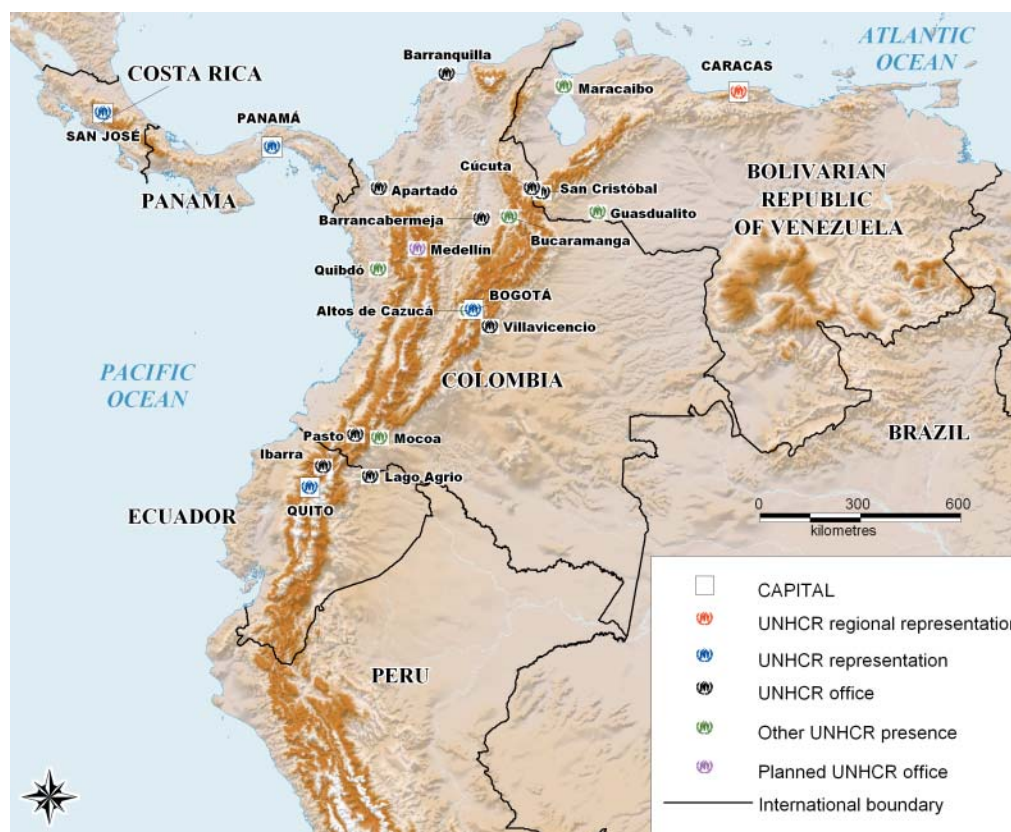


# Colombia Situation

Colombia  
Costa Rica  
Ecuador  
Panama  
Venezuela



## Working environment

### The context

Colombia continues to be caught in a complex internal conflict involving the State, two main guerrilla groups and various paramilitary organizations. Since 1990, more than 40,000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in the armed conflict. Millions of people have

been displaced within Colombia; thousands have fled to surrounding countries. Indeed, with more than three million internally displaced people (IDPs), Colombia has one of the largest displaced populations in the world. In addition, more than half a million Colombians have fled to Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama and Costa Rica as a result of the generalized violence. Most of these people have not come forward to officially seek asylum for fear of deportation or discrimination, or because they are not aware of asylum procedures. Nonetheless, they are in

### Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2007		Dec 2007	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Colombia	25,120	550	29,720	650
	Cuba	660	-	660	-
	Nicaragua	620	-	620	-
	Various	2,860	1,720	3,120	1,940
Asylum-seekers	Colombia	10,560	7,860	14,560	10,460
	Various	1,180	680	1,670	1,100
IDPs	Colombia	3,000,000	265,000	3,000,000	350,000
Others of concern	Colombians in Ecuador	250,000	-	250,000	-
	Colombians in Venezuela	238,000	15,560	254,000	31,350
	Colombians in Panama	10,470	4,570	10,690	4,790
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,539,470</b>	<b>295,940</b>	<b>3,565,040</b>	<b>400,290</b>



A mobile registration team, part of an emergency documentation campaign for newly-displaced people in south-western Colombia. UNHCR / M.-H. Verney

need of international protection and thus of concern to UNHCR.

In Colombia, the humanitarian situation has not improved following the re-election of President Alvaro Uribe in 2006 and the demobilization of paramilitary groups. Human rights violations, including extra-judicial killings and disappearances, are common. Illegal armed groups recruit children – often forcibly – in many areas of the country. More than a million children do not go to school.

In 2006, an escalation of violence led to new displacements, particularly among indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in Chocó, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Guajira provinces. In some cases it was not conflict but military operations to eradicate coca crops that forced people to flee. It is likely that the displaced population will continue to increase in 2007, with indigenous people and Afro-Colombian groups under the most threat. Many communities at risk remain trapped in the midst of conflict without any solution in sight.

The Government is the main provider of humanitarian assistance for displaced people in Colombia. In 2005, it approved a budget of USD 2 billion to assist displaced people between 2006 and 2010. Government programmes focus mainly on recovery issues, such as housing, income generation, education and health. Colombia has a very sophisticated legal framework and institutional structure to support the humanitarian response. Nevertheless, as reiterated by the Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, there is a considerable

gap between the legislation and its implementation. This has been acknowledged by the country's Constitutional Court. The Court has ordered the Government to provide a minimum standard of assistance for the displaced, additional resources for that purpose and comprehensive reports on the progress made, including on compensation for the victims of the conflict.

Elections will take place in Venezuela and Ecuador at the end of 2006 in complex political landscapes. In both cases, UNHCR will look for an effective dialogue with the new governments on their asylum obligations and more specifically on the implementation of the Mexico Plan of Action.

## The needs

The majority of displaced Colombians seek anonymity in the big cities of the region. Without official registration and proper documentation, they have difficulty availing themselves of basic government assistance, employment, health care and education. Displaced girls are often more vulnerable to sexual and gender-based abuse, exploitation and early pregnancy than other teenagers. There is a need for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence to have access to medical, psychological and legal assistance.

Colombian refugees and asylum-seekers in the region generally have the same access to public health and education services as the local population. In the most isolated areas, however, public services are often insufficient even for the local population. But the biggest problem is access to land and employment. This situation is particularly serious for those families of concern to UNHCR who lack documentation. Many of these people are victims of discrimination and extortion and live in very precarious conditions in big cities or close to the borders. Refugees with specific needs find it particularly difficult to integrate locally; resettlement is often the only viable durable solution for them.

In 2006, UNHCR's assessment of public policies in Colombia revealed that security issues and difficult access to economic and social rights are the main preoccupations for displaced people. According to the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation, the main problems for displaced households are related to access to land, housing and jobs. The average monthly income of a displaced person is far lower than the national average, and most work in the informal sector. The situation is particularly precarious for displaced families headed by single women; adolescents vulnerable to crime or forced recruitment into armed groups; and older people without support.

**Total requirements: USD 23,874,822**

## Main objectives

UNHCR seeks to promote a collaborative and comprehensive response to internal displacement in Colombia and to protect Colombian asylum-seekers and refugees in the surrounding countries.

### In the asylum countries, UNHCR will:

- Provide international protection to all refugees and asylum-seekers in the region.
- Seek durable solutions for refugees, particularly through local integration and resettlement.
- Ensure that other Colombians in need of international protection enjoy basic rights.

### In Colombia, UNHCR will:

- Help prevent displacement.
- Ensure protection and humanitarian assistance for displaced people.
- Foster durable solutions.

### Key targets for 2007

#### Asylum countries

- All asylum-seekers and refugees in the region are duly documented.
- In Panama, permanent residence is granted to the protracted refugee population (some 230 refugees from El Salvador and Nicaragua) and to at least 400 Colombians under temporary humanitarian protection.
- All survivors of incidents of sexual and gender-based violence who come to UNHCR's knowledge have access to medical, psychological and legal support.
- All refugees and asylum-seekers in the region have access to public health and education services.
- At least 470 new microcredits are granted benefiting some 2,000 refugees in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela.
- Some 150 community-based projects are implemented in border communities in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela, benefiting some 75,000 people, including refugees, other Colombians of concern and local populations.
- At least 900 vulnerable refugees in Ecuador and Costa Rica are resettled in third countries.

#### Colombia

- State institutions implement the orders of the Constitutional Court on minimum standards of treatment for displaced people.

- 120,000 undocumented displaced people are provided with documentation by the Special Unit for Assistance to Vulnerable Populations of the National Registry.
- 33,000 families that are either displaced or at risk of being displaced benefit from land property protection measures in seven provinces. Women and men are registered as land owners.
- Free legal and psychological assistance is given by legal aid clinics in nine big cities, directly benefiting some 8,000 displaced families.
- At least 1,300 families in Nariño, Bucaramanga, Putumayo and Soacha benefit from economic stabilization programmes.
- The presence and capacity of the Office of the Ombudsman is strengthened in all border areas and the areas most affected by the conflict.
- Nine indigenous organizations and 68 Afro-Colombian community councils actively participate in the formulation of public policies on the prevention of and response to displacement.
- A common humanitarian strategy and plan of action for 2007 is implemented by the Humanitarian Country Team.

## Strategy and activities

In 2007, a supplementary programme will cover UNHCR's activities for internally displaced Colombians, whereas the operations for refugees, asylum-seekers and others of concern are covered under the annual programme.

In line with the Mexico Plan of Action (see the regional overview for Latin America), UNHCR promotes a comprehensive response to displacement within Colombia and the protection of Colombian asylum-seekers and refugees in the surrounding countries. The overarching goal is to promote an effective response by States and civil society groups. In Colombia, border monitoring, early warning procedures and the provision of country of origin information to asylum countries is an integral part of this regional strategy. In the surrounding countries, UNHCR will promote self-reliance and socio-economic integration. UNHCR will reach almost half a million Colombians in need of international protection. The Office strives to gauge the numbers, as well as the main characteristics and needs of Colombians who need international protection but have not sought asylum.

### Refugees, asylum-seekers and other Colombians of concern to UNHCR

In the asylum countries, UNHCR will consolidate the legal framework for the protection of displaced people

by strengthening national eligibility commissions and developing regional protection networks. The Office will undertake assessments on the number and the needs of those Colombians who are in need of international protection, but who have not come forward to seek asylum. UNHCR will foster the economic integration of refugees, particularly in urban areas, through the development of microcredit schemes and job placements.

In close coordination with governments, UN agencies, NGOs and international organizations, UNHCR will implement community-based projects (e.g. for basic services and programmes to encourage self-reliance) that help both displaced Colombians and the local population. The Office will seek to have these programmes included in the respective national development programmes. UNHCR will also seek to strengthen the capacity of state actors and implementing partners to deal with sexual and gender-based violence. Lastly, the Office will consolidate its resettlement programme in the region.

### Internally displaced Colombians

UNHCR will promote a comprehensive and coordinated response to the humanitarian crisis in order to protect the rights of displaced people and those at risk of displacement. It will seek durable solutions, taking into account the specific needs of vulnerable people. Following discussions with the Government, in 2007 UNHCR will consolidate its presence in the Field and open a new office in Medellín. Under the framework of the Humanitarian Country Team, consisting of UN agencies and international NGOs, a common humanitarian strategy will be developed and a comprehensive humanitarian action plan for 2007 implemented.

The Office will continue to help build institutions responsible for the protection and assistance of displaced people, particularly in isolated areas that are at risk of displacement (e.g. Magdalena Medio, Chocó and Nariño). UNHCR will also reinforce IDP associations, as well as local organizations focusing on protection, citizens' rights and access to social services. In accordance with the High Commissioner's priorities, the Office will sensitize and educate displaced young people on issues such as human rights, sex and reproduction, and HIV/AIDS prevention. Specific programmes will be implemented to encourage the participation of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities in the formulation of public policies, prevention of displacement and the implementation of projects.

### Constraints

In certain areas of Colombia, the internal conflict makes it difficult for humanitarian aid agencies to reach affected communities. The presence of armed groups has reportedly increased in certain border areas, making staff security a serious and persistent concern.

Many displaced people live in isolated border areas where the presence of the State is very weak. The lack of security and public services hinders return and causes further displacement. The presence of landmines is another serious constraint. According to Government figures, the casualty rate from landmines in Colombia is now the highest in the world.

In surrounding countries, xenophobia is on the rise and public attitudes towards Colombian refugees and asylum-seekers are hardening.

## Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence	Colombia	Asylum countries
Number of offices	12	9
Total staff	102	94
International	17	18
National	59	48
UNVs	20	22
JPOs	3	6
Deployees	3	-

### Coordination

In the countries of asylum, UNHCR coordinates its activities with government institutions and NGOs dealing with refugee issues. In 2007, UNHCR will strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations such as the Catholic Church, international organizations and NGOs. UNHCR will also continue to participate in UN Country Teams. In Ecuador, the Office will coordinate the Northern Border Inter-Agency Thematic Group established to draw up a common development and humanitarian strategy for that area.

In Colombia, UNHCR works closely with the Government, a wide range of national partners, international organizations and NGOs to provide protection. Each of the UN agencies is called upon to contribute to the response to internal displacement based on its mandate and expertise. While overall responsibility for the UN response lies with the Humanitarian Coordinator, UNHCR has the lead role in IDP protection. In line with the UN Humanitarian Reform and as recommended by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, three thematic groups (protection, assistance and basic services, and early warning) have been established. As designated lead agency for the Protection Group, UNHCR will coordinate the development of a comprehensive protection strategy and plan of action for 2007.

## Partners

### Asylum countries

**Government:** Immigration Board, Ministry of Labour (Costa Rica); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ecuador); *Oficina Nacional para la Atención de Refugiados (ONPAR)*, *Ministerio de Gobierno y Justicia* (Panama); *Comisión Nacional para Refugiados* (Venezuela).

**NGOs:** *Asociación de Consultores y Asesores Internacionales (ACAI)*; *Asociación de Profesionales para el Desarrollo (APRODE)*; *Comisión Pro-Refugiados*; Ecuadorian Red Cross; *Fundación Ambiente y Sociedad*; Catholic Church Ibarra; *Fundación Esquel*; *Desarrollo, Acción y Vida*; Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS); *Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)*; *Vicariato del Darién*; *Pueblos del Bosque*; Panamanian Red Cross; Caritas Táchira; Jesuit Refugee Services; Caritas Machiques; Caritas Venezuela; *Justicia y Paz*; *Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP)*.

**Other:** UNV.

## Colombia

**Government:** *Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional*, *Defensoría del Pueblo* (Ombudsman's Office), *Procuraduría General de la Nación* (Prosecutor's Office), *Registraduría* (National Registry).

**NGOs:** *Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular*, *Consultoría de Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento*, *Fundación Compartir*, *Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales*, *Opción Legal*, *Secretaría Nacional de Pastoral Social*, *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia*, *Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas*.

**Others:** *Universidad Nacional de Colombia*, UNV, IOM.

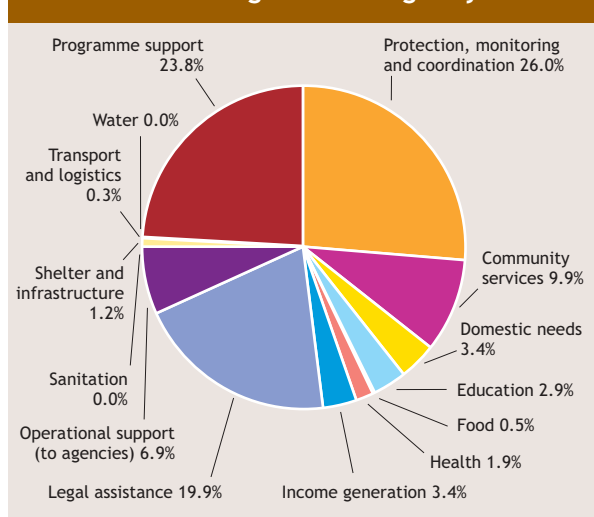
## Budget (USD)

Activities and services	2006	2007		
	AB <sup>1</sup>	AB <sup>2</sup>	SB	Total
Protection, monitoring and coordination	4,658,510	2,351,823	3,451,961	5,803,784
Community services	1,775,192	813,312	1,532,889	2,346,201
Domestic needs	605,182	725,007	0	725,007
Education	523,898	335,655	428,806	764,461
Food	83,916	145,928	0	145,928
Health	332,294	240,414	0	240,414
Income generation	607,521	473,179	601,673	1,074,852
Legal assistance	3,552,582	1,430,554	3,560,541	4,991,095
Operational support (to agencies)	1,232,015	818,298	807,652	1,625,950
Sanitation	50	0	0	0
Shelter and infrastructure	210,668	140,913	118,440	259,353
Transport and logistics	45,723	31,101	0	31,101
Water	960	0	0	0
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>13,628,510</b>	<b>7,506,183</b>	<b>10,501,962</b>	<b>18,008,145</b>
Programme support	4,263,681	3,113,409	2,753,268	5,866,677
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,892,191</b>	<b>10,619,592</b>	<b>13,255,230</b>	<b>23,874,822</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes activities in Colombia (USD 8,443,625), Costa Rica (USD 1,705,293), Ecuador (USD 3,944,085), Panama (USD 857,493), Venezuela (USD 1,841,696) and regional activities (USD 1,100,000).

<sup>2</sup> Includes activities in Colombia (USD 353,362), Costa Rica (USD 1,926,507), Ecuador (USD 4,446,802), Panama (USD 847,304) and under the Regional Office in Venezuela (USD 3,045,617). Note that the 2007 requirements for internally displaced people in Colombia are presented in a Supplementary Programme Budget.

### 2006 Annual Programme Budget by sector



### 2007 Total budget by sector

