

# Ecuador

## Monthly Update

N.4 | April - May 2022



Yuliana and Raibelis tell their stories through dance, thanks to a UNHCR-supported contemporary dance initiative. Photo: UNHCR/Jaime Gimenez

### Figures at a glance

#### Population figures

**72,033** Historical figure of refugees recognized by Ecuador<sup>1</sup>

**57,356** refugees with active cases registered on UNHCR's database<sup>1</sup>

**96%** from neighbouring Colombia

#### Our 2022 response in figures

**52,162** people supported as of the end of April 2022

**10,255** people assisted with cash for protection or emergent needs

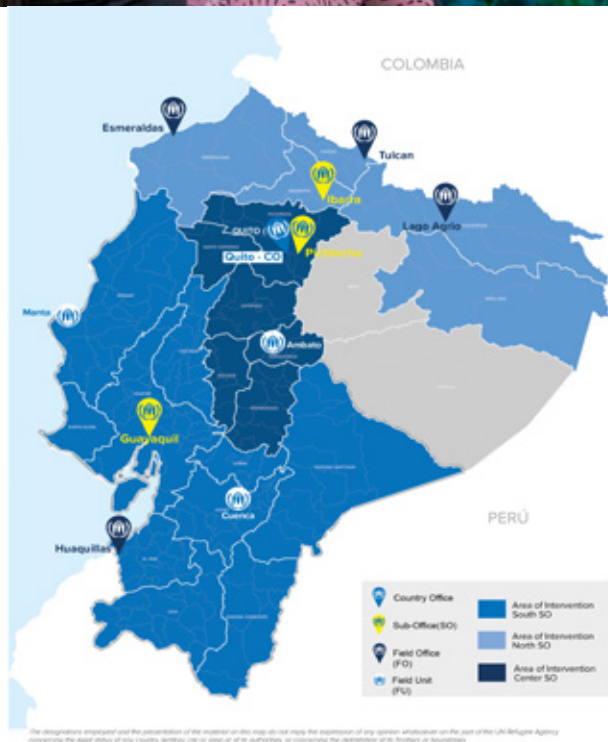
**678** people provided with entrepreneurship or business training

**17,068** people received legal guidance & assistance

**1,072** GBV survivors supported

**15,521** people received hygiene kits

**7,568** people supported with emergency shelter



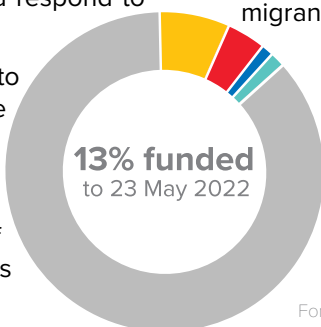
### Operational context

Ecuador is currently being affected by high levels of violence, with ongoing reports of homicides, robberies, prison riots and assaults – most prominently at both the northern and southern borders. This prompted the declaration of a state of emergency in the provinces of Esmeraldas, Manabí and Guayas and the deployment of larger military and police presence. UNHCR and partners are monitoring the impact of violence on refugee-hosting areas and continue to work alongside communities to understand and respond to their most pressing needs.

Colombians and Venezuelans continued to enter Ecuador, at a steady rate during the first four months of the year. UNHCR has remained present in host communities, registering needs and providing support to both authorities and people in need of international protection to facilitate access to the asylum system.

Moreover, UNHCR continues to work with national and local authorities to help strengthen their response to forced displacement and integration needs.

With overall improvements to the COVID-19 pandemic, the mandatory use of facemasks across Ecuador as well as capacity restrictions were lifted. The fourth dose for people in highly vulnerable conditions was announced, while the third dose remains available for all people, including refugees and migrants.



**76.1M required**

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

For more information on funding, please visit [reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador](https://reporting.unhcr.org/ecuador)

<sup>1</sup> Historical figure registered by the government. UNHCR registers active refugee cases in ProGres to end of April.

## Main populations of concern in Ecuador

### Venezuelans

#### Key figures

**513,903** Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Ecuador<sup>2</sup>

**62%** estimated to be in an irregular status<sup>3</sup>

**45%** estimated to be between 26 and 35 years old<sup>3</sup>

**23%** estimated to have a higher education degree<sup>3</sup>

#### Main needs

**87%** access to food<sup>3</sup>

**65%** access to livelihoods or employment<sup>3</sup>

**53%** access to housing or shelter<sup>3</sup>

Venezuelans continue to lead in numbers of arrivals in Ecuador. 34,713 people entered Ecuador in April, with a daily entry average of 1,157 Venezuelans.

### UNHCR launches Me Tuve Que Ir campaign



Me Tuve Que Ir (I had no choice but to leave) is an initiative that seeks to tell the stories of Venezuelans who had to leave their country. The campaign highlights the diversity of causes prompting their displacement, including insecurity, violence, difficulty in accessing basic services or economic scarcity.

The campaign publishes a story every month, and can be [accessed here](#).

### Colombia

**1,150** Colombians were registered in need of international protection in 2022<sup>2</sup>

**347** were registered in April, a significant increase

#### Main needs of Colombians in Ecuador

**69%** access to food, housing, clothing<sup>4</sup>

**24%** access to employment and services<sup>4</sup>

**6%** access to documentation<sup>4</sup>

The arrival of Colombians in need of international protection continues, registering a 38% increase compared to January. In April alone, 347 Colombians had registered to seek asylum in Ecuador, 22 more than last month, for a total of 1,150 people so far in 2022.

### Local, refugee leaders help communities recover from the tremor

Alexandra loves helping others. This 18-year-old Colombian refugee is helping people affected by the 26 March earthquake in Esmeraldas by delivering food, raising awareness on risk prevention and participating in community activities. Along with other local and refugee community leaders, they are all helping bring joy to the city's vulnerable neighborhoods.

"People must know they should vacate dangerous places, where there is glass. When they had to leave their homes, I helped calm them down. There has to be someone who remains calm. And I explained to them how to take precautions if this happens again," said Alexandra.

By mid-April, nearly 17,000 people had been affected by the tremor, including around 2,000 refugees in Esmeraldas. Over 8,000 homes were lightly, partially or severely damaged, while 15 health centres, 16 schools and 12 public buildings were also impacted. At the request of the National Risk and Emergencies Management Service, the Humanitarian Country Team's response was activated. UNHCR, has been delivering assistance and protection to refugees and locals affected by the earthquake. In addition, UNHCR continues to advocate for the inclusion of refugees within the government response and assistance.



<sup>2</sup> According to data estimated by UNHCR and its partners within the Refugee and Migrant Working Group (GTRM, by its acronym in Spanish)

<sup>3</sup> Third R4V Joint Needs Assessment, [www.r4v.info](http://www.r4v.info)

<sup>4</sup> 2021 Protection Monitoring available at our [data portal](#)

**Activities in the field**

**NATIONAL** | Solve | Enhancing socioeconomic inclusion

**UNHCR, Global Compact and Sin Fronteras Programme launch seal of recognition for companies that include refugees in Ecuador**



UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, the United Nations Global Compact Ecuador Network and Sin Fronteras Programme launched the Inclusive Company Seal, an initiative that seeks to recognize private sector entities that have taken action in favour of the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and others in human mobility in Ecuador.

The Inclusive Company Seal is part of the Companies with Refugees (Empresas con Personas Refugiadas) initiative, which brings together more than 20 companies that have made an active commitment to the socioeconomic inclusion of people forced to flee. These and other companies part of the United Nations Global Compact Ecuador Network will be aspiring to the Inclusive Company Seal. [Find out more.](#)

**NATIONAL** | Solve | Enhancing socioeconomic inclusion



**UNHCR supports national inclusive entrepreneurship platform**

With support from UNHCR and UNDP, Ecuador now has a National Entrepreneurship Guide, a tool to help people develop their businesses. The guide, [available online](#), is also a platform where refugees and locals can access training, financial service tools and marketing sessions, among others.

The Guide was launched during an event chaired by Carla Muirragui, Vice Minister of Production and Industries. This tool will allow refugees and their host communities to improve their businesses and contribute to Ecuador.

**LAGO AGRIO, SUCUMBÍOS** | Solve | Enhancing socioeconomic inclusion

**Speed mentoring programme helps entrepreneurs develop businesses**



70 micro-entrepreneurs within the gastronomic, agriculture and cosmetics industries received virtual “Speed mentoring” training provided by the International University (SEK) and UNHCR. They learned about business development, marketing and business regularization.

**CHICAL, CARCHI** | Solve | Enhancing socioeconomic inclusion

**UNHCR helps local and refugee entrepreneurs showcase their crafts**

UNHCR, local authorities and partner FUDELA held a gastronomic and handicraft fair where 38 locals and refugees showcased their products.



**NATIONAL** | Protect | Supporting the asylum system

**UNHCR helps strengthen interview techniques for government entities**

Within the Asylum Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI), UNHCR trained 31 DPIN officials on how to conduct interviews with people with specific needs. The training also included staff from Administrative Units for International Protection (UAPI) from Quito, Guayaquil, Azogues, Esmeraldas, Ibarra y Tulcán. According to the results of a survey carried out jointly by UNHCR and DPIN, 55% of the personnel who work in the DPIN offices consider that training should be more frequent.

The training provided tools on how to apply the Age, Gender and Diversity approach in the Refugee Status Determination interviews and focused on tailored interview standards and techniques with groups, like children, adolescents, survivors of gender-based violence and LGBTI people.



**QUITO, PICHINCHA** | Protect | Supporting the asylum system

**UNHCR and Pichincha Prefecture sign agreement to strengthen the response to refugees**

Through a letter of understanding, the two entities will seek to increase technical cooperation, the delivery of services through mobile brigades, developing livelihoods opportunities and the implementation of community work in prioritized cantons.

Pichincha is home to around a quarter of all people in human mobility in the country, being the province with the highest concentration of refugees and migrants in the country. In this context, the Prefecture has shown constant solidarity, having a dedicated programme that provides care, guidance and information on services, access to health and vocational training, among others. The letter of understanding will strengthen these actions. [Find out more.](#)



**GUAYAQUIL, GUAYAS** | Protect | Promoting a favourable protection environment

**UNHCR supports locals and refugees access health, education services**



In Mapasingue, a neighborhood in western Guayaquil, UNHCR took part in a community health fair, in which 150 people participated. Legal orientation and protection cases were identified and referred to partners for assistance. In Juan Montalvo and Urbano neighborhoods, also in Guayaquil, UNHCR and partner CDH supported 40 families with enrolment in the education system, as well as with access to the health system.

**CARCHI** | Protect | Promoting a favourable protection environment

**UNHCR and local authorities help create rights promotion community group**



In El Angel, UNHCR together with the Cantonal Council for the Protection of Rights formed the first group of community defenders composed of 6 Colombians and Venezuelans and 20 Ecuadorians. This first multinational team will oversee promoting human rights in their community and alerting authorities in case of violations.

**GUAYAQUIL, GUAYAS** | Protect | Promoting a favourable protection environment

**UNHCR and the Guayaquil Bus Terminal Foundation work together to provide information and protection to people in human mobility**



The bus terminal is a key point for refugees who transit through Ecuador, and who are heading to other locations within the country or who seek to reach the south of the continent. Having an information point within the Terminal will allow us to be close to our persons of concern and reduce protection risks, even for those who want to stay in Guayaquil.

Like in Guayaquil, UNHCR has established additional information points in Allurquin and Manta, to continue bringing vital information closer to refugees.

**NATIONAL** | Empower | Promoting peaceful coexistence

**Schools join Model United Nations for Refugees in Ecuador**

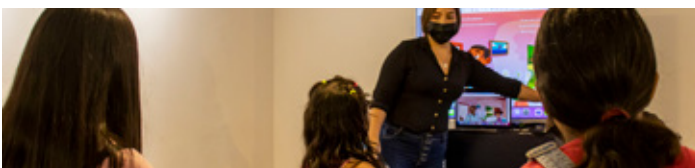


Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Colegio Liceo Internacional and Colegio Menor joined the #MUNRefugeeChallenge to discuss responses to the needs of refugees. Students were trained by UNHCR on the refugee situation in Ecuador, UNHCR’s mandate and durable solutions.

**ESMERALDAS** / Empower | Promoting peaceful coexistence

**UNHCR-supported language lessons**

**help refugees integrate**



In Esmeraldas, UNHCR supported the local museum and the “Tambo Lectura” (Reading House) project to organize English and Portuguese lessons for 30 Ecuadorian and refugee children. The course allowed refugee children and their parents to strength their local integration through community networks.

**HUAQUILLAS, EL ORO** / Empower | Promoting peaceful coexistence

**Summer camp brings refugee and local**

**children together**



In Huaquillas, 40 children and adolescents attended the holiday camp “I learn while playing’ where UNHCR and partners promoted integration through education and games. This activity was conducted in collaboration with local GTRM partners.

## The European Union, UNHCR and IOM join forces to support the Ecuadorian Government in the prevention and response to Covid-19



The European Union, UNHCR and IOM, the International Organization for Migration presented the results of the joint efforts carried out between July 2020 and December 2021 to promote integration among the refugee, migrant and vulnerable Ecuadorian population affected by the pandemic. This initiative focused on providing assistance, to improve access to social protection services, public health, shelters; and also on raising awareness about the virus, promoting the inclusion of refugees and migrants in national responses to the pandemic.

186 accommodation units for refugees were installed in health centres and hospitals, used as triage and isolation areas. In addition, 138,298 units of personal protective equipment were provided to frontline humanitarian personnel, including: surgical gowns, gloves, masks, respirators and protective suits.

This partnership between the European Union, UNHCR and IOM facilitated the inclusion of refugees and migrants in the response provided by the State to curb the spread of Covid-19 in Ecuador. [See more here.](#)

## UNHCR and Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcome Japan's contribution to refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Ecuador



UNHCR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility in Ecuador celebrated the contribution from the Government of Japan to respond to the urgent needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, as well as host communities in the country.

“We express our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Japan for their contribution to improving the alarming situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela currently in Ecuador,” said Giovanni Bassu, UNHCR Representative in Ecuador. “Thanks to this, we will be able to provide more emergency assistance and to strengthen our support to the asylum system and the provision of documentation, in addition to reinforcing access to information and legal orientation.”

With Japan's contribution, UNHCR will be able to continue supporting vocational training and skills development to promote insertion into formal employment and boost financial inclusion and self-sufficiency for people on the move and their host communities. [See more here.](#)



Stories from the field

#InternationalDanceDay

**Dance helps refugees heal and integrate in Ecuador**



#IDAHOT

**Gay activist strives to make her host country more inclusive for all refugees**

**QUITO, PICHINCHA** / Empower | Promoting peaceful coexistence

When Raibelis left her country, Venezuela, she thought she would put away her dance shoes in a deep drawer, at least for a long time. The 21-year-old had been part of a dance group in Trujillo, her hometown in western Venezuela, for seven years and she dreamed of becoming a professional dancer.

But these dreams quickly vanished when the company fell apart, as members of the group started leaving the country, one after the other, fleeing insecurity and the widespread shortage of basic supplies. Finally, Raibelis understood that she had no choice but to leave too, with her son, now 3 years old. After a long and difficult journey in which they traveled hundreds of kilometers on foot, mother and son settled in Ecuador.

There, a UNHCR-supported programme gave Raibelis, along with a handful of other refugees and migrants, the opportunity to dance once again. The series of workshops helped her to overcome the feeling of isolation now that she is away from her family, and to handle the loneliness of the pandemic. In Ecuador, UNHCR and its partners implement several programmes that promote integration and peaceful coexistence. From dance, theater, audiovisual production and painting, hundreds express themselves in different formats.

[Click here](#) to find out more about this programme.

Yeraldine Cabrera fled her native Venezuela for many of the same reasons that have driven millions of her compatriots to flee in recent years. She suffers from a health problem, and widespread medicine shortages made it impossible for her to get the treatment she needed back home. But there was another reason. Yeraldine is a lesbian, and she and her partner, Zaillet, faced discrimination due to their sexual orientation.

Although being gay made their journey to safety much harder and riskier, the couple eventually found community in Ecuador. Yeraldine is now working with an outreach group to help make her host country a more inclusive place for LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers like herself.

“I want people to see beyond the symbols – beyond the rainbow flag and the LGBTQI+ acronym – and recognize that we are human beings... and we want to help and to belong.”

As a participant in Redes Comunitarias, a UNHCR project aimed at giving refugees and migrants the tools they need to become community leaders, Yeraldine has become an unofficial spokesperson for the LGBTQI+ cause. She has helped produce podcasts, videos and events aimed not only at teaching displaced LGBTQI+ people about their rights but also making their host country a more accepting place. [Read more.](#)

**We thank the contributions of our donors**

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**UNHCR Ecuador is grateful for the critical and generous support provided by donors who have contributed with earmarked and unearmarked funding.**



**UNHCR Ecuador is grateful for the support from private donors.**



Private donors in Japan and Spain

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