

Main Objectives

- Reinforce the rights of IDPs and populations-at-risk, and consolidate national mechanisms to improve compliance with national IDP legislation and policies.
- Support state institutions and civil society organisations working with IDPs through capacity-building activities.
- Ensure unhindered access to basic services for IDPs.
- Seek durable solutions for IDPs whenever possible, including return, local integration and relocation. Enhance IDP self-reliance and support IDP associations through vocational training and pilot income generation projects.
- Target IDP groups with specific needs, such as displaced women, children, young people and ethnic minorities.
- With the support of OCHA, facilitate the co-ordination within the United Nations system of humanitarian issues and activities on behalf of IDPs.
- Promote international protection and durable solutions for 130 asylum-seekers and refugees in Colombia.



Working environment

Recent developments

Armed conflict has created internal displacement throughout Colombia, and refugee movements into Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panamá and Venezuela. During 2003, this conflict intensified in the areas bordering Ecuador and Venezuela. Prospects of a negotiated solution with all actors in the conflict are distant. Several bomb attacks carried out in urban centres in 2003 were attributed by the Government to the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). Since the end of 2002, the Government has been in negotiation with the largest paramilitary group in the country, the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC). It is expected

that these talks will lead to the demobilisation of some 10,000 combatants, to be completed by 2005.

The Government of Colombia is promoting the return of IDPs, and intends to facilitate and support the reintegration of IDP families into their areas of origin by providing them with access to shelter and productive activities. The emphasis on return has affected the implementation of policies and programmes in favour of IDPs' local integration. In 2003, UNHCR's government counterpart, the *Red de Solidaridad Social* (RSS) reported the return of some 40,000 IDPs. Further repatriations are also being prepared from the Darién province in Panamá, to the Chocó district in Colombia. UNHCR and other international organisations are monitoring the return movements to ensure that the minimum criteria of voluntariness, safety and sustainability are met.

There are 84 indigenous groups in Colombia. According to a national organisation of indigenous people, virtually all

of them have been affected by forced displacement and threats by irregular armed groups.

The Government of Colombia has sought the involvement of Ecuador, Panamá and Venezuela in monitoring and securing border areas, including the prevention of arms-trafficking, tighter border controls, financial measures to prevent money laundering, and the sharing of intelligence. The Colombian Government also signed bilateral agreements with those governments in 2003, to improve the monitoring of borders and population movements.

Constraints

Although United Nations personnel have not been targeted, a series of attacks and threats against other humanitarian workers signals a possible deterioration in the working environment for providers of humanitarian aid in 2004. In the coming year, the Office will reinforce security measures and communications systems throughout the country. Relations between the Colombian Government and several NGOs have been strained by a divergence of views on human rights issues.

The intensification of the Colombian conflict, together with new security measures amount to a considerable challenge for the international community in its efforts to help IDPs. The inclusion of the category of IDPs into the broader category of “vulnerable population” will also affect UNHCR’s work, since it will reduce the visibility of the humanitarian crisis in the country and the severe situation in which many IDPs find themselves.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

In 2004, UNHCR will consolidate the existing mechanisms to protect IDPs, support the development of new policies to defend their rights, and further promote the implementation of IDP law 387, which sets out the rights of IDPs, as well as the protection and assistance regimes in Colombia. Moreover, the Office will continue to promote Francis Deng’s “Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,” the international standards for IDP protection. The Office will monitor non-compliance by responsible authorities, and elaborate a set of recommendations to improve IDP protection.

UNHCR will continue to accompany IDP communities when they return

to their homes. In co-operation with the legal aid centres of four national universities and specialised NGOs, the Office will reinforce legal aid services to individual IDPs. UNHCR will strengthen its co-ordination with the Ombudsman’s Office and the General Procurator to monitor State institutions working on IDP issues. The Office will also promote and organise documentation campaigns to provide individual identification cards and civil registration to some 70,000 IDPs and other vulnerable people living in isolated areas of Colombia.

UNHCR will promote and facilitate durable solutions, through voluntary return, relocation and local integration, whenever possible. These solutions will aim to stabilise the socio-economic situation of the IDPs and vulnerable groups, and attend to the needs of specific groups that have been affected by the conflict. The Office will also help IDP families search for employment, participate in income-generating activities and have access to basic services during the post-emergency phase.

Assistance

In Colombia, UNHCR does not provide direct material assistance to IDPs. The Office implements a broad variety of community development activities to support the integration or return of IDPs, and communities-at-risk-of-displacement. These activities consist in improving and constructing school facilities, distributing school supplies to IDP children and children of host communities, initiating income generation projects, and providing vocational and capacity-building training to IDP communities.

UNHCR’s assistance strategy in Colombia will:

- encourage community development by reinforcing the managerial capacity of IDP associations and their participation in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of IDP assistance policies;
- promote community development projects to enhance the self-reliance of IDPs in the post-emergency phase;

Planning figures		
Population ¹	Jan. 2004	Dec. 2004
Colombia (Assisted IDPs)	180,000	201,000
Refugees of various origins	120	100
Asylum-seekers	10	10
Total	180,130	201,110

¹ Please note that according to Government figures, there are some 1.15 million IDPs inside Colombia. NGOs have estimated that there are about 3.03 million.

Total requirements: USD 5,616,549



A UNHCR-sponsored cultural centre was constructed by IDPs. UNHCR / B. Heger

- facilitate IDPs' access to basic services, such as education (including emphasis on the rights of the child), water, sanitation, and health care;
- provide identification documents to IDPs and enter undocumented children into the Civil Registry; and
- promote the rights of IDPs, ethnic groups, and indigenous communities.

The strategy will mainly cover Apartadó, Barrancabermeja, Baranquilla and Puerto Asís.

Desired impact

The programme is aimed at increased protection of IDP rights by means of an improved and more comprehensive response from the relevant state authorities and civil society organisations. Individual IDPs will have easy access to legal aid, documentation and other basic services. Sustained support for IDP associations will lead to an improvement in the IDP's self-esteem and a multiplicity of initiatives leading to self-reliance.

Organisation and implementation

Management structure

In 2004, UNHCR Colombia will operate with 36 staff (10 international, two JPOs, and 24 national) and the addi-

tional support of 16 UNVs. The office in Bogotá is responsible for the overall management of the programme and liaison with the Government, national and international agencies, members of the diplomatic community and NGOs. The Field Offices are also co-ordinating local initiatives benefiting IDPs.

Co-ordination

UNHCR is the designated co-ordinator on displacement issues for the UN system in Colombia. This task is carried out in close co-ordination with the humanitarian co-ordinator, and with the support of OCHA. In conjunction with other UN agencies in the country, the Office will work to enhance mechanisms for facilitating inter-agency co-ordination on IDP issues. Through the implementation of the Humanitarian Action Plan, the UN team will strengthen its efforts to assist IDPs in a systematic manner.

Offices
Bogotá
Apartadó
Barrancabermeja
Barranquilla
Puerto Asís

Partners
Government agencies
Attorney General (<i>Procuraduría</i>)
Office of the Ombudsman (<i>Defensoría del Pueblo</i>)
Registry Office (<i>Registraduría</i>)
Social Solidarity Network (<i>Red de Solidaridad Social</i>)
NGOs
Casa de la Mujer
CEDAVIDA – <i>Fundación Social Colombiana</i>
CINEP – <i>Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular</i>
CODHES – <i>Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento</i>
COMPARTIR – <i>Fundación Compartir</i>
ILSA – <i>Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Mujer y Futuro</i>
OIA – <i>Organización Indígena de Antioquia</i>
ONIC – <i>Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia</i>
<i>Opción Legal</i>
OZIP – <i>Organización Indígena Putumayo</i>
Project Counselling Services
SNPS – <i>Servicio Nacional de Pastoral Social</i>
<i>Taller de Vida</i>
Others
FAO
ICRC
IOM
OCHA
UNDP
UNFPA
UNHCHR
UNICEF
UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
WFP
WHO-PAHO – Pan American Health Organisation

Budget (USD)	
Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and co-ordination	1,409,552
Community services	706,900
Education	329,000
Income generation	343,000
Legal assistance	849,840
Operational support (to agencies)	500,960
Shelter / other infrastructure	152,500
Total Operations	4,291,752
Programme support	1,324,797
Total	5,616,549