

Colombia

January - December 2024

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, newly elected local authorities took office across Colombia. UNHCR established active agreements with 53 local governments and supported their government investment plan, integrating concrete measures to protect forcibly displaced populations.

During the world's largest biodiversity summit, COP16, which was held in Colombia in 2024, UNHCR facilitated discussions on the nexus between forced displacement, biodiversity loss, and extreme-weather related disasters. UNHCR will contribute to the design of the public policy on displacement due to environmental degradation and disasters.

Latin American and Caribbean countries marked the 40th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration with a milestone: "the Chile Declaration and 2024-2034 Action Plan". This will further boost regional cooperation for the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees.



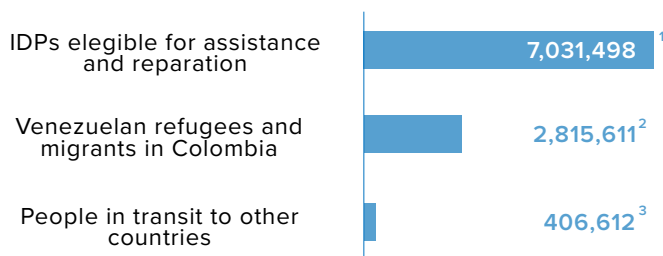
“ We have lived for centuries on these lands, which for us have no borders. But for more than 500 years, we have been victims, dispossessed of our territories. This led me to fight and protect the land from a very young age.

”

Esnedá Saavedra

Yukpa woman and counselor of the ONIC

PEOPLE FORCED TO FLEE



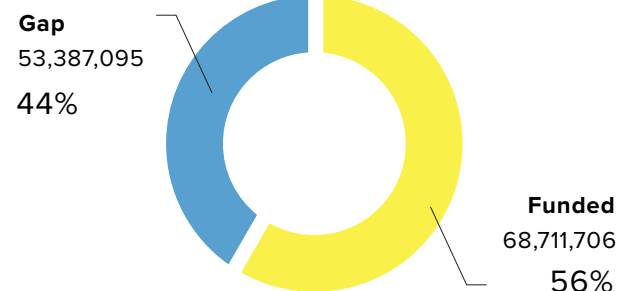
¹ Victim's Unit 2025

² Migración Colombia 2024

³ Migración Colombia 2024

FUNDING (as of December 31, 2024)

USD 122.1 million



Context

Despite significant achievements with the 2016 Peace Agreement, Colombia remains one of the countries most significantly impacted by forced displacement. This includes displacement caused by conflict, natural disasters, and extreme-weather related disasters, as well as the reception of forcibly displaced populations from neighboring nations. Colombia is the third-largest host country for refugees and other people in need of international protection, with over 2.8 million Venezuelans. Additionally, it ranks fourth globally in terms of internally displaced persons (IDPs), with 7 million individuals in need of support and reparations.⁴

Main activities

In 2024, the UNHCR operation in Colombia prioritized sustainable programming by fostering initiatives that promote long-term solutions, self-reliance, and resilience against weather-related disasters for displaced populations and host communities. UNHCR also emphasized localization and area-based strategies by strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders, including local governments and community-based organizations, to lead and implement effective responses tailored to their contexts.

PROTECTION

UNHCR supported 234,143 refugees and migrants from Venezuela, by providing legal guidance and access to protection services. Additionally, it continued supporting the implementation of the Temporary Protection Status Permit for Venezuelan Migrants (ETPV in Spanish). According to official figures, 1,979,452 Venezuelans have received the Temporary Protection Permit.⁵

UNHCR also advocated for new legal stay permits for Venezuelans and other persons in need of international protection. This included protection considerations in the recently created Special Stay Permit for parents and caregivers of children with Temporary Protection Permit (PEP Tutor in Spanish) to help preserve family unit. Once implemented, the PEP Tutor is expected to benefit the parents in irregular status of 270,000 children who already have a regular status in the country.

Through our partners and in collaboration with government institutions, 234,581 people received information and guidance on how to access rights and services across 24 departments and 71 municipalities.⁶ 77% of these people attended seeking protection services, 11% required specialized health assistance, 10% had issues related to regularization process such as the Temporary Protection Permit and the access to the asylum system, and 2% needed support to improve their socioeconomic status. Additionally, 40,079 people received specific guidance on the dangers of crossing the Darién, to discourage such a risky journey.

UNHCR ensured the effective functioning of 78 Orientation and Information Centres (PAOs), including seven mobile units, across 51 municipalities. PAOs provided vital support on temporary protection, refugee status determination, regularization, documentation, and access to basic rights for refugees, migrants, IDPs, and Colombian returnees. Throughout 2024, 137,780 people were assisted and guided in these PAOs.⁷



The mobile Attention and Orientation Center (PAO) providing guidance on access to rights and services for refugees and migrants in Norte de Santander. 2024 ©UNHCR

⁴ UNHCR Global Trends 2024
⁵ Migración Colombia

⁶ MARC The information may change due to validations and adjustments

⁷ MARC The information may change due to validations and adjustments

UNHCR implemented a litigation strategy to enhance legal protection services for forcibly displaced people. Notably, 34 legal clinics in leading universities were trained in legal protection mechanisms, enabling them to directly assist 15,296 people by providing personalized guidance on protection rights and access to services. Additionally, a pro bono legal services program was carried out to ensure access to legal support for 49,604 forcibly displaced individuals living in remote areas.

↻ ASSISTANCE

Throughout 2024, UNHCR provided complementary humanitarian assistance in emergencies. In the department of Chocó, on Colombia's Pacific coast, rains and flooding affected 27 out of 31 municipalities and more than 180,000 people, the majority of whom belong to Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities.

UNHCR, in coordination with the local humanitarian team (ELC) and national and local institutions, mobilized efforts to support affected individuals and communities and delivered Core Relief Items (CRIs): hygiene kits (1,400), water purification tablets to ensure access to safe drinking water, and solar lamps (620).

In a second wave of distribution, UNHCR purchased and dispatched shelter kits – to address a shortage identified on the ground – including family tarpaulins (400), mattresses and bedsheets, blankets (950), and mosquito nets (5,000). In total, 1,748 people benefited from the distribution of CRIs, water purification tablets, and shelter kits.⁸

Over 21,926 people benefited from direct support to cover basic needs.



Distribution of hygiene kits to community affected by natural disasters in Chocó. 2024. ©UNHCR

Watch the video on how the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) supported Chocó in 2024

✊ COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT



Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees gathered at an entrepreneurs' fair to commemorate World Refugee Day. Putumayo. 2024. ©UNHCR

UNHCR enhanced the strategic, operational, and technical capacities of 64 forcibly displaced people-led Civil Society Organizations in Colombia. This initiative strengthened their advocacy efforts, established solid structures, and ensured long-term sustainability, empowering them as key actors in driving positive social change.

Additionally, UNHCR launched a pilot agreement with an Afro-Colombian authority, the Community Council of Black Communities of the Tolo River Basin and South Coastal Zone (COCOMASUR) of the Darién region. This ethnic-territorial organization focuses on land management, governance, sustainable resource use, forest conservation, biodiversity, and engaging youth in the protection of collective territories and cultural heritage.

⁸ Migración Colombia

UNHCR supported a network of 97 community outreach volunteers to identify and assist individuals facing heightened protection risks. Through these efforts, 34,579 people participated in community empowerment programmes.

To strengthen its Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), [UNHCR implemented tailored feedback mechanisms, prioritizing in-person communication and community-driven initiatives](#). Special attention was given to child-focused activities, incorporating of child-friendly communication tools such as stickers and games to encourage participation. Additionally, interagency efforts, including initiatives like "The Feeling Box" in Arauca, further enhanced engagement and responsiveness.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

As the leading agency, [UNHCR coordinated the implementation of the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund \(IDSF\), an interagency initiative](#) that also involved UNDP, IOM, and UN-Habitat. Ensuring coherence among the components of this effort, UNHCR is responsible for supporting the Colombian government in developing a comprehensive strategy for durable solutions to internal displacement through the formulation of a public policy document (CONPES). [The National Planning Department \(DNP\) has announced that the public policy will be approved in the first half of 2025.](#)

UNHCR supported legalization processes of 57 informal settlements across 35 municipalities where forcibly displaced people live. UNHCR was involved in 23 legalization processes, 17 settlement assessments, and supported land title issuance in 9 communities, [benefiting 4,150 families](#). This helped displaced populations access basic services (water, electricity, sanitation, roads, transportation, healthcare, and education) and securing their rights to land and adequate housing.

UNHCR accompanied the regularization of collective territories for 10 ethnic and rural communities by guiding them through the ethnic-territorial protection pathway.



Settlement assessment for legal urbanization, Majagual, Sucre. 2024. ©UNHCR

UNHCR strengthened the capacities of 530 local government officials in the legalization and titling of informal settlements by organizing 19 regional workshops in alliance with the Ministry of Housing and local authorities.

[6,087 entrepreneurs](#) in 41 municipalities and 23 departments [received technical assistance to create or develop small businesses](#); and over 5,236 people received training and job certification.

[Read about UNHCR'S legalization program](#) 

Interagency



Colombia continued to make progress as one of four pilot countries for the Flagship Initiative. UNHCR was particularly involved in advancing community participation and the implementation of the Manifesto for Transformation, which outlines principles and recommendations from community leaders and grassroots organizations on participation.

The Protection Cluster published the Protection Analysis Update (PAU) of Colombia on the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) website. This tool serves as a resource for visibility and advocacy, providing contextual information, analysis of the most relevant protection risks, responses, and recommendations.

[The R4V Platform launched its Regional Response Plan - RMRP 2025-2026, requiring \\$1.4 billion in its first year.](#) This funding will support over 2.3 million vulnerable refugees and migrants, as well as their host communities, across 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.



The Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM) developed the Colombia Chapter of the RMRP, totalling USD 194.7 million to provide a comprehensive and coordinated response across 31 departments and Bogotá D.C., aligned with the needs identified in the 2024 Refugee and Migrant Needs Analysis (RMNA). The Protection Cluster contributed to the protection chapter of the RMRP.

In anticipation of regional developments, a Contingency Plan and an Emergency Response Coordination Guide are being continuously updated. These documents include an analysis of the local response capacities of GIFMM partners.

Working with partners and localization

UNHCR and its partners operated in 31 departments and 418 municipalities across Colombia in 2024, delivering protection and assistance while fostering durable solutions and social cohesion for communities affected by forced displacement. Fifteen partners supported UNHCR in implementing this strategy, advancing its protection and solutions mandate, and strengthening alliances with local NGOs, international NGOs, and UN agencies.

Local partners (10):



International partners (5):



See our coverage and partner's map

UNHCR thanks its donors for their contribution to fulfil its **Operation Plan**:



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Contacts

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