



COLOMBIA

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 21.1 M**

Appeal number **MAACO002**

In support of the Colombian Red Cross



32

National Society branches



3,000

National Society staff



21,800

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



20,000

Climate and environment



200,000

Health and wellbeing



200,000

Migration and displacement



936,115

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network multiyear focus

Longer term needs

- Disaster risk reduction and response
- Protection and assistance to migrants and displaced persons
 - Climate change adaptation
- Community and emergency health and WASH

Capacity development

- Digital transformation
- Internal systems efficiency
- Financial sustainability and resource mobilization

Key country data

Population **51.3 million**

Long-term Climate Risk Index **38**

Human Development Index rank **88**

Population below poverty level **42.5%**

Hazards



Floods and cyclones



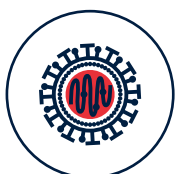
Earthquakes



Volcanic eruptions



Population movement



Disease outbreaks

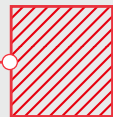


Violence and conflict

Funding requirements

Total 21.1 M CHF

Through the IFRC



→ **3.6 M CHF**

Through Participating National Societies



→ **1.3 M CHF**

Host National Society



16.2 M CHF

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

2.4 M CHF
Migration and displacement

0.8 M CHF
Values, power and inclusion

0.4 M CHF
Enabling local actors

Participating National Societies

American Red Cross

British Red Cross*

Canadian Red Cross

German Red Cross

Norwegian Red Cross

The Netherlands Red Cross*

Spanish Red Cross

Swedish Red Cross*

Turkish Red Crescent Society



NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The Colombian Red Cross was founded in 1915 and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1922. The Colombian Red Cross is an autonomous, non-profit institution. It is auxiliary to its government authorities in its humanitarian activities and subject to Colombian laws.

The Colombian Red Cross has achieved nationwide coverage across different programmes, with 21,800 active volunteers and 3,000 staff. The National Society has a network of 32 branches, within which, 92 Municipal Units and 146 Support Groups allow the Colombian Red Cross to maintain an active presence throughout the country, as well as provide support to other countries in the region. The headquarters national directorate, located in Bogotá, is responsible for setting policies, strategies and providing administrative, technical, operational and financial support to the branches.

The Colombian Red Cross reached nearly 5.3 million people in 2022 with assistance and services, achieving the goal proposed in its Strategic Plan for 2022. Its activities, particularly those carried out during times of armed conflict or other emergency situations, include disaster risk management, the promotion of health and social welfare and the prevention of disease, encouraging voluntary work, and promoting and defending human rights, international humanitarian law and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Colombian Red Cross's [Strategic Plan for 2021–2025](#) outlines the following objectives in relation to humanitarian and social development:

- Peace building and institutional doctrine
- Disaster risk management
- Comprehensive health management
- Education
- Volunteering
- Blood banks

The strategic plan also defines priorities across organizational transformation, corporate governance, alliances and cooperation and sustainability.

Operational priorities for the National Society include climate change, population movement, addressing the consequences of armed conflict and other situations of violence, and epidemics or pandemics. The Fundamental Principles, humanitarian diplomacy, community resilience in urban and rural communities, and sustainable development are all cross-cutting elements.

Over the past six years, the Colombian Red Cross has managed a budget of 73.4M USD. Twenty-five per cent of this support was from external partners, and 75 per cent from Movement components, as follows: 31 per cent from IFRC, 9 per cent from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 10 per cent from American Red Cross, 24 per cent from German Red Cross, 16 per cent from Norwegian Red Cross, and 10 per cent from Spanish Red Cross.

IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

Joint situational analysis

Located in the north-western tip of South America, Colombia has both a Pacific and Atlantic coastline. From south to north, it crosses the Andes mountain range, which gives the country its diverse weather conditions from its tropical climate along the coast and the eastern lowlands to its cooler climate in the highlands and Andes.

The diverse and varied geography of Colombia means that it is exposed to a broad range of environmental hazards (hydrometeorological as well as geophysical),

which are directly impacted and exacerbated by the impacts of climate change across the country. Ranked 29 by the 2022 Inform Risk Index, Colombia is one of the higher risk countries in the world. Between 2021 and 2022, 962,000 people across 557 municipalities were affected by disasters in Colombia. Violence, as a result of conflict, is also a significant issue for people in Colombia. More than half of the people affected by natural hazards are also affected by the presence of armed groups.

The socio-economic consequences of disasters in Colombia over recent decades represent a major challenge for the country and for the sustainability of its development. The municipalities that are most affected are usually those with the lowest levels of development and governance, and the impact of these disasters aggravates their existing situation, affecting levels of resilience and social welfare.

Colombia was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact, increasing the already significant challenges of unemployment and poverty. In Colombia, the levels of poverty have reached 27 per cent

nationally, but in some territories exceed 50 per cent. The country is also currently hosting significant numbers of migrants, due to the ongoing migration crisis in the Americas, and at least 2.5 million Venezuelans are present in the country.

Despite significant progress in delivering the social protection system, the country continues to face significant challenges in terms of access to basic and specialized health services, especially for those communities furthest from urban centres. There are also challenges related to access to higher education, social inequality, and gender-based violence.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

The country's topography and the large areas of mountains, valleys, plains and jungles leads to many different climatic and thermal zones and a high level of biodiversity. The country's location in an inter-tropical convergence zone explains the intense rainy seasons and periods of drought that occur annually. These seasons are exacerbated by the regular El Niño and La Niña phenomena, which affect rainfall levels. Therefore, the country is highly susceptible to a wide range of natural hazards. Climate change continues to have a negative impact on communities in Colombia, affecting ecosystems, economies, and human livelihoods and well-being.¹ Vulnerable groups, such as those living in poverty, women, children and older people are particularly at risk.

Glacier retreat is a concern in Colombia, while its extensive coastline also leaves communities vulnerable to rising sea levels. The agricultural industry in country is highly vulnerable to temperature increases and extreme weather events. Livestock and up to 80 per cent of high value crops are vulnerable to hydro-meteorological events and are putting the livelihoods of smallholder farmers at risk. Changing precipitation patterns will affect soil and water availability and higher temperatures will be unfavorable for certain crops, with some needing to move to higher altitudes to survive.

The incidence of floods and landslides is also projected to increase, resulting in more frequent soil erosion, that will lead to reduced yields, damaged crops and livestock and, eventually, increased food insecurity. It is estimated

that sixty per cent of land suitable for irrigated rice production could be lost by the 2050s. Collectively, these climatic risks will disrupt food systems, causing rises in food prices and threatening household incomes and livelihoods.

Climate change also affects the Colombian fishing industry, with a negative impact on communities that rely on fisheries for their livelihoods and food security. Additionally, the tourism sector is highly susceptible to extreme climatic events, exacerbated by the impact of climate change on vital infrastructure. The incidence of poverty also risks increasing among communities that are highly dependent on tourism, particularly in coastal areas.

Finally, climate change is projected to significantly impact health of the population, with increases in communicable diseases, morbidity and mortality from heat waves, increased exposure to air pollutants and other impacts, which will overburden existing medical capacity and healthcare infrastructure. Climate change will increase the incidence of non-communicable diseases, such as acute respiratory infections, and communicable diseases, mainly vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, leishmaniasis, and leptospirosis. In addition, water-borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoeal diseases are expected to increase.

Main actions and areas of support

The Colombian Red Cross is part of the IFRC [Global Climate Resilience Programme](#), which aims to foster an unprecedented scale-up in locally-led, climate-smart

1 The Colombia analysis for this section has been supported by the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre: <https://www.climatecentre.org/>

disaster risk reduction and adaptation efforts to prevent and reduce climate-related disaster impacts and build community-level climate resilience. The programme aims to support 500 million people in 100 of the most climate-vulnerable countries, focusing on the least supported and marginalized communities. This holistic, multi-year programmatic approach consists of four operational pillars: (1) scaling up climate-smart disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action and preparedness; (2) reducing the public health impacts of climate change; (3) addressing climate displacement; and (4) enabling climate-resilient livelihoods and ecosystem services.

The Colombian Red Cross considers climate and the environment a priority in its 2021–2025 Strategic Plan and promotes both social development and humanitarian actions that seek to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, as part of their wider humanitarian work. A 2020 document on climate and how the National Society plan to include it in its programmes established the following priorities:

- Smart climate solutions and disaster risk reduction
- Climate risks included in preparedness and response
- Health and climate
- Migration and climate
- Nature-based solutions

The National Society is a signatory of the [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#) and is committed to developing its capacities and working more effectively to deliver climate programmes, and has employed a climate change focal point to support this. In 2023, the Colombian Red Cross plans to develop a climate change policy and carry out media and communications actions to amplify the impact of its climate-related work. The Colombian Red Cross will also support staff and volunteers to improve their organizational capacity in environmental management and adaptation to climate change.

To implement climate and environmental actions, the National Society will focus on vulnerable areas or regions of the country where livelihoods are closely dependent on saturated or overexploited ecosystems. It will also focus on vulnerable populations in areas or regions of the country that are vulnerable to extreme temperatures, floods, droughts or extreme weather conditions. This includes the Eastern Plains, the Caribbean region and the Colombian Pacific.

Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see IFRC GO page [Columbia](#)

Due to geographic location of the country and human activity, Colombia is vulnerable to many natural hazards and extreme weather events. People in Colombia experience multiple threats to their safety and livelihoods, including armed conflict, violence and natural hazards, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, hydrometeorological phenomena (floods, droughts and cyclones), vegetation fires and anthropogenic or manmade hazards, such as pollution. It is categorized as a high-risk country in the INFORM Risk Index 2023.

The country is located in an area of very high tectonic complexity, where the Nazca, South American and Caribbean plates meet, generating high seismic and volcanic activity. Colombia experiences significant volcanic activity, with 21 active volcanoes, which are constantly monitored by the Colombian Geological Service (SGC). This provides technical information to the National Risk Management System (SNGRD), in order to prepare for potential eruptions, prevent potential disasters and ensure the welfare and safety of exposed communities. Periodic volcanic eruptions also produce toxic ash that can compromise human health, kill livestock and destroy crops. The activity level of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano currently remains of concern, with the departments of Tolima, Caldas, Risaralda and Cundinamarca all seen as at risk. It is estimated that almost 60,000 people could be affected by an eruption (comprising about 15,000 people in municipal centres and 45,000 in dispersed rural communities over 22 municipalities, with 35 municipalities potentially indirectly affected).

In recent decades, 88% of the disasters that occurred in Colombia were hydrometeorological. Annual floods are on the increase, with 2022 becoming the worst rainy season in more than a decade, with heavy rainfall aggravated by La Niña phenomenon. This caused losses in more than 78% of the country's municipalities and affected more than 800,000 people. One of the most affected areas was the La Mojana sub-region, a productive wetland within the Momposina Depression Basin that regulates the course of the Magdalena, Cauca and San Jorge rivers, and encompasses 11 municipalities. During the rainy season in 2022, breaks in the Jarillon river allowed large amounts of water to enter inhabited areas, with 165,000 people affected by the flooding.

The hurricane season, which runs from early June to late November, represents a high risk for the country,

especially for the Colombian Caribbean coast. At the end of 2020, a Category 5 hurricane, Hurricane IOTA, impacted the islands of San Andres, Providencia and Santa Catalina, and the department of Bolivar. As a result, 98 per cent of the infrastructure of Providencia and Santa Catalina was destroyed or significantly affected, and the population was left without access to basic services. This was exacerbated by having to deal with the significant challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and its health and socio-economics consequences during the response. People in Colombia are also in danger of tsunamis along the coastlines.

The government issued a law in 2012, which adopted the National Disaster Risk Management Policy and established the National Disaster Risk Management System of Colombia. The government entity in charge of implementing disaster risk management, establishing sustainable development policies and coordinating the operation and development of the SNGRD, is the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD).

Main actions and areas of support

The Colombian Red Cross is part of the National Disaster Risk Management System (SNGRD) of Colombia and continues to successfully respond to crises and disasters, through its strong human resource capacity and trained response teams that are deployed across the country. The National Society also makes these teams available for international-level response operations.

The National Society has good coordination with scientific and forecasting agencies, hydrometeorological and geophysical bodies, such as the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM) and the Colombian Geological Service (SGV). It also maintains close coordination with other relief agencies.

The Colombian Red Cross adopted its Disaster Risk Management Policy in 2018, where it aligned with the National Disaster Risk Management Policy, adapting its internal structure to give greater scope to its assistance role in emergencies. The National Society also ensured that it included a longer-term social development focus, prioritising the implementation of disaster risk knowledge, disaster risk reduction, and disaster and crisis management processes. Its scope of action now includes community risk reduction, risk management training in the education sector, climate change and climate variability, early warning systems, road safety, urban risk and resilience, and livelihoods. Response interventions typically comprise search and rescue,

humanitarian assistance in emergencies, temporary shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

Alongside other emergencies, the Colombian Red Cross has responded to the 2022 floods, with support from the IFRC through the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) [allocation](#). During 2022, the Colombian Red Cross reached approximately 1.9 million people with its work across the different risk management programmes.

The Colombian Red Cross has established contingency plans for various hazards, including for potential volcanic eruptions. In the event of an eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano, the defined lines of intervention that could be activated include population evacuation support, search and rescue, management of dead bodies, pre-hospital care and psychosocial support, rapid needs assessments support, humanitarian assistance including shelter, WASH and restoring of family links.

The National Society is also developing approach and methodologies for anticipatory action, building on its long relationship with the Colombian state disaster response system. In 2023, the Colombian Red Cross will further engage in anticipatory action and develop early action protocols for floods, complex crises (armed conflict), and epidemics and pandemics. It will strengthen its capacity for anticipatory action with the support and technical assistance of the German Red Cross and the IFRC Climate Centre. The Colombian Red Cross faces some technological and administrative challenges, which, if resolved, will significantly improve its readiness to respond to future crises and disasters.

Health and wellbeing

In Colombia, the health system is composed of a large social security sector and a decreasing, but exclusive private sector. Its central pillar is the General Social Security Health System (SGSSS) with its contributory regime and subsidiary regime - the contributory regime affiliates all salaried workers, pensioners, and self-employed workers with incomes equal to or greater than one minimum wage, while the subsidiary regime affiliates all persons without the capacity to pay.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected communities and exposed important issues in the provision of an integral health service. Colombia has struggled to respond to epidemics due to a lack of capacity to detect disease outbreaks, especially in dispersed rural territories with indigenous or Afro-descendant majority populations. A lack of public health records and epidemiological research in rural areas affected by armed

conflict has also hampered effective response from the authorities, as well as weakened multi-sectoral interaction. The impact of emerging and re-emerging diseases, such as Ebola, polio, cholera and COVID-19 variants on South and Central American populations, due to trans-continental human mobility, is placing further pressure on health care services in Colombia. Climate change and globalization are also encouraging the emergence and spread of new diseases.

Emergencies of natural and anthropogenic origin also represent challenges that directly or indirectly affect individual, family and collective public health. People in Colombia face a lack of public service networks to serve the most vulnerable communities, and there are particular difficulties in integrating different ethnic and intercultural approaches into public health surveillance activities. An estimated 4.9 million people currently lack access to improved sanitation, creating a significant risk of increased water-borne diseases and decreased access to potable water for vulnerable populations.

Climate change is also affecting the health and well-being of people in Colombia. Rising incidences of heat stress and the risk of injuries from extreme weather events is affecting vulnerable people, including infants and children, pregnant women, older people, those with chronic illnesses, street workers and other marginalized groups. As a result, heat-related morbidity and mortality are projected to increase. In addition, climate-driven water shortages and extreme rainfall are both likely to cause damage to the water distribution infrastructure in Colombia, and to see increasing water contamination from human waste. As a result, climate change will increase the incidence of non-communicable diseases, such as acute respiratory infections, and communicable diseases, such as malaria, dengue fever, leishmaniasis and leptospirosis. Water-borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoeal diseases are also expected to increase. Extreme climatic events will also indirectly affect the health and well-being of communities, by their impact on agriculture and food markets, and on livelihoods, including both incomes and consumption. An increase in air pollution will also affect the health of the vulnerable groups mentioned above.

Making mental health visible as a priority is one of the guidelines for the country's health sector, and there is a need to generate the necessary conditions in the country to more fully address mental health issues, so that those with mental health needs can be protected, cared for, and supported. In the context of a post-pandemic environment and with a focus on reconciliation for peace, it is a priority to recognize that the mental health

of the population poses important challenges that need to be addressed. According to the Integrated Social Protection Information System (SISPRO), the National Observatory of Coexistence and Mental Health and the Public Health Surveillance System (SIVIGILA), the incidence rate of suicide attempts in 2021 was 58.4 per 100,000 inhabitants.

Main actions and areas of support

During 2022, the Colombian Red Cross reached more than 2.2 million people with its health actions. The National Society manages six blood banks and has a network of institutions providing health services, health assistance and transportation, mobile health units, pharmacies and has targeted user care strategies. Its health programmes cover:

- **Health services:** this includes the rehabilitation and capacitation of health services; the management of health information systems; and the establishment of integrated health services networks and emergency medical teams
- **Public health promotion:** support for healthy housing and environments; the provisions of public health in emergencies and disasters; the promotion of sexual and reproductive health; and public health surveillance
- **Mental health promotion and psychosocial care:** the provision of first level (psychosocial welfare) and second level (mental health promotion and prevention); the prevention of mental health diseases; and specialized level (therapeutic processes)
- **Medical missions:** this includes the awareness, reduction and management of incidents and infractions against medical teams carrying out humanitarian work on medical missions.

In 2021, the Colombian Red Cross adopted its Integrated Health Management Policy to guide the formulation, adoption, planning and execution of health actions, to strengthen the health capacities of the branches, and to facilitate the management of programmes for primary health care, which contribute to the management of mortality, morbidity and disability in humanitarian situations.

In 2023 and beyond, the Colombian Red Cross will focus on epidemic and pandemic preparation and response. This will include strengthening community surveillance for outbreaks, improving information management, training specialized teams on field epidemiology and

adaptation, and implementing a national humanitarian health liaison centre to support sectorial and inter-sectorial coordination and response for public health emergencies of international concern.

The National Society will also promote the formulation of plans, strategies and actions in:

- Building a comprehensive approach to health care that includes, emotional and social well-being of the individual
- Building Primary Health Care based on the social determinants of health and the adoption of new technologies and scientifically proven initiatives that promote quality health services in humanitarian situations
- Increasing the capacity strengthening and access to new technologies for Colombian Red Cross health facilities equipment and services, to strengthen the infrastructure necessary to provide better access to health services for the most vulnerable communities
- Reducing gaps in access to health services for the country's most vulnerable communities and those who are confined to and/or displaced from their territory due to conflict. This includes migrants and other vulnerable groups.

Migration and displacement

Colombia has historically been characterized by high levels of population movement. Colombia's comprehensive migration policy addresses the needs related to migration to and from Colombia, as well as the development dimensions of the migrant population. Since 2018, the national government has prioritized three lines of action: border security and control; solidarity and protection of human rights for migrants and returnees; and economic development and assistance. Migración Colombia is the national immigration authority responsible for the surveillance and immigration control of nationals and foreigners in the national territory. It also supports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other state institutions in the formulation and implementation of migration policy.

The country hosts the largest population of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, amounting to approximately 2.5 million people, with diverse needs, including for those transiting, moving back and forward and those interested in staying. The reopening of border crossings with Venezuela in the last quarter of 2021, facilitated the entry of regular migrants to Colombia.

Since 2021, the Temporary Statute of Protection for Venezuelan Migrants under a Temporary Protection Regime authorizes Venezuelan migrants to remain in the national territory of Colombia under special migratory regularity conditions, which allow them to exercise legal activities and have a right to employment or take on labour contracts during its validity.

In recent years, migration from Venezuela to Colombia has been concentrated mainly in the border areas (Norte de Santander, Arauca and La Guajira), Bogotá and the Atlantic Coast. Bogotá is the city with the largest number of migrants. 80 per cent of the overall number of refugees and migrants are in need of some level of assistance, with children and women considered the most vulnerable. The main needs relate to integration, housing, health, protection, including gender-based violence, food security and education. The high levels of poverty that already exists in the border areas, makes it difficult for the main host communities and represents a great challenge for the country, increasing the needs in areas that already experienced significant poverty and putting great pressure on public institutions that have limited service coverage.

Another important challenge for the country is to address the border crossing of migrants into the Darien jungle. The Darien gap is composed for 575 thousand hectares of jungle between Colombia and Panama. The number of people crossing via this trans-continental route keeps increasing and the presence of armed and criminal groups in the area, makes the journey, which can last for weeks, a high risk one for the physical and mental condition of those on the move, even risking their lives. The precarious conditions on this route have lead humanitarian organizations and institutions to provide extra services in primary physical and mental health care, protection and orientation on rights, and re-establishment of family links, among others.

Armed conflict is one of the main causes of forced displacement in Colombia, with the persistent violence in the country leading to the temporary or permanent internal displacement of Colombian people. Migrants in Colombia are also impacted by the conflict. Departmental capitals are the main recipients of the victims of the armed conflict, with cities such as Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Barranquilla, Santa Marta and Cartagena the major recipients. The data reported by the Sole Registry of Victims has a historical accumulation of more than 8.2 million people who have suffered from forced displacement between 1985 to 2021, with approximately 5.2 million people maintaining their status as internally displaced.

The country is now also experiencing internal displacement due to water related disasters, made worse by climate change. At the end of 2022, around 41,000 people were displaced as a result of water related disasters in Colombia, including 39,000 who had fled floods and storms mostly in the low-lying departments of the Caribbean region, which bore the brunt of La Niña. The projected increase in average temperatures and changing climate patterns will place these rural communities under even greater pressure, reducing their livelihoods and increasing rural to urban migration as a result. The uncontrolled growth of urban centres, without the necessary infrastructure and services, will result in communities being left without sufficient capacity to respond to the consequences of climate change, putting their lives, families and livelihoods at risk.

Main actions and areas of support

The Colombian Red Cross is part of the IFRC three-year [Global Route-Based Migration Programme](#), which aims to improve the safety and dignity of people on the move along deadly and dangerous land and sea-based migration routes across Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people on the move and people in host communities annually through three operational pillars: (1) improving access to assistance and protection, including through humanitarian service points; (2) strengthening National Society capacities; and (3) local to global humanitarian diplomacy.

The Colombian Red Cross already has 43 humanitarian service points across the country, 23 of which are active and supporting migrants. The National Society actively participates in the coordination of migrant services through the Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM) and through the sub-groups for both trans-national and trans-continental migration. The Colombian Red Cross also works closely with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the National Societies in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, to improve the coordination of protection and humanitarian response services across the region.

In 2023 and beyond, the Colombian Red Cross will continue to focus its migration work in border areas, transit corridors, recipient cities and 'last mile' communities. The National Society will support migrants and refugees in extremely vulnerable situations, including victims of internal displacement caused by armed conflict, Colombian returnees, bi-national indigenous people, unaccompanied and separated minors, people with special protection needs, and vulnerable host communities.

The National Society will continue to deliver actions to support migrants in the areas of health, protection, social and cultural integration, basic needs including shelter, economic integration and advocacy and diplomacy. This will include specific services in:

- Roadside health care and the provision of services via health service providers
- Epidemiological surveillance and community health
- Access to information and support for case management
- Restoring family links and the maintenance of family links services
- Legal assistance and anti-stigma actions
- Sexual and gender-based violence prevention
- Community infrastructure for migrants including child friendly spaces
- Humanitarian assistance on the move, including multi-purpose and conditional cash transfers
- Access to clean water and sanitation
- Accommodation on the move including specialized accommodation
- Strengthened livelihoods and productive opportunities for migrants
- Solidarity via economic support, such as community banking
- Access to employment and self-employment

Values, power and inclusion

In the last decade, Colombia has made significant efforts to consolidate peace and development across the country. However, during the past years, the humanitarian context still presents major challenges, with 7.7 million people in need of assistance as a result of the internal armed conflict, the increase in disasters, including those linked to climate variability, the increase of socio-economic needs generated by COVID-19 and inflation, and the limited institutional capacities to deal with this high number of affected people.

During 2022, the number of people affected by forced displacement and confinement increased by 47% compared to 2021. In addition, high levels of conflict-related sexual violence, increased recruitment and use of children and adolescents in the conflict, and the contamination by weapons, all continue to disproportionately affect the population. The departments with multiple impacts present the greatest needs, however, these

are not being fully met due to budgetary and human resource limitations and restricted access imposed by non-state armed groups. According to OCHA, 2022 broke the record, with the highest number of people affected by confinement and mobility restrictions since 2008, due to the increase in social control by non-state armed groups.

The country is in a period of recovery and slow economic growth, with progress around a reduction in the unemployment rate by 2.3 points (10.7 per cent in 2022) and GDP growth of 12.6 per cent. Some of the communities in Colombia face high levels of inequality and gaps in accessing basic goods and services. Access to primary health care and mental health care is particularly difficult for these communities. The humanitarian situation in the country is closely related to limitations in the social protection services. There are areas of the country that lack an institutional presence and present difficulties in gaining access to meet needs and provide services.

The assignment of gender roles continues to make women vulnerable in both conflict and disaster contexts. According to OCHA, by 2023, it is estimated that gender-based violence (sexual, economic, physical and psychological violence) will increase, with greater risks for women and girls in areas of armed conflict. At least 4,000 women were victims of crimes against freedom and sexual integrity during the armed conflict between 2017 and 2022. According to the Observatory of Legal Medicine, in 2021 over 55,000 cases of gender-based violence were registered in Colombia. These represented an increase of 19 per cent in relation to cases registered in 2020.

In terms of labour integration, the situation is more positive. According to [national statistics](#), the gap between women and men in terms of labour integration was reduced by almost 4 per cent between 2008 to 2019. During the same period, the overall participation rate for women increased by 6.7 per cent. However, there is a significant gap between the situation for women in urban areas (56.7 per cent participation) and rural areas (39.1 per cent participation), while the participation rate for men is very similar in both contexts.

Main actions and areas of support

The Colombian Red Cross maintains an inclusive approach in all actions, in accordance with the IFRC's [protection, gender and inclusion policy](#). It adopted a Peace Building Policy in 2018, aimed at strengthening the humanitarian response of the Colombian Red Cross in relation to the mitigation of armed conflict and other situations of violence, the promotion of respect for human rights, and the non-violent transformation of conflicts. The Colombian Red Cross approved its Gender and Diversity Policy in 2019, to incorporate actions that will improve humanitarian action through a cross-cutting approach that promotes gender equity, social inclusion and diversity. The programmatic integration of peace building and the inclusion of peace building in the institutional doctrine of the Colombian Red Cross is composed of programmes of prevention and mitigation of violence, protection, institutional doctrine and gender and diversity.

The Colombian Red Cross will focus on increasing its capacities in this area in approximately 10 branches per year, as follows:

- 2023: Chocó, Nariño, Cesar, Cauca, Valle, Norte de Santander, Antioquia, Arauca, Putumayo and Bolívar
- 2024: Vichada, Caquetá, Guaviare, Magdalena, Huila, Meta, Casanare, Risaralda, Santander and Sucre
- 2025: Atlántico, Amazonas, Guainía, Tolima, Córdoba, Cundinamarca, Guajira, Caldas and Boyacá

Stronger National Society branches will continue to reach direct and indirect victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence, bringing informed assistance that will target areas affected by these protracted crises. This will include supporting social inclusion through a gender and diversity approach, strengthening institutional capacities to activate and sustain a humanitarian response, building community initiatives to encourage peace building in each area and implementation of a strong protection, gender and inclusion approach in response to emergencies. In 2023, the Colombian Red Cross will also bring to a close a 36-month programme that started in May 2020, focused on prevention and response to human trafficking, funded by the Netherlands Red Cross.

Enabling local actors

The Colombian Red Cross is committed to pursuing institutional strengthening, in line with the priorities identified in its Strategic Plan 2021-2025. It has carried out the self-assessment part of the IFRC [Organisational Capacity Assessment and Certification](#) process, which was completed in 2012. The self-assessment part of the process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities. The Colombian Red Cross is also committed to the IFRC's [Preparedness for Effective Response](#) process and is currently working on the orientation phase. The approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyze the strengths and gaps in their preparedness and response mechanism and ultimately take the necessary action to improve it.

In the area of National Society development, the Colombian Red Cross has started to develop and implement several strategies that will consolidate its long-term vision, such as its Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The Plan is aligned with IFRC Strategy 2030, the 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals and Colombia's National Development Plan. This plan aims to establish the operational framework and financial requirements to help the National Society respond to identified priorities, as well as strengthen its institutional capacity .

Support for National Society development is provided through the IFRC [Capacity Building Fund](#) and the IFRC and the ICRC joint [National Society Investment Alliance](#) projects, which respectively focus on branch development and sustainability and innovation. The IFRC network is committed to supporting the Colombian Red Cross in its development, as per the priorities it sets for itself.

Engaged

The Colombian Red Cross will expand its humanitarian network and strategic partnerships with external and Movement partners to promote inter-institutional cooperation, and mobilize or exchange knowledge, technology, goods, and technical and financial resources to meet the country's humanitarian needs.

In line with its Strategic Plan 2021-2025, the Colombian Red Cross will focus on:

- remaining a key national partner for promoting social development and humanitarian assistance, that contributes to the resilience of vulnerable communities
- consolidating volunteering and strategic allies that strengthen its mission
- building integral sustainability on environmental, social and economic levels and for itself as a National Society
- strengthening human resources and managing efficient processes that deliver humanitarian innovation

Accountable

The Colombian Red Cross has the ISO 9001 Quality Management System certification for its National Headquarters, national Lottery and Blood Banks. In 2021, it was certified for the Environmental Management System under the 14001:2015 norm, and for the Occupational Health and Safety Management System under the 45001:2015 norm. Likewise, the Colombian Red Cross has a Corporate Risk Management Policy as an instrument for analysis, management and decision-making, to ensure it obtains timely information that allows it to take preventive measures, to react or respond appropriately in cases that risk damage to the integrity and reputation of the institution.

In 2023 and beyond, the Colombian Red Cross will work on its organizational transformation, developing capabilities within the framework of an agile and collaborative environment and consolidating structures and operational efficiency. It will seek to increase its sustainability by diversifying income sources and business units. The IFRC will provide technical support to the Colombian Red Cross to promote agile and efficient management of the National Society, especially in during disasters and crises.

Trusted

In 2022, the Colombian Red Cross adopted its national institutional security policy aimed at preserving and protecting the integrity of its human resources, image, credibility and humanitarian work within its territory and abroad. This policy also aims to promote and guarantee compliance with the Fundamental Principles. For several years, the Colombian Red Cross has been at the top of the list of the institutions most admired by Colombians.

In 2023 and beyond, the Colombian Red Cross will strengthen its corporate governance and adopt best practices that promote strategic, regulatory, statutory and management direction. National Society headquarters and branches will improve their capacities in

disaster communications, media management and reputational crisis communications. The National Society will encourage volunteers to develop themselves as agents of change, with a strong sense of ethics and inclusion - already 58% of its 21,800 volunteers are women.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC has supported the Colombian Red Cross through its Andean Country Cluster Delegation, based in Lima (Peru) since 2016. In Colombia, the IFRC does not have a headquarters agreement with the Government but plans to turn its project office into a delegation in 2023. The IFRC supports the Colombian Red Cross across the areas of strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy, including strengthening its auxiliary role. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported Colombian Red Cross through a number of DREF and Emergency Appeal funded [operations](#) in response to population movement, floods, mudslides, avalanches, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, disease outbreaks, civil unrest, and for election preparedness. One DREF operation for floods launched in December 2022 will continue into early 2023. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IFRC has supported the National Society in its COVID-19 responses through its [global Emergency Appeal](#).

IFRC membership coordination

IFRC coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs, agree common priorities, co-develop strategies to obtain greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space, mobilize funding and other resources, clarify consistent public messaging, and monitor progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need incorporate clear humanitarian action and development assistance, and reinforce the auxiliary role of National Society in its respective countries.

In 2019, the Colombian Red Cross approved a Cooperation Policy, to ensure the effective, orderly, transparent and timely management of national and international cooperation. This contributes to

the fulfillment of its humanitarian mission, helps to strengthen its institutional capacities and positions the Red Cross as a leading humanitarian entity in the country.

In 2022, the “Bogotá Agreement” document was agreed, which brings together the main humanitarian analyses and challenges for the wider region. It is a humanitarian declaration from all the national Red Cross Societies of the continent and marks a major milestone in the joint working of the sister Societies through the Inter-American Regional Committee (CORI). This agreement ratifies the firm commitment to support the implementation of the guidelines established by the IFRC and to promote the integration and development of the National Societies of the Americas and the Caribbean, including to strengthen their capacities.

The Colombian Red Cross is also a member of the Governing Board of the IFRC, representing the Americas region and is part of the IFRC and Movement’s strategic and technical platforms and networks at global and regional levels, including:

- the Migration Leadership Group, the Global Migration Task Force and the Migration Leadership group of the Americas (which it co-chairs);
- the Global Mapping of Professional Health Services
- the Global Initiative on Data and Digitalization, and the Global Advisory Group for strengthening the GO platform for disaster management
- the working group for the [Movement MHPSS Roadmap for implementation](#), that focuses on Priority Action Area 3: Protect and promote the mental health and psychosocial well-being of staff and volunteers. The group has existed since 2021 and the Colombian Red Cross has taken part since its inception.

The Colombian Red Cross is part of the IFRC network initiative on the New Way of Working, which is being piloted in 14 countries. It aims to establish a new model of membership coordination, working over multiple

Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements
Canadian Red Cross	CHF 0.01M
German Red Cross	CHF 0.44M
Norwegian Red Cross	CHF 0.84M
Spanish Red Cross	CHF 0.01M

years to develop and establish a thorough change in the way the IFRC network works together and places the National Society of the country at the centre of the action. This includes prioritizing effective coordination to improve joint results, optimizing the power of working as one IFRC network by sharing resources, learning, and common standards, and ultimately achieving greater impact.

Particular attention is being given to collective planning to ensure that the National Society partners present in country all participate in one multi-year country plan, which will ensure that the resources and expertise of the network are being used in a complementary and efficient way. A number of participating National Societies also have longer-term partnerships with the Colombian Red Cross:

The **American Red Cross** has had a delegation in the country since 2010, supporting the Colombian Red Cross to strengthen health and risk management, particularly within the climate change component.

The **German Red Cross** delegation was established in Colombia in 2010 and has since developed interventions in the areas of health, disaster risk management, volunteering and migration. It is currently working in a consortium with the Spanish Red Cross on the ECHO humanitarian implementation plan for the care of migrants and victims of conflict. Additionally, the German Red Cross is developing eight other projects, which include: institutional strengthening and volunteering; humanitarian assistance, primary health care and shelter for victims of the armed conflict and migration crises; strengthening local capacities through disaster preparedness; strengthening health response; improving sexual and reproductive health; caring for vulnerable populations; and emergency response to floods. The German Red Cross is also supporting

the Colombian Red Cross in the implementation of a Forecast-Based Action mechanism.

The **Norwegian Red Cross** delegation has been present in the country since 2011, supporting the Colombian Red Cross to deliver projects in the Pacific region of the country. These projects include mobile health care units, medical missions, community resilience and health care, prevention of urban and gender-based violence, and strengthening employability for people being (re)integrated in Colombia. The Norwegian Red Cross also supports the National Society to strengthen institutional areas, such as volunteer exchange, gender and diversity, and planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. In other parts of the country, the Norwegian Red Cross is supporting the National Society to deliver peace building and medical missions.

The **Spanish Red Cross** has been present in Colombia since 2010, supporting the National Society on livelihoods, peace building and health projects to support the migrant population and the victims of the conflict. It is currently working in a consortium with the German Red Cross on the ECHO humanitarian implementation plan for the care of migrants and victims of the conflict. During 2022, the Spanish Red Cross also developed projects to support public health systems, as well as recovery, strengthening of livelihoods and care for vulnerable populations, including those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, **The Canadian Red Cross Society and Turkish Red Crescent Society** have supported the Colombian Red Cross in recent years, although they do not have a permanent presence in the country.

Movement coordination

Coordination between the Colombian Red Cross, the IFRC and the ICRC is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#). This coordination is essential to ensure that actions are complementary and based on transparency and accountability. Among the Movement's coordination and cooperation activities carried out by the Colombian Red Cross are the Tripartite Committee with the IFRC and ICRC, the Movement's Executive Committee, and the Multilateral Security Committee.

In Colombia, the ICRC carries out actions to support the victims of conflict and other situations of violence, and those affected by migration. Cooperation with the National Society includes programmes in safer access, public and operational communication, economic security, health, WASH, protection of family links, protection and education in urban environments, International Humanitarian Law, prevention of and response to sexual violence, and institutional strengthening.

Coordination with other actors

In line with its auxiliary role, the Colombian Red Cross coordinates closely with the public authorities in the humanitarian field. It is a member of the main national coordination platforms for emergencies, and, as part of the country's national disaster risk management system, participates in the unified command posts for the coordination and management of emergency response.

The Colombian Red Cross Society currently has agreements with 33 external partners across Government, academia, technical and scientific institutions, the private sector, cooperation agencies from foreign governments, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), UNHCR and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, among others. The Colombian Red Cross is part of the humanitarian country team and other

national platforms, such as the inter-agency group on mixed migratory flows.

A notable partnership with the private sector is the bilateral collaboration with the company Zurich Colombia Seguros, as part of the IFRC's long-standing partnership with the Zurich Foundation, which supports flood resilience. The programme seeks to enhance community flood resilience in the communities of Barranquilla, Medellin and Bogota, through the implementation of the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities approach. It also aims to strengthen partnerships with public and private actors, to improve the national public policy, technical capacity, compliance and investment in flood resilience at local and national levels. The programme ends in December 2024.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) data
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers**. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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