

HIGHLIGHTS

- Cauca, the most affected by displacement and armed actions in 2014
- March 2014, the most violent month since the beginning of the year
- Protection and humanitarian concerns persist in Buenaventura
- Dry season hinders humanitarian access
- HCT improve monitoring of CERF and ERF



Diakonie/Omar Guevara

In this issue

Cauca, scene of war and displacement P.1

Armed actions increase in March P.4

Buenaventura situational analysis P.4

Women, sexual violence in conflict and the peace process P.7

Dry season affects several regions P.7

Stories from the field P.3,6

Cauca, scene of war and displacement

The department of Cauca, located in south-western Colombia along the Pacific coast, has been an epicentre of the country's armed conflict for decades. Its varied terrain, including jungle along the coastline and steep mountains interspersed with agricultural valleys, has also been subject to prolonged disputes over property rights. The area's demographic diversity has also played a role in the local context: more than one-fifth of its inhabitants are Afro-colombians and another fifth are indigenous people. More than two thirds of the department is rural.

Cauca suffered more than one third of Colombia's armed actions in March

Every year since 2009, Cauca has had the largest number of armed actions in Colombia, according to OCHA's [Monitor](#) information system. Official figures also indicate that over the past five years, this department has been a major centre of armed activity.

These trends continued during the first quarter of 2014. In March, there were 31 armed actions, more than one third of all those in the country (see Illustration 1). March was the most violent month so far this year in Cauca, with a 180 per cent increase as compared with February, and a 343 per cent increase as compared with January. The most frequent events were armed clashes in northern Cauca and along the Pacific coast.

FIGURES

# of IDPs in mass events March 2014 (OCHA)	2,456
# of IDPs in mass events Jan – March 2014 (OCHA)	5,722
# of APM/UXO victims March 2014 (PAICMA)	20
# of APM/UXO victims Jan - March 2014 (PAICMA)	58
# of people affected by natural disasters March 24, 2014 (UNGRD)	9,548

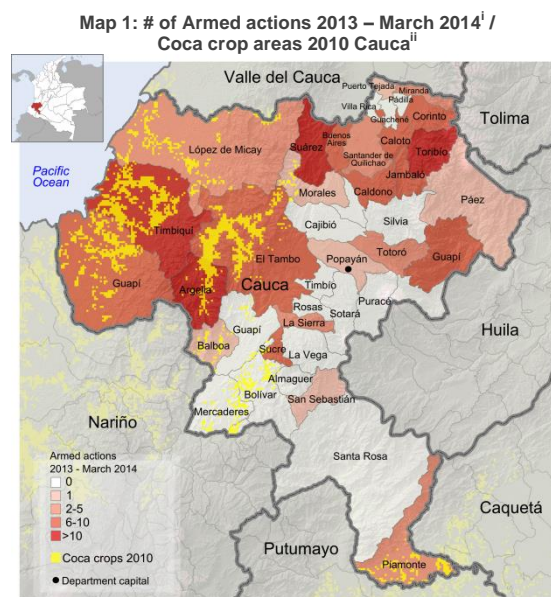
FUNDING

US\$25,708,477

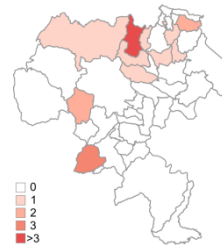
2014 total humanitarian funding received as of 15 April 2014 (FTS)

US\$50,685,055

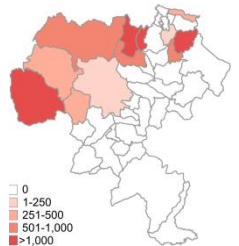
2014 humanitarian funding being implemented as of 15 April 2014 (OCHA 4W)



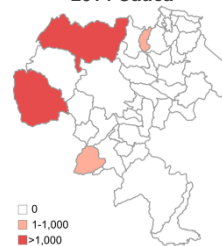
Map 2: # of APM/UXO victims 2013 – March 2014 Caucaⁱⁱⁱ



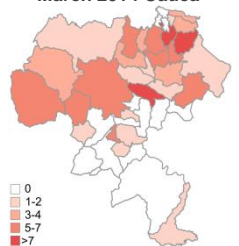
Map 3: # of IDP in mass events 2013 – March 2014 Caucaⁱ



Map 4: # of people confined 2013 – March 2014 Caucaⁱ



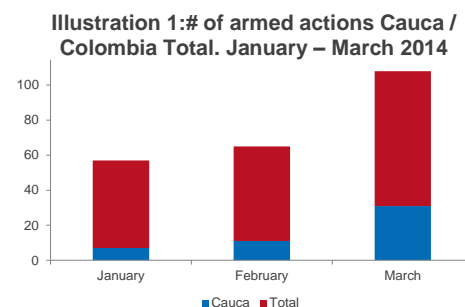
Map 5: # of attacks against civilians 2013 – March 2014 Caucaⁱ



Sources: i. OCHA-Monitor; ii. UNODC Coca census 2010; iii. PAICMA.

25 per cent of all IDPs in mass events in 2013 and nearly half in the first quarter of 2014 were in Cauca

The intensity of Colombia's armed conflict varies each year, but the humanitarian impact on the local civilian population has been constant. Most confrontations were between FARC-EP and Armed Forces, and they resulted in mass displacements¹, restrictions on the movements of civilians, and restrictions on local inhabitants' access to daily livelihoods, such as agriculture and commerce. Access to education was also frequently affected.



Source: OCHA-Monitor

Cauca now has almost half of all IDPs in 2014

Mass displacements also took place in March. The Local Humanitarian Team (LHT) reported seven events. Recurring hostilities between FARC-EP and the Armed Forces, weapon contamination and a fear of new confrontations led to the displacement of about 1,700 people from rural to urban areas. In Guapi, on the Pacific coast, Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities were displaced several times during the month. Cauca contains only 3 per cent of Colombia's population, but 25 per cent of all internally displaced people (IDP) in mass events in 2013 and nearly half in the first quarter of 2014 were in Cauca.

Displacement dynamics in Cauca are connected with protection and resistance mechanisms in local communities, particularly among indigenous people. During confrontations, these people displace temporarily from their homes to community-identified shelters –most of them schools, without permanently abandoning their lands and belongings. Given the recurrence and short duration of these types of displacements, victims often do not declare IDP status, which is a requirement in order to receive State assistance.

The infrastructure of some of these local shelters has been improved with support from the State IDP Assistance Unit (UARIV) to have minimum conditions for the emergency phase. National and international organizations have also supplemented Government assistance and strengthened local community-protection strategies. These activities have been effective and have saved lives during the most critical moments of armed confrontations. Despite these efforts, not all affected communities have such shelters; further initiatives are required to create dignified refuges when they are needed.

Four MIRA needs assessments conducted in these emergency situations, along with other sectoral evaluations, identified shelter and non-food items as the most urgently needed assistance.

Limited local capacity and access constraints, challenges for humanitarian response

In Cauca, limited local capacities and access constraints hinder timely and effective humanitarian response

Emergency humanitarian assistance in Cauca has presented several challenges for State institutions and the international community. The magnitude of these emergencies has overwhelmed the response capacity of several municipalities, which are by law the first line of response for humanitarian needs in these situations. In 2013, UARIV supported emergency response to 126 emergencies in Cauca, as requested by 30 of Cauca's 42 municipalities.

Humanitarian access also poses challenges for local assistance efforts. Municipalities along the Pacific coast, which frequently suffer from mass displacements in rural areas, are only accessible by river or sea. Few organizations have the logistical capacity to reach the most remote areas. These conditions increase humanitarian response costs considerably and make timely assistance, monitoring and sustainability difficult. In mountainous areas, towns are cut off for weeks at a time due to the poor state of roads. Ongoing hostilities in the area and the risk of landmine or unexploded ordnance

¹ A mass displacement event affects more than 10 families or 50 people.

contamination also limit access for humanitarian organizations. These factors affect the implementation and sustainability of many projects over the short and medium term.

Field coordination and complementary activities have helped to optimize humanitarian work in Cauca. One example is the implementation of projects financed by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in 2013. Between 2013 and 2014, UNHCR, PAHO-WHO and UNICEF have been implementing complementary projects in protection, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

Characteristics of the conflict and armed violence in Cauca

The historical presence of FARC-EP guerrillas and the increasing impact of post-demobilization armed groups (PDAGs) are influencing conflict dynamics and affecting the humanitarian situation. There are also concerns about an increasing level of armed violence in Cauca's urban areas. The recruitment and use of children and adolescents by non-state armed groups is a major concern. Confirmed reports of these events are poor, but the Regional Ombudsman's Office stated that in 2013 there were at least 60 reports of the recruitment of children and adolescents, mainly from local indigenous communities. Several indigenous communities reported "programmed" recruitment, where children and youths are recruited seasonally and then return to their families (see i.e. [Flash MIRA report – Jambaló](#)).

Coca growing, cocaine trafficking and illegal mining are also connected to the increasing presence of non-state armed groups, including PDAGs. The latest UNODC coca-crop census for 2012 noted that while there was a 29 per cent drop in coca cultivation in the area as compared with 2011, Cauca is the fourth-largest grower of coca in Colombia. Connected to coca crops is the use of antipersonnel mines to protect crops from manual eradication and guard strategic corridors for non-state armed group movements. These minefields affect civilians and humanitarian operations in the zone.

Stories from the Field

Norwegian Ambassador visits an Emergency Response Fund project in Guapi, Cauca

By Lars Vaagen, Ambassador of Norway in Colombia

On 6 March this year, I visited Guapi, Cauca, as the Ambassador from Norway. The mission was accompanied by OCHA, Diakonie-Katastrophenhilfe and Caritas Colombia. The purpose of this visit to the communities of El Bagrero and Vuelta Larga was to identify how the funds from the Emergency Response Fund (ERF), to which Norway has been one of the principal donors since 2009, have improved living conditions for local Afro-Colombian women, men and children in these two communities.

This visit allowed me to observe first-hand the many humanitarian needs that the population of this municipality have, as well as the importance of international cooperation and continuous support to humanitarian work in Colombia. Norway, as a country that supports stable and lasting peace for Colombia, sees in Guapi the potential of a land with rich natural resources and a hopeful population that is overcoming violence and adversity.

Nonetheless, we are also aware of the enormous humanitarian challenges faced by this area of the country, not only caused by the armed conflict, as is the case for example with recent mass displacements of hundreds of people, but also seen with the visible gaps of poverty and inequality. As a country that funds the ERF, we were encouraged to see how, in the midst of these major challenges, the resources that we channel through OCHA have had a positive impact on the lives of the inhabitants of Guapi, and have eased the situation of double vulnerability created both by violence and recent flooding.

We believe that these humanitarian interventions are the first steps in consolidating long-lasting actions that will permit to increasingly close existing gaps. Meanwhile, Norway will continue to act as a humanitarian donor, promoting these important initiatives for the country. Norway will accompany, through seven current ERF projects, the most vulnerable Afro-Colombian and indigenous people, impacted disproportionately by armed violence and natural disasters.



Photocredit: OCHA/Gerard Gómez. Lars Vaagen, Norwegian Ambassador in Colombia, meeting with the community of Vuelta Larga in Guapi (Cauca). March, 2014.

Armed actions increase in March

March had the highest number of armed actions in 2014

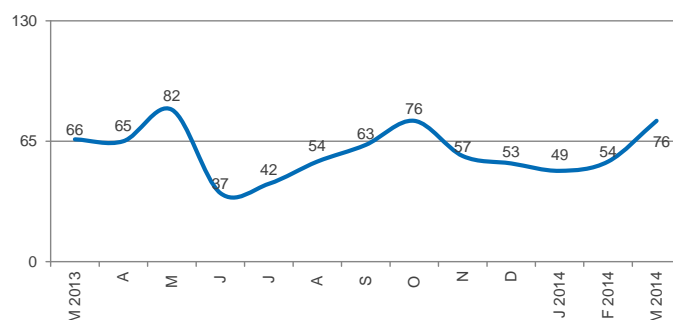
According to [Monitor](#), March had the highest number of armed actions in 2014. Seventy-six armed actions were recorded, representing a 57 per cent increase compared with the beginning of the year. These armed actions are 28 per cent higher than the monthly average in 2013 (see Illustration 2).

Following a trend in 2013, 4 per cent of armed confrontations consist of combat and 33 per cent of unilateral attacks. FARC-EP guerrillas continue to represent more than half of armed actions, either due to clashes with the Armed Forces in nearly one third of cases, or due to unilateral attacks in 28 per cent of all cases. Local analysts report that this increase is associated with a commemoration of the death of ex-FARC-EP guerrilla leader Manuel Marulanda Vélez. Most of these attacks occurred in Cauca and Nariño in south-western Colombia. Another factor was a major military offensive concentrated in Nariño and Caquetá departments (see Map 6).

Two out of five armed actions in March took place in Cauca. Most events were clashes between the Armed Forces and FARC-EP guerrillas. Arauca, on the Venezuelan border, was the second most affected area, mainly due to ELN guerrilla attacks. These attacks increased fourfold, as compared with February, and doubled as compared with the yearly average.

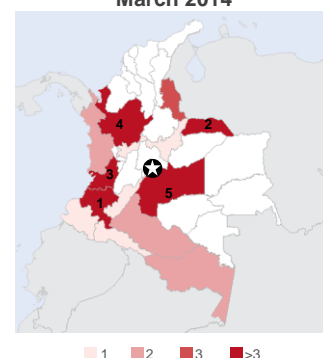
In Arauca, there were repeated ELN attacks on oil infrastructure. Given that natural-resource exploitation is a central issue on the ELN agenda, it is likely that these types of attacks will continue in the short and medium term. The humanitarian impact of these attacks is concerning, as they contaminate water sources, they restrict access to potable water and damage local livelihoods and.

Illustration 2: # of Armed actions. March 2013 – March 2014



Source: OCHA-Monitor

Map 6: # of Armed actions. March 2014



Department	# Actions	%	
1	Cauca	31	41%
2	Arauca	15	20%
3	Valle del Cauca	8	11%
4	Antioquia	4	5%
5	Meta	4	5%
	Other	14	18%
Total	76		

This section was contributed by the Comité Interinstitucional Humanitario de Buenaventura.

Humanitarian actors analyse the situation in Buenaventura

Humanitarian situation deteriorates

Despite early warnings and alerts, armed violence continues to have serious humanitarian consequences in Buenaventura, the main Pacific coast port in Colombia and one of the country's poorest cities.

In October 2012, nearly 5,000 people were displaced in this municipality. A similar emergency occurred in November 2013, involving 6,000 IDPs ([see Humanitarian Bulletin November 2013](#)). So far in 2014, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, with new cases of mass displacements reported in rural **and urban** areas and a steady increase in IDP numbers.

During the first quarter of 2014, various reports have revealed the cruelty of crimes occurring in the city, leading to major news stories and political reactions at the local,

The CIH draws attention about emergency response gaps and humanitarian needs in Buenaventura.

departmental and national levels. The national Government responded by increasing military presence in the city.

CIH identifies gaps in emergency response

The humanitarian coordination space in Buenaventura is the Comité Interinstitucional Humanitario (CIH), a committee of local organizations including Caritas Colombia, Proceso de Comunidades Negras; the Public Ministry, UN agencies and international NGOs. CIH was created in 2007 to join efforts and facilitate a common vision of the local humanitarian and social conflict. CIH recognizes the significant efforts of State institutions to provide humanitarian assistance. However, its members recognize that there are major emergency response gaps that need to be addressed through improved coordination between national and local authorities.

Gaps in the design and implementation of the city's Territorial Action Plan² are one component of structural challenges for the protection of victims of the armed conflict. Assistance focuses on responding to the most visible cases of forced displacement. Further efforts are needed to address the causes of displacement, such as threats, forced recruitment, or sexual violence. Many of these occurrences are never legally declared, due to lack of trust in authorities, fear and the social control of non-state armed groups and PDAGs in many neighbourhoods and communities. Institutions in charge of the State response have limited personnel and resources to meet the high level of demand.

Delays in assistance and limitations on movements affect response

There are challenges in providing assistance for cases of displacement. These challenges are even greater in urban contexts. For example, in mass displacements in March 2014 and November 2013, humanitarian aid delivery began 10 to 14 days after the emergency. The situation is even more worrisome in individual displacements, which are typically attended to one or two months after the displacement. Humanitarian organizations' access to communities to identify needs and improve the situation's visibility is limited by strong territorial and social control by non-state armed groups and PDAGs.

Urgent shelter needs

There are urgent shelter and early recovery needs, particularly regarding housing. Taking into consideration the recurrence of mass displacement events, it is vital that improvements are made to temporary shelters so that they comply with minimum standards. Housing conditions are precarious—wooden homes built on stilts are common throughout the area. These types of homes are particularly vulnerable during armed confrontations, with no protection from bullets. Non-state armed groups and PDAGs frequently destroy IDPs' homes during their clashes. The protection of housing and properties is essential.

Challenges to coordination and an effective response

CIH faces many challenges in improving support to victims in Buenaventura. This includes coordinating humanitarian emergency response and coordinating with the local authorities for prevention activities and community strengthening. Other priorities are protection and the prevention of forced recruitment and sexual and gender-based violence; increasing the visibility of the humanitarian situation in rural areas; and advocacy with national and local institutions to create integral prevention strategies and sustainable solutions for the effective enjoyment of rights, taking into account gender, cultural, ethnic and age approaches, as well as psychosocial assistance and mental health for victims and people at risk of victimization.

² Territorial Action Plan (PAT): These plans are defined by law, and must be prepared by the departments, municipalities and districts for a term of four years in accordance with the periods of local representatives. PATs must define the measures for prevention, response, support and reparation for victims, and should be consistent with the National Plan for Victims and Land Development Plans.

This section was contributed by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

Buenaventura, a challenge for citizen security

In line with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) understands the concept of citizen security as a situation in which persons are able to live free of the threats caused by violence and crime, and the State has the necessary means to respect, protect and guarantee the human rights directly threatened by violence and crime.

Across Latin America, citizen security is a significant challenge that requires a profound shift in the way governments conceptualize and implement their human rights strategies in order to reverse prolonged State abandonment and other factors. Despite the high media coverage of the extreme violence including dismemberments in Buenaventura, however, citizen security is a concern in various parts of the country.

The response plan for Buenaventura announced by President Santos on 8 March intends to address a situation that the Ombuds Office, UNHCR and OHCHR have reported since 2012 and before. While some local authorities had not acknowledged the problems, there were 132 homicides in 2012 and 162 in 2013 in this municipality alone. Impunity is a central concern: by the end of 2013 there were 1,200 methodological investigation plans developed but only 10 prosecutors in total, and only 1 Technical Investigation Body (CTI) investigator dedicated to homicides; inadequate resources for their transportation; delays in victim identification due to the lack of a local forensic laboratory and an absence of concrete operations against criminal structures.

Other challenges include a lack of institutional coordination; inadequate participation by institutions other than the police in mechanisms to find missing persons; deficiencies in the provision of assistance and shelter for victims; lack of prior consultation processes for community housing projects; inadequate education and a lack of opportunities for youth; under-reporting and invisibility of sexual violence; and scarce police presence in at-risk neighbourhoods. The authorities need to increase oversight on public spending, including on IDP assistance. An increased commitment from the private sector to create mass and sustainable employment is also vital. Such challenges need to be addressed jointly by national and local government in order to create sustainable citizen security in Buenaventura and elsewhere, and will remain a challenge even if the hoped for peace agreement with the FARC-EP is achieved.

Stories from the field

Protection by presence: An experience in Tolima

By UNHCR Colombia/Neiva office

“Protection by presence” implies a proactive presence that builds on a protection strategy and seeks to comprehensively:

- Mitigate threats and reduce vulnerability among communities that suffer protection risks.
- Increase commitment to and capacity among national and local authorities in protection.
- Increase community capacities in self-protection mechanisms.

In the upper reaches of the Atá river, Planadas municipality, Tolima department, there are 11 rural *veredas* (rural communities) with difficult road access and a limited presence of local authorities. Until at least five years ago, the area was dedicated to poppy production, which was seriously affected by the armed conflict.

Despite the pressures of the conflict, this rural community has achieved a high level of community work and local organization. It has assumed that the best way to maintain dialogue with the State is in a united and organized fashion, and that owning and advocating for its rights prepares the



Photocredit: UNHCR Colombia/Neiva office. UNHCR community activities in Planadas (Tolima).

ground for institutional investments/development projects.

It is an area with a strong presence of FARC-EP guerrillas. Therefore, UNHCR carried out visits to gain the community's confidence and to understand the local dynamics of organization in the community. Following work with rural leaders and the creation of an inter-disciplinary team with the NGO Fundación Yapawayra, the team accompanied the rural community for 10 days to carry out a rapid participatory diagnostic.

Through the intervention, UNHCR promoted conditions for community participation to guarantee inter-generational dialogue, to listen to the difficulties that have limited development, and to understand protection risks and gaps for protection among the population. This work constituted the basis of the Community Prevention Plan. This experience allowed the community to identify its needs and build self-protection measures, from education and community leadership practice. These mechanisms increased the protection of the community, including prevention, emergency response and solutions.

Based on information obtained through its active presence in the zone, UNHCR could liaise with the Armed Forces, the Regional Ombudsman's Office and the social welfare institute ICBF, to mitigate protection risks among the community, protect their rights as a civilian population in respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and create networks for effective protection. These protection-by-presence actions were complemented with advocacy with the municipal and departmental authorities to recommend public policies and investments in basic services, in connection with the Departmental Development Plan.

This section was contributed by Oxfam – UK, on the occasion of the launch of the report:

"Colombia: mujeres, violencia sexual en el conflicto y el proceso de paz" by ABColombia (Oxfam, SCIAF, Christian Aid, CAFOD, Trocaire), Sisma Mujer, US Office on Colombia.

Women, sexual violence in conflict and the peace process

The magnitude of conflict-related sexual violence against women in Colombia has never been completely understood. This crime is seriously under registered. When it is denounced, women encounter major obstacles to access justice, including high levels of impunity. Nonetheless, despite these obstacles, and at great personal cost, Colombian women are raising their voices and demanding their right to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition. By raising their voices, surviving women and the organizations that accompany them face threats against their physical integrity and that of their families. Nonetheless, without their dedicated work, none of these cases would ever be tried in court.

To comprehend the impact of sexual violence, it is important to understand the social and cultural context of this crime. In addition to patriarchal systems, other factors exist, such as social, political and economic marginalization that should be considered. For indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, these factors are combined with historical attitudes related to racial discrimination. Impunity has reinforced these patterns of discrimination against women. For this reason, surviving women insist that these crimes be addressed in the peace process.

All armed actors, state and non-state, in different ways, are involved in sexual violence against women: the bodies of women have been used to achieve military objectives and as spoils of war.

Women carry out a crucial role in the defense of human rights in Colombia: they contribute to sustainability for any potential accord between the Government and FARC-EP guerrillas, and they are key actors in the construction of peace. It is fundamental to eradicate sexual violence against women, take measures against impunity and promote a citizen culture that considers this practice to be an unacceptable crime (see complete report [here](#).)

Dry season affects several regions during first quarter

Since December 2013, an extreme dry season has been affecting several areas in Colombia. The lack of precipitation has led to droughts, potable water shortages and forest fires.

According to analysis by the Centro Regional del Climapara Suramérica (CRC-OSA)³, there is the potential for an El Niño event in the next months if current conditions persist. The centre also indicates that the intensity and duration of such a possible event are still uncertain, and monitoring is important in order to have a more robust prediction in the coming months. The national weather service, IDEAM, also issued an alert for a dry season in December 2013 (see Illustration 3).

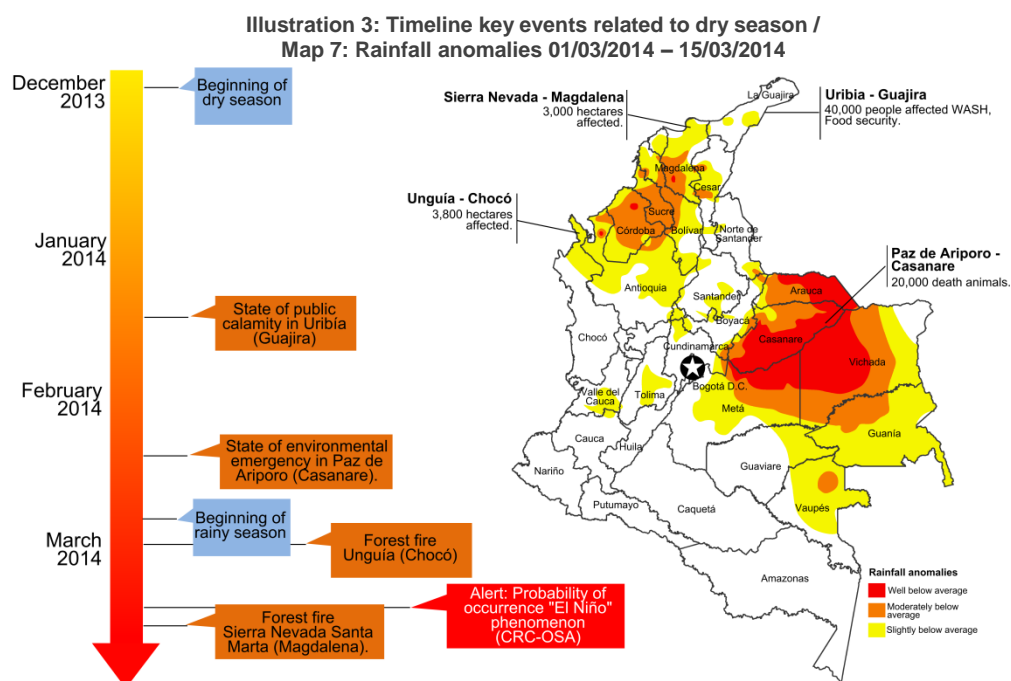
Water shortages, fires and low river levels, are causing humanitarian impact. The potential for an El Niño event should be monitored.

Fires and water shortages in several regions

Two major forest fires occurred in March (see Map 7). In northern Chocó, along the Panamanian border, a forest fire consumed more than 3,500 ha of palm crops and forest. The limited local response capacity and logistical challenges in the area delayed an effective response, and the fire was controlled only after 13 days. Nearly 300 indigenous people were at high risk in the area. In late March, another fire consumed more than 3,000 ha of forests in Magdalena department on the Caribbean coast. Nearly 500 people were evacuated.

In eastern Colombia in Casanare department, an environmental emergency was declared due to drought conditions. A water shortage in rural areas led to the death of more than 20,000 animals. IDEAM reported that this dry season was part of a natural cycle in this part of the year. However, researchers stated that the situation was worsened by climate change, soil erosion and poor water management.

Earlier this year (see [February Humanitarian Bulletin](#)), institutions and international organizations raised the alarm about the serious humanitarian impact of a water shortage in La Guajira department in northern Colombia. This phenomenon, combined with structural conditions and problems in neighboring Venezuela, has led to high levels of vulnerability for more than 40,000 local indigenous people.



Low river levels restrict humanitarian access

The dry season in March also affected the population and the humanitarian response. In Chocó indigenous communities, people affected by confinement and forced displacement

³Formed by: Servicio Nacional de Hidrología y Meteorología de Bolivia (SENAMHI), Dirección Meteorológica de Chile (DMC), Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales de Colombia (IDEAM), Instituto Nacional de Hidrología y Meteorología de Ecuador (INAMHI), Servicio Nacional de Meteorología e Hidrología del Perú (SENAMHI), Instituto Nacional de Meteorología e Hidrología de Venezuela (INAMEH), convened by Centro Internacional para el Estudio del Fenómeno de El Niño (CIIFEN). See communiqué: http://www.ciifn.org/images/stories/Noticias/CRC-CIIFEN_Boletn_Especial_de_Analisis_Ocenico_y_Atmosferico_Marzo_2014.pdf

faced access constraints to water due to the low level of rivers and streams. Agricultural activity is also affected, leading to potential food insecurity.

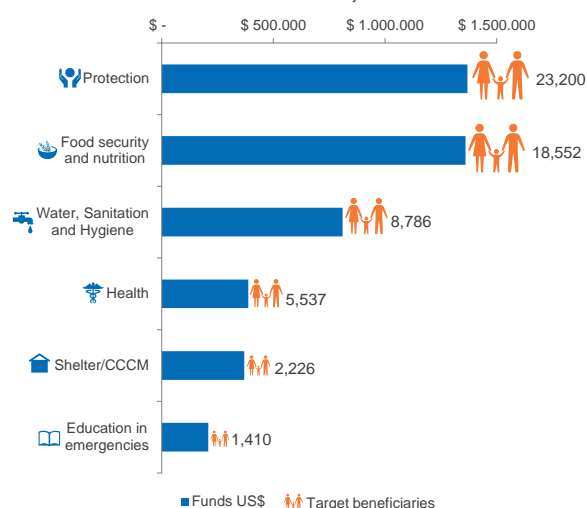
The low level of rivers in these areas impedes navigations and therefore access to and from rural communities, which are only accessible by river. This situation is widespread in northern Colombia, particularly Chocó and Córdoba. Food-aid deliveries and health brigades have been delayed due to difficulties in accessing the communities.

HCT improve monitoring of CERF and ERF

The ERF and CERF have played an increasing role in humanitarian financing in Colombia in recent years. It is estimated that for 2014, these funds will represent more than 10 per cent of all humanitarian funding in Colombia. As a result, monitoring and accountability are important challenges for UN agencies and NGO implementers.

With this premise, OCHA and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) have prioritized the implementation of a monitoring strategy, including joint field missions with UN agencies, NGOs and donors, and improved mid-term and final reporting.

Illustration 4: CERF 2014 Funds, Beneficiaries / Sector



Source: OCHA

OCHA will publish quarterly infographics on ERF and CERF implementation, reporting progress, impact and financial status (see [CERF infographic](#), [ERF infographic](#)).

CERF resources will be implemented in more than 40 municipalities

As a result of a needs and gaps analysis in eight departments (Arauca, Caquetá, Meta, Guaviare, Putumayo, Nariño, Chocó and Cauca) prioritized by CERF for 2014, UN agencies and their implementing partners will carry out humanitarian projects in 41 municipalities. Around 60,000 people will benefit from actions in protection, food security and nutrition, WASH, health, shelter and education projects (see Illustration 4).

HCT and Government promote complementarity in CERF fund implementation

The Inter-Cluster Group has maintained close coordination with UARIV for IDP response, and with UNGRD for disaster response, to share information about the projects prioritized for CERF 2014 funding. Through these coordination activities, the ICC and Government actors identified that two thirds of municipalities prioritized by CERF in 2014 also benefit from UARIV social and community-infrastructure projects. UARIV and the Inter-Cluster Group agreed to share project information with teams in the field. They aim to improve this complementarity in order to maximize the impact of their work.

In Chocó department, for example, UARIV responders, municipal administrations and IOM are complementing efforts in the construction of temporary shelters in CERF's priority municipalities for 2014. UARIV will supply construction materials for the shelters, the municipality will provide labour, and IOM, through CERF funding, will contribute design formulations, materials, training and shelter kits. This complementarity of financial and technical resources will promote more integrated strategies that include infrastructure improvement, equipment, livelihoods, coordination and shelter management training.

Government and HCT create new humanitarian affairs committee

On 12 March, the first meeting was held between Government institutions—including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UARIV, UNGRD, DNP and APC—and the HCT, represented by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild, together with OCHA, UNHCR and WFP. The meeting formalized the creation of the Coordination Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, which is a high-level political space that will promote effective coordination between the HCT and the Government. The committee will facilitate a common understanding of priorities and promote complementary actions.

During the meeting, the HC presented the HCT's objectives and strategic priorities for 2014, as well as the humanitarian architecture and existing spaces for dialogue with the national and local government. Mr. Hochschild recognized the capacity of the Colombian State and major advances in assistance and reparation to victims. He also mentioned that response gaps still persist in some areas. HCTs' added value is to support and complement Government assistance in hard-to-reach areas where needs persist. The HC highlighted the importance of international NGOs' role as HCT members, and he requested that they have a greater role in dialogue with the Government.

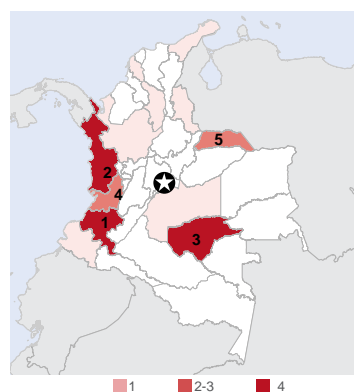
National institutions indicated that Colombia has a robust legal framework accompanied with operational capacity for assistance and reparation to victims of the conflict as well as natural disasters. The Government highlighted that humanitarian coordination should focus on strengthening national systems designed to respond to crisis situations, based on humanitarian principles as stated in UN resolution 46/182 of 1991.

This meeting identified coordination challenges between national institutions and international cooperation related to information sharing, response mapping, the coordination of clusters with State structures, and intervention protocols to assist people affected by conflict and disasters (double vulnerability). All participants, national and international, recognized the importance of creating a coordination mechanism as a unique opportunity to improve Colombians' humanitarian situation. The committee will meet again in the second half of 2014.

MIRA: a strategic HCT effort to improve situational awareness

Since June 2013, the HCT's humanitarian organizations have carried out 22 rapid needs-assessment missions using the multi-cluster/sector initial rapid assessment methodology (MIRA). The majority of these needs analyses were carried out in Chocó, Guaviare, and Cauca, which are all departments prioritized in the joint humanitarian strategy (see Map 8). These analyses are part of a strategic HCT effort to improve situational awareness and highlight Colombia's humanitarian situation.

Map 8: # of MIRA missions June 2013 - 2014



Source: OCHA

	Department	# of field missions
1	Cauca	4
2	Chocó	4
3	Guaviare	4
4	Valle del Cauca	2
5	Arauca	2
6	Antioquia	1
7	Bolívar	1
8	La Guajira	1
9	Meta	1
10	Nariño	1
11	Norte de Santander	1
Total		22

By compiling information from secondary sources combined with community surveys, MIRA assessments identified humanitarian priorities in different sectors following a sudden emergency due to the conflict in 38 per cent of cases, or due to natural disasters in one fifth of cases. MIRA missions were also used to monitor chronic situations in conflict-affected areas in 43 per cent of cases. Since mid-2013, the most frequently prioritized sectors were food security and nutrition, health, WASH, protection and shelter.

Ten UN agencies and six international NGOs participated in at least one MIRA mission. OCHA, WFP, UNHCHR and UNHCR were the most frequent participants. The Ombudsman's Office and some national NGOs also participated in more than one third of missions.

22 MIRA needs-assessment missions	10 UN agencies have participated in at least one MIRA mission	6 INGOs have participated in at least one MIRA mission	4 ERF projects prioritized in areas where a MIRA mission was carried out
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MIRA mission results are public (see www.salahumanitaria.co/es/assessment-registry) and are systematically shared with humanitarian partners, donors and State institutions. In this sense, MIRA is considered a first step in the HCT's response. A MIRA provide inputs for resource mobilization, resource prioritization through ERF and CERF when available, and advocacy with State institutions responsible for emergency response.

Since mid-2013, at least four ERF projects were prioritized in areas where a MIRA mission was carried out. MIRA was also key for the geographic and sectoral prioritization of several CERF-financed projects for 2014.

MIRA is an information tool that can provide a baseline for coordination and response complementarity. Therefore, in October 2013, with the support of the food security and nutrition, WASH and shelter clusters, OCHA facilitated a MIRA training for UARIV emergency response staff. State representatives also participated in MIRA trainings at the local level. Joint training facilitated information sharing on needs and humanitarian gaps, and it improved coordination among members of the humanitarian community and State institutions.

In 2014, MIRA training will continue with strategic partners such as UNGRD and local disaster response institutions, clusters and LHT partners, with an emphasis on national and international NGOs, as well as the Ombudsman's Office. Since 2014, the use of MIRA in needs assessments has been included as a requirement to access ERF funds.

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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).