

COLOMBIA

HUMANITARIAN
NEEDS OVERVIEW
SUMMARY

2021



Photo credit: MMI, 2020

Despite years of continuous socio-economic progress and the signing of the 2016 Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace¹ between the Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), which brought a period of relief unseen in decades, numerous humanitarian challenges persist, in some remote regions of the country due to the presence of criminal organizations and non-state armed groups continue to generate violence and new conflict dynamics², with humanitarian implications for vulnerable populations. In addition to the above, the natural disasters and the influx of mixed-migration flows from Venezuela.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic not only had a severe impact on the economy, causing a deep recession and affecting in particular the most vulnerable parts of the population, but also had severe implications on the health systems in the country as well as on food security, nutrition and protection indicators, aggravating the humanitarian situation in the country and increasing multisectoral

needs. The number of people with multisectoral needs increased by 31 per cent in 2020, according to the results of the HNO 2021.

Despite the current post-agreement context, the security situation in the country remains critical with protection challenges being compounded. In some areas, illegal armed groups took advantage of the pandemic-related situation to expand their territorial presence, which has led to hostilities: confinements, displacements and other attacks against the civilian population and infrastructure as well as against medical and humanitarian missions – in addition to an increased social control over communities.

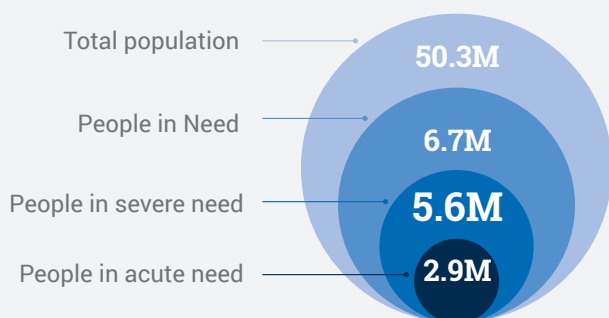
This comes in addition to a twofold increase in the number of people affected by natural disasters, devastating areas, where capacities are low and leading to situations of a double to triple affectation of the population. The severity of humanitarian needs and coping mechanisms of the different vulnerable groups are reflected in the dynamics of each region.

For more information, please consult the complete document at: <https://bit.ly/3dLIVqH>

¹ The Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace is in the remaining document referred to as the Peace Agreement.

² The armed conflict is in the remaining document referred to as armed violence in line with the terminology used by the Government, without prejudice to other characterizations of the context used in other official reports of the United Nations or other humanitarian organizations. And therefore, without prejudice to the classification of five conflicts given by the ICRC: "El Conflicto armado en Colombia: un dolor que no se va"; available at: <https://www.icrc.org/es/colombia-conflicto-armado-DIH-balance-humanitario>. In addition, considering the Victims Law 2078 of 2021 to which the humanitarian community in the country adheres.

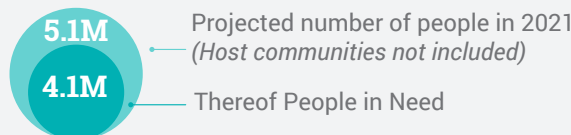
People in Need (PiN)

Intersector PiN internal
complex emergencies

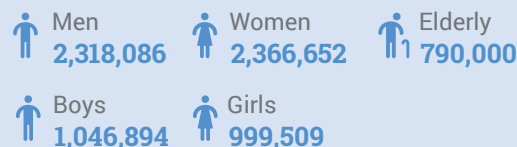
Of these 6.7M people in need, at least 2.9M exhibit critical needs that are classified as catastrophic in their severity, being located in 248 municipalities of the country's 1,122 municipalities with major impacts and high exposure to risks arising from the four main humanitarian emergencies: COVID-19, armed violence, mixed migration flows, and natural disasters.

Refugees and
Migrants*

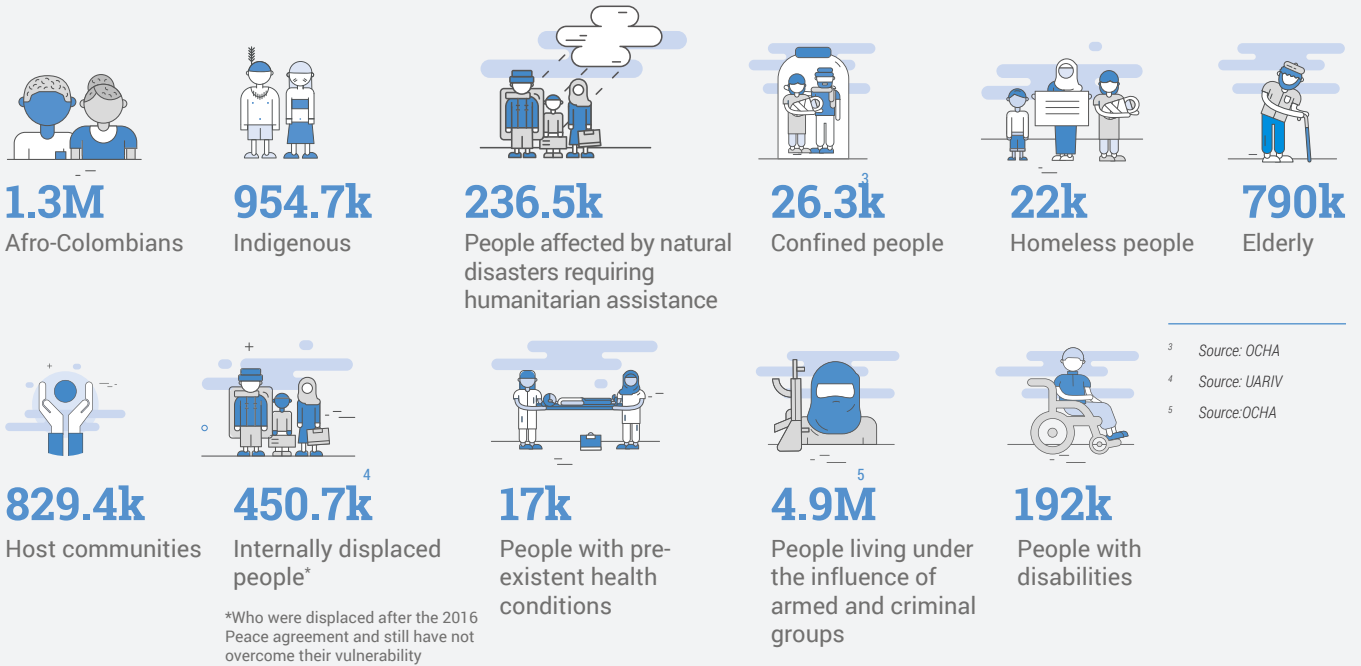
*Refugees and migrants, Colombian returnees and their host communities



People in Need by gender and age



Vulnerable groups



People in Need (PiN) historic trends

Underlying causes:



Armed violence



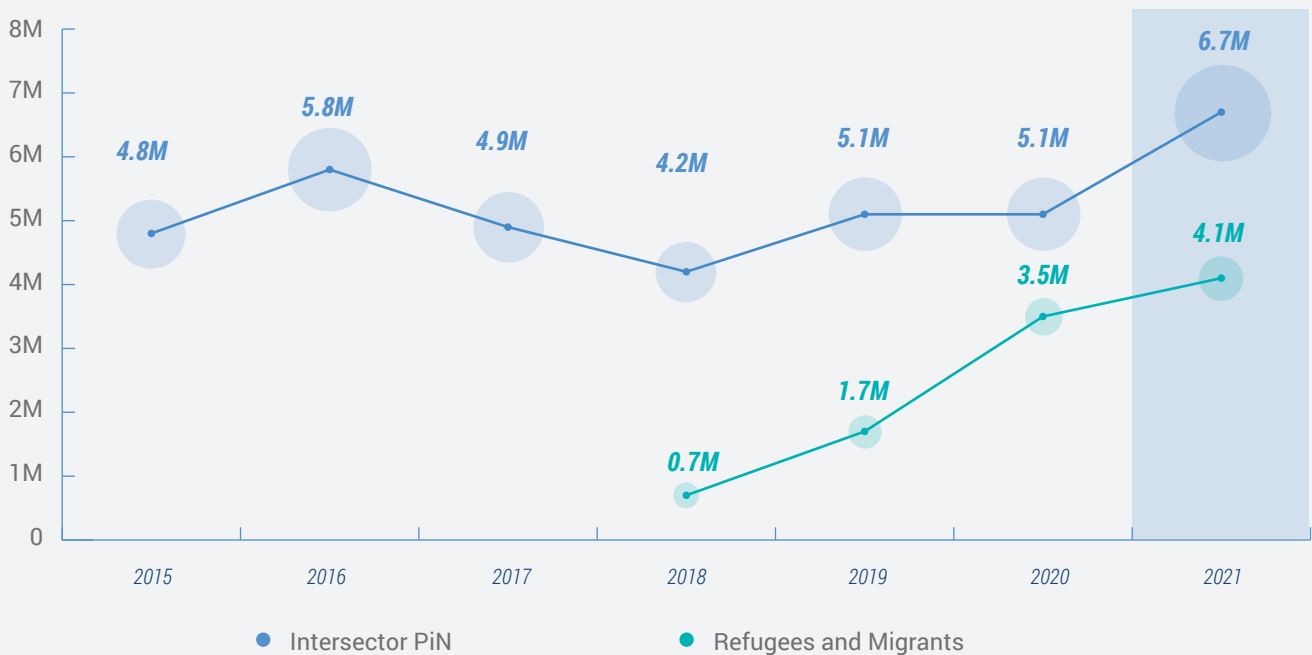
COVID-19



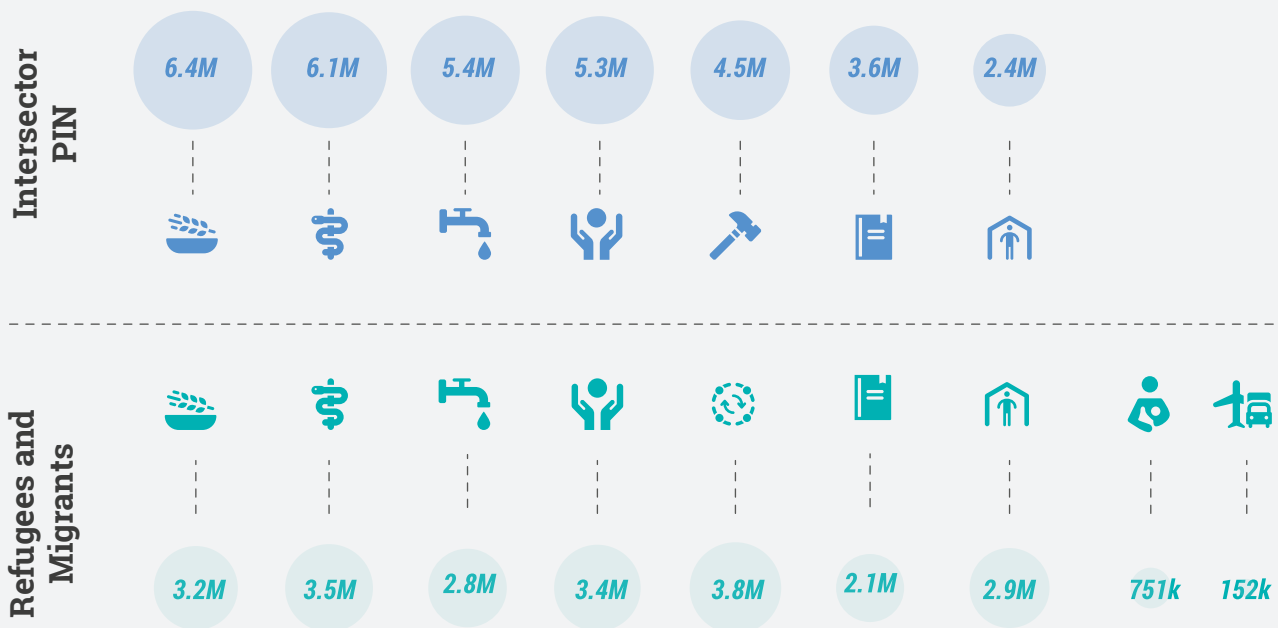
Natural disasters



Mixed migration flows



People in Need (PiN) by Cluster



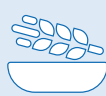
Key Insights



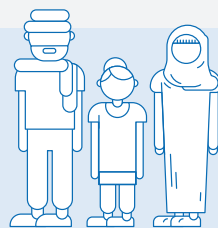
6.7 million

People in need of humanitarian assistance.

The main humanitarian needs are located in **rural, peripheral and hard-to-reach areas of the country.**



The main identified needs are related to **protection, food security, health and access to basic services.**



5.6 million

exhibit severe needs (**685 Municipalities**)

2.9 million

exhibit acute needs (**47 municipalities**).



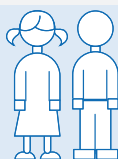
6.2 million

exhibits food security and nutrition related needs in all of Colombia's 1122 municipalities, according to the WFP (aggravated by the pandemic).



3.5 million

are acutely food insecure according to the WFP - by **2021** the figure may rise to **10M**, extending to urban and peri-urban areas.



302 thousand

Children under 5 years of age are at risk of suffering from a high degree of malnutrition.

Source: ENSIN 2015

304 municipalities

exhibit cases of child malnutrition above the national average.

Source: ENSIN 2015



More than 18 thousand

newborns are at risk of having **low birth weight.**

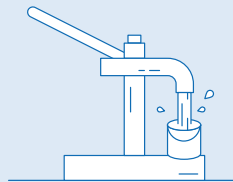
Source: Sivigila 2019



At least 4.4 million

people do not have access to purified water sources
(corresponding to 72.2% of people nationwide who are in this situation).

Source: DANE Censo 2018, DANE GEIH 2020, UARIV 2019



1.5 million

people do not have access to safe sanitation services and facilities.

Source: DANE Censo 2018, DANE GEIH 2020, UARIV 2019



10 million

children and adolescents were **left out of school due to the pandemic**.

Source: Ministry of Education



2.5 million

students have difficulties to access the internet.

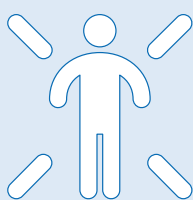
Source: CNPV 2018



102 thousand

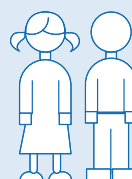
children and adolescents dropped out of school completely during 2020.

Source: Ministry of Education



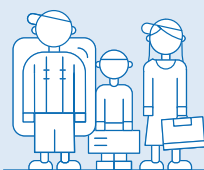
5-7 million

People in rural areas live under the influence of armed and criminal groups (**some 500 municipalities**), according to estimates by OCHA.



1.9 million

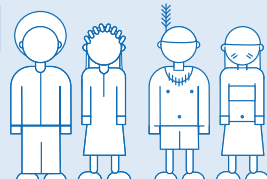
Children and adolescents are in need of humanitarian protection in the country, according to estimated by the Child Protection subcluster



500 thousand

People have been displaced since the signing of the Peace Agreement and **450k have not overcome their vulnerability**.

Source: UARIV



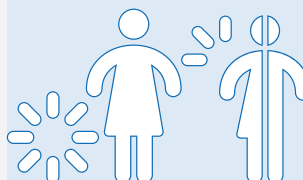
Of these, at least **20 thousand** people belong to indigenous population and **48 thousand** people to afro population.

Source: OCHA



268 thousand

people are in need due to the contamination of explosive artefacts and mines in **148 municipalities**, according to the Action Against Mines subcluster



1.5 millions

of people, including women, LGTBQ+ population and children and adolescents are at risk of GBV, sexual and domestic violence, according to estimates of the protection cluster.

5.7 million

people have difficulties accessing health services, due to armed violence, mobility restrictions and **low coverage of the health system, compounded by the pandemic**, according to estimates by the health cluster.



1.6 million

confirmed COVID-19 infections in 2020.
(**6 per cent belong to ethnic minorities**)

Source: National Institute of Health



More than 43 thousand

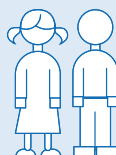
deaths were provoked by complications derived from the virus.



14%

of the total population of the country has a high vulnerability in relation to COVID-19 (**in particular elderly and people with comorbidities**).

Source: DANE



477 municipalities

have a child mortality rate above the national average.

Source: Sivigila 2019



67 municipalities

possess a maternal mortality rate above the national average.

Source: DANE - Estadísticas Vitales - 2018, Sivigila 2019

202 thousand

people have a high probability of suffering from **Malaria and Dengue**.

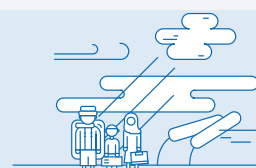
Source: Sivigila 2019



610 thousand

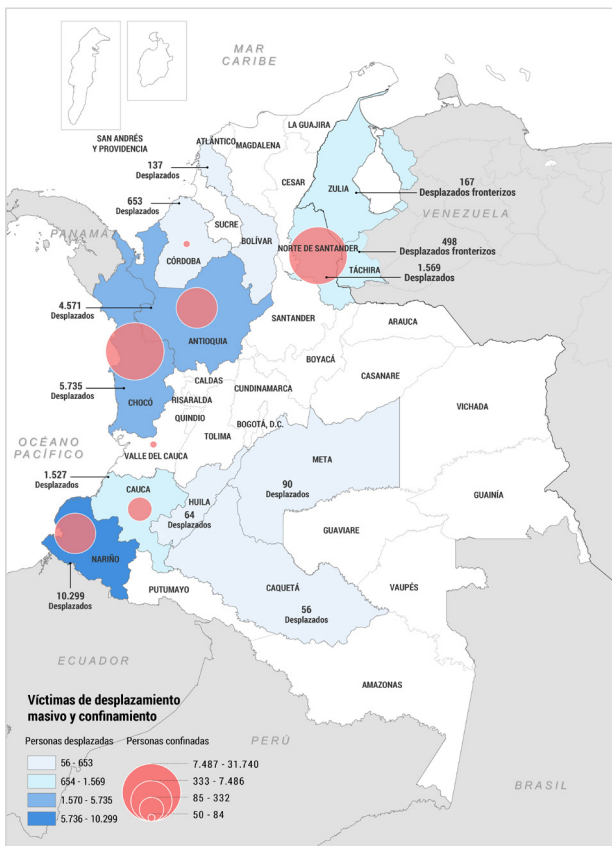
people were affected by **natural disasters** in 2020.

Source: UNGRD



Key points

Victims of mass displacement and confinement



ARMED VIOLENCE

- According to the National Victim's Registry (RUV) by October 31 of 2020, a historical accumulated total of more than 8 million people were displaced due to the armed violence with some 500k people have been displaced since the Peace Agreement was signed in 2016. Of these, 477,000 people have been identified with intersectoral needs with intersectoral needs, particularly related to shelter, food security, livelihoods and access to safe water and basic sanitation facilities.
- During 2020, confinements have increased by 247 percent, evidencing a new practice of victimization and social control by organized armed and criminal groups over the population, affecting more than 74,000 people, according to OCHA's monitoring system. The hostile presence of armed and criminal groups lead to mobility restrictions in at least 248 municipalities, affecting the access of the population to basic services and goods.

- Other attacks against civilians, such as the recruitment and use of children gender-based violence, homicides, massacres, kidnappings and attacks against the civilian infrastructure, not only lead to a severe impact and risk of the people's lives, but also affect the social fabric in these vulnerable communities; these fear repercussions from armed groups if they report the incidents. As a consequence, the affected population requires humanitarian assistance, security guarantees and other forms of protection.
- The progressive increase of the use of improvised explosive devices and landmines by armed and criminal groups, has augmented the number of victims by 49 per cent in 2020 in comparison to the previous year.⁶ This development increases the number of people affected by landmine contamination, leading to protection risks and causing mobility and access restrictions to basic services and goods.
- Organized armed and criminal groups capitalised on the situation to expand not only their territorial control but also their social control over the population, imposing strict lockdown with some communities having been afraid to access health services due to potential retaliations from armed groups⁷.

NATURAL DISASTERS

- Over 3,300 events of natural disasters were registered in the country throughout 2020, affecting some 610,000 people through heavy rains⁸, flooding, hurricanes, landslides and earthquakes, among other disasters and leading to deaths, loss of property as well as crops and damages to the infrastructure in the country, further compounding intersectoral needs of the mostly rural population.
- The nature of these events is highly volatile. As such, some 306,000 people were affected solely in November 2020 by the raining season and the passing of the hurricane Iota in the Caribbean region of Colombia.

COVID-19

- The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the most vulnerable populations in Colombia, aggravating the impact of violence and poverty dynamics, natural disasters, large mixed-migration movements and significantly reducing non-COVID-19 related health services. More than 1.6 million COVID-19 cases - the 11th highest value worldwide - and over 43,200 deaths were reported by the end of 2020⁹.
- Although strict Government measures and response efforts have successfully mitigated the pressure on the health system, they could not entirely prevent the spread of the disease and had negative socioeconomic consequences, affecting women and children disproportionately. As such, the number of people in food insecurity exponentially increased similar to the number of people affected by gender-based violence.
- According to the National Institute of Statistics (DANE) the country expects its largest recession in its history of -7 to -8.1 per cent.
- At least 10 million children and adolescents were for large parts of the year out of the school, with many lacking the access to the tools required to participate in remote education. In addition humanitarian actors estimated that at least 10.4 million people exhibited humanitarian needs related to the pandemic in 2020¹⁰.

⁶ Source: Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz

⁷ Source: OCHA, UN OHCHR

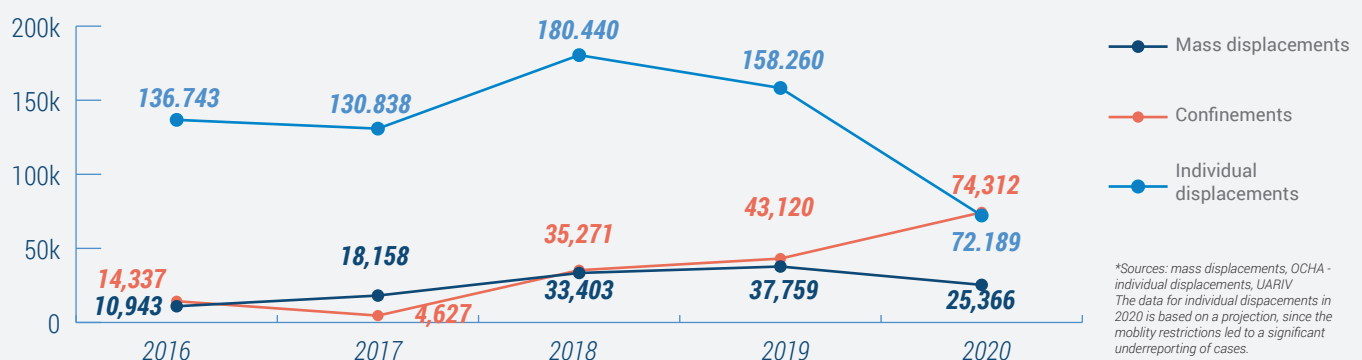
⁸ Source: UNGR

⁹ Source: National Institute of Health

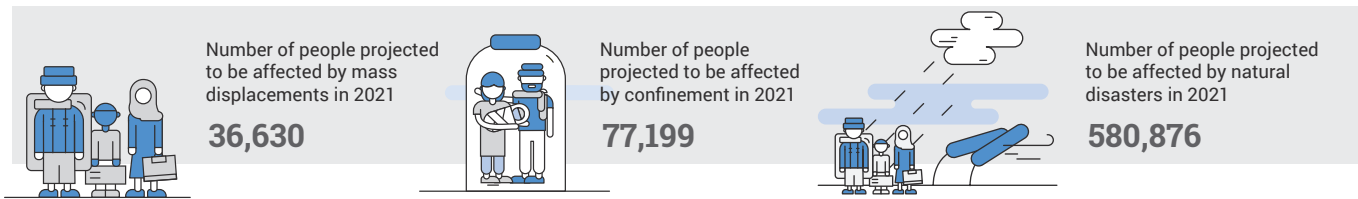
¹⁰ Source: Ministry of Education, CNPV 2018, Intersectoral COVID-19 Response Plan Colombia

¹¹ Source: Equipo Humanitario País (EHP) - result of

Evolution of individual and mass displacements*



Humanitarian Consequences



THE HIGH VULNERABILITY OF INDIGENOUS AND AFRO-COLOMBIAN COMMUNITIES:

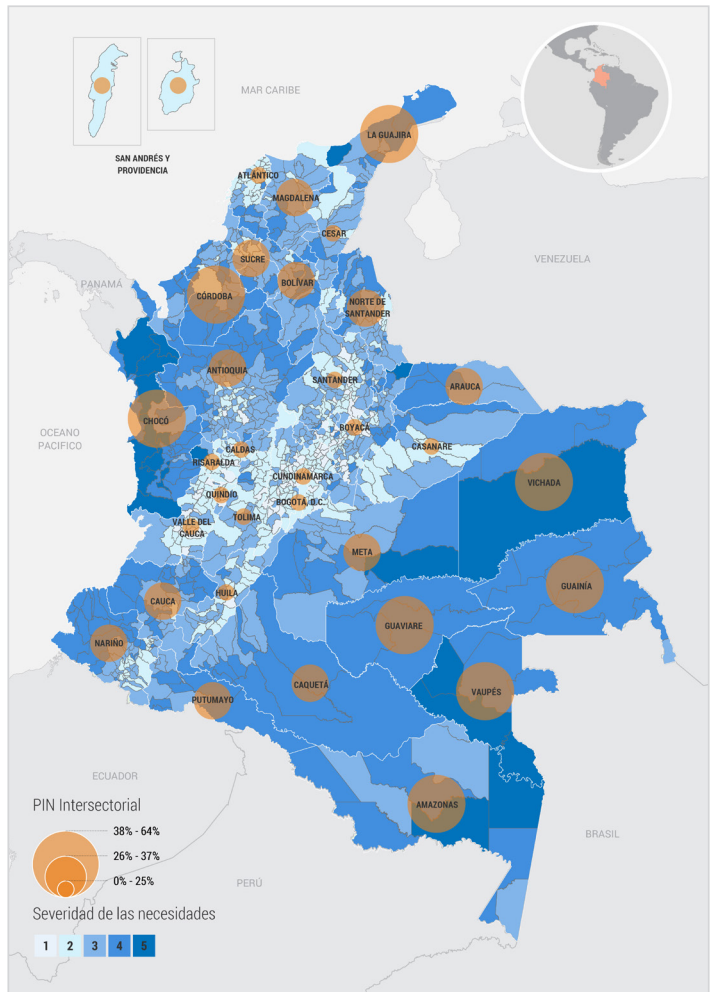
The complex humanitarian emergencies in the country affect certain population groups disproportionately, among them the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. These groups face one of the highest needs in the country, with their physical well-being severely affected by the lack of access to basic health, water and sanitation services. Colombia is one of the least equal countries in the world according to the Gini coefficient with significant differences between ethnic groups; this is reflected in the multidimensional poverty affecting this groups. Faced with the lack of access to health services in the most remote territories, where large parts of these communities live, these population groups were particularly affected by the arrival of COVID-19 and they decided to isolate themselves from the outside, leading to an exponential increase in their food insecurity. In addition, indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities were affected by 65 per cent of mass displacements registered in 2020, despite representing only 13 per cent of Colombia's population, illustrating their disproportional affection to the armed violence, according to OCHA's monitoring system. For all of the above, the humanitarian consequences are of particular concern, as the affected population reverts to negative coping mechanisms in order to guarantee their livelihood and that of their families.

LIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ARMED AND CRIMINAL GROUPS

The dynamics of territorial and social control generated by armed and criminal groups through the imposition of codes of conduct, curfews, illegal checkpoints, threats and direct attacks against the civilian population, leads to serious human rights violations. The affected population lives under constant fear and faces access restrictions to basic services and goods. Areas under the influence and/or control of organized armed and criminal groups are also particular prone to armed strikes against the civilian population and infrastructure to demonstrate their power and willingness to use it¹¹.

A continuation of forced displacements and confinements as a consequence of armed confrontations and direct threats as well as attacks against the population is expected. It is imperative for humanitarian actors to give special attention to the needs of women, children, adolescents, people with disabilities and ethnical minorities.

People in need and severity



joint work

Identified risks

- Increased levels of insecurity for the civilian population and persistence of protection risks for those living in areas with a presence of illicit crops and armed groups, where high poverty and inequality persist.
- Continued humanitarian emergencies, such as forced displacement and confinement, requiring particular attention for ethnic communities, women, children and adolescents.
- The lack of information and elements to prevent the spread of the disease, the absence of potable water services, especially in hard-to-reach areas, limiting the transportation of patient, generating higher vulnerabilities of the general population and ultimately increasing the mortality from COVID-19.
- Both, the unfolding of emergencies related to the La Niña phenomenon, which is expected to last until May, as well as the dry season in other territories, are expected to lead to significant losses of crops, further compounding the widespread food insecurity, affecting in particular the livelihoods of rural communities.
- Limitations in access to goods, services and fundamental rights of populations in need, such as limitations in humanitarian access for organizations, would have an impact on the deterioration of people's living conditions. The above, considering causes associated with: actions of armed violence as well as geography and/or climatic phenomena.
- Some 580,000 people are projected to be affected by natural disasters in 2021 with 236,500 people being estimated to need humanitarian assistance according to projections by OCHA.