

LATIN AMERICA



UNHCR

2013 GLOBAL REPORT

- Argentina
- Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Uruguay
- Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)



Through activities like the *Fundamusal* programme, Colombian refugee children in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are being given the chance to integrate

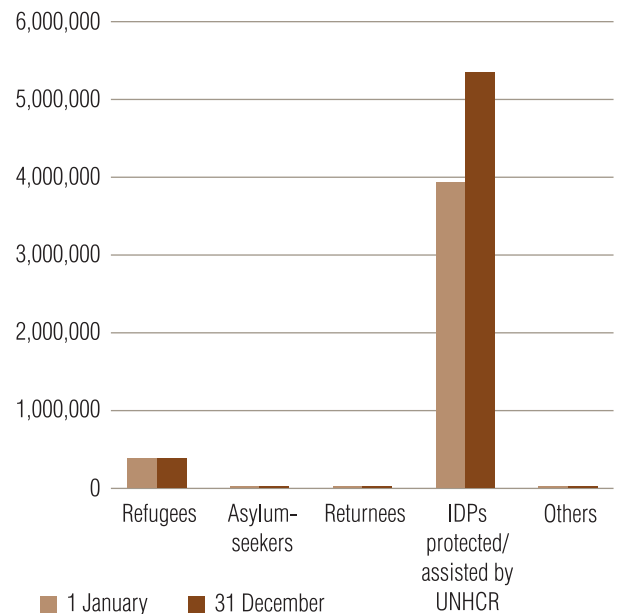
UNHCR



| Overview |



People of concern to UNHCR in Latin America | 2013



Highlights

- UNHCR developed successful and innovative regional solutions strategies, such as the Transitional Solutions Initiative in Colombia and the Comprehensive Solutions Initiative in Ecuador and Costa Rica.
- The Office continued strengthening regional refugee status determination (RSD) procedures, in 2013. Argentina and Brazil joined the Quality Assurance Initiative framework, while Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama continued to engage in the process. This protection programme increased the efficiency of national refugee determination procedures and regional coherence.
- Peace talks between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), combined with implementation of the Law on Victims and Land Restitution, were promising. However protection and security concerns persisted, not only in Colombia, but also in countries of asylum.
- Preparations to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees included consultations with governments, academics and civil society members. This “Cartagena +30” commemoration will offer a unique opportunity to analyse and strengthen regional protection mechanisms.
- As part of the commemoration process, in October UNHCR convened a roundtable on the interpretation of the extended refugee definition. This expert meeting, held in Montevideo, was part of a broader project to develop guidelines on international protection for people fleeing armed conflict and other situations of violence and to clarify the interpretation and application of this extended refugee definition.

| Results in 2013 |

Working environment

While Colombia's peace talks progressed, and implementation of the Law on Victims and Land Restitution (Victims Law) brought new opportunities to achieve durable solutions for those forcibly displaced, protection needs remained. Every month, some 1,000 Colombian nationals crossed into Ecuador in search of safety and protection, and many others entered the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The armed conflict continued to affect northern Ecuador, where most refugees arrived. In this border area, the impact of illegal armed groups continued to affect the security and integration of refugees, many of whom felt safer in bigger urban settings.

As national and transnational organized crime increased so did incidents of violence and the numbers of people in need of international protection, including those from Central America to Mexico, the United States, Canada and Costa Rica. The number of unaccompanied children fleeing violence and organized crime in Central America and Mexico, and seeking protection, also increased in 2013. High levels of criminal violence affecting Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala contributed to greater numbers of their nationals seeking safety and protection in Costa Rica, Mexico and Nicaragua.

Integration agreements among countries in the Andean region and South America could facilitate solutions for refugees, such as the MERCOSUR resolution to grant residence permits for nationals of States Parties. This may be an opportunity for UNHCR and States in the region to develop an innovative programme to facilitate Latin American migration and protect Colombian refugees who are settled in other South American countries, such as Brazil and Argentina. In line with the objectives of the existing Solidarity Resettlement Programme, such a strategy could provide a durable solution for thousands of refugees and promote burden sharing with host countries, including Ecuador.

Achievements and impact

Efforts to develop solutions strategies related to Colombian refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) progressed in 2013. In Colombia, UNHCR and UNDP have implemented the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI), developing sustainable solutions for IDPs in 17 communities living in urban locations. TSI offers considerable potential to assist victims of forced displacement in regaining their full citizens' rights.

In Ecuador, through the Comprehensive Solutions Initiative (CSI), UNHCR coordinated with national authorities to better understand the complex refugee situation and reach durable solutions: resettlement,

naturalization to facilitate local integration, alternative migratory solutions and voluntary repatriation. CSI and national plans were aligned, including advocating the right to work and universal access to social security, health, education and housing. CSI aimed to reopen spaces of protection and dialogue. Costa Rica has also developed the CSI with the objective of achieving self-reliance. Refugees will need to be helped to find opportunities to generate income, either through formal employment or self-employment, and to have access to education and training at all levels. Enhancement of the current labour insertion scheme will be sought through new alliances with the private sector and other key partners. A corporate social responsibility programme *Living Integration* is being adopted within companies to enable job placement for hundreds of refugees.

In Ecuador, UNHCR provided an analysis of the new Refugee Decree 1182, which regulates the RSD procedure and its impact on the asylum system; the main issues concerned the recognition rate and the elimination of due process safeguards. Renewed dialogue with the Refugee Directorate resulted in UNHCR's inclusion as an observer in the Eligibility Commission, the body in charge of refugee recognition. While UNHCR's efforts yielded positive developments, the national RSD system faced challenges due to the Decree's dispositions and as a result of restrictive administration practices since 2011.

An RSD workshop for National Governments of Mesoamerica took place in Managua, Nicaragua, in 2013, attended by 40 delegates from national institutions responsible for refugee issues in Central America and Mexico. This forum enabled regional participants to share experiences of dealing with protection challenges, particularly sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) survivors, children and adolescents; victims or potential victims of trafficking; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) individuals.

In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, UNHCR's partnership with the Refugee National Commission evolved through the design and implementation of a joint working plan in 2013. The Eligibility Commission rate of refugees' recognition increased on 2012, and a new operational approach saw more than 7,000 asylum-seekers profiled or registered – more than previously.

A new migration law adopted by Costa Rica began to improve protection standards for refugees and asylum-seekers. It featured the integration of migrants and refugees, the 1951 refugee definition, as well as the incorporation of gender, a new special category for victims of trafficking; it reiterated the *non-refoulement* principle, and adopted refugee regulations that included work permits for asylum-seekers (renewable every two years). This law was the result of an extensive

participatory process, including consultation with asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR provided technical advice on matters affecting the population of concern.

In Costa Rica, a law against Trafficking in Persons (TIP) was adopted, that created the National Coalition against Smuggling of Migrants and TIP, in which UNHCR participated as an observer and provided technical advice.

In relation to other forms of violence in Central America, UNHCR established a strategic partnership with the Central American Integration System to better understand the dimensions of the problem, the protection gaps and raise awareness of new regional displacement trends.

Having recognized the impact of violence on its population, the Government of Honduras passed a decree establishing an inter-institutional commission for the protection of people displaced by violence. This body formulates policies and adopts measures to prevent forced displacement, provide assistance and protection, and find solutions for the displaced population. The decree expressly recognized cooperation with UNHCR.

In 2013, Nicaragua acceded to both of the UN statelessness conventions while Peru acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

Constraints

Despite progress in the region through the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI), and a general positive protection environment, acceptance of regional protection needs by different eligibility commissions remained low. Security concerns continued to impact asylum procedures.

The general elections in Honduras delayed the creation of the national Inter-Institutional Commission on Forced Displacement.

In Mexico and other countries, a lack of access for refugees to formal employment opportunities represented a challenge for effective local integration.

In Argentina the exposure of women to SGBV at the hands of smuggling networks, as well as to the risk of sexual exploitation, were particular concerns.

Operations

The operation in Colombia is described in a separate chapter.

In Argentina, UNHCR developed a comprehensive strategy to promote access to effective legal remedies

and expand livelihood opportunities, from which over 1,200 people benefitted.

The organization inaugurated its presence in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to closely monitor the main entry points of asylum-seekers, coordinate with local stakeholders and strengthen local capacities to deal with the needs of greater numbers of people of concern. A partnership with the Ministry of Justice was established to develop and strengthen the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE), and to establish activities that enhance the visibility of refugee issues.

In Costa Rica, the local RSD process was fully revised following the implementation of the QAI project, in order to advocate adequate protection space.

In Cuba, all people of concern have had access to RSD. Although the country had not ratified the 1951 Convention, the Cuban Government modified its policy by opening the door for the local integration of some dual national (Cuban/Syrian) families who arrived in 2013.

The Refugee Directorate reported over 56,400 recognized refugees in Ecuador in 2013. The country's new Refugee Decree provided recognized refugees with the right to work and access to basic social protection. The CSI, developed by UNHCR in coordination with national authorities, looked toward a three-year strategy that prioritized local integration together with a livelihoods approach. Ecuador continued implementing recommendations made by the Urban Refugee Steering Group in 2012, which focused on enhanced livelihoods and community outreach, areas also included in the proposed strategy. Through a wide range of activities, the operation aims to strengthen effective mechanisms for community outreach, with local partners through protection networks, and effective coordination with local governments. The Office aims to work on the legal, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of local integration.

High levels of criminal violence affecting El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in 2013 contributed to an increasing number of nationals from these countries seeking safety and protection in Mexico. The Mexican Government's role in support of refugees and other people of concern was enhanced and expanded, in particular through the signing of an agreement between the Mexican Secretariat of the Interior and the Federal District to offer improved integration opportunities.

In Central America, there was growing evidence of violence-induced forceful displacement. This situation led to serious human rights abuses and persecution, affecting adolescents and children. Meanwhile, Governments in El Salvador and Honduras put in place coordination and policy-making structures to respond to the needs of IDPs and refugees in the region.

UNHCR supported the implementation of Panama's 2011 law, which permitted the regularization process of some 400 refugees, mainly Colombians, who had lived under a Temporary Humanitarian Protection (PTHs) regime while awaiting permanent residency. The Regional Technical Hub in Panama and the Regional Legal Unit in Costa Rica supported the organization's regional strategies on SGBV through the XI Latin American Course on International Refugee Law, which emphasized the importance of having an SGBV approach in every action taken by refugee protection authorities during the RSD process and beyond.

In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the organization consolidated its partnership with the Office of the Ombudswoman by implementing activities of the joint work plan, which aimed to ensure people of concern could access their rights. The organization worked with the Ministry of the Interior, to improve protection mechanisms for human trafficking victims. On prevention and response to SGBV, the operations' specific strategy was finalized and rolled out, and local work plans were implemented.

| Financial information |

Operations in the Latin America subregion were constrained by limited resources, as only 46 per cent of the total budget of USD 81.5 million was funded in 2013. Nevertheless, collaborative networks and the incorporation of refugee issues in national social plans

helped maximize results. However, lack of sufficient funds hampered the implementation of durable solutions, which require significant and sustained investment.

Budget and expenditure in Latin America | USD

Operation		PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 2 Stateless programme	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	Total
Argentina Regional Office ¹	Budget	4,264,664	126,305	0	0	4,390,969
	Expenditure	3,154,229	126,304	0	0	3,280,534
Brazil	Budget	4,912,318	208,868	0	0	5,121,186
	Expenditure	2,528,682	104,581	0	0	2,633,263
Colombia	Budget	1,250,050	0	0	28,388,581	29,638,631
	Expenditure	858,870	0	0	18,870,843	19,729,712
Costa Rica	Budget	2,056,514	0	0	0	2,056,514
	Expenditure	1,778,346	0	0	0	1,778,346
Ecuador	Budget	21,178,736	0	0	0	21,178,736
	Expenditure	11,640,442	0	0	0	11,640,442
Mexico	Budget	3,098,622	0	0	0	3,098,622
	Expenditure	2,214,931	0	0	0	2,214,931
Panama Regional Office ²	Budget	5,696,697	158,151	0	0	5,854,849
	Expenditure	3,872,178	158,152	0	0	4,030,329
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Budget	9,974,811	0	0	0	9,974,811
	Expenditure	3,829,174	0	0	0	3,829,174
Regional activities ³	Budget	160,744	0	0	0	160,744
	Expenditure	146,437	0	0	0	146,437
Total budget		52,593,157	493,324	0	28,388,581	81,475,062
Total expenditure		30,023,288	389,037	0	18,870,843	49,283,167

¹ Includes activities in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

² Includes the Regional Legal Unit in Costa Rica.

³ Regional activities cover the entire Americas Region.

Voluntary contributions to Latin America | USD

Earmarking / Donor	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	PILLAR 4 IDP projects	All pillars	Total
LATIN AMERICA OVERALL				
United States of America			10,900,000	10,900,000
LATIN AMERICA OVERALL Total			10,900,000	10,900,000
ARGENTINA REGIONAL OFFICE				
Argentina			126,000	126,000
United States of America	290,000			290,000
ARGENTINA REGIONAL OFFICE Total			126,000	416,000
BRAZIL				
Brazil	24,204			24,204
United States of America	250,000			250,000
BRAZIL Total				274,204
COLOMBIA				
Canada		3,894,839	486,855	4,381,694
Central Emergency Response Fund		435,000		435,000
European Union		3,856,235		3,856,235
Italy		127,714		127,714
Luxembourg		454,545		454,545
Norway		1,668,368		1,668,368
Spain		643,501		643,501
Sweden		623,269	1,342,883	1,966,151
Switzerland		1,079,914		1,079,914
COLOMBIA Total			1,829,738	14,613,122
ECUADOR				
Colombia	162,162			162,162
European Union	2,799,329			2,799,329
Private donors in Spain	211,303			211,303
Private donors in the United States of America	10,000			10,000
United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security	24,075			24,075
ECUADOR Total				3,206,869
MEXICO				
United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security	518,232			518,232
MEXICO Total				518,232
VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF)				
European Union	981,675			981,675
Private donors in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela			228,779	228,779
VENEZUELA (BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF) Total			228,779	1,210,454
COSTA RICA				
Private donors in Switzerland	20,950			20,950
COSTA RICA Total				20,950
PANAMA REGIONAL OFFICE				
European Union	260,756			260,756
Sweden	168,481			168,481
United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS	35,000			35,000
PANAMA REGIONAL OFFICE Total				464,237
Total	5,756,167	12,783,385	13,084,516	31,624,068

Note: Includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the "New or additional activities – mandate-related" (NAM)