

COLOMBIA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

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COLOMBIA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This ICG report argues that it is paramount that much more decisive action be taken immediately to confront Colombia's humanitarian crisis. Massive human hardship and suffering has become a constant feature of life as the armed conflict has expanded and intensified. The government's humanitarian policy has encountered many difficulties, largely because of the magnitude of the crisis, the lack of state capacity, the reluctance to divert fiscal resources from military to social programs, and the wide gap between policy planning and reality.

The launching of the Inter-agency Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) by the UN in 2002 reflects a growing international awareness that more coordinated and effective action is urgently needed. But even more needs to be done, including achieving better coordination between the government and humanitarian organisations and increasing current levels of international humanitarian aid.

Colombia faces a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented dimensions. In 2002, forced internal displacement, following a sharp upward trend since 2000, reached an all time high: approximately 320,000 persons were obligated to leave their homes and seek shelter in other parts of the country from the escalating armed conflict. During the first three months of 2003, an estimated additional 90,000 persons have been displaced. Half were assisted by the ICRC. An estimated 100,000 Colombians fled to the neighbouring countries between 2000 and 2002.

Between 6,000 and 7,000 children are enrolled in the ranks of the irregular armed groups, anti-personnel mine incidents/accidents are on the rise, and many communities across the country are either blockaded, controlled or under siege from the

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) or the paramilitaries. Meanwhile, the government's armed forces are restricting the free circulation of gasoline, medicines, food stuffs and other basic provisions in war-affected areas as part of their military strategy to subdue the armed groups.

Recent shifts in strategy by both the government and the armed groups have had a direct impact on these conditions. The war strategy of the latter is designed to control strategic corridors. In its pursuit, they have acted in total disregard of the deaths and injuries inflicted on non-combatants. In rural areas, they have sought to deny sanctuary to their opponents and been willing to terrorise local populations to accomplish that goal. The Uribe government's determined "democratic security policy" was initiated to deny the armed groups their objectives and re-establish legitimate state authority in places where it has been absent for decades.

All of this causes severe hardship among civilians, who are systematically targeted by the armed groups, suffering displacement, abduction, disappearance, extortion and torture. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and blockaded or isolated communities also often find it impossible to gain access to basic social services, such as health care, sanitation, housing and education. Food and other basic provisions are also often in short supply, and IDPs suffer malnutrition and illness. The situation is further aggravated by precarious or non-existent social services, wide-spread poverty and unemployment in large parts of rural Colombia as well as many peripheral urban neighbourhoods. Frequently, communities and municipalities that receive IDPs or economic migrants from rural areas are unable to provide them the needed assistance.

While not insensitive to the humanitarian crisis, during its first eleven months the Uribe administration has given priority to implementing its “democratic security policy” and also focused its energies on designing and implementing political and economic reform and fiscal austerity policies. The government agency in charge of coordinating the state’s assistance to IDPs as well as their return, the Social Solidarity Network (RSS), is overburdened and has not received adequate support from the nineteen state institutions that comprise the National System of Integral Assistance to the Population Displaced by Violence (SNAIPD). In consequence, more than half the new IDPs received no government assistance in 2002; indeed, many were not even registered.

In the context of the current escalation of the armed conflict, it also has to be asked whether the Uribe administration’s humanitarian policy emphasis on promoting and facilitating the return of IDPs is appropriate. Although the government claims that 7,218 displaced families have returned to their homes since it took office, it is questionable whether returning represents a real option for the great remainder of IDPs. The three basic conditions for a successful return – that it be safe, voluntary and supported by economic and social reintegration/re-establishment programs – are difficult for the government to guarantee under prevailing circumstances. The government should strongly consider the resettlement of IDPs in their new places of residence and the design and implementation of a comprehensive rural development strategy as part of the “democratic security policy”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Colombia:

1. Strengthen cooperation between the state institutions that integrate the SNAIPD and increase its effectiveness, in part by increasing cooperation with organised civil society.
2. Seek to raise U.S.\$1 billion over several years for food security, basic rural housing, victims of violence compensation, and educational and health programs and guarantee that the state institutions comprising the SNAIPD earmark sufficient funds for activities and programs related to IDP assistance and stabilisation.

3. Guarantee that all registered IDPs receive public assistance as stipulated in Law 387 and adopt a differentiated assistance approach, focussing on children, women and ethnic groups.
4. Improve the system for registering IDPs, expand its scope and generate more and better information on forced internal displacement.
5. Strengthen judicial institutions, the ombudsman’s office and other institutions responsible for fundamental human rights, and implement all obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law covenants to which Colombia is party, including recognising the distinction between combatants and non-combatants and providing access for humanitarian relief to non-combatants.
6. Improve the performance of the Early Warning System by raising the political level of the Inter-Institutional Committee that directs it and assure close monitoring by the Vice President’s Office of responses to risk assessments and warnings.
7. Guarantee the safe and voluntary return of IDPs as well as integration/reconstruction assistance to all returnee communities, including vocational training, income-generating projects and psychosocial assistance.
8. Provide IDPs with integration and reconstruction support in their new places of residence when adequate conditions to permit safe and sustainable return home do not exist, and assist receiving communities and municipalities to integrate IDPs.
9. Design and implement a comprehensive rural development strategy, with priority for war-affected and border regions and focusing on citizen registration, social development (health care, education, housing, sanitation and infrastructure), legalisation of land titles and income-generating measures.
10. Increase efforts at detecting anti-personnel mines, warning the civilian population about their existence and clearing mined areas.
11. Permit the free circulation of food stuffs, gasoline, medicines and other basic provisions in war-affected regions, even at the risk that some will benefit the irregular armed groups.
12. Increase efforts geared at guaranteeing respect for human rights and severing ties between the armed forces and the paramilitaries.

13. Collaborate closely with the governments of the neighbouring countries and UNHCR in the protection and safe return of Colombian refugees.

To the United Nations:

14. Increase inter-agency efforts at implementing and improving the UN's Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) in cooperation with the government and domestic and international humanitarian aid organisations and give special attention to increasing UN presence in war-affected and risk regions.
15. Promote strongly the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) in order to ensure funding for the HAP in 2004, and beyond.
16. Continue with the systematic generation and dissemination of information and analyses on the humanitarian crisis, including by establishing close cooperation with the National Information Network of the government's Social Solidarity Network (RSS).
17. Provide emergency and other assistance such as legal counsel to Colombian refugees and asylum seekers in the neighbouring countries.

To domestic and international humanitarian aid organisations in Colombia:

18. Continue and expand humanitarian aid cooperation with the government, focussing on emergency and post-emergency assistance as well as socio-economic stabilisation of IDPs.
19. Conduct regular and rigorous evaluations of the progress of aid projects and coordinate action so as to produce synergy.

To the international donor community:

20. Support the government, international and multilateral organisations, the Churches and NGOs with funds, personnel and expertise in order to alleviate and overcome the humanitarian crisis.
21. Fund fully the UN's Consolidated Appeal for humanitarian aid for Colombia.
22. Encourage and support the government in designing, implementing and funding a rural development strategy that can both discourage displacement now and make the successful return of displaced persons possible when safety can be guaranteed.

To the irregular armed groups:

23. Abide by the norms of international humanitarian law, and in particular end the targeting of civilians, the expulsion, blockade and siege of civilian communities, and the use of mines where civilians are at risk.
24. Respect and do not interfere with humanitarian aid operations, including medical missions and food aid deliveries.
25. Stop recruiting children and hand over child soldiers to the authorities so that they can be rehabilitated.

Bogotá/Brussels, 9 July 2003

COLOMBIA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

I. INTRODUCTION

Caught up in a 40-year-long and escalating internal armed conflict, Colombia is also witnessing a humanitarian crisis of growing dimensions. The majority of casualties and victims are civilians. Hundreds of thousands are forced to flee their homes every year because of the fighting or massacres, killings and bombings committed by paramilitary squads, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). In many instances, forced internal displacement is a strategy of the irregular armed groups, whose aim is to control large stretches of territory, especially strategic gun and drug running corridors. Other interests, such as appropriating land for large-scale agro-industrial businesses, also play a part.

It is estimated that the number of persons who have been internally displaced (IDPs) since 1985 amounts to well over two and a half million. Reflecting the intensification of the armed confrontation, the last two years has witnessed a significant increase in internal displacement. Although the figures are disputed, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the government Network of Social Solidarity (Red de Solidaridad Social, RSS in Spanish) attest to an upward trend.

While forced internal displacement is probably the most obvious expression of Colombia's humanitarian crisis, there are many other forms of human hardship and suffering that are often – but not always – related to the internal armed conflict. Inhabitants of villages and hamlets, but increasingly towns too, find themselves trapped in the fighting, under siege from, or blockaded by, the armed groups, suffering food, electricity and water shortages. In Chocó province, for example, the irregular groups and the army restrict the volume of foodstuffs, petrol and other supplies that may be carried on boats on the Atrato River.

Travellers on highways are regularly abducted or have their vehicles seized and burned. Trucks transporting international food aid are stopped by the irregular armed groups, and medical missions are not allowed access to the displaced and highly vulnerable civilian population.

Of Colombia's 32 departments, 30 are affected by landmines, an estimated 100,000 of which have been laid by the insurgents and the paramilitaries, indiscriminately maiming and killing soldiers and civilians alike. The numbers of missing persons and, despite a reduction in massacres, conflict-related killings are on the rise. Under-age youth are forced to join the irregular armed groups. Minorities, such as Afro and indigenous Colombians, are particularly vulnerable to pressure and violence. They live in rural regions rich in natural resources from which the state historically has been absent and where the paramilitaries and insurgents fiercely fight for control.

Moreover, in large parts of rural Colombia and in many peripheral urban neighbourhoods, the state does not provide basic services such as health, education, housing, sanitation and security. Employment and sustainable sources of income are scarce, and poverty, including extreme poverty, is widespread. The flow of IDPs into large and medium-sized cities such as Cartagena, Quibdó and Soacha and small towns such as Tumaco and Viotá puts an increasing strain on already precarious living conditions.

ICG interviews revealed that in general IDPs do not consider returning to their homes solely out of fear of reprisals by the irregular armed groups, but also because there are no basic services.¹ In spite of the extremely bad living conditions in their "new homes", IDPs perceive an advantage to staying in cities that –

¹ ICG interviews, Soacha and Tumaco, 13 and 18 March 2003.

unlike the desperate poverty of their home communities – at least offer their children an opportunity to attend school and receive food and health attention.

The government of Álvaro Uribe is concentrating on internal security, political reform, economic revival and the fight against poverty and unemployment.² The most significant departure, by far, from past administrations has been the single-minded determination to expand security by increasing the military and police. The Plan for National Development 2003-2006, which was submitted to parliament in February 2003 and has since been approved, contemplates a broad spectrum of measures to be implemented in these areas.³ Although humanitarian emergency programs and social policies do not figure among its priorities, they are not left out, reflecting the government's awareness of their importance.

Yet, during its first eleven months, in addition to strengthening the armed and police forces, the Uribe administration has made its main priorities launching the "Referendum against corruption and political chicanery", engaging the international community and Colombia's neighbours in the fight against the insurgents, preparing the ground for peace talks with the paramilitaries and implementing fiscal austerity. Meanwhile, since early 2002 when the always tenuous peace talks finally broke down completely, there has been a sharp increase in forced internal displacement and countless violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights not only by the irregular armed groups, but also by state agents. That constant rise in violence is sad evidence that government policy has not yet appreciably improved the security of the most vulnerable sectors of Colombian society.

It is vital that much more decisive action be taken immediately to confront the humanitarian crisis. International humanitarian aid organisations, both multilateral and non-governmental, have been very active in supporting the government in alleviating the crisis. But more needs to be done, including boosting revenues to permit an increase of resources to social programs.

² See ICG Latin America briefing, *Colombia: Will Uribe's Honeymoon Last?*, 19 December 2002.

³ Presidencia de la República, *Bases del Plan Nacional de Desarrollo de Colombia* (Bogotá, 2002) and *Proyecto de Ley No. 169/03 C, 167/03 S*.

II. FORCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

A. DIMENSION, PATTERNS AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Massive forced internal displacement is a dramatic, if not always the most visible, manifestation of Colombia's humanitarian crisis. According to government statistics, more than one million Colombians were forced to leave their homes between 1995 and March 2003.⁴ The non-governmental Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) estimates that 2,900,000 citizens were internally displaced during 1985 to 2003.⁵ Although under-registration and other statistical problems imply that available IDP data is only approximate, government, NGO, Church and ICRC sources all document a sharp upward trend in forced internal displacement since 2000.⁶ For example, while RSS, CODHES and the ICRC counted or assisted 266,605, 317,000 and 123,651 newly displaced persons respectively in 2000, those figures two years later had risen to 365,961, 412,000 and 179,142.⁷ According to a new RSS-run system that cross-references IDP data from various

⁴ The exact figure given by the Red de Solidaridad Social (RSS) is 1,079,080 IDPs. RSS, *Registro Nacional de Población Desplazada por la Violencia*, at www.red.gov.co.

⁵ "Destierro y redoblamiento", in *Boletín de la CODHES*, no. 44, 28 April 2003.

⁶ On Church sources on internal displacement, see Sistema de Información sobre Desplazamiento RUT, *Boletín* no. 14 and 15.

⁷ RSS, *op.cit.*; ICRC figures provided by ICRC, Bogotá. It should be noted that the RSS registration system, SUR (Sistema de Registro Único), has improved over the years. This explains in part why RSS registered only 25,216 IDPs in 1999 when in 2000 their number amounted to 266,605. RSS director Luis Hoyos admits that in 2003 the rate of IDP under-registration could be as high as 30 to 35 per cent. This was confirmed in ICG interviews with RSS officers in Quibdó and Cúcuta. Nonetheless, under-registration alone cannot account for this large difference. The intensification of the armed conflict in many parts of the country as well as aerial spraying of illicit crops in large swaths of Colombian territory are important factors in the increase of internal displacement since the late 1990s (see chapter II below). ICG interviews, Cúcuta and Quibdó, May 2003; *El Tiempo*, 26 May 2003, p. 1/6.

sources, there were 183,748 newly displaced persons in 2001 and 312,048 in 2002.⁸

There is also consensus that 2002 saw the highest absolute and relative increases of internal displacement in the last ten years. IDP data on the first semester of 2003 is not yet available but some observers point out that after the peak in 2002 it may be expected that the rate will have decreased somewhat.⁹ Nevertheless, while the ICRC assisted 45,500 new IDPs during the first four months of 2003, it is estimated that there may have been a total 90,000 during the first quarter of 2003.¹⁰

The number of municipalities affected by forced internal displacement has also grown considerably over the last three years: while 480 municipalities saw the expulsion of inhabitants and the reception of IDPs in 2000, in 2001 and 2002 the figures were 547 and 955, respectively.¹¹ Among the municipalities that expelled most inhabitants in 2002 were Bojayá, Chocó (67.7 per cent of total population), Mapiripán, Meta (50.5 per cent), El Tarra (26 per cent), Convención (25.5 per cent) and Teorama (24.6 per cent) in the department of Norte de Santander.¹²

Ironically, some of the municipalities with the highest expulsion rates were also among those that received the most IDPs from elsewhere. For example, in 2002 Convención and El Tarra, Norte de Santander and Mapiripán, Meta received 12,412 (48.5 per cent of total population), 3,520 (27.7 per cent) and 3,770 (35.6 per cent) IDPs, respectively.¹³ The same trend can be observed on the department level. All 32 Colombian departments witnessed expulsions in 2002. In absolute IDP numbers, the most affected were Antioquia, Caldas, Caquetá, Chocó, Magdalena, Norte de Santander and Putumayo. Among the departments that received most IDPs were Caquetá, Chocó, César, Magdalena, Norte de Santander, Putumayo and Sucre¹⁴. The departments with the

highest relative increase in IDP numbers over the period 2001-2002 were Caldas (nine-fold increase), Arauca (nine-fold), Cundinamarca (six-fold) and Huila (five-fold).

The regions most affected by internal displacement were the border with Venezuela (departments of Arauca, Cesar, Norte de Santander and Guajira); the Atlantic coast, particularly the Sierra Nevada, Magdalena and the Serranía de Perijá, Cesar; and the departments that either formed part of or are close to the former demilitarised zone (DMZ) (Caquetá, Cundinamarca, Guaviare, Huila, Meta, Putumayo and Tolima).¹⁵

According to government data and ICG interviews, the most common pattern of internal displacement is not massive – large groups of people fleeing a village or municipality because of a specific threat or combat – but individual or small group displacements.¹⁶ RSS states that out of 1,079,080 IDPs counted since 1995, 210,313 were displaced in large groups, such as the flight of close to 70 per cent of the population of Bojayá after 119 civilians were killed by a makeshift FARC mortar in the village of Bellavista on 2 May 2002.¹⁷ The remaining 868,767 IDPs left their homes on an individual basis or in small family groups for various reasons, such as threats by, or the arrival of, one of the irregular armed groups, selective assassinations, the perception of imminent danger or because their crops, both illicit and licit, had been sprayed and destroyed.¹⁸ Displaced individuals or small groups of IDPs often prefer the anonymity of urban centres for fear of being

⁸ The *Sistema de Estimación por Fuentes Contrastadas* (SEFC) was set up in 2002 and uses IDP data generated by SUR, CODHES, RUT and other organisations.

⁹ ICG interview, Bogotá, 22 May 2003.

¹⁰ ICRC figures provided by ICRC Bogotá; USAID, "Internal Displacement in Colombia" (s.l., s.d.). For further figures, see the table on IDPs in Appendix C.

¹¹ There are 1,098 municipalities in Colombia. CODHES, op. cit., RSS, *Atención a la población desplazada por la violencia en Colombia* (Bogotá, 2001).

¹² CODHES, op. cit.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ In 2002, 30 per cent of IDPs were from the Atlantic coast, 17 per cent from the border areas with Venezuela and 15 per cent from areas encompassed in, or close by, the former demilitarised zone (DMZ). The DMZ was established by President Andrés Pastrana at the beginning of his term (1998-2002). It encompassed five municipalities and 42,000 sq. kms. in the departments of Caquetá, Huila and Meta and, until it was abolished in February 2002, served as the location for the peace talks between the government and the FARC. See ICG Latin America Report no.1, *Colombia's Elusive Quest for Peace*, 26 March 2002. For more information on which municipalities, departments and regions have been most affected by IDP's, see the tables in Appendix C.

¹⁶ ICG interviews, Soacha, Tumaco, Quibdó and Cúcuta, March and May 2003; RSS, op. cit.

¹⁷ See section IV. B below.

¹⁸ In Colombia this pattern of displacement is known as *gota a gota* ("drop by drop").

identified by one of the irregular armed groups as former inhabitants of a specific region and, hence, potential collaborators of their enemies.

There are many reported cases of IDPs who had to flee more than once because “the war had followed them”.¹⁹ Often the second or third displacement occurs within the receiving municipality or urban centre and is caused by (renewed) threats from an irregular armed group. In June 2002, 65 families were forced to leave their homes in the El Salado neighbourhood in Medellín owing to the fighting between FARC and ELN insurgents and the army. Since they did not flee beyond their “habitual place of residence”, that is, Medellín, but into the city, RSS rejected their petition for IDP status. Following legal action on part of the displaced families, the Constitutional Court ruled in April 2003 that the 55 women and 165 children were entitled to government assistance under Law 387 of 1997.²⁰ This ruling is important since it acknowledges for the first time the increasing incidence of intra-urban or intra-municipal displacement as a result of the conflict.

However, ICG interviews also revealed that the search for employment and generally a better life in urban centres also drives this “invisible” displacement. For example, women in Quibdó (Chocó) stated that men often leave their hamlets or villages in search of jobs. In some cases, their families follow them once they have found employment, usually in small or medium-sized towns. However, more often than not families break up, owing to the death of the man or because he established a new family.²¹ Women thus have no choice but to stay behind and take on the role of the head of household.²² If they can, they will attempt to send their children to stay with relatives or friends in urban centres such as Quibdó in order to attend school. Family separation or disintegration

might explain in part why nearly 75 per cent of IDPs are adult women and children.²³

The recent intensification of the armed conflict in regions such as Catatumbo (Norte de Santander), Atrato (Chocó) and the eastern part of Antioquia has reinforced a hitherto less common pattern of forced displacement. Since the paramilitary forces have been expanding their control of the small and medium-sized towns, often located in strategic positions along rivers and roads, IDPs from rural areas have become reluctant to seek shelter in urban centres. They fear that the insurgents might indiscriminately attack the towns or the paramilitaries might persecute and harm them, branding them guerrilla collaborators. In consequence, they flee to remote jungle or mountain areas where they feel safer but are in fact highly vulnerable.

For example, according to ICG sources, a large number of families are trying to avoid the fighting between paramilitaries and FARC/ELN insurgents over strategic corridors and illicit crop plantations in the departments of Arauca and Norte de Santander. They have fled to remote rural areas where they are forced to survive without any government or international assistance.²⁴ Another large intra-rural displacement occurred in the municipality of San Francisco, Antioquia, whose residents fled to the mountains along the Río Verde in an attempt to seek shelter from heavy fighting between six battalions of the VI Army Brigade and FARC units in March 2003. The civilians had no option other than the mountains because the army had taken up a battle position on the road to the urban centre of San Francisco.²⁵

Colombia's indigenous people are particularly affected by this pattern of displacement. While indigenous IDPs have fled to cities or towns such as Cartagena, Cali or Saravena, it is more common that they try to stay within the boundaries of their

¹⁹ ICG interviews, Soacha and Quibdó, March and May 2003; *El Colombiano*, 4 April 2003.

²⁰ On Colombian IDP legislation see section IV.A below. *El Colombiano*, 24 April 2003; *El Tiempo*, 24 April 2003; ICG interviews, Medellín, 19-22 June 2003.

²¹ Men also join the irregular armed groups – especially the paramilitaries – in order to make a living.

²² ICG interview, Quibdó, 3 May 2003.

²³ RSS, *Poblaciones y territorios afectados: población afectada*, at www.red.gov.co.

²⁴ ICG interviews, Cúcuta and Saravena, 11 and 15 May 2003. This pattern of displacement is sometimes referred to as inter-rural (*desplazamiento interveredal*).

²⁵ *Ficha Técnica Situación Humanitaria del Oriente Antioqueño*, Sala de Situación Humanitaria (Bogotá, 16 May 2003).

reservations when exposed to combat or threats.²⁶ This reaction may be explained by a strong sense of belonging among the members of indigenous communities as well as well-founded fears of losing their cultural identity and forms of subsistence in the cities.²⁷ While it could be assumed that owing to their close and ancestral relationship with nature, indigenous IDPs find it easier than farmers to survive in inhospitable and remote regions, they are nonetheless suffering considerable hardship when displaced within the reservations. RSS and CODHES report respectively that between January 2000 and June 2002, either some 3.75 or some 1.75 per cent of Colombia's indigenous population were forced to leave their homes.²⁸

Other ethnic groups, such as Colombians of African descent and Roma, are also particularly affected by forced internal displacement.²⁹ RSS estimates that during the same January 2000 to June 2002 period, 17.72 per cent of newly displaced persons were Afro-Colombians.³⁰ According to CODHES, this figure rose during 2002 to 33 per cent, an estimated 85,650 individuals.³¹ The association of Colombia's Roma People (*Proceso Organizativo del Pueblo Rom (Gitano) de Colombia*, PROROM) has denounced the irregular armed groups, in particular the paramilitaries, for threatening, extorting, displacing and killing Roma. By the same token, PROROM charges that the Colombian state and society do not acknowledge the suffering of the Roma people or support their quest for self-determination and peace.³²

It goes without saying that all IDPs – regardless of age, ethnic origin, sex or social position –

experience the loss of their homes and familiar professional and social environments as a threat to their very existence. However, the social consequences of forced internal displacement vary from group to group. It is generally asserted that members of minority ethnic groups experience great difficulties in adapting to new and often completely unfamiliar urban environments. For example, Afro-Colombians from the department of Chocó who have fled to Soacha (Cundinamarca) are exposed to a hostile climate and are deprived of their traditional ways of earning a living, such as fishing or subsistence agriculture.

In general, women tend to be more successful than men in guaranteeing the survival of the family and finding jobs in new settings. Community kitchens, kindergartens and other social associations and initiatives in IDP quarters are usually organised and run by women.³³ This is related to their experience as community leaders in their home villages prior to displacement as well as the above-mentioned fact that the majority of IDPs are women and children. Furthermore, there are a number of women's organisations in Colombia, most prominently the National Network of Women, which was founded in 1991 and today consists of fourteen regional associations. Among their activities are the promotion of gender equality and the training of both women and men in community leadership and community development.³⁴ The armed groups often force women heads of household to leave their homes because of the prominent role they play in community development.

It is estimated that IDPs need an average of one year to reach minimal economic stability after resettling.³⁵ During this period, displaced families or individuals usually suffer severe hardship, including malnutrition, sickness and lack of basic housing, sanitation and access to health services. This is particularly the case with IDPs who do not receive government assistance because they were unable to, or consciously did not, register with RSS.³⁶

²⁶ For example, in May 2003, a large group of Belasqueros, Bareros and Julienos fled to Saravena, Arauca, which formed part of one of the three RCZs. ICG counted 150 in the Church of Cristo Rey. ICG visit to Saravena, 15 May 2003.

²⁷ ICG interviews, Quibdó, 3 May and Cúcuta, 12 May.

²⁸ Approximately 12,650 persons. CODHES, op. cit.; RSS, op. cit.

²⁹ On the situation of the Roma in Colombia, see *Proceso Organizativo del Pueblo Rom (Gitano) de Colombia (PROROM), Sobre la paz y la guerra: reflexiones de los invisibles de Colombia* (Bogotá, May 2002); ICG interview, Bogotá, 5 June 2003.

³⁰ In comparison, over the same period 3.75 per cent of new IDPs were indigenous. RSS, *Desplazamiento: implicaciones y retos para la gobernabilidad, la democracia y los derechos humanos* (Bogotá, 2002).

³¹ CODHES, op. cit. 26 per cent (some 10.5 million people) of Colombia's total population are of African descent.

³² PROROM, op. cit..

³³ ICG visits to Cúcuta, Quibdó, Soacha and Tumaco, March-May 2003.

³⁴ Red Departamental de Mujeres Chocoanas, *Portafolio de Servicios* (Quibdo, s.d.).

³⁵ ICG interview, Cúcuta, May 2003.

³⁶ Among the main reasons for not registering with RSS are lack of knowledge of the registration process, lack of an ID

However, testimony indicates that the government-provided three-month assistance, although renewable for another three months, and the post-emergency income-generating programs fall short of economically stabilising the bulk of the IDP population.³⁷ While IDPs are mostly concerned about obtaining enough food during the first year after displacement, their children dropping out of school clearly is a further problem.³⁸ According to RSS, 98 per cent of displaced families form part of the three poorest and most vulnerable groups of the Colombian population as defined by the System for the Selection of Beneficiaries of Social Programs (SISBEN).³⁹ A recent World Food Programme study found that 80 per cent of IDPs live in extreme poverty and do not have access to sufficient nutritional foods. Many of the foods consumed by IDPs lack protein, and their diets are often calorie and vitamin poor. Vitamin A deficiencies among IDPs are as high as 62 per cent, followed by calcium deficiencies (52 per cent) and iron deficiencies (25 per cent), and 25 per cent of displaced children are at risk of malnutrition.⁴⁰

card and reluctance to become identified and, hence, run the risk of being subjected again to persecution by the irregular armed groups. ICG interview, Quibdó, 3 May 2003.

³⁷ For example, RSS has difficulties in distributing food and other aid items to all registered IDPs in a given location. ICG interviews also revealed that distributed food does not always match the usual diets of the target population. See section IV.B below. ICG visits to Quibdó and Saravena, 1-3 and 15 May 2003.

³⁸ In Cúcuta, for example, IDPs told ICG that they considered education to be important but food came first. In consequence, many displaced children do not attend school because they help their parents generate income (as street vendors or beggars, for example). Of course, many non-displaced children of poor families suffer the same fate. ICG interviews, Cúcuta, 13 May 2003.

³⁹ SISBEN employs a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 representing the group in extreme poverty and 6 the group with the highest income. 85 per cent of the non-displaced population are on levels 1 to 3. RSS, op. cit.

⁴⁰ World Food Programme/Colombia, *Vulnerabilidad a la inseguridad alimentaria de la población desplazada por la violencia en Colombia* (Bogotá, June 2003).

B. CAUSES

1. Armed conflict and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law

Government data for the period 2000 to June 2001 reveals that internal displacement is mainly caused by “generalised threats” (44 per cent). This is followed by armed confrontations involving the irregular armed groups and the armed forces (15 per cent), massacres (9 per cent), specific threats (5 per cent), military occupation of villages by the armed groups (3 per cent), indiscriminate attacks (0.85 per cent) and forced recruitment (0.01 per cent).⁴¹ Some 46 per cent of interviewees stated that paramilitary forces were responsible for their displacement, followed by the insurgents (12 per cent) and the armed forces (0.65 per cent). More than one armed actor and “other actors” were considered responsible for 19 and 0.01 per cent of expulsions, respectively.⁴²

These figures indicate that forced internal displacement in Colombia is mainly caused by the irregular armed groups. In effect, the steady and substantial increase of displacement since 2000 has been directly related to escalation of the armed conflict. This became particularly evident after the ruptures of the peace talks between the government and the FARC and ELN in February and May 2002, respectively.

⁴¹ 20.4 per cent did not know or respond, 2.1 per cent mentioned different causes not included in the questionnaire, and 0.33 per cent had no knowledge of the cause. RSS, *Poblaciones y territorios afectados: causas y presuntos autores del desplazamiento*, at www.red.gov.co. Unpublished and preliminary RSS data for 2002 presents the following picture: “generalized threats” 57 per cent, armed confrontations 29.5 per cent, specific threats 6.2 per cent, massacres 4 per cent, military occupation of villages by the armed groups 0.3 per cent, forced recruitment 0.2 per cent and indiscriminate attacks 0.1 per cent. 2.7 per cent of interviewees did not know or did not respond.

⁴² The remaining 21.94 per cent did not know or respond. *Ibid.* The preliminary RSS data for 2002 ascribes 17 per cent of responsibility to the paramilitaries, 7.7 per cent to the insurgents, 0.5 per cent to the armed forces, 29.5 per cent to “other actors” and 32.4 per cent to more than one actor. 13.8 per cent did not know or respond. UNHCR estimates that the paramilitaries are causing 50 per cent of displacement and the insurgents 25 per cent. UNHCR, “Evaluation of UNHCR’s programme for internally displaced people in Colombia”, May 2003.

The FARC noticeably stepped up its military pressure on the government and began targeting urban areas more decisively. Many civilians were hurt and killed in bomb attacks, and electrical and telecommunication infrastructure, water reservoirs and roads suffered severe damage.⁴³ Moreover, the insurgents issued a nationwide death threat against mayors and municipal officials. Nine mayors who declined to resign have subsequently been killed.⁴⁴ After failing to assassinate President Uribe during his electoral campaign, the FARC attacked his inauguration ceremony with mortars.⁴⁵ At least two more assassination plots were uncovered by the security forces during the following months, during which armed encounters with the FARC increased in frequency and intensity.

The ELN, in turn, sought closer military cooperation with the FARC.⁴⁶ In December 2002, for example, a mixed FARC/ELN unit attacked a camp in the department of Bolívar, killing more than 30 paramilitary fighters.⁴⁷ Furthermore, ELN units continued to kidnap for ransom, detonated bombs in urban centres and blockaded whole regions, such as four municipalities in eastern Antioquia in January and the department of Arauca in February 2003.⁴⁸

Although the paramilitary forces experienced deep internal fissures during 2002, they continued to

consolidate and expand their control of large areas of the country.⁴⁹ In November 2002, the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) declared a unilateral ceasefire, and in December the government established a six-member commission to explore the possibility of entering into peace negotiations with the paramilitary groups.⁵⁰ However, the level of armed confrontation has not yet been appreciably reduced.

Civilians, especially labour and community leaders and suspected guerrilla collaborators, continue to be targeted and killed by paramilitaries, particularly those who did not accept the AUC ceasefire, as are members of youth gangs and other "undesirable elements".⁵¹ Colombia remains the world's most dangerous place for trade unionists. According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions' annual survey, in 2002 184 Colombian trade union members were murdered, accounting for 90 per cent of all such killings in Latin America and 86 per cent globally. Another 189 were threatened while nine disappeared and 27 were kidnapped.⁵² During the four months before this report was drafted, eighteen civilians, including three municipal officials, were targeted and killed by paramilitary forces in the municipality of Viotá (Cundinamarca).⁵³

In addition to numerous heavy clashes between paramilitary and FARC units, such in the department of Norte de Santander in April 2003, there have been armed confrontations between different paramilitary groups during the last months.⁵⁴ This appears to be related to the struggle

⁴³ Among the most shocking bombings were the attack on the El Nogal social club in Bogotá in February 2003, the bicycle bomb in the Fatima neighbourhood in Bogotá in April 2002 and attacks on shopping centres in the cities of Cúcuta and Medellín also in 2003.

⁴⁴ Vicepresidencia de la República, *Observatorio de DDHH y DIH* (Bogotá, 25 March 2003). During the whole of 2002, thirteen mayors and 62 municipal officials were killed. According to the Federation of Colombian Municipalities, 554 of the total of 1,098 mayors received death threats from the FARC. Ibid.

⁴⁵ The FARC's makeshift mortars missed their target and destroyed several houses of a poor Bogotá neighbourhood instead. Fourteen civilians were killed in the attack. Since August 2002, the authorities have thwarted a number of FARC attempts to assassinate President Uribe.

⁴⁶ See declaration by ELN commander Ramiro Vargas quoted in *El Tiempo*, 20 January 2003, p. 1/10. On the peace process with the ELN, see ICG Latin America report no. 2, *The Prospects for Peace with the ELN*, 4 October 2002.

⁴⁷ *El Tiempo*, 27 December 2003, p. 1/3.

⁴⁸ ICG interview, Arauquita, 15 May; *EL Tiempo*, 9 January 2003, p. 1/2; ELN, Communiqué from 7 February 2003, at www.eln-voces.com

⁴⁹ Among the newly penetrated areas were parts of the former DMZ and of the departments of Arauca, Cundinamarca, Guaviare, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo, Sucre and Valle del Cauca. See the forthcoming ICG report on the paramilitary forces.

⁵⁰ See the forthcoming ICG report on the paramilitaries.

⁵¹ In its latest report, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia states that as part of an effort to gain legitimacy and improve its image, the paramilitary leadership instructed its troops not to commit massacres among the civilian population. Instead, "the paramilitaries preferred selective assassinations and death threats". *Informe del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos sobre la situación de los derechos humanos en Colombia*, 24 February 2003, p. 14.

⁵² ICFTU Survey 2003: "Latin America and the Caribbean – Trade Unionists in the Firing Line", at www.icftu.org.

⁵³ *El Tiempo*, 24 June 2003.

⁵⁴ *El Tiempo*, 5 June 2003, p. 1/6.

within the paramilitary camp, underway for more than a year and exacerbated by differences over possible peace negotiations with the government. The armed forces and the police have also stepped up their pressure on the paramilitaries. Some 600 fighters were captured or killed during the first five months of 2003, numerous drug-processing laboratories were destroyed and some key members were arrested.⁵⁵

President Uribe's inauguration marked a sharp change in policy toward the irregular armed groups. From the start the new administration made clear that it was prepared to begin peace talks with the armed groups only after they had entered into a ceasefire. It also showed determination to confront the irregular armed groups and re-establish the state's presence and authority across the country. The government declared a state of public unrest, created a network of civilian informants, levied a one-time "security tax", established three Rehabilitation and Consolidation Zones (RCZs), began training highly mobile elite forces and peasant soldiers and strengthened military and police presence along the most important highways.⁵⁶

In April 2003, the Uribe administration submitted an anti-terrorist bill to parliament.⁵⁷ Basically, this

initiative aims at providing the authorities with a permanent legal base from which to confront the threat posed by irregular armed groups. The bill, which is being debated in both houses of parliament, contemplates an amendment of Articles 15, 28 and 250 of the political constitution in order to provide the authorities power to intercept communications, conduct house searches and arrest individuals without a judicial warrant. The Attorney General's office, in turn, would be empowered to create special judicial police units including members of the armed forces, the Department of Administrative Security (DAS) and the police.⁵⁸ The measure has drawn criticism from both local and international human rights organisations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia, and some diplomatic missions.⁵⁹

Eleven months after taking office, President Uribe continues to enjoy unusually high approval ratings.⁶⁰ This is certainly a reflection of the general feeling among Colombians that the government is committed to confronting the irregular armed groups and is capable of producing results.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the many internal displacements through the first half of 2003 show that the intensification of the conflict has produced increased civilian suffering. This means that the government's efforts to improve security have not yet protected the most vulnerable sectors of society.

The latest report of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in Colombia shows that during 2002 violations of human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) increased.⁶² The document reports a rise in violations of civil and political rights by the armed forces and police. Among the most affected were the rights to life, physical integrity, liberty and due process. This is specifically attributed to the new

⁵⁵ For illustration, following Uribe's taking of office, the armed forces destroyed twenty paramilitary-run drug laboratories in the department of Nariño. ICG interview, 17 April 2003, Tumaco. In early June 2003, the Seventh Army Brigade engaged in combat with paramilitary forces in the department of Meta. A few days earlier, eleven fighters of the Peasant Self-Defence Forces of Meta and Vichada were killed in clashes with the army. This incident temporarily interrupted the exploratory talks between the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, and that paramilitary group, which accused the army of killing under-age youngsters who were about to be handed over to the authorities. Judicial police later established that no children were among the dead fighters. *El Tiempo*, 10 June 2003, pp. 1/4 and 1/7.

⁵⁶ The RCZs, three of which were created under the state of public unrest but have since been abolished for constitutional reasons, formed a core part of the Uribe administration's "democratic security policy". Among their main features were enhanced military presence and the empowerment of military officers, who acted as governors and mayors, to control the carrying of weapons and the movement of people and vehicles. See ICG Briefing, *Will Uribe's Honeymoon Last?*, op. cit; ICG visit to Arauca, 15-17 May 2003.

⁵⁷ *Proyecto de acto legislativo no. 223-2003 Camera* (Bogotá, s.d.).

⁵⁸ See the forthcoming ICG briefing paper on constitutional reforms.

⁵⁹ ICG interview, Bogotá, May 2003.

⁶⁰ According to a survey conducted by Opinometro in five cities (sample of 700 adults) 78 per cent of Colombians see President Uribe in a favourable light. *El Tiempo*, 17 June 2003, p. 1/3.

⁶¹ In June 2003, the commander of the national police, General Teodoro Campo, stated that during the first five months of 2003 homicides had decreased by 20 per cent. Abductions decreased by 40 per cent. *The Miami Herald*, 3 June 2003.

⁶² UNHCHR, op. cit.

government's security policy and the measures implemented under the state of public unrest.

While UNHCHR recognizes that the Uribe administration has manifested a clear disposition to comply with constitutional and international obligations regarding human rights, it underlines that numerous public agents are either directly responsible for violations of human rights or have not acted appropriately to prevent them. The latter concerns refer specifically to state agents' tolerance of, support for and complicity with the paramilitaries.

Among the main victims of human rights abuses during 2002 were human rights defenders, trade union leaders, members of indigenous and afro-Colombian communities and peasants. According to CINEP, a Colombian NGO that maintains a data base on human rights and political violence, the armed and police forces were responsible for 1,030 arbitrary detentions, 100 extra-judicial executions, 89 threats and 41 acts of torture during 2002.⁶³

The escalation of the armed conflict since early 2002 also produced an appreciable increase in violations of IHL by the irregular armed groups. According to UNHCHR, increasing numbers of civilians have become victims of indiscriminate attacks, terrorist attacks, abductions and forced displacement.⁶⁴ Many of these violations were committed as part of the military strategies of the irregular armed groups and hence may constitute war crimes.

While UNHCHR reports that the number of massacres committed by the irregular armed groups has diminished during 2002, the number of conflict-related civilian deaths has increased. This is stated to be due to the continued and intensified practice of selective killings and social cleansing by the armed groups, especially the paramilitaries. All armed actors, including the armed forces, were found responsible for blockading civilians in order to prevent their (alleged) provisioning of an irregular armed group.

CINEP reports that the paramilitaries are responsible for 842 homicides of persons protected under IHL, 492 threats, 126 disappearances, 143 deaths of civilians in armed operations and 96 acts

of torture. The insurgents, including the FARC and ELN, but also the much smaller Popular Liberation Army (EPL), Revolutionary Guevarist Army (ERG) and Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People (ERP), are held responsible for 418 homicides of protected persons, the wounding of 501 persons in illicit acts of war, 411 threats and 205 civilian deaths in armed operations.⁶⁵ The Observatory of Human Rights and IHL of the vice president's office concurs with UNHCHR that during 2002 the number of massacre victims diminished. Contrary to UNHCHR, however, it states that the number of conflict-related victims also fell during that year.⁶⁶

2. Anti-personnel mines

The increasing employment of anti-personnel mines by the irregular armed groups, in particular the ELN and FARC, is part of the worsening of the conflict. According to the Mine Observatory of the vice president's office, during the first ten months of 2001, 243 mine incidents/accidents in 140 municipalities killed or maimed 162 persons. The most affected departments were Arauca (31 victims), Antioquia (22), Bolívar (22), Norte de Santander (16) and Cundinamarca (14). Slightly more than half the victims were soldiers and policemen, the rest civilians. The FARC were held responsible for 30 per cent of the incidents/accidents, the ELN for 26 per cent and the paramilitaries for 1.6 per cent. In about 40 per cent of incidents/accidents responsibility could not be established.⁶⁷

While there is no reliable data on anti-personnel mines laid in Colombia since the 1940s, it is estimated that today there are 100,000, distributed across 30 of the country's 32 departments.⁶⁸ A recent study conducted by the Mine Observatory in Bogotá and four departments concluded that during 2002 mine-affected regions increased by more than 50 per cent.⁶⁹ Although the bulk of mines continue

⁶³ CINEP, *Banco de Datos de derechos humanos y violencia política* (Bogotá, s.d.).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁶⁵ CINEP, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ Vicepresidencia de la República, *Observatorio de DDHH y DIH* (Bogotá, 21 March 2003).

⁶⁷ Vicepresidencia de la República, *Minas antipersonal en Colombia* (Bogotá, December 2001).

⁶⁸ Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM), at www.cccminas.org.co.

⁶⁹ The sample of departments included Antioquía, Boyacá, Cundinamarca and Quindío. Vicepresidencia de la República, *Estudios de evaluación del riesgo social y*

to be laid in rural areas, there is evidence that urban centres, including Bogotá and Medellín, are also becoming risk areas. Mines have been found near schools, houses and on pedestrian walks. Approximately 80 per cent of mine victims were between fifteen and 29 years old; some 10 per cent were children (five to fourteen). Owing to a fierce territorial dispute between the FARC and paramilitary forces, the department of Putumayo also has witnessed a sharp rise in mine incidents/accidents in 2003.⁷⁰

Although most victims of landmines are military and police personnel, it is clear that these weapons increasingly represent a grave threat to, and are causing great suffering among, civilians. Mines also disrupt normal economic and social activity, especially in rural areas, and cause displacement because inhabitants of affected municipalities prefer to leave instead of running a constant deadly risk. While there is no statistical information on mines as a factor driving internal displacement, ICG interviews in Norte de Santander have revealed that the existence of minefields or the fear that they could exist have led people to abandon their homes. This was illustrated by interviews in Cúcuta where a group of people returning to their village had walked into a minefield that had been laid by the FARC to stop the army and paramilitaries from entering the area.⁷¹

3. Unemployment, precarious social services and large economic projects

Although the armed conflict is the main cause for massive forced internal displacement in Colombia, socioeconomic factors also play a role. When asked by ICG the reasons for their displacement, IDPs in several parts of the country usually mentioned first a specific threat by an armed group or the perception that they and their families faced imminent danger. However, in many cases they added that their displacement had also been motivated by a desire to escape unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. This was confirmed

by government officials and members of the Catholic Church.⁷²

The latest UNDP report shows that Colombia has fallen back on the human development index from position 60 in 2000 to position 68 in 2002 (out of 173 countries).⁷³ Some 59 per cent of Colombians subsist beneath the poverty line, in rural areas, 83 per cent. In 2001, close to half the workforce was either unemployed (18.1 per cent) or underemployed (28.9 per cent).⁷⁴ Despite a significant increase in public social spending during the 1990s (from 8 to 14.5 per cent of GDP), Colombia barely is at the Latin American average. Only 51 per cent of the population has access to basic health services; 29 per cent are covered by a pension scheme; and 88, 52 and 26 per cent respectively have access to primary, basic secondary and secondary education. Close to three million children and adolescents (between five and fifteen) do not attend school.⁷⁵

Rural areas are further disadvantaged. For example, while 90 per cent of urban households have access to water, in rural areas coverage does not reach 60 per cent. There is also a marked difference between regions in coverage of basic social services. On the Atlantic coast, for example, only 43 per cent of the population has such access while 66 per cent in Bogotá do.⁷⁶ In Chocó, Colombia's poorest department, only 60 per cent of urban and 27 per cent of rural households are supplied water; 45 per cent of urban and less than 20 per cent of rural households are connected to a sewage system.⁷⁷ In 2001, close to 90 per cent of the economically active population of Chocó was either unemployed or under-employed (approximately 55 per cent) or received a monthly income below the minimum wage.⁷⁸

In other instances, people were forcibly expelled from their homes and farms for reasons related to the economic and strategic interests of the state (large infrastructure and energy projects) or

económico para la prevención de accidentes por minas antipersonal y artefactos explosivos abandonados (Bogotá, June 2003).

⁷⁰ *Diario del Sur*, 15 May; Vicepresidencia de la República, *Putumayo: aumentan registros por acción de las minas antipersonal durante el 2003* (Bogotá, May 2003); *El Tiempo*, 16 June 2003, p. 1/4.

⁷¹ ICG interviews, Cúcuta, 12 and 13 May 2003.

⁷² ICG interviews, Cúcuta and Arauca, 12 and 16 May 2003.

⁷³ UNDP Human Development Report

⁷⁴ Contraloría General de la República, *Colombia entre la exclusión y el desarrollo* (Bogotá, 2002), p. 177.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. XXV-XXVI.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. XXVI.

⁷⁷ Gobernación del Chocó, *Plan de desarrollo departamental, 2001-2003* (Quibdó, 2001).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

landowners and industrialists (agro-industrial enterprises).

During visits to Quibdó and Cúcuta, ICG heard sharp criticism from representatives of indigenous communities as well as members of the National Association of Afro-Colombian Women regarding several public infrastructure and energy projects in the department of Chocó and the Sarare region (encompassing parts of the departments of Arauca, Boyacá, Santander and Norte de Santander).⁷⁹ Their view was that the termination of the Pan-American Highway and the construction of the port of Tribugá (Pacific coast), hydro-electric plants and oil-wells would threaten their communities, and conflict would intensify because the armed groups would seek to obtain control over the new infrastructure.

They also doubted that these projects would improve the precarious socio-economic conditions since their objective was to foster the economic interests of entrepreneurs and industrialists in Medellín and Bogotá rather than development in poor and marginal regions. Instead, they expressed concern that the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities that are the collective owners of much of the land would be uprooted and displaced.

In some regions, agro-industrial developments have caused forced displacement. For example, in 1996 the eastward expansion of large-scale cattle ranching from the Urabá region in Antioquia to the northern parts of Chocó caused the displacement of approximately 15,000 to 17,000 farmers.⁸⁰ Similar displacements occurred with the introduction of African palm plantations in Chocó. In both cases, agro-industrial expansion went hand in hand with expansion of the paramilitary forces from Córdoba and Urabá towards the east and the south. In many instances, the paramilitaries cleared out the small peasant farmers to permit larger agricultural investments.

4. Illicit crop cultivation and aerial spraying

While it is difficult to establish a causal link between illicit crop cultivation/eradication measures and internal displacement, it is important not to lose sight of this problem. Illicit crop cultivation can be considered a source of

displacement because coca and poppy fields are disputed by the irregular armed groups. Peasant families are compelled to leave in order to escape the fighting that results when their lands are illegally seized by armed actors for the purpose of drug cultivation. There is evidence that aerial spraying, in turn, destroys not only illicit but also licit crops, especially where there is mixed cultivation. This jeopardises the livelihood of subsistence farmers who depend on coca cultivation as well as of those who cultivate both licit and illicit crops (or in some cases even of those who only cultivate licit crops).

However, it should be kept in mind that many coca-leaf pickers (the *raspachines*) neither are from the area where the crop is grown nor own the land. Rather, they form part of a large "floating population" that moves about the country, seeking employment in the agricultural sector.⁸¹ When there is a coca boom, not only *raspachines* come to work in the fields but also people from other trades. As coca cultivation began to extend widely in the Catatumbo region (Norte de Santander), small villages were transformed into large camps inhabited by coca-leaf pickers, salesmen, construction workers, bartenders and prostitutes.⁸² Implicitly, many who are compelled to leave a coca-producing region after spray and crop destruction cannot be considered IDPs as such.

While it is impossible to know to what precise degree aerial spraying forces displacement, ICG sources estimated that it was responsible for 15 per cent in the department of Putumayo during 2002.⁸³ CODHES gives the same figure for the whole country (40,000 individuals).⁸⁴ By comparison, the armed conflict is held responsible for 66 per cent of the cases in Putumayo during 2002.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ ICG interviews, Quibdo and Cúcuta, 2 and 12 May 2003.

⁸⁰ Pastoral Social, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

⁸¹ ICG interview, Bogotá, 23 April 2003.

⁸² ICG sources in Cúcuta said that up to 400 prostitutes came to the Catatumbo region in order to profit from the coca boom. ICG interview, Cúcuta, 13 May 2003.

⁸³ ICG interview, Bogotá, 23 April 2003.

⁸⁴ "Destierro y repoblamiento", in *Boletín de la CODHES*, no. 44, 28 April 2003, p. 6.

⁸⁵ ICG interview, Bogotá, 23 April 2003. Of all coca-affected departments, Putumayo has seen the most significant reduction during 2002: 30,000 hectares, mostly eradicated through aerial spraying. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Colombia: Coca Survey for 2002", Preliminary report, March 2003.

III. OTHER ASPECTS OF THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

A. BESIEGED, BLOCKADED AND ISOLATED COMMUNITIES

The escalating conflict not only forces civilians to flee their homes but often traps them in the cross-fire, compelled to stay in the combat zone under siege from or blockaded by the armed groups, their lives in jeopardy because they are not allowed to move. While there are no figures as to how many communities are so affected, ICG interviews and other sources indicate that this is a problem of considerable scale.

For instance, most villages and small urban centres along the Atrato, Baudó and San Juan Rivers in the department of Chocó are controlled by the paramilitaries. The villages on the higher ground, in turn, are under siege from the insurgents (mostly FARC but also ELN and ERG). Both insurgents and paramilitaries have check-points on the rivers and roads to control the movement of people and goods. This makes it impossible for the inhabitants to move freely – even to locations close by – to carry out their normal farming, commercial and other activities. Consequently, their communities are suffering food shortages and cannot obtain other basic provisions, such as fuel, medicines and household items.

Families are torn apart since often some members live on the river and others in the mountains. Inhabitants who attempt to visit either the villages on the river or those in the mountains without permission from the armed groups run a serious risk of being branded guerrilla collaborators or paramilitary informants (*sapos*). In both cases the consequences could be fatal. Rationing by government forces of basic provisions and gasoline that the inhabitants of the region may transport further exacerbates this situation.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ For example, close to Quibdó the navy maintains a check-point on the Atrato River and controls the amount of petrol that is carried on boats. Inhabitants may only take with them the amount needed for the journey they have planned. If, for whatever reason, they carry more, the navy confiscates the petrol on grounds that it might end up in the hands of the irregular armed groups. ICG interview, Quibdó, 1 May 2003; communiqué of COCOMOPOCA/OREWA & Diocese of

There are other kinds of trapped communities. In the department of Norte de Santander, it is estimated that some 12,000 families are trapped in the rural Alto Bovalí region (municipalities of Carmen, Convención, Teorama and parts of Alto Tibú) because of fighting between paramilitary and FARC forces.⁸⁷ The latter have been encircled by the paramilitaries, and the civilians are caught in the crossfire, unable to escape either to the department of Cesar to the west or the departmental capital Cúcuta to the south. The FARC's attempts to break out, in turn, have caused displacements in southern areas of Norte de Santander that previously had been spared from the conflict.⁸⁸ According to UNHCR, a similar situation exists in the southern part of the department of Bolívar (Middle Magdalena Valley).⁸⁹

Another scenario involves communities located in remote rural areas, reservations or national parks. These isolated communities have seen their already precarious survival jeopardised by the armed conflict and specifically the blockades. Before the war reached them, poverty and the lack of basic social services were notorious features of their life but people subsisted by forming health and education cooperatives. The armed conflict destroyed this precarious, self-sustained balance. Community leaders were killed and the inhabitants were unable to hunt and fish or seek medical and other assistance.

Representatives of the Regional Organization of the Embera and Wounaan (OREWA), an association of indigenous communities in the department of Chocó, told ICG that both the army and the irregular armed groups prevented them – on charges of being collaborators – from travelling on inter-departmental roads. They also accused the army of killing several indigenous persons during the first months of 2003. A similar situation was described by a member of the Motilones community in Norte de Santander.⁹⁰ Because of

Quibdó from 4 June 2003 on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Alto Atrato region and the municipalities of Lloró and Bagadó, Chocó.

⁸⁷ A similar situation was found by ICG in the region of Tame and Santo Domingo in the department of Arauca. ICG visit to Arauca, 15-16 May 2003.

⁸⁸ ICG interviews, Cúcuta, 12 and 13 May 2003.

⁸⁹ United Nations System Thematic Group on Internal Displacement, Humanitarian Action Plan: Colombia 2003 (Bogotá, February 2003), p. 43.

⁹⁰ ICG interviews, Quibdó and Cúcuta, 3 and 12 May 2003.

interference by the armed groups, medical and other aid missions organised by the local authorities or international aid agencies have failed on various recent occasions to reach isolated communities whose members are exposed to severe hardship and suffer from malnutrition and illness.⁹¹

B. CHILD SOLDIERS AND FORCED RECRUITMENT

It is estimated that up to 6,000 boys and girls form part of the rank and file of the irregular armed groups.⁹² On average, they are fourteen years old and mostly from poor peasant families, especially in the departments of Meta, Putumayo and Tolima.⁹³ Their duties range from working as cooks, messengers and cleaners to spying and fighting. Girls are often sexually abused; reduced to camp followers and when pregnant, compelled to abort.

While testimony indicates that most children are not physically pressed into irregular military service, their decision to leave homes and families and join the armed groups can surely not be described as totally voluntary. Rather, children attempt to escape ill-treatment and physical abuse by parents or relatives as well as poverty and the lack of educational opportunities. Out of fear, parents often do not resist the recruitment. In the department of Chocó, for example, the armed groups bully families into either planting coca or letting them take one or more of their sons. Boys

are also lured into joining by promises of wealth and a better life.⁹⁴

The desire for recognition and revenge, especially when the children have seen their families murdered or their houses destroyed, and a fancy for weapons and uniforms are other factors. Also, many children are used to the presence of, and have interacted on a daily basis with, irregular armed groups in their home villages. Joining one, therefore, is not an unusual step. Finally, there are child soldiers whose mothers are members of the insurgent organisations.

However, forced recruitment of children does occur. According to a report by the Office of the Colombian Ombudsman, some 14 per cent of child soldiers are believed to have been recruited forcibly by the guerrilla organisations.⁹⁵ The usual procedure is that a group of children is rounded up in a village and taken to the mountains. Forced recruitment by the paramilitary groups is considered to be even more extensive and systematic. In parts of the Middle Magdalena Valley, paramilitary organisations have established "obligatory military service". Testimonies indicate that children of not more than nine years have been forced to "serve" in the paramilitary ranks.⁹⁶

Parental fear of seeing their children recruited by the irregular armed groups, forcibly or not, is a cause of internal displacement. As a displaced woman said:

I had to come to Bogotá because I was afraid that the violent ones would – in retaliation against my husband – take away one of my children. I had noticed that they were telling nice stories to my oldest boy in order to have him come with them. And the little boy is only eleven years old.⁹⁷

⁹¹ For example, in April 2003 the FARC looted and burned food aid trucks of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) close to La Gabarra, Norte de Santander. *El Tiempo*, 16 April 2003, p. 1/16. According to the Ministry of Health, from 1998 to June 2002, 279 health workers were threatened by the irregular armed groups; 32 were killed while exercising their profession; two were wounded; two were declared military targets; 25 were detained; twenty health care units and eight ambulances were attacked; two ambulances were stolen; and two health care units were looted. Vicepresidencia de la República, *Observatorio de los Derechos Humanos en Colombia*, no. 23, September 2002.

⁹² Vicepresidencia de la República de Colombia, "Children and the Armed Conflict in Colombia" (Bogotá, 2001). According to a recent declaration by UNICEF spokesperson Damián Personas, there are more than 7,000 child soldiers serving in the ranks of the armed groups today. BBC, 13 June 2003.

⁹³ *El Tiempo*, 4 December 2002, p. 1/4.

⁹⁴ ICG interview, Quibdó, 23 May 2003.

⁹⁵ Quoted in UNICEF, ed., *El dolor oculto* (Bogotá, May 1999).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Quoted in *Convivencia con el desplazamiento forzado*, supplement of *El Tiempo*, 10 June 2003. While very few members of indigenous communities, children or adults, have joined the irregular armed groups, fear that their children would be recruited has led some indigenous families to leave their communities. ICG interviews, Quibdo, Cúcuta and Saravena, May 2003.

C. MISSING PERSONS

The disappearance of persons is a dramatic, if probably under-reported, aspect of the Colombian conflict. According to the Association of Relatives of Detained and Missing Persons (ASFADDES, in Spanish), disappearances have increased substantially over the past decade. While during 1994-99 the number of victims was below 500 each year, by 2001 it was 1,374. For the first ten months of 2002, ASFADDES reported 1,000 disappearances.

This slight reversal of the trend in 2002 is questioned by the Permanent Committee for Human Rights (CPDDHH, in Spanish), which claims that the level of forced disappearances was maintained during 2002.⁹⁸ According to ICG sources, two persons are currently disappeared per day in the city of Cúcuta alone.⁹⁹ In 2000, the ICRC documented 471 cases of missing persons, in 2001 680, in 2002 689 and during the first semester of 2003 206.¹⁰⁰ It should be noted that some of the missing persons may be abduction victims whose relatives have not been contacted by the kidnappers and of whom the authorities have no record.

D. COLOMBIAN REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ECUADOR, PANAMA, PERU AND VENEZUELA

The number of Colombians who have crossed into the neighbouring states has sharply increased over the last two years. It is estimated that 100,000 sought protection, temporary or on a more prolonged basis, from the armed conflict between 2000 and 2002. Only a fraction, however, requested or received the status of refugees or asylum seekers.¹⁰¹ According to UNHCR, Ecuador has had the largest increase in Colombian refugees and asylum seekers (up from 1,752 in December 2000 to 11,334 in March 2003), followed by Venezuela

(from 233 to 1,332), Panama (from 1,471 to 1,677) and Peru (from 694 to 845). The monthly pace of new asylum applications increased by more than 318 per cent between 2001 and 2003.¹⁰²

The main reasons for leaving the country are similar to those cited by IDPs: threats from the armed groups, massacres, selective killings and forced recruitment.¹⁰³ The conditions faced by Colombians who have fled to the neighbouring countries are also often comparable to those of IDPs. Many do not want to identify themselves and register with the authorities because they fear reprisals against their families back home, or against them when they return. Others fear that they will be deported or they will be threatened or harmed by the Colombian armed groups, who operate in some parts of the neighbouring countries.¹⁰⁴

Often without assistance from the host governments and in some cases also without help from international organisations such as an overstretched UNHCR, these refugees face severe hardships.¹⁰⁵ In April 2003 an estimated 1,000 Colombian civilians crossed the Venezuelan border to flee the heavy fighting between paramilitary and FARC units in Catatumbo. The Venezuelan side of the border is inhospitable and, except for a strong army presence, virtually without state institutions. With no other option, the refugees sought shelter in a mountainous area close to El Cruce, which is part of Theatre of Operations No. 2 of the Venezuelan army. Fearful of being detected by those troops, they were unable to move, either within Venezuela or back to Colombia, and barely survived in very harsh conditions.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁸ ASFADDES and CPDDHH figures quoted in Vicepresidencia de la República, *Observatorio del programa presidencial de DDHH y DIH* (Bogotá, March 2003).

⁹⁹ ICG interview, Cúcuta, 12 May 2003.

¹⁰⁰ Figures provided by ICRC, Bogotá. They only reflect the cases documented by ICRC since 2000 and are not indicative of a general trend.

¹⁰¹ See ICG Latin America Report no. 3, *Colombia and Its Neighbours: The Tentacles of Instability*, 8 April 2003.

¹⁰² UNHCR, Annual Statistical Reports 2000-2003 and Quarterly Statistical Reports 2001-2003.

¹⁰³ ICG Report, *Colombia and Its Neighbours*, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Deportations of Colombians from the neighbouring countries, especially Venezuela and Panama, are quite common, as evidenced by the forced return of 109 from Panama in April 2003. Some towns or areas in the border regions of Colombia's neighbours are known to be dangerous for Colombian refugees because of the presence of the armed groups. One such location is San Antonio in Venezuela. *El Tiempo*, 24 April 2003, p. 1/8; ICG interview, Cúcuta, 13 May 2003.

¹⁰⁵ In general Ecuador provides Colombian refugees better assistance than Panama or Venezuela.

¹⁰⁶ ICG interviews, Cúcuta and Bogotá, May 2003.

In response to the worsening refugee crisis, UNHCR has developed and is implementing protection and assistance programs in Venezuela, Panama and Ecuador, especially in the border regions. While UNHCR already has an ample presence in Ecuador (offices in eight locations and regular missions to others), it is working on opening, in addition to the existing office in San Cristobal (Tachira), two more in the border states of Apure and Zulia in Venezuela. A liaison office in Panama is planned for 2004. UNHCR's partners in the implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) for refugees in Venezuela and Panama are Caritas and various other humanitarian agencies of the Catholic Church.¹⁰⁷

IV. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

A. ASSISTANCE AND THE PRIORITY OF RETURN

IDP assistance policy in Colombia dates back to 1995 when the administration of President Ernesto Samper (1994-98) formulated the first comprehensive program.¹⁰⁸ In 1997, Law 387 entered into effect,¹⁰⁹ defining an IDP as a person who has been displaced by acts of violence and stipulating preventive measures and assistance, including for return and resettlement. The law created the National System of Integral Assistance to the Population Displaced by Violence (SNAIPD), which is composed of nineteen state agencies and is charged with assisting IDPs in emergency situations and in the process of their return or resettlement.¹¹⁰

From the beginning, Colombia's IDP policy has focused on preventing internal displacement, providing emergency assistance and creating the conditions for voluntary return. Only in exceptional cases, for example when security and safety could not be guaranteed, would the government consider resettling IDPs in new locations. While this policy has not been modified substantially, there have been institutional changes as a result of SNAIPD's operational difficulties and limited initial achievements.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Departamento Nacional de Planeación, *Programa nacional de atención integral a la población desplazada por violencia* (Bogotá, 13 September 1995).

¹⁰⁹ Law 387 of 1997, in *Diario Oficial*, no. 43,091 (Bogotá, 24 July 1997)

¹¹⁰ The state agencies that form part of the SNAIP are: the national narcotics council, the presidential advisory bodies on social policy and human rights, the ombudsman's office, the national directorate for the prevention of and attention to disasters, the Colombian institute for family wellbeing, INCORA, INURBE, the ministries of defence, interior, health, education, agriculture and economic development, the office of the high commissioner for peace, RSS and SENA.

¹¹¹ Basically, the SNAIPD had great difficulties in coordinating the actions of nineteen state agencies and responding swiftly to IDP emergencies. Departamento de Planeación Nacional, *Plan de acción para la prevención y atención del desplazamiento forzado* (Bogotá, 10 November 1999).

¹⁰⁷ UNHCR fact sheets provided to ICG in May 2003.

The most important changes included putting the Social Solidarity Network (RSS) in charge of coordinating the SNAIPD activities. The National Fund for the Assistance of Displaced Population and the National Registry of Displaced Population also were transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to RSS. In addition, RSS and UNHCR set up a Joint Technical Unit (JTU) to improve the performance and effectiveness of operations. A number of new RSS offices were opened across the country. Today, RSS headquarters in Bogotá runs 32 of these, one in each department.¹¹²

The Uribe administration's response to the humanitarian crisis is embedded in its policy of re-establishing security and the democratic authority of the state throughout Colombia. This approach is based on the premise that the prevention of new displacement and the return of IDPs, which are seen as priorities, can only be achieved if the state is able to reduce citizens' vulnerability to the armed groups and safeguard their fundamental rights. The government has pledged to work strongly towards preventing displacement by protecting citizens, providing emergency assistance to IDPs, creating the conditions for their safe return and strengthening the SNAIPD.¹¹³ It also stated its commitment to human rights and the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, launched an assistance program for victims of violence and two large food security and housing programs.¹¹⁴

The assistance program for victims of violence contains measures such as compensation payments for the loss of family members and property in attacks and communal development and reconstruction.¹¹⁵ The food security program aims at reaching 600,000 families (three million persons) by 2006, and the housing program focuses on improving rural living quarters.¹¹⁶ Further prevention and protection

measures as perceived by the government included the RCZs, the return of police to 260 municipalities, the peasant soldiers, educational and psychological assistance and the improvement of the Early Warning System (EWS).¹¹⁷

In the area of emergency assistance, the government sees it as a priority to provide victims of displacement, especially women and children, immediately with the necessary items and services to cover their basic needs. During the post-emergency phase it aims at providing IDPs temporarily with shelter, health care and food aid. RSS continues to be in charge of coordinating the government's response to internal displacement on the national and regional level. However, the Uribe administration's humanitarian policy contemplates improving cooperation between the state agencies that form part of the SNAIPD through regular

and the housing program at U.S.\$7 million. ICG interview, Bogotá, 1 July 2003.

¹¹⁷ The EWS was established with support from USAID and is based at, and coordinated by, the People's Ombudsman's office. It seeks to prevent massive violations of human rights and IHL, such as forced internal displacement or massacres. Twelve regional offices monitor the evolution of the armed conflict. 157 alerts were issued by the EWS between June 2001 and November 2002. Following restructuring in late 2002, 21 risk assessments were issued. The restructuring of the EWS and the creation of an Early Warning Inter-Institutional Committee (IC) at the interior ministry was due to the shortcomings of the original system. While there were 144 responses by military civilian authorities to the 157 warnings issued between June 2001 and November 2002, the armed forces criticised the many alerts put out by the Ombudsman's office and expressed concern that they could be ambushed when responding to an early warning. The IC's task is to cross-reference risk assessments issued by the Ombudsman's office with intelligence information provided by the interior ministry, DAS and the armed and police forces. Based on this analysis an alert has to be issued, or not, within 24 hours, and local/departmental civilian and military authorities must take action. While the new institutional arrangement aims at improving the EWS and the government's response capability, a number of problems persist. For example, the IC takes too long to assess a risk and, consequently, the average response time is 6.9 days (far too long as became brutally evident in the case of the massacre in Bellavista, Chocó on 2 May 2002). Further, the IC lacks the necessary political clout to get the state institutions, especially the military, to act. There is also a degree of distrust between the IC and the Ombudsman's Office, which does not form part of the government and in part relies on information from NGOs. Finally, most IDPs leave their homes individually or in small groups. The EWS cannot detect or prevent small-scale forced displacement since it is designed to warn about massive imminent threat of human rights and IHL violations.

¹¹² Ibid.; ICG interview, Quibdo, 2 May 2003.

¹¹³ Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2003-2006.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.; ICG interview, Bogotá, 1 July 2003.

¹¹⁵ RSS, *Victimas de la violencia, desplazamiento* (Bogotá, s.d.).

¹¹⁶ The food security and housing programs are not focused specifically on IDPs. They are designed to provide assistance to all vulnerable persons or families, regardless of whether they are displaced. Private sector associations, such as the Federation of Coffee-Growers, are involved in the programs, providing funds and helping with implementation. The food security program is budgeted at U.S.\$70 million (roughly half of which has been raised)

meetings of the National Council for Displacement and the generation of more and better information.¹¹⁸ It also emphasises the need for a more decentralised approach by involving all levels of government in policy formulation and implementation.

Facilitating the return of IDPs is a humanitarian policy priority of the Uribe administration. A pilot project has been designed which aims at returning 30,000 families (150,000 individuals) by 2006. Under this scheme, the government provides returnees with housing subsidies, supports income-generating projects and promotes vocational training and the assignation of land titles. Special emphasis is given to establishing productive associations in returnee communities and involving private enterprise and NGOs in the resettlement and stabilisation process.¹¹⁹

B. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH IDP ASSISTANCE AND RETURN

Considering the magnitude of Colombia's humanitarian crisis and the government's limited capacity to respond in the midst of the escalating armed conflict, it is perhaps not surprising that achievements so far have been few and many problems persist.¹²⁰ In the words of UNHCR:

¹¹⁸ The NCD is presided over by a delegate of the president. It is integrated by the presidential adviser on displacement, or a delegate, the ministers, or their delegates, of the interior, finance, defence, health, agriculture and rural development and economic development, the director of the national planning office, the people's ombudsman, the presidential advisers on human rights and social policy and the high commissioner for peace. Law 387, article II/6. However, during the first eleven months of the Uribe administration, the Council has not met. ICG interview, Bogotá, 1 July 2003.

¹¹⁹ Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, op. cit.; ICG interviews, Quibdó and Cúcuta, 2 and 12 May 2003.

¹²⁰ The RSS budget for 2003 is U.S.\$30 million. According to the director of RSS, this means that the budget has been restored since it was reduced to U.S.\$ 7 million at the end of the previous administration. The funds for the large-scale food security and housing programs as well as for the victims of violence and health and education programs, projected at U.S.\$1 billion, are still being raised. The Uribe administration hopes to obtain them from the anticipated savings from streamlining the state bureaucracy (called for under a pending government reform referendum) and oil royalties. ICG interview, Bogotá, 1 July 2003.

[During 2002] the emergency response has been largely inadequate with a coverage of only 43 per cent, leaving 53 per cent of all newly displaced persons with no access to relief assistance from the government, ICRC, the UN or any other organisations.¹²¹

RSS data reveals that 61 per cent of IDPs received no government assistance over the period January 2000 to June 2001.¹²² This was said to be due to the non-registration of IDPs who did not fit the criteria of Law 387, decided not to register or returned shortly after their displacement.

However, it has to be assumed that many IDPs who by law would have been entitled to government assistance still did not receive any support. Evidence for this can be found in a Constitutional Court decision describing how a large group of families from rural areas in Chocó had fled to the department's capital Quibdó where they were not assisted by RSS. In consequence, they peacefully occupied two municipal buildings and, finding that the conditions were unbearable, submitted a legal claim for protection of their fundamental rights (*tutela*) against RSS. The Court ruled in favour of the IDPs, establishing that it was RSS responsibility to provide appropriate living quarters, the opportunity to send their children to school, assistance from the Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing (ICBF), health care and funds to set up productive projects.¹²³

Although RSS states that the government's return program has made it possible for 7,218 families to return home during the last ten months, compelling evidence indicates that this battle is by no means won.¹²⁴ The return of the people of Bellavista, located in the municipality of Bojayá, Chocó, is illustrative. On 2 May 2003, the village commemorated the first anniversary of the killing of 119 civilians, among them 46 children, during

¹²¹ UNHCR, "Evaluation of UNHCR's programme for IDPs in Colombia", op. cit., p. 1.

¹²² Only 30 per cent of persons who displaced themselves individually or in small groups received government assistance during the first eleven months of the Uribe administration. RSS, *Población y territorios afectados: demanda de atención al Estado Colombiano*, at www.red.gov.co; RSS, *Victimas de la violencia, desplazamiento*, op. cit.

¹²³ Corte Constitucional, *Sentencia T-098/02* (Bogotá, 14 February 2002).

¹²⁴ ICG interview, Bogotá, 1 July 2003.

combat between FARC and paramilitary units. The civilians had sought shelter in the church of Bellavista when they were hit by a makeshift FARC mortar.¹²⁵ Following this, 1,900 inhabitants fled in panic, most first to Vigía del Fuerte on the other side of the Atrato River and then to the capital of Chocó, Quibdó. One year later, 1,200 have returned to Bellavista.

However, despite promises of reparation and reconstruction made by then President Andrés Pastrana and, after the change of government in August 2002, by Vice President Francisco Santos, nothing has changed. The planned relocation of the destroyed village has not materialised, and only a small part of the promised U.S.\$3.5 million in aid has been disbursed owing to red tape.¹²⁶

The Bellavista case exemplifies the core problem with the return policy: the government has great difficulty providing the conditions for a return that would give people a real chance to rebuild and improve their lives. This is mainly related to a lack of funds, corruption, security problems, overburdening of RSS and coordination problems between the municipal, departmental and national government levels as well as between the state institutions that comprise the SNAIDP.¹²⁷ For example, while RSS is responsible for organising distribution of food parcels and an income generating kit (seeds, tools, and the like) to returnees for a one to three-month period after their return, the municipalities are responsible for providing basic social services such as health care and schooling.¹²⁸ However, the municipalities are often unable to meet their obligations because they lack the funds and social infrastructure. In other cases, the mayor and municipal officials are not in

the municipalities because they have been threatened by the FARC.

Another set of difficulties is related to food aid for returnees. Generally, this is bought by RSS in Bogotá and then transported to the returnee communities.¹²⁹ On several occasions, food aid trucks were unable to reach their destination because they were stopped and looted by the irregular armed groups. Also, since the food is not bought locally, it does not always match the diets of the recipients and may go to waste.

IDPs often perceive the risks in returning as high. Thus, many of those interviewed by ICG expressed fear that an army escort would lead to attacks or retaliation from the insurgents.¹³⁰ This is why returnees prefer civilian accompaniment, by NGOs, the Church or the Ombudsman's office. In many cases, IDPs also distrust the authorities. From their interaction with the local RSS office, they know that it is the government's priority to return IDPs and not necessarily to improve living conditions in their home villages. Hence, they fear that the authorities neither will provide the promised resettlement aid nor make social investments they requested as a condition for their return.¹³¹ Finally, many IDPs have nothing to go back to.¹³² For them returning would only mean a real change if the government effectively provided housing subsidies, land titles and the means to generate an income, i.e. the stated central components of the return policy.¹³³

¹²⁵ See *Semana*, 13-20 May 2003, pp. 32-43.

¹²⁶ *Cambio*, 21-28 April 2003, pp. 30-32; *El Tiempo*, 2 May 2003, p. 1/16; RSS, *Red de Solidaridad trabaja por la recuperación de Bojayá* (Bogotá, 20 May 2003).

¹²⁷ ICG interviews, Quibdó and Cúcuta, May 2003.

¹²⁸ RSS cooperates with NGOs to deliver emergency, post-emergency and resettlement assistance to IDPs. The municipalities are supposed to be supported by departmental secretaries, including those for health, education, and sanitation. However, cooperation between the municipalities and the governments of the departments often does not work. For example, funds are not disbursed either because they have not been assigned to the departments by the central government or because they "vanish" in the departmental administrations. ICG interviews Tumaco and Quibdó, March and May 2003.

¹²⁹ The reason for this is to avoid shortages in the regions where the food is distributed.

¹³⁰ IDPs in Cúcuta stated that they believed the paramilitaries, in complicity with the army, were using returns as a means to gain control over territory. This is why they feared they would be attacked by the insurgents. ICG interviews, Cúcuta, 12 May 2003.

¹³¹ In effect, an RSS official in Cúcuta stated that IDPs who had made their return conditional upon public social investment in their home village were asking for too much since "they had never had anything". The implication was why give it to them now?

¹³² According to RSS, only one third of IDPs own land. RSS, *Victimas de la violencia, desplazamiento*, op. cit.

¹³³ This point is confirmed by the fact that Afro-Colombian IDPs in Chocó, who own land, are more inclined to return than IDPs in Cúcuta, for example. ICG interviews, Quibdó and Cúcuta, May 2003.

V. THE ROLE OF HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES

A. NATIONAL AGENCIES

The Catholic Church, through the Pastoral Social, and the Colombian Red Cross are the most important non-governmental humanitarian actors in Colombia.

Pastoral Social monitors and maintains a registry of internal displacement.¹³⁴ Dioceses across the country provide support to IDPs by strengthening organisations that defend the rights of indigenous and Afro-Colombian people, such as OREWA and the Integral Peasant Association of the Atrato (ACIA). There are also Church reception centres for IDPs, such as the *Centro de Migración* in Cúcuta. In these, displaced persons and families are provided with emergency and, temporarily, post-emergency assistance. Missionaries visit and stay in villages threatened by the armed groups. In emergencies, Pastoral Social organises aid operations, supplying blockaded and isolated communities with food and other basic provisions.¹³⁵

Members of the Church are also involved in the return operations. They form part of the return committees organised by RSS and the municipalities. In order to guarantee a safe return, Church verification commissions visit the first and then accompany the returnees. If there are armed groups in the areas, Church members engage them in humanitarian talks aimed at reducing any risk for the returnees. The Church also promotes the interests of returnees by reminding the authorities to comply with their resettlement obligations.

Despite being generally perceived and treated as a neutral actor, the Church has experienced difficulties in carrying out humanitarian work. For example, in 2002 the FARC looted the boat used by the dioceses of Quibdó to supply the community

shops on the Atrato River. To increase protection, the Church seeks to cooperate closely with international organisations in its humanitarian operations.¹³⁶ As part of the escalation of the armed conflict, priests and missionaries are increasingly threatened. The figures are alarming: 36 members of the Catholic Church assassinated since 1995, sixteen in 2001 and 2002 alone, and 82 protestant priests assassinated between 2000 and 2002.¹³⁷

In cooperation with the ICRC and a number of national Red Cross associations, the Colombian Red Cross (CRC) provides emergency assistance to IDPs.¹³⁸ Civilians affected by the armed conflict receive food and non-food aid, such as blankets and medicines. For example, the CRC's Chocó section played an important role in evacuating wounded inhabitants after the Bojayá massacre.

It also helped to stabilise Las Mercedes community, 30 minutes from Quibdó. This community had already been displaced three times owing to threats from the irregular armed groups. The CRC designed a program geared at preventing a fourth displacement. This program, funded by the Dutch Red Cross and helped by the World Food Programme (WFP), focused on community development, training of the inhabitants in human rights and peaceful living together. It also provided psychological assistance to children who suffered from war-induced trauma. According to the CRC representative in Quibdó, it has prevented another forced displacement because it enabled participants to resist pressure from the irregular armed groups.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ ICG interview, Quibdó, 2 May 2003.

¹³⁷ Vicepresidencia de la República, *Observatorio de DDHH y DIH: informe marzo 2003/Religiosos* (Bogotá, 25 March 2003)

¹³⁸ The CRC maintains 31 regional sections and has cooperation agreements with the ICRC and the Red Cross associations of Spain, France, Holland, Sweden, Canada, Norway and the United States.

¹³⁹ While the strengthening of community structures and the empowerment of the inhabitants appear to have been important elements of this success, continued accompaniment by the CRC also played a role. For example, on several occasions FARC fighters appeared in the village after the program had been launched. Two community leaders assumed the task of speaking to them, explaining that the community was not involved with any of the armed groups and that it would not give in to pressures to leave. When the problem could not be solved in this manner, the CRC in Quibdó was informed and CRC personnel went to Las Mercedes and also spoke to the

¹³⁴ On a regular basis, Pastoral Social publishes analysis and information about internal displacement in the RUT bulletin.

¹³⁵ For example, the diocese of Quibdó regularly supplied a network of shops in villages on the Atrato River with basic provisions. Because the boat which was especially acquired for this purpose was damaged, this operation had to be stopped. ICG interview, Quibdó, 2 May 2003.

B. INTERNATIONAL/MULTILATERAL AGENCIES

In late 2002, the United Nations in Colombia began to design and implement its Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP).¹⁴⁰ Given that the humanitarian efforts of the UN agencies in Colombia had suffered from fragmentation and dispersion, this initiative represented an important step in tackling the deteriorating humanitarian situation. The HAP is a strategy document that seeks to increase the coordinated humanitarian response capacity of the UN system in Colombia in five areas:

- strengthening of institutions;
- prevention of forced displacement and protection of IDPs;
- social and economic integration and reconstruction;
- food security; and
- assistance in health, education and family wellbeing.¹⁴¹

Priority is assigned to preventing further displacement and to post-emergency assistance. The HAP also serves as an instrument for raising funds for humanitarian assistance among the international donor community.¹⁴²

insurgents. So far, the community has managed to stay. ICG interview, Quibdó, 1 May 2003.

¹⁴⁰ SNU/Grupo Temático de Desplazamiento, *Plan de Acción Humanitaria: Colombia 2003* (Bogotá, February 2003).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* The HAP includes: *institutional strengthening of the SNAIPD* through technical assistance and training at national and local levels; *prevention of displacement and protection of population* and communities affected by the armed conflict and the humanitarian crisis by providing basic social services, promoting early warning systems and providing identification documents for individual IDPs; *economic and social integration of IDPs* in a new setting through fostering social investment, income generation and housing; *integral attention to health care, education and family wellbeing* by improving the diets of children and women; promoting local food production; and improving teacher training and school supplies; and guaranteeing *food security* in displaced and risk communities by supplying basic food aid, especially to women and children, promoting local food markets, and facilitating access to land and land titles.

¹⁴² ICG interview, Bogotá, 14 May 2003. Thus far in 2003, total contributions to the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency

The HAP does not narrowly focus on emergency assistance to IDPs. Rather, it seeks to contribute to guaranteeing the respect for, and the protection of, the rights of the population affected by the armed conflict and respond to the humanitarian crisis in an integral and flexible manner. This means that attention is to be given to IDPs as defined in Law 387 but also to intra-urban and intra-municipality displacement, blockaded, besieged, isolated and receiving communities, child soldiers and anti-personnel mines. The UN wants the HAP not to replace state action but rather to complement and coordinate the efforts of the government – in particular RSS – and of the Red Cross movement and other humanitarian organisations.

The Thematic Group on Displacement (TGD) – chaired by UNHCR (with the support of OCHA) and comprised of mostly UN agencies – is in charge of designing and implementing the HAP.¹⁴³ The TGD produces regular reports on internal displacement. These documents are characterised by a high level of analysis and in-depth information about the situation of IDPs across the country owing to the inputs from the field offices of the UN agencies. The newly created Inter-agency Information Centre on the Humanitarian Situation supports the TGD in the analysis, systematisation and publication of information on the humanitarian situation.¹⁴⁴ Progress evaluation of the HAP is another responsibility of the TGD.

Appeal for humanitarian assistance for Colombia amount to U.S.\$6,615,585, 10.6 per cent of the projected total of U.S.\$ 62,387,897. The largest donor is the United States (52.91 per cent), followed by Japan (25.84 per cent), Switzerland (5.56 per cent), Norway (4.2 per cent), Canada (2.74 per cent) and Sweden (1.78 per cent). Additional humanitarian assistance for Colombia outside of the framework of the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal amounts to U.S.\$ 10,100,765, the great bulk of which has been contributed by the European Commission (U.S.\$ 8,611,410); Canada contributed U.S.\$828,026 and Switzerland U.S.\$661,329 (all figures as of 7 July 2003). In 2002, Germany contributed 1,310,000 Euros in bilateral humanitarian aid for Colombia; Finland, Spain and Austria gave 300,000 Euros, 110,000 Euros and 10,000 Euros, respectively. See www.reliefweb.int and <http://europa.eu.int>.

¹⁴³ The following agencies participate in the TGD: FAO, UNPF, IOM, UNHCHR, UNDCP, OPS-WHO, UNIDO, WFP, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFW. ECHO and the JTU-RSS participate as observers SNU/GTD, HAP, op. cit. See glossary of acronyms at Appendix B.

¹⁴⁴ The Information Centre produces monthly reports on the humanitarian situation and assistance measures of the

An example of HAP implementation on the local level is the Pilot Plan (PP) for Humanitarian Action in the Middle Magdalena region. It was launched at the end of 2002 and is projected to last through 2003. Currently, fourteen projects are being implemented in the five core areas of the HAP.

- A local TGD is in charge of improving coordination between the four agencies of the UN system with a permanent presence in the region: UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UNDP and WFP. The first two are developing a strategy geared at strengthening the Centres for Community Assistance to IDPs and community structures in general.¹⁴⁵ UNDP is building up an Inter-agency Documentation Centre which aims at providing the SNAIPD and the UN agencies with information on IDPs as well as pertinent literature on the topic.
- UNHCR is leading a registration campaign, expanding the area of coverage to at risk communities in the municipalities of Santa Rosa and Morales. In cooperation with UNHCHR, it is conducting fact-finding missions to at risk communities, such as those in the Catatumbo region (Norte de Santander).
- UNHCR and IOM are continuing with the implementation of a rice cultivation project in Carmen del Cucu in the municipality of San Pablo that was begun by RSS. WFP is also contributing to this project.
- IOM is evaluating psychosocial assistance programs, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) is working on incorporating models of prevention of gender, domestic and sexual violence. In cooperation with IOM, the Church and the community of Canaletal, UNHCR is establishing a rural secondary school in San Pablo.

- WFP is implementing a pilot food security program for risk population in Micoahumado and the Catatumbo region.¹⁴⁶

The humanitarian aid office (ECHO) of the European Union's Commission has been active in Colombia since 1993. Six general plans have been implemented since 1997, involving more than 40 million Euros in humanitarian aid. ECHO has financed relief operations and post-emergency projects for war-affected population, in particular IDPs, as well as emergency operations for victims of natural disasters, such as the 1999 earthquake in the coffee belt. In 2002 and 2003, the European Commission granted 9.2 million Euros and 8 million Euros respectively in humanitarian aid to Colombia.¹⁴⁷

The main focus of ECHO's activities in Latin America continues to be the Colombian crisis and assisting IDPs. ECHO aims at providing short-term emergency assistance and protection to IDPs as well as promoting the social integration of IDPs in receiving communities.¹⁴⁸ The first includes distributing food parcels, bed sheets, cooking sets and hygiene products; the latter comprises the construction of small-scale water supply systems and latrines, the provision of health care, housing and psychosocial support and assistance in the development of small-scale income-generating activities.

ECHO's main partners in Colombia are the ICRC and UNHCR (emergency aid and protection; co-sponsor of the UN Inter-agency Information Centre on the Humanitarian Situation); NGOs (economic and social integration and reconstruction, including psychosocial assistance, housing, food for highly vulnerable groups, such as women, children and the elderly); and the national associations of the Red Cross movement (mobile health units in blockaded regions).¹⁴⁹ The work of ECHO focuses on the four regions (fifteen departments) with the highest incidence of forced internal displacement. Lately, ECHO has also begun

government, foreign governments and international/multilateral organisations. It also elaborates technical studies on issues related to the humanitarian crisis.

¹⁴⁵ IOM and UNDP are supporting this project in Bucaramanga, Santander.

¹⁴⁶ SNU/TGD, HAP, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

¹⁴⁷ It is possible that during 2003 additional funds will be approved. ICG interview, Bogotá, May 2003; European Commission, "Commission grants EUR 8 million in humanitarian aid for Colombia" (Brussels, 11 March 2003).

¹⁴⁸ European Commission, "ECHO Aid Strategy 2003" (Brussels, s.d.).

¹⁴⁹ ICG interview, Bogotá, May 2003.

to give attention to Colombian refugees in the neighbouring countries.¹⁵⁰

In 2001, USAID launched a five-year, US\$173 million IDP assistance program in Colombia (2001-2005).¹⁵¹ The program is designed to offer medium and long-term assistance to IDPs in 25 departments. The focus is on health services, psychosocial care, education and school improvement, community organisation, housing and income-generating measures, including micro credits, the building up of micro enterprises, job training and return/resettlement support. USAID's program partners are RSS, the Pan-American Development Foundation, IOM, World Vision, UNICEF, Profamilia, the Cooperative Housing Foundation and UNHCHR.

In addition, USAID is implementing a five-year program (2001-2005) for the rehabilitation of former child combatants. Cooperating with ICBF and Save the Children UK, USAID is supporting four specialised attention centres and has opened three additional centres and four transit homes. A database for program control and follow-up has been created for ICBF.

ICRC has been present in Colombia since 1980 and maintains seventeen offices covering all regions affected by the humanitarian crisis. Its activities are focused on protection, emergency relief, basic health provision and promotion of IHL. In the years 2000, 2001, and 2002 and between January and April 2003, ICRC assisted 123,651, 107,572, 179,142 and 45,477 IDPs respectively with food aid and non-food aid, such as cleaning and kitchen kits, dishes, blankets and mattresses.¹⁵²

Lastly, a large number of domestic and international NGOs, such as Corporación Buen Ambiente, Project Counselling Service (PCS), Plan International (PI), Doctors without Borders and Oxfam, and humanitarian organisations of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches, such as Caritas and Diakonisches Werk, provide emergency and post-emergency assistance to IDPs as well as humanitarian aid in general. Their activities include giving food aid, setting up and maintaining community kitchens and

kindergartens, improving sanitation and child/family welfare in IDP and poor communities, providing IDPs with legal and other counsel, accompanying return operations and generating and publishing information about internal displacement and the humanitarian crisis in Colombia.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ ICG interview, Bogotá, 2 July 2003. Also see http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2004/latin_america_caribbean/colombia.pdf.

¹⁵² Figures provided by ICRC Bogotá.

¹⁵³ For example, Oxfam implemented a comprehensive humanitarian program in four peace communities in the Urabá region: San Francisco de Asís (on the Atrato River); San José de Apartadó (located in the municipality of San José de Apartadó); Haikerabsabi community of the Embera people (located in Piñales) and returnee communities in Cacarica; between January and May 2003, Caritas Spain assisted 1,456 IDPs in eight municipalities in the department of Meta (financed by ECHO); through its foster parents program, PI is supporting community development and child welfare in the departments of Nariño, Chocó, Córdoba and Bolívar; Diakonisches Werk assists IDPs and poor families in Florencia, Caquetá.

VI. CONCLUSION

Escalation of the armed conflict has produced a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented dimensions in Colombia. War-induced human suffering is sharply reflected in continuously growing numbers of IDPs, refugees in the neighbouring countries, missing persons and anti-personnel mine victims, as well as besieged, blockaded and isolated communities and child soldiers. The kidnap victims, the victims of massacres and selective assassinations, torture and arbitrary imprisonment also need to be counted among the humanitarian toll.

The efforts of the Colombian government, international and multilateral organisations, the Catholic and Lutheran Churches and NGOs at providing humanitarian assistance to the countless civilian victims have fallen short of effectively alleviating the humanitarian crisis. Much has been, and is being, done, and many lessons have been learned but humanitarian aid policy in Colombia is still struggling to cope with the magnitude of the crisis and its own shortcomings. An adequate, effective and coordinated response, involving both domestic and international actors, is yet to be achieved. The first responsibility resides with the Colombian government but the international community also has distinctive obligations.

While every effort must be pursued to end the conflict, the victims of Colombia's war, the great majority civilians, should not be expected to suffer until this happens. Despite, or precisely because of, the worsening armed conflict, they should receive the assistance they are entitled to and be given a real chance to rebuild their lives. Urgent action needs to be taken in the following areas:

Improving emergency and post-emergency assistance for IDPs. In the context of expanding IDP numbers, it is paramount that the Colombian state substantially increase its assistance capacity. The institutions that integrate the SNAIPD need to assign more funds to IDP assistance measures. RSS, which is in charge of coordinating SNAIPD activities, should get more funds so as to be able to generate more and timelier information on internal displacement, reach more IDPs in the registration process and coordinate the delivery of assistance more effectively.

Both emergency and post-emergency assistance programs should be designed to take into account

specific gender-related needs, as well as those of children, the elderly and ethnic groups. It is furthermore important that interactions between municipal, departmental and national levels of government are expedited, communication channels are improved and backlogs in the transfer of funds are avoided. NGOs, IDP and civil society associations, and private business should be involved more systematically in the formulation and implementation of assistance plans.

Guaranteeing the safe and voluntary return of IDPs. Returns of IDPs to their homes can only succeed if they are safe, voluntary and supported by economic and social reintegration/reestablishment programs. If one or more of these three conditions cannot be met by the government, the returns in question should not be promoted. Depending on the specific circumstances of IDPs who cannot return, the government should support resettlement/integration in their new places of residence. This includes facilitating appropriate housing, sanitation, health care and education as well as supporting small-scale income-generating projects.

In order to increase the chances for successful integration of IDPs into new communities, the receiving municipalities should be supported by the departmental and central governments with special economic and social integration funds as well as technical and logistical advice. Emphasis should be put on combining integration of IDPs with community development so that frictions between the receiving community and the new residents are avoided.

Strengthening state institutions and safeguarding the fundamental rights of the population across Colombia. In order to prevent forced displacement, provide effective assistance to IDPs and create appropriate conditions for their successful return/re-establishment, it is paramount that the Colombian state extend its presence throughout the country, especially in war-affected and high risk regions. The fundamental rights of the population must be safeguarded. This includes effectively protecting civilians from attacks, threats, disappearance, recruitment, blockades and sieges by the armed groups as well as anti-personnel mines.

The armed forces should stop restricting civilian access to food, gasoline, medicines and other basic provisions. Furthermore, municipalities and departments with insufficient basic social service coverage and high rates of unemployment, such as

Chocó, should receive priority attention from the central government.

Designing and implementing a comprehensive rural development strategy. Problems of structural underdevelopment in most rural areas are fomenting displacement and making the successful return and reestablishment of IDPs difficult. It is essential to design a comprehensive rural development strategy and implement it jointly by municipal, departmental and central levels of government with real community participation. As a first step, such a strategy should focus on war-affected and high risk areas, such as those in border regions. It should seek to assure basic social service coverage, including food security and shelter, and police and justice sector presence, while encouraging community and infrastructure development and small-scale employment and income-generating measures.

As a second step, the strategy should be expanded to cover also rural areas that are not directly affected by the armed conflict. Colombia needs a comprehensive rural development strategy.

Increasing efforts by international/multilateral humanitarian aid organisations and NGOs, and coordination between them and the Colombian government. The HAP should be strongly promoted and fully implemented. Its continuation should be guaranteed until 2006. The UN system in Colombia should continue expanding its permanent presence and humanitarian aid activities in war-affected and high risk regions. These include the Catatumbo region (Norte de Santander) and the departments of Caquetá, Cauca, Nariño and Putumayo, as well as border regions in the neighbouring countries, especially Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela. Cooperation between the UN Information Centre on the Humanitarian Situation and the National Information Network of RSS should be encouraged.

The European Commission should plan to increase further its humanitarian aid for Colombia, channelled through ECHO, until 2006. The ICRC and other international humanitarian aid organisations should continue and expand their humanitarian aid operations in Colombia. In order to tackle the problems of dispersion of humanitarian assistance and with a view to producing synergy effects, cooperation between the government and the humanitarian aid organisations should be systematically increased.

Bogotá/Brussels, 9 July 2003

APPENDIX A

MAP OF COLOMBIA



Courtesy Of The General Libraries, The University Of Texas At Austin

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACIA: Integral Peasant Association of the Atrato

ASFADDES: Association of Relatives of Detained and Missing Persons

CCCM: Colombian Campaign Against Anti-Personnel Mines

CINEP: Centre for Investigation and Popular Education

CODHES: Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement

CPDDHH: Permanent Committee of Human Rights

CRC: Colombian Red Cross

DAS: Department of Administrative Security

ECHO: European Commission (European Union) Humanitarian Aid Office

ELN: National Liberation Army

EPL: Popular Liberation Army

ERG: Revolutionary Guevarist Army

ERP: Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

FARC: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

HAP: Humanitarian Action Plan

IC: Inter-Institutional Committee, Interior Ministry

ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

IHL: International Humanitarian Law

ICBF: Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing

INCORA: Colombian Institute of Land Reform

INURBE: National Institute of Subsidized Housing and Urban Reform

IOM: International Organization for Migration

JTU: Joint Technical Unit, RSS/UNHCR

NCD: National Council for Displacement

OPS-WHO: Pan-American Health Organisation-World Health Organisation

OREWA: Regional Organization of the Embera and Wounaan

PCS: Project Counselling Service

PI: Plan International

PROROM: Organising Process of the Rom People of Colombia

RCZ: Rehabilitation and Consolidation Zone

RSS: Social Solidarity Network

SENA: National Vocational Training Service

SNAIPD: National System of Integral Assistance to the Population Displaced by Violence

TGD: Thematic Group on Displacement

UNDCP: United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime Prevention

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNWF: United Nations Women's Fund

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCHR: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

UNPF: United Nations Population Fund

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WFP: World Food Programme

APPENDIX C

TABLES

Table 1: Estimated numbers of IDPs in Colombia, 2000-31 May 2003

Institution/year	2000	2001	2002	1 January-31 May 2003
RSS (registered)	263,501	319,934	338,370	75,725
CODHES	317,000	342,000	412,000	N.A.
ICRC (assisted)	123,651	114,000	187,717	45,500*

* January-April 2003.

Sources: RSS, CODHES and ICRC (Bogotá, 2003).

Table 2: Departments most affected by internal displacement in Colombia, 2002

Department	Number of displaced persons/percentage of total population
1) Antioquia	31,007/0.56
2) Norte de Santander	22,618/1.6
3) Chocó	20,497/5.0
4) Caquetá	18,260/4.2
5) Magdalena	17,530/1.3
6) Cesar	14,196/1.4
7) Bolívar	13,664/0.65
8) Putumayo	13,516/3.85
9) Caldas	13,078/1.15
10) Córdoba	10,639/0.79

Source: CODHES (Bogotá, 2003).

Table 3: Departments most affected by internal displacement in Colombia, 1 January-31 May 2003*

Department	Number of displaced persons
1) Antioquia	12,834
2) Cesar	6,889
3) Cundinamarca	6,139
4) Putumayo	5,708
5) Bolívar	5,475
6) Norte de Santander	3,407
7) Caquetá	3,315
8) Magdalena	3,050
9) Arauca	2,640
10) Tolima	2,517

* Registered by RSS

Source: RSS: Registro Único de Población Desplazada por la Violencia (SUR) (Bogotá, 2003).

Table 4: Regions most affected by internal displacement in Colombia, 2002

Region	Number of displaced persons/percentage of total population
1) Sierra Nevada	24,622/1.9
2) Middle Magdalena Valley	21,990/1.8
3) Catatumbo	19,509/14.0
4) Eastern Antioquia	15,148/3.1
5) Atrato	13,795/6.8
6) Middle Lower Putumayo	13,348/4.3

Source: CODHES (Bogotá, 2003).

APPENDIX D

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (ICG) is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, with over 90 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, ICG produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers.

ICG's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and printed copy to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made generally available at the same time via the organisation's Internet site, www.crisisweb.org. ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The ICG Board – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring ICG reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; and its President and Chief Executive since January 2000 has been former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

ICG's international headquarters are in Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York, Moscow and Paris and a media liaison office in London. The organisation currently operates twelve field offices (in Amman, Belgrade, Bogota,

Islamabad, Jakarta, Nairobi, Osh, Pristina, Sarajevo, Sierra Leone, Skopje and Tbilisi) with analysts working in over 30 crisis-affected countries and territories across four continents.

In *Africa*, those countries include Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone-Liberia-Guinea, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe; in *Asia*, Indonesia, Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir; in *Europe*, Albania, Bosnia, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia; in the *Middle East*, the whole region from North Africa to Iran; and in *Latin America*, Colombia.

ICG raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. The following governments currently provide funding: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Foundation and private sector donors include Atlantic Philanthropies, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation Inc., John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, John Merck Fund, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Open Society Institute, Ploughshares Fund, Ruben & Elisabeth Rausing Trust, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Sarlo Foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund and the United States Institute of Peace.

July 2003

APPENDIX E

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* The Algeria project was transferred from the Africa Program in January 2002.

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