

Ecuador

Operational Update

N.9 | September 2025

"I discovered my skills, learned how to apply for jobs, do interviews, and share what I was feeling."
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Figures at a glance

Population figures

80,589

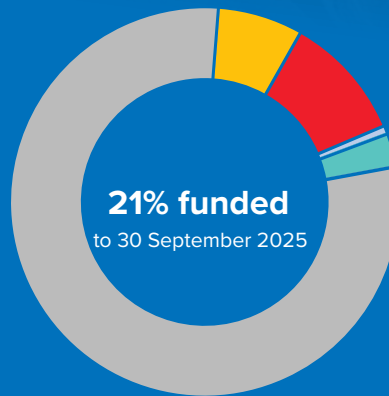
Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador¹

94%

from neighbouring Colombia

67,836

refugees with active cases registered on UNHCR's database¹



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

Our 2025 response in figures

37,446*

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



26,562

people received orientation and assistance to access asylum services



7,733

people supported with collective emergency shelter



581

people supported with child protection services



3,942

people supported with community - based protection services



3,140

women and girls survivors of violence supported



7,598

people assisted to cover their basic needs and protection²



9,061

people supported with mental health and psychosocial support



4,570

people received hygiene kits



338

people provided with technical or skills certification



1,152

people linked with a decent employment opportunity

¹ Historical figure [registered by the government](#) since 1978 to the end of July 2025. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres. Figures to the end of September 2025. Active cases vary throughout the year. This pattern reflects known reporting lags along the pipeline admissibility, issuance/notification of substantive decisions, and subsequent capture of the recognition rate, so monthly figures can be revised upward retroactively (backfilling).

² Preliminary data

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

Operational context

In September, Ecuador continued to experience a complex political and socioeconomic environment, with developments affecting mobility trends and humanitarian needs. On 12 September, President Daniel Noboa signed Decree 123, formally concluding the Migration Statute between Ecuador and Venezuela. The 2010 agreement had previously facilitated the regularization of Venezuelan nationals residing in the country. Its termination followed the suspension of funding for human mobility programmes and evolving diplomatic relations between both countries.

Economic measures also shaped the national context. Through Decree 126, the Government announced the gradual removal of the diesel subsidy, in place since 1974, increasing the price from USD 1.80 to USD 2.80 per gallon. Transport and other sectors voiced concerns regarding the potential socioeconomic impact of the measure, and related demonstrations affected mobility across several provinces.

A 60-day state of exception was declared in seven provinces in response to public demonstrations and localized security incidents. Two days later, the Indigenous confederation CONAIE and allied organizations announced a nationwide mobilization calling for policy dialogue on economic and social matters. The mobilizations resulted in temporary road blockages, disruption of public services, and the suspension of in-person classes in some areas.

In parallel, around 296,000 people in Esmeraldas Province were affected by water shortages following damage to the

main treatment plant on 11 September. UNHCR participated in the Emergency Operations Committee (COE), advocating for the inclusion of refugees and migrants in response and coordination efforts. The situation underscored the need for continued support to local and national systems addressing overlapping humanitarian and service-delivery challenges.

According to official data, 423 Venezuelan nationals sought asylum in Ecuador in September 2025 (4,329 cumulative year-to-date), a slight decrease from August. About 66% arrived as family units, reflecting ongoing protection needs and continued reliance on regular migration pathways. Venezuelans have represented roughly 45–50% of asylum claims since 2022, demonstrating sustained demand for protection. In the same period, 203 Colombian nationals sought asylum (2,921 year-to-date), a small increase from the previous month. Ongoing insecurity and displacement in Colombia suggest that arrivals are likely to continue through the rest of 2025.

The political environment remained dynamic. The National Electoral Council confirmed that a referendum and popular consultation will take place on 16 November, addressing issues including foreign military cooperation, political financing, and potential constitutional reforms. At the UN General Assembly, Foreign Minister Gabriela Sommerfeld reaffirmed Ecuador's commitment to international cooperation and highlighted the need for a coordinated global response to transnational organized crime.

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



Colombians

According to Government data, 203 Colombians sought asylum in Ecuador in September 2025 (2,921 so far in the year), a 2% increase as compared to the previous month. This number accounts for 42% of those registered in 2024. 70% of people registered this month arrived in the country in families of two or more. With 2024 registering the highest number of asylum claims filed by Colombians in Ecuador since 2014 and conditions worsening in the country of origin, including with constant internal displacements and confinements in departments at the border with Ecuador, UNHCR projects an important number of asylum claims in 2025.

2,921 Colombians who have sought asylum in Ecuador in 2025²
203 were registered in August

Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador

58% access to housing⁴

54% Access to food⁴

46% access to employment⁴

² 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.

³ Fifth R4V Joint Needs Assessment. www.r4v.info

⁴ 2025 Protection Monitoring Report available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/ecu>

Venezuelans

Venezuelans continue to lead in numbers of arrivals in Ecuador, though in September there is a significant reduction in entries and exits compared to previous months. Border partners report a decrease in movements due to the national strike began on 22 September (with a total shutdown in the province of Imbabura and a partial one in Tulcán on the northern border). 13,216 people entered Ecuador in September 2025 (36% less than previous month), with a daily entry average of 441. 11,760 people left the country; a 39% decrease as compared to previous month; leaving a balance of 1,456 people who entered and remained the country during the reporting period. According to Government data, 423 Venezuelans sought asylum in Ecuador in September 2025 (4,329) so far in the year, a 5% decrease as compared to the previous month. 66% of people registered arrived in the country in families of two or more. Since 2022, Venezuela has accounted for approximately 45–50% of the asylum claims processed in Ecuador. This underscores both the continued need for support and the sustained interest in accessing international protection. Moreover, with the conclusion of the second phase of the regularization process, the asylum system has become increasingly relevant for those with protection needs.

440.450 Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador²

45% estimated to be between 18 and 45 years old³

25% estimated to have a higher education degree³

Main needs

82% access to food³

67% access to housing or shelter³

57% access to livelihoods or employment³

Ecuadorians



Trends in Ecuadorian displacements have shifted, with this nationality dropping to the fifth to cross the Darien Jungle, according to Panamanian authorities. These numbers have decreased dramatically compared to the same period in previous years. 108,000 Ecuadorian asylum-seekers globally were pending a decision on their claims by mid- 2024. The Ombudspersons Office, with support from UNHCR and ECHO, launched a report on internal displacement which estimates that over 315,000 Ecuadorians had been internally displaced between 2022 and 2024. See the [executive summary here](#).

HUMANITARIANS AT WORK



MY NAME IS CAMILA VERGARA AND I WORK IN THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS UNIT. THE WORK I DO AT UNHCR IS MUCH MORE THAN A JOB: IT HAS BECOME A LIFE PURPOSE. IT MEANS WAKING UP EVERY MORNING WITH THE CERTAINTY THAT WHAT I DO TODAY WILL HAVE A REAL IMPACT ON SOMEONE WHO NEEDS IT. SOMETIMES, IN THE ROUTINE, WE LOSE PERSPECTIVE... BUT THERE ARE ALWAYS MOMENTS THAT REMIND US THAT OUR WORK MATTERS, AND IT BECOMES A REASON FOR BEING.

[Read the full story](#)

DELIVERING PROTECTION

ESMERALDAS

Empowering communities through sport



UNHCR trained 22 community leaders and coaches in Esmeraldas on sport-based methodologies that promote protection, integration, and social cohesion. By using sport as a tool, UNHCR helps build inclusive spaces where refugees and host communities connect, heal, and thrive together, while strengthening local capacities to foster solidarity and peaceful coexistence. UNHCR is grateful to LIV Golf for supporting this effort and helping us unlock the power of sport to protect and unite.

NATIONAL

Strengthening national response for refugees



UNHCR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador inaugurated the 2025 national workshop for the Directorate for International Protection (DPIN), bringing together government officials from across the country. The workshop aims to strengthen institutional capacities to uphold the rights of refugees and improve coordinated responses to their protection needs. Through joint efforts, UNHCR and national counterparts are working to ensure that refugees in Ecuador receive timely support and access to essential services. This initiative, done with support from the government of Japan, reflects Ecuador's continued commitment to international protection and inclusive policies for displaced populations.

GUAYAQUIL

Women leading change



UNHCR, together with CDH Guayaquil and the Cantonal Council for the Protection of Rights, began developing the Work Plan for the Guayaquil Women's Advisory Council. Fifty women participated in consultations and dialogue sessions to identify key actions addressing the risks and challenges they face. This participatory process strengthens local leadership and promotes inclusive decision-making to advance the rights and protection of women, including refugees and migrants. UNHCR remains committed to supporting spaces where women's voices shape solutions and drive change. This was done with support from our donors from both the public and private sector.

PROMOTING ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

MANTA

Cultivating strength and self-care in San Mateo

UNHCR, in collaboration with the Juana la Avanzadora Collective, organized a women's circle in San Mateo focused on horticulture and self-care. 20 refugee and host community women came together to create life plans and nurture personal growth through gardening. Each woman named her plant after her greatest strength—brave, resilient, unique—symbolizing empowerment and healing. This initiative promoted access to basic services and well-being, while fostering community bonds and self-reliance. UNHCR continues to support spaces where women can grow, connect, and lead change, with support from the Republic of Korea.

NATIONAL

Championing women's wellbeing through sport

UNHCR, in partnership with the Ministry of Sport, supported 150 refugee women across Manabí, Santo Domingo, and Esmeraldas through the "Corazón de Campeona" workshop. This safe and empowering space combined sport and self-care to strengthen confidence, well-being, and leadership. As part of the Actívate initiative, the workshop promoted physical and emotional health while fostering community and resilience. UNHCR continues to champion inclusive programmes that support refugee women's access to basic services and personal development, with support from LIVGolf.



TULCÁN

Supporting refugee families through self-care

In Tulcán, UNHCR partnered with Gran Colombia Educational Unit to host a self-care workshop for 15 refugee and host community parents. The session provided a space for reflection on mental health, family wellbeing, and the importance of caring for oneself in order to care for others. By promoting emotional resilience and strengthening support networks, UNHCR helps families navigate challenges and access essential services. This initiative fosters inclusion and empowers parents to build healthier, more connected communities, with support from our public and private sector donors.



PROMOTING SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

NATIONAL

Opening doors to real opportunities



In Manta and Portoviejo, UNHCR and Humboldt Zentrum monitored the progress of 13 forcibly displaced and Ecuadorian apprentices participating in a dual training programme with Grupo DIFARE. This initiative promotes socioeconomic inclusion by combining education and hands-on experience in the workplace. Already, three participants have been hired in this cohort—demonstrating that when doors are opened, real opportunities follow. UNHCR continues to work with partners to strengthen pathways to employment and self-reliance for refugees and host community members, with support from the government of Japan and the Republic of Korea.

GUAYAQUIL

Youth building futures



UNHCR, in partnership with Humane Negocios, launched the second edition of Futuro en Movimiento in Guayaquil. This initiative supports 100 young Ecuadorians, Colombians, and Venezuelans in gaining practical skills in sales, customer service, logistics, and inventory management. By equipping youth with tools to enter the workforce, UNHCR promotes socioeconomic inclusion and self-reliance for both refugee and host communities. Futuro en Movimiento creates pathways to employment and empowers young people to shape their own futures, with support from the government of Japan.

BOLÍVAR

Sustainable skills for displaced communities



In Bolívar, UNHCR, FUDELA and the Prefecture of Carchi delivered a hands-on training for forcibly displaced people. Participants learned how to prepare sustainable bio-inputs to strengthen their agricultural production while protecting the environment. This initiative promotes self-reliance and environmental stewardship, equipping refugees and host community members with practical skills to improve their livelihoods. UNHCR continues to support inclusive programmes that foster economic resilience and sustainable development in rural areas, with support of public and private sector donors.

NATIONAL

Inclusive entrepreneurship in action



Dozens of entrepreneurs took part in Pymes Ecuador, a commercial event organized under the Compra con Propósito initiative to promote economic inclusion and create new opportunities for vulnerable entrepreneurs. The event featured a business roundtable connecting 40 entrepreneurs—both Ecuadorians and people in human mobility—with 20 companies, enabling national and international networking and business opportunities. Participants also showcased their products in a showroom and received training on business development and digitalization. Organized in collaboration with UNHCR, IOM, FAO, UNDP, IMPAQTO, and Ecuador's Ministries of Agriculture and Production, the event reaffirmed a shared commitment to inclusion and sustainability. This was possible thanks to the support from the government of Japan.

PROMOTING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

NATIONAL

Advancing protection and inclusion through partnership

UNHCR signed a Letter of Understanding with the National Council for Human Mobility (CNIMH) to strengthen protection and inclusion for forcibly displaced people. Together, UNHCR and the CNIMH will promote public policies and legal reforms, prevent discrimination and xenophobia, and build technical capacities. The partnership also aims to generate data to improve institutional responses and create spaces for training and awareness. To support CNIMH's work, UNHCR donated equipment including computers, phones, and film equipment. Through Un Mundo Posible, UNHCR continues to build alliances that uphold rights and foster inclusive societies.



SAN GABRIEL

Creating safe spaces through community action

In San Gabriel, UNHCR, FUDELA and the Santa Clara community hosted the Minga de la Alegría, a collective action to promote inclusion and wellbeing. Over 30 participants, including caregiver mothers, came together to paint a sports court that will now serve as a safe recreational space for children. This initiative fosters community engagement and strengthens social bonds between refugees and host communities. Through inclusive activities like this, UNHCR supports local efforts to build welcoming environments and promote peaceful coexistence. This was done with the support of our private and public sector donors.



GUAYAQUIL

Refugees contributing to sustainable development

UNHCR participated in the 2025 ODS Leaders' Summit organized by Revista Vistazo in Guayaquil. At a dedicated stand, UNHCR showcased its programmes and shared stories of resilience from refugees who are actively contributing to the development of their host communities. The event provided a platform to advocate for inclusion, challenge xenophobia, and highlight the positive impact of displaced people in Ecuador. Through initiatives like this, UNHCR continues to promote awareness and build support for inclusive and sustainable development, with the support of our donors.



Más de 100 cartas se escribieron en Ecuador.
.... No por cualquier persona.
Sino por quienes se han visto forzados a huir y volver a empezar en este país

Lee sus cartas aquí

Con amor DES DE ECUADOR

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Private sector driving inclusion for displaced and host communities

"I discovered my skills, learned how to apply for jobs, do interviews, and share what I was feeling."

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When Norelbis Amayaña arrived in Ecuador from Venezuela, she never imagined how hard integration would be. "It was a big shock—new customs, new culture, new food," she recalls. Finding a job was also difficult: "Sometimes I'd send my CV and they'd say, 'Oh, but you're Venezuelan.'" Everything changed when she saw a social media post about the Practical Training with Companies programme supported by UNHCR and partners. "I discovered my skills, learned how to apply for jobs, do interviews, and share what I was feeling."

Thanks to training provided by FUDELA and the Pontifical Catholic University of Ibarra, Norelbis completed a 60-hour internship at Calzado Pazzos, a company that opened its doors to refugees and migrants. It was her first real opportunity to show what she could do.

Ecuador hosts over 440,000 Venezuelans, along with tens of thousands from Colombia and other countries. With 59% of them being adults, there is strong potential for integration into the private sector and contributions to the national economy.

UNHCR-supported technical training programmes, in collaboration with Humboldt Zentrum, HIAS, and FUDELA, offer vulnerable refugees, migrants, and Ecuadorians not only theoretical and technical education but also real-world experience to strengthen their professional profiles.

"Designing job opportunities based on real business needs allows companies to access diverse talent that drives innovation and sustainability," said Daniela Navas, UNHCR's Economic Inclusion Officer in Ecuador. "At the same time, displaced people gain valuable experience that enhances their CVs—even if they're not hired, they gain the work history companies often require."

More than 160 companies in Ecuador have joined the Empresas con Refugiados initiative, earning the Inclusive Business Seal for their hiring and training policies. In October 2025, UNHCR celebrated its fourth edition, with over 300 companies now part of the network.

Read the [full story here](#).

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

30 September 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



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