



ICRC

HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES 2023

COLOMBIA



The importance of humanitarian action

No matter where I am in the world, I am often asked how it is possible to remain neutral when confronted with the suffering of people affected by armed conflict.

It isn't easy. Every humanitarian worker can tell you a story of the dilemmas they face – again, pretty often – when they have to take decisions that will affect people's lives. Finding the balance between the potential benefits and the potential risks is hard.

But what is certain is that neutrality is not only a moral stance. It's a humanitarian and pragmatic one, which enables us to speak with weapon bearers and have access to communities in need. Neutrality means we cannot take sides in a conflict, but we can take action to help its victims. It allows us to cross front lines to provide humanitarian assistance that saves lives.

For more than 50 years, our neutrality, impartiality and independence have enabled us to fulfil our humanitarian role in the most conflict-affected areas of Colombia.

Last year, we provided water and food to more than 74,000 confined or displaced people. We obtained security guarantees so that our health teams could treat 382 sick or wounded people and 1,170 victims and survivors of sexual violence in areas where hostilities were going. We recovered the bodies of 39 missing people so that they could be returned to their families to receive a proper funeral. We facilitated the release of 63 people being held by armed groups and visited detainees in 11 of the country's prisons.

Our principles enable us to champion states' compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL). Neutrality does not mean that the ICRC must remain silent; instead, it creates the space needed for dialogue to take place between us and weapon bearers suspected of breaking the rules.

This dialogue is bilateral and confidential. We present allegations and, if founded, seek to make the parties involved take responsibility for their actions. Events do not need to have been published on social media to have

taken place. Confidentiality is not akin to complacency. We prioritize face-to-face meetings with the weapon bearers who make decisions during the fighting. We also communicate publicly to support our multilateral work, raise awareness of IHL and other humanitarian norms, and explain our way of working.

Adopting a neutral stance does not alone resolve humanitarian issues, but it does provide a logical and coherent framework for everything the ICRC does and says. Coherence is fundamental for generating trust.

The 2022 reports from our field teams show that the situation in Colombia has continued to deteriorate in several parts of the country as a result of the seven ongoing non-international armed conflicts. Sadly, there was a rise in the number of victims of explosive weapons and in attacks on health workers by weapon bearers. We also continue to register hundreds of cases of people who have gone missing and to assist tens of thousands of confined or displaced people.

For this reason, we welcome the "Total Peace" policy and all the efforts being made to reduce the humanitarian consequences of the armed conflicts. We insist on the importance of safeguarding humanitarian action and respecting our ways of working to assist those affected.

Impartial humanitarian organizations need to follow standards that arise out of the constant use of the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as rigorously managing the safety of all those concerned.

At the same time, we must not forget that humanitarian rules, such as IHL, are the foundations and not the roof: they are the minimum set of rules that humans have managed to agree on to protect those who are not or are no longer taking part in hostilities. They are not optional for parties to a conflict to enjoy.

All parties can do more to protect people than what is laid down by IHL – but they cannot do less. Moreover, they can strike agreements with other parties to bilaterally apply greater protection.

Given all this, whenever I'm asked how it is possible to be neutral in the midst of armed conflict, my answer is always the same: to be on the side of the victims of war.



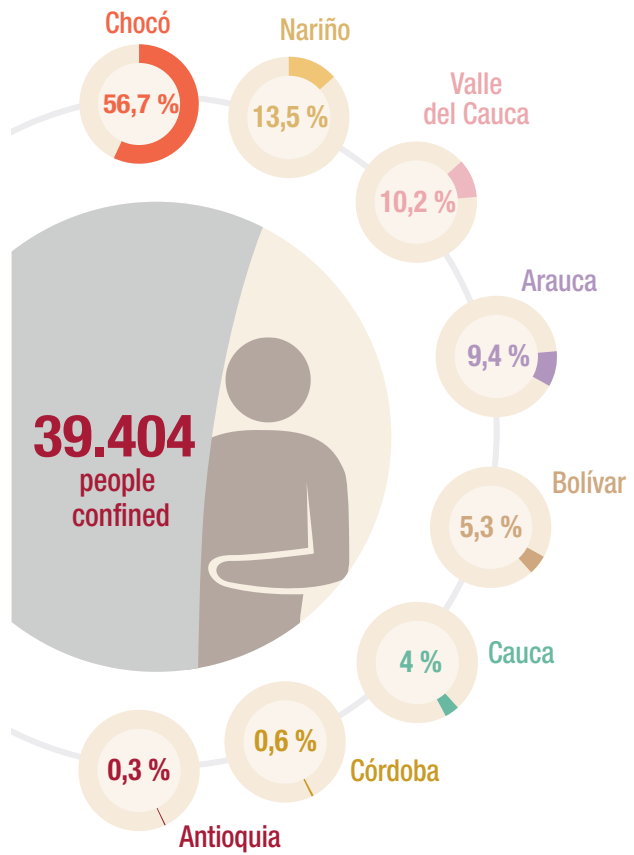
Lorenzo Caraffi
Head of Delegation, Colombia

Civilian population trapped in fear and anxiety

In Colombia, armed conflicts and violence continue to have a deep impact on the civilian population. Many civilians have been wounded, killed or gone missing; relatives have been separated from their loved ones; communities have been confined or displaced; young children and teenagers have got involved with armed groups; and individuals are suffering from psychological distress, fear, anxiety and permanent uncertainty. In several parts of the country, people are enduring indescribable suffering that is exacerbated when armed actors fail to uphold IHL rules and humanitarian principles.

In 2022, our field teams recorded 400 suspected violations of IHL – some of them serious – and other humanitarian norms, of which more than half were homicides; threats; sexual violence; indiscriminate use of explosive weapons; recruitment, use and participation of children and teenagers in hostilities; arbitrary detention; and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Confinement in 2022

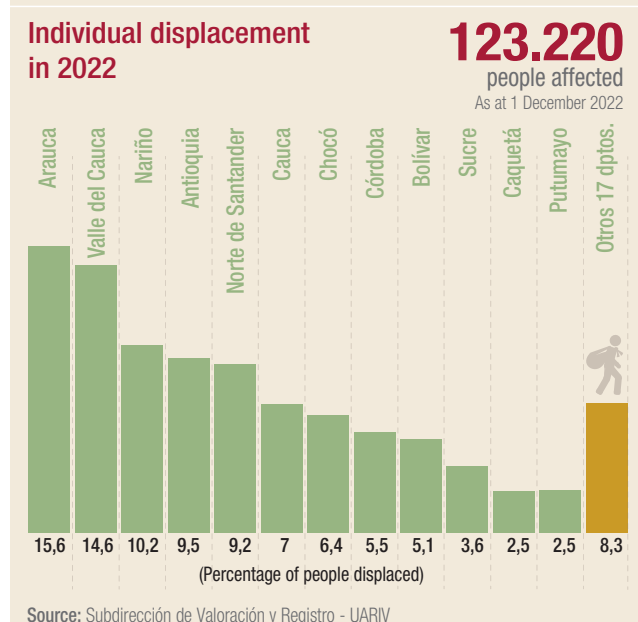
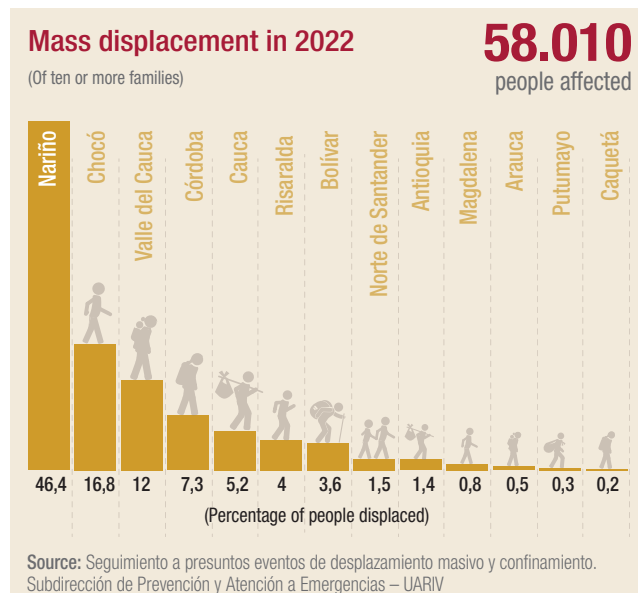


Source: Seguimiento a presuntos eventos de desplazamiento masivo y confinamiento. Subdirección de Prevención y Atención a Emergencias – UARIV

In relation to the conduct of hostilities, they recorded the failure of the parties to the conflicts to comply with the obligation to take precautionary measures to protect the civilian population and property.

The presence of armed actors near populated areas and the use of civilian objects with military purposes increased the pressure on communities and their fear of being caught in the crossfire or their community spaces being turned into military objectives.

Other issues have added to this complex picture. Last year, we recorded 515 victims of explosive hazards, the highest figure in the last six years. This is further confirmation of a trend we have seen since 2018, where year on year the problem has grown worse and with it the scale of this human tragedy.



*People who are unable to leave their communities because of the risks of crossfire, anti-personnel mines, threats by armed groups, etc. are "confined".

*This does not reflect the complete situation in the country, but rather only those cases that have come to the attention of the ICRC directly while carrying out our humanitarian work. The statistics do not allow us to accurately assess whether the total number of cases has gone up or down, year on year, given that many factors can influence the collection of these data.

Last year, we recorded 348 cases of people who have gone missing in relation to the armed conflicts and violence since the Peace Agreement was signed, of which 209 went missing in 2022. These figures do not reflect the total number of people recorded missing nationwide, but they do show quite clearly that this issue is not confined to Colombia's past.

According to official figures, last year there were at least 123,000 cases of individual displacement; mass displacement affected a further 58,000. All these people were forced to abandon their homes to save their lives.

Around 39,000 people were confined as a result of the upsurge in armed violence and the presence of explosive hazards in the areas where they lived: 64 per cent of those confined identified as indigenous; 27 per cent as Afro-Colombian.

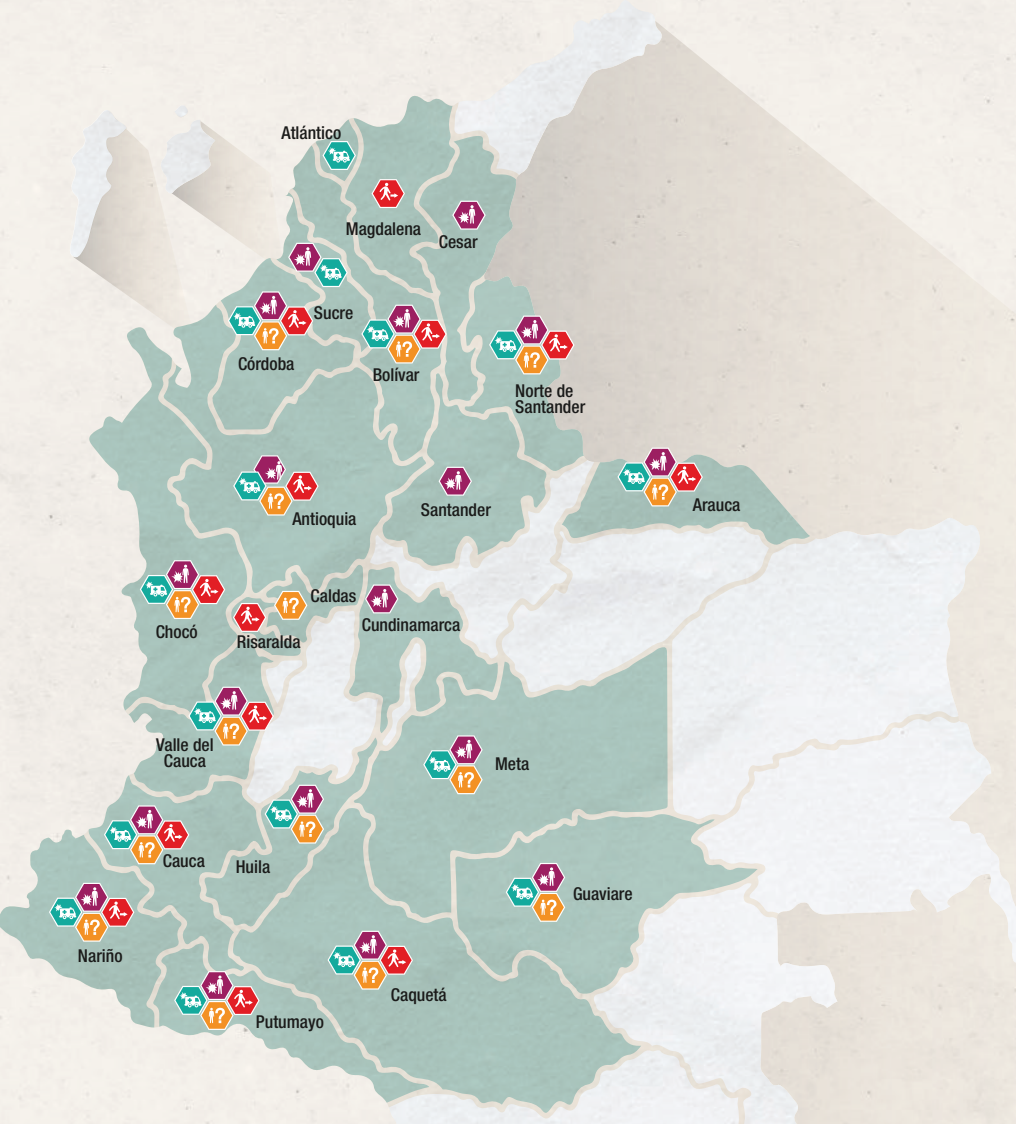
These figures indicate that the level of confinement and displacement have remained steady in certain departments, such as Nariño and Chocó. For the last four years, these two departments have seen the highest levels of mass displacement and confinement, respectively. Other areas have seen considerable changes.

One example is Arauca department, where confinement increased tenfold between 2021 and 2022 and individual displacement shot up from 763 people in 2021 to more than 19,000 people in 2022.

Attacks on health care continued last year; the most serious cases were recorded in the areas most affected by the armed conflicts and violence, e.g. health workers and patients were killed, received threats, suffered sexual violence or were subject to blackmail, and ambulances were held up at roadblocks. In some of these cases, those affected were too frightened to file an official complaint with the authorities.

Attention must be paid to the recruitment, use and participation of children and teenagers in hostilities. We are concerned that armed state and non-state actors continue to involve children in the armed conflicts. This has profound consequences for them, such as being separated from their families; losing control over their lives; experiencing psychological issues; becoming victims of sexual violence; and being wounded, mutilated or killed. The lack of safe spaces, opportunities, access to education, as well as the presence of weapon bearers near populated areas and the rise in their control over these areas increases the vulnerability of children.

We remain deeply concerned by the sexual violence that continues to occur in the armed conflicts. These acts of violence are frequently used by weapon bearers as reprisals to generate fear or demonstrate power and to destroy the social fabric of the local population. There are many forms of sexual violence besides rape, such as sexual harassment or forced nudity, that can have devastating consequences for the victims, their families and their communities.



Humanitarian consequences in 2022



However, most cases are never reported out of a fear of being attacked again or a feeling of guilt or shame. Obstacles remain that hinder victims of sexual violence from reporting cases and getting treatment within 72 hours of the assault, even in the event of a medical emergency where the victim's life is at stake.

All of the above demonstrates how complex the current situation is, and how the dynamics of the armed conflicts, the behaviour of weapon bearers and the consequences in humanitarian terms can vary widely from one place to another.

In 2022, fighting over territory intensified in several parts of the country. This exacerbated problems and increased risks for the civilian population, as communities not only had to face the direct consequences of the clashes (confinement, mass displacement, landmines and unexploded ordnance, damage to property, etc.), but also faced pressure from armed actors who, on several occasions, accused them of belonging, helping or favouring one or another party to the conflict simply on account of living in that area and staying put in the midst of the fighting.

However, in other parts of the country clashes between government forces and armed groups went down for several months in the second half of the year, which reduced the direct effects of hostilities on civilians and provided a certain amount of relief. Despite this, the situation for communities in these areas continued to be complicated, since in some places weapon bearers remained in control and, with that, threats, violations and various types of abuse continued.

According to the ICRC's legal classification of conflicts, based on the criteria laid down in IHL, there are currently seven non-international armed conflicts in Colombia. Three of these are between the state and the following non-state armed groups (NSAG): the National Liberation Army (ELN), the Gaitanist Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AGC) and former FARC-EP currently not adhered to the Peace Agreement (former FARC-EP).

The other four conflicts are between NSAG. One is between the ELN and the AGC, and the other three are between the former FARC-EP and the Second Marquetalia, the Border Commandos-Bolivarian Army (CDF-EB) and the ELN respectively. This last conflict was classified recently as such following observation and analysis of hostilities between both groups and the generated humanitarian consequences over the last two years.

The changing dynamics of territorial control, the reconfiguration of non-state armed actors, the deterioration in the humanitarian situation and the weak presence of state institutions, which historically has existed in the areas most affected by the armed conflicts, show the multiple challenges facing humanitarians and the difficult living conditions and lack of security of the civilian population.

However, it is important to make clear that both the statistics and the analysis contained in this report represent what we saw in 2022. Given how fast things vary in Colombia, this outlook may change.

Classification of armed conflicts

Why does the ICRC classify armed conflicts?

The ICRC classifies armed conflicts in order to fulfil its humanitarian mission, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, their Additional Protocols and the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. We work to promote respect for IHL by all parties, to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and to provide them with assistance.

What criteria does the ICRC use to determine there is a non-international armed conflict?

The ICRC uses the criteria set out in IHL to determine whether a situation of violence should be classified as a non-international armed conflict. For this to happen, the armed groups involved must be organized to a sufficient degree and hostilities between parties must have reached a minimum level of intensity. The ICRC carries out a technical and objective analysis to determine whether these two criteria have been met on the basis of data gathered directly on the ground.

Are an armed group's motives relevant under IHL for classifying it as a party to a non-international armed conflict?

Under IHL, an armed group's motives – political, economic, religious, ethnic and so forth – are not requirements or criteria for determining whether an armed group is a party to a non-international armed conflict, or to whether IHL applies. Moreover, establishing that a non-international armed conflict exists and that IHL therefore applies does not confer any special status on the armed groups involved or their members. In this sense, IHL neither permits nor prevents a state from negotiating with armed groups.

The constant threat of explosive hazards

Explosive hazards continue to have serious effects on the population, such as confinement, displacement, psychological issues and anxiety. Although these issues leave fewer visible scars than others, they are just as serious, since they can turn people's lives upside down.

In 2022, whole communities experienced fear, anxiety and powerlessness as a result of the risks posed by explosive hazards, which make it impossible for civilians to move freely across their area of residence, fish, hunt, or access crops or other forms of subsistence. In addition, they prevented people from getting access to basic services such as health care and education, and increased the vulnerability of children and teenagers, who, by being deprived of safe spaces, remained at greater risk of becoming involved in the armed conflicts.

The number of people who are direct victims also highlights the gravity of this issue. Last year, we recorded 515 victims of anti-personnel landmines, explosive remnants of war, launched explosives and controlled detonation devices. Of these, 56 people were killed; the remainder survived with physical and psychological scars that may stay with them for the rest of their lives.

These cases were recorded in 18 departments, of which six – Cauca, Antioquia, Arauca, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Meta – were the worst affected, accounting for 70 per cent of all victims. Unfortunately, the analysis shows that new areas have now been hit by this issue.

Of the 86 municipalities in which incidents occurred last year, 57 per cent had recorded no victims in 2021. In 2022,

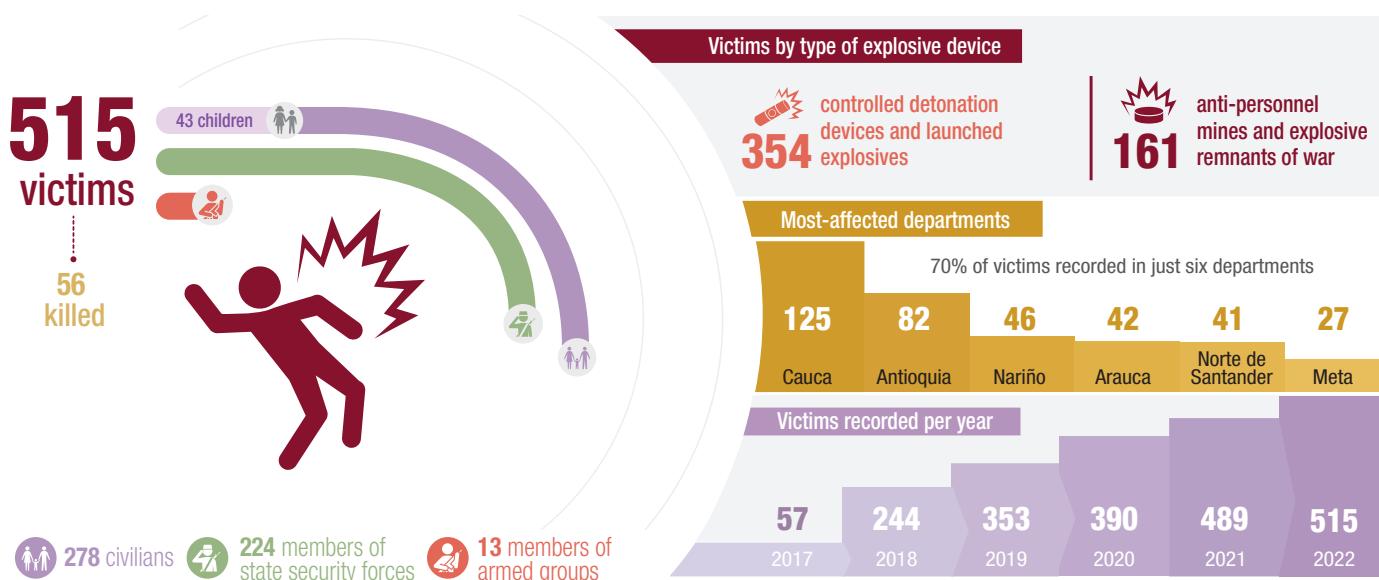
incidents involving explosive hazards were recorded in 26 new municipalities that had not recorded any victims of such hazards in the previous four years. These figures show that the evolution of this issue is bound up with the dynamics of the armed conflicts and violence, which are constantly shifting and can vary widely from one area to another.

The type of explosive hazard has altered. Last year, the number of victims of anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war dropped by 13 per cent year on year. However, use of launched explosives and controlled detonation devices increased, accounting for 69 per cent of all victims of explosive weapon.

One of the most worrying aspects of this issue is its impact on the civilian population. In total, 54 per cent of the victims recorded last year were civilians, of which 43 were children.

This situation adds to the complexity of the outlook for these communities. For example, there were 30 municipalities that recorded incidents involving explosive hazards where, in addition, the local population also had to deal with mass displacement and confinement. Cases like this also occurred in areas that recorded no direct victims but in which the presence of explosive hazards has had devastating effects.

All the above shows the size of the issue and the scale of human suffering. It is crucial that armed actors, state institutions and wider society are made aware of what these communities are going through, a daily reality that is not normal and should not be normalized.



Source: International Committee of the Red Cross

Unending uncertainty

To not know whether a loved one is dead or alive, what has happened to them or where they are was the painful reality for hundreds of Colombian families last year. People continue to go missing in relation to the armed conflicts and violence in the country, leaving scars that will take a long time to heal.

Our figures, which account for only a fraction of the cases, show the issue is still a live one in the country. Last year, we recorded 209 cases of people who had gone missing in relation to the armed conflicts and violence in 15 departments, of which Arauca, Chocó, Cauca, Nariño and Norte de Santander were the worst affected. These departments accounted for 79 per cent of all our recorded cases. Since the Peace Agreement was signed in 2016, we have recorded 1,122 disappearances.

The control and pressure that weapon bearers exert not only shape the daily lives of communities, but also determine communities' access to the institutions tasked with looking for their loved ones and meeting their needs. In some cases – out of fear of reprisals – families prefer to wait months or years before reporting a relative as missing.

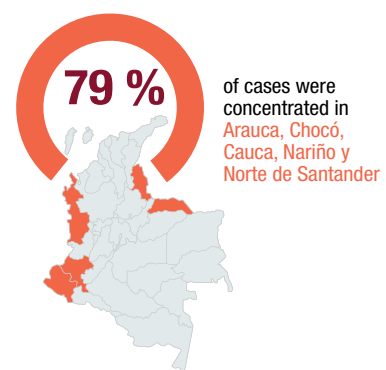
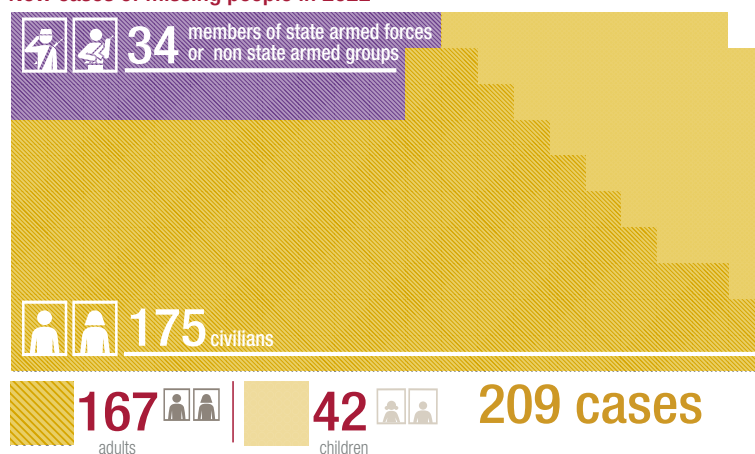
How armed actors behave when dealing with wounded or injured people, as well as how they ensure these people do not lose touch with their families, can stop people from going missing in Colombia. In some parts of the country, one of the ways of exerting control over communities is not to allow them to recover the bodies of those who have died or inform anyone about the situation. In other cases, armed groups have informed various humanitarian organizations so that they can recover the bodies.

Given the emotional upheaval that recovering the bodies of loved ones entails for thousands of families, we must insist on the need to strengthen state action to promote the dignified treatment of the dead, including in the most remote places. To achieve this, the state must provide the willpower and the necessary resources, especially to enable the proper functioning of the Unit for the Search for Missing Persons (UBPD). Likewise, weapon bearers in all parties must prevent people from going missing; this obligation is laid down in IHL.

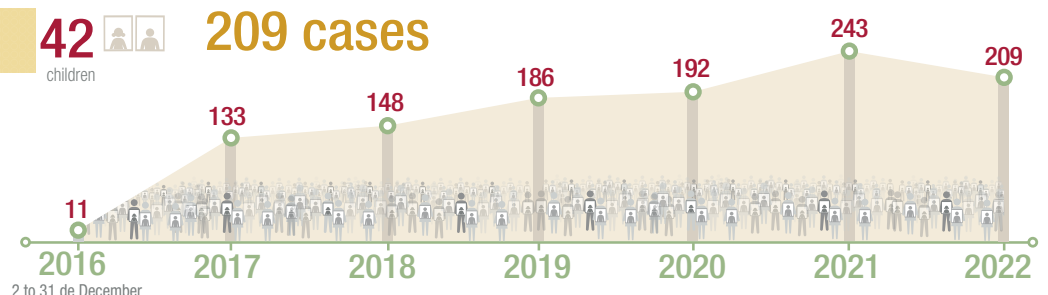
All of the above is part of the bigger picture of disappearances that have taken place since 2016 and beforehand. The state must take the necessary measures for these disappearances to end, and to investigate the fate and whereabouts of those who have gone missing. They should promote the use of the Urgent Search Mechanism (MBU), which could help prevent others from going missing. This would mean raising awareness of the mechanism among civil servants and creating a system to follow up on the work carried out when institutions trigger the mechanism.

In addition, the relatives of missing people must have access to suitable mental-health care with the public health-care system. These are not simply statistics but broken dreams, destroyed families, hours of searching and waiting – sometimes for an answer that never comes – and, above all, the uncertainty and pain of not knowing what happened to a loved one or where they now are.

New cases of missing people in 2022*



Cases of people who have been recorded as missing since the Peace Agreement entered into force in 2016 and December 2022**



*These figures correspond to cases documented by the ICRC in areas where we are present and carrying out our humanitarian work. They are not, therefore, an exact reflection of the scale of the problem.
 **These figures may vary from publication to publication, as some disappearances are not reported during the same year in which they occurred. For example, we recorded 348 missing person cases in 2022, of which only 209 occurred that year; the remainder occurred between December 2016 and December 2021.

Health in the midst of conflict

Attacks on health workers were particularly serious last year in the areas hardest hit by the armed conflicts and add to the many hardships generated already by the violence endured by the civilian population in those areas.

Our presence and our dialogue with health workers in these areas enabled us to identify acts of violence committed against health care that had not been recorded in the official system. The violence affected in particular the departments of Arauca, Nariño, Cauca, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Chocó and Antioquia.

In 2022, we recorded the killing of at least seven patients and health workers. This is more than the total number of killings (six) that took place between 2018 and 2021. In addition, we received information about other types of violence against the health-care sector, such as sexual violence, armed actors holding up ambulances at check-points, forced removal of patients from ambulances, as well as threats and blackmail.

The provision of health care is also affected by certain situations – such as the detonation of explosive devices near health facilities or the confinement of communities, which prevents them from accessing health care.

In addition, there were cases of health workers being taken against their will to treat wounded or sick people. In such instances, health workers are at risk of being caught in the crossfire and of being tried for giving medical treatment to those who were taking part in hostilities. It should be noted

that IHL and other humanitarian norms safeguard health workers against attack during hostilities, as well as against being tried for providing medical treatment to any party to a conflict, in accordance with medical ethics.

Despite this violence against health care in remote areas affected by the armed conflicts, we regularly find paramedics, nurses, doctors, ambulance drivers and public health teams continuing, resiliently and courageously, to provide health-care services to people and communities.

Some have to travel for eight hours by mule to reach those most in need. Frequently, we ask ourselves “Where do they get the strength?” In Putumayo, we received this answer: “All lives are worth the same.”

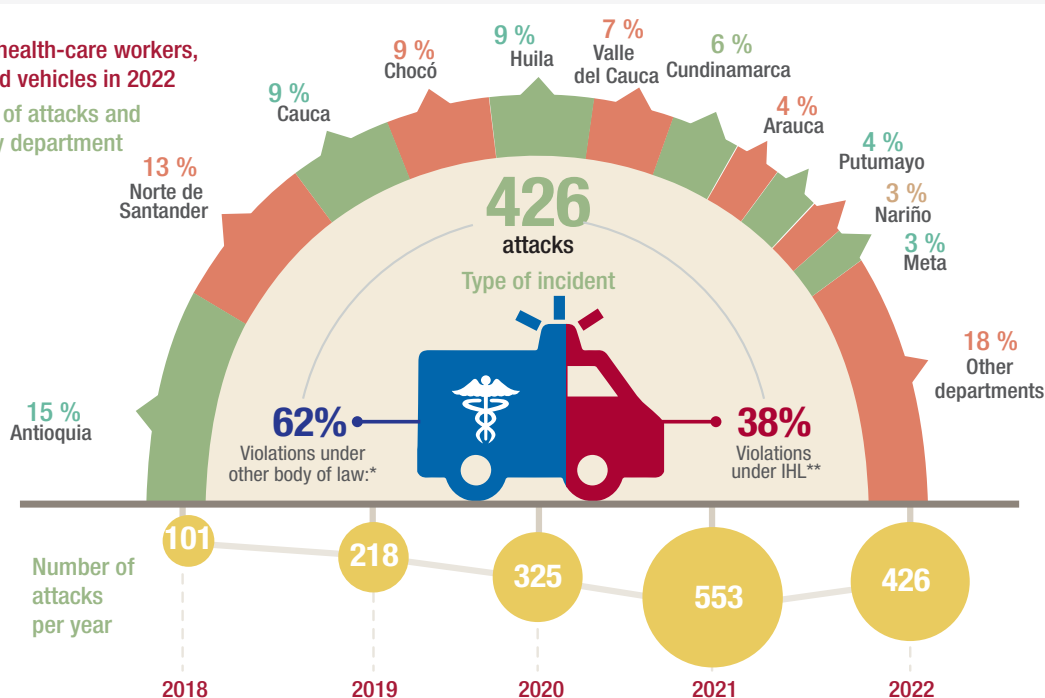
Despite this bravery, we mustn’t forget that this violence has a considerable impact on their mental health and requires a different focus.

Although the context of armed conflicts presents the most complex facts, attacks on health care were also recorded in other situations. Last year, the *Mesa Nacional de Misión Médica* recorded 426 attacks against health-care workers, facilities and vehicles – 62 per cent of which had no relation to the armed conflicts.

Beyond this particular context, it is important to understand that those who provide health care must be respected and protected in all circumstances because the lives of others depend on them.

Attacks on health-care workers, facilities and vehicles in 2022

Percentage of attacks and incidents by department



* This refers to attacks on health care carried out within the context of armed conflicts and therefore covered by the provisions of IHL.

** This refers to attacks on health care carried out outside the context of armed conflicts and therefore covered by domestic law and international human rights law.

Overcrowding in temporary detention centres getting worse

The state of the Colombian prison system continued to put the fundamental rights of people deprived of their liberty at risk.

Although overcrowding in state prisons has decreased substantially since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic – from 51 to 21 per cent – the problem has shifted to temporary detention centres, where rates of overcrowding have hit critical levels.

State prisons also continue to have trouble ensuring detainees have decent living conditions and access to the basics, such as health care, water, food, hygiene and sufficient space.

In addition, prison infrastructure is often deficient and poorly maintained. Furthermore, the lack of personnel and education and rehabilitation programmes has a negative impact on social reintegration.

Among those who are currently in detention, certain groups, such as older adults, people with disabilities and people with mental health issues are more vulnerable because of the lack of a differentiated approach to their problems. For detained women heads of household, time in prison considerably reduces the emotional ties their children feel for them as a result of the impact it has on their children’s upbringing and many exclusionary factors.

Releases: A reflection of our role as neutral intermediary

In 2022, we handled the release of 63 people who had been in the hands of various armed actors. This is one of the highest figures in recent years. Irrespective of the number of times we take part in these strictly humanitarian operations, every time someone is reunited with their loved ones it is deeply gratifying for us.

To alleviate the suffering of those who are being held by armed actors is one of our priorities. To achieve this, our bilateral and confidential dialogue with all parties to the armed conflicts is fundamental – in addition to security guarantees and respect for our humanitarian work. With these things in place, we can cultivate the right atmosphere to enable people, irrespective of the reasons they are being held, to be set free.

It is crucial that armed actors respect IHL, which in particular protects civilians and individuals who are no longer taking part in hostilities, including those who are being held by a party to a conflict.

Every time we can facilitate or take part in someone’s release from captivity, we thank the weapon bearers for their trust in our neutrality, impartiality and independence and our appreciation for their humanitarian gesture.

In 2023, we shall continue our endeavours as neutral intermediaries to facilitate this type of humanitarian operation whenever and wherever possible.



Antioquia. Dialogue with Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AGC).

R. Monsalve/ICRC



Nariño. Humanitarian release of 16 people held by Second Marquetalia.

E. Portillo/ICRC



Arauca. Humanitarian release of two people held by National Liberation Army (ELN).

M. Rodríguez/ICRC



Valle del Cauca. Humanitarian dialogue with Jaime Martínez Front.

C. Avila/ICRC



Calls to action

Armed conflicts

- ✓ Armed actors must give impartial humanitarian organizations access to their territories so that they can alleviate the suffering of the civilian population and mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the armed conflicts and violence. They must also respect these organizations' standards and ways of working, which are based on the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence.
- ✓ In any dialogue or negotiations between the Colombian state and armed groups, it is important that the parties consider commitments that entail greater respect for IHL in order to reduce the impact of the armed conflicts and determine possible post-conflict obligations. IHL should not be used for political purposes or related to political decisions so that its capacity to protect the lives of people affected by armed conflict is not diminished.
- ✓ Respect for IHL means everything for people affected by armed conflict. When the rules of IHL are followed, human suffering is reduced. That is why we insist on this point, so that parties to conflicts protect the lives and dignity of those who are not or are no longer taking part in hostilities and treat them with humanity at all times.
- ✓ We call on armed actors to assess and reduce the humanitarian consequences generated by the presence, use and abandonment of explosive weapons and their direct and indirect effects on the civilian population.
- ✓ Children and teenagers must not be involved in any way with armed actors. In this respect, it is important that state and non-state armed actors uphold the protection conferred on them by IHL and other humanitarian norms. Likewise, it is crucial that the Colombian state develop areas where people are protected and promote opportunities in rural and urban areas to hinder the recruitment, use and participation of children in hostilities.
- ✓ We insist on the importance of the state's strengthening its institutional capacity to provide a complete response to those affected by the armed conflicts.

Missing people

- ✓ To prevent people from going missing, we urge armed actors to take the necessary measures, such as to enable family members to remain in contact with their relatives and to manage dead bodies properly. Likewise, we request that they hand over all the information they have and that might be useful to clarifying the fate and whereabouts of

missing people to the institutions tasked with searching for them.

- ✓ We remind public prosecutors, judges and the authorities in general that the Urgent Search Mechanism is an indispensable tool that must be activated in an immediate and suitable manner in missing person cases.
- ✓ We ask the Colombian state and society to continue supporting the Unit for the Search for Missing Persons and its important humanitarian work. This applies as much to economic resources as to the interinstitutional support and access to information it needs to carry out its work.

Health care

- ✓ We urge armed actors to cease their attacks on health workers, facilities and vehicles. Their protection is especially important in areas where health care is most fragile, such as in the areas worst hit by the armed conflicts and violence.
- ✓ We call on civilians to respect, protect and recognize the fundamental role played by medical personnel in society. Likewise, we remind everyone of the importance of allowing these people to carry out their work in whatever circumstances and without any arbitrary restrictions.

People deprived of their liberty

- ✓ We appreciate the Colombian state's endeavours to reform and humanize the penal and prison system. A particularly welcome development was the adoption of draft law no. 093 in 2019, which incorporated our recommendations and established community service for detained women heads of household as an alternative form of punishment.
- ✓ Given that the state, despite their endeavours, has not managed to fully meet the needs of people deprived of their liberty, and based on the principle of the rational and exceptional use of prison, it is necessary to rethink penal policy to ensure better access to legal aid, respect for procedural deadlines and alternatives to detention, which should include a differentiated approach.

- ✓ We recognize the efforts of the state to improve health care in places of detention. However, recognizing that health care in prison is a matter for the public sector, we recommend that it be managed by one sole institution, and consequently that the Ministry of Health and Social Protection be more involved.

In 2022, our humanitarian work benefited 334,000* people.

*One person may have received more than one service. This figure represents a continual effort by our teams in the field to help those most affected by armed conflict and violence, often in cooperation with the Colombian Red Cross.



125 tonnes of food was distributed to 11,000 people in Chocó.

Victims/survivors of sexual violence



1.170 victims
survivors received support, guidance, physical- and mental-health care, emergency assistance and income-generating support.



2 hospitals
received support to renovate treatment areas for the victims/survivors of sexual violence.



D. Rodríguez/ICRC

We are working with Emberá women in Antioquia to develop a booklet in their own language about sexual rights and gender-based violence.

Victims of armed conflict



334,000 people
affected by armed conflict enjoyed greater economic security after receiving food and support for productive and income-generating activities.



54 health-care
facilities received medicines and medical supplies, which helped provide emergency care to around 171,500 people, including migrants.



41.495 people
benefited from better sanitation, access to water and facilities in schools and health centres.



6.000 educational tools
were delivered to areas affected by the armed conflicts and violence.



382 sick
wounded and disabled people received physical- and mental-health services and physical rehabilitation.

Victims of explosive weapons



86
survivors received wheelchairs, prostheses or another form of physical rehabilitation support.



101
victims received medical attention.



239
victims received economic assistance to access state health-care services.



300
community action plans were drawn up to help communities affected by the presence of explosive hazards.



21.060
people living in areas affected by the presence of explosive hazards received accident-prevention training.

Missing people



183 relatives
of missing people received information about where their loved ones were, thanks to our support. Of these, 118 people were found alive.



39 bodies
of missing people were recovered and handed over to the authorities for identification. We also carried out eight searches and supported the handover of the remains of 12 missing people to their families.



2.584 relatives
of missing people received guidance, psychological and psychosocial support, money, training and other kinds of support to find a job or develop their business.



241 government
officials and relatives of missing people received training on searching for, recovering the bodies of, and identifying missing people.

Migrants in Colombia



716 migrants
received guidance and support to cover travel and travel-related expenses.



55 migrants
wishing to settle permanently received food and hygiene items.



19 migrants
received medical attention and physical rehabilitation.



D. Rodríguez/ICRC

People deprived of their liberty



31.828
detainees were visited in 40 visits and 11 places of detention.



34
disabled people received wheelchairs, prostheses or another form of physical rehabilitation support.



12.000
people have better access to water and sanitation thanks to our team's work to maintain water-supply networks in six prisons.



325
people with reduced mobility have more accessible facilities, such as physiotherapy offices, baths and washrooms.



72
prison guards and administrators received training on managing restrictive regimes and respect for human rights.



102
judges received training on sentencing in a joint project with the High Council of Justice and the Judicial College.



320
health workers took part in online training on medical ethics, workplace health and human rights.



Orlando Balcárcel was injured by an explosive weapon in rural Saravena in 2000. The ICRC supports the association of victims of such weapons.

J. Uribe/ICRC

COVID-19 response



11.324 vaccine doses
were administered with our support in areas affected by the armed conflicts and violence.



75 health-care
facilities received support for their COVID-19 information management system, cold chain management and personal protective equipment for their staff.



J. Murillo/ICRC



4.212
members of the state security forces and government officials received training on international standards of the use of force, IHL and other humanitarian norms.



355
officials from the civil service and academia received training in IHL.



96.326
connectivity-related services (calls, access to WiFi and battery-charging points) were provided to help migrants and victims of armed conflict get in touch with their loved ones.



63
people being held by non-state armed groups were released in humanitarian operations that we facilitated.



548
cases were presented to weapon bearers to investigate the fate and whereabouts of missing people.



439
people, including victims and health workers at the National Penitentiary and Prison Institute (INPEC), received technical training in physical rehabilitation and social inclusion.

Collaboration with the Colombian Red Cross



421.314 victims
of armed conflict and other violence received assistance from the Colombian Red Cross with our technical, financial and logistical support.



27 Colombian
departments benefited from the humanitarian work of the Colombian Red Cross in collaboration with the ICRC.



R. Businaro/ICRC

Solar-powered radios for indigenous communities in Dabeiba

In rural Dabeiba, Antioquia, the most remote indigenous communities were also the most affected by the presence of explosive hazards, as they could not receive messages about how to prevent incidents and mitigate risks. So we provided seven communities with a solar-powered radio and flash drive each to spread messages about safe behaviours.

“This is good for our community, we can listen and learn about risks and how to prevent incidents”.

Elkin Balarín, indigenous teacher.



J. Uribe/ICRC

Songs of hope and peace, Tumaco

Funeral rites for Afro-Colombian communities on the Pacific coast are carried out as a community. People walk through the neighbourhoods holding altars and singing funeral songs to accompany the dead on their new journey. Death is not seen as the end but as a new form of existence. Unfortunately, as people have gone missing, this tradition has become weaker. So a group of women who are looking for their loved ones got together to remember them in prayer and song.

“If he’s dead, he’ll hear this funeral song; if he’s still alive, he’ll hear that I haven’t forgotten him”.

Matilde Casanova, singer.



J. Uribe/ICRC

Granita: Honey-making association in Tame, Arauca

In Tame, Arauca, the community association is working to build hope with a beekeeping and honey-making project. We provide psychosocial, productive, commercial and environmental support to 74 families to help the association continue to grow thanks to the quality of their honey.

“It’s a legacy that we can leave to our children. Rather than leave them money, we leave them land that is more than productive – somewhere that they can live.”

Luz Stella Sucre, association member.



J. Uribe/ICRC

Resilience in Bekocha, Putumayo

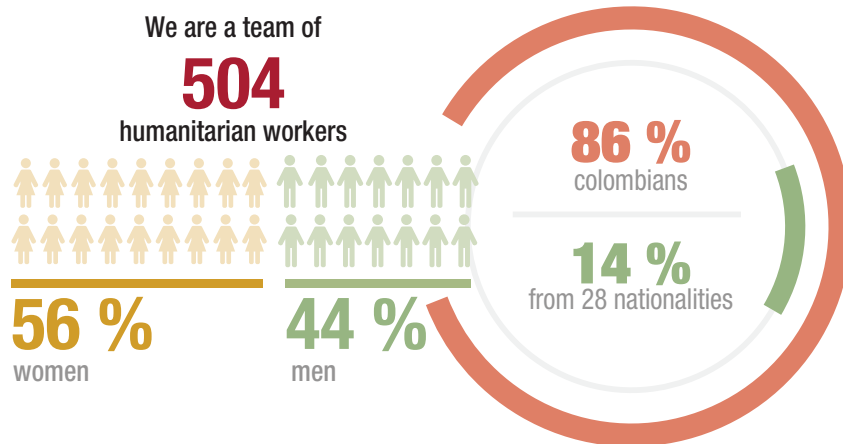
The Bekocha Guajira indigenous reserve is home to a Putumayo community affected by armed conflict. They decided to raise hens for their eggs so that they could form stronger bonds in their community and maintain food security. The activities were led by the women, who passed on their cultural knowledge about raising hens and getting eggs to their children.

“We women got together and talked about breeding animals, we’re very happy with this help.”

María Orozco, Bekocha woman.

Scan the QR code to watch the full stories





Our budget in 2022 was:



162.427
million Colombian pesos

We have been carrying out humanitarian work:

54 years

of humanitarian
work in Colombia



160 years

of humanitarian
work worldwide



We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, doing everything we can to protect their dignity and relieve their suffering, often with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. We also seek to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.

People know they can count on us to carry out a range of life-saving activities in conflict zones and to work closely with the communities there to understand and meet their needs. Our experience and expertise enable us to respond quickly, effectively and without taking sides.

-  CICRColombia
-  @CICR_co
-  cicr_americas
-  www.icrc.org/co
-  bogota@icrc.org

Hotline ***CICR te escucha***

☎ (57) 601 200 71 40
☑ #919 Toll free
from Claro, ETB,
Movistar y Tigo.



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

Calle 96 N.º 11b-37
Phone: (601) 313 86 30
Bogotá D.C. - Colombia