

COLOMBIA SITUATION Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela

February 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

7.3 million

Registered internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Colombia.

340,000

Colombian refugees living abroad. The majority have found refuge in Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama and Costa Rica.

8,750

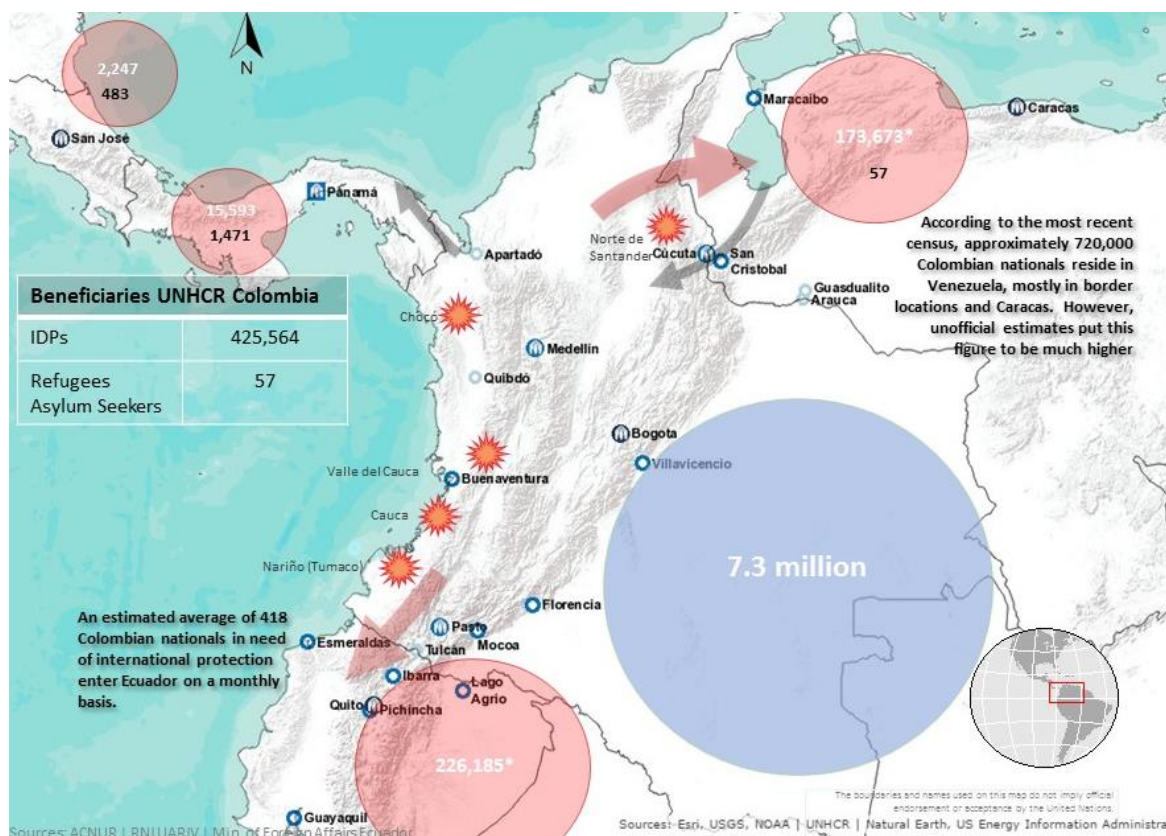
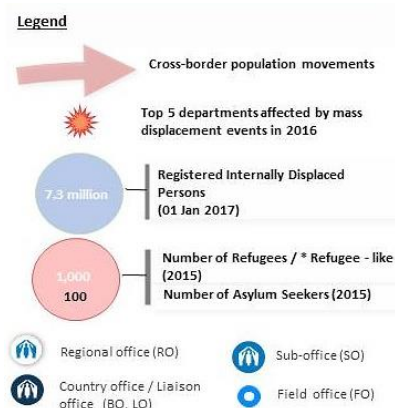
Estimated number of recognized refugees living in Venezuela, out of **173,673** persons living in a refugee-like situation.

60,524

Recognized refugees living in Ecuador, out of an estimate of **226,000** persons who applied for asylum in Ecuador (1989-2016) **87.5 per cent** of refugees are Colombian citizens, while **12.5 per cent** are from other nationalities.

CONTEXT

- At the close of four years of intense negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a final peace agreement was signed on 24 November 2016 with the Government of Colombia. The agreement has been approved by Congress and entered into force on 1 December. Furthermore, peace negotiations were launched on 8 February 2017 in Ecuador with the National Liberation Army (ELN), the second largest *guerilla* in the country. The situation in Colombia remains volatile with ongoing displacement and violence. In several parts of the country, increased violence by new armed actors is leading to humanitarian and protection risks, such as killings, forced



recruitment of children, gender-based violence, limited access to education, water and sanitation, as well as mobility restrictions and forced displacement. In addition, mixed flows into the country are increasing due to the deteriorating political and economic situation in other countries in the region.

- In Colombia, security risks for local social leaders have been increasing, affecting leaders who are supporting the peace process in their regions such as the trial processes against the mining or production of illicit crops, as well as those promoting questions of restitution of lands.
- In Ecuador, the current economic crisis is affecting the continuity of the Government's presence as well as social policies and programmes in the northern border area and other areas with a high concentration of Colombian refugees.
- Venezuela's political, social and economic tensions continue to pose important protection challenges mainly related to limited access to food and medicines among persons of concern. Cross-border movements along the Colombia and Brazil borders have increased and require important monitoring efforts in conjunction with authorities to mitigate protection risks among potential people of concern.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

- Colombia has a dramatic record after decades of conflict. According to Victim's unit, the country is home to some 8.3 million registered victims, some 17 per cent of the total population. During the conflict, more than 260,000 murders were reportedly committed, some 46,000 people were missing, 7.3 million people were forced to leave their homes and relocate to another part of the country (internally displaced persons), and some 340,000 people became refugees in other countries.

In Colombia, UNHCR registered 47 emergencies (including mass displacement, confinement or restrictions to mobility), affecting nearly 14,000 people in 2016. Over two thirds of those affected were indigenous people and the rest mainly Afro-Colombians and farmers. Furthermore, over 68,000 new internally displaced persons (IDPs) were individually registered by the Government in 2016, a number that is expected to grow further due to the slow registration and verification process.



UNHCR 2016 – Ecuador –
Refugee family from
Colombia

- Ecuador hosts the largest refugee population in Latin America. 95 per cent of this population is composed of people fleeing the armed conflict in neighbouring Colombia. Some 90 per cent of Colombian refugees in Ecuador have expressed their wish to remain in Ecuador. About 400 Colombians fleeing conflict and persecution seek asylum in the country every month. In addition, Ecuador is receiving increasing numbers of Venezuelans and asylum seekers of other nationalities (Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, and Congolese).
- Venezuela has generously hosted Colombian persons of concern for decades. However, while over 9,000 have been recognized as refugees, an estimated 164,000 remain unregistered and are particularly affected by the deteriorating economic situation, increased migratory controls and insecurity. Despite this deterioration of conditions, 90 per cent have expressed their wish to integrate locally with proper documentation and do not see repatriation to Colombia as an option, mainly due to the continued presence of various armed groups in their areas of origin.
- Based on data obtained from asylum countries, UNHCR has observed an upward trend in the number of asylum seekers originating from Venezuela resulting in a doubling of figures year-on-year, as a consequence of the current political, social and economic tensions in the country. At the end of 2016, UNHCR has reported over 28,000 asylum seekers and some 7,400 recognized refugees in 2015 from Venezuela in countries of asylum.

REGIONAL APPROACH

- UNHCR's 2016-2018 Regional Protection and Solutions Strategy aims to respond in an enhanced coordinated manner to operational exigencies that a post-agreement phase entails, focusing on securing and defending the rights of forcibly displaced persons in Colombia and Colombian refugees in neighbouring countries, and to ensure that they are protected from harm and repetition of abuses.
- The Regional Strategy is implemented within the framework of the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action and encompasses country specific strategies, which are aligned with the respective national development and human rights policies.
- UNHCR will focus on sensitive border regions, where widespread protection gaps continue. UNHCR will step up emergency preparedness and strengthen asylum procedures to guarantee the rights of persons of concern.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- UNHCR has been a key partner in supporting the Government of Colombia in the protection and search for durable solutions for internally displaced population and has worked with other institutions to support the response to recurring displacement and emergencies. UNHCR is mentioned among the UN agencies which play an important role in supporting the Colombian government in the implementation of the peace agreement, especially in relation to the victims' assistance.
- UNHCR has promoted successful and innovative local integration processes in Ecuador, which have allowed refugees to become active contributors to Ecuador's development. Some 1,500 households participate in UNHCR's Graduation Approach programme nationwide.



©UNHCR / October 2016 /Zulia state- Venezuela/Waoo Producciones. Representative of Venezuelan Government, Representative, UNHCR Regional Director and staff interviewing an asylum seeker during the launching of the Profiling exercise.

- In Venezuela, UNHCR and State authorities started the implementation of a profiling exercise in order to ascertain the number, profiles and needs of persons living in refugee-like situations and persons at risk of statelessness, with a view to promoting effective protection mechanisms and solutions.

MAIN PRIORITIES FOR 2017

- Support provided to Colombia Situation Governments to ensure that regional legal frameworks and national public policies are in line with international standards, in particular ensuring continued access to asylum.
- Implementation of the peace agreement supported and protection challenges addressed in a coordinated manner among Colombia Situation operations.
- Emergency preparedness and response capacities established in the region to effectively address cross-border movements.
- Improve synergies among Colombia situation operations and solutions for refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern (three countries in the Multi-Year Multi-Partner initiative).
- Raise awareness and visibility of people of concern in the region.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- Through a **comprehensive needs assessment**, the necessary funding for operations in the Colombia Situation to implement its planned activities is over US\$ **58.8 million for 2017**.
- Funding levels for this situation remain extremely low, although **humanitarian needs are expected to continue** in the initial phase post peace-agreement in the three countries.

Consequences of underfunding

- The efforts made by UNHCR, the government and communities towards the achievement of durable solutions for those affected by one of the biggest displacement crises of the past few decades will have a limited impact should UNHCR not be able to consolidate its efforts in the post agreement phase.
- UNHCR's efforts towards local integration in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela to support particularly vulnerable persons will be constrained. Most of the newly arrived people of concern face difficulties to access basic services and to an adequate employment during the first months in the country. Some 39 persons of persons of concern live under the poverty line, out of which 14 live under the extreme poverty line. As a consequence of limited resources, only 600 households (2,400 people) – half of the total number of participants benefitting from the programme in 2016 - will be assisted through the Graduation Model programme during 2017.
- In Venezuela, UNHCR will not be able to follow up on the results of the profiling exercise which will be carried out in March 2017, which should result in the documentation of all refugees and other persons of concern.
- UNHCR's capacity to respond to the recurring emergencies will decrease, resulting in inadequate risks assessments and limited support to vulnerable people forcibly displaced within the countries and across the region.
- UNHCR will not count on the necessary means to appropriately protect and respond to the needs of people in search of international protection, whose numbers are currently increasing across the region.
- UNHCR will not be able to appropriately ensure the protection of people at risk of violence and other hazards - such as children, youngsters and women- and will have limited impact in promoting conflict resolution within and among communities and authorities.

2017 Colombia situation programme and operational budget (US\$)

Favourable Protection Environment	6.3 million
Fair Protection Processes and Documentation	5.4 million
Security from Violence and Exploitation	6.5 million
Basic Needs and Essential Services	5.6 million
Community Empowerment and Self Reliance	7.6 million
Durable Solutions	16.9 million
Leadership, Coordination and Partnerships	5.4 million
Logistics and Operations Support	5.1 million
TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS 2017	58.8 million