

Colombia



UNHCR supports the Government's documentation campaign, which will provide 100,000 displaced Colombians and others at risk of displacement with national identification documents in 2008. *UNHCR/M.Brooks*

Executive summary

Colombia continues to experience a complex internal armed conflict that has left millions of Colombians displaced internally, and many others leaving the country. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) continues to rise, with an annual average of some 200,000 newly displaced people since 2003. The impact of displacement is strongest in underdeveloped rural areas in 186 of Colombia's 1099 districts. In recent years, the conflict has shifted from central regions towards the border departments of Nariño (southern Colombia), Chocó (north-western Colombia) and Arauca (north-eastern Colombia). Indigenous and afro-colombian people have been disproportionately affected by the conflict.

Colombia has an advanced legal framework for the protection of displaced people, including a comprehensive assistance system. The

Government has allocated USD 2.5 billion (nearly 1 per cent of the national budget) to meet the needs of displaced people between 2006 and 2010. In spite of this, serious protection and assistance problems remain. The gap between the legislation and its application has been illustrated in various judgments on internal displacement by the Constitutional Court and in UNHCR's recently released Evaluation of Public Policies (2004 – April 2007).

Within the framework of the Mexico Plan of Action, UNHCR's overall goal in Colombia is to promote a comprehensive response to internal displacement. As the leading agency of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) protection cluster and in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, UNHCR is working to close the protection gap and to seek durable solutions for displaced people. UNHCR aims to

strengthen national protection mechanisms, supporting the State or other relevant actors.

In 2008, UNHCR's operation will be consolidated focusing on the most affected areas and strengthening the protection capacity in the field. A priority will be to promote a substantial increase in the allocation of resources by the State for displacement issues. The main protection needs of IDPs will be addressed through providing identification documents to 100,000 Colombians that are displaced or at risk

of displacement and by integrating 50,000 displaced children into the Colombian education system.

The most critical challenges will be the ongoing conflict and the weak presence of the State and civil society in many areas of displacement.

Title	Comprehensive protection response to IDPs in Colombia
Population of concern	IDPs*, of whom 470,000 directly assisted by UNHCR
Time frame	January to December 2008
Total requirements	USD 18,719,715

* According to the Constitutional Court of Colombia, there is a discrepancy between the real number of displaced people and the number given by the national registration system (2.2 million). The Court cites the Director of the *Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional* who acknowledged that the number of IDPs in Colombia is close to three million (Order of Compliance 218, dated 11 August 2006, related to the landmark Judgment T-025).

Main objectives

UNHCR will seek to close the protection gap, primarily through strengthening national protection mechanisms. The three main objectives of this effort will be to:

- Contribute to the prevention of forced displacement;
- Promote protection and assistance of IDPs; and
- Foster durable solutions for IDPs.

Strategy and activities

To achieve its objectives, UNHCR will use three primary implementation mechanisms:

- **Consolidate the legal and public policy framework and strengthen institutional capacity:** UNHCR will work with Colombian authorities to refine further the legal and public policy framework governing the protection of displaced people, as well as to build the State's institutional capacity to comply fully with its responsibilities, in particular at regional and local levels in key regions.
- **Strengthen the capacity of IDP and community groups:** UNHCR will strengthen the capacity of IDP and



A suburb of Bogotá where displaced people settle. Due to displacement, many children are behind in school. UNHCR / P. Smith

- community groups to ensure that the displaced, returnees and the population at risk of displacement can effectively demand their rights, including through their participation in the building of public policies and accessing social programmes.
- **Reinforce the State's supervisory and compliance mechanisms:** UNHCR will provide support to strengthen domestic supervisory mechanisms in order to identify protection gaps and problems in protection delivery and recommend corrective measures so that the State's response to displacement is consistent with its obligations.

In 2008, UNHCR will target 50 districts that have been most affected by displacement in the last three years, including several where it currently has no or very limited activities. In areas where UNHCR has no physical presence, it will reinforce strategic alliances with key partners such as the Ombudsman's Office, the Prosecutor's Office, Pastoral Social, ICRC, OHCHR and local NGOs, as well as through the IASC Protection Thematic Group (cluster).

During the year, UNHCR will focus on critical issues for displaced people and communities at a high risk of displacement. These include providing official identification documents as a means of prevention and protection; protection of property, including land and housing; ensuring access to primary education; and safeguarding the rights of indigenous and afro-colombian people. UNHCR

will also increasingly emphasize regional initiatives to ensure a coherent response to the Colombia situation, including border monitoring, contingency planning and the promotion of indigenous rights.

2008 will be a critical year in the development and implementation of policies related to displacement due to the assumption of functions by new governors, mayors and local councils in all parts of the country for a four-year term. UNHCR will play a fundamental role in ensuring that the multi-annual action plans developed by each governor, mayor and line ministry fully involves displaced people.

In 2008, UNHCR will consolidate its operation, reinforcing field offices and focusing on areas most affected by displacement. The Office will shift its operational structure so that the ratio of field staff increases from 52 to 60 per cent, and will allocate more resources to regional initiatives. In line with the regional approach of the Colombia situation, the field office in Barrancabermeja will be closed and a field



When Sterling joined the UNHCR Learning Circle, a initiative to help displaced children catch up in school, he could barely read and write. His progress since then has his teachers hoping that he will be able to join the mainstream school soon. *UNHCR / P. Smith*

office will be established in Arauca to reinforce border monitoring with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. UNHCR will also continue to prioritize its participation in the IASC mechanism (cluster approach) as a means to ensure an increased participation in displacement issues by other UN agencies and other international actors recognizing the Office's limited mandate and capacity, particularly to meet the development needs of displaced people. Particular attention will be paid to strengthen ties with UNICEF and WHO/PAHO in the education and health sectors, as well as other UN agencies in Colombia.

Challenges

In certain areas of Colombia, the internal conflict makes it difficult for humanitarian agencies to reach affected communities. In spite of the demobilization of paramilitary structures, the emergence of new irregular armed groups is causing renewed insecurity in some areas of the country.

Many displaced people live in isolated border areas where the presence of the State is weak or does not exist. This complicates UNHCR's goal of ensuring that the protection gap is reduced through the reinforcement of State structures.

Partners

Government partners: *Consejería Presidencial para la Equidad de la Mujer, Contraloría General de la Nación, Defensoría del Pueblo, Departamento Administrativo del Sistema de Prevención, Atención y Recuperación de Desastres de Antioquia, Gobernación de Antioquia, Gobernación de Nariño, Gobernación de Santander, Gobernación del Guaviare, Gobernación del Meta, Desarrollo Rural, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Ministerio de la Protección Social, Ministerio del Interior y Justicia, Ministerio del Ambiente y Vivienda, Secretaría de Educación Gobernación de Antioquia, Personería Municipal Soacha, Procuraduría General de la Nación, Programa Presidencial Colombia Joven, Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, Unidad Técnica Conjunta /Acción Social*

NGO implementing partners: *Caritas Medellín, Catholic Relief Services, Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli, Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento, Fundación Mujer y Futuro, Instituto Latinoamericano de Servicios Legales Alternativos, Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas, Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia, Opción Legal, Opportunity International, Secretariado Nacional de Pastoral Social*

Others: IOM, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, PAHO/WHO, UNHCHR, ICRC

Cluster leads: Protection – UNHCR, Emergency assistance and basic services – UNICEF, WFP, PAHO/WHO (rotating), Early recovery – UNDP, IOM (joint)

Key targets

- Population of concern directly assisted by UNHCR and its partners increase from 350,000 to 470,000
- The amount of resources allocated by the State to displacement issues increases by 20 per cent
- 50 per cent of the provinces and districts most affected by displacement have in place integrated action plans for displacement (PIUs)
- 100,000 Colombians who are displaced or at risk of displacement are issued national identification documents
- 100,000 hectares of land belonging to some 80,000 families who are displaced or at risk of displacement are protected
- 50,000 displaced children are integrated into the education system
- Policies on integrating displaced children, youth, older people and people with disabilities into government programming are adopted by four government ministries
- Policies to protect indigenous and afro-colombian communities that are displaced or at risk of displacement are adopted by at least five relevant authorities
- 1,000 members of the armed forces are trained by UNHCR on their protection role in key regions for prevention of displacement and protection of IDPs
- IASC Protection Groups are operational in at least six regions severely affected by forced displacement and operational partnerships are established with at least five UN agencies

Total requirements

Budget – 2008	
Activities and services	USD
Protection, monitoring and coordination	6,478,123
Community services	2,038,943
Crop production	343,270
Education	403,741
Income generation	58,717
Legal assistance	5,392,560
Operational support (to agencies)	994,645
Shelter and other infrastructure	223,126
Total operations	15,933,125
Support costs (7%) *	1,084,729
Programme support	1,701,862
Grand total	18,719,715

* A seven per cent support cost is recovered from contributions against supplementary programmes to cover indirect costs for UNHCR.

