

HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 3,000 people attend victims forums.
- Attacks on infrastructure, mass protests and heavy rains have serious humanitarian consequences in Putumayo.
- Ombudsman's Office analyses structural causes of humanitarian situation along the Pacific coast of Cauca.
- International community mobilizes to provide humanitarian response in Chocó.

FIGURES

# of IDPs in mass events July 2014 (OCHA)	380
# of people affected by natural disasters July 2014 (UNGRD)	71,419

FUNDING

US\$55,345,693
2014 total humanitarian funding received as of 15 August 2014 (FTS)
US\$89,064,636
2014 humanitarian funding being implemented as of 15 August 2014 (OCHA 4W)



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The victims speak: Humanitarian Coordinator

By Fabrizio Hochschild, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN in Colombia

At the request of negotiators in Havana, in July and August the United Nations and Universidad Nacional de Colombia organized three regional victims' forums in Villavicencio, central Colombia, and in Barrancabermeja and Barranquilla in the north, as well as one national forum.

These events attracted more than 3,000 people, most of whom were direct victims of the conflict and representatives of victims' organizations. All events had a balanced participation of men and women, and adolescents and youths had the opportunity to make proposals.

Thousands of proposals made to the FARC-EP guerrillas and the Government were heard and systematized in accordance with the principles agreed by the negotiators who are discussing victims' issues. These included recognition of victims and responsibility, fulfillment of rights, participation of victims, processes for discovering and revealing past wrongdoing, reparations, guarantees for protection, security, and non-repetition and reconciliation.

The forums were spaces of recognition and dignity for all victims. There was an environment of respect and tolerance that should serve as an example to all Colombians. Pain has no ideology, the victims are united by the same suffering and solidarity around human pain that can help us overcome polarization and work together for reconciliation and peace building, the victims and survivors acting as their own social agents for change.

Participants demanded to recognize all victims, and to discover the truth of past events; a more agile and effective reparation mechanisms and improvements to the implementation of the Victim's Law, as well as measures to ensure that new victims are not created. This last point is particularly relevant from the humanitarian point of view. We cannot forget that peace dialogues in Havana are being discussed in the midst of conflict, which implies that each and every day the number of victims increases.

This means that discussions regarding victims refer to victims of the past, present and the future. Parties must reflect on how to mitigate the conflict's impact while negotiations continue, and remove civilians from the war. An absolute compromise with respect for international humanitarian law and human rights is necessary while peace arrives in the country. This is the most solid guarantee for non-repetition.



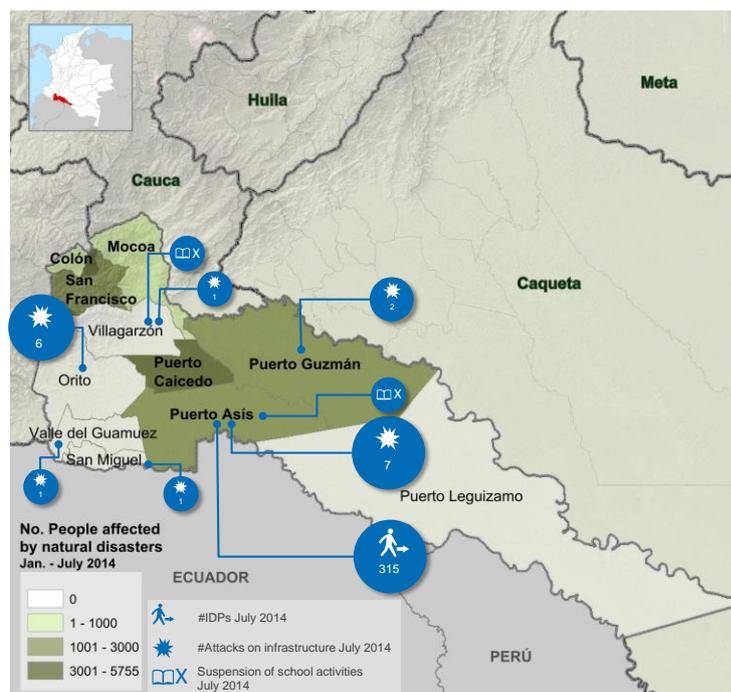
Photocredit: UNDP/Andres Bernal. Victim's Forum in Cali (Valle del Cauca). August 2014.

Attacks on infrastructure, mass protests and heavy rains have serious humanitarian consequences in Putumayo

Attacks on infrastructure cause high humanitarian impact in Putumayo

Since early 2014, the border with Ecuador in Putumayo has been heavily affected by the armed conflict. Each month this year, all along this border there has been at least one attack on road infrastructure, civilian goods or other basic infrastructure important to civilians, according to the information system [Monitor](#). There were at least 17 such events in July, mostly caused by FARC-EP guerrillas.

Map 1: Humanitarian impact summary Putumayo July 2014



Sources: OCHA - Monitor

More than 100,000 affected by attacks on infrastructure

Attacks against energy infrastructure cut electricity to more than 80,000 people in Orito, Valle del Guamuez and San Miguel municipalities for more than a week. This situation affected many basic services and commerce. In several areas it limited mobility due to security reasons.

The Trans-Andean oil pipeline was repeatedly attacked throughout July. It cuts through more than 300 km of Nariño and Putumayo departments on the Ecuadorean border, and moves up to 50,000 barrels of crude oil each day. FARC-EP has initiated a new tactic, forcing oil tankers to open their valves when they are seized, thus spilling more than 5,000 barrels of crude oil. This was combined with coordinated attacks on oil installations and oil company workers, with damages to roads, civilian homes and schools (more than 1,200 children affected by suspension of school activities). These events have a humanitarian and an environmental impact: more than 100,000 people have been affected by water source contamination, crop damage, disrupted education in rural areas and mass displacements due to the fear of new attacks.

The humanitarian response is a topic of debate. Local response capacities are overstretched; authorities demand that oil companies provide assistance to affected communities. This aid is generally limited to water distribution, however companies argue that they are not responsible for it since the affectation is caused by third party. This situation leads to significant gaps, especially in terms of livelihoods recovery. Repairs to damaged infrastructure and rehabilitation activities are slow due to fears of explosives

and mines in affected areas. Security concerns have also limited humanitarian aid distribution and the implementation of ongoing projects.

Road blockages affect humanitarian operations

The reactivation of large coca-eradication programmes and aerial coca-crop fumigation has angered many rural residents in Putumayo. Many rural inhabitants are also protesting against the extension of oil-exploration licenses without previous consultation with the communities; people are worried about the environmental impact of these activities; and of the possible consequences of an increase in attacks against oil infrastructure. These protests are blocking major roads and delaying humanitarian operations, including ERF projects; in some areas violent confrontations between protesters and the authorities were reported.

Heavy rainfall leads to flooding

While in northern Colombia, the dry season is having serious consequences, in Putumayo in southern Colombia, heavy rainfall has caused flooding that has affected more than 16,000 people this year. Forecasts indicate that the rainfall will likely continue throughout the coming months. This rainfall, combined with river contamination by oil spills, is worsening issues with potable water access. The humanitarian community and water experts have expressed concern that this issue will spread into neighbouring Ecuador and may have a longer-term impact on water sources in the area.

Stories from the field

Faces of hope

By Carolina Gamboa/OCHA Colombia

Puerto Guzmán is one of the largest municipalities in Putumayo department, along the southern border of Colombia neighbouring Ecuador. Between July and August 2013, the Chaqueta river, which makes up one of the borders of this municipality, flooded after heavy rains, creating one of the municipality's most serious humanitarian emergencies in the past 25 years.

Our first visit to the area in July 2013 was to carry out a MIRA rapid needs evaluation. It was painful to carry out. Many families had lost their homes, and their hopelessness was clear to see on their faces. The aid teams in the area told us with anguish how they were forced to leave in the middle of the night to rescue families in the area, with no assurance that they could reach everyone in need.

We met Doña Marina, a rural community leader of La Vega vereda, a community severely affected by the flooding. Some 11 families there had lost their homes during the emergency and had to take shelter for a month in the municipality's cultural centre. To visit this community was shocking. Marina, who walked with us during the mission, cried as she told us about the damage the rain had caused.

An elderly disabled couple lived in the first house we reached upon entering the community. Doña Marina told us how she had to help them so that they weren't carried away in floods, using her body to remove tree trunks coming downstream, and which threatened to destroy the house. We explained that we were carrying out a needs evaluation, but that it was impossible to assure an intervention in the community, but we would do our best to mobilize a response.

To support the local authorities' efforts, and with the support of FAO and Caritas Colombia, the local team submitted a project to OCHA's Emergency Response Fund, which allowed for a response in food security and nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene, helping 21 flood-affected communities in Putumayo and Cauca.

Eleven months later, we returned to the community to see the progress of the Caritas Colombia project. The community enthusiastically showed us their harvest, told us how important their



Photo credit: OCHA/Álvaro Viveros. OCHA monitors an ERF project in Puerto Guzmán, Putumayo. May 2014.

weekly meetings with the community had been, and demonstrated how they had involved the elderly in the project. The effort has changed the faces and the looks you see in the community. Marina said: "I told you, I had faith that things would move forward."

This section is a contribution from the Early Warning System of the Ombudsman's Office.

Ombudsman's Office analyses structural causes of humanitarian situation along the Pacific coast of Cauca

The Ombudsman's Office has monitored the humanitarian crisis facing communities along the Pacific coast of Cauca for many years. This area includes the municipalities of Guapi, Timbiquí and López de Micay.

The monitoring focuses on promoting an effective approach to empower local people's rights and fundamental liberties. The majority of local inhabitants are Afro-Colombian and indigenous peoples who have been frequent victims of human rights violations and international humanitarian law (IHL) infractions during the armed conflict. These violations are combined with a systematic occupation of their ethnic territories by illegal mining operations, as well as coca-crop eradication and fumigation operations; poor public services, health care and education; and precarious road and telecommunications infrastructure. These factors put the local population at serious risk of food insecurity, a loss of autonomy and culture, and their survival as ethnic groups.

Since 2010, the Early Warning System of the Ombudsman's Office has issued several documents that serve as warnings on this situation and provide recommendations to aid the populations¹.

The Ombudsman's Office, via the delegate for the prevention of human rights and IHL violations, prepared the first structural report on risk due to the armed conflict for Guapi, Timbiquí and López de Micay.

This report describes the modus operandi of local armed groups, victimization dynamics and the communities' socioeconomic conditions, recommending effective measures to reduce the impact of the armed conflict and improve local quality of life. This report encourages local authorities to focus on the protection of these people. It also makes a call to increase humanitarian aid and protection for IDPs. It requests authorities' compliance with protocols on individual and collective returns, and the principles established under the Victim's Law, law 1448 of 2011.

The report is a major contribution to State entities, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, designed to highlight the need to commit to improved measures for prevention, protection, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition for victims of violence in order to overcome the conflict.

The complete report is available at: www.salahumanitaria.co/es/document/informe-estructural-situacion-de-riesgo-por-conflicto-armado-en-la-costa-pacifico-caucana

International community mobilizes to provide humanitarian response in Chocó

According to [Monitor](#), Alto Baudó municipality in Chocó, on the Pacific coast, has been the area most affected by mass displacement² so far in 2014 (see Map 2).

Between January and July, about 12 per cent of the rural populations of Alto Baudó (about 3,000 people) were displaced in mass displacement events caused by confrontations between post-demobilization armed groups and ELN guerrillas. The

¹ *Informe de Riesgo* N° 017, October 2010. *Nota de Seguimiento* N° 019, August 2011. *Informe de Riesgo de Inminencia* No. 011 Timbiquí (Cauca), March 2013.

² A mass displacement event affects more than 50 people or 10 families.

presence of these groups has limited civilians' movement and their economic activities. More than 2,000 affected people are indigenous.

During July, the situation of these remote communities deteriorated. Despite local authorities' attempts to reduce the pressure on these people, the risk and vulnerability situations continue.

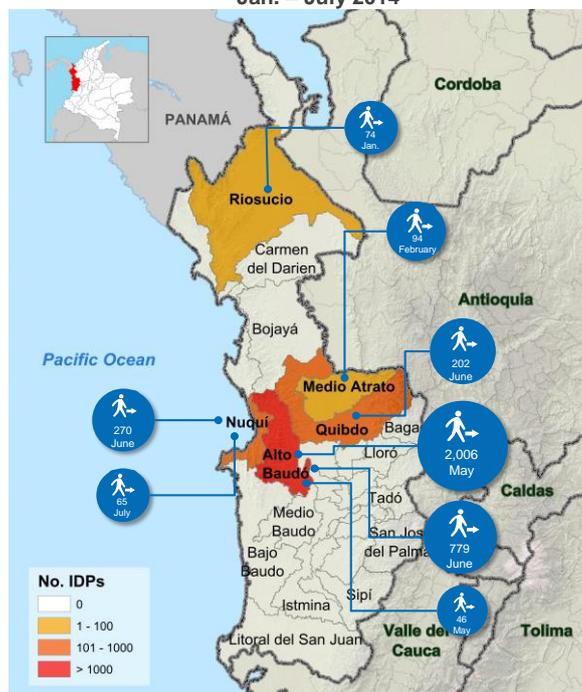
The most recent situation caused the Catholic Church, ethnic organizations and civil society to announce their concern throughout Chocó department. This was not just in relation to the most recent emergencies, but also due to a worsening broader context (see note by Pastoral Social– Cáritas Colombia).

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) responded with several measures:

- Increase the situation's visibility via situation reports prepared by the Local Humanitarian Team (LHT) and joint public communiques (see joint communiques in [May 2014](#), [July 2014](#)).
- Activate the LHT, inter-cluster group and clusters.
- Carry out rapid MIRA needs assessments (see [MIRA reports](#)) and in-depth sectoral needs assessments (see [UNICEF evaluations on food security, water, sanitation and hygiene and health](#)).
- Implement two ERF projects that were approved to provide complementary response to emergencies in health, water, sanitation and hygiene and health (psychosocial accompaniment).

There are recognized limitations that affect the local government's abilities to respond effectively. However, the international community will continue to raise awareness of the situation and of people's humanitarian needs. It will coordinate the response in areas and sectors with gaps or limited official response capacity.

Map 2: IDPs in mass displacement events Chocó Jan. – July 2014



Source: OCHA-Monitor

Catholic Church, ethnic organizations, civil society and international community, expressed their concerns about Chocó humanitarian situation.

This section is a contribution from the National Secretariat of Pastoral Social– Cáritas Colombia.

Humanitarian crisis in Chocó: between hope and oblivion

Understanding the humanitarian situation in Chocó requires approaching a history of silence, violence, abandonment, exclusion and poverty; words that, paradoxically, are often used to refer to one of the richest regions in the country in terms of cultural, water, mining, and biological resources.

Historically, insufficient social investment, lack of participative policy-making and spaces for social dialogue between institutions, communities and the private sector, and a fragmented and intermittent social offer of the State, are amongst the root causes of the current situation in Chocó.

Inequality in access to land and its resources, lack of understanding of the history and world vision of local communities and widespread corruption, are problems that add to a persisting armed conflict, leading to one of the major humanitarian crisis of the country.

Insufficient public services and health, education and housing infrastructure; combined with hunger, disease and infant and maternal deaths, make the women, children and elder the first victims of this tragedy. Rural Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in this department survive lacking awareness of their own rights, fearing reprisals if they denounce their situation and being neglected in such a manner that for many they only represent a figure to display.

Some institutional interventions have served to calm the symptoms, mitigating the pain of these

communities from time to time, but they have not addressed the structural problems of this department. Nonetheless, voices of solidarity from the international community and from national civil society organizations raise hope that these communities will be heard and supported. In the meantime, while skeptical and exhausted, some of the most affected communities continue to speak with a voice of hope and continue to prepare, lead, claim and propose solutions to their problems.

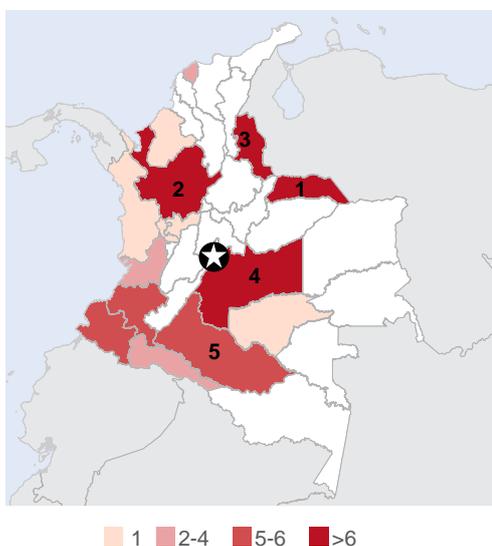
Against this background, the Catholic Church once again calls attention over the need to protect and defend the human rights, dignity and integral human development of Chocó, through urgent and coordinated measures at all levels that finally address the crisis of this department; a crisis that is expanding from Tumaco and Buenaventura to the Urabá Antioqueño, where the Pacific meets the Caribbean region.

Violence increases in July

According to [Monitor](#), July was the second most violent month this year due to an increase in the number of armed confrontations throughout Colombia. July showed an increase in the number of road blockades, ambushes and attacks on military infrastructure. Arauca and Norte de Santander, at the border with Venezuela, and Antioquia in north-western Colombia, were the most affected. In Arauca, four roadside bombs limited mobility and public and school transportation. In Norte de Santander, there have been frequent military operations and ELN guerrilla offensives since June, with intermittent mass displacements and limitations on humanitarian operations.

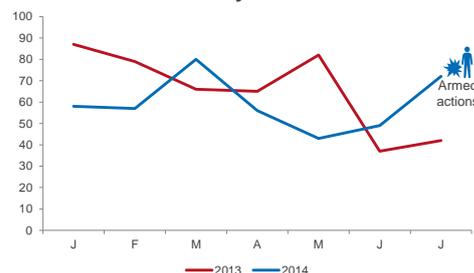
In terms of attacks on illicit targets, there were 63 attacks on civilian infrastructure, nearly five times the number reported in June. This increase was most noted in Putumayo department, where attacks on energy, road and oil infrastructure by FARC-EP have had major effects (see note on Putumayo above).

Map 3: #Armed actions. July 2014



Source: OCHA-Monitor

Illustration 1: #Armed actions. Jan. – July 2013 / 2014



Department	# Armed Actions
1 Arauca	11
2 Antioquia	8
3 Norte de Santander	8
4 Meta	7
5 Caquetá	6
6 Others	26
Total	66

Dry season has already affected half of the country, so far 2014.

The meteorological authorities have not yet officially declared the arrival of El Niño, but there is a continuing alert due to its forecasted arrival and a need to adopt preventive measures and contingency plans.

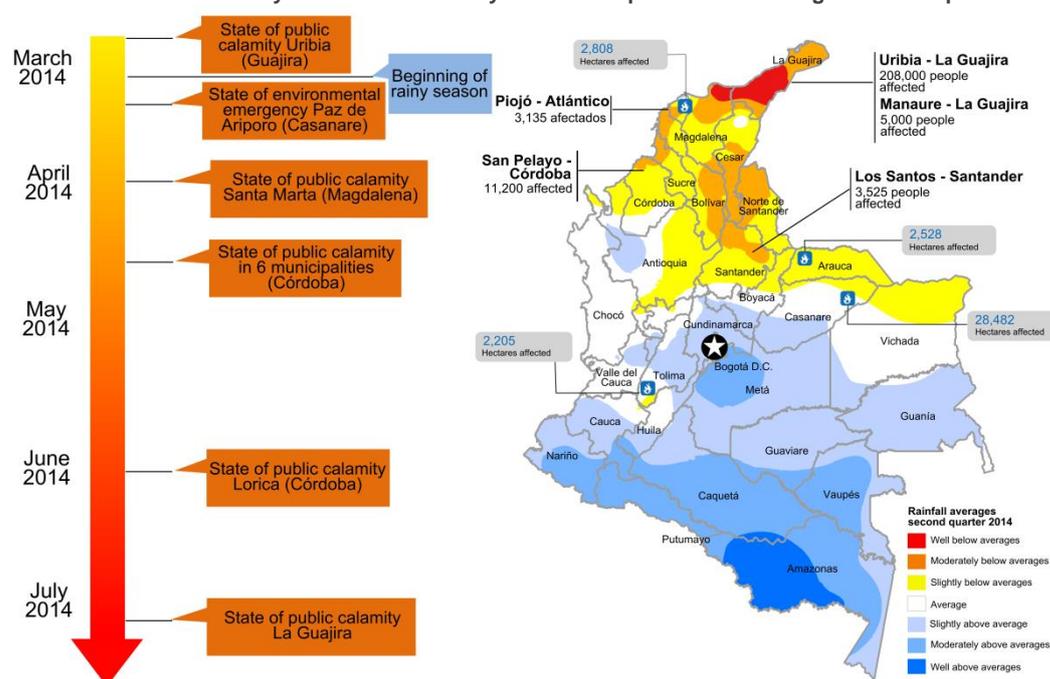
In its July analysis, the research centre Centro Internacional para la Investigación del Fenómeno del Niño (CIIFEN) indicated that El Niño would reach its peak during the last

quarter of 2014, with a high likelihood of extending through early 2015. Its intensity is still unknown.

IDEAM forecasts indicate that in Colombia, the greatest impact will take place in the central Andean region, the Caribbean coast and the northern part of the Pacific coast. Local authorities were asked to take urgent preparation measures.

The dry season has already had devastating effects in several regions, particularly in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene, food security and nutrition, livelihoods and health. At least 729 municipalities (more than half of the country) in 26 departments have suffered dry conditions between January and July. According to the national disaster response authority Unidad Nacional para la Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres (UNGRD), 925 fires destroyed about 52,500 hectares of forest in 28 departments, with more than 253,000 people affected. In several regions, such as La Guajira, Chocó, Casanare and the rural Caribbean coast, this impact is aggravated due to structural conditions including poor infrastructure, a lack of access to basic services, and high levels of poverty and armed violence.

Illustration 2: Timeline key events related to dry season / Map 4: Rainfall averages Second quarter 2014



Sources: CRC – OSA (Centro Regional del Clima para el Oeste de Sur América). Rainfall anomalies Second quarter 2014 IDEAM. Processed by OCHA.

National authorities activate response and contingency plan for dry season

National authorities plan to assist more than 70,000 families affected by the dry season.

National and local authorities and entities within the National Risk Management and Disaster System began to implement a [response plan](#)—led by UNGRD—in relation to the impact of the dry season and El Niño. An estimated 70,000 families will receive humanitarian aid in seven departments along the Caribbean coast, including Atlántico, Bolívar, Cesar, Córdoba, La Guajira, Magdalena and Sucre, and in the north-east areas of Arauca, Boyacá, Casanare and Santander. According to official data, at least 41 municipalities in 11 departments have declared a “public calamity” between January and July due to the lack of response capacity. This declaration allows municipalities to allocate resources and implement specific action plans in order to rapidly respond to the situation.

International humanitarian community promotes contingency planning and sectoral needs evaluations

Under the leadership of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is updating its contingency and preparation plans in relation to El Niño. The clusters are preparing recommendations to be adopted for projects under way,

especially in the food security and livelihoods sectors, which could be seriously affected by a water shortage. The food security and nutrition cluster has already started working on a contingency plan. LHTs are coordinating actions with the local authorities, identifying potential areas for priority intervention, and supporting the design of strategies for information-sharing and coordinating interventions.

In February, the HCT, as requested by national authorities, carried out a MIRA needs evaluation following the food and water access crisis in La Guajira department in northern Colombia (see [February 2014 bulletin](#)). In August, a mission is planned to update the diagnostic, with an emphasis on humanitarian needs in food security and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and livelihoods. The results will provide adequate criteria to prioritize interventions by the national authorities and the international community operating in the area.

Colombia's first UNDAC consolidation course

Colombia hosted more than 40 international invitees for the first UNDAC³ consolidation course for the Americas, organized by OCHA and UNGRD.

The five-day course was held in a Colombian Red Cross training centre in Circasia, Quindío. Attendees were from Argentina, Guatemala, Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, El Salvador, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Ecuador, Italy, Paraguay, Bolivia, Spain, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Brazil and France.

The UNDAC team is part of the United Nations emergency response structure. It supports national Governments, the United Nations and international response actors by coordinating the first phase of the response to a major emergency. Currently, the group comprises 250 experts from more than 70 countries, as well as several international and regional organizations. Since its creation in 1993, UNDAC has deployed more than 74 missions in 27 countries in the Americas.



Photocredit: UNGRD. UNDAC Consolidation Course, Circasia (Quindío). July 2014.

This was the first consolidation course to be held in Colombia, and was held upon the invitation of UNGRD Director General Carlos Iván Márquez Pérez. The goal was to strengthen the national system and socialize local experiences in risk management and emergency response. This event took place as one of Colombia's initiatives as second Vice President of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group during 2014.

Video: The Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator of the United Nations welcomes UNDAC Team in Colombia. Link: <http://bit.ly/U75fi0>

ERF allocation progress

Second round of ERF financing opens

As established in the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) strategy for Colombia, the second round of project financing for prolonged or chronic emergencies opened, with a deadline of 31 August. OCHA, as fund administrator, invited interested NGOs to present their proposals, which will be reviewed by OCHA and the Technical Review Board. It is hoped that this round will finance US\$600,000 in emergency responses for sudden and chronic emergencies (see ERF [latest ERF infographic](#)).

³ UNDAC (United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination).

In brief

Commemorating World Humanitarian Day in Colombia

- This month, Colombia's humanitarian community will commemorate World Humanitarian Day (19 August). In Bogotá, an event will be held with the RC/HC on 20 August in Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano, together with the donor community and the Humanitarian Studies Institute, to recognize best practices in humanitarian action in Colombia. International and local humanitarian actors will be considered for this recognition. It is hoped that this will be established annually and become a learning, accountability and best-practices tool. During the event, organizations will share their best practices and research in the sectors of humanitarian action in Colombia. This will be the event's sixth year, with participation from several areas throughout the country. More information here: <http://diamundialhumanitario.org>
- Colombia will also unite with the global World Humanitarian Day [campaign](#) to recognize humanitarian heroes who work in Colombia. A cultural and music event will be held at the Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano recognizing [Messengers of Humanity](#). This role will continue throughout the year in order to support humanitarian causes in Colombia and around the world.

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OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at: www.salahumanitaria.co | www.unocha.org | www.reliefweb.int

All the information reflected in this report has been processed by OCHA from official and secondary sources. Data for mass displacement and protection of civilians has been processed by OCHA Colombia through the Integrated Humanitarian Information System. Sources: Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas (UARIV); Programa Presidencial para la Acción Integral Contra Minas Antipersonal (PAIMCA); Sistema Integrado de Información Humanitaria (SIDIH/Monitor).