FACT SHEET
November 2026

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 has the second-highest number of people displaced by conflict and violence in the world, around 7.2 million at the end of 2025 (IDMC). The country also hosts the 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, with nearly 132,000 new displacements in 2025 (IDMC). Panama hosted 2,733 recognised refugees as of June 2026 (UNHCR), while the shift from northbound transit to reverse flows toward South America has left many people stranded without documentation or assistance. On 10 August 2026, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake with its epicentre in Chocó struck Colombia, adding 1.2 million people in need according to OCHA, many of them in areas already affected by armed conflict.

Funding shortfalls remain severe, particularly for protection. As of September 2026, Colombia's Protection Sector faced an 80.1% funding shortfall, compared to a 51% shortfall for the Humanitarian Response Plan overall. UNHCR's operations were 22% funded in Colombia and 16% in Ecuador, while the Regional Refugee and Migration Response Plan was only 14% funded.

Barriers to regularisation and assistance persist for people in need of international protection across the three countries. Refugees in Ecuador, Panama, and Colombia remain without adequate access to income opportunities, services and rights, hindering their integration into host communities.

## Our core activities

- Education
- Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)
- Protection from violence
- Shelter and settlements
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

### NRC Colombia, Ecuador & Panama

| | |
|---|---|
| Established | 1991 |
| International staff | 5 |
| National staff | 369 |

## Our areas of operation

**Colombia**
- Amazonas
- Antioquia
- Arauca
- Bolivar
- Caquetá
- Casanare
- Cauca
- Chocó
- Cundinamarca
- Guaviare
- Magdalena
- Meta
- Nariño
- Norte de Santander
- Putumayo
- Risaralda
- Valle del Cauca

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

**Panama**
- Darien
- 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 emergency response, we promote durable solutions in territories shaped by instability, including where efforts are being made to achieve peace. 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 humanitarian needs persist across the region, notably for Venezuelans, we provide aid and support 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.

**24,833 people reached in 2026*** ▼

### 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.

**62,238 people reached in 2026*** ▼

### 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.

* January to September 2026

**15,114 people reached in 2026*** ▼

## 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.

**16,106 people reached in 2026*** ▼

## 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.

**27,009 people reached in 2026*** ▼

### 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 (e.g. 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. Between January and June 2026, we reached 4,299 people with cash transfers, channelling USD 1.8 million through financial service providers.

## 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, refugee and migrant children to go to safe learning environments during acute emergencies.

Following the earthquake in Colombia on 10 August 2026, we provided shelter and camp management, WASH, protection, ICLA, education in emergencies and multi-purpose cash assistance in Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Risaralda and Cauca, where the earthquake compounds armed conflict. By the end of October, we had reached 6,123 participants and we are currently co-leading the shelter working groups in Chocó and Valle del Cauca.

**In 2026, we recorded 88 emergency responses by the end of July. Our first-line response reached 72,378 people in the first half of the year, 48,488 in hard-to-reach areas.**

## Advocacy

We use our field presence and evidence to advocate for faster, more effective responses to displacement, violence, and disasters. In Colombia, we push for faster responses to confinement, more systematic assistance for people affected by violence and disasters, and for compliance with housing, land and property frameworks. In Ecuador, we advocate for state response pathways for people displaced by violence. Across the region, we call for sustained funding for the most severe humanitarian needs and for localisation to be measured by the quality and impact of partnerships, not only through funds transferred.

* January to September 2026

## Our donors

**We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:**

- Education Cannot Wait
- European Commission Foreign Policy Instruments
- European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
- LEGO
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- NetHope
- Norwegian Embassy Colombia
- Regional Humanitarian Pooled Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean (RHPF LAC)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- United States Department of State
- UNICEF
- UNHCR

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


**Contact NRC Colombia, Ecuador and Panama**

Country Director: Giovanni Rizzo

co.nrc@nrc.no

www.nrc.org.co

Calle 74 #11-61