



COLOMBIA SITUATION

Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela

December 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

7.2 million

Registered internally displaced persons in Colombia.

At least **50%** of those displaced fled to slums of the 27 largest cities.

340,000

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

167,000

Persons living in refugee-like situation in Venezuela. **7,500** Recognized refugees by Venezuelan authorities, the majority of whom originate from neighboring Colombia

233,000

Persons sought asylum in Ecuador, mostly from Colombia from 1989 to 2016. **60,000** Recognized refugees, 95% of whom are Colombian citizens

CONTEXT INFORMATION

Colombia

- 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 which was approved by Congress and entered into force on 1 December. UNHCR will focus on sensitive border regions, where protection gaps are widespread. In this respect there is a need to step up emergency preparedness and strengthen asylum procedures to guarantee the rights of persons of concern. The Government is also in the process of initiating peace negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN), the second largest guerilla in the country.

Colombia situation: Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela

UNHCR presence

as of 20 Dec 2016



- Displacement inside the country is ongoing, mainly due to new dynamics relating to violence, although numbers have decreased in recent years. Moreover, mixed flows are increasing due to the political and economic situation in other countries in the region.
- UNHCR's National Protection and Solutions Strategy aims to respond to new and on-going protection needs as well as help achieve durable solutions for internally displaced persons, refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.

Ecuador

- Since 2000, UNHCR has worked in Ecuador supporting the State to protect the largest refugee population in Latin America. Ninety five percent of this population is composed of people fleeing the armed conflict in neighbouring Colombia. Some 90% of Colombian refugees in Ecuador have expressed their wish to remain in Ecuador. In addition, Ecuador is receiving increasing numbers of Venezuelans and asylum seekers of other nationalities (Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, Congolese, etc.).
- UNHCR has been implementing a multi-year comprehensive solutions strategy since 2014, which allows the operation to respond holistically to the situation faced by refugees, facilitating durable solutions and access to rights through a comprehensive approach that integrates legal, economic and social dimensions.
- The strategy aims at the gradual inclusion of refugees in national plans and policies, not only as beneficiaries, but also as economically active persons, who enjoy the same rights as Ecuadorians and contribute to the development of their country of asylum.

Venezuela

- Since 2013, Venezuela has been experiencing episodes of violence as a result of the political, social and economic tension in the country. In 2016, the situation has become particularly dire due to very high inflation, chronic shortage of basic items and food, disruption of health services, deterioration of public services and alarmingly high levels of criminality.
- This situation has created political instability has also prompted numerous Venezuelan citizens to leave the country –either for short or long term– seeking to fulfil basic needs, livelihood opportunities and/or safety conditions that they have lost in their country. 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. With current trends, it appears likely that the number of Venezuelan asylum seekers could reach 20,000 persons by the end of 2016.
- Venezuela has generously hosted Colombian persons of concern for decades; however, the majority remain unregistered and are particularly affected by the deteriorating economic situation, increased migratory controls and insecurity. UNHCR's 2016-2018 protection and solutions strategy in Venezuela focuses on facilitating access to documentation and promoting comprehensive solutions for all persons of concern, in alignment with the Brazil Plan of Action.
- Based in a multi-year National Human Rights Plan and a new survey to determine the needs of persons of concern, including refugees and stateless persons, UNHCR and Venezuelan authorities are working to secure solutions for them through documentation and effective access to rights.



UNHCR 2016 – Colombia. Visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- UNHCR is mentioned among the UN agencies which will play an important role in supporting the Colombian government in the implementation of the peace agreement, particularly in relation to assistance to victims. UNHCR has been a key partner in supporting the Government in the protection and search for durable solutions for IDPs and has worked with the Colombian Constitutional Court to establish national IDP jurisprudence, and with other institutions to support the response to recurring displacement.
- 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 will participate in UNHCR's Graduation Approach programme nationwide.
- The Operation in Venezuela has strengthened field presence and began the implementation of a profiling exercise of persons in need of international protection in Venezuela (asylum, statelessness, complimentary protection).

MAIN CHALLENGES

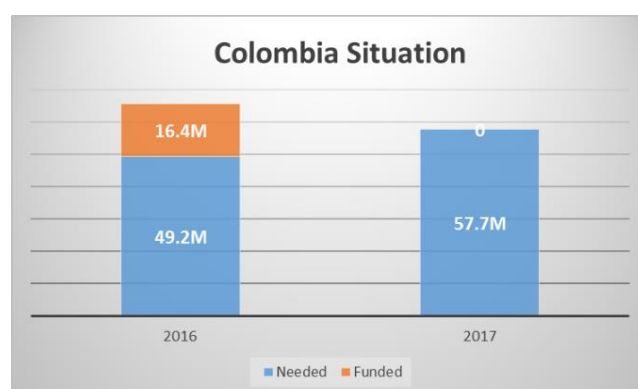
- The situation in Colombia continues to be very volatile with continued displacement and many humanitarian and protection risks in the areas where the FARC will demobilize. UNHCR will continue to monitor protection incidents and possible new displacement.
- There is an urgent need to reinforce UNHCR's field presence in the border areas between Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Brazil and increase emergency preparedness to address cross-border movements.
- In Ecuador, the current economic crisis is negatively affecting the continuity of the Government's social policies as well as state presence and programmes in the norther border area and other areas with a high concentration of refugees. Any inclusion of refugees in public programmes will entail more investment from UNHCR.
- In Venezuela, the escalation in the political confrontation between the Government and the opposition hinders the capacity of State institutions to address protection gaps and promote solutions for persons of concern, including legislative reforms, regularization pathways and hosting community development.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- Through a comprehensive needs assessment, the necessary funding for operations in the Colombia Situation to implement its planned activities is over 57 million USD. Funding levels for this situation remain extremely low (25% in 2016) although humanitarian needs are expected to continue in the initial phase post peace-agreement in the three countries.

The consequences of underfunding include:

- A significant part of the efforts towards solutions made by UNHCR, the government and communities in the past years are likely to have limited impact despite their criticality in a post agreement phase.
- UNHCR will have limited capacity to respond, especially in places with recurring emergencies, to undertake risks assessments and to promote conflict resolution and new forms of communications between communities and authorities.



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 agreements 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.
- Synergies among Colombia Situation operations improved and solutions for refugees, IDPs and other PoC consolidated (three countries in the Multi-Year Multi-Partner initiative)
- Advocacy and communication activities strengthened for increased awareness and visibility of PoC in the region.



UNHCR 2016 – Ecuador - Refugee family from Colombia part of the Graduation Model pilot project.