

NRC's operations in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama

Humanitarian overview

Urgent humanitarian needs persist across this multi-country programme, driven largely by intensifying armed conflict and its impact on civilians in Colombia, escalating violence in Ecuador, and the situation for refugees and migrants (primarily Venezuelans) in these two countries and Panama. According to the United Nations, more than 10 million people require humanitarian assistance in Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama alone.

Despite the 2016 peace agreement, Colombia remains in the top three 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. Ecuador is the country with the highest violent homicide rate in Latin America and a growing number of displaced people. Asylum applications in Panama continue to be registered almost every day.

Despite a significant reduction in the total number of people in transit in 2025, migratory routes across these three countries became increasingly perilous. Refugees and migrants from African and Asian countries, Caribbean nations like Haiti, and South American countries – mainly Venezuelans – faced critical needs. Between border militarisation and pervasive violence, many were left without essential aid or access to international protection.



Our core activities



Education



Information, counselling
and legal assistance (ICLA)



Livelihoods
and food security



Protection
from violence



Shelter
and settlements



Water, sanitation
and hygiene (WASH)

NRC in Colombia, Ecuador & Panama

Established	1991
International staff	5
National staff	417

Our areas of operation

Colombia

- Antioquia
- Arauca
- Bolivar
- Caquetá
- Cauca
- Cesar
- Chocó
- Córdoba
- Cundinamarca
- Guaviare
- La Guajira
- Magdalena
- Meta
- Nariño
- Norte de Santander
- Putumayo
- Tolima
- Valle del Cauca

- Vaupés

Ecuador

- Carchi
- El Oro
- Esmeraldas
- Guayas
- Imbabura
- Los Ríos
- Manabí
- Orellana
- Pichincha
- Santa Elena
- Sucumbíos

Panama

- Chiriqui
- Darien
- Panama
- West Panama



Our activities in detail

In Colombia, we support internally displaced people (IDPs) and communities severely affected by the armed conflicts in rural areas where limited state presence leaves civilians vulnerable. Beyond conflict response, we facilitate the reintegration of former combatants and promote durable solutions in territories shaped by instability. Our impact extends to Ecuador and Panama, where we provide essential aid to Colombians forced to flee across borders.

In response to escalating violence in Ecuador, we have expanded our assistance to include both IDPs and those whose lives are disrupted by this situation. As the Venezuelan crisis persists across the region, we provide humanitarian aid and contribute to the stabilisation and long-term integration of refugees and migrants to build resilience from the ground up in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama.

Central to our approach is localisation. We work alongside local partners and community-led organisations to ensure our actions are rooted in the specific needs of the populations we serve, ensuring our efforts remain coordinated with and complementary to the State's obligations.



26,904 people reached in 2025 ▼

Education

We help displaced, refugee and migrant 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 also in emergency situations, and ensure those who are out of school are not neglected. Promoting safe, protective learning environments is central to our response.



71,464 people reached in 2025 ▼

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 refugees and migrants access and exercise their rights that are denied or violated. 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.



10,449 people reached in 2025 ▼

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.

These initiatives will transition into a new strategic phase in 2026.



15,282 people reached in 2025 ▼

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 the risks people face as a consequence of the armed conflict in Colombia, violence in Ecuador, and the protection situation of refugees and migrants mainly from Venezuela.



14,503 people reached in 2025 ▼

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.



48,887 people reached in 2025 ▼

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Without sufficient safe water for drinking and personal hygiene, it is difficult to stay healthy. 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, migrant and refugee families to achieve better living conditions.

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

Our donors

We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:

- Colombian Ministry of Education
- Education Cannot Wait
- European Commission Foreign Policy Instruments
- European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- 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 Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United States Department of State

Your support saves lives, alleviates suffering, and fosters long-term solutions. To ensure regional stability, displaced persons still require your vital support.

Contact NRC in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama



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