

Colombia

Main objectives

In 2002, UNHCR continued to promote a comprehensive response to the forced displacement of civilians caused by the ongoing armed conflict. The Office reinforced the promotion of IDPs' rights and fostered viable solutions. At the same time, UNHCR remained aware of the regional implications of the Colombian conflict through its protection networks and field presence in the border areas, and provided country of origin information to UNHCR offices working with Colombian asylum-seekers.

The operational strategy included four main sectors of intervention:

- Strengthening institutional capacity, as well as the development of policies and mechanisms to respond to internal displacement;
- Identifying the protection concerns of IDPs, returnees and communities-at-risk, and facilitating their access to legal aid and basic services;
- Formulating and implementing policies and projects to ensure viable solutions for IDP communities (socio-economic stabilisation), reinforcing their own participation in these processes;
- Promoting a response to internal displacement that is co-ordinated, inter-institutional, and takes place in priority areas.

In addition, UNHCR continued to find durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers in Colombia.

Impact

Although the humanitarian crisis in Colombia worsened during the year, UNHCR managed to enhance the protection of IDPs' rights at the national level. The Office carried out training on IDP issues, to strengthen the institutional capacity of authorities attending to IDP needs. In the areas covered by UNHCR, IDP communities and associations were supported by national and international staff. Working in partnership with NGOs, UNHCR



implemented educational activities, and provided IDP associations with management training and technical support to improve their negotiation skills to mitigate the effects of the conflict, as well as their access to basic services.

At the end of President Pastrana's administration in August 2002, UNHCR, in co-ordination with the *Red de Solidaridad Social* (RSS), independent experts and NGOs, undertook a survey on the assistance that had been provided to IDPs. The results of the survey indicated that over the previous three years, important progress had been made in the development of the legal framework and national support system for IDPs.

UNHCR, in co-ordination with OCHA, spearheaded the joint UN Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP), which was presented by the High Commissioner to government authorities, donors, academics, international agencies, and NGOs in Bogotá in Novem-

ber 2002. The plan included activities which were complementary to existing national efforts to assist IDPs, and was endorsed by the Colombian Government. During the year, UN agencies continued to advocate the national IDP legislation.

As a result of continued collaboration with the Government, the UN Thematic Group on Internal Displacement and the Vice President constituted an *ad hoc* working group to focus on voluntary return, local integration or the relocation of IDPs. UNHCR and other UN agencies also implemented a rapid response system in Chocó Province after the massacre of 119 persons in Bojayá in May 2002. UN staff assisted the displaced communities and facilitated their return home.

Working environment

The context

The most significant political developments in Colombia in 2002 were:

- the breakdown of the peace talks with the FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) in February 2002;
- the breakdown of negotiations with the other guerrilla group, the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) in May 2002;
- the election of Alvaro Uribe Vélez as President of Colombia in August 2002; and
- the announcement by paramilitary groups that they were ready to start negotiations with the new Government in December 2002.

The end of the peace process brought an escalation of the conflict, with the FARC intensifying its fight for territorial control with the paramilitary groups, and increasing urban warfare.

On 7 August 2002, President Uribe Vélez took office for a four-year term. His national security strategy consisted of a reinforced military response, coupled with political reforms, anti-corruption measures and an emphasis on social issues such as education and employment.

At the end of the year, there were 205 refugees, and six new asylum cases in Colombia. In September 2002, the Government adopted a new decree regulating the national implementation of the 1951 Convention, which removed the refugee definition of the Cartagena Declaration.

Constraints

During the year, the security situation worsened in many areas covered by UNHCR and access by humanitarian agencies to remote IDP communities became more difficult. The Office had to increase security measures for NGOs and its own staff in the three field offices in Apartadó, Puerto Asís, and Barrancabermeja.

In August 2002, the Government declared a "state of internal disorder," giving additional powers to military authorities, and making access more difficult for humanitarian aid workers.

Persons of Concern				
Main Origin / Type of Population	Total In Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Colombia (IDPs)	950,000	154,980	52	43

Income and Expenditure (USD) Annual Programme Budget				
Revised Budget	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
4,562,114	5,100,049	73,558	5,173,607	4,418,955

¹ Includes income from contributions restricted at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments. The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

Funding

During 2002, UNHCR's operations in Colombia received full donor support through earmarked contributions from several governments and private donors. The international community was kept informed through regular progress reports and briefings both in Colombia and Geneva, and the Office organised several missions for donors. In 2003, UNHCR will need additional resources to support the implementation of the Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP), which will require the expansion of the Office's programme and field presence in Colombia.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

In 2002, UNHCR undertook several institution-strengthening activities with the most relevant Colombian institutions responsible for IDPs. As a result, co-operation was reinforced with the RSS, the Ombudsman's office, and the Attorney General's office.

During the year, the Joint Technical Unit (JTU), established by both the RSS and UNHCR, supported 140 local committees responsible for the implementation of IDP policies at the local level, in their efforts to prepare their strategic plans for assistance to IDPs. The Unit developed a database of property lost by IDPs and facilitated the application of the Decree on Housing for IDPs. The JTU also designed new legal instruments to promote the education and health sectors, as well as guidelines to address the psycho-social needs of IDPs in government programmes.

UNHCR supported ethnic minority organisations to improve their security in "at-risk" areas of the country. The intensification of the conflict and the repeated displacement which several groups have suffered, necessitated a firmer and better co-ordinated institutional response. Some 16,000 indigenous people benefited directly from the project.



IDPs receive services from a UNHCR mobile registration unit in Ciudad Bolívar.
UNHCR / P. Smith

Activities and assistance

Community services: UNHCR's priority in Colombia was to foster community development with IDPs and local communities. The Office promoted several projects aimed at providing support to 24 national organisations, returnee communities, and those communities lacking the capacity to receive displaced persons. To facilitate local integration, these projects focused on the registration of IDP organisations; income-generating projects (such as agriculture, fishing, small enterprises, and trade); psycho-social activities for IDPs; and the renovation of basic infrastructure. Some 10,000 IDPs participated in these projects. The emphasis was placed on catering to the needs of women and receiving communities.

UNHCR promoted and supported the establishment of links between IDP associations in different areas of the country. As a result, key governmental institutions started capacity-building programmes with 79 of these associations. Working in partnership with the Ombudsman's office, the JTU, and NGOs, UNHCR set up an open forum on the humanitarian crisis in Colombia in November 2002, which included the active participation of various IDP associations.

At the end of the year, the Office expanded its activities to the Chocó province, which was seriously affected by the conflict. By reinforcing local associations and facilitating contacts, UNHCR supported co-ordinated interventions by local authorities and indigenous and Afro-Colombian representatives.

The Office elaborated and implemented protection strategies to assist the affected communities, supported a return plan for 102 communities, implemented six documentation campaigns, and supported the rehabilitation of houses and community buildings.

Domestic needs/household support: UNHCR provided basic material assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Education: UNHCR extended the “pedagogy and childhood protection” project to eight new provinces in 2002. The main objectives of the project were to strengthen the educational authorities; promote the integration of displaced children; and train teachers who could work in schools in conflict situations. More than 300 schools were involved in the project and some 12,000 children benefited directly from it.

The Office also made efforts to provide displaced women with access to basic rights. The activities included providing women with the same access to state benefits as men. Thirty meetings were held on the issue of violence against displaced women and girls during armed conflict. Some 30 organisations representing 8,000 women participated. Many of the Office’s activities targeted IDP women, to increase their educational and technical skills for the job market, and more than 1,000 women participated actively in UNHCR projects.

Health/nutrition: UNHCR provided health/nutrition assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Legal assistance: UNHCR’s field offices promoted the application of national IDP policies, and facilitated the local settlement and return of IDPs. The Office also worked closely with local authorities to improve protection and assistance to IDPs. It participated in territorial committees; and provided technical assistance to municipalities and provinces to prepare plans for an emergency response and the economic and social stabilisation of displaced families. UNHCR facilitated the presence of State institutions in high-risk zones and accompanied communities of returned IDPs, especially peace communities who declared themselves neutral vis-à-vis all armed groups. In the Province of Nariño, the Office started a legal aid project for IDPs within the University, assisting some 150 IDPs to address their legal problems.

UNHCR and the IDP Unit within the Ombudsman’s office trained 220 local staff in the Ombudsman’s office on international human rights law and gave them office equipment. The Ombudsman’s office organised 96 humanitarian missions to conflict areas and maintained a presence in 15 high-risk communities. UNHCR provided the Attorney General’s office with a system for keeping track of the implementation of public policies by governmental institutions. With the support of UNHCR, the National Registry office registered 61,362 IDPs and populations at risk of displacement (52 per cent women), and promoted 19 campaigns in nine different provinces using the mobile unit provided by UNHCR. In addition, the Office trained 160 local Registry officers on IDP legislation and documentation. Some 160 army and police officers were also trained on IDP rights and preventive policies.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR implemented several activities on forced displacement in the areas of advocacy and dissemination of information to increase the awareness of academic institutions, the media, as well as private sector interests which come into frequent contact with IDPs. Various initiatives were supported, such as the seminars on forced displacement at the National University in Bogotá, the University Course in *Protection and Attention to IDPs* at the Javeriana University in Bogotá and Pasto, as well as television and radio programmes on IDP issues.

Transport/logistics: Six refugees were repatriated to their country of origin.

Organisation and implementation

Management

UNHCR’s main office is in the capital city, Bogotá. Three field offices are located in Barrancabermeja (Magdalena Medio), Puerto Asís (Putumayo) and Apartado (Uraba). In 2002, two antenna offices were established in Quibdó (Chocó) and Pasto (Nariño).

At the end of 2002, there were 56 staff, including international and local staff, JPOs, UNVs and consultants. OCHA seconded six staff to Bogotá to assist

UNHCR in its UN co-ordination role on IDP issues. During the year, UNHCR established 40 agreements with national institutions and NGOs, of which 17 were concluded directly with the implementing organisation, and another 23 were signed through umbrella agencies. All projects were fully implemented and about 94 per cent of the total budget was spent.

Working with others

UNHCR is working directly with four State institutions and 13 Colombian NGOs. A prominent function of UNHCR in Colombia is the co-ordination of the UN System on internal displacement. The UN Thematic Group on Displacement, headed by UNHCR, is composed of twelve UN agencies, the JIU and the RSS. ICRC and ECHO participate as observers. In 2002, UNHCR maintained direct dialogue with the most important agencies of international co-operation, donors, and others. At the national level, the Office reinforced its complementary role with the ICRC on thematic issues, such as

protection and humanitarian assistance. At the local level, periodic exchanges took place between the regional delegates of both agencies.

Overall assessment

A comparative analysis of the beneficiary numbers, field coverage, the UNHCR staff and the available annual budgets for UNHCR's special operation with IDPs showed that this operation registered a gradual and important growth over the years. This reflects the wide acknowledgement among national authorities, the international community and civil society of the importance of the role played by UNHCR in response to the humanitarian crisis in Colombia.

During the last part of 2002, a high-level working group was established following an agreement between President Uribe Vélez and the High Commissioner. The group comprises UN agencies and ministers in the new Government, and has been

Offices

Bogotá
 Apartado
 Barrancabermeja
 Pasto (since October 2002)
 Puerto Asís
 Quibdó (since July 2002)

Partners

Government Agencies
 Attorney General (*Procuraduría General de la Nación*)
 Office of the Ombudsman (*Defensoría del Pueblo*)
 Registry (*Registraduría*)
 Social Solidarity Network (*Red de Solidaridad Social*)

NGOs
 Casa de la Mujer
 Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular
 Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento
 Fundación Compartir

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Fundación Social Colombiana
Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales
Justicia y Paz
Opción Legal
Organización Indígena de Antioquia
Organización Indígena Putumayo
Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia
Pastoral Social (Catholic Church)
Taller de Vida

Others

FAO
 ICRC
 IOM
 OCHA
 UNDP
 UNFPA
 UNHCHR
 UNICEF
 UNIDO
 UNIFEM
 WFP
 WHO-PAHO (Pan American Health Organisation)

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addressing crucial protection issues related to the return of IDPs. The working group confirmed the importance of a humanitarian response to the IDP situation, embodying respect for IDP rights.

special attention to the needs of displaced women, children and adolescents. The Office also provided support to the organisations of displaced indigenous groups and Afro-Colombians.

On the operational side, the Humanitarian Action Plan elaborated and presented in 2002, defines the operational framework for future UNHCR and UN interventions with IDPs. UNHCR incorporated a gender equity approach in all its activities, with

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure Breakdown	Annual Programme Budget			
	Current Year's Projects	notes	Prior Years' Projects	notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	755,329		0	
Community Services	205,890		316,903	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	289		2,853	
Education	1,727		2,666	
Health / Nutrition	82		328	
Income Generation	0		2,625	
Legal Assistance	376,672		(14,955)	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	358,588		57,513	
Transport / Logistics	683		2,395	
Transit Account	1,623		0	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	1,696,580		(333,327)	
Sub-total Operational	3,397,464		37,001	
Programme Support	913,618		14,484	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	4,311,082	(3)	51,485	(5)
Unliquidated Obligations	107,873	(3)	0	
Total	4,418,955	(1) (3)	51,485	
Instalments with Implementing Partners				
Payments Made	2,178,651		279,845	
Reporting Received	482,071		613,172	
Balance	1,696,580		(333,327)	
Outstanding 1st January	0		398,571	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		73,731	
Currency Adjustment	0		8,488	
Outstanding 31 December	1,696,580		0	
Unliquidated Obligations				
Outstanding 1st January	0		62,424	(5)
New Obligations	4,418,955	(1)	0	
Disbursements	4,311,082	(3)	51,485	(5)
Cancellations	0		10,939	(5)
Outstanding 31 December	107,873	(3)	0	(5)
Figures which cross-reference to Accounts:				
(1) Annex to Statement 1				
(3) Schedule 3				
(5) Schedule 5				