By Paula Gaviria, Director of the Victim’s Unit, Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a Víctimas (UARIV)

In 2015, the Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a Víctimas (UARIV), through its Sub-directorate for Prevention and Assistance to Emergencies verified the occurrence of 628 humanitarian emergencies in 251 municipalities of Colombia. Of these, 54 generated mass displacements impacting more than 3,700 families, who were assisted in the emergency phase (Atención Humanitaria Inmediata) by state entities integrating Transitional Justice Committees, as well as humanitarian organizations in the departments of Cauca, Chocó, Antioquia, Norte de Santander, Nariño, Putumayo, Meta, Arauca and Magdalena.

In 2015, there were 628 emergencies resulting from armed actions. These figures represent a drop as compared to 2014, when there were 798 such emergencies. Nevertheless, the number of mass displacement events remained stable, with changes in the geographic impact and in the actors responsible of displacement (see Illustration 1).

While in 2014 the FARC-EP were responsible of 69 per cent of mass displacements, the ELN of 11 per cent and the BACRIM1 of 16 per cent, in 2015 the FARC-EP participated in 37 per cent of mass displacement events, the ELN in 31 per cent, and the BACRIM in 13 per cent. The EPL guerrilla, who was not registered as an actor related to mass displacement in 2014, participated in four mass displacement events in 2015. Cauca, Chocó and Nariño were the departments most affected by mass displacement both in 2014 and 2015, while Antioquia, Arauca, Magdalena, Meta and Norte de Santander registered an increase in mass displacement events in 2015; finally, Valle del Cauca, Córdoba, Guaviare and Guajira showed a decrease in the number of mass displacement events in 2015.

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1 Also called in this document post-demobilization armed groups (PDAGs)
The Law 1448 of 2011\(^2\) establishes that municipal authorities are responsible of coordinating response and assistance to victims in the immediate emergency stage; however, occasionally, these authorities lack adequate personnel and budgets. Based on that, in 2015, the UARIV supported through subsidies more than 200 municipalities, with the allocation of more than US$900,000 in cash aid and about US$4 million in non-food items. These resources guaranteed shelter and food for nearly 20,000 families. At the same time, the UARIV supported social and community infrastructure in 57 municipalities of 18 departments, for about US$1.6 million.

Considering that in 2016 municipalities and departments have new mayors and governors, the challenge for UARIV, in the area of immediate assistance, is to strengthen local authorities with in kind and cash support, as well as with social and community infrastructure projects, to mitigate the impact of violence on victims with adequate, relevant and appropriate humanitarian aid. This objective will be made possible through permanent technical assistance, adequate use of tools such as contingency plans; and efficient coordination at the national, departmental and municipal levels, as well as with humanitarian organizations, prioritizing victims’ participation and a differential.

\(^{2}\) Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras
Colombia Humanitarian Situation

2015 in review

**January**
- 70,000 people (550 families) with restrictions to access to water in Córdoba
- Combat and armed actions by ELN and military forces cause mobility and access restrictions to 3,000 indigenous in Chocó.

**February**
- + de 850 IDPs in Chocó, due armed clashes between FARC-EP and the ELN
- 18,000 children with access restrictions to education due to threats and presence of armed groups in Córdoba.

**March**
- The Government declares that el Niño event has reached Colombia
- Presence of armed groups causes mobility and access restrictions and the displacement of + 900 people in Cauca

**April**
- Weapon contamination in rural Cauca limits access to education for 1,500 children

**May**
- The FARC-EP suspends its unilateral ceasefire, conflict escalates
- 2,500 people in Cauca faces mobility restrictions and access constraints as a consequence of military operations against the FARC-EP.
- Avalanche in Antioquia affects 10,000 people

**June**
- Attacks on oil infrastructure in Narino and Putumayo creates environmental emergency, contaminating water sources and destroying crops. +260,000 people affected
- +800 IDPs due armed clashes between the national army and the FARC-EP in Cauca
- +470,000 people without electricity for two days in Caqueta due to a FARC-EP’s attack

**July**
- FARC-EP initiates a new unilateral ceasefire
- +1,290 IDPs due to combat between the national army, EPL and ELN in Norte de Santander
- +8,000 affected by floods in Putumayo
- +33,000 affected by floods from May to July in Arauca

**August**
- Declaration of the State of Exception and closure of border crossings in Venezuela
- More than 22,000 Colombians living in Venezuela return and 9,506 are deported. From Venezuela
- +2,000 IDPs due armed clashes between the national army, FDG and the EPL in Antioquia and Norte de Santander
- Presence of armed group causes displacement of +240 indigenous people in Meta

**September**
- +7,000 people with access restrictions to water in Cauca due to forest fires
- Presence of armed groups causes mobility and access restrictions for +3,000 people in Chocó

**October**
- 3,000 people affected by floods in Córdoba

**November**
- +29,000 people affected by floods in Cauca

**December**
- 580 Wounan indigenous displaced due the presence and threats of ELN in Chocó
- 78% of Colombia is on a red alert for forest fires, as consequence of el Niño
- 24 departments on red alert for high temperatures and low level of rains and rivers
Forced displacement drops in 2015

During 2014, according to data provided by the UARIV, 249,000 people were forcibly displaced in Colombia, of whom 47 per cent were minors. According to official figures, more than 60 per cent of IDPs were from the departments of Antioquia, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Chocó and Cauca.

According to official figures, between January and December 2015, 78,474 persons were forcibly displaced as a result of the conflict and armed violence. Some 45 per cent of these were under 18. Nearly a fourth of forced displacement was concentrated in just six municipalities on the Pacific coast.

These figures represent a decrease compared with 2014; however the number of IDPs in 2015 is likely to increase as the registry is updated, as it has happened in previous years. OCHA estimates that the number of IDPs during 2015 may reach 166,000 in total, which will still be a drop compared with the previous year (See illustration 2).

In 2015, some 52 per cent of IDPs were female, 18 per cent Afro-colombian, and 5 per cent Indigenous. The impact of forced displacement on Indigenous people could be higher, since in most cases these populations displace for short periods as a protection measure during armed actions, without declaring displacement to the authorities. In addition, many Indigenous communities live in isolated areas, with difficult access to the Public Ministry and local response mechanisms.

According to official figures, in 2015 post-demobilization armed groups (PDAGs, BACRIM in the official language), unidentified armed groups and groups other than guerrillas were responsible of 53 per cent of the victims of forced displacements. The guerrillas (FARC-EP, the ELN and the EPL) caused 47 per cent of IDPs.

Mass displacement drops, social control measures persist

According to information processed through Monitor, in 2015 a total of 13,590 people were displaced in mass events, a drop of 23 per cent as compared to 2014. Despite this drop, each month on average 1,133 people were forcibly displaced in mass events. Nearly half of IDPs in mass events were Indigenous, and 17 per cent Afro-colombians.

The reduction in the total number of affected people could be related to the drop in armed actions in 2015, which decreased by 21 per cent as
compared to 2014. The unilateral ceasefires declared by the FARC-EP and other de-escalation measures implemented by the parties have likely had a positive impact on these trends. Since the last ceasefire declaration8 by the FARC-EP, there have been no reported mass displacements related to unilateral actions of this guerrilla group.

At the same time, according to OCHA and other humanitarian partners’ analysis, social control measures imposed by all armed groups on communities persist, creating consequences that are less visible and harder to monitor. Among these are extortion, death threats, assassinations, movement restrictions and restrictions on access to basic goods and services (see access section). According to official figures9, during 2015 there were 5,304 cases of extortion, 416 more than in 2014. Between January 2013 and October 2015, there were 13,741 cases of extortion officially denounced, while in the three years prior to the peace process there were 5,473 such cases. The total number of victims may be higher considering under-registration.

Mass displacement impacts new regions

Eighty per cent of the victims of mass displacement in 2015 were concentrated in Cauca, Norte de Santander, Chocó and Antioquia departments (see Map no. 2). This indicates a greater geographical dispersion as compared to 2014, in particular in areas under the influence of armed groups other than the FARC-EP, such as the EPL, the ELN and PDAGs, as well as new unidentified actors. The presence of these groups and their armed actions caused 62 per cent of IDPs in mass events.

The number of IDPs in mass events in Norte de Santander and Antioquia increased in 2015 as compared to the year prior. While in 2014 no mass displacement was reported in Antioquia, in 2015 there were nine of such events that displaced 2,400 people. In Norte de Santander, the number of IDPs in mass events almost tripled in 2015 compared to the previous year.

The main causes of forced displacement in Norte de Santander were related to combat and armed actions involving the ELN and EPL in 80 per cent of the cases. In Antioquia, armed actions were connected to the ELN and Clan Úsuga or Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia.

Attacks on illicit targets remain steady

Attacks on infrastructure disproportionately impact civilians

During 2015, attacks on illicit targets of war persisted as part of non-state armed groups’ strategy. Although there was a 6 per cent drop in these events as compared to 2014, their impact on civilians was greater. Only three events in Tumaco, Buenaventura and Florencia led to major restrictions on access to basic goods and services for more than 1 million people.

In 2015, the number of people impacted by movement limitations and access constraints related to armed actions, nearly tripled as compared to 2014. This is largely due to the high impact of attacks against

Illustration 4: Main attacks against illicit targets

Sources: OCHA-Monitor (Accessed on 04 Jan. 2016)
energy infrastructure (including oil pipelines and electrical lines) perpetrated by the FARC-EP in the first half of the year, before the most recent unilateral ceasefire. During the current ceasefire, OCHA has identified no actions of this kind perpetrated by the FARC-EP and leading to such impacts on mobility and access.

Actions against infrastructure, in particular the ones that caused water contamination, had humanitarian consequences related to a deterioration or loss of livelihoods, access to safe water for consumption or hygiene, a loss of crops and livestock and the suspension of fishing. These attacks produced environmental damages with long-term consequences.

Humanitarian response to these types of actions represented a new challenge for local and national authorities, as well as for the international community, in terms of legal framework, a clear attribution of responsibilities and institutional coordination. Although the UARIV provides aid to people impacted by such attacks, equivalent to two minimum wages, this mechanism is not always clear at local level.

The Local Humanitarian Teams in the most impacted areas have worked to complement institutional response and to raise awareness around the impact of these attacks (See reports Nariño, Putumayo).

Limitations on mobility and access continue

In 2015, 2.4 million people were impacted by limitations on mobility and access to basic goods and services. Events related to armed violence caused 66 per cent of affected people, followed by events related to natural disasters (see illustration 5).

Armed violence leads to restrictions in 16 departments

The events causing restrictions on mobility and access related to armed violence occurred in 16 departments. About 80 per cent of affected people were located in the departments of Caquetá, Nariño, Valle del Cauca and Cauca, with a high concentration in the municipalities of Tumaco, Buenaventura and Florencia.

Other armed groups also caused movement and access restrictions

While attacks against infrastructure caused by the FARC-EP had the higher impact on mobility and access restrictions, during 2015 more than 190,000 people suffered movement and access limitations due to other non-state armed groups including the ELN and EPL guerrillas, PDAGs and unknown actors. These actions were related to death threats, combat and territorial and social control imposed by these groups. The most impacted departments were Arauca, Norte de Santander and Chocó.

This situation highlights that the strategies and actions of armed groups are creating impacts on civilians other than mass displacement, which are less visible and harder to monitor. The humanitarian community will continue to monitor these situations, identifying the needs of affected populations and promoting response in complementarity to national and local actors.

10 20 July 2015
11 Resolution 2349 of 2012 establishes that those “at risk on their food security generated by the affectation, the damage on stocks and items for human consumption, as well as affected on their goods and items essential for survival” have the right to receive assistance.
13 For more information on mobility and access restrictions for natural disasters see next paragraph on el Niño.
Chocó the most impacted by confinement

During 2015, more than 6,000 people suffered restrictions on movement and access to basic goods and services for a period longer than one week. These restrictions simultaneously impacted more than one sector (for example, education, health and WASH), thus implying a confinement situation according to OCHA Colombia’s definition. The most impacted department was Chocó, where more than 5,400 people were in confinement situations. Movement restrictions were caused by the presence and actions of the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia and the ELN. These groups had not had a presence before in the area, traditionally controlled by the FARC-EP (See fact Sheet).

Overall, the total number of people who faced situations of confinement in 2015 dropped by nearly half as compared to 2014.

El Niño impacts Colombia

Forest fires kept the country on red alert

Between March and December 2015, the Government of Colombia attended approximately 4,400 forest fires, which were attributed to the effects of El Niño. The fires burned more than 100,000 hectares in 500 municipalities (44 per cent of the country).14

In December 2015, the Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales- IDEAM, indicated that as the result of high temperatures and a drop in rainfall,15 at least 24 departments (of which 10 were prioritized by the HCT in its HRP 2016), or 78 per cent of the country, (see map 9), were on red alert due to potential forest fires.

The impact of drought is of concern

The Government of Colombia reported that at least 124 municipalities (more than 10 per cent of the total) is facing water shortages; and has declared a red alert due to low water levels in the Magdalena and Cauca rivers, which supply water to 70 per cent of the country’s municipalities.16 Through December 2015, water levels were the lowest in the past several years, impacting navigability and water access as well as food supplies.

In addition to water access, the drought has impacted traditional livelihoods. More than 35,000 livestock died as a consequence of the draught.

The Government takes mitigation measures

As a prevention and mitigation measure, the national government has requested local authorities to prohibit any burning and commit to saving water and electricity. In some municipalities, partial water rationing is in place. This measure could expand to more municipalities starting in March 2016, when the drought situation is expected to worsen.

El Niño has diverse impacts

During 2015, more than 547,000 people were impacted by natural disaster events according to official figures. Between March (when IDEAM declared El Niño event in 14 Source UNGRD
15 IDEAM expects a 90 per cent rainfall deficit in the next months
16 CorMagdalena ( Corporación Autónoma Regional del Magdalena Medio)
Colombia) and December 2015, the Unidad Nacional para la Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres - UNGRD reported a total of 496,223 affected (see illustration 6).

While the drought was most intense along the Caribbean coast and in the Andean region, departments in the southwest suffered heavy rainfall and flooding. The most severe impact was recorded in May, June and November, when floods impacted more than 115,000 people and droughts affected more than 92,000. In particular, in Timbiquí, Cauca, more than 28,000 people were affected by floods in November. This emergency caused humanitarian needs in food security and nutrition, impacted livelihoods and limited education for children, as nine schools were closed. At the same time, floods in Arauca between May and July affected more than 33,000.

In 2015, according to the UNGRD, the most impacted departments by natural disasters included Cauca, Chocó, Bolívar, Arauca and Norte de Santander (See map 8). In addition, based on OCHA field monitoring, some other areas have declared a public calamity due to drought. For example Córdoba department, where approximately 178,000 people in 16 municipalities are affected by the drought.

**El Niño also limited mobility and access to basic goods and services**

According to OCHA’s monitoring, events related to natural disasters created movement and access restrictions for more than 800,000 people. The main impacts were related to access to water, food and livelihoods. The most affected departments were Caquetá, Córdoba and Norte de Santander, with 79 of the affected population (See table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>#People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Caquetá</td>
<td>252,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Córdoba</td>
<td>222,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Norte de Santander</td>
<td>161,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cauca</td>
<td>92,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Antioquia</td>
<td>24,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Otros</td>
<td>52,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>806,101</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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17 Official figures as of 31.12.2015
2015: Risk Management from the right side: prevention!

By Carlos Iván Márquez Pérez, Director of Unidad Nacional para la Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres (UNGRD)

In 2015, the national risk management system, Sistema Nacional de Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres – SNGRD – advanced in vulnerability reduction in coordination with the National Development Plan. For this first time in Colombia, resource allocation in this area has taken a turn towards prevention.

Resources reached about US$150 million, of which around US$100 million were focused on risk reduction projects and actions, as well as risk management (67 per cent); and more than US$49 million were allocated for preparedness, response and recovery from disasters (33 per cent). These resources reached more than 3.6 million Colombians in all 32 departments.

Actions included bridge building, housing construction, road infrastructure and hydraulic improvements. Around 639 successfully formulated their municipal disaster risk management plans, and 821 of these now have funds available to finance risk reduction.

A strategic achievement, approval of the National Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015-2025

With the approval of the National Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction, Colombia now count on policy guidelines to prioritize resource allocation and comply with the agreements of the Sendai Framework and COP21 related to risk management and climate change.

In disaster management, five major events in 2015 requested the SNGRD’s response capacity:

1. The landslide in Salgar, Antioquia, which left 53 dead and 11 missing. As soon as the response phase ended, six vehicle bridges and six pedestrian bridges were rebuilt in only 278 homes.
2. Earthquake 6.6 on the Richter scale in the Santanderes that impacted 9 municipalities and 3,083 homes. 2,670 have been repaired and another 638 are underway.
3. The migration emergency on the Venezuelan border that impacted 22,695 returnees. To respond to the needs of affected persons, thirty shelters were built and 3 temporary shelters were adapted. 20,000 assistance kits were delivered and more than 4,800 families received rental subsidies. In 76 days, 6,129 people were attended in shelters. Today the economic recovery phase continues.
4. The El Niño event that by the end of 2015 had impacted 111 municipalities with partial water shortages and more than 100,000 hectares burned by forest fires. The National Contingency Plan and Sectoral Plans have implemented resources for more than $1.4 billion pesos (around US$400 million). Some 10 per cent of these were channeled through UNGRD.
5. The landslide in Salgar, Antioquia, which left 53 dead and 11 missing. As soon as the response phase ended, six vehicle bridges and six pedestrian bridges were rebuilt in only 278 homes.

In several of these emergencies, technical assistance from international cooperation contributed in key areas such as knowledge transfer. In preparedness, the Early Warning System, simulations and the creation of a National Logistics Centre, from where equipment and tools are dispatched for emergency response, are of particular relevance. These actions allowed Colombia to consolidate its leadership in platforms such as INSARAG, UNDAC, Delta Coalition and to contribute with specific actions in the final drafts of Sendai 2015-2030 documents.

The year that begins will demand that Colombia puts in place the National Risk Management Plan, the National Emergency Response Strategy, maintains assistance to those impacted by El Niño, increases work on risk management and climate change, works on risk management in a post-conflict setting, continues working on reducing vulnerability and increases the capacity of local authorities, to make Colombia a country with less vulnerable communities contributing to peace building in their territories.

Colombo-Venezuelan Border

In 2015, tensions between Colombia and Venezuela led to new complexities for the humanitarian situation in the country. On 19 August 2015, the Government of Venezuela declared a state of exception initially for Táchira state, progressively expanding the measure along other States bordering with Colombia. The measures taken in the state of exception included the expulsion of thousands of undocumented Colombians living in Venezuela, in many cases having arrived escaping from the internal armed conflict. By mid-September, more than 22,000 Colombians had returned through formal deportation processes (2,000), or spontaneously along informal paths, due to fear of deportation, violation of their rights and family separation. The majority of returned families were forced to leave their belongings in Venezuela and arrived in the country with urgent humanitarian needs (See Sit Rep 12). Local Humanitarian Teams in departments impacted...
by the migratory flows, with the support of the Humanitarian Country Team, worked in a coordinated and complementary manner with the UNGRD, which was in charge of coordinating national and international humanitarian response from the onset of the emergency. Despite the acute phase of the emergency has passed, the border with Venezuela remains closed, impacting in particular the economy and the movement of people in this border region.

Humanitarian financing

**ERF and CERF support HCT response**

The Country Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) have funded a total of US$5.1 million in 2015 (CBPF US$ 2.1 / CERF US$ 3.0), providing humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable communities. Eleven CBPF projects provided humanitarian assistance in Norte de Santander, Chocó, Córdoba, Arauca, Chocó, Nariño and Caquetá. Nine out of the total of these projects assisted chronic emergencies, and two assisted sudden emergencies. Additionally, eight CERF humanitarian projects assisted underfunded emergencies in Chocó, Arauca, Cauca, Valle del Cauca y Putumayo (See map 10). In total these pooled funds allowed to help around a total of 64,459 beneficiaries.

During 2015, 100 per cent of the resources of the CBPF and CERF were allocated to the geographical areas, sectors and populations prioritized by the Humanitarian Country Team Strategic Response Plan (SRP). Around 30 per cent of the CBPF funds were allocated to national NGO and about 70 per cent to international NGO.
**Map 1:** # of IDPs (UARIV) 2015

- 1. Antioquia: 12,218
- 2. Valle del Cauca: 11,252
- 3. Nariño: 9,528
- 4. Chocó: 6,710
- 5. Cauca: 6,421
- Other: 31,948

Total: 13,590

*Source: UARIV, Cut-off date: 01/12/2015.*

**Map 2:** # of IDPs in mass events 2015

- 1. Cauca: 3,665
- 2. Norte de Santander: 3,235
- 3. Chocó: 2,781
- 4. Antioquia: 2,468
- 5. Nariño: 876
- Others: 565

Total: 13,590

*Source: OCHA Monitor, Cut-off date: 31/12/2015.*

**Map 3:** # of people affected by access and mobility constraints 2015

- 1. Caquetá: 730,954
- 2. Nariño: 433,493
- 3. Valle del Cauca: 418,708
- 4. Córdoba: 250,677
- 5. Norte de Santander: 203,094
- Others: 399,302

Total: 2,436,228

*Source: OCHA Monitor, Cut-off date: 31/12/2015.*

**Map 4:** # of people confined 2015

- 1. Chocó: 5,456
- 2. Cauca: 909

Total: 6,362

*Source: OCHA Monitor, Cut-off date: 31/12/2015.*

**Map 5:** # of armed actions 2015

- 1. Cauca: 88
- 2. Arauca: 71
- 3. Antioquia: 61
- 4. Norte de Santander: 54
- 5. Nariño: 36
- Other: 220

Total: 530

*Source: OCHA Monitor, Cut-off date: 31/12/2015.*

**Map 6:** # of attacks against civilians 2015

- 1. Valle del Cauca: 219
- 2. Cauca: 136
- 3. Antioquia: 95
- 4. Arauca: 59
- 5. Chocó: 53
- Other: 416

Total: 978

*Source: OCHA Monitor, Cut-off date: 31/12/2015.*

**Map 7:** # of APM/UXO victims 2015

- 1. Cauca: 29
- 2. Antioquia: 28
- 3. Meta: 28
- 4. Caquetá: 25
- 5. Norte de Santander: 18
- Other: 89

Total: 217

*Source: DAICMA, Cut-off date: 31/12/2015.*

**Map 8:** # of people affected by disasters 2015

- 1. Cauca: 150,471
- 2. Chocó: 70,493
- 3. Arauca: 35,528
- 4. Bolivar: 32,059
- 5. Norte de Santander: 29,876
- Other: 229,102

Total: 547,529

*Source: UNGRD.*