

Colombia: Thousands of newly displaced

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PRESS RELEASE

With 3,000 people displaced in Colombia's Pacific region in the first two weeks of January alone, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) calls on the authorities in area affected by armed conflict to step up support to the victims of mass displacement and confinement.

"I am worried to witness thousands of men, women and children living in remote areas of Colombia face fresh waves of displacement, violence and forced confinements at the start of this year. We call the authorities, particularly the newly appointed mayors and governors of the Pacific region, to continue with their obligation to provide aid to all victims of the armed conflict," said Giovanni Rizzo, NRC's country director in Colombia.

In the first fifteen days of 2024, media and community leaders have reported violent and highly concerning events from across Colombia's Pacific region. According to preliminary data from local authorities and UN OCHA, escalating conflict in the area forced more than 3,000 people to flee their homes, and an additional 10,000 remain confined in their homes – a method used by armed groups to control territories.

"These vulnerable communities must not be abandoned. Authorities should provide communities with desperately needed access to life-saving humanitarian aid and essential services, including education and health. All parties to the conflict must be held accountable for their actions," stated Rizzo.

In the [Olaya Herrera](#) and [Samaniego](#) municipalities in the Nariño department, armed clashes forced more than 3,000 people to flee within the first ten days of January. The media also reported mass displacements in the department of [Valle del Cauca](#). Additionally, in the department of Choco, more than [9,000](#) people have been confined since November 2023 because of armed clashes and death threats to civilians. The situation is also worrying in Jurado, where more than [1,000](#) people are currently confined within their own territory.

"The hope for peace among communities who are struggling to live a normal life, free of violence, must be secured by implementing the agreements within the current peace process, including a steadfast commitment to upholding the respect for international humanitarian law," said Rizzo.

Notes to editors:

- Colombia remains in the [top 5](#) list of countries with the highest number of displaced people in the world with 4.8 million.
- In the Olaya Herrera municipality in the Nariño department, armed clashes forced nearly 1,500 people to flee within the first ten days of January ([UN OCHA](#)).
- According to data from the Humanitarian NGO Forum in Colombia, 245,672 people have been forcibly displaced between January and August 2023 as a result of conflict and violence in the country.
- NRC Colombia gratefully acknowledges funding for its emergency humanitarian response from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation ([AECID](#)), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation ([SDC](#)), USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance ([BHA](#)), European Union ([ECHO](#)).
- NRC provide humanitarian assistance to displaced and confined persons in Buenaventura and Alto Baudó in the departments of Valle del Cauca and Chocó.
- The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is a humanitarian aid organisation working in 40 countries around the world. [Read more here](#).

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