

2. Legal and political situation

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2.1. Demographics and migration profile

The population of Colombia in 2025 was estimated at 53.06 million.[36] For 2023, an estimated 7.6 % of the population were Afro-descendant, Black, Raizal, or Palenquero; a further 4.1 % were Indigenous, and 88.3 % of the population were listed as not having an ethnic group,[37] which encompasses those who are Mestizo (mixed race people of indigenous/white heritage) and White.[38] Colombia is considered an upper middle-income economy[39] and it is member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[40] The country, however, has one of the highest income inequality levels in the world.[41] High levels of poverty,[42] unemployment, and informal employment are also a challenge.[43] Colombia has one of the highest numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world.[44] According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), there were 7.3 million IDPs in Colombia at the end of 2024.[45]

Colombia is an origin, transit, and destination country of asylum-seekers and migrants.[46] Since the signing of the 2016 FARC-EP Peace Agreement, Colombians have made increasing applications for international protection in Europe, rising from 1 050 in 2016[47] to 43 280 in 2022, 63 211 in 2023, and down again to 51 529 in 2024. Recognition rates for Colombians remained low, but varied from 6 % in 2022, to 7 % in 2023, and 5 % in 2024.[48] US immigration measures have decreased the number of migrants transiting through Colombia towards North America.[49] In 2024, Colombia reported 400 612 irregular migrants transiting through the country, with main nationalities including Venezuela (302 185), Ecuador (22 785), and Haiti (17 329), and others such as China, India, Vietnam, and Bangladesh.[50] Between January and October 2025, the number was 129 656, with main nationalities being from Venezuela (17 681), Peru (103), Ecuador (99), and Chile (26).[51] Panamanian authorities reported that the number of Colombians crossing through the Darién Gap was 17 529 in 2024[52] and 189 between January and September 2025; in both years, Colombians were the second highest nationality after Venezuelans.[53] Migrants attempting to cross the Darién Gap encounter abuses and human rights violations,[54] including extortion, human trafficking, kidnapping, and sexual/physical violence.[55] Organised crime groups such as the Gulf Clan control migration routes in and out of Colombia via the Darién Gap and Ecuador.[56]

In 2021, Colombia was commended by the UN in its response to the unprecedented migration of millions of Venezuelans over its borders by offering them a regularisation scheme.[57] The

Temporary Protection Status (TPS) is a mechanism that was established by the Colombian government in 2021 and grants Venezuelans access to essential goods and services as well as formal and legal employment under equal conditions.58 There were more than 2.815 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants living in Colombia as of December 2024.59 According to data published by the Government of Colombia as of 22 January 2025, 2 133 071 TPS permits have been authorised and there were a further 2 574 000 pre-registrations.60 Some Venezuelans encountered stigmatising narratives and acts of xenophobia.61

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