

“A Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City”
Fact Sheet: COLOMBIA

Internally Displaced People (IDPs)	Up to 4 million (second highest in the world) ¹
Refugees	552,000 (fourth highest in the world) ²
Refugees fled to	Venezuela, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Brazil, Panama
Conflict began in	1960s
Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) began working there in	1985
MSF staff on the ground	267
MSF activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary health care • Mental health care • HIV/AIDS treatment • Treatment of sexual violence • Water-and-sanitation programs
MSF concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence against civilians • Lack of access for IDPs to government health-care services • Massive mental trauma among population

- Hundreds of thousands of Colombians are displaced, trapped, isolated and impoverished by the conflict among guerrilla groups, government forces and paramilitary groups that has ravaged their country for the past 45 years.
- Violence has caused widespread physical and psychological distress, yet health-care access is difficult and dangerous for those in rural conflict zones and those forced to seek refuge in urban slums.
- Tens of thousands have sought safety in shantytowns located outside of major Colombian cities. In these semi-urban slums, the displaced endure squalid living conditions and very limited access to medical and counseling services.
- MSF works in fixed and mobile medical clinics in both urban and rural areas.
- The Colombian government provides free health care for internally displaced persons (IDPs) who are registered, but only a tiny minority is registered as revealing personal information may be too risky.
- Colombia has been listed on MSF’s annual “Top Ten Most Underreported Humanitarian Stories” every year since 1999.

For more information visit www.doctorswithoutborders.org/colombia

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¹ SOURCE: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: “Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2007” (April 2008). For latest data visit <http://www.internal-displacement.org>

² SOURCE: UNHCR: “2007 Global Trends” (June 2008)