

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim

This report aims to assess the needs of IDPs experiencing **individual displacement because of conflict** in Colombia, with a specific focus on the municipalities of Bogotá, Buenaventura, Florencia, and Ocaña. Individual displacement tends to be underreported to the authorities, rendering those affected less visible and leaving them in precarious conditions without adequate support. The analysis examines the specific challenges that individually displaced people face, highlighting barriers to accessing basic services.

Methodology

The findings of this report are based on a combination of secondary data review and primary data collection through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). This report cites KIIs to encompass insights gathered from both individual KIIs and FGDs, the latter conducted with people who have experienced displacement because of armed conflict and are currently residing in the studied municipalities. The primary data collection focused on gathering information specifically about individual displacement. The secondary data included reports and documents from humanitarian organisations, local NGOs, and national institutions, providing a broad context of displacement dynamics across Colombia.

Data collection was conducted in collaboration with REACH, involving 33 KIIs and six FGDs across the four municipalities (Bogotá, Buenaventura, Florencia, and Ocaña). The analysis team chose to focus on these municipalities given their status as major host locations for IDPs, the significant number of arrivals in each location, and their geographic and strategic importance in providing an understanding of the displacement dynamics.

Limitations and information gaps

Accessing reliable data on individual displacement presents significant challenges. A central issue for this report was distinguishing the needs and experiences of individually displaced people from those undergoing mass displacement. To address this challenge, the primary data collection tools explicitly focused on individual displacement. In much of the secondary data, however, this distinction was not clear. As a result, this report uses the term 'IDP' when

the type of displacement (individual or mass) is not explicitly stated. This undermines efforts to accurately assess the number of individually displaced people and their needs upon arrival in host municipalities.

Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas (UARIV), the national unit providing assistance to victims of armed conflict, keeps records on the number of displaced people, but these figures largely rely on IDPs actively declaring their status at UARIV offices. According to a 2024 Humanitarian NGO Forum survey, in 2023, 31% of the surveyed IDPs did not declare their displacement. The three main reasons for not declaring were fear for their safety (23%), perceiving it as useless (18.4%), and a lack of knowledge about the process (18%) (Humanitarian NGO Forum 22/05/2024).

Institutional distrust underpins these main reasons. First, many IDPs perceive institutional responses as inadequate or facing delays from bureaucratic processes. For example, a formal complaint against non-state armed groups (NSAGs) or other responsible parties must be filed with the prosecutor's office as part of the declaration process. High demand at UARIV offices and other regional institutions often forces IDPs to wait long periods for appointments, heightening their vulnerability as they struggle to secure their basic needs (KII 16/10/2024; KII 21/10/2024; KII 30/09/2024; KII 01/10/2024). Second, key informants noted that IDPs are often concerned about the confidentiality of the information they share with institutions, fearing that declaring their displacement status may expose them to risks, particularly in areas with a high presence of NSAGs (KII 01/10/2024; KII 21/10/2024; KII 20/10/2024).

In the four municipalities, there are significant information gaps regarding the specific needs of individually displaced people, including the exact number of people in need and a more granular understanding of their challenges. There is also a lack of information on the needs of individually displaced people with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ population.

A note on terminology

The Colombian Law 387 of 1997 established that a victim of **forced displacement** is “any person who has been forced to migrate within the national territory, abandoning their place of residence or regular economic activities, because their life, physical integrity, personal security or freedom have been violated or are directly threatened, due to any of the following situations: internal armed conflict, internal disturbances and tensions, generalized violence, massive violations of Human Rights, violations of International Humanitarian Law, or other circumstances arising from the previous situations that may drastically alter or have altered public order” (Govt. Colombia 24/07/1997).

Forced displacement covers the following two types of displacement.

Article 12 of Decree 2569 of 2000 defines **massive displacement** as a simultaneous event affecting ten or more households or fifty or more people. A household is defined as a group of people, related or not, living under the same roof, sharing meals, and having been affected by forced displacement related to violence (Función Pública 12/12/2000).

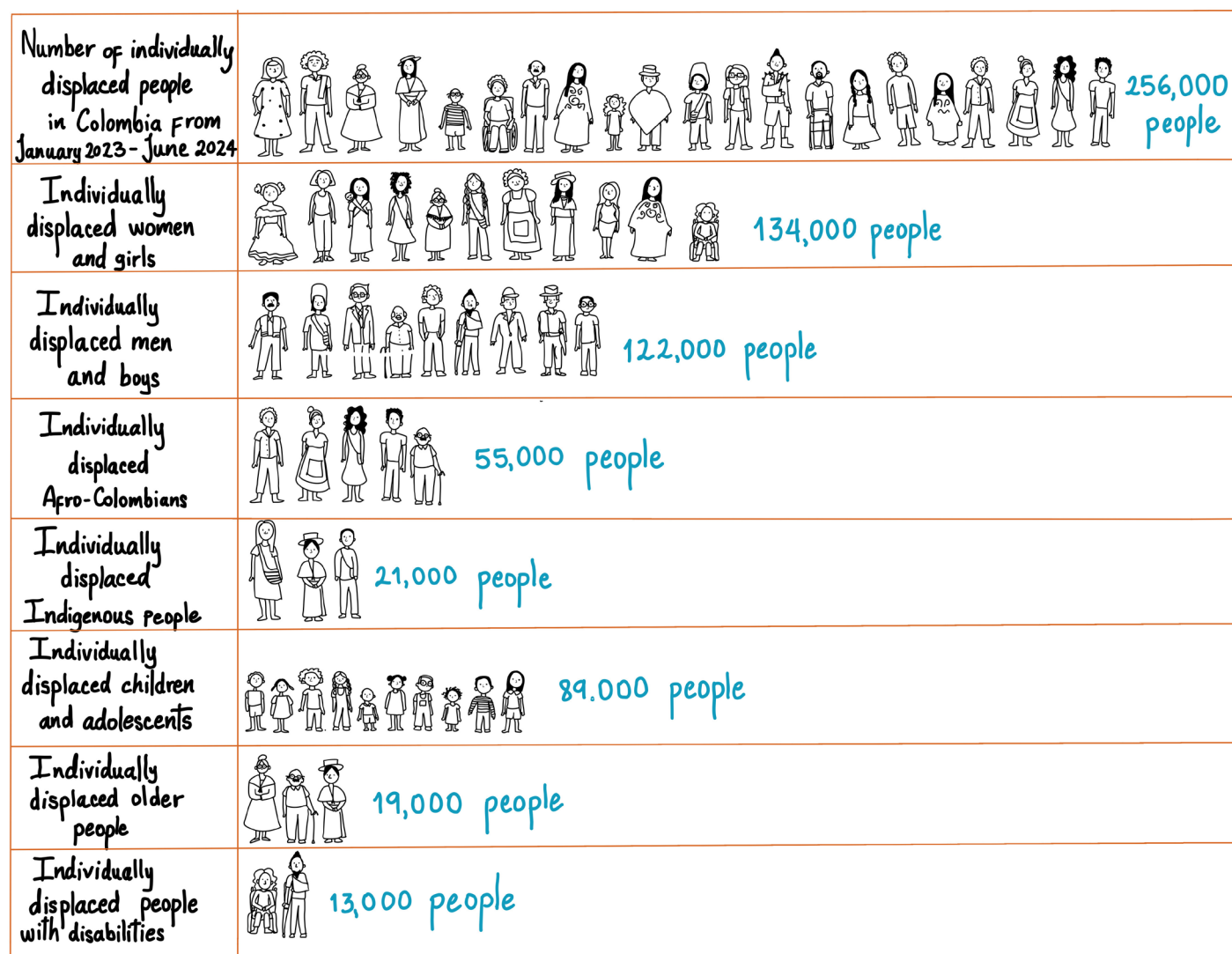
Individual displacement in Colombia is defined as an incident involving fewer than ten households or 50 people. While Colombian law lacks a specific definition, UARIV records numerous isolated displacement cases.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview.....	3
Legal provisions for supporting individually displaced people in colombia.....	4
Individual displacement drivers	5
Aggravating factors related to individual displacement	5
Climate and natural hazards	5
Economic challenges.....	5
Crisis by municipality	6
Buenaventura	6
Ocaña	7
Bogotá.....	8
Florencia	10
Priority needs of individually displaced people	11
Shelter and wash.....	11
Livelihoods and food security.....	13
Protection	15
Health.....	16
Education	17

OVERVIEW

Figure 1. Individually displaced people in Colombia from January 2023 to June 2024, by population group



Source: ACAPS using data from Blumont/UARIV (accessed 31/10/2024)

Note: the number of people drawn does not represent the exact number of people in each category and is only an approximation. This illustration presents the total number of individually displaced people during the analysis period, followed by a disaggregation of the data by population characteristics. These figures reflect reported displacements. Because of underreporting, the actual numbers are likely higher.

Map 1. Number of individual displacements in Colombia per location from 2023 to June 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from Blumont/UARIV (accessed 30/10/2024)

Colombia has experienced decades of internal displacement, largely driven by the presence of multiple NSAGs and a history of prolonged armed conflict. This dynamic has generated significant and persistent protection challenges, affecting millions of individuals and entire communities (Comisión de la Verdad accessed 07/11/2024; iDMC 30/05/2024). Reflecting this, IDPs report threats or direct violence as the main reasons for displacement, followed by clashes between armed groups (Humanitarian NGO Forum 18/08/2023). Despite the signing of the 2016 Peace Agreement, which initially reduced mass displacement events, displacement remains prevalent, with **individual displacement becoming a dominant trend. Since 2020, individual displacement has increased in Colombia, surpassing mass displacement in large numbers** (Blumont et al., 27/03/2024). Between January 2023 and June 2024, 343,917 people were displaced, 75% of them individually displaced. Among these, 52% were women, 34% were children, 21% belonged to Afro-Colombian communities, and 8% were members of Indigenous communities (Blumont/UARIV accessed 26/11/2024). Some individuals may experience both individual and mass displacement over time, reflecting the fluid and complex nature of displacement in Colombia (KII 01/10/2024; KII 30/09/2024/ KII 21/10/2024).

LEGAL PROVISIONS FOR SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia, the rights of IDPs, both mass and individual, are protected under Law 387 of 1997 (Law on Internal Displacement) and Law 1448 of 2011 (Victims and Land Restitution Law). These laws establish the framework for emergency humanitarian assistance, access to basic services, and comprehensive reparations, including health, education, housing, and income generation. The framework has been updated to extend the declaration period to five years and ensure access to aid across municipalities without requiring re-registration. It also establishes maximum deadlines for the delivery of emergency assistance and administrative procedures (MADR 28/05/2017).

There are other complementary laws, such as Constitutional Court Judgment T-025 of 2004, which declared forced displacement unconstitutional and ordered specific measures to address it. Decrees 4633, 4634, and 4635 of 2011 provide assistance and reparation for Indigenous, Rrom, and Afro-Colombian victims. Law 1719 of 2014 guarantees access to justice for victims of sexual violence in the conflict, and the Final Peace Agreement (2016) and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace address the care and justice for victims, including the displaced (Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá accessed 28/10/2024).

While the legal framework offers comprehensive provisions for both mass and individual displacement, its implementation presents significant challenges. Although Colombian legislation protects IDPs, the assistance provided by subnational state entities and humanitarian organisations falls short of addressing the scale of displacement across the

country. In all studied municipalities, displaced individuals face insufficient services. Individual displacement often lacks the visibility and scale required to trigger robust institutional responses. As these laws were primarily designed to address mass displacement, they also often fail to account for the nuanced and less visible challenges that individually displaced people face.

In contrast to mass displacement events, which often trigger national emergency responses that facilitate access to support services, **individual displacements are less visible and typically receive more limited assistance**, resulting in acute gaps in support (Humanitarian NGO Forum 22/05/2024; KII 22/09/2024). **People experiencing mass displacement are more likely to receive assistance.** According to the Humanitarian NGO Forum, 36% of the people displaced in groups of ten households received aid in 2023, compared to 26.2% of those displaced in smaller groups. IDPs, whether displaced en masse or individually, reported needs across all sectors, with the highest priorities being food, housing, and employment (Humanitarian NGO Forum 22/05/2024). This means that individually displaced people are at heightened risk of having unmet basic needs because they are less likely to receive assistance compared to cases of mass displacement.

INDIVIDUAL DISPLACEMENT DRIVERS

In the Colombian context, multiple factors drive displacement. These drivers include conflict, climate-related events, and economic pressures. **This report focuses on conflict as a key driver of individual displacement**, highlighting NSAG activities and their impact on communities. Many individually displaced people also face repeated displacement as a result of continued threats from NSAGs (KII 15/10/2024). The actions of these groups, largely driven by clashes over territorial control and the exploitation of illegal economies, consistently force populations to flee across the country (ICRC 03/07/2024; Revista Semana 31/05/2023). Displacement is closely associated with various protection risks, including threats, extortion, gender-based violence (GBV), and recruitment into NSAGs, particularly among children (Humanitarian NGO Forum 22/05/2024). As reported in Florencia, child recruitment is a primary driver of individual displacement to this municipality (KII 22/09/2024).

Fear of violence and the erosion of community trust, resulting from the extensive control NSAGs exert over various aspects of daily life, are drivers of both mass and individual displacement. In the case of individual displacement, individuals often leave in small groups without their belongings to avoid raising suspicion, increasing their immediate post displacement needs as they must rely on limited resources to rebuild their lives while waiting for state assistance, which often faces delays in the form of the bureaucratic hurdles mentioned earlier (ICRC 03/07/2024; iDMC accessed 26/11/2024; Comisión de la Verdad accessed 05/11/2024).

Some communities report that NSAGs prohibit mass displacements through threats and acts of violence to avoid attracting the attention of authorities, especially if the armed group is in negotiations with the Government. In some cases, armed groups force people to report mass displacement events as individual displacements to limit visibility and external intervention, allowing them to maintain control over affected populations and reducing external interference to their activities, including humanitarian or government assistance (KII 26/09/2024; KII 01/10/2024).

AGGRAVATING FACTORS RELATED TO INDIVIDUAL DISPLACEMENT

Climate and natural hazards

Colombia is significantly vulnerable to climate change, with 85% of its population living in areas exposed to natural and climate-related hazards. Displaced individuals face heightened risks, whether climate-related or conflict-driven, because of limited access to formal housing, forcing many to relocate to informal settlements susceptible to landslides, floods, and heatwaves. Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities face additional barriers to housing access, often linked to structural discrimination, limited financial resources, and challenges in accessing documentation, intensifying their vulnerability. That said, information gaps persist in identifying the specific barriers affecting each group, particularly Afro-Colombian populations, who constitute the majority of IDPs in Buenaventura (USAID 01/11/2024; NUPI/SIPRI 10/2022).

Flooding, heatwaves, and wildfires aggravate the precarious living conditions of individually displaced people, who often settle in high-risk informal areas given limited access to formal support. Those who settle in these areas may face reduced resilience to such shocks because of delayed or insufficient assistance. Flooding can contaminate water sources, limiting access to potable water for IDPs in informal settlements. Individually displaced people often face heightened risks compared to mass-displaced IDPs because of the former's reliance on less secure and underserved locations (OCHA 27/09/2024; KII 01/10/2024; KII 22/09/2024).

Economic challenges

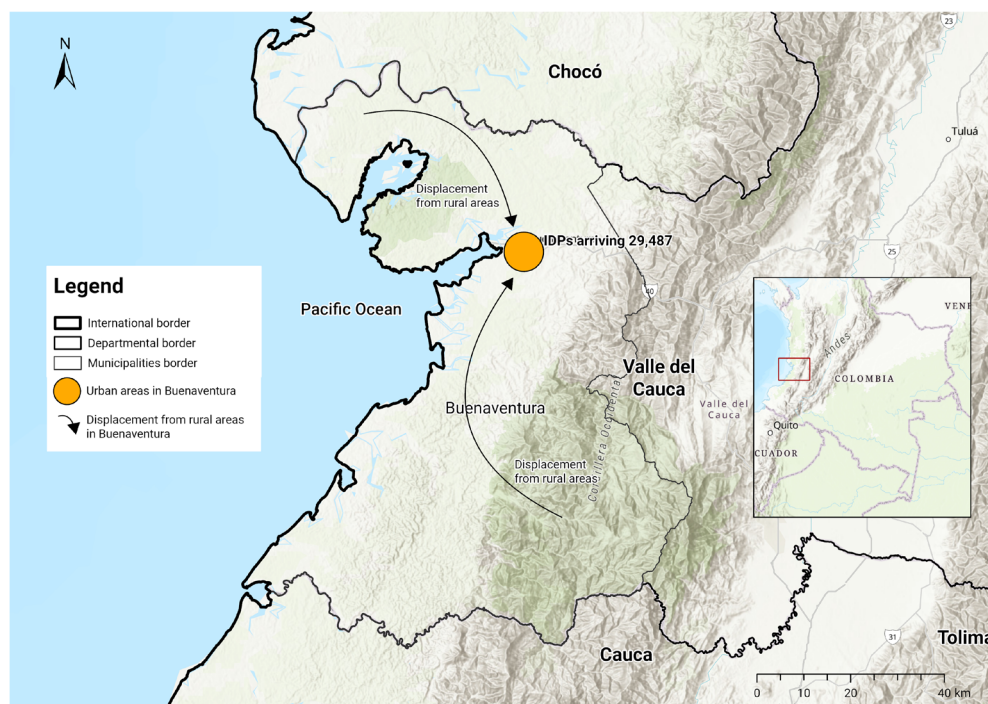
Poverty and inflation further aggravate the situation for individually displaced people (ACNUR 26/04/2024). Limited access to formal employment and the high cost of living in urban centres force many into informal labour markets, making it difficult for them to secure stable incomes or afford adequate housing. High food prices in urban areas further compound food insecurity for displaced populations. Many IDPs, whether individually or mass-displaced, struggle to

afford the basic food basket. Inflation and limited income from informal employment make it difficult to cover essential food needs, often forcing them to adopt coping strategies such as reducing meal size or frequency (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024; UARIV 02/2024).

CRISIS BY MUNICIPALITY

Buenaventura

Map 2. Number of individually displaced people arriving in the urban district of Buenaventura from 2023 to June 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from Blumont/UARIV (accessed 07/10/2024)

Table 1. Baseline indicators for the municipality of Buenaventura on access to basic services and demographic characteristics of the general population

Total population (2024 projections) for Colombia: 52,695,952 and Buenaventura: 324,130

Indicator value		
	10%	30%
	50%	80%
Indicator	Colombia	Buenaventura
1 % of people in poverty according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index	12%	41%
2 % of people without access to improved water sources	8%	26%
3 % of people with inadequate sanitation	9%	32%
4 % of people in informal jobs	71%	88%
5 % unemployment rate (2023)	9%	24%

Sources: DANE (22/03/2023 a, 22/03/2023 b, 28/08/2023, and 19/04/2024); DANE (accessed 26/11/2024); Migración Colombia (accessed 26/11/2024); Buenaventura Cómo Vamos (15/08/2024); DANE (accessed 07/11/2024)

Note: for all baseline tables, the service access data and multidimensional poverty indicators may not reflect the most current data for the municipalities. While more recent information is available at the departmental level, it may not accurately represent conditions at the municipal level given variations within departments. As a result, we used the most reliable and representative data available for the municipalities at the time of writing. Data marked with * corresponds to 2023 indicators.

Overview

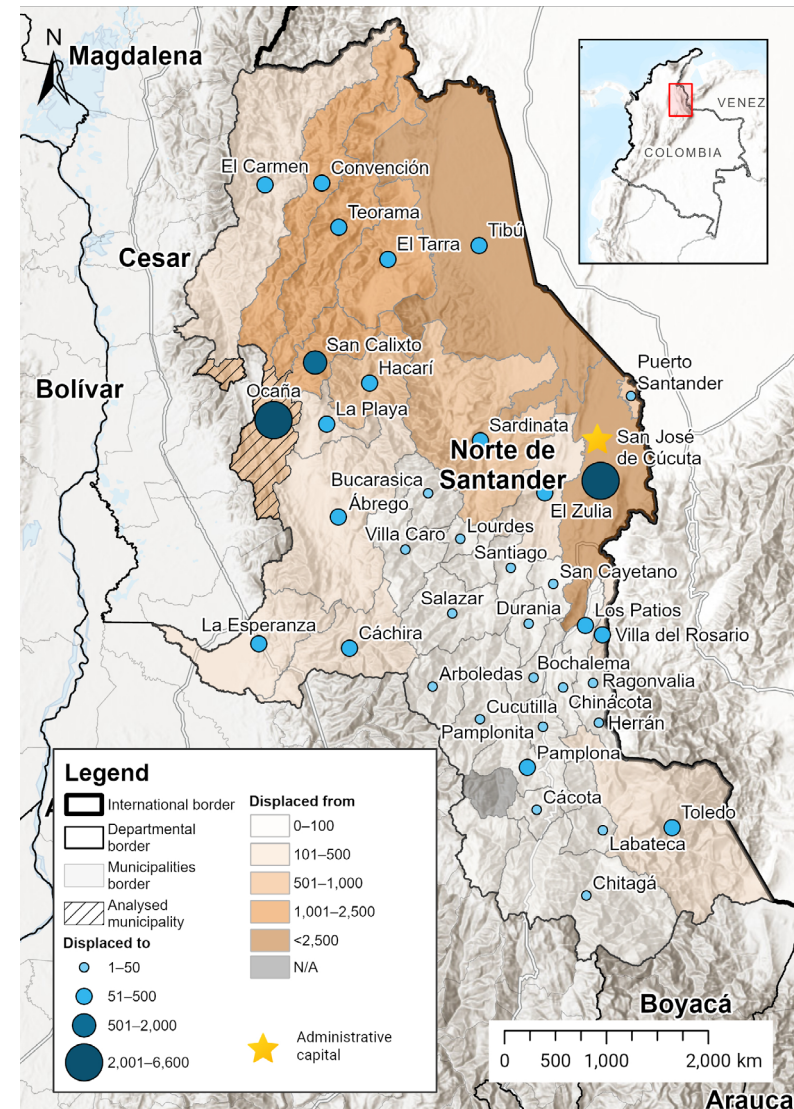
Buenaventura, which contains Colombia's main seaport, is located in western Valle del Cauca department. Despite holding the country's main port, **Buenaventura has a poverty rate of 41%**. Approximately 86% of its population identifies as Afro-Colombian, many of whom have experienced the impacts of the armed conflict. In Buenaventura, Afro-Colombian populations disproportionately face such impacts, as they predominantly reside in rural areas where displacement and conflict dynamics disrupt their livelihoods, community councils, and spaces for the transmission of knowledge and traditions (KII 01/10/2024). Within the municipality, various NSAGs, such as the National Liberation Army (ELN), the Gaitanist Army of Colombia (AGC), and dissident groups of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) compete for control of its continental, river, and maritime territories (Sinisterra-Ossa

and Valencia 25/10/2019). On the other hand, the urban areas are under the control of organised crime groups of the Shottas and the Espartanos (PARES 22/05/2024; Sinisterra-Ossa and Valencia 25/10/2019). **By December 2023, 82% of Buenaventura's neighbourhoods were under the influence of NSAGs or organised crime groups** (DP 05/12/2023).

Between January 2023 and June 2024, 29,487 individually displaced people arrived in Buenaventura, primarily as a result of violence from NSAGs and organised crime groups (ReliefWeb accessed 06/11/2024). These displacements include both intra-urban movements and arrivals from neighbouring municipalities. Intra-urban displacement is often driven by threats, extortion, and confinement, which hinder mobility and access to goods or services (DP 05/12/2023; Infobae 19/07/2023; Global Protection Cluster 16/12/2022). Support for individually displaced people is available through UARIV. Upon arrival, IDPs, including those individually displaced, must approach municipal authorities or UARIV to receive assistance. That said, key informants noted that inefficiencies in service provision intensify IDPs' vulnerability to unmet basic needs, leaving many without adequate support (KII 01/10/2024).

Ocaña

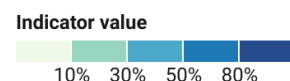
Map 3. Number of individually displaced people by municipality of departure and arrival in Norte de Santander department for January 2023 to June 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from Blumont/UARIV (accessed 30/10/2024)

Table 2. Baseline indicators for the municipality of Ocaña on access to basic services and demographic characteristics of the general population

Total population (2024 projections) for Colombia: 52,695,952 and Ocaña: 135,344



	Indicator	Colombia	Ocaña
1	% of people in poverty according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index	12%	31%
2	% of people without access to improved water sources	8%	7%
3	% of people with inadequate sanitation	9%	7%
4	% of people in informal jobs	71%	89%
5	% unemployment rate in Norte de Santander department	9%	12%

Sources: DANE (22/03/2023 a, 22/03/2023 b, 28/08/2023, and 19/04/2024); DANE (accessed 26/11/2024); Migración Colombia (accessed 26/11/2024); UPR (accessed 07/11/2024); DANE (accessed 07/11/2024)

Note: the unemployment rate provided corresponds to department-level data, as municipal-level data is not available.

Overview

Ocaña is located in northeastern Colombia, in Norte de Santander department, and is part of the Catatumbo subregion, which encompasses 11 municipalities. Its strategic location near Venezuela and in a coca cultivation area makes it of strategic importance for armed groups and central to their illicit economies (Infobae 03/11/2023; Carrascal 12/09/2019). The presence of NSAGs, including FARC-EP dissident groups, has led to territorial disputes and heightened risks for communities in both rural and urban areas (Comisión de la Verdad accessed 05/11/2024; Carrascal 15/07/2019).

Between January 2023 and July 2024, 3,437 individually displaced people arrived in Ocaña, primarily from Convención, El Tarra, and Tibú (KII 15/10/2024; ReliefWeb accessed 05/11/2024). Displacement drivers include threats of violence, as well as other factors such as land

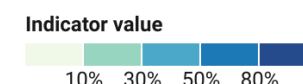
dispossession, and child recruitment, with many IDPs, including those individually displaced, settling in informal settlements on the city's outskirts (KII 15/10/2024; 3iS/OCHA 31/07/2024; DP 29/06/2023).

The dual pressures of internal displacement and Venezuelan migration strain Ocaña's institutional capacity to support individually displaced people. According to Migración Colombia, approximately 56% of all land entries into Colombian territory occur through Norte de Santander, which hosts a diverse range of migrant profiles, including those seeking permanent residence, in transit, or returning to Venezuela (GIFMM/R4 26/09/2024).

Bogotá

Table 3. Baseline indicators for the municipality of Bogotá on access to basic services and demographic characteristics of the general population

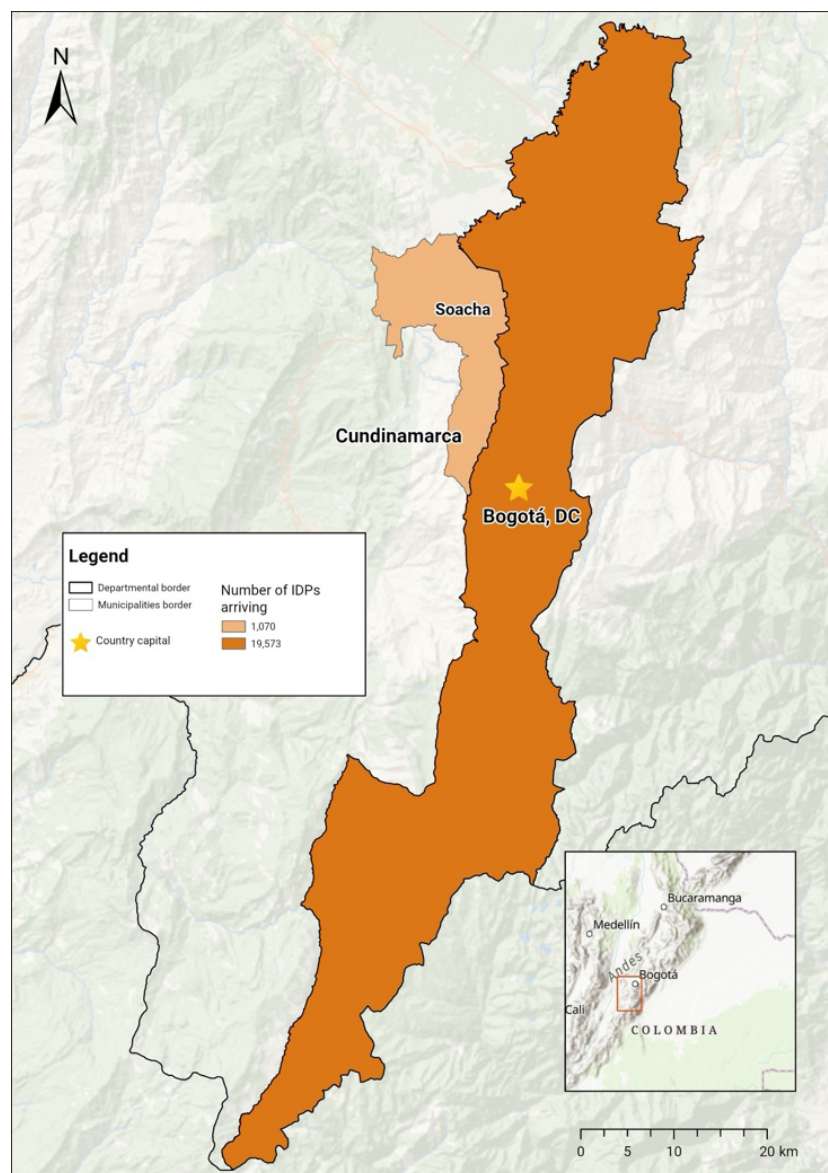
Total population (2024 projections) for Colombia: 52,695,952 and Bogotá: 7,929,539



	Indicator	Colombia	Bogotá
1	% of people in poverty according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index	12%	9%
2	% of people without access to improved water sources	8%	1%
3	% of people with inadequate sanitation	9%	1%
4	% of people in informal jobs	71%	69%
5	% unemployment rate (2024)	9%	9%

Sources: DANE (22/03/2023 a, 22/03/2023 b, 28/08/2023, and 19/04/2024); DANE (accessed 26/11/2024); Migración Colombia (accessed 26/11/2024); Alcaldía de Bogotá DC (02/11/2024); DANE (accessed 31/10/2024); DANE (accessed 31/10/2024)

Map 4. Number of Individually displaced people arriving in Bogotá and the municipality of Soacha from January 2023 to June 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from Blumont/UARIV (accessed 31/10/2024)

Overview

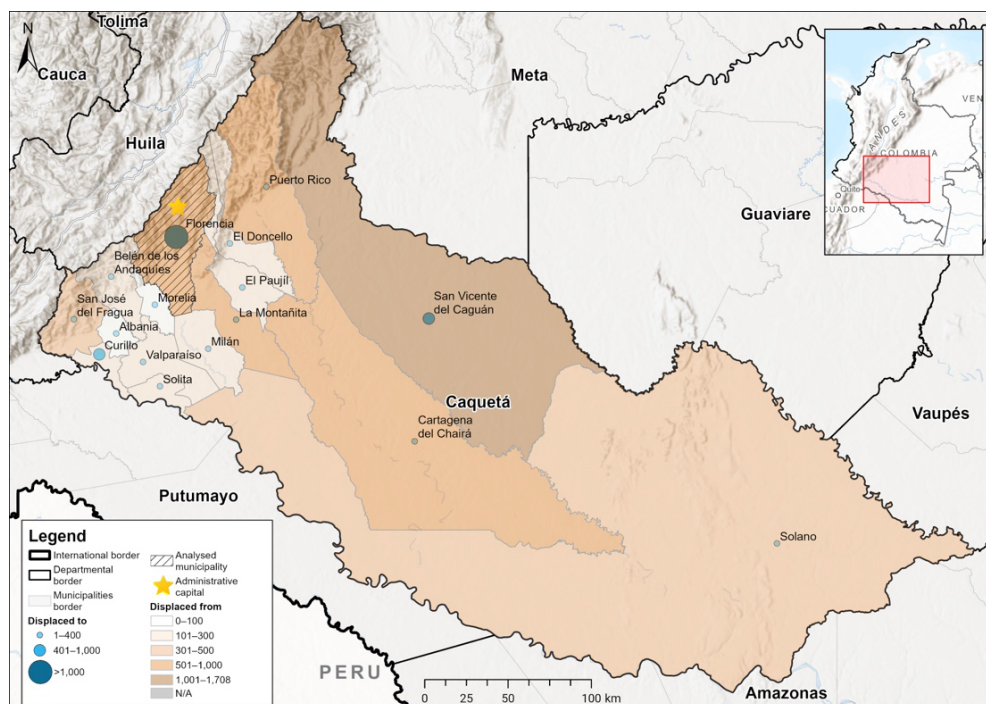
Bogotá, situated in the Andean region, is Colombia's capital and largest city. Bogotá is historically the city with the highest reception of displaced populations in the country (SDDE/Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá 22/12/2017). Despite Bogotá offering better average living conditions compared to other municipalities, with access to basic services higher than the national average, IDPs, including those individually displaced, are more likely to reside in other districts (localidades) with the highest levels of deprivation, due to the lower cost of living in these areas and limited access to affordable housing elsewhere, further worsening their vulnerabilities (KII 01/11/2024). Organised crime groups, including NSAG-affiliated ones, operate in districts with high numbers of IDPs, such as Bosa, Ciudad Bolívar, and Kennedy, heightening security risks (Infobae 30/07/2024).

Between January 2023 and July 2024, Bogotá received 19,573 individually displaced people (3iS/Blumont accessed 1/11/2024). IDPs, whether individual or mass, face challenges in accessing housing and employment, with many relying on external support to meet basic needs. Vulnerability indicators show that 79% of IDPs remain in precarious conditions in terms of access to basic needs, with gaps in housing, healthcare, and education access (ODVCA 30/09/2024).

Bogotá offers a relatively robust institutional response compared to smaller municipalities, although high demand strains resources. One key informant observed that efforts focus on providing shelter and social services, but many IDPs report unmet needs despite these interventions (KII 01/11/2024).

Florencia

Map 5. Number of individually displaced people by municipality of departure and arrival in Caquetá department from January 2023 to June 2024



Source: ACAPS using data from Blumont et al./UARIV (accessed 07/10/2024)

Table 4. Baseline indicators for the municipality of Florencia on access to basic services and demographic characteristics of the general population

Total population (2024 projections) for Colombia: 52,695,952 and Florencia: 179,233

Indica value



	Indicator	Colombia	Florencia
1	% of people in poverty according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index	12%	29%
2	% of people without access to improved water sources	8%	8%
3	% of people with inadequate sanitation	9%	11%
4	% of people in informal jobs	71%	85%
5	% unemployment rate (2023)	9%	13%

Sources: DANE (22/03/2023 a, 22/03/2023 b, 28/08/2023, 19/04/2024, and 09/01/2024); DANE (accessed 26/11/2024); Migración Colombia (accessed 26/11/2024); DANE (accessed 07/10/2024) DANE (accessed 07/10/2024)

Overview

Florencia, the capital of Caquetá, is located in southern Colombia, serving as a transitional point between the Andean and Amazon regions. Its strategic location and ecological significance make it a key target for NSAGs, particularly FARC-EP dissidents, who exploit the area for illegal economies such as coca cultivation and timber extraction (CNMH et al. 12/2013; Mongabay 24/07/2024; Oviedo Hernandez 10/05/2024).

Between January 2023 and July 2024, over 4,400 individually displaced people arrived in Florencia, fleeing threats, child recruitment, and armed violence (ReliefWeb accessed 06/11/2024; Cambio 27/05/2024; OCHA 19/07/2023). Most arrivals came from La Montañita, Puerto Guzmán, and San Vicente del Caguán, seeking safety and basic services in urban areas (Blumont unpublished).

Limited institutional resources, a lack of coordination among subnational agencies, and high demand exceeding available infrastructure constrain Florencia's capacity to support IDPs, including those individually displaced. Blumont is one of the organisations actively providing

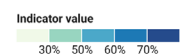
consistent assistance, particularly in shelter support, with programmes aimed at supporting displaced women with children. Despite the efforts of Blumont and other responders, many IDPs remain without adequate shelter or access to basic services, reflecting significant gaps in response capacity (KII 21/10/2024; UARIV 11/06/2024; Blumont 17/07/2024).

PRIORITY NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

The following sections present data from *Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento* (CODHES), a consultancy focused on human rights and displacement services, and the *Visor de Superación de Situación de Vulnerabilidad* (SSV), a tool that UARIV developed to monitor and assess the conditions of IDPs in Colombia. The SSV focuses on their access to services and progress in overcoming situations of vulnerability. These datasets analyse the conditions of displaced populations. While CODHES explicitly considers both individually and mass-displaced individuals, it is unclear if the SSV includes individually displaced cases. The data is included to provide a general context for each sector before delving into municipality-specific findings, with information from the KIIs used to give specific insights into the needs of individually displaced people. CODHES data corresponds to the first quarters of 2022 and 2023, while SSV data reflects conditions until December 31, 2023.

Shelter and wash

Table 5. SSV indicator for IDPs in Buenaventura (2023) – adequate rented/owned housing



Indicators of Vulnerability Situation Assessment on IDPs	Colombia	Buenaventura	Ocaña	Bogota	Florencia
% of IDPs without an adequate house or rented or owned housing	68%	69%	74%	42%	74%

Source: ACAPS using data from UARIV (accessed 31/10/2024)

Note: the indicator ‘% of IDPs without adequate rented/owned housing’ assesses whether an IDP resides in a home that meets adequate housing standards, has not been affected by natural hazard-related disasters, and is verified as owned, rented, or certified for habitation.

Lack of formal shelter options for individually displaced people

Across the four municipalities, there is a lack of formal shelter facilities for IDPs upon arrival, but individually displaced people face more challenges. In contrast, coliseums have served as temporary shelters in some cases of mass displacement across all municipalities (Municipal Government of Ocaña 26/04/2018; Govt. Colombia 23/04/2018; Noticias RCN 05/11/2023). The lack of formal shelters means that the majority of IDPs, particularly those individually displaced, must find accommodations independently, with many relying on social networks or seeking housing in peripheral neighbourhoods and informal settlements.

Without formal shelter support, some organisations provide alternatives. In Florencia, Blumont offers six months of rental aid for women-headed households with children, a demographic that requires housing that avoids overcrowding, ensures privacy for girls, and is outside high-risk areas. Given Blumont’s limited financial aid capacity, however, all 2024 rental support slots were filled early. This underscores the challenges in meeting the shelter needs of IDPs, the majority of whom have been individually displaced (Blumont 17/07/2024; KII 22/10/2024). Barriers to cash transfers include the requirement for an ID and, in the case of minors, the presence of a legal guardian, complicating access for some individuals. This is particularly challenging for minors who are already mothers or are unaccompanied. Displaced Indigenous individuals encounter additional obstacles in the form of language barriers and often require accompaniment and support to navigate these processes effectively (KII 22/10/2024).

Across all four municipalities, there is limited information on the housing situation of individually displaced people, although data generally shows that 74% of IDPs (individual and mass) either lack adequate housing or rely on temporary arrangements that fail to provide stable shelter (UARIV accessed 12/11/2024). Since a significant proportion of IDPs are individually displaced, this suggests that many of those affected by inadequate housing fall within this group. When reflecting on the challenges that individually displaced people face in securing adequate shelter, key informants noted that those who could not access shelter support or find housing with family or friends typically resort to low-cost rentals in peripheral neighbourhoods or informal settlements, which often lack basic services such as water, electricity, and sanitation (KII 15/10/2024; KII 30/09/2024; KII 21/10/2024). The high cost of rent in both formal and informal housing markets further limits safe shelter options for individually displaced people, increasing their reliance on precarious living arrangements that often lack basic services and increase the risk of exploitation and eviction (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024; KII 01/11/2024). In Ocaña, the mayor’s office has reported a lack of housing, and members of Asodepo, an IDP organisation, have been waiting over a decade for housing, highlighting broader structural gaps in the response (La Opinión 01/08/2024).

Across Colombia, 56.6% of IDP households report property loss, and 44.8% have lost land because of displacement. Risks are particularly acute in areas such as Buenaventura, where criminal groups seize homes during intra-urban displacement (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024). One key informant noted that individuals forced to relocate to other neighbourhoods lose their property that criminal groups end up occupying in their absence (KII 01/10/2024).

Increased vulnerability to health, safety, and protection risks because of inadequate shelter

The precarious shelter conditions in informal and peripheral neighbourhoods where individually displaced people often reside expose them to additional vulnerabilities. Overcrowding is a significant issue, especially in cases of multiple families sharing small spaces. A key informant explained that in Florencia, overcrowded conditions are common, with up to seven or eight children sometimes sharing a single bed. This heightens protection risks and contributes to the spread of diseases (KII 22/10/2024). In informal settlements, compact household arrangements compound these challenges. High temperatures combined with waste accumulation create ideal breeding grounds for disease vectors (KII 18/11/2024).

Diseases such as gastrointestinal infections, respiratory illnesses, and skin conditions are even more prevalent in makeshift shelters across all municipalities, where access to drinking water and sanitation facilities is inadequate (KII 18/11/2024; Shayo et al. 24/07/2023; UNHCR accessed 26/11/2024). Displaced pregnant women are at particularly increased risk, as poor WASH conditions in these settlements can lead to anaemia, preterm births, and miscarriages associated with soil-transmitted helminth infections (KII 18/11/2024). Displaced children under five living there also face grave impacts, with diarrhoeal diseases, environmental enteric dysfunction, and soil-transmitted helminth infections contributing to stunted growth (UNICEF/OMS 24/06/2021; KII 18/11/2024).

In Buenaventura and Ocaña, informal settlements in peripheral areas are especially vulnerable to climate-related hazards, such as landslides and flooding, and the associated health and safety risks. One key informant noted that in Buenaventura's coastal areas, flooding presents a constant risk, compounding the precarious living conditions in low-income neighbourhoods that frequently house individually displaced populations (KII 01/10/2024). Displaced people in these settlements often live in makeshift homes built from substandard materials, making them highly susceptible to structural damage during severe weather events (La Opinión 23/03/2024; EE 23/11/2022). Individually displaced families with children and older people are at particular risk of the negative effects of climate events, to which these categories of people are more vulnerable.

Individually displaced people settling in informal or low-cost housing often face significant protection risks, including exposure to violence and illegal activities. In Bogotá, Buenaventura, and Ocaña, key informants noted that criminal groups and drug trafficking networks exert control over certain neighbourhoods where individually displaced people reside, heightening safety concerns for residents (KII 01/10/2024; KII 01/11/2024). One key informant observed that they risk exposure to illicit economies, and children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to recruitment, exploitation, and substance abuse (KII 15/10/2024). In Florencia, another key informant reported that substance abuse is a prevalent issue in peripheral neighbourhoods where individually displaced people reside (KII 21/10/2024).

Women and girls are especially vulnerable in these inadequate shelter settings given a lack of safe, private spaces and appropriate sanitation facilities (KII 18/11/2024). Temporary and informal shelters often lack gender-segregated spaces and bathrooms, exposing displaced women and girls to increased GBV risks, including sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and exploitation (Global Protection Cluster 16/12/2022; KII 30/09/2024). These risks are heightened for individually displaced women and girls, who often lack access to formal shelter support and robust social networks, making them more likely to settle in unsafe housing options. In peripheral neighbourhoods, particularly in Buenaventura, Florencia, and Ocaña, many individually displaced women and girls face additional barriers, including limited access to essential sanitary products, private facilities, and reliable water services, which complicates menstrual hygiene management and increases their vulnerability to health and protection risks (KII 30/09/2024; CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024; Salcedo Ávila and Paes-Machado 14/08/2023).

Livelihoods and food security

Livelihoods

Barriers to formal and informal work among individually displaced people

Across Colombia, IDPs, whether mass- or individually displaced, face significant livelihood challenges upon arrival in their new locations. According to CODHES, IDPs face higher unemployment rates (17.6%) compared to the general population in urban areas (10%), as well as a higher rate of informal employment (82.4%), which is more pronounced among women (84%) than men (81.3%) (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024).

The four municipalities covered in this report present similar challenges for individually displaced people. Key informants noted that individually displaced people often leave without belongings, forcing them to use their economic reserves to replace essential items and further straining limited resources (KII 15/10/2024). Most individually displaced families

come from rural areas and are unfamiliar with urban work environments, which, combined with their nontransferable skills, heightens their risk of unemployment in municipalities already facing high unemployment rates and living costs, including transportation and basic services (KII 16/10/2024; KII 15/10/2024; KII 21/10/2024; iDMC accessed 21/11/2024).

Instances of begging have been reported in urban areas across all municipalities, particularly among individuals from rural zones who previously relied on livestock-related livelihoods. This reflects a wider challenge for displaced people from rural areas who move to urban areas and find that their skills and experience frequently do not match the demands of the urban labour market, which requires different competencies related to technology or technical preparation (FIP/KAS 30/11/2023). Discrimination, a lack of documentation, and stigma further hinder IDPs' access to formal employment, especially for older individuals and women (Salcedo Ávila and Paes-Machado 14/08/2023).

Limited employment opportunities leave individually displaced people to resort to precarious informal work that provides insufficient income to support their families (KII 01/10/2024; CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024). In Buenaventura, many people depend on work related to fishing given the municipality's location close to the Pacific Ocean. Those who do not live close to the shores face more difficulties in re-establishing livelihoods. In Ocaña, where the informal employment rate has reached 89.3%, IDPs, including those individually displaced, are compelled to seek informal jobs such as farm labour or motorcycle taxi services (DANE accessed 26/11/2024). While Bogotá offers more employment options, a key informant observed that the majority of individually displaced people work informally, often in street vending or domestic work (KII 21/10/2024).

Employment challenges for individually displaced women

Although all individually displaced people face barriers in accessing income generation opportunities, women, particularly household heads, face additional barriers to employment, such as the need to balance work with childcare responsibilities. Reflecting the experiences of displaced women more generally, this often leads them into local economic networks, where they accept low-paying and informal work, such as street vending or domestic work (KII 22/10/2024; KII 15/10/2024; SDDE 26/02/2024; Salcedo Ávila and Paes-Machado 14/08/2023; FIP/KAS 30/11/2023). Although there are initiatives aimed at supporting caregiving responsibilities alongside paid work, such as the Caregiver Woman Initiative in Buenaventura and the Care System in Bogotá (Manzanas del Cuidado in Spanish), these programmes do not exclusively focus on individually displaced women. Instead, they serve diverse population groups. As a result, there is no specific information on how many individually displaced women benefit from these programmes, and the existing initiatives likely remain insufficient to meet the broader demands of displaced caregivers (KII 22/10/2024; OIT 07/03/2024; Fondo Mujer 07/03/2024; Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá accessed 06/11/2024).

For displaced women, including those who have been individually displaced, dependence on male household members for income increases gender power disparities in the household. Those who enter the unregulated informal workforce may find themselves at heightened risk of GBV, including sexual and labour exploitation. While one key informant argued that the risk of GBV was particularly critical for individually displaced women in Buenaventura, it is important to note that GBV often goes unreported, making it difficult to assess its prevalence across locations. That said, these risks are likely replicated across all four municipalities (PNUD 12/12/2023; KII 30/09/2024). Individually displaced men, on the other hand, face a high risk of labour exploitation and, with their immediate need to secure income, may be more likely to engage in illicit activities with NSAGs or organised crime groups, posing a threat to their safety and wellbeing. Their limited access to support compared to mass-displaced men compounds this risk (Castillo-Valencia et al. 2022).

Food security

Table 6. SSV indicator for IDPs in Buenaventura (2023) – food insecurity

Indicator value					
30% 50% 60% 70%					
Indicators of Vulnerability Situation Assessment on IDPs	Colombia	Buenaventura	Ocaña	Bogota	Florencia
% of IDPs facing food insecurity	54%	55%	63%	40%	57%

Source: ACAPS using data from UARIV (accessed 31/10/2024)

Challenges in access to sufficient and nutritious food for individually displaced people

According to CODHES, 36.3% of displaced people reported experiencing all three indicators of food insufficiency: insufficient quantity, quality, and access to food. An additional 49.5% reported experiencing at least one of these symptoms, with women disproportionately affected. For individuals displaced to urban areas, the situation is worse because of higher food prices, compounded by widespread monetary poverty among displaced households. This includes a significant proportion living in extreme poverty, defined by their inability to meet basic food and non-food needs (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024). Among these households, 80.6% are women-headed and face greater barriers to accessing the labour market and achieving higher income levels (ACNUR 26/04/2024).

Across the four municipalities, key informants frequently cited food security as a significant concern affecting individually displaced people. Key informants noted that this group often struggles to access food owing to limited resources and a lack of state assistance tailored to meet their needs (KII 01/10/2024; KII 02/10/2024; KII 21/10/2024). In Buenaventura and Florencia, the presence of NSAGs and organised crime groups contributes to food insecurity as they impose extortion fees on vendors, fishermen, merchants, and farmers, also forcing food prices to rise. This makes food less affordable for individually displaced people, particularly those who do not receive state support or have lost their livelihoods upon displacement (STC 22/03/2023; PARES 22/01/2024).

Assistance available to IDPs, including those individually displaced, is insufficient across all four municipalities. UARIV provides financial aid and food kits for three months after IDP registration for both mass- and individually displaced people. That said, key informants noted delivery delays and insufficient quantities to meet their needs. Humanitarian aid, including food distributions, is similarly inadequate for long-term food security, particularly for individually displaced people. These people often leave with few belongings to avoid attracting attention from NSAGs, leaving them with fewer assets to sell for food (KII 21/10/2024; KII 01/10/2024; KII 27/09/2024; Dejusticia 25/02/2022).

Categories of individually displaced people at heightened risk of food insecurity

Although all displaced people face food insecurity, certain groups within the individually displaced population are at heightened risk, including older people, women, children, and people with disabilities. For example, older people, especially those over 60, face higher food insecurity given limited employment opportunities. Similarly, individually displaced people with disabilities face barriers such as difficulties in accessing communal kitchens or transporting food supplies, limiting their access to adequate nutrition (KII 01/10/2024).

Children are also at heightened risk of food insecurity. In all four municipalities, the CODHES study highlights that displaced children are sometimes unsupervised because of parental work obligations, worsening food access issues (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024). In Buenaventura, for instance, communal kitchens require an adult's signature, limiting access for individually displaced unsupervised children (KII 01/10/2024). While public schools provide one meal per day in some municipalities, this is often the only food available to children from the most food-insecure households (Infobae 20/06/2023). In the specific case of Bogotá, even though there are more organisations and extensive government coverage, there is limited information on the specific food security needs of the individually displaced population. One key informant noted that individually displaced women with infants in need of nourishment face additional challenges. For example, infant formula is unaffordable for many displaced families, costing around COP 80,000 (approximately USD 20, depending on the exchange rate) (KII 22/10/2024).

Protection

Protection risks in arrival municipalities for individually displaced people

According to a 2023 CODHES survey, 27.7% of IDPs across Colombia since 1985 reported experiencing additional forms of victimisation beyond forced displacement. These incidents are more common among women (30.2%) compared to men (24.9%) (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024). In the four municipalities, IDPs, including those individually displaced, are understood to encounter complex security dynamics involving the control of territory by NSAGs and organised crime groups in arrival municipalities. This control is exerted both in urban and rural areas, creating zones of high territorial control.

This context is especially challenging for individuals or families arriving from rural areas, as they may not anticipate the intensity of these threats, further increasing their exposure to violence. One key informant in Buenaventura noted that although some are aware of these risks, many lack alternatives to relocate to safer areas (KII 15/10/2024). The security risks for IDPs, whether mass- or individually displaced, are broadly similar; however, key informants noted that individually displaced people may face heightened risks due to their isolation and lack of visibility compared to those affected by mass displacement (KII 01/10/2024).

In all four municipalities, IDPs face direct protection threats, including extortion, selective homicide, and kidnapping, often employed by armed groups as control strategies (Consejo de Bogotá 21/08/2024; El Tiempo 07/07/2024; Caracol Radio 25/09/2024; DP 07/10/2023). The most frequently reported events include the assassination of family members, followed by enforced disappearances, torture, the recruitment of minors, and kidnapping (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024). Data on protection threats is not segregated between mass- and individually displaced IDPs but given the high numbers of individual displacement in each location, the data is likely to reflect the reality of many individually displaced people.

In Buenaventura, organised crime groups dominate urban areas and enforce 'invisible' borders, posing immediate risks of violence, harassment, and displacement within the city (KII 30/09/2024; DP 07/10/2023; KII 16/10/2024; Infobae 20/10/2024). In Bogotá, similar intra-urban displacement dynamics are present in localidades such as Kennedy and Los Mártires, where organised crime groups threaten residents with extortion and violence, particularly affecting families unfamiliar with these areas' security dynamics (KII 01/11/2024; SDDE/Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá 22/12/2017). Florencia and Ocaña, where NSAGs dominate peripheral neighbourhoods, experience a distinct type of threat. These groups, particularly in Florencia, monitor and track displaced individuals, including those who have been individually displaced, to enforce territorial control, extort, recruit, or target specific individuals perceived as threats, such as social leaders, former military personnel, and peace signatories (KII 15/10/2024; KII 21/10/2024; EE 22/01/2024).

Heightened GBV risk

Across the four municipalities, individually displaced women and girls face elevated GBV risks, as displacement often separates them from family and community support systems that could otherwise offer protection. This increases their vulnerability to various forms of GBV, including intimate partner violence, harassment, and sexual exploitation (KII 15/10/2024; WB et al. 26/01/2022). In Buenaventura, a key informant reported that individually displaced women under the control of gang members face risks of sexual violence from rival groups, particularly in urban areas. Indigenous women and girls, especially those displaced from communities such as Naya, are even more vulnerable as a result of the absence of male family members who often remain in rural areas to protect their belongings, leaving women more exposed when migrating alone (KII 01/11/2024). In Ocaña, a key informant noted that there have been reported cases of sexual abuse among displaced women and men (KII 15/10/2024).

Members of the LGBTQ+ community among displaced populations (individual and mass) face significant risks upon relocation, as highlighted by key informants across the four municipalities. In Ocaña, NSAGs have distributed stigmatising pamphlets targeting transgender individuals, aggravating transgender IDPs' risk of discrimination and violence upon arrival in the municipality (KII 15/10/2024). This discrimination highlights the double victimisation that LGBTQ+ individuals face, including transgender people, who are already marginalised given their gender identity or sexual orientation. Key informants noted that while transgender individuals may face comparatively lower levels of violence in urban settings than in rural areas, substantial risks remain across the four municipalities, particularly owing to a lack of specific protection measures and support networks (KII 01/11/2024). Overall, significant information gaps exist regarding the experiences of individually displaced people from the LGBTQ+ community.

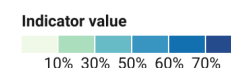
Heightened protection risks for children and adolescents

Individually displaced children and adolescents in the four municipalities face severe protection risks, including recruitment and use by NSAGs, trafficking, and the worst forms of child labour (KII 01/10/2024; KII 30/09/2024; KII 22/10/2024). In Buenaventura, key informants reported that parents adopt coping mechanisms with potentially harmful consequences to protect their children from recruitment by organised crime groups, such as relocating them once they reach the age of ten or restricting their outdoor activities after 20:00 in high-risk neighbourhoods (KII 30/09/2024; KII 22/10/2024; 90 Minutos 29/08/2024). Children left unattended while their parents work are at heightened risk of recruitment, exploitation, and exposure to illicit economies, including trafficking and sexual exploitation, especially in areas with active illegal narcotics economies and high substance abuse (KII 22/10/2024; Infobae 10/07/2024).

These risks appear to affect all children whether displaced or not. Children affected by individual displacement often face barriers in accessing protection mechanisms given documentation requirements, a lack of awareness of available services, and limited institutional capacity. In Bogotá, while some families benefit from institutional support that allows them to avoid leaving their children unattended, the overwhelming demand for and limited availability of resources mean that many still lack access to these services. This leaves children vulnerable to recruitment, exploitation, and involvement in illicit economies in peripheral neighbourhoods. In comparison, protection and support services in the other three municipalities are even more limited, further increasing risks for children in these areas (KII 01/10/2024).

Health

Table 7. SSV indicator for IDPs in Buenaventura (2023) – medical and psychosocial care



Indicators of Vulnerability Situation Assessment on IDPs	Colombia	Buenaventura	Ocaña	Bogota	Florencia
% of IDPs who have not received psychosocial care	57%	83%	63%	39%	43%
% of IDPs not affiliated to the health system	10%	12%	8%	10%	9%

Source: ACAPS using data from UARIV (accessed 31/10/2024)

Healthcare access

Healthcare access is a challenge for IDPs across the country. 63.5% of IDPs rate healthcare as good, 19.9% rate it as fair, and 8.4% as poor. Over 10% of IDPs lack effective healthcare access despite registration, and 13.7% rely on public hospitals for specialised care instead of their designated providers (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024). Impeded healthcare access can have notable effects on IDPs. This demographic faces heightened risks of communicable diseases, including diarrhoeal illnesses among young children and vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, because of overcrowding in shelters, poor sanitation, and limited access

to clean water and healthcare (INS/ONS 09/07/2018). There is higher health coverage for the general population (89.5%) in Bogotá, but in the other three municipalities, significant structural barriers limit healthcare access for displaced people, including those individually displaced (ODVCA 30/09/2024).

Geographical and environmental challenges further compound these structural barriers by impeding timely healthcare access. Individually displaced people typically reside in peripheral areas where costs are lower but healthcare access is also more limited (KII 02/10/2024). Extreme weather events further prevent people from reaching healthcare centres – for example, when rainfall triggers landslides and floods that block roads (EE 05/11/2024; Semana 31/05/2023; AT 30/05/2024).

In each of the four municipalities, healthcare providers struggle to cope with the increased demand for services from the displaced population and – in the case of Ocaña – Venezuelan refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. By September 2024, high demand was already overwhelming the Emiro Quintero Cañizares Hospital in Ocaña, the only secondary and tertiary facility serving Catatumbo region and nearby areas. Its infrastructure is inadequate, with insufficient emergency facilities and reported hygiene issues, including the morgue's proximity to maternity and paediatric wards (La Opinión 14/09/2024; W Radio 18/09/2024). One key informant noted that patients requiring cancer treatment, chronic care (such as dialysis or diabetes management), or disability certificates must travel to Cúcuta, as Ocaña lacks the necessary facilities (KII 15/10/2024).

Similarly, by early January 2023, structural issues in Buenaventura among Entidades Promotoras de Salud (EPS), the entities managing the Colombian public healthcare system, include insufficient staffing, frequent medical supply shortages, and mass resignations among doctors given a lack of payment, as reported at Buenaventura's main hospital (Infobae 13/01/2023). In July 2023, Florencia also reported issues with the healthcare services provided by the EPS Asmet Salud, which covers 70% of the population of Caquetá. Patients lack access to essential inpatient medication and treatments required for managing epilepsy, psychiatric conditions, and other chronic illnesses (DP 07/07/2023). This situation disproportionately affects displaced populations, who heavily depend on public health services and face additional barriers, such as limited financial resources and strained economic reserves, making it difficult to maintain the continuity of treatment during displacement.

Individually displaced people must register in the new location to access healthcare, a process that is generally straightforward with the necessary documents. The absence of documentation complicates registration, delaying access to essential services (KII 21/10/2024; KII 15/10/2024). Across all municipalities, key informants noted that individually displaced people generally face a lack of prioritised healthcare, with long waiting times, appointments scheduled up to three months later, and limited access to specialised services, especially

for chronic diseases and reproductive health (KII 23/10/2024; KII 16/10/2024; KII 26/09/2024). Key informants highlighted that individually displaced women have unmet needs related to sexual and reproductive healthcare, while older adults and people with disabilities require additional support and face barriers to adequate nutrition and healthcare (KII 16/10/2024; KII 02/10/2024).

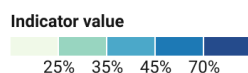
Insufficient mental health support for individually displaced people

Studies indicate that IDPs have a significantly higher likelihood of experiencing mental health disorders compared to the nondisplaced population (Leon-Giraldo et al. 19/05/2023). When reflecting specifically on the mental health needs of individually displaced people, key informants noted that these needs are prevalent across all four municipalities, with individuals experiencing high levels of psychological distress because of violence, displacement, and continued threats (KII 02/10/2024; KII 01/10/2024). Key informants observed that individually displaced women commonly experience significant stress and anxiety, largely owing to fear of NSAGs recruiting their children, with specific concerns raised about organised crime groups in Buenaventura's urban areas (KII 30/09/2024; KII 27/09/2024). Many also arrive having survived physical and sexual violence (KII 30/09/2024; KII 01/10/2024). Displaced children, including those individually displaced, frequently display signs of hyperactivity or aggression, reflecting their exposure to violence. While these findings were highlighted in Buenaventura, the high presence of NSAGs and organised crime groups across all four municipalities suggests that similar challenges are likely present elsewhere (KII 02/10/2024).

Mental health services are available across the four municipalities but are insufficient to meet the scale of needs. Programa de Atención Psicosocial y Salud Integral a Víctimas (PAPSIVI) is a state-led programme aiming to address the psychosocial and health impacts of armed conflict on people across the country (OIM 19/04/2016). Key informants across the four municipalities reported that this programme has limited capacity, often providing inadequate psychosocial support for cases that require clinical psychotherapy and psychiatric care (KII 15/10/2024; KII 01/10/2024). In Florencia, organisations, including Blumont, help bridge this gap by providing psychosocial support, prioritising cases of sexual violence and assisting with healthcare transfer services. In Buenaventura, mental health needs among individually displaced people were reported as particularly acute given the impact of urban violence, which fosters fear and social distrust, further deteriorating mental health conditions. Mental health services are often insufficient to address these heightened needs, leaving many without adequate support (KII 27/09/2023; KII 30/09/2024).

Education

Table 8. SSV indicator for IDPs in Buenaventura (2023) – education



Indicators of Vulnerability Situation Assessment on IDPs	Colombia	Buenaventura	Ocaña	Bogota	Florencia
% of IDPs experiencing school absenteeism	37%	36%	46%	25%	38%

Source: ACAPS using data from UARIV (accessed 31/10/2024)

Impeded education access for individually displaced children

Colombian law facilitates the enrolment of IDP children and adolescents in educational institutions (MEN accessed 07/11/2024; Corte Constitucional accessed 07/11/2024). That said, in the 2023 CODHES survey, nearly 20% of displaced individuals in Colombia cited a lack of school slots as a barrier, reflecting issues in educational planning and digital entry processes. 16% of students missed school because of financial constraints or work, 11.3% because of illness or disability, and 7.5% because of displacement-related factors such as relocation, a lack of documentation, and security concerns, highlighting the impact of protection risks on educational stability (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024).

Key informants observed that individually displaced children in the four municipalities face similar educational barriers to the IDP population in general, with a lack of documentation cited as a particular concern since many leave their homes urgently (KII 01/10/2024; KII 15/10/2024). In Buenaventura and Florencia, key informants noted that arriving in the middle of the academic year restricts children from enrolling, particularly when school capacities are limited, disrupting educational continuity (KII 01/10/2024; KII 21/10/2024). Children from rural areas also face additional challenges when entering the education system for the first time. In Ocaña, for example, cases of 12- and 13-year-olds without primary education illustrate the barriers to their integration and adaptation within the school environment (KII 15/10/2024).

For individually displaced older youth, higher education access remains a significant challenge. Although institutions such as the National Training Service (SENA) offer technical education programmes targeting low-income populations, access for IDPs remains limited.

The importance of SENA was especially highlighted in Florencia in relation to enhancing individually displaced youth's access to higher education. That said, information gaps remain regarding the extent to which these youth are aware of and use its offerings. Challenges such as financial constraints and administrative barriers may also limit their access to these opportunities (KII 24/10/2024; KII 15/10/2024).

Economic burden of education for individually displaced families

Economic barriers significantly contribute to school dropout rates, with 16% of displaced students not attending because of high costs or the need to work. The financial burden associated with schooling – such as costs for uniforms, school supplies, and transportation – presents additional obstacles for individually displaced families. According to CODHES, 92.6% of displaced students across Colombia require school supplies, 89.8% need uniforms, and 41.5% require transportation, emphasising the economic strain on displaced families (CODHES/CSPPDF 20/03/2024). Individually displaced families face greater challenges in covering these needs, as they are less likely to receive institutional support or have sufficient financial reserves given the urgency and isolated nature of their displacement.

Key informants reinforced these findings, noting that in Florencia and Ocaña, children often lack essential school items, leading to inconsistent attendance and a heightened risk of engaging in paid work instead of education (KII 22/10/2024; KII 02/10/2024). In Buenaventura and Bogotá, high transportation costs further complicate access, especially when schools are far from IDP settlements (KII 01/10/2024). Long commutes in all municipalities also expose children to additional protection risks, including NSAG recruitment and drug-related activities (KII 01/11/2024).

Barriers impeding the performance of individually displaced children

Displaced children often face psychological challenges, such as anxiety, that put a strain on their academic performance, adaptation to new environments, and peer relationships (PUJ 24/06/2024). In Buenaventura, one key informant observed that children who experience multiple displacements, including individual ones, struggle with maintaining focus and achieving academic milestones (KII 02/10/2024). In Florencia and Ocaña, other key informants noted that stigma linked to their association with conflict-affected areas further affects individually displaced children's school experience (KII 16/10/2024; KII 22/10/2024).