

## *Public Statement*

### **On the World Humanitarian Day: The Colombia Humanitarian Forum calls for increased action and the protection of humanitarian space**

**#LoHumanitarioNosUne: Humanitarian assistance must be strengthened in Colombia. More than nine million people suffer humanitarian needs due to the complex situation caused by the pandemic, the migration crisis, the armed conflict, and disasters and climate change.**

On August 19, 28 national and international organizations members of the Humanitarian Forum in Colombia join the commemoration of World Humanitarian Day. The hashtag #LoHumanitarioNosUne, pays tribute to those who dedicate their lives to alleviating the suffering of people affected by crises and emergencies in the country and worldwide.

#### **World Humanitarian Day**

The United Nations General Assembly commemorates August 19th as World Humanitarian Day following the 2003 attack on the United Nations headquarters in Bagdad (Iraq), which took the life of 22 humanitarian workers.

In Colombia, 6,000 humanitarian workers of NGOs assist and alleviate the suffering of those most vulnerable, save lives, and rebuild their life projects. Since 2020, they have reached more than 2.5 million people, affected by internal armed conflict, disasters, climate change, COVID-19 pandemic, and Venezuela's migration and refuge crisis.

They must overcome many barriers to access populations in need. Restrictions on mobility imposed by non-state armed actors, armed clashes, or anti-personnel mines limit humanitarian access. According to ICRC, in 2020, there were 325 attacks on the medical mission, while 189 events occurred just in the first four months of 2021, the highest rate in the last 24 years. To accomplish our mandate, all actors must respect the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity.

#### **The humanitarian situation in Colombia.**

Since early 2020, there were almost 200 mass displacements (each including more than 50 individuals), affecting at least 102,700 people. Additionally, hundreds of thousands suffered individually forced displacement. In the same period, 121,400 people were confined by armed actors, as indicated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

According to official statistics, 2.2 million refugees and migrants from neighbour Venezuela live in Colombia, many of them at great humanitarian needs, and a significant number are also affected by the armed conflict. To add more complexity, hundreds of thousands are affected every year by natural disasters and climate change, while COVID-19 has severely disrupted both the economy and health systems.

As humanitarian workers, we fulfil our commitments as part of the human family and core humanitarian principles.

On this date, we call on all armed actors to respect humanitarian assistance and access to the most vulnerable populations. On the Government, to strengthen coordination mechanisms that respect and facilitate our humanitarian work. On the international community, to mobilize additional and sufficient economic resources to maintain the commitment to the victims, leaving none behind in Colombia.

*Please show your support by posting the hashtag #LoHumanitarioNosUne and #TheHumanRace to commemorate this 2021 World Humanitarian Day with us.*