

# Ecuador

## Operational Update

N.2 | February 2025

Juana Ramírez is a Venezuelan heroine. Her name has gone down in history for being in charge of logistics during the independence era. "She was responsible for food, clothing, in the confrontations," says Katuska. It was in her honor that this collective, led by Katuska, was named Juana La Avanzadora. © UNHCR/Omar Ganchala

### Figures at a glance

#### Population figures

**78,629**

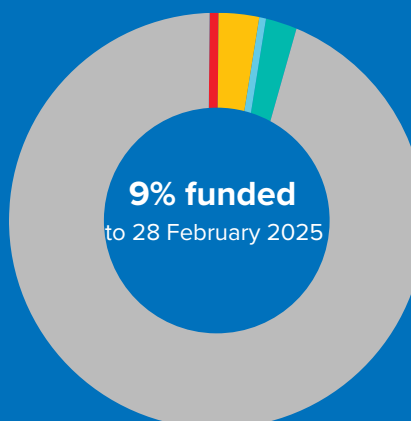
Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador<sup>1</sup>

**95%**

from neighbouring Colombia

**66,974**

refugees with active cases registered in ProGres<sup>1</sup>



**73.3M**  
required in 2025

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

For more information on funding, please visit [reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador](https://reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador)

#### Our 2025 response in figures

**6,707\***

refugees and other displaced people supported and registered in proGres as of the end of February 2025



**2,474**

people received legal guidance & assistance



**928**

people supported with collective emergency shelter



**88**

people supported with child protection services



**520**

people supported with community - based protection services



**407**

women and girls survivors of violence



**2,830**

people assisted with cash for basic needs and protection



**1,032**

people supported with mental health and psychosocial support



**636**

people received hygiene kits



**12**

people provided with technical or skills certification

<sup>1</sup> Historical figure registered by the government to the end of December 2024. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres. Figures to the end of February 2025.

\*Figure includes people supported through other services beyond those described below.

## Operational context

In February 2025, Ecuador held general elections to elect a president, vice president, 151 assembly members, and five representatives to the Andean Parliament. This election was monitored by the largest delegation of international observers in Ecuador's history, consisting of 507 individuals, along with 1,149 national observers. The elections resulted in a tight outcome between Noboa and González, who will go to a second round of elections in April.

Reports highlight January 2025 as the most violent month in Ecuador's history, with over 730 violent deaths, mainly in provinces like Guayas and Manabí – a situation that also affects forcibly displaced people.

Heavy rains that started in January 2025 continue to affect thousands across the country. According to the latest report from the Risk Management Secretariat, as of mid-March, there are 20 deaths and more than 108,000 people affected.

One of the hardest-hit provinces is Los Ríos, with significant impacts also in El Oro, Guayas and Manabí. UNHCR is delivering support through the coordination of the UN System and in complement to the actions of the national and local Governments.

Global budget cuts to UNHCR and the humanitarian community had a significant impact in the work in Ecuador. Without support, critical aid for people forced to flee and host communities in vulnerable conditions are likely to suffer as they cannot access basic services.

In this context, UNHCR is prioritizing life-saving actions to continue to provide support to people forced to flee, including those arriving in very vulnerable situations. Moreover, UNHCR remained available to support people affected by extreme weather events across the country.

## Main populations forced to flee hosted by Ecuador and others of concern

### Venezuelans

Venezuelans continue to lead the number of arrivals to Ecuador, albeit in decreasing numbers. On average, 736 Venezuelans entered each day in February 2025, while an estimated 677 people left each day. This leaves a balance of almost 60 people who entered and remained in the country. *\*These figures have been compiled by the GTRMs in Ecuador's border areas (Tulcán, Lago Agrio, and Huaquillas) with qualitative and quantitative information on mixed movement trends. These figures are not triangulated with neighboring countries.*

**444,778** Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador<sup>2</sup>

**45%** estimated to be between 18 and 45 years old<sup>3</sup>

**25%** estimated to have a higher education degree<sup>3</sup>

### Main needs

**82%** access to food<sup>3</sup>

**67%** access to housing or shelter<sup>3</sup>

**57%** access to livelihoods or employment<sup>3</sup>

### Colombians

According to Government data, 386 Colombians sought asylum in Ecuador in February 2025 (733 so far in the year), similar to the number in the previous month (347) and nearly half of the number reports in the same month in 2024 (661). Even though numbers in 2025, so far, seems to be comparable to those of 2023, with 2024 registering the highest number of asylum claims filed by Colombians in Ecuador since 2014 and conditions worsening in the country of origin, UNHCR still projects high asylum claims in 2025. Predictions take into account that the reduction of numbers in the first months of 2025, when compared to 2024, may be a result of forced confinement generated by exacerbated violence and actions from armed groups.

**733** Colombians who have sought asylum in Ecuador in 2025<sup>2</sup>

**386** were registered in February

### Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador

**77%** access to food, housing, clothing<sup>4</sup>

**10%** access to rights and services (job, education)<sup>4</sup>

**7%** access to documentation<sup>4</sup>

### Ecuadorians

Trends in Ecuadorian displacements have shifted, with this nationality dropping to the sixth to cross the Darien Jungle, according to [Panamanian authorities](#). 103,000 Ecuadorian asylum-seekers were pending a decision on their claims by mid-2024.

<sup>2</sup> According to data estimated by the Refugee and Migrant Working Group (GTRM, by its acronym in Spanish). The GTRM is assessing a new methodology with the Government to estimate the new stock figure. Figures of asylum claims from the Government.

<sup>3</sup> Fifth R4V Joint Needs Assessment. [www.r4v.info](http://www.r4v.info)

<sup>4</sup> 2023 Protection Monitoring Report available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ecu>



## HUMANITARIANS AT WORK



*I'M MATÍAS VACA, AND TELLING STORIES IS MY WAY OF UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD. WHEN I STARTED IN THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS UNIT, I THOUGHT MY JOB WOULD BE SIMPLE, BUT I SOON REALIZED IT WAS MUCH MORE THAN CREATING CONTENT. IT'S ABOUT MAKING VISIBLE THE REALITY OF THOSE WHO HAVE HAD TO FLEE, LETTING THE WORLD KNOW THEY EXIST AND NEED OUR SOLIDARITY.*

*ON A MISSION TO LAGO AGRIQ, ON THE BORDER WITH COLOMBIA, I SAT DOWN TO LISTEN TO THEIR STORIES, TO UNDERSTAND THEIR STRUGGLES AND THEIR VICTORIES.*

[Read the full story.](#)

## DELIVERING PROTECTION

### IBARRA

### Awareness campaign addresses violence against women and girls through youth engagement



UNHCR held a school-based initiative in Ibarra, convening 58 adolescents for workshops on preventing violence against women and girls, fostering reflection on harmful norms and educating participants about local protection mechanisms. Held at Escuela Cristóbal de Troya, the sessions equipped youth with tools to identify risks and access support services. This effort, done with the support from Korea and aligned with broader protection goals, strengthens community-led strategies to combat violence and promote safer environments for all.

### CUENCA

### Support groups tackle violence against women and girls through dialogue



Led by UNHCR and Fundación María Amor, the session of a support group in Cuenca brought together refugee and migrant women, as well as host community members to address and prevent violence against women and girls. The dialogue-centred initiative provided safe spaces for sharing experiences and strengthening protective networks. The session, delivered with the support from Korea, equipped participants with tools to identify risks and access local resources, aligning with efforts to empower vulnerable populations through peer-led advocacy.

### QUITO

### Community-led dialogue maps drive pathways to safer neighbourhoods



Lead by UNHCR, forcibly displaced women in the neighborhood of Solanda identified safe and unsafe community spaces through participatory discussions, culminating in a localized action plan to enhance protection measures. The initiative centred on collective risk analysis and empowerment strategies, enabling participants to shape solutions addressing their specific security concerns. By prioritizing displaced voices in safety planning, the project strengthens grassroots advocacy and fosters inclusive environments where vulnerable groups can thrive.

## LAGO AGRIO

### Workshops strengthen rights awareness for displaced families



UNHCR delivered legal and protection workshops to forcibly displaced families at Buen Samaritano shelter, focusing on international safeguards and rights access. Organized in collaboration with Caritas Ecuador, the sessions provided critical guidance on navigating legal frameworks and claiming rights. The programme equipped displaced families with knowledge to mitigate vulnerabilities and advocate for their rights. By combining rights-based education with psychosocial support, these efforts reinforce community-led protection networks and foster long-term resilience among crisis-affected populations. This was done with the support from Japan.

## PROMOTING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

## IBARRA

### Multi-sector initiative expands essential services for people forced to flee

In Ibarra, UNHCR provided critical infrastructure upgrades bolstering access to basic services for displaced families. Bedding supplies were provided to Fundación Cristo de la Calle to safeguard children and displaced households, while the municipal dining hall received equipment to enhance childcare for 300 daily users, including forcibly displaced people and locals. The Priorato Health Centre received new furnishings via UNAIDS' support. Additionally, Urcuquí's Rights Protection Board gained a printer to streamline assistance for children and priority groups. These ensure dignified access to protection, nutrition, and healthcare through cross-institutional collaboration.



## TULCÁN

### Cross-sector collaboration enhances basic services for at-risk communities

UNHCR continues to provide access to basic services. In Tulcán, coordinated efforts improved access to education, healthcare, and protection services for people forced to flee. School furniture was delivered to Luis Alfonso Calvachi Educational Unit, upgrading its dining facilities for displaced and local students. A renewed agreement with the Ministry of Public Health benefits displaced populations and host communities. Additionally, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights received supplies from UNHCR, paired with community prevention campaigns. These initiatives, spanning education, health, and rights protection, prioritize equitable access to essential services while fostering systemic resilience through institutional partnerships.



## MANTA

### Targeted aid improves living conditions for displaced and host communities

Sleeping kits were delivered by UNHCR to refugee families and locals in vulnerable conditions in Manta, ensuring access to essential shelter resources for safe rest and dignity. The initiative addresses immediate gaps in household supplies, particularly benefiting those facing severe economic hardship. By prioritizing both displaced populations and marginalized host communities, this effort fosters social cohesion while meeting basic needs. These interventions lay the groundwork for longer-term stability, aligning with broader goals to enhance equitable service access.





## PROMOTING SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

### LAGO AGRIO

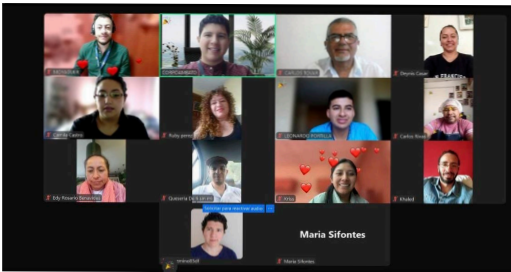
#### Economic empowerment initiative supports displaced entrepreneurs in formalization process



UNHCR, with the municipality of Lago Agrio distributed agricultural machinery and promotional materials to forcibly displaced entrepreneurs in the Agronegocios programme and refugee-owned businesses undergoing formalization. This support enhances livelihood opportunities for displaced and local producers by strengthening agro-business capacity and market access. The collaboration fosters socioeconomic inclusion through resource provision and institutional backing, enabling displaced populations to integrate sustainably into local economies.

### SIERRA CENTRO

#### Entrepreneurial formalization unlocks market access for displaced communities



Ten entrepreneurs from Quito, Ambato, and Santo Domingo received health certifications for their natural food and cosmetic products through a formalization programme supported by UNHCR and Corporación de Desarrollo de Ambato y Tungurahua (Corpoambato). By securing legal compliance and product safety approvals, this milestone enables access to regulated markets, boosting economic viability for small-scale refugee and migrant-led businesses.

## WEATHER-RELATED EVENTS

### IBARRA

#### Capacity-building drives inclusive policies for waste management workers

UNHCR, in collaboration with GTRM partners, gave a workshop to municipal staff on human mobility frameworks to better protect informal waste collectors during registration processes. The training emphasized rights-based approaches and inclusive governance. Collaborative efforts also focused on integrating recyclers into local solid waste management regulations, ensuring their legal recognition and access to social protections. By aligning policy reform with frontline worker needs, the initiative advances equitable safeguards for forcibly displaced people while the help care for the environment.



## PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

### NATIONAL

#### Allies for a world of possibilities in sport: The first sports coalition in Ecuador promotes the protection and integration of people forced to flee



UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and 17 professional, local, and community sports organizations and teams, as well as high-performance athletes and content creators, launched the coalition "Allies for a Possible World in Sport," a group that aims to promote sport as a tool for protection and integration in communities and foster integration and empathy for people forced to flee their homes. This effort is possible thanks to the support from LIV Golf.

[Read more here.](#)

## Stories from the field



Juana Ramírez is a Venezuelan heroine. Her name has gone down in history for being in charge of logistics during the independence era. "She was responsible for food, clothing, in the confrontations," says Katuska. It was in her honor that this collective, led by Katuska, was named Juana La Avanzadora. © UNHCR/Omar Ganchala

## The leadership of women like Katuska builds strong supportive networks



Katuska Vélez arrived in Ecuador 8 years ago and settled in the community of San Eloy, in Manta, the third city with the largest presence of forcibly displaced people in the country. Katuska, along with her husband and two daughters, came to this port city seeking better access to food, especially formula milk for her newborn daughter. In Venezuela, her country of origin, Katuska had completed her studies in Human Resources, had a job, and was starting her family. But the increasingly urgent need for food forced her to leave her country.

Once in Manta, Katuska sought a support network and began to gather women who also had to leave their countries, as well as women from the San Eloy community, to share their stories and support each other. This is how Juana La Avanzadora was born, a collective where community members, but especially women, can find a support networks and a safe space. The Juana La Avanzadora collective has its origins years before the pandemic. This group of women who shared information and inspired others with their stories became a space for development, learning, and community growth.

In addition to supporting each other, this group of women began

to manage donations for those who needed them most, to carry out projects for their communities, and to seek common interests. Under Katuska's leadership, Juana La Avanzadora started having more frequent meetings to share their concerns and manage solutions.

Juana Ramírez is a Venezuelan heroine. Her name has gone down in history for being in charge of logistics during the independence era. "She was responsible for food, clothing, in the confrontations," says Katuska. It was in her honor that this collective was named Juana La Avanzadora.

Katuska remains one of the leaders of Juana La Avanzadora. She is proud of the work she has done. Now the collective also welcomes men, teenagers, and children who, together with the women leaders, work to create inclusive community spaces where children and adolescents can participate in workshops, women can empower themselves, learn their rights, and generate livelihoods. Juana La Avanzadora is a centre of information on social, cultural, entrepreneurial, rights, and other topics that serves the entire community, regardless of the nationality of the people.

**You can help us continue building a World of Possibilities for thousands of displaced people and their host communities in Ecuador. [Donate now.](#)**

**We thank the contributions of our donors**

28 February 2025

**UNHCR Ecuador is grateful for the critical and generous support provided by donors who have contributed with earmarked and unearmarked funding.**



**UNHCR Ecuador is grateful for the support from private donors**



**For more information:** Diana Diaz Rodriguez, External Relations Officer [diazdi@unhcr.org](mailto:diazdi@unhcr.org) | **For media queries:** [ecuqumedia@unhcr.org](mailto:ecuqumedia@unhcr.org)

**CHECK OUT MORE UPDATES**

[@ACNUREcuador](#) | [Data Portal](#)

[acnurecuador](#)