

FMO Country Guide: Colombia

Author: Sean Loughna

Summary

1 Overview

- 1.1 Historical background
 - 1.1.1 *La Violencia*
- 1.2 Politics
- 1.3 Culture
- 1.4 Geography, society, and economy

2 Causes and consequences

- 2.1 Conflict-induced displacement
 - 2.1.1 Political violence
 - 2.1.2 Guerrillas
 - FARC*
 - UC-ELN*
 - EPL*
 - 2.1.3 Armed forces
 - 2.1.4 National police
 - 2.1.5 CONVIVIRs
 - 2.1.6 Paramilitaries
 - 2.1.7 Internally displaced people
 - 2.1.8 Legal framework
 - 2.1.9 Peace process
 - 2.1.10 Illicit drugs
 - 2.1.11 Plan Colombia
- 2.2 Disaster-induced displacement
- 2.3 Development-induced displacement

3. Needs and responses

- 3.1 Colombians in exile
 - 3.1.1 Ecuador
 - 3.1.2 Panama
 - 3.1.3 Venezuela
- 3.2 Refugees in Colombia
- 3.3 Vulnerable groups
 - 3.3.1 Children
 - 3.3.2 Women
- 3.4 Civil society
- 3.5 International community
- 3.6 International non-governmental organizations

4. Other resources

- 4.1 Colombian newspapers
- 4.2 Other electronic resources
- 4.3 Non-electronic resources and bibliography

Formal name: Republic of Colombia (República de Colombia).

Capital: Bogotá.

Estimated population: 41,008,227 (July 2002 est)

Map

UNHCR August 2002

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/opendoc.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=44103c150&page=publ>

Summary

Most of those people displaced in Colombia are forced to flee as a result of long-running armed conflict and political violence. Colombia has the highest rate of forced migration in the Western Hemisphere and one of the highest in the world. It also has the highest murder rate in the world. This combination of factors suggests that Colombia might present the worst humanitarian crisis in the hemisphere. Criminal and political violence are part of everyday life in Colombia. Most forced migration is a consequence of the country's four-decade-long internal armed conflict, the longest running in Latin America. This 'dirty war' is a complex conflict fought primarily between left-wing guerrillas and Colombian armed forces and right-wing paramilitaries, but also involving drug traffickers, landowners, and other legal and illegal interests. For a number of reasons, the vast majority of those forced to flee do not cross borders but become internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Colombia. The total number of IDPs in the country varies between government estimates of around 525,000 and those of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which put the figure at over 2 million. According to human rights groups, some 1.9 million people were displaced between 1985 and 2000, with some 342,000 persons displaced in 2001 alone. Colombians are also increasingly fleeing across borders, most notably to Costa Rica and Ecuador. The conflict has intensified and expanded during 2001 and 2002 and the number of IDPs continues to grow dramatically, with no solution in sight.

During the 1990s there are estimated to have been over 300,000 violent deaths in Colombia, of which some 30,000 were a result of political violence. But of these politically motivated killings, on average only 1,000 of the victims each year were combatants, compared with 2,000–3,000 civilians. Civilians are regularly killed or forced to flee, often entire communities at a time. Increasingly, IDPs are moving to the cities or to shanty towns nearby. These shanty towns and other poor urban areas are also populated by Colombians who have been forced to migrate in significant numbers as a result of environmental degradation and disasters (such as earthquakes), illicit crop eradication programmes, development initiatives (such as dams), and to escape from desperate poverty.

Websites:

CIA World Factbook 2002

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/co.html>

CNN In-depth Archive

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2000/colombia.noframes/story/statistics>

Conflict and Ethnicity in Colombia, INCORE
<http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries/colombia.html>

Library of Congress Country Studies
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cotoc.html>

1. Overview

1.1 Historical background

Following Colombia's independence from Spain in 1819, the social structures of the former colony remained largely intact. A small number of predominantly white, locally born, upper-class landowners continued to dominate a majority of mestizo labourers, artisans, ranch workers, and peasant farmers. Much of the nineteenth century was characterized by regional and interest group struggles for supremacy, under the broad rubric of centralism versus federalism. By the mid-nineteenth century, Colombia's familiar two-party political structure had been established. The Conservative Party (*Partido Social Conservador*) have traditionally favoured centralized, authoritarian government and Roman Catholicism, and has represented landed interests and been wary of political and economic reform. The Liberal Party (*Partido Liberal*) has supported free trade, competition, secularism, and a federal system of government. Party affiliation has tended to be strongly regional and family based. This bipartisanship functioned reasonably well for many decades and did not spark the military coups that characterized politics in other parts of Latin America. Nonetheless, there was continual political violence and social unrest in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a result of regional, factional, and personal rivalries. In the 1940s, the two political parties established themselves as the institutional vehicles for local and class rivalries, and became effective means of mobilizing mass political participation, which sometimes spilled over into armed conflict. (See Politics)

1.1.1 *La Violencia*

For most observers, the roots of the current armed conflict and much of the violence in Colombia today stems from the transition from a Liberal to a Conservative hegemony in 1946. This sparked a period of civil unrest which exploded violently in 1948 and continued through the 1950s and 1960s (particularly 1948–1953): a period known as *La Violencia*. In this undeclared civil war, it is estimated that some 300,000 people were killed. A further 2 million people were uprooted by violence during this period. The left-wing Liberal uprising rallied around Liberal politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who, having failed to secure his party's nomination in the 1946 elections, ran as an independent candidate. With the Liberal Party votes divided, the Conservative Party returned to power.

But conflict and violence between extremist elements of the Conservative Party and left-leaning Liberals only intensified. There was already a good deal of tension and violence in many rural areas, such as the coffee-growing regions of Antioquia and Old Caldas. There was particular resentment about the large number of seasonal coffee-pickers being used – landless labourers who travelled from farm to farm supplementing existing labour supply. A significant population of rootless people continues to be a feature of rural Colombia today. The various armed groups, whether

Conservative *pájaros*, Liberal guerrillas, or Communist *comandantes*, recruited members from these unstable groups and from the rapidly growing slums of the cities. Discussion and debate about the causes and consequences of this period in Colombian history continue to this day.

As the revolutionary armed guerrilla groups emerged in the 1960s, violence between Conservatives and Liberals was brought to an end through the establishment of a so-called National Front pact. This was essentially a pact between the two parties, in which they agreed to share power exclusively amongst themselves. Thereafter the party officially in power was simply the one that happened to be taking its turn in office, and government positions were assigned evenly between the Liberal and Conservative parties. The absence of legal channels for opposition parties or civil society as a whole served to fuel the armed insurrection. Although the National Front officially came to an end in 1974, there continued to be an understanding until 1986 that the losing side would be given a share of power. Indeed, even today many perceive an unofficial continuance of this system, at least at some level.

Website:

Colombia Human Rights Network
Chronology of recent Colombian history:
<http://www.igc.org/colhrnet/timeline.htm>

1.2 Politics

The Republic of Colombia is a constitutional, multi-party democracy. It has a democratically elected representative system of government. Two political parties dominate – the Conservatives and the Liberals – and one or the other has always held power. (See Historical background)

Presidential elections are held every four years and are limited to a single term in office. The legislature is a two-chamber Congress consisting of one house of nationally-elected senators and one of regionally-elected representatives. Congressional elections are also held every four years. The distribution of power in Congress is in the hands of the two traditional parties. Currently the president is Alvaro Uribe of the Liberal Party, who was elected in February 2002.

Both parties have always been multi-class institutions, and both have been dominated by local politicians, whether merchants, landowners, or professionals. Traditionally, the Liberal Party has tended to have more support in urban areas while the Conservative Party has a stronger support base in the countryside, with regional differences. However, with increased urbanization and social dislocation in recent decades, these distinctions have become much less relevant.

Colombia's current Constitution, approved in 1991, introduced important and progressive reforms, including curbing powers of the executive, providing legal guarantees for individuals and minorities, and curtailing the military's power in issues of public order. All political offices were made subject to elections and the two main parties' stranglehold on power was loosened.

Websites:

1.3 Culture

Colombia has a diverse ethnic make-up with peoples of indigenous Indian, Spanish, and African origins. Some 60 per cent of the population is classified as mestizo (mixed race), 20 per cent of European origin, and 18 per cent of African origin. About 2 per cent of the population are classified as originating from one of the indigenous communities. The indigenous population has declined dramatically since the Spanish Conquest through a combination of war, disease, ill-treatment, and intermarriage. Currently, there are some eighty-two distinct ethnic groups in Colombia, numbering some 800,000 people in total. The only groups of highland Indians remaining in substantial numbers are the Páez and Guambiano Indians in the region of Cauca and Nariño, south of Cali. Other Indian regions include the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the Guajira peninsula.

Most of Colombia's black population lives on the Caribbean and Pacific coasts. Many of these are descendants of slaves originally brought from Africa to work in the mines. Many escaped slavery to form free communities, although others were not freed until slavery was abolished in 1851. There are approximately 2 million black people in Colombia. Despite their constitutional protection, they have increasingly been forced further into the mountains by the slash and burn methods employed by *colonos* (colonizers), as well as by the activities of those exploring for oil and minerals.

Colombia's official language is Spanish, but many indigenous languages are also spoken. The principal religion is Roman Catholic although there are also large numbers of Protestant evangelicals.

1.4 Geography, society, and economy

Colombia is the fourth largest country in Latin America and has the third highest population, at some 41 million. It has a GDP of about US\$90 billion. Colombia has a large and relatively stable economy. It was the only country in Latin America to experience continuous economic growth during the 1980s. However, in recent years Colombia has been enduring a deep and prolonged recession. It has experienced massive urbanization in recent decades, and some 75 per cent of the country's population currently live in urban areas. The capital, Bogotá, has a population of around 6 million (1996), and is politically and culturally the most important city in the country. It has expanded dramatically in recent decades as a consequence of migration, both economic and forced. Lawless shanty towns have sprawled upwards and outwards on the slopes surrounding Bogotá, and comprise some three-quarters of the city's population. All this has been damaging environmentally, destroying the trees and severely polluting the river.

Colombia's landscape and climate vary greatly from region to region. The country is heavily defined by three roughly parallel mountain ranges: the western, central, and eastern *cordilleras* of the Andes. This geography has made regionalism a powerful force in Colombia. A number of cities have grown into important focal points for the

region surrounding them. Many displaced people eventually end up in these cities. This is particularly the case in Bogotá as well as Medellín, the country's second largest city, located high in the Antioquia mountains.

Colombia has substantial oil reserves and is also a major producer of gold, silver, emeralds, platinum, and coal. Its other main exports are coffee, bananas, cut flowers, chemicals, cotton products, sugar, and livestock. Most of the coffee crop is grown in the temperate valleys around the centre of the *cordilleras*. The valley of the Cauca in the south-west of the country is one of its richest agricultural and sugar-producing regions. The tropical Caribbean coastal region is mainly used for cattle ranching, with banana production dominating Urabá in the north-west. To the east of the *cordilleras*, the *llanos* provide the main oil-producing region. The massive jungle areas to the south became economically important with the emergence of the cocaine trade.

Health care has improved in recent decades but the differences between urban and rural areas are marked. Rural areas suffer from a lack of sanitation, access to safe water, and basic health care, and an incapacity to deal with diseases endemic in some areas, such as cerebral malaria and leishmaniasis.

Infant mortality rates have fallen from 74 per 1,000 live births in 1970 to 24 per 1,000 live births in 1997. The average number of children born per woman fell from 5.3 to 2.8 during the same time period. Average life expectancy in 1990 was 70 years compared with 57 years in 1960, and over 40 per cent of the population is under 18 years of age. However, life expectancy is significantly affected by violence. In 1995, 92 per cent of violent deaths were among males and the life expectancy of men was only 66 years compared with 72 years for women (EIU 2001a).

Over 90 per cent of the population is literate, and in 1997 Colombians had received an average of seven years of schooling. However, there are large differences between urban and rural areas. In the countryside only three-quarters of children receive primary education and only a third any secondary education. In 1995 some 42 per cent of the country's children did not attend school after the age of 10.

Websites:

Colombia Background Note, April 2002, US Department of State
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/bgn/index.cfm?docid=1831>

CIA World Factbook 2002
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/co.html>

Country Overview, Project Counselling Service
<http://www.infotext.org/pcs/country/index.htm>

2. Causes and consequences

2.1 Conflict-induced displacement

Internationally, Colombia is often associated predominantly with violence and illicit drugs. But this has not always been the case. The causes of the high levels of violence in Colombia are complex. The violence has distinct regional characteristics, has a

number of different causes, and has occurred in waves over recent decades. At the root of the conflict are the long-standing, huge disparities in the distribution of land and wealth, a political and social oligarchy based on 'clientism', a government and established institutions which are weak and ineffective, and an absence of institutional authority in many rural areas. Problems are perpetuated by the decline in the efficacy of the judiciary and increased impunity.

2.1.1 Political violence

During the past 10 years, there have been over 300,000 violent deaths in Colombia, of which about 10 per cent were the result of political violence. But of these politically motivated killings, on average only 1,000 of the victims each year were combatants, compared with 2,000–3,000 civilians. As well as a struggle over land, political violence in Colombia is a struggle over the hearts and minds of the civilian population. The scale of killings tends to peak around political events, such as elections.

According to one report (GAD 1999), during the period 1996–8, an average of 60–65 people died due to violent causes every day. Of these, ten were due to social and political violence (five were summary executions, one a 'social cleansing' killing, one a person's 'disappearance' and three the direct result of armed conflict). This figure had remained more or less constant throughout the preceding decade.

Colombia also has the highest rate of kidnappings, or hostage taking, in the world. Many of these are carried out by the guerrillas in order to create revenue, although they deny any involvement in such activities. But criminal gangs are also responsible for kidnappings. The vast majority of those taken are Colombian nationals. As the rate of kidnappings has increased, easier targets such as children have become more frequent victims, while the number of kidnappings of well-protected wealthy people has dropped. Many kidnappings go unreported and are resolved without the involvement of the authorities, thus failing to feature in official statistics.

According to the Ministry of Defence in Colombia, 1,777 people were killed in combat in 2000. But the Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ), a human rights NGO, claims that 6,067 people were killed as a result of 'socio-political violence' in the twelve months up to September 2000, which is a 50 per cent increase on the previous twelve months (*The Economist* 2001). The CCJ claims that the paramilitaries were responsible for 49 per cent of non-combatant killings, compared with the 11 per cent carried out by the guerrillas. Smaller numbers of killings were carried out by agents of the state. However, it has been widely claimed that many of the paramilitary killings were carried out with either the participation or active non-interference of security forces, particularly the army (US Department of State 1999).

Certain professions are particularly dangerous in Colombia and increase the likelihood of being targeted for killing or displacement by one of the armed groups. These include human rights defenders, politicians, unionists, community leaders, and, increasingly, journalists. But store owners, teachers, and community workers may also be targeted because of their regular contact with those perceived as adversaries by one side in the conflict. Sometimes a whole village or town may be collectively condemned as sympathizing with an opposing side, and forced to flee.

Massacres have had a dramatic impact upon the level of displacement. In one blow, a massacre eliminates those close or perceived to be close to an opposing side, punishing family and community members for the alleged actions of individuals. Massacres promote terror among survivors, neighbours to the site, and all those who hear about them. These survivors and witnesses usually feel they have no choice but to flee.

Forced ‘disappearances’ occur when state agencies or their allies deny custody or conceal the fate or whereabouts of persons who have been deprived of their liberty. Forced disappearance is often assumed to be followed by extra-judicial execution and the secret disposal of a body. This has a particularly traumatic impact upon the surviving family, friends, and colleagues, who can never be sure of the person’s fate or what kind of suffering they have undergone, and are unable to mourn or organize a burial in a traditional manner.

Websites:

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, US Department of State - 2001
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/wha/8326.htm>

2.1.2 Guerrillas

The main guerrilla groups in Colombia during the 1970s were:

Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), FARC

Ejército Popular de Liberación (Popular Liberation Army), EPL

Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army), ELN

Movimiento 19 de Abril (19 April Movement), M-19

Quintín Lame

Partido Revolucionario de Los Trabajadores (Revolutionary Workers’ Party), PRT

During the 1980s and 1990s, the guerrillas represented a force of law and order in some areas under their control, albeit an undemocratic and self-appointed one. These areas tended to be ones neglected by the government authorities and formerly controlled by abusive landowners, and the people were thus willing to offer the guerrillas a degree of public support. However, like the paramilitaries, the guerrillas have increasingly targeted civilians; in particular locally elected officials, civic leaders, business owners, peasants, and teachers. All of these groups, except the ELN, EPL, and FARC, have subsequently given up their armed struggle and joined the political system through peace agreements and amnesties.

FARC

The *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC) are the oldest and most powerful group still active in Colombia. They originated in the 1950s during the period known as *La Violencia*. The FARC also calls themselves FARC-People’s Army (*Ejército del Pueblo*, FARC-EP). Initially a loose association of peasant self-defence groups, they became increasingly associated with the Communist Party and declared themselves a revolutionary army in 1964. Led by Manuel Marulanda Vélez or *Tirofijo* (‘Sure Shot’), FARC are present throughout Colombia, but are particularly strong in the departments of Caquetá,

Putumayo, and Guaviare. Today they are estimated to number some 15,000 combatants. Their military structure is based on that of the counter-insurgency forces of the army, and there is a tight and highly centralized system of command. FARC use a variety of illegal activities to fund their participation in armed conflict, particularly the trade of narcotics and kidnapping. They also levy a 'war tax' on commercial enterprises and narco-traffickers, as well as peasants, under threat of violence or damage to property.

According to human rights groups, FARC forces have been linked to gross human rights violations including massacres, killings, torture, kidnapping, and hostage taking. FARC have targeted mayors, senators, town councillors, former EPL combatants, paramilitaries and anyone suspected of supporting them, as well as members of the security forces. FARC also hold so-called 'popular trials' for civilians accused of misdeeds such as rape, theft, spousal abuse, or failure to pay a 'war tax'. Such trials are generally thought to be carried out without due procedure and process.

UC-ELN

The *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army, ELN) emerged in the Middle Magdalena region in 1964, comprising of guerrillas active during the period of *La Violencia*. Having being almost wiped out by an army offensive in 1973, the ELN have re-established themselves to become the second most significant guerrilla movement in Colombia. In 1987 the ELN merged with a smaller leftist insurgency and added *Unión Camilista* (UC) to their name, although they are often still referred to as the ELN. The UC-ELN are currently thought to have about 8,000 combatants in their ranks.

Regionally, the UC-ELN are concentrated in the Middle Magdalena region, southern Bolívar, Narino, Cauca, Valle, and the Colombian departments bordering Venezuela. Although ruled by a national leadership, the military unit commanders have a significant amount of latitude. The UC-ELN have espoused the importance of respecting international humanitarian law to a larger degree than other guerrilla groups or the paramilitaries. However, the UC-ELN have been linked to abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law. The ELN engage in killings, hostage taking, torture, and extorting 'war taxes'. The UC-ELN are particularly noted for bombing oil pipelines as an expression of their political opposition to the activities of multinational corporations in Colombia.

EPL

The *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (Popular Liberation Army, EPL) were the only major guerrilla group in Colombia espousing a Maoist political ideology, and, as such, they endorsed the concept of a prolonged popular war. Beginning their insurrection in 1967, the EPL's first military operations were in the department of Córdoba, on the Caribbean coast. By 1990 the EPL had been severely weakened by internal divisions and as a result of attacks by the army in collaboration with paramilitaries. Over 2,000 combatants accepted a government amnesty in 1991, and some joined a new political party called *Esperanza, Paz y Libertad* (Hope, Peace, and Liberty).

Although the EPL are smaller than the other two guerrilla groups, a single faction of

the EPL does continue to exist, retaining a presence of fewer than 1,000 combatants in Córdoba and the regions of Urabá and Magdalena Medio. Some former members of EPL have subsequently defected to the paramilitaries. (Although it would seem to represent a huge ideological shift, the defecting of combatants from the paramilitaries to the guerrillas, or vice-versa, does occur occasionally) Among the human rights abuses of which the EPL have been accused are the political killings of their own former members. Like FARC and the UC-ELN, the EPL depend upon kidnapping for revenue.

Websites:

ELN

<http://www.web.net/eln/>

FARC

<http://burn.ucsd.edu/~farc-ep/>

<http://www.resistencianacional.org/principalx.html>

2.1.3 Armed forces

The Colombian armed forces comprise the army (121,000 troops), navy (18,000), air force (7,3000), and police. Legally the army, navy, and air force are all under the command of the president. The minister of defence in Colombia must be a civilian and is accountable to Congress. In practice, the army has a high degree of autonomy, and decisions tend to be made by military commanders. The army's five divisions are arranged into twenty-four brigades, which are in turn divided into 154 battalions, two regional 'operative commands', and sixteen specialized anti-extortion units with a combined military-police staff. In addition, Colombia has three mobile brigades and specialized counter-insurgency units. Most recently, an anti-narcotics unit has been established. All Colombian males are required to serve a minimum of eighteen months' military service.

Up until 1991 Colombia had been in a permanent state of emergency for 36 of the previous forty-four years, with the armed forces being afforded strong powers. The 1991 Constitution outlined several different types of emergency that could be introduced by the government, but it prohibited the suspension of human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, on many occasions since then, the authorities have ignored these provisions and ruled by decree. Notably, in 1995 the Colombian government introduced a 'state of internal commotion' (decree 2027 of 1985) which afforded governors and mayors the power to evacuate civilians. As a result of a further decree in 1996, which authorized the creation of 'special public order zones', military forces were given special powers to declare curfews and restrict and monitor civilian movements in and out of the zone (Cohen and Deng 1998a).

There is a long-documented history of Colombian forces' involvement in gross human rights abuses, including extra-judicial execution, forced disappearance, forced displacement, beatings, and torture. Such actions have been carried out with almost complete impunity. Although the level of abuses by the armed forces has declined in recent years, Colombian and international NGOs and academics claim that they have assisted in, or at least not tried to prevent, an increase in paramilitary participation in similar abuses. Such links between the armed forces and the paramilitaries have also

been recognized by the US Department of State in its annual human rights country reports.

Websites:

Colombian Army

<http://www.ejercito.mil.co/>

2.1.4 National police

Established in 1891, Colombia's National Police were incorporated into the armed forces during the period known as *La Violencia*, between 1948 and 1958. Under the command of the military head of the armed forces, the police are responsible for maintaining public order. Some 103,000 police officers are present in over 90 per cent of the country's municipalities (HRW 1998a). Corruption and abuses of power up until the mid-1990s caused a loss of credibility and public confidence in the police. One particularly unpleasant form of violence prevalent in Colombia's urban areas is that of so-called 'social cleansing' (Ordoñez 1995, Schwartz 1995–6). However, they are widely regarded as having significantly improved their human rights record since then. The police and security agent (*Departamento Adiministrativo de Seguridad Republica*, DAS) have been linked to much of the urban displacement that takes place in Colombia.

Websites:

Colombian Police

<http://www.policia.gov.co/inicio.htm>

Departamento Adiministrativo de Seguridad Republica (DAS)

<http://www.das.gov.co/>

2.1.5 CONVIVIRs

In 1994 the Colombian government established the *Servicios de Vigilancia y Deguridad Privada* (Special Vigilance and Private Security Services), later renamed CONVIVIR. These groups consist of civilians who seek a licence from the government to provide their own local security in areas of combat where the government feels it cannot guarantee public safety. Unlike paramilitary groups, which were outlawed in 1991, CONVIVIRs are legal and enjoy government support. Uniquely, they are permitted to operate without wearing uniforms or any kind of insignia to identify them. CONVIVIRs have been controversial since they were first established, though they have received widespread support from security forces and the business sector. The government is responsible for ensuring that they are well scrutinized and that people with criminal records are not among their ranks. They have been criticized by human rights groups for blurring the distinction between civilians and combatants and thus putting civilians at increased risk of attack (HRW 1998a). They have been linked with serious human rights abuses, including killings and torture, which have largely gone uninvestigated and unpunished by the authorities. Some CONVIVIRs have also been accused of recruiting from, or collaborating with, paramilitary groups.

Websites

Exodo Report on the Involvement of CONVIVIRs in Displacement

2.1.6 Paramilitaries

The origins of the paramilitary groups in Colombia today lie with *Muerte a Secuestradores* (Death to Kidnappers, MAS), an alliance established in the 1980s between the Colombian military, police, businessmen, and ranchers to combat guerrillas. However, from its early days MAS was linked to the political killings of elected officials, farmers, and community leaders (HRW 1998a).

In the mid-1980s, Carlos Castano and his brother Fidel formed their own paramilitary army, known as *Los Tangueros*. They have been blamed for the massacre of civilians, including forty-two people in the Urabá town of Pueblo Ballo in 1990, and huge levels of forced displacement. It has been claimed that land abandoned by those fleeing was purchased inexpensively by the same traffickers-turned-landowners funding the Castano army. After one massacre by paramilitaries and their army patron in 1989, which included the killing of two judges and ten government investigators, the government of Virgilio Barco introduced Decree 1194, establishing criminal penalties for civilians and members of the armed forces who recruit, train, promote, finance, organize, lead, or belong to paramilitary groups. However, neither of the Castano brothers has ever been arrested despite numerous convictions and outstanding warrants for their arrests. In the early 1990s the Castanos reactivated their private army as the Peasant Self-Defence Group of Córdoba and Urabá (*Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá*, ACCU) in an attempt to defeat the guerrillas at a national level. Under the leadership of Carlos Castano, the ACCU quickly became the country's largest and most organized paramilitary group.

Since 1997 seven paramilitary groups have coordinated their activities under a nationwide umbrella group, the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (the United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia, AUC), which is also led by Carlos Castano. Since 1995, paramilitaries have been responsible for more displacement than any of the other armed groups in Colombia's conflict. There has been much criticism, both in Colombia and internationally, concerning links, assistance, and collaboration between the paramilitaries and the armed forces. However, these claims of association have been denied by both sides. Colombian and international human rights organizations, as well as the US Department of State, have frequently claimed that evidence exists for the armed forces' participation, or 'active non-intervention', in the operations of the paramilitaries.

The paramilitaries justify their illegal military activities by claiming that they are fighting like with like – they target the guerrillas by copying their combat tactics. The paramilitaries also claim that international humanitarian law does not apply to guerrillas or to those they suspect of supporting them, and effectively, anyone living or working in areas where guerrillas are present is a target. Like the guerrillas, the paramilitaries have strong links with the narco-trafficking industry, and it is alleged that the paramilitaries depopulate areas for the benefit of their own supporters and wealthy patrons. This depopulation usually comes at the expense of poor peasants, who are forced to sell their land at a fraction of its market value, or simply to vacate it at gunpoint. This process of taking land from the poor and giving it to rich landowners has been described as 'agrarian counter-reform' (USCR 1998).

Websites:

Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)

<http://www.colombialibre.org/>

2.1.7 Internally displaced people

The causes of displacement in Colombia are numerous, complex, and often interrelated. Many of those displaced have fled as a direct result of the armed conflict. Chief among the causes of forced displacement are violations in human rights and international humanitarian law, perpetrated by all armed actors in the conflict. Members of a family or community may be targeted and others warned implicitly or explicitly to leave the area. Others may flee to avoid forced recruitment to one of the armed groups.

Other factors influencing displacement are inequitable land-ownership, the narco-trafficking industry, and the alliance of cattle ranchers and other groups with paramilitaries in order to protect their economic interests. In the 1980s most displacement was perpetrated by the guerrillas and the army, but subsequently, while the guerrillas' participation has continued unabated, the paramilitaries have played a much larger role as the army's has diminished.

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country is a hotly contested issue in Colombia and estimates vary widely. By the end of 2001, human rights organizations in Colombia were estimating that over 2 million people in the country were internally displaced. According to the USCR (2002), an estimated 2.45 million Colombians were displaced by the end of 2001, including 342,000 who became displaced during the year. At the other end of the spectrum, Colombian government sources put the figure at around 525,000. The government statistics only include those that have been displaced since the 1995 (when the registration system was introduced), whereas the figures from many NGOs and the Catholic Church usually include those displaced since 1985. Many IDPs, fearing that they may be targeted *because* of the label, fail to register. USCR estimate that 40 per cent of the country's 1,069 municipalities experienced the forced expulsion of a proportion of their population during the three years leading up to 2000. This has increased subsequently, with the USCR estimating that almost 1,000 municipalities experiencing armed raids by guerrillas and/or paramilitaries during 2001 (USCR 2002). Although almost all departments of the country have now been affected by political violence and forced migration, some regions have been particularly affected, notably Los Llanos, Cordoba, Bolivar, Urabá, Magdalena Medio, Norte Santander, Caqueta, Sucre, and Chocó. The vast majority have moved to urban centres.

Forced migration, as with massacres, torture, summary executions, and 'disappearing' people, is increasingly a tactic of war used primarily against civilians/non-combatants by all sides in the conflict. Those who are perceived by one side to be supporting or sympathizing with an opposing one, however tacitly, are targeted.

In the late 1990s, combatants began targeting leaders of displaced communities, accusing them of either belonging to an opposing side or arranging displacements as part of a military manoeuvre. Shelters for the displaced and groups working with

them have also come under attack, particularly from paramilitary groups. In addition to living in conditions of impoverishment, IDPs also live in fear of their lives. Some IDPs have been displaced repeatedly.

While some of the professionals, elected officials, and businesspeople forced to flee have the resources to re-establish themselves elsewhere, most IDPs are poor farmers who lost everything when they fled. Prior to 1996 most of the internally displaced fled as individuals or families, but since then there has been a marked increase in the displacement of entire villages or towns.

Some IDPs receive government assistance during the first 90 days of their displacement. After this the authorities do not tend to provide any further assistance, claiming that they have insufficient resources. Some NGOs and international organizations provide assistance to many IDPs who would otherwise receive none, but this still only benefits a minority of those who are displaced. Despite the government's legal obligations, there is a massive shortfall in the provision of compensation or assistance in acquiring alternative land.

A large proportion of the population in rural and urban areas is poor. Those displaced share poverty with local populations. The immediate needs of the IDPs tend to be shelter, security, food, and clean water. In the medium to long term, their needs extend to secure housing, basic services, employment opportunities, access to education, and safety from further displacement.

Most IDPs have joined the swelling slums surrounding Colombia's towns and cities. They live in fear and miserable poverty, usually receiving no assistance. Some have taken shelter in the few camps or settlements that exist. Like the slums, these are also overcrowded and without access to basic health care, sanitation, food, or education. Children are at particular risk of chronic diarrhoea, dehydration, and hepatitis.

Websites:

Global IDP Project, Norwegian Refugee Council

<http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/wCountries/Colombia>

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):

Internal Displacement Unit

<http://www.reliefweb.int/idp/partners/global.htm>

Briefing on Displacement, Theme Group on Displacement

<http://www.disaster.info.desastres.net/desplazados/informes/gtd/ene2001/defaulten.htm>

US Committee for Refugees (USCR)

<http://www.refugees.org/world/countryindex/colombia.htm>

Red de Solidaridad Social (Joint Technical Unit), Government of Colombia

<http://www.red.gov.co/>

http://www.red.gov.co/DesplazamientoForzado/Poblaciones_Territ/MagnitudDespl/magnituddespl.html

Reply of the Government of Colombia on UN figures
[http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2001.139.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2001.139.En?OpenDocument)

2.1.8 Legal framework

Throughout the 1990s and subsequently, national and international human rights organizations have been monitoring and reporting grave and systematic human rights violations by all sides in the conflict. This is despite the fact that Colombia is a signatory to all the major instruments of humanitarian and human rights law, and that it has had, since 1991, perhaps one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. In addition to UN conventions and protocols, Colombia is bound by such international treaties as the American Convention on Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture.

Neither the 1951 UN Refugee Convention nor the 1967 Protocol apply to the internally displaced in Colombia, since they have not crossed an international border. However, these legal instruments do apply to those Colombians who have fled to one of Colombia's five neighbouring countries, North America, or member countries of the European Union, all of whom have ratified the 1951 Convention and/or the 1967 Protocol. They also apply to those seeking refuge in Colombia, since it is a signatory.

Several instruments of international humanitarian law, as well as domestic legislation in Colombia, do specifically address the plight of internally displaced people. In 1963 Colombia ratified the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. Article 3, which is common to the four Geneva Conventions, relates specifically to internal armed conflicts and imposes fixed legal obligations on warring parties to ensure humane treatment of persons not or no longer participating in hostilities.

Of particular importance is Protocol II Additional to the Geneva Conventions, adopted in 1977, and which came into effect in Colombia in 1996. Article 17 of Protocol II specifically prohibits forced migration. Unless non-combatants are forced to move for reasons of their own safety or for a clear military imperative, any displacement related to a conflict is a violation. Unlawful forced displacement may occur as a result of other violations such as extra-judicial executions, disappearances, massacres, death threats, and the use of torture. Protocol II also serves to protect any displaced civilians from the harm produced by military operations. All displaced civilians should be provided with satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, medical attention, safety, and nutrition. There have been instances reported in Colombia where government forces have compelled or coerced IDPs to return to their communities despite being unable to guarantee their security, in violation of Article 17 of Protocol II (HRW 1998a).

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are of great relevance and importance to IDPs in Colombia, and some of their provisions have been incorporated into Colombia's domestic policies. The Guiding Principles are a body of principles

developed under the direction of the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, Francis Deng. These wide-ranging guidelines are based upon and consistent with international human rights law, humanitarian law, and refugee law.

In 1995, under pressure from the church and NGOs, the government recognized the scale of the problem of IDPs in Colombia, and announced Law 387 and the National Programme for Integrated Attention to the Population Displaced by Violence. Of particular importance to this process were the findings of the Colombian Conference of Bishops Report on Violence and Internal Forced Displacement and those of the *Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento* or Consultation for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES), which identified political violence as the main cause of displacement. Law 387 was finally adopted in 1997, recognizing the right of displaced persons to humanitarian aid in emergencies. The law provided IDPs with access to government income-generation projects, agro-reform and rural development schemes, health and education projects, as well as housing and employment programmes. The post of presidential counsellor for the displaced (*Consejería Presidencial para Desplazados*) was also introduced. However, Law 387 focuses on emergency aid to those already displaced and refers little to issues of prevention and sanction. Despite the promised provisions of Law 387, government measures for assisting IDPs have been criticized by agencies for being under-funded and poorly coordinated.

Fear often causes IDPs to choose anonymity over being labelled as displaced persons, and this decision leaves them unable to access government assistance and services. The authorities' registration system has been criticized by national and international NGOs because the information gathered might be used against a person by one or more armed groups.

The Office of the Presidential Adviser for Human Rights was established in 1987 to support the promotion and protection of human rights through collaboration with NGOs, including those working on internal displacement. In 1997 a Presidential Advisory for the Displaced was also created.

The Ombudsman's Office (*Defensoría del Pueblo*) acts as a kind of intermediary body between the state and the citizen. It has worked effectively in collaboration with NGOs in providing advice to victims of the conflict.

The 1991 Constitution reformed the judiciary with the introduction of the independent Office of the Prosecutor General (*Fiscalía*). This body was responsible for uncovering drug corruption at the highest level of government, including that of the president, during the administration of Ernesto Samper (1994–8).

The Attorney-General's Office (*Procurador General*) is another independent body which investigates and seeks disciplinary action against public officials who violate the law. However, this body has been plagued by corruption and efforts to reduce its prosecutorial powers, and thus has proved less effective in tackling human rights abuses than it might have been.

Despite these numerous legal instruments and government initiatives, the scale of human rights abuses being committed in Colombia continues to be facilitated with pervasive impunity. According to the Colombian government, 97–99.5 per cent of all crimes go unpunished, and an estimated 74 per cent of all crimes are not reported to the authorities (Cohen and Deng 1998a).

Websites:

1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Protocols, ICRC
<http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/WebCONVFULL?OpenView>

1951 UN Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, UNHCR
http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+AwwBmeJAIS_www3wwwwwwwhFqA72ZR0gRfZNtFqrpGdBnqBAFqA72ZR0gRfZNcFq1WK9WagdDVnDBodDaBnLBDzmxwwwwww/open doc.pdf

American Convention on Human Rights, OAS
<http://www.cidh.oas.org/B per centC3 per centA1sicos/basic3.htm>

Cartagena Declaration, UNHCR
<http://www.asylumlaw.org/docs/international/CentralAmerica.PDF>

Departamento Nacional de Planeación (DNP)
<http://www.dnp.gov.co/>

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, OCHA
http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/pub/idp_gp/idp.html

Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture
<http://www.cidh.oas.org/B per centC3 per centA1sicos/basic9.htm>

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, OHCHR
http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm

Law 387, Theme Group on Displacement
<http://www.disaster.info.desastres.net/desplazados/displaced.htm>

Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis Deng, Submitted Pursuant to Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1993/95. Profiles in Displacement: Colombia
[http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.1995.50.Add.1.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.1995.50.Add.1.En?Opendocument)

Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons Submitted in Accordance with Commission Resolution 1999/47, Profiles in Displacement: Follow-up Mission to Colombia
[http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/6d5358107a11e85a802568ac003ea6b6/\\$FILE/G0010059.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/6d5358107a11e85a802568ac003ea6b6/$FILE/G0010059.pdf)

Reports and Treaties on Human Rights by UN
<http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord2000/vol4/colombia.htm>

Summary Report of the Workshop on Implementing the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, held in Bogotá, Colombia, from 27 to 29 May 1999
<http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/TestFrame/2646932bdd246ac0802568630060001a?Opendocument>

Workshop on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the National IDP Legislation in Colombia
http://www.idpproject.org/pdf_files/Colombia_workshop.pdf

Law, Social Justice and Global Government: Legal Services to the Displaced Population of Colombia
<http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/global/issue/2001-1/mullerhoff2.html>

2.1.9 Peace process

Peace dialogues between the government and the guerrillas were initiated in 1991 with the introduction of the National Strategy against Violence. However, these talks soon broke down without any major achievements. The current peace process was formally established on 6 May 1999, when FARC and the government officially signed the agreement of a 'Common Agenda for Change towards a New Colombia'. This agenda for peace comprised twelve basic points. These included a commitment to reach a negotiated political settlement; introduce integral agrarian reform; combat drug-trafficking and corruption; implement political reform; restructure the judicial system; and implement the application of international humanitarian law. Specific solutions for resolving the plight of IDPs were not set out in the document.

The peace process broke down under former president, Andreas Pastrana, following fierce criticism for allowing FARC, the largest of the country's two left-wing rebel groups, to continue to control a demilitarized zone, about the size of Switzerland, in the south of the country, while seeming to operate as usual. The zone acts as a haven for the guerrillas, where peace talks can be held. Critics claimed that FARC used the area to train recruits, to detain hostages, and as a base from which to launch military offensives. The government had also considered giving the ELN, the second largest guerrilla group, their own demilitarized zone in the north of the country. However, with the breakdown of negotiations, the zone was reoccupied by the army in February 2002.

The governments of Canada, Cuba, Spain, France, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and Venezuela had supported the negotiations between the government and FARC. Meanwhile, moves by the government and the ELN toward peace talks were encouraged by Germany, Canada, Japan, Portugal, Sweden, Cuba, Spain, France, Norway, and Switzerland. The AUC paramilitaries also wish to participate in peace talks, but this proposal has been repeatedly rejected as unacceptable by the guerrillas.

Websites:

Colombia Project, Center for International Policy

<http://www.ciponline.org/colombia/>

Colombia's Human Rights Certification, January 2001 (AI/HRW/WOLA)
http://www.wola.org/colombia_adv_certification_jointstatement_0101.htm

NACLA

http://www.nacla.org/art_display.php?art=526

2.1.10 Illicit drugs

For the past two decades, Colombia has been the world's largest supplier of cocaine. Its role used to be limited to that of processing coca, the raw material of cocaine, and exporting the product to its principal markets, the USA and Europe. But during the 1990s, Colombia surpassed Bolivia and Peru as the largest grower of coca plants, marking its involvement in every stage of production. The growth of this illegal but highly lucrative industry has effected Colombian society at many levels. Drugs have permeated all levels of economic, political, and social life in Colombia, and all armed groups engaged in the conflict have been accused of having links to the narcotics industry. It provides a huge source of revenue for the guerrillas and the paramilitaries, as well as employment for urban youth, particularly as *sicarios* (hired killers). As the major supplier of cocaine, and increasingly heroin, to the USA, that country's foreign policy towards Colombia has long been driven by its 'war on drugs'. This has involved extensive funding and assistance for crop eradication programmes, and more recently military support for counter-guerrilla offensives. While it is clear that the guerrillas are extensively engaged in the production, processing, and trafficking of illicit drugs, so too are the paramilitaries, who are not, however, being targeted to the same extent.

(See Plan Colombia)

Aerial fumigation has been used increasingly in Latin America over the past decade in an attempt to eradicate the production of coca and poppy crops. The idea is to reduce at source the availability of cocaine and heroin on the international market, thus reducing consumption. However, while over 300,000 hectares of coca and poppy fields have been sprayed in Colombia over the past ten years, production has increased threefold over the same period. A factor contributing to this escalation was the dramatic drop in coffee prices at the end of the 1980s, resulting in huge job losses. The land so well suited to the growing of coffee plants worked equally well for coca production. Peasant farmers have also turned to illicit crop production as a result of the loss of land and legal crops caused by their displacement.

Aerial fumigation causes chemical pollution affecting humans, animals, and vegetation. Concerns have also been raised about pollution to the water supply through spraying. While complaints of health problems are common in the weeks following fumigations, US authorities deny there is a link. US companies provide the herbicides used and receive the contracts for fumigation.

It is evident that the fumigation of crops destroys the livelihoods of peasant and indigenous communities, forcing them to migrate, often deeper into the forest. This accelerates deforestation, as the peasants adopt the slash and burn method to plant more illicit crops. Alternatively, peasants flee to urban areas, often living in harsh

conditions without employment, proper shelter, and in poor sanitary conditions. While there are assurances of compensation and assistance in alternative crop production, these tend to be inadequate if available at all.

Under the new administration of President George W. Bush, the USA is proposing to tackle the problem at a more regional level. They propose an increase in aerial spraying, the targeting of planes suspected of being used for trafficking, and an augmentation in the provision of development assistance for alternative crops in Colombia and neighbouring countries. Increased levels of development assistance for Colombia's neighbours are deemed especially necessary so as to prevent a shift in illicit crop production across borders.

Websites:

Colombia Policy Briefs, LAWG

[http://www.colombiapolicy.org/drug per cent20stats.htm](http://www.colombiapolicy.org/drug%20stats.htm)

Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and Its Implications for Regional Stability, Angel Rabasa and Peter Chalk (RAND)

<http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1339/>

Drugs and Democracy Project, Transnational Institute

<http://www.tni.org/drugs/index.htm>

Virtual Truth Commission

<http://www.geocities.com/~virtualtruth/colombia.htm>

2.1.11 Plan Colombia

In 2000 the USA singled out Colombia (together with Indonesia, Nigeria, and Ukraine) as in need of special attention. Not only is Colombia the source of 90 per cent of the cocaine, and much of the heroin, entering the USA, but there is also increasing concern that the conflict could create regional instability. Since the 1980s, unable significantly to reduce the level of drug consumption at home, the USA has concentrated much of its efforts on trying to prevent illegal drugs from entering the country by targeting the points of source.

Assistance from the USA to Colombia has been provided in the form of a large contribution towards Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia aims to expand anti-narcotics activities in southern Colombia, to increase interdiction, and to provide alternative economic development. The USA has provided some \$1.3 billion in aid (of the \$7.5 billion required in total), earmarked largely for the establishment of three anti-narcotics battalions, trained and equipped by US special forces. Sixty helicopters are also being provided. Bill Clinton, the American president at the time of Plan Colombia's introduction to Congress, waived most of the human rights conditions normally attached to the provision of such aid. In February 2001 President George W Bush met with President Andreas Pastrana and gave his backing to the plan. Funds for other, non-military provisions of Plan Colombia, such as assistance to displaced people and human rights education programmes, have not materialized. The US had hoped that the EU would fund these activities, but the EU decided that it wanted to play no role in the Plan.

Based in Putumayo, the troops aim to eradicate some 6,000 square kilometres of coca, the raw material of cocaine, through aerial fumigation. After destroying the coca crop, the plan promises the implementation of social and economic reform in the region. But much of the income from the lucrative drug trade benefits both right-wing paramilitaries and left-wing guerrillas. Putumayo is a stronghold of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the larger of the county's two left-wing rebel groups, and it has announced that it will resist the eradication efforts. The region is mostly jungle and well suited to guerrilla warfare.

Many human rights organizations, both inside Colombia and internationally, have condemned Plan Colombia. Amnesty International has criticized its drug-focused analysis, which ignores the state's own current and historic responsibilities for, and the deep-rooted causes of, the conflict and the human rights crisis. Along with other human rights organizations, Amnesty International points to overwhelming evidence of the right-wing paramilitary groups' widespread involvement in gross and systematic human rights violations, and the tacit or active support of army personnel which will further escalate the conflict.

Some of Colombia's neighbouring countries have also criticized Plan Colombia and have expressed concern that the civil war could spill over their borders. In addition, there is concern in the USA that the country's increased involvement in Colombia could lead to another Vietnam-style conflict. The plan has also been criticized by those who believe that while the initiative will barely dent FARC's finances, it will devastate those of peasant farmers. Concerns about public health and environmental damage as a result of the fumigation have also been raised.

In the plan, the 'Push into Southern Colombia Growing Areas' programme reserves \$31 million in aid for the 10,000 people it is estimated will be displaced as a result of the eradication efforts. Each will receive a ninety-day emergency benefits package. Although opinion within Colombia is divided as to the effectiveness of the current eradication programme, US authorities have insisted it must continue if they are to support the peace process.

Websites:

American Association of Jurists

<http://www.aaj.org.br/planc.htm>

Background Notes: Colombia, March 1998, US Department of State

http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/colombia_0398_bgn.html

Centre Europe – Tiers Monde (CETIM)

<http://www.cetim.ch/2001/01FC09WA.htm>

Derechos Human Rights

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/doc/plan/>

Foreign Policy in Focus

<http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/>

Government of Colombia
<http://www.presidencia.gov.co/webpresi/index2.htm>

Institute for Policy Studies
<http://www.ips-dc.org/>

US Defence and Security in Latin America, LAWG
<http://www.ciponline.org/facts/co.htm>

US Department of State 2000 Country Report on Colombia
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/wha/index.cfm?docid=741>

US Support for Plan Colombia, US Department of State
<http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/colombia/>

Virtual Truth Commission
<http://www.geocities.com/~virtualtruth/colombia.htm>

2.2 Disaster-induced displacement

During the 1990s Colombia was victim to volcanic eruptions, severe earthquakes, floods, landslides, and forest fires. As a result, tens of thousands were killed and many more displaced. Such calamities were exacerbated by the armed conflict and poverty. Displaced people, living as they often do in cramped conditions on hillsides, in shanty towns, and in poor quality housing, are at particular risk.

Colombia experiences more earthquakes and volcanic eruptions than most countries, particularly in its Andean regions. These are the result of geological factors, such as the Nazca plate which stretches from the northern region of the country to Central America's Pacific Rim fault, and the mountain ranges that drop down to the Caribbean sea.

Colombia suffered ten serious earthquakes during the twenty-first century. In 1985, 23,000 people died as a result of a volcanic eruption in the city of Armero, and many more were made homeless. Currently, there are some sixteen active volcanoes in Colombia. Two significant cities – Manizales and Pasto – are situated close to active volcanoes.

In January 1999 a major earthquake struck western Colombia near the city of Armenia. The epicentre was located approximately 20 kilometres from the city of Armenia in the department of Quindío and 50 kilometres from the city of Pereira in the department of Risaralda. Some 1,200 people were killed and over 4,700 residents were injured. The earthquake affected more than 425,000 people, and rendered 150,000 inhabitants homeless. The Colombian government declared twenty municipalities to be disaster zones, with more than 45,000 houses destroyed or damaged. An estimated 65 per cent of all buildings in Armenia and Calarcá were destroyed or damaged beyond repair.

Colombia's lower basins are often affected by floods, which cause large-scale economic and environmental damage. Crops are destroyed and families are forced to flee their homes. Flash floods have resulted in mudslides and avalanches. Suburbs built on steep inclines are at particular risk, as are the regions of Atlantico, Cordoba, and Sucre, which are aggravated by the regional phenomenon *El Niño*.

Disaster preparedness has improved significantly in recent years. Under the supervision of the Interior Ministry, the National System for Prevention and Attention to Disasters (SNPAD) was established to bring together and coordinate the activities and experiences of governmental and non-governmental organizations working on disaster-related issues.

Websites:

Briefing on Displacement, Theme Group on Displacement

http://www.disaster.info.desastres.net/desplazados/estudios/Situacion2001/idpscol_en.htm

Colombian Red Cross

<http://www.crcol.org.co>

Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (CONPES)

<http://www.dnp.gov.co/ArchivosWeb/Conpes/3146.pdf>

Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED)

<http://www.cred.be/emdat/profiles/natural/colombia.htm>

Health and Displacement, Disasters Info

<http://www.disaster.info.desastres.net/desplazados/indexen.htm>

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<http://www.ifrc.org>

Pan-American Health Organization

<http://www.paho.org>

La Red

<http://www.desenredando.org/>

2.3 Development-induced displacement

Much of the displacement in Colombia is resource-based and the civilian population are frequently displaced by armed actors, particularly the paramilitaries, for vested development concerns. People are displaced and involuntarily resettled in Colombia as a result of several types of initiative ostensibly aimed at development, including dams, urban renewal, transportation projects, and national park and protected wildlife projects.

For example, the Urrá 1 dam on the Upper Sinú River in Colombia displaced 12,000 people and also severely affected more than 60,000 fishermen downstream. The Pacific Development Plans, which include highways, roads, inter-oceanic land bridge

and seaports, threaten to displace the Community Organizations of the Choco. The planned extension of the Pan-American Highway through the Darien region linking Colombia to Panama, threatens to displace members of the Choco Indian communities there, comprised of the culturally distinct Embera and Wounaan indigenous groups.

Websites:

International Network on Displacement and Resettlement
<http://www.displacement.net/>

Trade and Environment Databases (TED)
<http://www.american.edu/TED/colspill.htm>

Franciscans and Dominicans for Human Rights
<http://www.fiop.org/doc/99/CM.99.I14.WC.E.html>

British Petroleum – Beyond Petroleum?
<http://www.bpamoco.org.uk/index.htm>

Center for World Indigenous Studies
<http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/Americas/colombia.txt>

York University, Canada
<http://www.liucentre.ubc.ca/iir/conferences/lasa160502/media/bose-full.pdf>

3. Needs and responses

3.1 Colombians in exile

Although most Colombians fleeing violence do not leave the borders of their country, some do cross into neighbouring countries or even go further afield. The countries sharing borders with Colombia (particularly Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela) do not tend to consider Colombians seeking refuge in their countries as refugees, but rather as undocumented immigrants. Many are returned to Colombia, and those who do remain do not usually receive assistance. In 2001, some 80,000–105,000 Colombians were estimated to be living in refugee-like circumstances in these three countries (50,000–75,000 in Venezuela, 30,000 in Ecuador, and 1,100 in Panama), but the numbers are increasing and could be much higher. The numbers fleeing to Central America, particularly Mexico and Costa Rica, dramatically increased towards the end of the 1990s. Costa Rica received a total of 5,500 Colombian asylum seekers during the year 2001. Others flee to the US and Europe. During 2001 some 12,860 Colombians sought asylum outside the region, 7,603 in the US, 3,533 in European countries and 1,627 in Canada (USCR 2002). Every year tens of thousands of Colombians travel to other countries, particularly the US, and remain there once their visas have expired. Visa requirements for Colombians have been stepped up all over the Western Hemisphere and Colombians also now require a transit visa to pass through the USA.

3.1.1 Ecuador

Venezuela and Ecuador both have troops monitoring their shared borders with Colombia, but Ecuador is reported to have a higher acceptance rate of Colombian

asylum seekers. Currently, there are thought to be a few thousand Colombian asylum seekers living in Ecuador, as well as many more who live there without having applied for asylum. Many Colombians who go to Ecuador have fled violence in the Putumayo region of Colombia. Colombians residing in Ecuador tend not to receive much institutional assistance, are prevented from working, and have allegedly endured violations of their civil and political rights.

3.1.2 Panama

Many of those Colombians seeking refuge in Panama have fled from the Chocó region of Colombia and are Afro-Panamanians or indigenous people. Most Colombians fleeing to Panama settle in the Darien, a remote, tropical forest region. Paramilitary forces from Colombia have made military excursions into Panama, allegedly in pursuit of guerrillas who regularly pass in and out of the region. In the past, Panama has been comprehensively criticized for forcibly returning Colombian refugees, in violation of their legal obligations under Article 33 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

3.1.3 Venezuela

Although many Colombians seeking refuge in Venezuela are sent back, thousands have managed to settle there, living amongst more established Colombian communities. At one point, the Venezuelan authorities were repatriating all Colombian *de facto* refugees and even came up with a special term for them: 'internally displaced in transit'. As in Panama, many Colombians in Venezuela try to keep a low profile, living and working as if they were Venezuelan.

3.2 Refugees in Colombia

At the end of 2001 Colombia hosted some 227 people of concern to UNHCR, of which 210 were recognized as refugees (USCR 2002). These included Nicaraguans, Chileans, and Hungarians.

3.3 Vulnerable groups

Most of those killed for political reasons in Colombia are men. Women and children make up most of the internally displaced.

3.3.1 Children

Guerrillas, paramilitaries, and security forces in Colombia have all been accused of routinely and forcibly recruiting children to their ranks (HRW 1998), in violation of Article 4 (3) (c) of Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions, which forbids the recruitment or inclusion in hostilities of children under 15. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child makes similar demands upon the Colombian state, which ratified it in 1991. An optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child raises the minimum age for recruitment and participation in hostilities from 15 to 18. In addition, domestic legislation also protects the rights of the child. Although some children undoubtedly join an armed group by choice, there is strong evidence that others are compelled to do so, although many of the armed groups deny it (HRW 1998). Both boys and girls are recruited. Child soldiers who escape are considered to be deserters and may be subject to on-the-spot execution. Displacement to avoid forced recruitment is a relatively recent and growing phenomenon in Colombia.

Parents may send sons and daughters away, or the entire family unit may flee together.

In 1997 Colombia passed Law 418, which makes boys under the age of 18 exempt from military service in the armed forces. In spite of this, under-18s do continue to serve in the armed forces with parental permission. Although these children are not technically serving in war zones, the distinctions are blurred in the context of Colombia. Children who supposedly only carry out support functions to an armed group are in fact often drawn into a more participatory role. Even if they are not actively engaged in combat, as military personnel children may be considered legitimate targets by an opposing side.

As witnesses to terror and extreme violence, children often suffer psychosocial trauma. Displaced girls, in particular, are vulnerable to rape, sexual exploitation and prostitution. Adolescent boys are often treated as criminals, and have few education or employment opportunities. Criminal activity and violence may appear to be the only avenues open to them.

Many girls work as domestic servants, working long hours for low wages with few, if any, social benefits. Domestic work and prostitution tend to be the only options for impoverished, poorly educated girls in Colombia. According to UNICEF, 55 per cent of the displaced are under 18 years of age and 13 per cent are under 5 (Cohen and Deng, *The Forsaken People*, 1998). In general, children are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, 'social cleansing', prostitution, forced recruitment to one of the armed groups, kidnappings, landmines, and domestic violence.

Websites:

Casa Alianza

<http://www.casa-alianza.org/EN/index-en.shtml>

A Charade of Concern: The Abandonment of Colombia's Forcibly Displaced, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

<http://www.theirc.org/wcrwc/reports/womenscommission-colombiareport.pdf>

Children Displaced by Violence, Derechos

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/desplazados/jov.html>

Save the Children Fund

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/development/reg_pub/country_reports/SAmerica_1999.pdf

Statistics on Displaced Children, Global IDP Database

<http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/1c963eb504904cde41256782007493b8/aaa0ca2349b8731ac125684100344863?OpenDocument>

Unseen Millions: The Catastrophe of Displacement in Colombia. Children and Adolescents at Risk

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

http://www.womenscommission.org/reports/wc_colombia_04.02.pdf

3.3.2 Women

According to a 2001 report by the Women and Armed Conflict Work Table, every fourteen days a Colombian woman is forcibly 'disappeared'. Some 58 per cent of Colombians forced to flee their homes are female and some 39 per cent of households are headed by women. Many of these displaced women are responsible for elderly relatives as well as children. These women are forced to flee under threat of violence, often having lost husbands, fathers, and brothers in massacres and extra-judicial killings. Some 36 per cent of displaced women are heads of households due to changes in the family structure before, during, and after displacement. With no home and no income, they are forced into menial jobs, street vending, prostitution, or begging. Women often find it difficult to obtain the ninety-day assistance available through the ICRC or the Colombian Red Cross and some are not even aware of their entitlements.

Women are the victims of physical, verbal, sexual, and psychological abuse by members of the armed groups. These types of assault are related to women's historical status, one of discrimination and marginalization

Websites:

A Charade of Concern: The Abandonment of Colombia's Forcibly Displaced, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
<http://www.theirc.org/wcrwc/reports/womenscommission-colombiareport.pdf>

Half a Million Displaced, Mujeres en Red
<http://www.nodo50.org/mujeresred/colombia-desplazadas.html>

Statistics on Displaced Women, Global IDP Database
<http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/1c963eb504904cde41256782007493b8/fb3c5783ded661e6c1256841003466ff?OpenDocument>

Law, Social Justice and Global Government: Legal Services to the Displaced Population of Colombia
<http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/global/issue/2001-1/mullerhoff2.html>

3.4 Civil society

Civil society in Colombia, – understood here to include local NGOs, grassroots groups, the church, and universities – play a variety of roles in assisting and protecting IDPs. Many NGOs are treated with suspicion and hostility by the authorities and are frequently accused of being guerrilla sympathizers, despite their criticism of all sides in the conflict. Many human rights activists and lawyers have been intimidated and threatened; some have been killed or forced to flee. The church has played a highly important and influential role in addressing the plight of the displaced in Colombia. In particular, the church has been involved in assistance projects, human rights protection programmes, and peace dialogue initiatives. It has also conducted and published comprehensive studies, such as the year-long study resulting in the Bishop's Conference report.

Colombia has a long tradition of popular movements, social resistance, and NGOs. There is also a long history of tension and suspicion in the relationship between the Colombian government and NGOs. They have become more numerous and dispersed throughout the country in recent years, though most are still based in the main cities. There are numerous Colombian NGOs carrying out research, investigations, reporting, and advocacy activities on human rights issues and the conditions of the displaced. There are a smaller number of Colombian NGOs providing assistance and support to displaced people.

The NGO Mencoldes provides basic assistance and counselling to displaced persons arriving in Bogota. Mencoldes has provided shelter to some displaced families and also assists them in gaining access to government assistance. The Intercongregational Commission for Justice and Peace (*Comisión Intercongregacional de Justicia y Paz*) runs the Data Bank on Political Violence. The Popular Research and Education Centre (*Centro de Investigación y Educación Popluar*, CINEP) compiles information on human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law.

Another important Colombian NGOs is the Association for the Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared (ASFADDES). This organization works in the promotion and protection of human rights, specializing in work with the relatives of people who have been ‘disappeared’ and murdered as a part of repression. They report on events and supervise legal cases, as well as working in human rights education.

There are a number of grassroots self-protection initiatives in Colombia, notably the ‘peace communities’ (*Comunidades de Paz*) and Communities in Resistance (*Comunidades de Resistencia*). These groups emerged after a series of massive displacements in the Urabá region in 1997, and have declared themselves as unarmed civilians and autonomous to all armed groups. The success of these communities has been somewhat mixed.

Websites:

Asamblea Permanente de la Sociedad Civil por la Paz
<http://www.asambleaporlapaz.f2s.com/>

Centro de Investigación y Educación Popluar (CINEP)
<http://www.cinep.org.co/>

Colombian Commission of Jurists/*Comision Colombiana de Juristas (CCJ)*
<http://www.nd.edu/~kellogg/ccj.html>
Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES)
<http://www.codhes.org.co/>

Corporacion de Promocion Popular (Popular Training Institute)
<http://www.corporacionpp.org.co>

Exodo: Bulletin on Internal Displacement in Colombia, published by Support Group to Organizations of Displaced People in Colombia (GAD)
<http://www.exodo.org.co/>

La Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos (FCSPP)

<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/eng.html>

GAD's response to First Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons

<http://www.exodo.org.co/12informe-index.html>

Government Plan of Action to Prevent and Assist IDPs

<http://www.disaster.info.desastres.net/desplazados/leyes/conpes3057/index.htm>

Minga (The Association for Alternative Social Advancement)

<http://www.mingaong.com.co/>

3.5 International community

The ICRC has delegations in the most affected areas, which visit detainees, promote humanitarian law, and provide material assistance to those recently displaced. With its sixteen sub-delegations, the ICRC is able to gain wide access and maintains contact with all the armed groups.

Project Counselling Service (PCS) is an international consortium of European and Canadian NGOs. PCS and its sponsoring agencies have worked with local counterparts, NGOs, and grassroots organizations to find durable solutions to the problems faced by refugees, displaced people, and others affected by internal socio-political conflict throughout Latin America, including Colombia. PCS has a permanent office in Colombia. The member agencies of PCS are the Danish Refugee Council, Dutch Interchurch Aid, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS), and the Canadian agency Inter Pares.

Oxfam also has offices in Colombia and has been working with Colombian NGOs and grassroots organizations for over twenty years. Oxfam provides direct assistance, training and education on human rights and international humanitarian and refugee law, psychosocial rehabilitation to torture victims, as well as advocacy and lobbying at national and international levels.

Since 1994 Peace Brigades International (PBI) has been providing international accompaniment to human rights defenders who are threatened with political violence. PBI has gradually expanded its activities in subsequent years, providing accompaniment to many on a 24-hour-a-day basis.

Other international NGOs fund projects working with the displaced in Colombia by channelling funds through local NGOs or the church.

Although the Colombian government has managed to resist efforts from the international community to have a special *rapporteur* to the UN Commission on Human Rights, a UN human rights office was established in Colombia in 1997 with a one-year mandate. This office has received substantial funding and staff members from the EU. The office continues to run with its mandate currently due to expire in April 2002.

UNHCR opened its first office in Colombia in 1999, under an agreement with the Colombian government. UNHCR's activities in the country are aimed at strengthening local capacity to deal with internal displacement. Specifically, this has involved providing technical and financial support to the government and NGOs in providing assistance to the internally displaced; advising the police and military on the obligations to provide security to the displaced; and advising on contingency planning and early warning for emergencies. UNHCR is also working to strengthen asylum procedures in Colombia's neighbouring countries. In August 2001 UNHCR announced the opening of its third field office, this one located in the southern department of Putumayo near the border with Ecuador. The other two offices are in Barrancabermeja and Apartado.

Websites:

Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH, OAS)

<http://www.cidh.org/annualrep/2000eng/chap.4a.htm>

[http://www.cidh.oas.org/countryrep/Colom99en/table per cent20of per cent20contents.htm](http://www.cidh.oas.org/countryrep/Colom99en/tableper cent20of per cent20contents.htm)

Consolidated Report, 14 June 2001, World Food Programme (WFP)

<http://www.col.ops-oms.org/desplazados/informes/pma/FinalReportEnglish.htm>

Development Gateway

http://www.developmentgateway.org/country-overview?country_id=36695

ICRC

[http://www.icrc.org/WEBGRAPH.NSF/Graphics/AN2000_latin_america.pdf/\\$FILE/AN2000_latin_america.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/WEBGRAPH.NSF/Graphics/AN2000_latin_america.pdf/$FILE/AN2000_latin_america.pdf)

[http://www.icrc.org/WEBGRAPH.NSF/Graphics/AC_AM_COLOMBIA_AR.pdf/\\$FILE/AC_AM_COLOMBIA_AR.pdf](http://www.icrc.org/WEBGRAPH.NSF/Graphics/AC_AM_COLOMBIA_AR.pdf/$FILE/AC_AM_COLOMBIA_AR.pdf)

International Treaties to which Colombia is a signatory in 2000, Human Rights Internet

<http://www.hri.ca/forthecord2000/vol4/colombiarr.htm>

ReliefWeb (Spanish)

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/vID/120ECC676A7E8213852569E40057763C?OpenDocument>

Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis Deng, Submitted Pursuant to Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1993/95. Profiles in Displacement: Colombia

[http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.1995.50.Add.1.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.1995.50.Add.1.En?OpenDocument)

Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons Submitted in Accordance with Commission Resolution 1999/47, Profiles in Displacement: Follow-up Mission to Colombia

[http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/6d5358107a11e85a802568ac003ea6b6/\\$FILE/G0010059.pdf](http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/6d5358107a11e85a802568ac003ea6b6/$FILE/G0010059.pdf)

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Office in Colombia 2000, UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights
<http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord2000/documentation/commission/e-cn4-2000-11.htm>

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Office in Colombia 2001, UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights
[http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2001.15.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2001.15.En?Opendocument)

Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances 1999, UN Commission on Human Rights
<http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord2000/documentation/commission/e-cn4-2000-64.htm>

Third Report on the Human Rights Situation in Colombia, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Organization of American States
<http://www.cidh.oas.org/countryrep/Colom99en/tableper cent20of percent20contents.htm>

Inter-American Commission On Human Rights (IACHR), Annual Report 2000 Chapter IV Colombia

UNHCR

Operational Plan for Response of UNHCR to Forced Displacement in Colombia
[http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/1c963eb504904cde41256782007493b8/3DC5BD1A2B7DA409C125684000743A67/\\$file/UNHCRCol.pdf](http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/1c963eb504904cde41256782007493b8/3DC5BD1A2B7DA409C125684000743A67/$file/UNHCRCol.pdf)

UNHCHR

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human Rights Situation in Colombia
[http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2001.15.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2001.15.En?Opendocument)

UNICEF

<http://www.unicef.org.co/00.htm>

World Bank

<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/External/lac/lac.nsf/596f1e60aab04341852567d6006ae779/32f04d5a7493cd5b852567f400640bdc?OpenDocument>

3.6 International NGOs

American Association of Jurists
<http://www.aaj.org.br/planc.htm>

Amnesty International
<http://www.amnesty.org/>

Andean Commission of Jurists
http://www.cajpe.org.pe/ENG_CAJ.HTM

Catholic Relief Services
<http://www.catholicrelief.org/>

Children of the Andes
<http://www.children-of-the-andes.org/>

Christian Aid
<http://www.christian-aid.org.uk>
<http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/world/where/lac/colombip.htm>

Colombia Human Rights Network
<http://www.igc.org/colhrnet/>

Colombia Policy Briefs
<http://www.colombiapolicy.org/index.htm>
<http://www.colombiapolicy.org/project.htm>

Colombia Support Network
<http://www.colombiasupport.net/>

Crosspoint Anti-Racism
<http://www.magenta.nl/crosspoint/colombia.html>

Derechos Human Rights
<http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/colombia/eng.html>

Global IDP Database
<http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wCountries/Colombia>

Human Rights Watch (HRW)
<http://www.hrw.org/>
<http://www.hrw.org/reports98/colombia/>
<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/americas/colombia.html>

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
<http://www.fidh.org/ameriq/colombie.htm>

Latin America Working Group
<http://www.lawg.org>

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights
<http://www.lchr.org/home.htm>

Médecins du Monde
<http://www.medecinsdumonde.org/francais/htm/missions/french/amsud/colombie.htm>

Mennonite Foundation for Community Development (Mencoldes)
<http://www.mcc.org/regions/colombia.html>

Mine Action

http://www.mineaction.org/countries/countries_overview.cfm?country_id=Colombia

Norwegian Refugee Council

<http://www.nrc.no>

Oxfam

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/atwork/where/lac/colombia.htm>

Pax Christi, Colombia

<http://antenna.nl/paxchristi/coloeng.html>

Peace Brigades International (PBI)

<http://www.peacebrigades.org/colombia.html>

Process of Black Communities

<http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/colombia/>

Project Counselling Service (PCS)

<http://www.infotext.org/pcs/>

US Committee for Refugees (USCR)

<http://www.refugees.org/>

http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/amer_carib/colombia.htm

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

<http://www.wola.org/>

http://www.wola.org/colombia_pubs_csinitiatives.htm

Witness for Peace

<http://www.witnessforpeace.org/colombia.html>

World Organization Against Torture (OMCT)

<http://www.omct.org/>

4. Other resources

4.1 Colombian newspapers

El Colombiano

<http://www.elcolombiano.terra.com.co/hoy/np001.htm>

El Espectador

<http://www.elespectador.com/>

El Herald

<http://www.elheraldo.com.co/>

El Mundo

<http://www.elmundo.com/>

El Pais

<http://www.elpais.com/>

El Tiempo

<http://eltiempo.terra.com.co/>

4.2 Other electronic resources

Academic Research Resources, University of Texas at Austin

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/colombia/>

Americas.Org, Resource Center of the Americas

<http://www.americas.org/>

Americas Project, World Policy Institute

<http://www.worldpolicy.org/americas/samindex.html>

Cien Días

http://www.cinep.org.co/cien_dias/index.html

Colombia Report, Information Network of the Americas (INOTA)

<http://www.colombiareport.org/>

Colombia Times

<http://www.colombiatimes.com/>

Latin America Press

www.latinamericapress.org

Locombia.Org

<http://www.locombia.org/>

NACLA

http://www.nacla.org/art_display.php?art=526

4.3 Non-electronic resources and bibliography

Americas Watch, *'Drug War' in Colombia : The Neglected Tragedy of Political Violence*, Washington DC, 1990.

Charles Berquist, Ricardo Penarda, and Gonsalo Sanchez G., eds., *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2001.

Braun, H., *The Assassination of Gaitan : Public Life and Urban Violence in Colombia*. Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1994.

Carrigan, A, *The Palace of Justice: A Colombian Tragedy*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993.

CODHES (*Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento*), 'Sistema de información de hogares desplazados por violencia en Colombia'. *SISDES*, vol. 1, April. (1996).

- Cohen, R, and Deng, F., *The Foresaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998a.
- , *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998b.
- Conferencia Episcopal de Colombia, ‘Desplazados por la violencia en Colombia’. Bogotá: Kimpres, 1995.
- The Economist*, 21 April, 2001.
- EIU, *Colombia: Country Profile 2001*. London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2001a.
- , *Colombia: Country Report*, July 2000. London: Economist Intelligence Unit, 2001b.
- GAD, *Follow Up Report*, May, 1999.
- HRW, *Generation Under Fire : Children and Violence in Colombia*. Washington DC: HRW, 1994.
- , *Colombia’s Killer Networks*. Washington DC: HRW, 1996.
- , *War Without Quarter: Colombia and International Humanitarian Law*. Washington DC: HRW, 1998.
- , *The Ties That Bind: Colombia and Military-Paramilitary Links*. Washington DC: HRW, 2000.
- , *The ‘Sixth Division’: Military-Paramilitary Ties and U.S. Policy in Colombia*. Washington DC: HRW, 2001.
- Mendez, Juan E., *Colombia: Political Murder and Reform*. Washington DC: HRW, 1992.
- Obregón, L., and Stravropoulou, M. ‘In Search of Hope: The Plight of Displaced Colombians’, in R. Cohen and F. Deng (eds.), *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998.
- Oquist, P., *Violence, Conflict and Politics in Colombia*. Bogotá: Instituto de Estudios Colombianos, 1978.
- Ordoñez, J.P., *No Human Being is Disposable: Social Cleansing, Human Rights, and Sexual Orientation in Colombia*. Washington DC: Colombia Human Rights Commission, 1995.
- Pahl, M., ‘Wanted, Criminal Justice: Colombia’s Adoption of a Prosecutorial System of Criminal Procedure’. *Fordham International Law Journal*, vol. 16, 1992.
- Pearce, J., *Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth*. London: Latin America Bureau, 1991.
- Posada-Carbó, E. (ed.), *Colombia: The Politics of Reforming the State*. London: Macmillan Press, London: ILAS, 1998.
- Rabasa, A. and Chalk, P. *Colombian Labyrinth: The Synergy of Drugs and Insurgency and Its Implications for Regional Stability*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001.
- Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World Disasters Report*, annual.
- Salazar, A., *Born to die in Medellin*. London: Latin America Bureau, 1992.
- Schwartz, E.F., ‘Getting Away with Murder: Social Cleansing in Colombia and the Role of the United State’. *University of Miami Inter-American Law Review*, vol. 27, Winter, 1995–6.
- USCR, *Feeding the Tiger: Colombia’s Internally Displaced People*. Washington DC, 1993.
- , *Colombia’s Silent Crisis: One Million Displaced by Violence*. Washington DC, 1998.
- USCR, World Refugee Survey 1999, Washington DC: USCR, 1999
- USCR, World Refugee Survey 2000, Washington DC: USCR, 2000

USCR, World Refugee Survey 2001, Washington DC: USCR, 2001
USCR, World Refugee Survey 2002, Washington DC: USCR, 2002
Vincent, M. and Sorensen, B.R. (eds.), *Caught Between Borders: Response Strategies of the Internally Displaced*, NRC, London: Pluto Press, 2001.
WOLA (Washington Office on Latin America), *Colombia Besieged: Political Violence and State Responsibility*, Washington DC: WOLA, 1989.