

Migrant and refugee populations

Ecuador

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | Difficulties accessing formal employment, El Niño-driven weather extremes and a deteriorating security situation threaten the food security of migrant and refugee populations.

PEAK 2023 (JULY–AUGUST 2022)

 **0.3M** or **60%** of the migrant and refugee population faced high levels of acute food insecurity (WFP, April 2023).

 **Economic shocks** were the primary driver of acute food insecurity among Ecuador's migrant and refugee population. The majority of Ecuador's migrant and refugee population arrived in the country in search of economic opportunities, with 74 percent stating that employment opportunities were their primary motivation for choosing Ecuador (WFP, April 2023). However, marginalized legal status and complex regularization processes make it difficult for them to obtain formal employment and access basic public services in healthcare and education (WFP, April 2023). Only 24 percent of migrants and refugees had a valid visa in Ecuador in 2023, while most migrants and refugees held jobs below their education level (WFP, April 2023; RMNA, 2023).

High levels of informal work limit the saving potential and job security of migrant and refugee populations, with 96 percent of employed migrants and refugees working in the informal sector (WFP, April 2023; RMNA, 2023).

 **Weather extremes** El Niño contributed to above-average rainfall at the end of 2023, particularly affecting regions hosting high numbers of migrants and refugees. About 70 percent of the migrant and refugee population is concentrated in the western provinces of Guayas, Manabí and Pichincha (ACAPS, September 2023). The government maintained heightened alerts for flood risks in December due to the potential for flooding to destroy shelters and public infrastructure, and to disrupt economic activity (WFP, December 2023; ICRC, August 2023).

 **Conflict/insecurity** A deteriorating security situation amid rising organized crime made Ecuador the most violent country per capita in Latin America in 2023 (WFP, December 2023). This trend is of particular concern for the large number of migrants and refugees who move through and settle in Ecuador and already faced increased threats and acts of violence by traffickers (RMNA, 2023). The spike in political violence is focused in coastal urban areas and threatens to affect the already precarious economic situation of migrants and refugees, limit government and humanitarian response capacity, and cause additional forced displacement of migrants and refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2024; ACLED, August 2023).

Peru

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | Hurdles to formal employment and El Niño-related flooding are driving high levels of acute food insecurity among migrants and refugees.

PEAK 2023 (MAY)

 **0.8M** or **50%** of the migrant and refugee population faced high levels of acute food insecurity (WFP (unpublished), May 2023).

Peru's migrant and refugee population increased to 1.54 million people as of May 2023, up from around 0.7 million in 2018, with most migrants and refugees living in Lima (UNHCR, October 2023). Compared with settled migrant and refugee populations, in-transit populations face higher levels of acute food insecurity and additional vulnerabilities, such as exploitation by traffickers and inadequate shelter (WFP, 2022).

DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS 2023–2024

 **Economic shocks** Restrictions affecting access to formal and reliable employment as well as a worsening economic crisis are the primary drivers of acute food insecurity among migrants and refugees. Around 42 percent of migrants and refugees still do not hold a valid visa or form of regular stay.

As a result of their precarious status, many migrants and refugees cannot access essential services and rely on informal employment in an economy that is still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (RMNA, 2023). Food inflation in Peru reached 13.2 percent in February 2023 (WFP, January 2024).

 **Weather extremes** Extreme weather events put added strain on Peru's limited public resources in 2023 and caused the localized displacement of host and migrant and refugee communities. The El Niño Costero phenomenon caused deadly flooding and the destruction of over 40 000 homes in early 2023, with nearly 800 000 people impacted mainly in the northern and southern mountains, in the provinces of Arequipa, Ica, Tumbes, Piura and Lambayeque. The flooding also triggered the largest dengue outbreak in Peru's history, with over 170 000 cases nationwide, leading to a substantial number of people being unable to work due to illness, impacting migrants and refugees' income and resilience to other shocks (CBI, 2023). From the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024, heavy rainfall caused floods, triggering landslides and resulting in damage (ECHO, January 2024).