



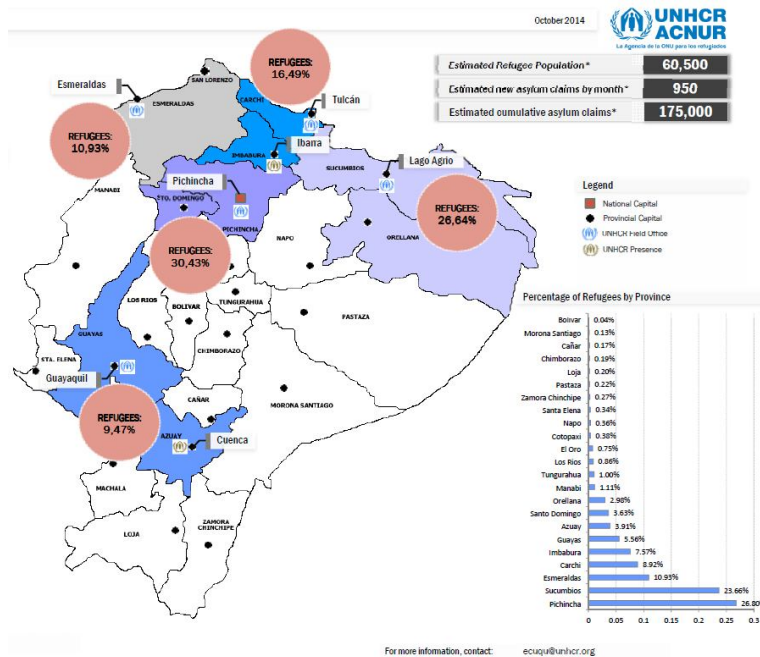
**UNHCR
ACNUR**
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados



ECUADOR

We have a DUTY to protect; we have a
RESPONSIBILITY to solve
June 2015

UNHCR IN ECUADOR



Since 2000, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, works in Ecuador supporting the State to protect the largest refugee population in Latin America, 98% of which are Colombian refugees who have left their country due to the internal conflict.

In accordance with our international mandate and the constitutional guarantees of Ecuador:

- We protect refugees as our fundamental duty, expanding the protection space through

promotion of public policies, legislation, enhanced administrative practices and protection interventions where appropriate.

- We promote the rights of refugees in the National Development Plan of Ecuador (*Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir, 2013-2017*), encouraging a public policy that contemplates local integration and naturalization of recognized refugees in Ecuador.
- We share the responsibility to find durable solutions for refugees, including the strategic use of resettlement as a protection tool and as a solidarity measure, and –in the future– voluntary repatriation.
- We fight xenophobia and discrimination, together with civil society organizations and government agencies, through public information campaigns designed to promote solidarity and peaceful coexistence.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Ecuador ratified the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees in 1958 and its 1967 Protocol in 1969. These instruments are effectively regulated by the Presidential Decree No. 1182 of 30 May 2012, which defines the national asylum system.

The 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution recognizes the principles of universal citizenship and Human Mobility- section III, article 40- . Besides, article 41 recognises the right to seek asylum (art. 41), in accordance with international law and human rights instruments.

Over the last few years, discrimination towards people of other nationalities, including the refugee population, has risen in Ecuador. Stigmatization and exclusion especially affect refugee women, unaccompanied children, afro-descendants and the indigenous population.

Some media channels have also fomented discrimination in their messages. While such sentiment is not generalized, it is a cause of concern for UNHCR, as the situation could deteriorate and thus hinder genuine integration between host communities and refugees.

Cross-cutting issues

- Special attention to children and adolescents. This population group is directly affected by the conflict; some of them are victims of forced recruitment and many lack access to education.
- Fighting gender-based violence. In Ecuador, 6 out of 10 women have been victims of violence. Female refugees, who often had been victims of sexual or gender based violence, are also commonly at risk, of violence in the country of asylum.
- Special attention to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the beneficiary population

**Source INEC, 2011.*

Population of concern

Refugees are people who flee from their country of origin due to a founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or belonging to a social group, and who cannot or, due to said fears, do not wish to seek the protection of their country, or who, lacking nationality and finding themselves, as a result of such events, outside their usual country of residence, cannot or, due to said fears, do not wish to return to it.

And also are those persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador in 2014, 60,500 people have been recognised as refugees in the country. The same report shows that since 2000, at a moment when only 390 refugees were recognized, about 175,000 people have sought asylum in Ecuador. 23% of them are children and adolescents.

70% of refugees in the country live in urban areas. Most of the remaining 30% live near the border in underdeveloped and isolated regions with limited basic services and infrastructure.



950 persons cross the border in search of international protection per month*



60.500 people recognised by the State as refugees since 2000*



175.000 people have sought asylum *

**Source: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2014. Period 2000-2014.*



AREAS OF ACTION

Protection and humanitarian assistance

- Humanitarian assistance provided to vulnerable newly arrived families.
- Guidance and support in terms of rights and responsibilities to asylum seekers.
- Technical support provided to State institutions with regards to refugee issues.



Favouring durable solutions

- UNHCR Works in coordination with State institutions and civil society organisations, to foster new durable solutions opportunities for UNHCR operation in Ecuador, strengthening livelihoods and enhancing peoples sustainable self-sufficiency.
- Specific activities:
 - Resettlement as a protection tool and promotion of cooperative approaches to foster resettlement programs in Ecuador.
 - Migratory alternatives for refugees, ranging from access to dependent or MERCOSUR visas, to naturalization or labor migration opportunities.
 - Information provided about voluntary repatriation to people interested in this alternative.
 - Interagency and multi sector approach against sexual and gender based violence.
 - Comprehensive and sustainable livelihoods opportunities offered.

Strengthening the right to asylum

- UNHCR offers technical assistance and advocates in order to develop enhanced public policies, legislation and administrative practices that ensure a better access to the asylum system.
- Specific activities:
 - In coordination with State institutions, the documentation issued to refugees and asylum seekers provide them with adequate access to services and integration needs.
 - Law and migratory policy developed or strengthened according to international standards.
 - People with specific needs have access adequate services.

Improving public information and combating discrimination

- In close coordination with institutions such as the Public Ombudsman of Ecuador, UNHCR works to promote a better perception of the situation on the refugee population and the work for solutions.
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- Specific activities:
 - Anti-discrimination campaign *Inspiras Dignidad* implemented in coordination with the Ombudsman's Office.

UNHCR AND ITS MANDATE

UNHCR is the leading global organisation saving the lives, protecting the rights, and building a better future for millions of refugees, forcibly displaced and stateless people. Using the 1951 Convention as its primary tool,

UNHCR's main mandate is to safeguard the protection of approximately 50 million uprooted people in the world over.

Working with governments and partners we help refugees return home safely, settle where they found refuge or resettle in another country.

These solutions can take time. In the meantime, we find new ways to help refugees build a better future by promoting self-reliance, encouraging education and improving skills. We also work on the frontlines, delivering life-saving assistance, protecting fundamental rights and providing refuge.

In Ecuador, UNHCR started its operations in the year 2000 at the request of the Ecuadorian Government in view of the growing number of refugees arriving from Colombia in the wake of the internal conflict.

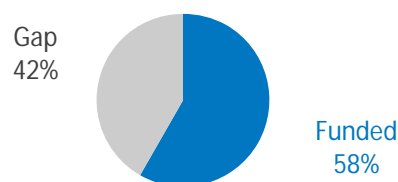
UNHCR's strategy is underpinned by alliances and partners, ranging from the national Government to provincial and municipal authorities, civil society organizations, the media, the international community, other UN agencies and the refugee and hosting communities themselves.

Partners

Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de Guayaquil (CDH) | Corporación Mujer a Mujer (COMAM) | Defensoría del Pueblo | Fondo Ecuatoriano *Populorum Progressio* (FEPP) | Fundación Ambiente y Sociedad (FAS) | Fundación de las Américas (FUDELA) | HIAS | Hogar de Cristo | Fundación Tarabita | Oxfam Italia | Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados | RET |

Budget

USD 21.8 millions requested



Presence in the field

Staff and affiliated workforce 112 persons

79 national staff and affiliated workforce
33 international national staff and affiliated workforce

Offices

1 Country Office in Quito
5 Field Offices: Quito, Guayaquil, Esmeraldas, Tulcán, Lago Agrio
2 Field Presence en Ibarra y Cuenca

To learn more about UNHCR in the world and in Ecuador visit: www.acnur.org or/ www.unhcr.org

Facebook: [Acnur/Unhcr Américas](https://www.facebook.com/ACNURAmericas), Twitter: [@ACNURAmericas](https://twitter.com/ACNURAmericas)

Or visit our office in Quito: Av. Amazonas 2889 y la Granja, edificio de Naciones Unidas.

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