

OVERVIEW

Since 2020, non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have strengthened their presence in certain areas of Colombia, leading to escalated territorial disputes. As at 2023, at least one NSAG had control over 47.5% of the national territory, encompassing 534 municipalities. Notably, 68% of these controlled areas were rural, highlighting the significant reach of NSAGs in the countryside (OCHA 15/03/2024 a). Clashes among these groups were the main driver of conflict-related humanitarian needs in 2023, with confrontations increasing by 54% that year compared to 2022. In Arauca, the main confrontations occur between the Estado Mayor Central and the National Liberation Army (ELN); in Chocó, between the ELN and the Gaitanist Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AGC); and in Nariño, between two dissident factions of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) (FIP 13/02/2024).

NSAGs benefit from enforcing confinements and mobility restrictions, which facilitate their territorial control and allow them to use civilians as a protective barrier. Such events also prevent communities from alerting law enforcement and humanitarian organisations about NSAGs' presence and illegal activities (TNH 25/11/2021). In the three border departments of Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño, NSAGs have also forged alliances with organised crime groups, aggravating violence in both border and urban areas (InSight Crime 29/12/2023).

In practice, NSAGs implement confinements and mobility restrictions through various mechanisms. These range from direct orders prohibiting residents from leaving their homes to more indirect measures, such as checkpoints and curfews. These tactics not only demonstrate power but also strategically control community dynamics and limit external interactions, profoundly affecting daily life and increasing isolation (KII 14/03/2024; KII 07/03/2024). NSAGs' strategic use of confinements and mobility restrictions to assert control over territories and regulate community dynamics represents a major protection risk. Ultimately, these tactics are essential for them to facilitate various illicit activities by minimising external interference and controlling local populations.

Confinements and mobility restrictions are not uniformly recognised under Colombian law. While confinements are legally acknowledged, allowing affected individuals to be recognised as victims, mobility restrictions lack a legal framework. This discrepancy results in a significant gap in the analysis and response to the impacts of mobility restrictions. Recognising both types of events enables a comprehensive understanding of community challenges, ensuring that all humanitarian needs and impacts are considered.

KEY FINDINGS

- Confinements and mobility restrictions, primarily enforced by NSAGs, severely restrict access to basic services and worsen existing vulnerabilities, affecting health, education, food security, and livelihoods. These measures disproportionately affect rural and ethnic communities, compounding hardship in areas already facing significant socioeconomic challenges (UARIV accessed 16/04/2024).
- Confinements and mobility restrictions affect indigenous and Afrodescendant communities the most, as they experience heightened risks. These groups frequently face compounded difficulties given their geographical isolation and limited access to essential services (OCHA 13/02/2024).
- Confinements and mobility restrictions often result in critical movement limitations, compelling communities to either displace or remain isolated. These restrictions directly expose residents to various protection risks, such as child recruitment and use, human trafficking, antipersonnel mine (APM) presence, attacks on civilians, forced labour, and various forms of gender-based violence (GBV), such as sexual assault, forced marriage, and coercive control (UARIV accessed 16/04/2024).
- APMs are a complex factor in the landscape of confinements and mobility restrictions. While directly linking their placement with intentions to confine is challenging, their presence undeniably heightens the risks associated with restricted movement. Mines are often remnants from past conflicts or newly laid by NSAGs to secure territories from rival groups or government forces. Regardless of their original purpose, these mines significantly complicate the mobility of local populations, acting as deadly barriers that can inadvertently lead to confinement-like conditions by severely limiting safe passage and access to essential resources and services.
- A complex interplay of factors influences the nature and severity of confinements. These factors include the strategies and objectives of the controlling NSAG, its operational tactics, and the sociopolitical dynamics within the affected community. The duration and strictness of restrictions can also depend on the relationship between NSAGs and local communities, which is one of the many elements that determine the overall impact on the community.
- Inconsistency in the definitions of confinements and mobility restrictions among different organisations leads to significant underreporting and information gaps. This confusion hampers effective humanitarian response and complicates the ability of affected individuals to receive timely aid.

TERMINOLOGY

Confinement: two main definitions of confinement are prominent in the context of Colombia.

- **Colombian law:** Resolution No. 0171 of 2016 describes confinement as “a situation of violation of fundamental rights, where communities, despite remaining within a portion of their territory, lose mobility due to the presence and actions of illegal armed groups. This restriction entails the inability to access essential goods for survival, stemming from the military, economic, political, cultural, and social control exerted by illegal armed groups within the context of the internal armed conflict” (UARIV 29/02/2016).
- **OCHA:** confinement involves the restriction of a population’s mobility and access to at least three basic services or goods (such as food, education, health, water and sanitation, and livelihoods) for a minimum of one week, arising from the military, economic, political, cultural, and social control of NSAGs in the context of internal armed conflict and armed violence. Situations resulting in mobility restrictions lasting less than a week are considered to fall within the scope of mobility restrictions, distinguishing them from longer-term confinements (OCHA 03/03/2021).

Identifying confinements poses significant challenges given the specificity of defining both the duration and the number of affected services. This legal gap increases the vulnerability of affected populations and escalates the risk of confinement (OCHA/UNCT Colombia 01/03/2024).

Mobility restrictions: NSAGs impose threats, checkpoints, and hostilities that constrain community mobility and access to essential goods or services. At the same time, physical environmental factors, such as natural disasters or road destruction, can also affect at least one humanitarian sector (OCHA 03/03/2021). Government institutions and humanitarian organisations find it challenging to address mobility restrictions effectively, as unlike confinements, they are not formally recognised under Colombian law. Confinements restrict access to at least three services for a minimum of one week, but mobility restrictions have no such time criteria under the OCHA definition. Even if restrictions on one or two services last more than a week, they remain classified as mobility restrictions, not confinements.

Within this report, we adhere to the OCHA definition of confinements and mobility restrictions to ensure consistency with international humanitarian standards. This decision is grounded in OCHA’s comprehensive data collection and regular updates, which offer detailed information disaggregated by municipality, ensuring the most current and precise understanding of these events. It is important to note that when citing secondary data, the specific definition employed is not always specified.

Armed strikes (‘paros armados’ in Spanish) comprise NSAG tactics that disrupt civilian and state activities. These include road blockades, mobility restrictions, and threats that force the closure of businesses and schools. These actions interrupt daily life and demonstrate

NSAGs’ power and control, significantly affecting the social and economic structures of involved areas (InSight Crime 12/05/2022).

NSAGs are entities not officially affiliated with the state but organised enough to engage in hostilities recognised under international humanitarian law as ‘armed conflicts’ and often with political motivations. These groups include the ELN, FARC-EP dissident groups, and the AGC.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim

This report aims to decipher the humanitarian impacts of confinements and mobility restrictions in Colombia, incorporating an intersectional approach that considers the gender and ethnic backgrounds of the affected people. The analysis covers the January 2023 to March 2024 period, highlighting three departments: Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño.

Methodology

This analysis draws on a comprehensive review of secondary data, including reports and documents from international and Colombian organisations and researchers. To enrich this data, ACAPS conducted 13 key informant interviews (KIIs) between January–March 2024 with other researchers and professionals from Colombian civil society organisations, INGOs, and UN agencies. These informants possessed a wide range of expertise and included humanitarian sector workers, academics, and individuals working directly with indigenous and Afrodescendant communities. The interviews focused on the affected territories within the departments of Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño.

Although confinements and movement restrictions are widespread across Colombia, this report specifically focuses on the three departments deemed most relevant to providing a deeper understanding of these events. Chocó and Nariño are among the departments most affected by confinements and other movement restrictions. While Arauca ranks eighth in terms of the number of affected individuals and sixth in terms of recorded events based on OCHA’s 2023 figures, it was specifically chosen given identified information gaps and the relatively lower attention given to this department within humanitarian analyses (OCHA accessed 09/04/2024). Its selection is driven by a broader humanitarian interest in shedding light on regions where gaps in coverage and understanding persist, in part as a result of its lower population density. This approach underscores the importance of not overlooking areas with significant humanitarian needs, even if they might not rank high in terms of sheer numbers affected.

Limitations and information gaps

Data collection on confinements and mobility restrictions in Colombia faces significant limitations. Figures can vary considerably between different entities given difficulties in accessing information and the diverse methods used to record and verify related events. Key informants highlight a substantial underreporting of cases among affected individuals, which not only creates barriers to accessing humanitarian assistance but also impedes a comprehensive understanding of the scope of protection threats these communities face.

Disaggregated data on gender, age, and disability, along with their specific impacts, is unavailable for most known situations of confinements and mobility restrictions because of access constraints in rural areas, particularly within indigenous and Afrodescendant communities. There is a significant gap in data on GBV and child recruitment and use during confinements and other movement restrictions, as well as a lack of insight into the coping mechanisms communities employ when their movements are restricted. The data available is also often outdated, with reports being made weeks or months after the events occur, further compounding the challenge of accurately categorising these incidents.

Information gaps also exist regarding specific impacts on migrants and refugees. Because of restrictions related to their migratory status, these people face limitations in registering as victims of the armed conflict with the Unit for Comprehensive Attention and Reparation to Victims (OCHA/UNCT Colombia 01/03/2024). Key informants have reported instances of NSAGs discriminating against or threatening migrants and refugees during confinements and mobility restrictions (KII 07/03/2024; KII 27/02/2024; KII 26/02/2024). That said, disaggregated information on how these events affect their routes and migratory patterns (transitory or pendular) remains unavailable. Regarding the LGBTQ+ population, although several KIIs have stated that this group is also likely facing severe impacts, there is very little information available and many informational gaps.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Context overview.....	4
Crisis by departament.....	5
Chocó.....	6
Nariño.....	8
Arauca.....	9
Aggravating factors.....	11
Impacts of confinements and mobility restrictions on affected communities	12
Increased risk of food insecurity and reduced livelihood access.....	14
Humanitarian access constraints	16

CONTEXT OVERVIEW

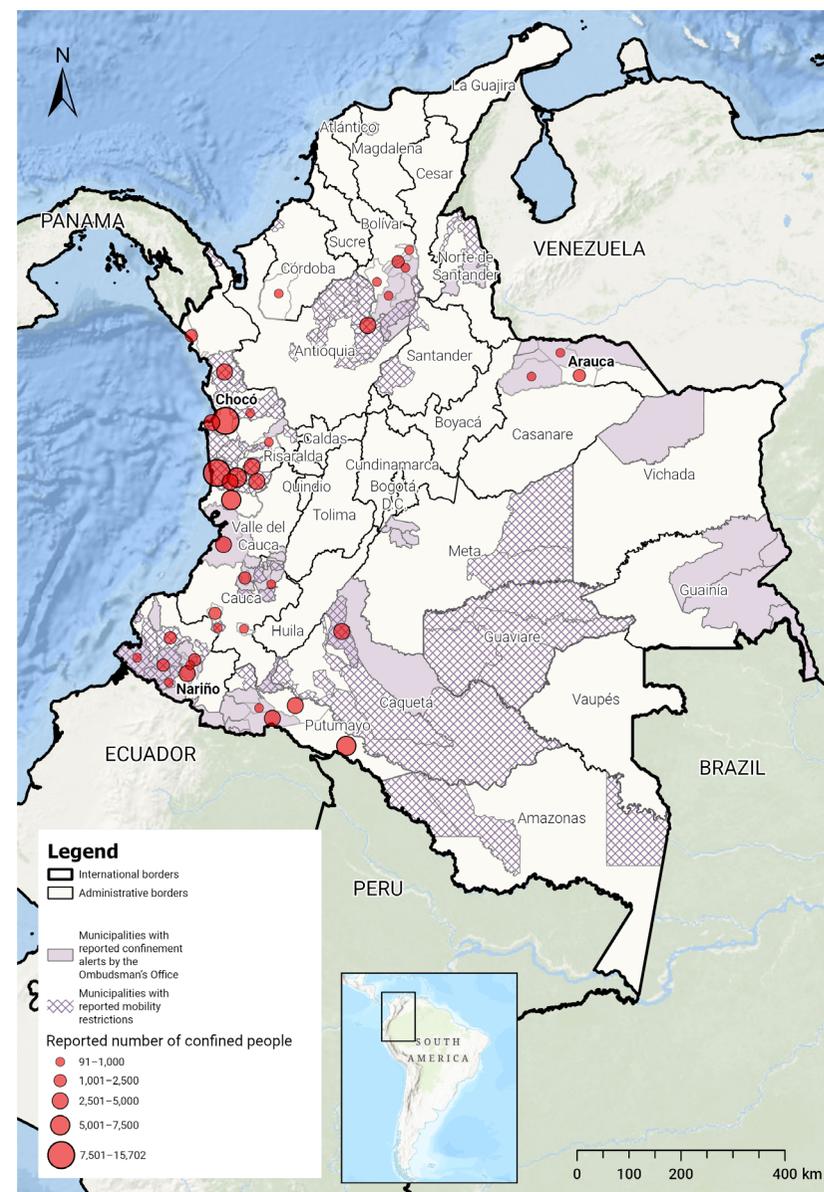
Confinements and mobility restrictions are strategies used by NSAGs to exert control over territories and populations. Confinements typically involve prohibiting individuals from leaving their homes or local areas, limiting their freedom of movement. Mobility restrictions can include curfews, roadblocks, or bans on the use of certain paths or rivers, which regulate and monitor movement to and from affected areas. These measures serve to demonstrate power, control territorial disputes, and manage the community dynamics essential for NSAGs' operations. The duration and intensity of these restrictions can vary greatly, often lasting from several days to weeks, depending on the strategic goals of the NSAGs (UARIV accessed 12/04/2024; NRC 26/06/2023).

Since 2016, there has been a marked intensification of hostilities among NSAGs, leading to a significant increase in the number of both confinement incidents and the individuals they affect (TNH 25/11/2021). This escalation in confinement, a strategy that NSAGs have historically used, reached unprecedented levels in 2022 (Comisión de la Verdad 28/06/2022). That year, NSAGs forcibly confined over 110,000 individuals, surpassing the number of victims recorded in the previous decade (NRC 26/06/2023).

The number of individuals that confinement affects exceeds the reported figures given access constraints related to threats from NSAGs, armed confrontations, and infrastructure damage from natural disasters (OCHA 13/02/2024). The number of recorded confinements and affected individuals can vary across institutions, often because of differing definitions of confinements.

- According to the Ombudsman's Office, in 2023, 215 confinements across Colombia affected 18,356 families or approximately 66,300 individuals, marking a 63% increase in national figures compared to the 132 confinements recorded in 2022 (DP 29/01/2024).
- In 2023, OCHA identified over 67 confinement events affecting more than 88,000 individuals, 79% of whom belonged to indigenous and Afrodescendant groups. This highlights the particular vulnerability of ethnic communities (OCHA 13/02/2024).
- Between January–February 2024, OCHA recorded 14 confinements affecting over 22,000 individuals. This represents a 70% increase in the number of confined people compared to the same period in 2023 (OCHA 22/03/2024).
- In 2023, OCHA recorded 60 mobility restrictions affecting over 539,000 individuals. From January–March 2024, the UN body recorded ten mobility restrictions affecting more than 54,000 people (OCHA accessed 03/04/2024).

Map 1. Confinements and mobility restrictions in Colombia from January 2023 to February 2024



Sources: ACAPS using data from OCHA (accessed 26/02/2024); DP (accessed 26/02/2024)

Confinements can occur multiple times during the year within the same community, severely affecting people's lives. Each subsequent confinement intensifies the community's vulnerability to economic, social, and educational disruptions, complicating their ability to recuperate and restore their livelihoods, household activities, and educational endeavours (UARIV accessed 05/04/2024). In 2023, confinements affected indigenous (50.3%) and Afrodescendant (49.7%) communities the most (OCHA 01/03/2024 a). Mobility restrictions and displacements, both collective and individual, lead to land usurpation within these ethnic communities, severely affecting cultural preservation and social cohesion (OCHA/UNCT Colombia 01/03/2024).

NSAGs employ various methods to impose confinements or other mobility restrictions on communities. One method involves directly preventing individuals from leaving their homes and halting all activities, often under the implicit or explicit threat of violence (NRC 26/06/2023). In some cases, NSAGs implement restrictions through explicit directives, such as threats via flyers, mandatory community gatherings, or local community networks. Armed confrontations between NSAGs and instances of community violence instil fear, compelling individuals to stay confined (UARIV accessed 03/04/2024).

The imposition of confinements and mobility restrictions serves as both a display of power and a strategic method to control community dynamics within NSAG territories. By limiting movement, these groups not only regulate illicit economic activities and goods flow but also reduce interactions between community members and external forces. This enforcement embeds NSAG norms deeply within communities, creating dependency. While some groups may use incentives to gain support, the dominant strategy involves instilling fear and maintaining authority through force and threat (KII 07/03/2024).

Confinements and mobility restrictions predominantly occur in rural, particularly remote areas where poor road infrastructure limits accessibility. These incidents are also frequent in areas with high poverty levels and already limited basic service availability. These areas historically experience reduced state presence, making it easier for NSAGs to establish their control (UARIV accessed 01/04/2024). Although NSAGs usually impose confinements and mobility restrictions in rural areas, another key informant reported that cases of mobility restrictions have also been observed in some urban areas, particularly in neighbourhoods disputed by organised crime groups. This urban dynamic complicates access to support and limits the ability of residents to report their situation, further isolating affected communities and aggravating their vulnerabilities (KII 29/01/2024).

Confinements and mobility restrictions affect communities across all sectors. These restrictions compound existing vulnerabilities, making daily survival and maintaining health increasingly difficult in these settings (OCHA 13/02/2024). While confined, communities may find themselves forced to choose between enduring the severe restrictions or displacing to avoid them or in response to direct threats from NSAGs. Some key informants have also

affirmed that the environment of confinement and restricted mobility increases exposure to child recruitment and use and GBV, such as sexual assault and forced marriage. These impacts across all sectors underscore the alarming and urgent nature of the risk of confinement, rendering already vulnerable populations even more susceptible to harm (David and Gutiérrez 2018).

CRISIS BY DEPARTMENT

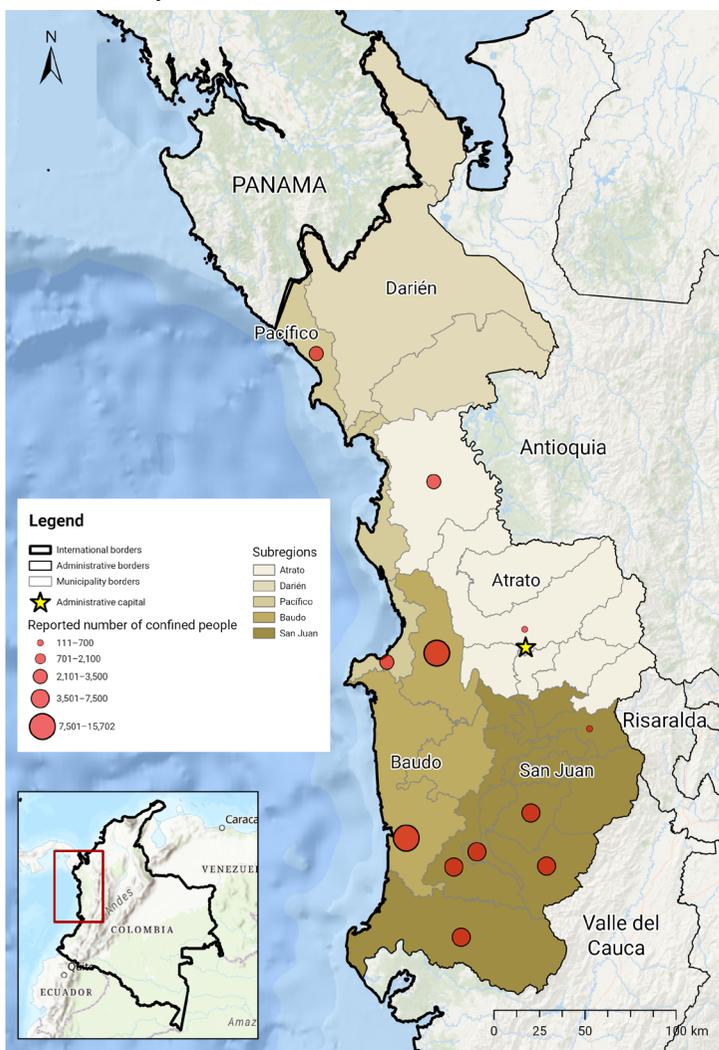
The three departments featured in this report, Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño, share key factors that greatly influence the dynamics of confinements and mobility restrictions. As border regions, they serve as critical points for mixed migratory flows and hold strategic value for NSAGs intent on dominating illicit economies and trafficking pathways. These departments are also distinguished by vast rural areas with inadequate infrastructure, making them especially susceptible to climate-related hazards and easier to control by NSAGs.

Arauca, bordering Venezuela, serves as a strategic NSAG hub given its international boundary. This facilitates a range of illicit activities, particularly illegal mining, drug trafficking, fuel smuggling, weapons trafficking, and human trafficking (UARIV 27/11/2023; DP 30/03/2024; KII 12/03/2024). Chocó ranks highest in Colombia for alluvial gold mining, covering 38,980 hectares (40% of the country's total). Around 79% of this mining is considered illicit, predominantly occurring within forest reserve zones (Govt. Colombia/UNODC 12/09/2023). Chocó and Nariño, with their Pacific coastlines, also represent strategic regions for NSAGs. Municipalities along the Pacific Coast, such as Nuquí and Bahía Solano in Chocó, are part of key drug shipment routes to North America and Europe (InSight Crime 27/10/2023). In 2022, these coastal departments recorded the country's highest coca cultivation levels, with significant concentrations in Tumaco and El Charco in Nariño and El Tambo in Cauca, accounting for 41% of the regional total (Govt. Colombia/UNODC 12/09/2023). Nariño's border with Ecuador adds to its strategic significance, as it offers additional routes for smuggling and the evasion of law enforcement, enhancing NSAGs' operational capabilities across borders. Nariño is also the site of other illicit activities, including illegal mining, timber exploitation, oil theft, clandestine refineries, and the smuggling of various products (El Tiempo 24/01/2024; Global Protection Cluster 13/04/2022).

CHOCÓ

Context overview

Map 2. Reported number of confined people in Chocó between January 2023 and February 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from OCHA (accessed 26/02/2024)

Located in northwestern Colombia, the department of Chocó borders Panama and the Caribbean Sea to the north, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the departments of Antioquia, Risaralda, and Valle del Cauca to the east and south (OCHA 01/03/2024 a).

Table 1. Baseline information on Chocó department's population statistics and access to basic services

INDICATOR	CHOCÓ	COLOMBIA
Total population (2024 projection)	605,478	52,695,952
% of the population living in rural areas (2024 projection)	57	24
Share of ethnicity	Indigenous= 16% Afro-descendant = 78.9%	Indigenous= 4.3% Afro-descendant= 6.8%
Migrant population	3,618	2,875,743
% of rural households without access to improved water sources	72.4	37.3
% of rural sewerage coverage	8.9	14.8
% of rural population in poverty according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index	45.8	27.3
% of rural scholar non-attendance	5.1	3.6
% of rural population without health care insurance	2.2	6.3
% of rural electricity coverage	84.9	94.2
% of rural population experiencing food insecurity	41.8	32.5

Sources: ACAPS using data from DANE (accessed 18/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 18/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 c); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 c); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 d); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 e); DA (accessed 20/03/2024); Migración Colombia (01/12/2023)

Chocó, with its Multidimensional Poverty Index rating of 49.0 as at 2019 – significantly more than twice the national average of 18.01 and placing it fifth among Colombian departments in terms of multidimensional poverty – faces inherent challenges in accessing essential services (DANE 01/2022). These challenges are compounded by frequent flooding and landslides that heavily affect already fragile road and infrastructure networks (EE 15/01/2024). In this context, confinements and mobility restrictions worsen the limited access to services, underscoring a critical aspect of the crisis that requires highlighting in the crisis overview.

Crisis overview

Table 2. Reported number of confined people in Chocó (by municipality)

DATE	MUNICIPALITY	CONFINED PEOPLE
2023	Bajo Baudó	15702
	Alto Baudó	12979
	El Litoral Del San Juan	7103
	Medio San Juan	6905
	Sipí	3839
	Novita	3758
	Istmina	3587
	Bojaya	2642
	Juradó	922
	Quibdó	402
	Tadó	111
Jan - Mar 2024	Nuquí	3022
	Alto Baudó	2523
	Juradó	1354
	Istmina	1299
	Tadó	1298
	Sipí	1291
	El Litoral Del San Juan	850
	Bojaya	151
Total	69738	

Source: OCHA (accessed 21/03/2024)

Confrontations between armed groups, the lack of availability of and access to basic services, and climate-related hazards worsen the humanitarian conditions in Chocó. In 2023, close to 4,000 individuals faced mass displacement, while natural hazards, including heavy precipitation and flooding, affected over 20,000. The municipalities with the most

confinement events in 2023 according to OCHA were Novita and Bojaya (OCHA accessed 21/03/2024). Confinements affected over 58,000 individuals in Chocó, with armed conflicts between NSAGs accounting for over 60% of these incidents. This continued trend has positioned Chocó as the department with the highest number of confinements in Colombia for the third year running (OCHA 13/02/2024).

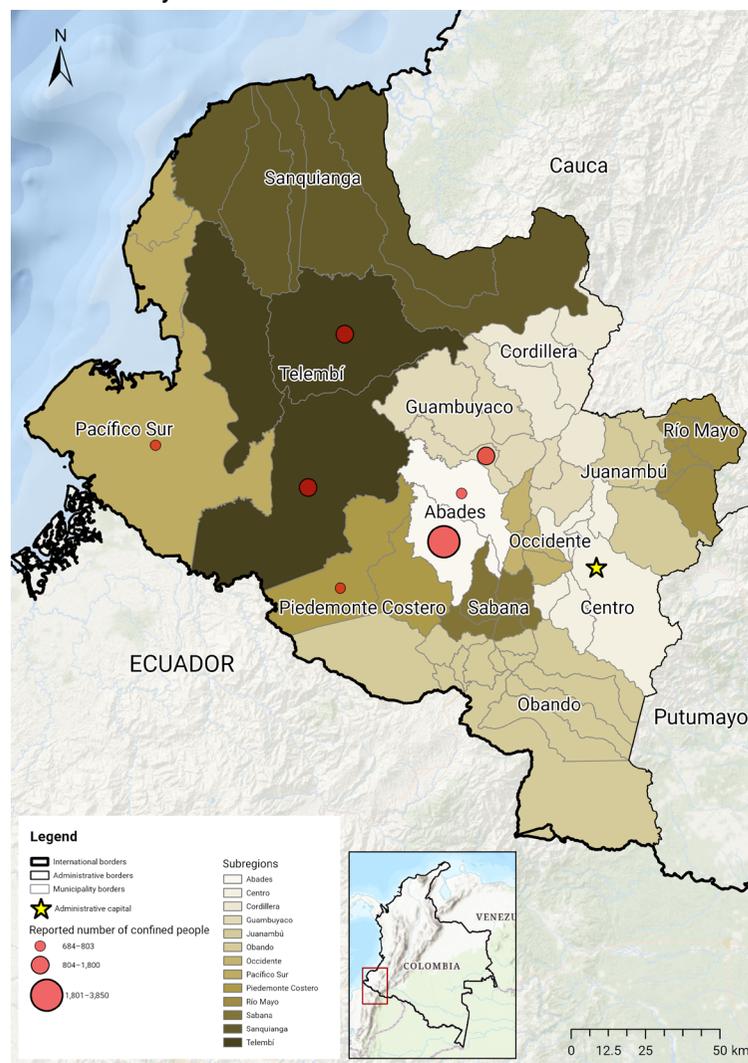
While NSAG presence is widespread in Chocó, the most affected municipalities are Alto Baudó, Bojayá, Carmen de Atrato, Medio Atrato, Medio San Juan, Nuquí, and the capital, Quibdó (Mongabay 08/02/2023). Since 2021, territorial disputes between various NSAGs have significantly affected Baudó and San Juan subregions, leading to confinements and mobility restrictions. That said, subregions under the control of a single group (such as the AGC), e.g. Atrato and Darién, also experience these events. Access to information about the restrictions in territories under the control of one NSAG is particularly challenging, though, because of the stringent control exerted by the dominant NSAG (KII 14/03/2024).

In Chocó, particularly in the capital, Quibdó, there has been a surge since 2018 in violence and crime by organised crime groups, with mobility restrictions enforced in urban areas. One key informant noted that the dynamics between various organised crime groups and their alliances with NSAGs are evolving, contributing to heightened violence (KII 14/03/2024). Within these neighbourhoods, the unmarked territorial divisions established by these groups not only limit free movement but also increase the risk of residents being targeted or accused of siding with rival factions. These divisions are often reinforced through the establishment of curfews, which confine residents to their homes after certain hours, intensifying the separation and control exerted by these groups. While confinements are more common in rural and remote areas, urban mobility restrictions disrupt everyday life, including work and education (KII 29/01/2024; InSight Crime 22/04/2022). From January–March 2024, Chocó witnessed nine new confinements affecting over 11,000 people (OCHA accessed 18/03/2024).

NARIÑO

Context overview

Map 3. Reported number of confined people in Nariño between January 2023 and February 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from OCHA (accessed 26/02/2024)

The department of Nariño is situated in southwestern Colombia, bordering Ecuador. It is bounded to the north by the department of Cauca, to the east by Putumayo, to the south by Ecuador, and to the west by the Pacific Ocean (OCHA 01/03/2024 b). Historically affected by armed conflict, Nariño, particularly its Pacific coastline, disproportionately bears the brunt of conflict and illicit economies (Truth Commission accessed 18/03/2024; EE 31/10/2023; Fundepaz 07/04/2021).

Table 3. Baseline information on Nariño department's population statistics and access to basic services

INDICATOR	NARIÑO	COLOMBIA
Total population (2024 projection)	1,709,890	52,695,952
% of the population living in rural areas (2024 projection)	56	24
Share of ethnicity	Indigenous= 15,7% Afro-descendant= 17,8%	Indigenous= 4.3% Afro-descendant= 6.8%
Migrant population	47,079	2,875,743
% of rural households without access to improved water sources	40.1	37.3
% of rural sewerage coverage	16.1	14.8
% of rural population in poverty according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index	21.4	27.3
% of rural scholar non-attendance	2.4	3.6
% of rural population without health care insurance	3.9	6.3
% of rural electricity coverage	99.0	94.2
% of rural population experiencing food insecurity	41.4	32.5

Sources: ACAPS using data from DANE (accessed 18/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 18/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 c); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 c); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 d); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 e); DA (accessed 20/03/2024); Migración Colombia (01/12/2023)

In Nariño, 33.5% of the population belongs to ethnic groups. These include 206,455 indigenous individuals (15.7%) and 232,847 Afrodescendants (17.8%) (OCHA 01/03/2024 b). For the Awá indigenous communities, in particular, systematic rights violations persist with the armed conflict. This situation has led the Constitutional Court to actively demand that the State take measures to prevent the risk of extermination that these communities face (Mongabay 11/04/2023). This has prompted the Ombudsman's Offices of Colombia and Ecuador to issue a binational early warning to address these severe threats (DP 07/03/2023). Approximately 75 community councils of Afrodescendant populations have been identified in Nariño (OCHA

01/03/2024 b). Social indicators reveal high levels of socioeconomic inequality and exclusion within Nariño, disproportionately affecting indigenous communities, Afrodescendants, and rural communities (MCIT 26/01/2024; Restrepo and Aponte 06/07/2009).

Crisis overview

Table 4. Reported number of confined people in Nariño (by municipality)

DATE	MUNICIPALITY	CONFINED PEOPLE
2023	Santacruz (Guachavés)	3850
	Magüí Payán	1800
	Barbacoas	1624
	La Llanada	1603
	Ricaurte	803
	Tumaco	735
	Samaniego	684
Jan 1 - Mar 31, 2024	Cumbitara	4202
	Roberto Payán (San José)	256
	Magüí Payán	20
	Total	15577

*For Santacruz and Roberto Payán municipalities, OCHA reports data for their respective populated centres.
Source: OCHA (accessed 01/04/2024)

The humanitarian situation in Nariño is facing significant challenges given multiple violence-driven events, such as displacements, confinements, mobility restrictions, and child recruitment and use, all compounded by widespread APM presence in the territory. The district is also highly exposed to natural hazards, including frequent wildfires, flooding, and landslides (Caracol Radio 08/08/2023; DAGRD 2023). Particularly affected are the municipalities along the Pacific Coast and in the Cordillera and southern subregions, where over 15 NSAGs have dispersed, significantly influencing patterns of violence and confinements (Fundepaz 15/03/2023; KII 07/03/2024).

In 2023, Nariño experienced over 16 confinements across various municipalities affecting around 11,100 individuals (OCHA 01/03/2024 b). The municipality with the most confinement events in 2023 according to OCHA was Barbacoas (OCHA accessed 01/04/2024). As at March 2024, there have been over three confirmed confinements in Nariño affecting over 4,000 individuals (OCHA accessed 21/03/2024). It is possible that additional mobility restrictions and confinements have been unreported (3iS/iMMAP 27/02/2024; Global Protection Cluster 14/04/2022).

ARAUCA

CONTEXT OVERVIEW

Map 4. Reported number of confined people in Arauca between January 2023 and February 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from OCHA (accessed 26/02/2024)

The department of Arauca is situated in eastern Colombia, sharing borders with Venezuela to the north and east. It is bounded by the departments of Boyacá to the west, Casanare to the south, and Vichada to the southeast.

Table 5. Baseline information on Arauca department's population statistics and access to basic services

INDICATOR	ARAUCA	COLOMBIA
Total population (2024 projection)	317,398	52,695,952
% of the population living in rural areas (2024 projection)	36	24
Share of ethnicity	Indigenous= 2.8% Afro-descendant= 4.2%	Indigenous= 4.3% Afro-descendant= 6.8%
Migrant population	77,737	2,875,743
% of rural households without access to improved water sources	3.2	37.3
% of rural sewerage coverage	12.7	14.8
% of rural population in poverty according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index	22.9	27.3
% of rural scholar non-attendance	3.4	3.6
% of rural population without health care insurance	15.9	6.3
% of rural electricity coverage	98.7	94.2
% of rural population experiencing food insecurity	38.6	32.5

Sources: ACAPS using data from DANE (accessed 18/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 18/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 19/03/2024 c); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 a); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 b); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 c); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 d); DANE (accessed 20/03/2024 e); DA (accessed 20/03/2024); Migración Colombia (01/12/2023)

The population in Arauca faces limited access to basic services, particularly in rural areas. While the situation in some areas might seem better than in others, three of the department's seven municipalities – Arauquita (41.3%), Arauca (31.3%), and Saravena (27.7%) – still report rates of basic service inaccessibility above the national average of 14.3% (UARIV 27/11/2023). Arauca is exposed to several natural hazards, including flooding and landslides, which trigger frequent displacement, infrastructure damage, and the disruption of livelihood activities (GFDRR accessed 08/04/2024; ACAPS 19/06/2023).

Historically, the department of Arauca has seen the presence of NSAGs, and since 2017, it has experienced significant mixed migratory flows (3iS accessed 03/04/2024). In March 2023, the Ombudsman's Office reported that the crisis in Venezuela had led to Arauca hosting 77,737 migrants and refugees, further complicating the department's social and economic landscape (OCHA 15/03/2024 b).

Crisis overview

Table 6. Reported number of confined people in Arauca (by municipality)

DATE	MUNICIPALITY	CONFINED PEOPLE
2023	Puerto Rondón	1427
	Tame	606
	Arauquita	330
	Total	2363

Source: OCHA (accessed 21/03/2024)

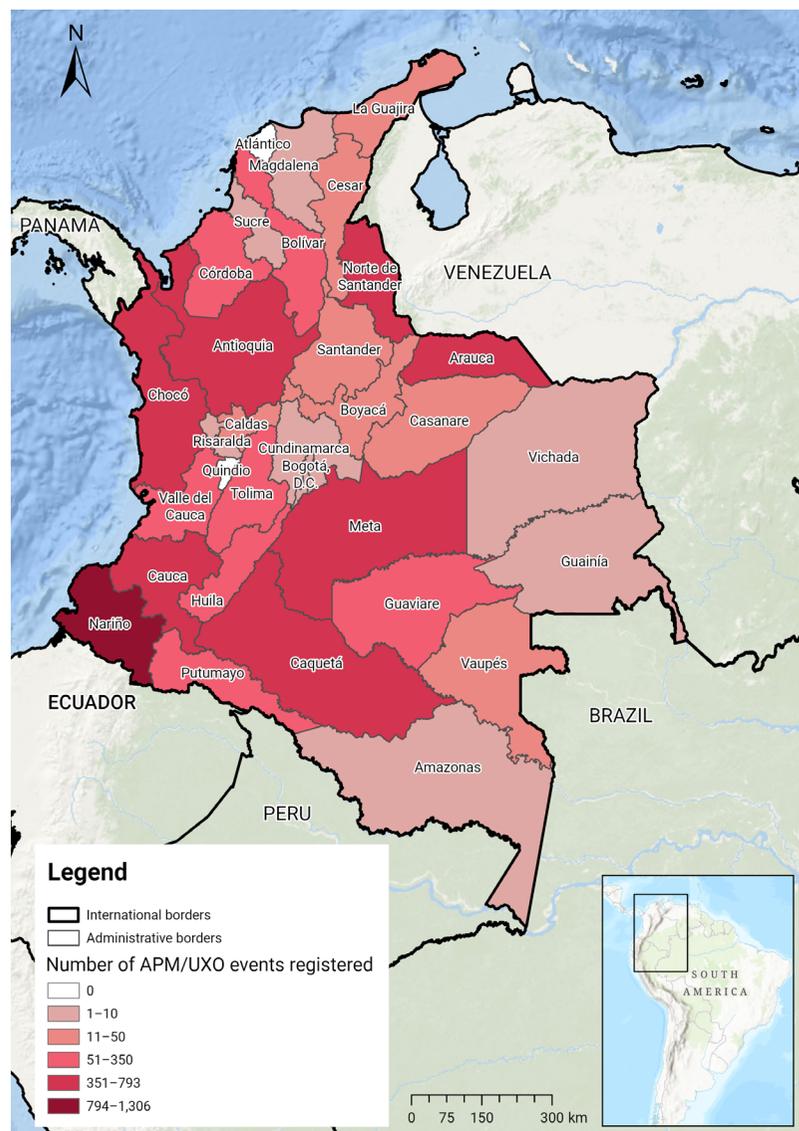
In 2023, confinements and mobility restrictions affected more than 2,000 individuals over 13 communities and one indigenous reservation in Arauca (iMMAP accessed 18/03/2024). As at March 2024, no verified confinement events had been reported in the department, although one key informant noted indications that mobility restrictions may be present and unreported, likely because of challenges such as limited information access or fear of NSAG reprisal. This suggests persistent difficulties for residents to secure freedom of movement and underscores the challenge of accurately reporting these events (KII 12/03/2024).

Rural and indigenous communities have been confined, especially in the border zone between Colombia and Venezuela, by control strategies that involve the installation of APMs and abandoned ordnance (ProtectionCluster/UNMAS 29/11/2023).

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

APM and unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination

Map 5. Reported number of APM/UXO events by department between 2016–2023



Source: ACAPS using data from 3iS/iMMAP (27/02/2024)

The strategic placement of APMs by NSAGs further complicates confinements and mobility restrictions. While APM presence significantly restricts mobility and increases the general risk for populations confined by NSAGs, it also heightens the likelihood of encountering these lethal hazards. Although a direct link between recorded accidents involving APMs and specific instances of confinement has not been definitively established, the pervasive danger posed by these devices affects all individuals in affected areas. In 2023, at least 85 accidents involving APMs and UXO were documented, highlighting the widespread risk they present (DA accessed 20/03/2024). APM presence is particularly noted in rural areas and alarmingly close to vital community spaces, such as schools, subsistence farms, and civilian pathways across Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño, amplifying safety risks for local populations (OCHA 01/03/2024 c).

- Nariño stands out as one of the departments most affected by APMs. Between 2016–2023, 83% of APM incidents were in the municipality of Tumaco, with an uneven distribution across the territory. There has been indiscriminate contamination in Pacific South subregion of the department, particularly linked to the collective territories of Afrodescendant communities and the indigenous Awá people. The most affected collective territory is the Alto Mira and Frontera Community Council (3iS/iMMAP 27/02/2024).
- In Chocó, APM prevalence is widespread in approximately 26 of the department's 31 municipalities suspected of harbouring these hazards, underscoring the pervasive nature of this risk (OCHA 01/03/2024 a).
- Although Arauca reports fewer mines compared to the other two departments, APM incidents significantly increased by 217% from 28 in 2022 to 61 in 2023. Municipalities such as Arauquita, Fortul, Puerto Rondón, Saravena, and Tame are among the most affected, indicating a growing concern in the department (OCHA 15/03/2024 b). This rise could be attributed to several factors, including intensified conflicts and territorial disputes among NSAGs, which often increase APM deployment as a strategy to control movement and instil fear. The expansion of NSAG territories could have also exposed more areas to previously laid mines, increasing the likelihood of incidents.

Climate hazards

Natural hazards worsen the effects of confinement, further deteriorating the health, livelihoods, and access to basic services of exposed populations. The effects of El Niño and La Niña, together with climate hazards intensified by climate change, have altered rainfall patterns, increased the frequency of extreme rainfall events, and changed agricultural cycles (NOAA 09/11/2020). Because of El Niño, the country experienced a 692% increase in the number of people affected by natural hazard-related disasters between January–February 2024 compared to the same period in 2023 (OCHA 22/03/2024). Floods, landslides, and wildfires jeopardise food security, as well as access to water, sanitation, health, and education, particularly in two of the departments covered by this report: Arauca and Chocó (OCHA 15/03/2024 a).

In Chocó, heavy rainfall and frequent flooding significantly disrupt the daily lives of communities, with the Atrato River's rising levels often isolating entire communities and hampering access to basic services. Nariño's diverse topography, ranging from coastal regions to highlands, contributes to high exposure to climate hazards. Landslides and flooding pose severe threats to already fragile infrastructure, particularly affecting indigenous and Afrodescendant communities living in remote areas (OCHA 01/03/2024 b).

Poor road and infrastructure networks worsen vulnerability to natural hazards in departments such as Arauca, causing significant mobility restrictions, especially during the rainy season (3iS et al. 20/09/2023). Flooding during the winter can impose natural mobility restrictions, complicating access in most parts. While such natural hazards can disrupt the ability of NSAGs to access these areas and enforce confinements, they also create a different type of movement restriction that can intensify the hardships that the communities face (KII 03/11/2024).

IMPACTS OF CONFINEMENTS AND MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS ON AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Figure 1. Impacts of confinements and mobility restrictions on different groups of people

Risks and potential consequences	Groups of people most affected			
	Girls	Boys	Women	Men
KEY ● Based on KIIs conducted for this analysis ● As reported in research and assessment reports				
Child use and recruitment	● ●	● ●		
Family violence	● ●	● ●	● ●	
Sexual exploitation	●		●	
Forced marriage	●			
Labour exploitation	●	●	●	●
Enforced dress codes for women and girls	●		●	
Risk of becoming an APM victim		●		● ●
Barriers to accessing healthcare	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●
Barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare and rights	● ●		● ●	
Barriers to accessing WASH services	● ●		● ●	
Mental health and psychosocial impacts	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●
Substance abuse	● ●	● ●		●
Education disruption	● ●	● ●		
Barriers to accessing traditional livelihoods	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●
Loss of cultural identity and traditions	●	●	●	●

Source: ACAPS

Confinements and mobility restrictions have profound consequences on communities, aggravating vulnerabilities and affecting various aspects of daily life. Recognising that these events do not affect people in the same way or to the same extent, Figure 1 shows how different intersectional characteristics, including ethnicity, gender, and age, influence how individuals experience and are affected by confinements and mobility restrictions (KII 06/03/2024; KII 07/03/2024; KII 27/02/2024). Indigenous and Afrodescendant communities frequently face heightened risks because of geographic isolation and limited access to essential services (OCHA 13/02/2024). While the figure does not explicitly include information

on migrant populations and the LGBTQ+ community given a paucity of detailed data, these groups also likely experience compounded adverse effects from confinements, potentially at an even more severe level.

Increased risk of protection risks

Confinements imposed by NSAGs in Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño pose immediate protection threats intricately linked to a spectrum of protection risks. These include displacements, child recruitment and use, human trafficking, APM presence, attacks on civilians, forced labour, and various GBV forms, such as sexual assault, forced marriage, and coercive control. They profoundly affect both the physical and emotional wellbeing of the affected communities across the three departments (OCHA 01/03/2024 c and 13/02/2024). One key informant noted that populations under confinements live in constant fear and distress, not only because clashes between NSAGs often lead to accusations of civilians affiliating with one side but also as a result of direct threats from these groups, which heighten their sense of insecurity and vulnerability (KII 12/03/2024).

- **Displacements.** Confinements and mobility restrictions contribute to mass displacements; armed group presence and the looming threat of confinement can compel communities and individuals to relocate. This willingness to uproot their lives highlights the potentially significant consequences of being affected by these events and underscores people's profound fear for their wellbeing and security. An analysis of OCHA's early warnings issued in 2023 for the departments of Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño shows that 18 out of 24 confinement early warnings involved displacements alongside confinements (ReliefWeb accessed 26/03/2024).
- **Recruitment and use of children and adolescents.** Confinements and mobility restrictions increase the risk of child recruitment and use by NSAGs (David and Gutiérrez 05/11/2018). A key informant highlighted that children and adolescents find themselves caught in a precarious situation, with diminished opportunities and the looming danger of coercion into illicit activities (such as illegal crop cultivation) or mining (KII 07/03/2024). Confinements and mobility restrictions significantly limit community movement, creating environments where NSAGs can more easily recruit young people (KII 14/03/2024). In some municipalities of Arauca, for example, adolescents are being displaced towards municipal capitals and out of the department as a preventive measure to avoid NSAG recruitment and use (OCHA 15/03/2024 b).
- **GBV.** Confinements and mobility restrictions aggravate gender-based vulnerabilities. These events lead to increased instances of sexual assault, forced marriage, and other GBV forms. When their movement is restricted, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation by NSAGs, as the limited mobility drastically reduces

their access to GBV response mechanisms (KII 07/03/2024). During confinement, it is nearly impossible for victims to access support services, and the isolation also prevents them from reporting abuse, leaving them highly exposed to continued exploitation and violence (KII 14/03/1014; KII 07/03/2024). These challenges persist even post-confinement as disrupted service networks struggle to recover, further prolonging GBV impacts. Confinements and mobility restrictions can also increase exposure to domestic violence, with women and children being particularly at risk in these controlled environments where their movements are severely limited (KII 14/03/2024).

Besides these broad risks, specific NSAG practices further compound the protection challenges that residents face. During confinements, NSAGs exercise population control by employing various mechanisms to assert their dominance. In Nariño, NSAGs issue identity cards as a means of personal identification and territorial control, particularly in Cordillera subregion. This system restricts freedom of movement and imposes arbitrary requirements, affecting the overall wellbeing and autonomy of individuals. Consequences for non-compliance with these imposed rules can be severe, including banishment, assassination, fines, or forced labour (KII 07/03/2024; OCHA 01/03/2024 b; Global Protection Cluster 14/04/2022). The introduction of such informal civil documentation by NSAGs poses significant protection risks, encompassing a range of issues – from increased surveillance and control over individuals' lives to heightened risks of extortion and violence. While specific reports of practices such as the creation of identity cards have not emerged from Chocó and Arauca, the latent risk of such mechanisms being employed remains a concern.

In some affected areas, NSAGs enforce strict behavioural and dress code norms that particularly affect women and girls. These imposed codes can include restrictions on how to dress, which not only limit personal freedoms but also heighten risks of discrimination and social stigma if not followed. Such measures intensify the vulnerability of women and girls during confinements, compounding their exposure to other risks of violence and abuse (KII 26/03/2024).

During confinements, there is a continual risk of individuals being wrongfully accused of affiliating with rival NSAGs, with men often being more susceptible to these accusations (KII 21/02/2024). The LGBTQ+ community also faces significant protection risks during confinements and mobility restrictions, including sexual violence, abuse, and threats. These individuals are frequently displaced and face harsh discrimination, which can worsen under the restricted conditions imposed by NSAGs. The limited ability to move freely often leaves them particularly exposed to targeted harassment (KII 06/03/2024).

INCREASED RISK OF FOOD INSECURITY AND REDUCED LIVELIHOOD ACCESS

“Hunger is a weapon they use against the population.”

–Female respondent, Nariño

Confinements and mobility restrictions by NSAGs critically limit access to food sources and severely disrupt economic activities, affecting the daily lives and economic stability of communities in Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño. During confinements, individuals are often confined to their homes with limited supplies and have to depend on what is available. In some cases, such as reported in Arauca, NSAGs control the quantity of provisions that families can purchase or bring into their homes, severely limiting food availability (KII 18/03/2024). Mobility restrictions can also hinder the transportation of goods, further complicating food access for the entire community. These constraints, including the presence of APMs that NSAGs use to enforce confinements and mobility restrictions, further aggravate structural issues, such as chronic food insecurity, malnutrition, and livelihood difficulties (OCHA 01/03/2024 d, 16/01/2024, and 15/03/2024 b).

Children are at significant nutritional risk, with school meals often serving as their primary or only food source. Confinements and mobility restrictions critically hinder affected children’s access to the nourishment they depend on, worsening food insecurity within this demographic (3iS accessed 03/04/2024; R4V 12/12/2023).

The departments of Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño already exhibit notable food insecurity levels, which intensify in situations of confinement and restricted mobility. These conditions severely hinder access to food sources and disrupt economic activities, making it even more challenging for affected communities to meet their nutritional needs and maintain their livelihoods.

In Chocó, the prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under five increased by 14% from October 2022 to October 2023, underscoring the severe impact of restricted mobility on food access (OCHA 15/03/2024 a). Chocó has the highest infant mortality rate resulting from malnutrition in the 0–5 age group (DANE 21/12/2023). Similarly, in Nariño, 125,700 individuals face severe food insecurity, with restricted access to markets and livelihood opportunities because of mobility restrictions intensifying their hardships (FSC/Nutrition Cluster 24/08/2023). Severe food insecurity has notably affected migrant and refugee populations in Nariño, with the department recording the highest rate nationwide in February 2022. Arauca, as the department with the third-highest food insecurity levels in Colombia, sees its conditions worsened by frequent confinements, which limit movement and access to essential resources. The indigenous and migrant populations in this department are particularly

vulnerable, as they often face restricted access to food and essential services, which contributes to the high rates of child malnutrition and economic instability observed in the region (WFP 08/06/2023; FSC et al. 13/12/2023).

“For us, who consider ourselves children of the forest, happiness is walking and interacting with our environment. To confine and lock us up is to give us a slow death.”

–Female respondent, Nariño

Some communities, particularly indigenous and Afrodescendant groups, face heavy impacts as they rely on fishing, hunting, and agricultural activities for their livelihoods. For example, in Nariño, the Awá community primarily sustains itself through hunting. Confinements, which hinder them from leaving their homes, severely compromise their food security by preventing them from hunting to provide for their needs.

These mobility restrictions and confinements not only affect food security and disrupt economic activities but also impede community gatherings and mandate avoidance of communal spaces. Such constraints pose significant challenges to cultural preservation and social cohesion. This particularly threatens cultural identity, leading to the erosion of traditions and social interactions. This is notably true for nomadic indigenous communities, such as the Awá people in Nariño and the Inga in Arauca, who rely heavily on mobility and cultural exchanges to maintain their way of life (KII 07/03/2024).

At the same time, these periods of confinement and restricted mobility significantly diminish the governance of community leaders and councils, especially in regions such as Arauca and Chocó. This reduction in local leadership effectiveness often leads to increased challenges in organising community encounters, tightening the control imposed by NSAGs over these communities. The absence of robust governance and regular community meetings further complicates communities’ ability to preserve their cultural and social structures, contributing to a pervasive sense of disconnection and disenfranchisement (UARIV accessed 03/04/2024; KII 14/03/2024; KII 12/03/2024; KII 21/02/2024).

The cycle of revictimisation is particularly harsh for communities that displace to avoid the confinements imposed by NSAGs. These communities, often already scarred by previous violence and displacement, face compounded challenges when they attempt to reintegrate into new communities. Adapting to new livelihoods and reintegrating into the community and labour market becomes exceedingly difficult amid the recurring adversities posed by NSAG presence and the risk of subsequent confinements (KII 14/03/2024).

Reduced access to services

WASH

Confinements and mobility restrictions by NSAGs have critically affected access to WASH services in Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño. These restrictions aggravate existing environmental and infrastructural challenges, making it even more difficult for communities to access essential water sources and maintain sanitation facilities. Many rural communities do not have potable water in their homes, and people rely instead on communal sources that become inaccessible during confinements. NSAGs' territorial control and the placement of APMs on pathways severely restrict movement, further hindering access to safe water and increasing the health risks associated with unsanitary conditions (OCHA 15/03/2024 b, 01/03/2024 b, and 01/03/2024 a).

Confinements and mobility restrictions severely compromise hygiene, particularly affecting women who lose access to communal water points and sanitary products. This lack of resources hits menstrual hygiene management the hardest, for which the absence of necessary supplies is acutely problematic. Inadequate sanitation facilities and restricted water access intensify these challenges, highlighting the critical need for targeted WASH interventions that address gender-specific needs during and after confinements (KII 14/03/2024). Rural and especially indigenous women in remote areas face compounded difficulties, as they often have very limited access to essential hygiene, sanitation, and sexual and reproductive health services (KII 14/03/2024; OCHA 01/03/2024 a).

In both urban and rural areas, confinements and mobility restrictions worsen existing WASH challenges. While urban centres may face issues with water potability, it is in rural areas where the impact of these restrictions is most severe. Communities that rely on rainwater or stagnant water sources are particularly vulnerable, as their already limited options for clean water are further restricted during confinements. These water sources are also often breeding grounds for diseases such as dengue and malaria, which can become more prevalent when NSAG activities disrupt regular water management and control measures (OCHA 15/03/2024 a; OCHA et al. 05/06/2023).

Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño also face the significant issue of the contamination of water sources by nearby mining or oil extraction activities. Confinements or mobility restrictions can detain communities within areas with potentially toxic water, increasing health risks and making it even more difficult for residents to manage their daily water needs safely (KII 05/03/2024; OCHA 20/10/2023; Rutas del Conflicto 23/07/2023). Other consequences include heightened disease prevalence, the loss of mangroves, water, air, and soil deterioration, desertification, ecosystem destruction, and the extinction of animal and plant species (OCHA 20/10/2023).

Health

In Colombia, 78% of municipalities have low or very low access to health services (OCHA 15/03/2024 a). Most healthcare centres in Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño are located in the municipal capitals of departments, requiring many rural residents to travel significant distances to access medical care. Confinements and mobility restrictions can severely limit the physical and mental wellbeing of communities by further restricting their ability to access healthcare facilities. Confinements not only make movement to health centres impossible but also critically hinder access to emergency medical care and medication. This is particularly impactful for individuals with chronic conditions and pregnant women, contributing to increased child mortality and complicating treatment for common illnesses (KII 07/03/2024; OCHA 01/03/2024 b). This lack of access to timely healthcare can worsen the severity of chronic diseases and lead to a higher incidence of complications, making confined populations especially vulnerable to worsening health outcomes (OCHA 20/10/2023, 22/09/2023, and 01/09/2023).

Addressing mental health needs in these confined areas, particularly considering factors such as ethnicity, gender, and age, is essential for effectively managing conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This holistic approach helps in reducing the prevalence of PTSD symptoms and the misuse of psychoactive substances, which can include both illegal drugs and necessary psychiatric medications, among affected populations (OCHA 05/12/2023, 30/10/2023, and 07/09/2023). The constant state of uncertainty, fear, and isolation contributes to a wide range of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and an increase in suicidal thoughts, underscoring the pressing need for accessible and culturally sensitive mental health services (CICR 22/03/2023; Uniandes 27/11/2019). Key informants from the three departments (Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño) reported concerns about the impact of restricting events on the mental health of children and adolescents, and they expressed alarm over the increasing issues of alcohol and drug abuse among these groups.

EDUCATION

“Children are losing their will to live; the little ones talk about killing, draw violent graphics, and replicate violent actions through play, while the older ones are drinking and smoking.”

—Male respondent, Nariño

Confinements and mobility restrictions significantly affect school attendance for children and adolescents, often completely hindering education access when families must stay within their homes or local community boundaries. Even when there is a school in the village with local teachers, conflict and security concerns related to NSAG activities, including APM presence, frequently disrupt school operations (OCHA/UNCT Colombia 01/03/2024). Armed conflict escalation aggravates these challenges by producing inadequate school facilities and a shortage of teachers. This shortage is often intensified by the confinements themselves, which prevent teachers from travelling from their homes to schools (KII 07/03/2024; DP 03/04/2023). These issues disproportionately affect ethnic communities, who frequently reside in more remote areas where the risks to safety and accessibility are even greater, further obstructing educational access and continuity (OCHA 01/03/2024 b; KII 14/03/2024; DRC 01/06/2023).

In some municipalities with NSAG presence, particularly in Chocó and Arauca, schools often fall under the influence of these groups, especially during confinements and mobility restrictions. It is common for NSAGs to use schools for recruitment or as operational bases, sometimes even serving as shelters during confrontations between armed groups, significantly disrupting the educational environment (KII 14/03/2024; 3iS accessed 01/04/2024).

Although linking school dropout rates directly to confinements and mobility restrictions is complex, key informants from these departments reported that such conditions force many children and adolescents to abandon their education. This is particularly evident in areas such as Arauquita, Saravena, and Tame, where NSAG presence and enforced mobility restrictions contribute to a notable increase in school dropouts, recorded at 5.59% in 2021 (3iS accessed 20/03/2024; DANE 07/2019).

Shelter

The threat of confinement by NSAGs, along with their confrontations and clashes with government forces, often leads communities in Arauca, Chocó, and Nariño to seek refuge outside their usual living areas. These communities typically move to alternative shelters, such as community centres or schools, when remaining in their homes becomes untenable

because of security concerns or direct threats (KII 26/02/2024; OCHA 22/06/2023, 20/10/2023, and 02/06/2023). This movement generally occurs within the confines of restricted areas or between municipalities that people hope to have less NSAG presence, highlighting complex mobility dynamics even under confinement conditions.

Overcrowding in these shelters often leads to severe access limitations to basic services, especially clean water and sanitation, increasing health risks. For instance, in Nariño, overcrowding in temporary accommodations has led to the spread of gastrointestinal and respiratory diseases, demonstrating the critical need for improved shelter conditions and service provision (KII 21/02/2024; OCHA 20/10/2023 and 01/09/2023). Despite known displacements in Arauca and Chocó, detailed information about the conditions within these shelters remains limited.

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

Even with confinements and mobility restrictions escalating existing humanitarian needs and creating new challenges, the capacity of authorities, civil society, and international cooperation organisations to deliver timely humanitarian aid to those affected remains severely limited. Confinements and mobility restrictions often prevent aid from reaching the most vulnerable populations, compounding the difficulties they face during crises. The three departments, particularly Chocó and Arauca, face significant humanitarian access challenges marked by confinements and mobility restrictions, compounded by the threat of violence from NSAGs against humanitarian responders. Incidents such as assaults on medical missions have been reported particularly in Chocó and Arauca, further impeding the delivery of essential aid and services (OCHA 15/03/2024 a; KII 12/03/2024). Challenges are compounded by the need for riverine transport, poor road conditions, and limited communication infrastructure, with some communities only reachable after several days of travel. These logistical barriers are particularly pronounced in regions under tight NSAG control, where movement is heavily restricted. Entry into areas under NSAG control is significantly hindered by more than just a lack of essential security measures. The region's challenging geographical features, including its dense forests and mountainous terrain, combined with climatic obstacles such as frequent floods and landslides, further complicate access. These natural hazards aggravate the difficulties already presented by confinement and mobility restrictions, making it even harder for humanitarian aid to reach those in need (Global Protection Cluster 13/04/2023; OCHA 01/03/2024 b).

The underreporting of confinement incidents, mobility restrictions, and threats from armed groups further hampers timely assistance to those in need across the three departments (ICRC 03/04/2024; OCHA/UNCT Colombia 01/03/2024).