

people in the world (4.8 million as of 2022⁶). The majority are victims of forced displacement, and about 80% of the internally displaced are women and children⁷. Furthermore, 15.8% of the women displaced because of the armed conflict have stated that they were also victims of sexual violence. Women belonging to indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities have been most affected by the armed conflict, with 51.6% of indigenous women and 40.7% of Afro-Colombian women declared to be victims of the conflict⁸.

Likewise, Colombia has one of the most severe food insecurity levels in the whole Latin American and Caribbean region⁹. Some groups with specific socio-demographic characteristics are more impacted by food insecurity than others, for example female-headed households. Some 35% of households headed by women are food insecure, while, in contrast, some 26% of households headed by men. This can be explained by the structural/ institutional barriers more often faced by women when entering the national labour market and the fact that women ultimately have lower-paid jobs¹⁰.

Colombia recovered robustly from the shock of the pandemic, with GDP up by 10.7% in 2021 and 7.3% in 2022. Nevertheless, it continues to have the highest levels of poverty, income inequality and labour market informality in Latin America. The unemployment rate was 12.7% in January 2024 (14.3 % for women in 2022), one of the highest in the region. In addition, this unemployment rate hides the larger problem of high levels of employment within the informal economy: more than 60% of workers have informal jobs and no access to social security benefits except for health. Female unemployment is almost double that of men. The availability of sewage systems is 92% in urban zones but only 15% in rural areas. Land inequality, which is among the highest in the world, increased sharply in the 1990s when illegal armed groups forcibly removed small farmers from their land, creating over 6 million displaced people.

Colombia is a mega-biodiverse country and has the highest number of species per area worldwide¹¹. Approximately 52% of its territory is covered with forests (47% of which in the Amazon Basin), making it also one of the richest countries in the world in terms of cultural diversity. This diversity is currently present in 61 protected natural areas belonging to the National Natural Parks System which, with a total of 23 million hectares, represents more than 11% of the national surface area (marine and land). These Natural Parks are key to regulating the water cycle, protecting the country's biodiversity, and combating the effects of climate change. Nevertheless, about 90,000 people live illegally in these protected areas, without access to social services and economic incentives. Most of them are internally displaced peasants, living in extreme poverty conditions.

The country has 26 million hectares for agricultural, livestock and forestry production (commercial reforestation). However, of the purely agricultural land (11.3 million hectares), only 35% is used. In contrast, although there are only 8 million hectares with potential use for livestock, 38 million hectares are devoted to extensive grazing. Land use and tenure dynamics have been shaped by a history of illegal economic activities and armed conflicts.¹² This context generates conflicts of use that fuel ongoing deforestation and contribute to land concentration, forest and ecosystem fragmentation, and the degradation of the services they provide. Colombia has the highest level of socio-environmental conflicts related to land and access to natural resources in Latin America. If

⁶ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data>

⁷ Vuelven las amenazas contra organizaciones de mujeres | VerdadAbierta.com

⁸ Overview of gender equality in Colombia | Gender Equality in Colombia: Access to Justice and Politics at the Local Level | OECD iLibrary oecd-ilibrary.org

⁹ No reliable data exist for Haiti and Venezuela

¹⁰ docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000147155/download/?_ga=2.232555929.722147881.1713345021-588225411.1713345021

¹¹ Colciencias recognises that Colombia is the second most mega-diverse country in the world. This information is available in: https://www.colciencias.gov.co/sala_de_prensa/colombia-el-segundo-pais-mas-biodiverso-del-mundo

¹² Livestock breeding can be a legal economic activity hiding recycling of narco-money or indeed pushing narco-deforestation. https://www.unodc.org/res/WDR-2023/WDR23_B3_CH4_Amazon.pdf