Position paper on the strengthening and effectiveness of humanitarian coordination

Bogotá, December 1, 2025 – Latin America and the Caribbean face an ongoing humanitarian crisis fueled by violence, armed conflict, organized crime, and disasters, leading to large-scale forced displacement.

In 2025, about 34.4 million people[1] in the region need humanitarian assistance. In 2025, over 21 million (UNHCR 2025[2]) were forcibly displaced or stateless. Many struggle to meet urgent needs - such as food, health, water, sanitation, and education- and lack access to protection mechanisms like migration regularization, asylum, or safety measures within their countries.

In Haiti, over 1.4 million people are internally displaced, according to IOM[3]. In Colombia, at least 190,000 have been displaced this year[4], and Ecuador ranks third in the region for displacement due to violence[5]. Added to this are forced returns and deportations linked to U.S. immigration policies since 2025, which have increased risks and worsened conditions for already vulnerable populations. These movements occur without proper coordination or protection, especially for unaccompanied children and those needing international protection. Given Venezuela's evolving political, economic, and social situation, significant migration and displacement - both outward and return - are expected.

This complex scenario is compounded by severe funding cuts, which have reshaped the humanitarian system and reduced operational capacity to meet urgent needs. While cuts are global, Latin America has been hit hardest due to heavy reliance on a single donor.

Faced with this situation, the LAC RMD Coalition - comprising 23 civil society organizations and strategic allies - calls for urgent action to strengthen humanitarian coordination in the region to better address the needs of the most vulnerable.

We support reforms within the UN system, such as the Humanitarian Reset and the UN 80 Initiative. However, we would like to highlight two major concerns. First, reducing humanitarian response plans and reconfiguring existing mechanisms could leave highly vulnerable areas – in countries such as Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador - or countries undergoing changes in humanitarian architecture, like Colombia, without adequate attention. This is especially worrying where there is no reliable data to monitor protection risks and humanitarian needs. Second, civil

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[1] Global Humanitarian Overview 2025: https://reliefweb.int/attachments/3e877412-ee25-4e7a-8544-6ad5c461c5aa/GHO-2025-Abridged-SP_web.pdf

[2] UNHCR 2025 : https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download

[3] IOM, Displacement in Haiti reaches record high as 1.4 million people flee violence, October 15, 2025. Available at https://www.iom.int/news/displacement-haiti-reaches-record-high-14-million-people-flee-violence

[4] https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/colombia/informe-de-tendencias-e-impacto-humanitario-en-2025-datos-acumulados-entre-enero-septiembre-de-2025-fecha-de-publicacion-24-de-octubre-de-2025

[5] https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2025/

society organizations are not being sufficiently included in these processes, even though they play a critical role in implementing humanitarian responses and often lead coordination spaces like sectoral clusters. Their participation must be strengthened.

To improve coordination, we propose four priority actions:

1. **Recognize regional humanitarian and protection crises while ensuring that humanitarian principles are the framework for decisions on humanitarian coordination**
   There is an urgent need to recognize these crises as interconnected regional phenomena that require coordinated, sustained responses focused on humanitarian assistance and protection, especially in contexts where there is greater risk of humanitarian and protection needs being made invisible. Minimum monitoring and response capacity must be maintained in these contexts, even in the face of reduced funding or the absence of humanitarian response plans (HRPs), prioritizing assistance and protection for women, children.

   Humanitarian principles are central to humanitarian responses because they ensure that aid reaches those who need it most, without discrimination or political interests. This enables us to act with credibility, autonomy and access in contexts of crisis, armed conflict or other situations of violence. Taken together, its value is about protecting human dignity, maintaining the trust of communities and preserving the neutral and independent essence of humanitarian action.

2. **Merge coordination platforms in LAC, at regional and country levels**
   In humanitarian emergencies, such as disasters and conflicts, IASC-type humanitarian coordination spaces should be merged to avoid duplication. In this way, it will be possible to work in a complementary and coordinated manner with the mechanisms established for the care of refugees and migrants. This merger should encompass both information management and operational response.

   In some contexts, such as Colombia, or in some specific regional sectors, such as protection, important steps have already been taken in this direction. These experiences can serve as models to strengthen the articulation of the platforms. Having a single coordination space focused on protection and coordinated humanitarian response would allow for more efficient and coherent action in mixed contexts, such as those that characterize LAC.

   In countries without HRP, but with humanitarian needs that should be more visible, such as Peru, Ecuador, Northern Central America or Mexico, it is crucial to strengthen the articulation between Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs), CSOs and public institutions, recognizing the institutional capacities in each territory.

3. **Inclusive coordination architecture and effective civil society participation**
   It is essential to strengthen the inclusion of civil society organizations (CSOs) in humanitarian coordination and decision-making at regional and country levels. This includes organizations

led by refugees, migrants, displaced people, and those affected by disasters, as well as national and international NGOs. Their participation must be continuous and influence key decisions such as geographic priorities, needs definition, and response planning. These organizations already play leadership roles in coordination structures, so they should also have seats on executive committees - not just thematic co-leadership. This will allow them to contribute to strategic decisions that shape the regional humanitarian architecture and ensure their voices are heard.

We must also recognize that many local and international organizations have diverse mandates, including development and peacebuilding. Follow-up mechanisms are needed to keep humanitarian responses aligned with humanitarian principles, especially in sensitive or politicized contexts.

4. **Operational capacity building and information systems**

   It is equally important to maintain regional capacity for monitoring, analysis, and emergency response, particularly in highly vulnerable areas excluded from hyper-prioritization. This requires resources for rapid response, needs assessments, and early warning systems for protection. Agencies, NGOs, and local actors should share complementary information systems to avoid duplication. Regional examples show how NGOs can provide continuous analysis using methodologies like JIAF 2.0. These systems must include a cross-border perspective, as most crises affect multiple countries. Using this evidence will help improve operational capacity, especially in protection services for children, adolescents, and women.

The LAC RMD Coalition, the Colombian Humanitarian NGO Forum, the Venezuela INGO Forum, and the Peru Humanitarian Forum reaffirm their commitment to work with all humanitarian actors. We offer our support, experience, and knowledge to ensure coordinated action for the rights, well-being, and immediate assistance of refugees, migrants, and displaced in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The LACRMD Coalition brings together 23 international NGOs with a regional presence in LAC and coordinates with NGO forums in each country. The Forum of Humanitarian NGOs of Colombia brings together 40 international and national humanitarian NGOs and the INGO forum of Venezuela brings together 40 international NGOs.