

# Colombia

## Main Objectives

- Promote and support an effective State and civil society response to the consequences of internal displacement.
- Reinforce protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the prevention of further displacement by strengthening the legal framework.
- Support integration and viable return processes through post-emergency stabilisation projects for IDPs. Ensure unhindered access to basic services.
- Strengthen advocacy by raising awareness of internal displacement in Colombia and abroad.
- With the support of OCHA, act as the co-ordinating agency within the UN system of humanitarian intervention for IDPs.
- Carefully target IDP groups with specific needs, such as displaced women, children, young people and ethnic minorities (in particular, Afro-Colombians and indigenous people).



## Working Environment

### Recent Developments

The humanitarian crisis in Colombia deteriorated in 2002, causing a sharp rise in internal displacement. According to UNHCR's government counterpart, the *Red de Solidaridad Social* (RSS), there were some 168,000 newly displaced persons during the first half of 2002, almost double the number of new IDPs during the same period in 2001. According to official sources, if the current trend continues, there will be more than one million registered IDPs at the beginning of 2003. Some NGO sources estimate that the actual number is twice as high as the official figures.

The newly elected Government intends to strengthen the State's response to the internal conflict and declared a state of internal commotion in August

2002 to give more powers to the military. The Government also expressed concern about the worsening humanitarian situation and the plight of those who are displaced by the ongoing violence. UNHCR has been working closely with the office of the new Vice-President to find a common policy on internal displacement.

In 2002, the UN agencies in Colombia completed a Humanitarian Plan of Action (HPA), which sets out the priorities for co-ordinated UN intervention on behalf of internally displaced people. The HPA

Planning Figures		
Population	Jan. 2003	Dec. 2003
Columbian IDPs	110,000	150,000
Refugees from third countries, mostly urban-based	220	240
Asylum-Seekers	15	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>110,235</b>	<b>150,260</b>

**Total Requirements: USD 5,842,993**

was developed by the Thematic Group on Displacement in consultation with NGO partners and the Red Cross movement. It will focus on five main issues: co-ordination and capacity-building; protection and prevention; integration and reconstruction; health, education and social welfare; and food security. Pilot projects for this Plan have been identified in Chocó as well as in the Magdalena Medio and Valle del Cauca regions.

## Constraints

Although the State has increased its capacity to respond to internal displacement, the goals and standards set by the National System for Integral Attention to the Displaced Population have not yet been achieved. Although there have been significant improvements in the delivery of emergency assistance, the post-emergency response has to date been generally inadequate.

The State has no presence in many areas of the country, leaving IDPs without government protection. ICRC, UNHCR and other international agencies have been the only organisations present in some affected communities. Access to many IDP communities has been hampered due to continued insecurity. Frequently, IDP leaders as well as government officials have been threatened and have had to leave their communities. Whenever feasible, UNHCR and partner organisations have accompanied IDP communities on the move. However, the intensified conflict has reduced the availability of alternative locations and safe areas (espacios humanitarios), leaving more and more affected groups in precarious situations. In order to maintain its field presence, the Office is continually monitoring security measures for its staff and NGO partners.

## Strategy

### Protection and Solutions

In 2003, UNHCR will seek to reinforce the local application of existing IDP legislation and national protection mechanisms. In order to enhance the protection of IDP rights, UNHCR will work to strengthen the role and performance of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Attorney General. In collaboration with universities and the Ministry of

Public Affairs, legal clinics will be established in main towns to provide advice and support to IDPs. Government authorities and military officials will be trained on national IDP related legislation and sensitised, together with civil society, on the international standards for IDP protection set forth in the 'Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement'. The Office will further enhance the dissemination of Law 387, which sets out the rights of IDPs as well as the protection and assistance regimes in Colombia. IDP associations will also continue to receive support to enhance their ability to mitigate the effects of displacement.

In addition to these activities, movements of displaced persons will be monitored closely, particularly in the border areas where UNHCR has access. As many Colombians flee into neighbouring countries, the Office will enhance its efforts to strengthen the information and protection networks in the areas along the borders. In Colombia, this network initiative will involve national and international NGOs, the Catholic Church and local authorities when appropriate.

There will be continued efforts to promote sustainable solutions for those IDPs who wish to integrate into their receiving communities. Since under current conditions return movements are often not viable, UNHCR and its partners will support and facilitate relocation and local integration activities in the post-emergency phase. If and when IDP communities do decide to return, UNHCR will accompany them whenever possible.

### Assistance

In Colombia, UNHCR's work will focus on capacity-building. In general, the provision of emergency assistance is not foreseen. However, a number of IDP associations will receive technical and financial support through the provision of materials that will enable them to start income-generating activities. Through advocacy with government authorities, and through enhanced community services, the Office will seek to ensure that IDPs have access to shelter and basic services such as health and education.

UNHCR's programme in 2003 will highlight the specific needs of displaced women, children, adolescents and ethnic minorities, as these are



Many IDPS live in squalid, slum-like conditions, and are in need of humanitarian assistance. UNHCR / L. Boscardi

the most vulnerable groups during the process of internal displacement. UNHCR's activities will aim at empowering and supporting displaced women, strengthening women's associations and providing IDP women with identity documents. The Office will work with the Ministry of Education to increase educational facilities for IDP children in selected areas. Assistance to ethnic minorities will focus on support for minority associations that advocate respect for the cultural and property rights of displaced minorities.

### Desired Impact

The programme is aimed at an improved response to internal displacement. By working in close co-ordination with a network of State institutions and NGO partners, UNHCR will be better placed to defend the rights of IDPs. As problems of internal displacement are not high on the social and political agenda in Colombia, the Office will also work to increase the visibility of IDP issues in order to create a better understanding within receiving communities and the public at large.

## Organisation and Implementation

### Management Structure

In 2003, UNHCR Colombia will operate with 36 staff (12 international, including two JPOs, and 22 national) and the additional 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.

In January 2003, UNHCR will open a fourth Field Office in Barranquilla to cover the Atlantic Coast region of the country, thus strengthening its presence in IDP priority regions that are directly affected by the conflict. The new office will operate with three staff, two of them nationals.

### Co-ordination

UNHCR is the designated co-ordinator on displacement issues for the UN system in Colombia. This task is carried out with the support of OCHA. In co-ordination 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 Plan of Action, the UN team will strengthen its efforts to assist IDPs in a systematic and well co-ordinated manner. UNHCR will also advise the new Government of Colombia to integrate its forthcoming Action Plan on Internal Displacement into the four-year development plan. In addition, UNHCR will call for the Action Plan to be issued in the form of a law, in order to make it mandatory for the different entities of the National System for Integral Attention to the Displaced Population.

Offices
<b>Bogotá</b>
Apartadó
Barrancabermeja
Barranquilla (to be opened in January 2003)
Puerto Asís

Partners
<b>Government Agencies</b>
Attorney General ( <i>Procuraduría</i> )
Ministry of Public Affairs ( <i>Ministerio Público</i> )
Office of the Ombudsman ( <i>Defensoría del Pueblo</i> )
Registry ( <i>Registraduría</i> )
Social Solidarity Network ( <i>Red de Solidaridad Social</i> )
<b>NGOs</b>
<i>Casa de la Mujer</i>
<i>Fundación Social Colombiana</i>
<i>Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular</i>
<i>Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento</i>
<i>Fundación Compartir</i>
<i>Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales</i>
<i>Justicia y Paz</i>
<i>Organización Indígena de Antioquia</i>
<i>Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia</i>
<i>Opción Legal</i>
<i>Organización Indígena Putumayo</i>
<i>Pastoral Social (Catholic Church)</i>
Peace Brigades International
Project Counselling Services
Save the Children
<i>Taller de Vida</i>
<b>Others</b>
FAO
ICRC
IOM
OCHA
UNDP
UNFPA
UNHCHR
UNICEF
UNIDO
WFP
WHO-PAHO (Pan American Health Organisation)

Budget (USD)	
Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,197,642
Community Services	811,189
Domestic Needs	7,375
Education	189,857
Health	907
Income Generation	3,022
Legal Assistance	1,671,518
Operational Support (to Agencies)	779,934
Transport / Logistics	7,098
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>4,668,542</b>
Programme Support	1,174,451
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,842,993</b>