanied minors in mixed migration flows was carried out with an international NGO. The findings highlighted that the most crucial needs are in: identifying and accessing people in need of international protection and referring them to asylum mechanisms; building capacity, particularly in Mexican States along the southern border and the Gulf of Mexico; public information and awareness-raising activities; and oversight and monitoring.

In Mexico, the National Migration Institute, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance and the Office for the Development of the Family and Children signed an agreement to boost support and assistance for Central American migrant minors in the State of Chiapas. The agreement will allow mothers with young children to be housed at a shelter for minor migrants.

The Office campaigned for new refugee laws or recommended amendments to existing legislation in El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. It also advocated the lifting of reservations to the Refugee Convention and its Protocol.

Cuba, covered by UNHCR's regional office in Mexico, has not signed the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. In 2007, 48 asylum-seekers were registered in the country. Refugees have free access to education and medical care, but local integration is not an option. Voluntary repatriation and resettlement are therefore the only viable durable solutions. In 2007, two Sudanese refugees returned to their country and

ten Sahrawi students were assisted to return to their first country of asylum, Algeria. Thirty-seven people were resettled in Canada, Sweden and the United States

In **Bolivia**, UNHCR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to cooperate on a capacity-building project to reinforce the National Refugee Commission. In 2007, UNHCR hired an external consultant to train government officials on refugee matters. Bolivia's RSD procedures were improved and a technical secretariat created for the National Refugee Commission.

In **Brazil**, the Ministry of Justice increased its support for the refugee assistance project that is administered by civil society partners from USD 23,000 in 2006 to USD 376,000 in 2007. The assistance complemented UNHCR's programme in the country. The Government, UNHCR and the civil society reviewed the existing resettlement and integration procedures in order to improve the sustainability of the programme.

In **Argentina, Chile, Paraguay** and **Uruguay**, the Office worked with national and local authorities and civil society to promote self-sufficiency and local integration of refugees and asylum-seekers. At the end of 2007, there were some 5,500 refugees in the region, mostly from Latin America, but also from Africa. The number of new asylum-seekers increased significantly throughout the region; some 1,500 people filed asylum applications in 2007. In Argentina, one of UNHCR's corporate partners signed a cooperation agreement to support employment of refugees and asylum-seekers.

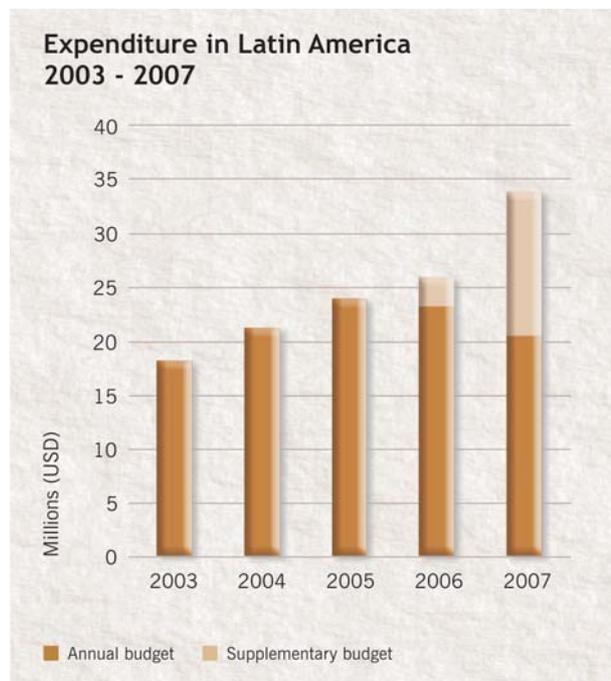
Twenty families were resettled in Argentina and Chile during the year. All of them received support for local integration from the Government and local NGOs. Local capacities for receiving resettled refugees in the two countries were improved. Rosario in Argentina and La Calera in Chile joined the Cities of Solidarity network under the Mexico Plan of Action, facilitating refugees' access to basic services. In September, the Government of Chile accepted to resettle some 100 Palestinian refugees who remain in no-man's land between Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Uruguay and Paraguay also signed framework agreements with UNHCR for the resettlement of refugees.

At the regional level, UNHCR monitored the new migration component of the South American Common Market, Mercosur, and promoted regional policies on refugee protection and durable solutions. UNHCR was invited to the first meeting of Mercosur's migration forum in 2008.

Financial information

Financial support for the MPA has increased over the past three years. Contributions for Latin America have risen by 72 per cent since the adoption of the Plan in 2004. In the spirit of regional solidarity, countries in the region are also contributing financially to UNHCR. However, many unmet needs remain. The poor socioeconomic situation of many countries prevents them from fulfilling their commitments to refugees. The sustainability of the regional resettlement programme will depend on adequate funding and the commitment and capacity of involved States to consolidate reception and integration mechanisms.

In Colombia and its neighboring countries, UNHCR has expanded its operations in the past five years to protect the large number of displaced people (see *Colombia Situation chapter*). In other parts of the region, expenditure levels have remained stable.



Budget and expenditure (USD)

Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget ¹	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Argentina ²	2,696,031	80,482	2,776,513	2,684,424	52,946	2,737,371
Brazil ³	2,591,391	533,010	3,124,401	2,573,305	499,581	3,072,886
Colombia	697,452	16,599,215	17,296,666	676,771	12,874,740	13,551,511
Costa Rica	2,005,493	0	2,005,493	1,995,559	0	1,995,559
Cuba	221,100	0	221,100	210,109	0	210,109
Ecuador	5,229,870	0	5,229,870	5,215,949	0	5,215,949
Mexico ⁴	2,277,510	0	2,277,510	2,267,874	0	2,267,874
Panama	1,044,296	0	1,044,296	1,040,605	0	1,040,605
Venezuela ⁵	3,667,318	0	3,667,318	3,662,948	0	3,662,948
Total South America	20,430,460	17,212,707	37,643,166	20,327,545	13,427,267	33,754,813

¹ Excludes a seven per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

² The annual budget includes local settlement in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, as well as resettlement in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. The supplementary budget includes resettlement of Iraqis from the Middle East.

³ The supplementary budget includes resettlement of Iraqis from the Middle East.

⁴ Includes local settlement in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

⁵ Includes local settlement in countries belonging to the Colombia Situation.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget
Latin America (Mexico Plan of Action)	Brazil	30,000	0
	Sweden	1,164,483	0
	Sub-total	1,194,483	0
Argentina	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR</i>	139,334	0
	Sub-total	139,334	0
Brazil	United States	3,000	0
	Sub-total	3,000	0
Central America and Mexico	Mexico	3,479	0
	United States	643,000	0
	Sub-total	646,479	0
Colombia Situation	Canada	423,729	0
	Japan	500,000	0
	Luxembourg	341,997	0
	Norway	772,158	0
	United States	1,740,000	0
Sub-total	3,777,884	0	

Earmarking	Donor	Annual budget	Supplementary budget
Colombia	Canada	0	2,244,828
	CERF	0	1,302,000
	<i>España con ACNUR</i>	44,443	134,409
	European Commission	0	3,237,655
	International Olympic Committee	15,000	0
	Japan Association for UNHCR	77,760	0
	Luxembourg	0	318,057
	Netherlands	0	1,492,650
	Norway	0	390,756
	Online donations (Headquarters)	35,071	19
	Pan American Development Foundation	0	38,634
	Private donors in Italy	492	0
	Spain	0	2,509,396
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling</i> (Netherlands)	101,354	0
	Sweden	0	406,114
	Switzerland	0	381,148
	UNAIDS	100,000	0
	United Kingdom	0	24,839
	United States	222,600	2,470,869
	USA for UNHCR	0	9,393
	Sub-total	596,720	14,960,766
Costa Rica	<i>España con ACNUR</i>	39,810	0
	Norway	45,407	0
	Private donors in Canada	20,000	0
	Spain	615,595	0
	United States	147,000	0
	Sub-total	867,811	0
Ecuador	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR</i>	100,000	0
	Colombia	465,000	0
	European Commission	1,276,882	0
	International Olympic Committee	15,500	0
	Private donors in Italy	12,322	0
	Spain	995,324	0
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling</i> (Netherlands)	441,900	0
	Switzerland	204,918	0
	UN Trust Fund for Human Security	306,252	0
	United Kingdom	12,091	0
	United States	1,014,710	0
	Sub-total	4,844,899	0
Panama	<i>España con ACNUR</i>	5,127	0
	European Commission	201,613	0
	United States	79,641	0
	Sub-total	286,381	0
Southern South America	United States	1,145,000	0
	Sub-total	1,145,000	0
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	European Commission	442,171	0
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling</i> (Netherlands)	230,726	0
	United Kingdom	151,272	0
	United States	1,500	0
	Sub-total	825,669	0
Total		14,327,661	14,960,766

Note: Contributions shown exclude indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes and the "New or additional activities - mandate related" (NAM) Reserve.