

# Colombia Fact Sheet

February 1, 2024



Welcome the stranger.  
Protect the refugee.

## Introduction

Colombia hosts the largest population of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, with more than 2.8 million residing in the country. In recent years, Colombia has also received around 845,000 returnees from Venezuela, many of whom had been living abroad for significant periods of time.

HIAS supports displaced people to rebuild their lives and reunite with family members in safety and freedom. HIAS Colombia focuses on supporting single women, women-headed households, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), people with disabilities and serious medical conditions, and LGBTQ+ refugees.

HIAS Colombia works with Venezuelan refugees and migrants, Colombian returnees from Venezuela, internally displaced people, and host communities.

## HIAS Programs and Focus

HIAS focuses on the prevention of and response to GBV, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, economic inclusion, and protection actions including temporary housing and supplementary food support. Working closely with government institutions, partner organizations, the private sector, and refugee communities, HIAS Colombia promotes local integration and access to rights and services. HIAS operates with the support of the United States Government, AECID, Airbnb, Cadena, Caritas, ECHO, the Hilton Foundation, the Internet Society Foundation, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Uber, UNHCR Colombia, USAID-Laser Pulse, and Mackenzie Scott.

## Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Response

HIAS seeks to improve the social and economic conditions of women, adolescents, and LGBTQ+ survivors of GBV, as well as supporting those at risk. In order to provide a comprehensive response, HIAS Colombia engages in a cross-border regional care model, which includes emergency case management and psychological support. In addition to these services, HIAS provides dignity kits and life-saving information to survivors and individuals at risk, seeking to reduce risks and promote response services, as well as the generation of learning and knowledge among participants.



Yaneth del Carmen Ovalles prepares a salpicón fruit salad at her fruit stall in Cali, Colombia on May 5, 2023. (Natalia Gardezabal/HIAS Colombia)



### GBV Response

Our GBV programming helps forcibly displaced women, girls, and LGBTQ+ people access their rights.



### MHPSS Support

HIAS Colombia offers people psychological first aid, individual sessions and referrals for mental health and psychosocial support.



### Economic Inclusion

HIAS promotes access to decent and sustainable livelihoods through the Entrepreneurship School with a Gender Lens.



### Legal Protection

HIAS Colombia works to empower displaced people to access rights and services.

## **Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (CB-MHPSS)**

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) care at HIAS aims to create spaces in which people can establish constructive interpersonal relationships and regain a sense of dignity, justice, control, and autonomy in their lives. This is achieved through psychological first aid, individual non-specialized care for people with mild to moderate symptoms, focused non-specialized care, and referral of severe cases for further support.

## **Economic Inclusion**

HIAS promotes access to decent and sustainable livelihoods that promote self-sufficiency for migrants, refugees, Colombian returnees, and host communities through the Entrepreneurship School with a Gender Lens. This school implements survivor-centered methodologies and empowerment processes aimed at improving the income generation of each of the participants and their families.

## **Protection and Legal Protection**

HIAS Colombia works to provide an inter-disciplinary response to ensure that displaced people can access rights and services and feel empowered. This is achieved through counseling and guidance, supporting legal actions, capacity building through training and workshops, and advocacy and strategic litigation at national and local levels to support people to overcome barriers of access in an equitable and dignified manner.

## **Cross-Border Strategies**

As part of our cross-border strategy, HIAS Colombia will strengthen our response in Urabá, in the areas of Necoclí, Turbo, Acandí and Capurganá, to be able to decentralize services according to territorial needs and migratory contexts. HIAS Colombia will work to enhance the capacities of government officials and front-line actors in GBV prevention and MHPSS tools, while coordinating a multi-country response to GBV prevention, legal protection, and MHPSS. This multi-country response will include the implementation of cross-border referrals, kit delivery, and provision of emergency funds to mitigate risks, vulnerabilities and threats faced by GBV survivors.

## **HIAS in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)**

HIAS advocates for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, other displaced populations, and local host communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. As part of a comprehensive regional response to meet the urgent needs of these populations, HIAS co-leads and participates in several coordination platforms and partnerships with a focus on protection, socioeconomic integration, MHPSS, food security, GBV, and cash and voucher assistance.

HIAS currently has programs in 11 countries in LAC (Aruba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela) and partners with a wide range of government agencies, UN entities (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, UNV/VFT), the private sector (Airbnb, TATA Consultancy Services, and Manpower), and other NGOs and consortia, including Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council and World Vision.

## **Contact**

For more information, please contact:

**Camilo Ramírez, Country Director**  
[infocol@hias.org](mailto:infocol@hias.org)

Find us on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at: [@HIASColombia](#)