

# NRC's operations in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama

## Humanitarian overview

There exist two major humanitarian crises in this multi-country programme: the increase in conflict and violence in Colombia, and the continued and unprecedented migration from Venezuela. Both situations have repercussions for neighbouring countries. According to the UN there are now 13.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama.

Despite the 2016 peace agreement, Colombia remains in the top five countries with the highest number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in the world. The country also hosts the third largest number of people in need of international protection and is the third most neglected crisis in the world. In 2023, Ecuador experienced a nightmarish descent into violence and Panama reached historic records in the number of refugees and migrants with humanitarian needs.

An unprecedented number of refugees and migrants are on the move across Colombia, Ecuador and Panama in mixed migration movements – mainly from Venezuela, but also from African, Asian, and Caribbean countries. The vast majority of women, men and children are fleeing violence, persecution, poverty, disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change. Most informally cross the deadly Darien jungle seek-

ing to reach North American countries in search of protection and better opportunities.

## NRC's operation

In Colombia, we help IDPs in hard-to-reach areas where authorities struggle to protect civilians and provide help. Despite the ongoing conflict, we also contribute to the process of reintegration of former combatants into civilian life and promote durable solutions in territories affected by violence. In Ecuador and Panama we help Colombians forced to flee their country.

The crisis in Venezuela means that many people are seeking humanitarian aid in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama. We provide emergency humanitarian assistance to those who need it most, and contribute towards the integration of refugees and migrants in host countries.

### NRC Colombia, Ecuador & Panama

Established	1991
International staff	13
National staff	812



## NRC in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama

### Country office

Bogotá



### Areas of operation

**Colombia:** Amazonas, Antioquia, Arauca, Atlántico, Caquetá, Cauca, Cesar, Chocó, Cundinamarca, Guaviare, La Guajira, Magdalena, Meta, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Tolima, Valle del Cauca, Vichada

**Ecuador:** Azuay, Cañar, Carchi, Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, El Oro, Esmeraldas, Guayas, Imbabura, Loja, Los Rios, Manabi, Morona Santiago, Orellana, Pichincha, Santa Elena, Santo Domingo, Sucumbios, Tungurahua

**Panama:** Chiriqui, Darien, Panama, West Panama

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### Protection from violence

We analyse protection risks in the contexts where we work and help to ensure displaced people and communities are protected, by preventing and responding to violence, coercion and actions taken by others to deny them their rights.

NRC delivers specialised protection services, including case management and individual protection assistance, where other services are limited or unable to adequately reduce protection risks. We work with displaced and host communities to design programmes that promote safety and reduce risks as consequence of the armed conflict in Colombia as well as the protection crisis in Venezuela.

### Education

We help displaced, migrant and refugee families keep their children in school, and work with youth and adults so they can complete their education and find safe vocational training opportunities. We continue to work with schools to reach people with educational materials and kits, identify challenges and solutions to ensure continuity of education, and ensure those who are out of school are not neglected.

### Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

Our ICLA team provides reliable and up-to-date legal services on access to documentation, access to the refugee status procedure, and other regularisation mechanisms.

We also provide legal services to help people claim or exercise rights that are denied or violated for refugees and migrants. These populations face particular challenges in enjoying their housing rights. So, we work with justice mechanisms – traditional, state-based and collaborative resolution mechanisms – to help prevent evictions and collaboratively resolve disputes.

### Shelter and settlements

Access to shelter is essential for one's dignity, privacy, health, and physical and social protection. Our shelter and settlements teams provide access to adequate shelter solutions for affected people across all phases of displacement.

This ranges from rapidly deployable emergency shelter solutions that can save lives, to supporting early recovery and promoting durable solutions.

### Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH)

Without sufficient safe water for drinking and personal hygiene, it is difficult to stay healthy and combat the Covid-19 pandemic. We provide infrastructure and equipment for water and water treatment, as well as hygiene and sanitation kits.

We also teach good hygiene practices and help displaced, migrants and refugee families to achieve better living conditions.

### Livelihoods and food security

When displaced people, migrants or refugees do not have access to food supplies, NRC provides food assistance.

We promote livelihood strategies that protect, restart and strengthen the ability of individuals and households to earn a living. The inclusion of host communities in this response is key to preventing discrimination and xenophobia.

### Cash transfers

In times of crisis, cash-based humanitarian assistance enables people in need to buy food, hygiene products or pay rent. We make electronic transfers through different means (such as smartphones or electronic payment cards) to displaced people and host communities.

We also provide vouchers, coupons or cards that can be exchanged for a specific amount of goods and services.

### Emergency response

When a new emergency arises, we provide humanitarian assistance to communities where no permanent field presence has yet been or can be established.

We are present in border areas where migrants and refugees need assistance. We provide food, water, hygiene kits, legal assistance and protection, and promote access to temporary shelter. We also help displaced, migrant and refugee children to go to safe learning environments during acute emergencies.

## **NRC in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama is grateful for the generous support from our donors:**

- Colombian Ministry of Education
- Education Cannot Wait
- European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
- Hilton Foundation
- International Organization for Migration
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
- Norwegian Embassy Colombia
- Swedish International Development Agency
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)
- United Nations World Food Programme
- United Nations Peace-Building Fund
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United States Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration
- USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance

Your support will bring relief and hope. Displaced people need our support to ensure their hard-won peace is consolidated.