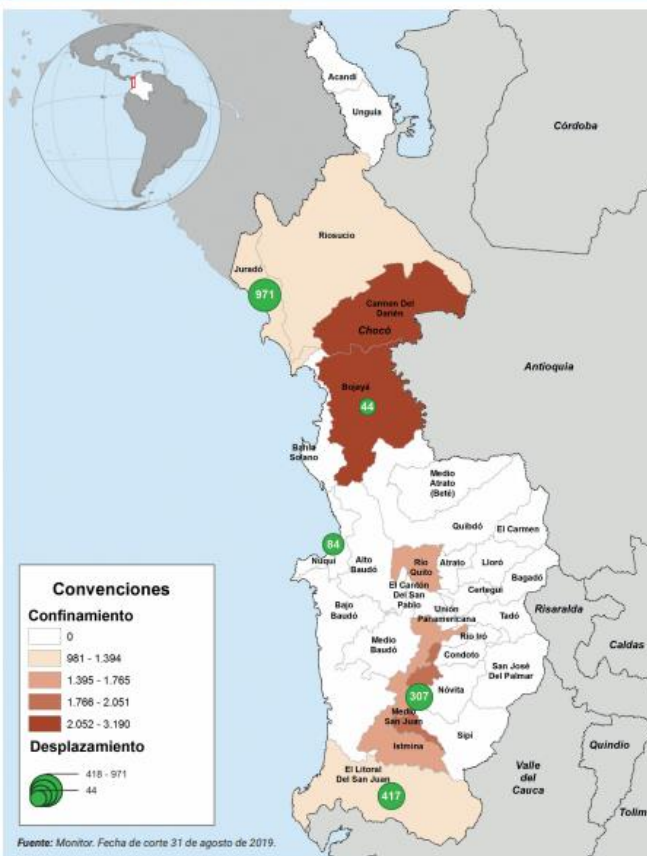


COLOMBIA

Displacement in Chocó

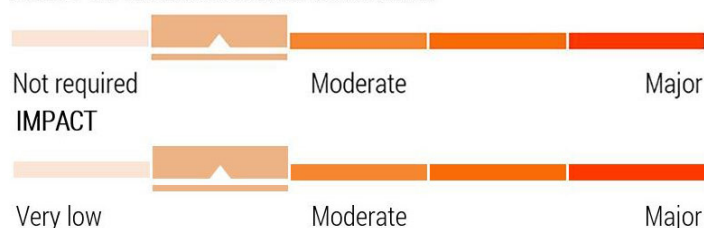
In October 2019 a re-intensification of armed clashes between the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) and the AGC (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia) for control of territories and resources in the municipality of Bojayá, Chocó department (northwest Colombia) have caused the confinement of 2,250 indigenous and Afro-Colombian people. Their freedom of movement has been severely curtailed as they cannot leave their place of residence. One civilian was allegedly killed in crossfire between the armed groups and 16 local leaders were threatened. As time goes by the humanitarian needs of those confined worsen. They do not have access to their usual sources of livelihood (fishing, agriculture), security hazards limit humanitarian access to the area, and the governmental response so far has not been adequate.

VÍCTIMAS POR CONFINAMIENTO Y DESPLAZAMIENTO EN EL DEPARTAMENTO DE CHOCÓ EN 2019:



Source: OCHA 09/2019

NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE



Anticipated scope and scale

Continuous heavy rainfalls might affect timely delivery of aid and temporary shelter arrangements of those displaced. Both confinement and displacement exacerbate the **protection, food, and health** needs of the population. The department of Chocó had high pre-crisis levels of **infant mortality** and **food insecurity**. As armed clashes in the department have occurred throughout 2019 and previous confinement periods this year have lasted for weeks, **continuing confinement** and **further displacement** of local communities cannot be excluded.

Key priorities



+2,250
confined Colombians



Agriculture & livelihoods
are affected

Humanitarian Constraints



Chocó was listed among the departments with the highest access constraints, with operations being affected by state and also non-state armed groups. As heavy rains have been reported, flooding and other impediments on roads and riverways in the department might be encountered.

Crisis impact

The department of Chocó in the northwest of Colombia is rich in natural resources, attracting the attention of different armed groups vying for control of the department (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). Its strategic border with Panama favours illegal drug trafficking towards the U.S. (AFP 18/10/2019). Consequently the region is destabilised by illegal goldmining, drug trafficking, and the existence of commercial routes for other illegal items (Unidad Víctimas 14/06/2016). The 2019 HNO already identified new trends in the violent clashes affecting Chocó, with new and old armed actors increasingly displacing the population (HNO 10/01/2019).

In the municipality of Bojayá (Chocó), armed clashes have intensified throughout 2019 with higher risks for local communities. The latest clashes were reported on 13 October between the ELN and the AGC, in the proximity of the Napipí river, causing displacement of some communities and confinement of others, which are unable to leave the area and face severe restrictions on their freedom of movement (Defensoría del Pueblo (local Ombudsman) 21/10/2019, Amnesty International 22/02/2018). Armed groups have threatened 16 community leaders who were against their presence and installed anti-personnel mines near telecommunication infrastructure, to prevent contacts within the region (Defensoría del Pueblo 21/10/2019).

One civilian was killed as he was reportedly hit by a bullet in the crossfire. Due to increased insecurity at least 12 families (29 people) of the Afro-Colombian community of Carrillo left for the town of Bellavista (Cocomacia 13/10/2019). Additionally, at least 2,250 Afro-Colombian and indigenous citizens in Bojayá have been confined because of new armed clashes predicted between the AGC and the ELN (Defensoría del Pueblo 21/10/2019).

Protection: State presence is low and the state cannot guarantee protection to individuals or specific groups from violence (OCHA 22/10/2019). Throughout 2019 local communities have been victims of killings, kidnappings, displacement and confinement because of armed clashes between the AGC and the ELN (OCHA Monitor 28/10/2019).

Food, nutrition and livelihoods: The communities confined in Bojayá cannot go fishing or tend to their fields and are therefore lacking adequate food (Defensoría del Pueblo 21/10/2019). The humanitarian response does not reach all families affected by malnutrition (OCHA 22/10/2019). Considering previous periods of confinement in Bojayá, the communities will most likely be prevented from trading and carrying out any commercial activities (OCHA 16/04/2019).

Health: Teams of medical personnel have difficulties accessing the department because of armed groups' presence (OCHA 22/10/2019). The particular needs of children and adolescents, along with those of pregnant and nursing mothers are not met (OCHA 22/10/2019). Health facilities are not maintained and the affected population is not

receiving the necessary medical attention (OCHA 22/10/2019, Defensoría del Pueblo 21/10/2019). Emerging psychosocial needs of those witnessing armed violence, especially in the Afro-Colombian community of Chocó, have been reported (Unidad para la Víctimas 30/12/2016).

Education: Schools have been occupied by armed groups, and some of them have been damaged or destroyed. The presence of mines and IEDs involves further risks in accessing schools (OCHA 22/10/2019).

Shelter and NFIs: Temporary shelters in the department are unsafe and at risk of collapse, as well as overcrowded. Emergency shelter does not take into account gender aspects, augmenting the risk of SGBV and other threats to civilians' safety (OCHA 22/10/2019).

Vulnerable groups affected

Afro-Colombians, indigenous people and farmers are among the most vulnerable groups in Chocó (GoC 10/10/2019). In 2018 those affected by confinement in the department were 74% indigenous and 26% Afro-Colombians; of those displaced 82% were indigenous and 17% Afro-Colombians (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). Afro-Colombians and indigenous communities constitute the majority of the population in the department (TERRIDATA 2005).

Children and adolescents have been identified as particularly affected by the ongoing insecurity in the department (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). Many children and youth can no longer access education, leaving them more exposed to the risk of being recruited in one of the local armed groups (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). Some of the 26 cases of forced recruitment by the ELN in Chocó in 2018 were registered specifically in the municipality of Bojayá (Monitor OCHA/UMAIC 31/12/2018).

Humanitarian and operational constraints

Chocó was listed among the departments with the highest access constraints, with operations affected by state and also non-state armed groups (HNO 10/01/2019). While in Bojayá municipality no incidents related to mines and IEDs were reported in 2019, six such episodes happened in Chocó in the same year (OCHA Monitor 28/10/2019). At the end of 2018, out of the total surface of 46,530 km² in Chocó, 543,790 m² were assessed as contaminated (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018) and might endanger the safety of humanitarian workers.

In February 2019 severe access constraints affected operators trying to reach Bojayá as the ELN announced a blockage of all river and transport routes (Enlace Caritas, Pastoral Social 11/02/2019). In the same municipality in March 2019 aid was also allegedly withheld by local armed groups (Defensoría del Pueblo March 2019).

As mines have been placed with the specific aim to isolate the region, telecommunication from and to Bojayá could be severely affected (Defensoría del Pueblo 21/10/2019).

Current heavy rains might also hamper aid delivery through local riverways and transport routes.

Aggravating factors

Rainy season

The rainy season has hit the department of Chocó with ongoing precipitation as of 21 October (UNGRD 21/10/2019). In the last month no citizens have been harmed in natural disasters (OCHA Monitor 28/10/2019). Still, heavy rains might affect the recently displaced and the confined alike, if they live in temporary shelters, or if one of the rivers in the Bojayá municipality overflows. The rainy season usually lasts till December (Sociedad Geográfica de Colombia 1967). The area of Bojayá was affected by flooding in December 2017 (UNGRD 07/12/2017) and was among the seven municipalities in Chocó with the highest number of registered victims for natural disasters (mainly windstorms and flooding) in 2018 (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018).

Contextual information

Past displacement

Already in 2016 the area of Bojayá was among the municipalities most affected by conflict in Colombia, where victims of conflicts had not received reparation and did not fully enjoy their rights (Unidad Víctimas 14/06/2016). In particular the city of Bellavista, where some of the displaced Afro-Colombians from Carrillo went, has already experienced displacement (Unidad Víctimas 14/06/2016). Many inhabitants left the town after a bomb exploded amid clashes between insurgent forces and paramilitaries, causing dozens of fatalities and injuries among those who had found refuge in the church of Bellavista on 02/05/2002 (Unidad Víctimas 14/06/2016). The inhabitants of Bellavista were still returning as of 2016 to recover their land and receive reparations (Unidad Víctimas 14/06/2016).

Main causes of displacement in the department of Chocó have been related both to violence and natural disasters (HNO 10/01/2019) in a phenomenon known as “doble afectación”, literally to be doubly affected (Government of Sweden, ODI, GiZ 30/09/2019). In February 2016, 187,000 people between Chocó, Cauca, Antioquia and Arauca were displaced because of ELN armed attacks (HNO 10/01/2019). In March 2017, 960 people in Chocó were displaced to cities due to the activities of armed groups (HNO 10/01/2019). In September 2017 some 5,380 families were left homeless by torrential rains (HNO 10/01/2019). Further flooding affected the department in February 2018 with 5,050 rural inhabitants being displaced, losing crops and belongings (HNO 10/01/2019). Finally, in June

2018 over 5,073 indigenous and Afro-Colombian individuals were confined because of ELN's threats and attacks (HNO 10/01/2019).

Rising confinement

While overall displacement in Chocó decreased from 2017 to 2018, the number of civilians confined and with restricted freedom of movement grew precisely because of the new conflict dynamics (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). Protection, food security, and access to livelihoods have become the top humanitarian priorities (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018).

Chocó was the department with the highest population confinement rates (57% of the total) as of end 2018 (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). OCHA confirmed that confinement rates in Chocó increased in 2019 compared to 2018 (OCHA 22/10/2019).

In the municipality of Bojayá both Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities were affected by prolonged confinement in March and April 2019, especially those living near the rivers Bojayá, Opogadó and Napipí (Defensoría del Pueblo March 2019, OCHA 16/04/2019). A total of nine communities and 2,778 people were confined in Villa Hermosa, Egoróquera, Playita, Unión Baquiaza, Carrillo, Mesopotamia, Napipí, Bocas de Opogadó and Pogue (Defensoría del Pueblo March 2019). They could not pursue any commercial activities or use riverway transport, as the prices asked for fuel skyrocketed (OCHA 16/04/2019). The confinement was caused by a dispute over the above-mentioned territories between the AGC, which was previously in control, and the ELN which carried out new operations in the territories (Defensoría del Pueblo March 2019).

History of conflict and relevant stakeholders

The ELN has been increasingly active in the department of Chocó since 2016. Its network is operated by around 2,300 combatants and covers about 10% of all Colombian municipalities (AFP 18/10/2019). They are expanding control from their core territory in Arauca to the areas vacated by the FARC in Chocó, including the illegal markets therein (ICG 25/10/2019). By July 2019 ELN presence was already reported in towns south of the Bojayá municipality, such as Bahía Solano, Juradó y Carmen del Darién (PARES 22/10/2019). The ELN is competing in the department against the drug-traffickers of the AGC (ICG 25/10/2019). The AGC is the armed section of the paramilitary Clan del Golfo, the main group of narcotraffickers in the country (AFP 18/10/2019). While a brief improvement in terms of mobility was registered after the FARC-EP left in 2018, the area soon witnessed the appearance of new armed groups (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018).

Key characteristics of Chocó department

- **Demographic profile:** total population 457,412 (49.4% male, 50.6% female) (DANE-Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda). 277,783 (61,2%) are black, biracial or Afro-Colombians, 43,991 (9.7%) form the indigenous population (TERRIDATA 2005).
- **Food security figures:** 64.2% of households affected by food insecurity (ENSIN 2010)
- **Nutrition levels:** malnutrition of children under 5 is at 6.3% (ENSIN 2010)
- **Health statistics:** infant mortality rate is at 40.9 per thousand births (DANE 2016).
- **WASH statistics:** 28.54% of the houses have access to improved sources of drinking water (DANE 30/08/2019).
- **Lighting and cooking sources:** 75.2% of houses have access to electricity (DANE 30/08/2019)
- **Literacy levels:** 14.82% of over 15 cannot read or write, 72.34% of those aged 5-24 years old are attending an educational institution (DANE 26/09/2019)
- **Employment:** 31.67% declared to have worked for at least one hour in the previous week with some form of payment, 23.98% were studying, 21.32% did house chores, 5.67% were looking for employment (DANE 18/10/2019)

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

In April 2019 the Defensoría del Pueblo suggested the intervention of the Committee for Transitional Justice as main point of contact for the coordination of humanitarian aid reaching the confined communities of Bojayá (Defensoría del Pueblo 21/10/2019). The Unit for the Rehabilitation and Reparation of Victims (UARIV) in Chocó usually provides information on means of assistance and reparation given by the state to victims of the conflict (Unidad Víctimas 20/06/2016) and is also responsible for the relocation and compensation of returnees (Unidad Víctimas 14/06/2016). The Unit has a sub-regional office in Bojayá which was expected to reach about 6,000 conflict victims in 2016 (Unidad Víctimas 08/03/2016). A local Risk and Disaster Management Committee is also active and cooperates with international organisations (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018).

Although both OCHA and the Red Cross have raised the alarm regarding the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Chocó, the government has not adequately responded (Colombia Reports 23/10/2019).

International response capacity

The humanitarian coordination team of Chocó is one of the largest in Colombia involving 26 active organisations (12 UN agencies, UN mission to Colombia, 9 INGOs, 5 NGOs, 2 observers) (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). It intervenes in those sectors where state support is lacking, namely WASH, food security, nutrition and protection (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). OCHA is the coordinator for the humanitarian response (Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018). Still, the 2019 HRP estimated that between 38 and 48 partners were active in Chocó instead, in addition to an OCHA sub-office (HRP 29/01/2019). Bojayá was one of the municipalities with an active intersectoral response (HRP 29/01/2019).

Presencia operativa de equipo local de coordinación Chocó

COORDINACIÓN

HUMANITARIO	Albergue	Agua, saneamiento e higiene	Seguridad alimentaria y nutrición	Salud	Protección	Educación	Recuperación temprana
	OIM, ACNUR, NRC	OXFAM, CICR, UNICEF, Fundación HALÚ, OIM, AECID, SNPS	PMA, FAO, UNICEF, Pastoral Social, Fundación Plan, CICR	CICR, CRC, HAI, Fundación HALÚ, Diakonia, Mercy Corp	ONU DDHH, CICR, ACNUR, OCHA, UNICEF, NRC, MAPP-OEA, OIM, SWEFOR, CCCM, RDMCh,	NRC, OIM, WCH, Plan, HAI, CID, Caminar	PNUD, FAO, Fundación Plan, OIM, PMA
PAZ				DESARROLLO			
ONU Mujeres, PNUD, Fundación Plan, Fundación Luterana, PMA, OCHA, OACNUDH, UNDOC				OIM, PNUD, UNFPA, FAO, PMA, UNICEF			

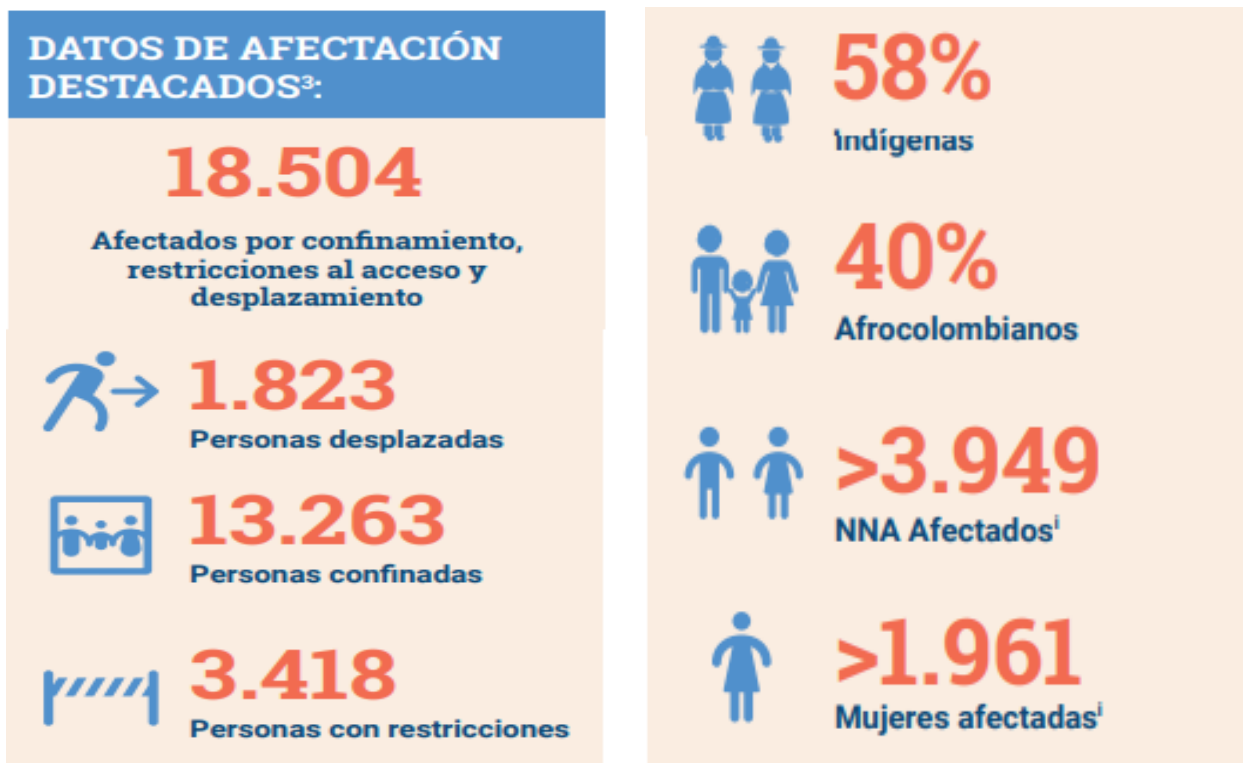
Source: Equipo Local de Coordinación Chocó 12/2018.

Information gaps and needs

As the events are very recent (they started on 13/10/2019) and displacement and confinement due to clashes among non-state armed actors is ongoing in other areas of Chocó (Alto Andágueda, Alto Baudó), it is difficult to obtain specific information regarding the municipality of Bojayá and its surroundings. No updates on the situation have been found since the alert was issued by the Defensoría del Pueblo on 21/10/2019 and hence coping strategies of the local population are unknown.

There is no specific information regarding the planned governmental response for the municipality of Bojayá. Numbers linked to the total presence of humanitarian organisations in the area are conflicting.

Chocó Department: people affected by violence (Jan-Sep 2019).



Source: OCHA 22/10/2019