

March 2026 – update from October 2022

Country – capital	Republic of Colombia - Bogota <sup>1</sup>
Population	4.4% indigenous, 9.3% Afro-Colombian. <sup>2</sup> Total population 52.9 million (est. 2024). <sup>3</sup>
Geography	Northern South America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Panama and Venezuela, and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Ecuador and Panama. <sup>4</sup>
Languages	Spanish (official) spoken by 99% <sup>5</sup> - and 65 Amerindian languages <sup>6</sup>
Writing system	Latin <sup>7</sup>
Education and literacy	95.6 % is literate – women and men alike. <sup>8</sup> From age 1 onwards children are seen in community daycare and nursery schools sponsored by the National Institute for Family Welfare. At age 6 they enroll at elementary school for 6 years. Standards in rural areas compare badly with city ones where teachers are far better qualified. Secondary education is divided into 4 years of compulsory basic secondary education, grades 6 to 9, and 2-year non-compulsory stage, grades 10 and 11. Vocational Education offers different specializations (technical, business, arts, and others, including academic programs), and is mostly available in urban areas. Access to tertiary education remains restricted to children of wealthy city dwellers. <sup>9</sup> 87.4% of girls and 78.8% of boys complete lower secondary school (2022). <sup>10</sup>
Religions	73% Catholic, 14% Protestant, 11% agnostic, others <2%, (2018 est.) <sup>11</sup>
Conflict history and overview	In November 2016, a five decades-long conflict between government forces, paramilitary, and anti-government insurgent groups, heavily funded by the drug trade, ended in a peace accord between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and government. <sup>12</sup> However, multiple (8) internal armed conflicts persist, and violence remains a serious concern, with some 9 million victims from the long conflict. Colombia’s biggest security problem is the limited state control and a lack of a state monopoly of violence. <sup>13</sup> Numerous armed groups operate in Colombia, fueled by illegal economies, including drug trafficking, illegal mining, and deforestation. <sup>14</sup>
Humanitarian situation	Life expectancy at birth: male 75, female 80.5. <sup>15</sup> Colombia is an upper middle-income economy. <sup>16</sup> Average annual income 7040 USD. <sup>17</sup> In 2025, 11.1 million were in need of humanitarian aid: 8.2 million IDPs since the start of the conflict, and >2.9 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants. <sup>18</sup>
Human rights situation	Colombia’s crime index has decreased but is still significant: 60.9. <sup>19</sup> Abuses by armed groups, limited access to justice, and high levels of poverty, especially among rural, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant communities, remain serious human rights concerns in Colombia. Despite President Gustavo Petro’s “total peace” strategy, 2025 was marked by one of the worst humanitarian tolls in a decade. <sup>20</sup> Violence included homicides, forcible recruitment of children and youth, threats and extortion, mobility restrictions, and harm caused by explosive devices. <sup>21</sup>
Situation of women FGM – early marriages	The maternal mortality ratio has improved from 143 in 2000 to 59 in 2023. <sup>22</sup> The legal minimum age is 18 years. 23% of girls in Colombia are married or in a union before the age of 18 and 5% before 15; early marriage is more prevalent among Indigenous and Black/Afro-Colombian communities. In rural areas 40% of girls are married before 18. <sup>23</sup> In 2024 and 2025, femicides and sexual violence increased, as well as human trafficking (women 75% of victims). <sup>24</sup> About 30% of women have experienced physical or sexual partner violence. <sup>25</sup>
Situation of LGBTI	Legal same-sex activities and relationships, civil partnerships and adoption; legal protection against discrimination of sexual orientation and gender identity. <sup>26</sup> LGBT face high levels of violence and discrimination: in 2024 164 LGBT ppl were killed. <sup>27</sup>
Asylum / migration / internally displaced persons (IDPs)	Apart from 7.3 million IDPs in 2024 <sup>28</sup> , 2.9 million Venezuelan refugees/migrants live in Colombia. Over 14,000 migrants from USA entered Colombia, seeking to return to their home countries. <sup>29</sup> In 2024, 51,529 Colombians applied for asylum in Europe. <sup>30</sup> Sea arrivals in Malta: unknown. <sup>31</sup> In 2025 Malta registered 65 Colombian asylum-seekers. <sup>32</sup> Several women reported being trafficked to Malta via Spain. <sup>33</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/colombia/> ; <https://www.worlddata.info/america/colombia/index.php>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://minorityrights.org/country/colombia/> ; <https://www.worlddata.info/america/colombia/index.php>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.worlddata.info/america/colombia/populationgrowth.php>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/colombia/> ; <https://www.worlddata.info/america/colombia/index.php>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.worlddata.info/america/colombia/populationgrowth.php>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://minorityrights.org/country/colombia/> ; <https://www.worlddata.info/america/colombia/index.php>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/colombia/> ; <https://www.worlddata.info/america/colombia/index.php>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/colombia/> ; <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/colombia>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.scholaro.com/db/Countries/Colombia/Education-System>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/colombia>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-report-on-international-religious-freedom/colombia>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-colombia-country-focus> p. 23
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-colombia-country-focus>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/colombia>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.worlddata.info/america/colombia/populationgrowth.php>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-colombia-country-focus-0>; <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/all-children-learn-colombia>
- <sup>17</sup> <https://www.worlddata.info/average-income.php>
- <sup>18</sup> [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/latin-america-and-caribbean/colombia\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/latin-america-and-caribbean/colombia_en)
- <sup>19</sup> <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/crime-rate-by-country>
- <sup>20</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/colombia>
- <sup>21</sup> <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-colombia-country-focus>;  
[https://www.defensoria.gov.co/documents/20123/2741928/24\\_135\\_DIGITAL\\_LOS\\_CONTRASTES\\_REALIDAD\\_HUMANITARIA.pdf](https://www.defensoria.gov.co/documents/20123/2741928/24_135_DIGITAL_LOS_CONTRASTES_REALIDAD_HUMANITARIA.pdf)
- <sup>22</sup> <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/colombia>
- <sup>23</sup> <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/colombia/>
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/colombia>
- <sup>25</sup> <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies/colombia>
- <sup>26</sup> <https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report>
- <sup>27</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/colombia#e81181>
- <sup>28</sup> <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/colombia/>
- <sup>29</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/colombia>
- <sup>30</sup> <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-colombia-country-focus> p. 27
- <sup>31</sup> <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/malta/asylum-procedure/access-procedure-and-registration/access-territory-and-push-backs/>
- <sup>31</sup> [https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download?data\\_finder%5BdataGroup%5D=displacement&data\\_finder%5Bdataset%5D=population&data\\_finder%5BdisplayType%5D=totals&data\\_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=REF&data\\_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=ASY&data\\_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=IDP&data\\_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=OIP&data\\_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=STA&data\\_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=HST&data\\_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=OOC&data\\_finder%5Byear\\_filterType%5D=range&data\\_finder%5Byear\\_rangeFrom%5D=2020&data\\_finder%5Byear\\_rangeTo%5D=2026&data\\_finder%5Bcoo\\_displayType%5D=custom&data\\_finder%5Bcoo\\_country%5D%5B%5D=44&data\\_finder=on&data\\_finder%5Bcoa\\_displayType%5D=custom&data\\_finder%5Bcoa\\_country%5D%5B%5D=132&data\\_finder%5Byear\\_%5D=&data\\_finder%5Bcoo\\_%5D=&data\\_finder%5Bcoa\\_%5D=&data\\_finder%5Badvanced\\_%5D=&data\\_finder%5Bsubmit%5D=](https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download?data_finder%5BdataGroup%5D=displacement&data_finder%5Bdataset%5D=population&data_finder%5BdisplayType%5D=totals&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=REF&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=ASY&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=IDP&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=OIP&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=STA&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=HST&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B%5D=OOC&data_finder%5Byear_filterType%5D=range&data_finder%5Byear_rangeFrom%5D=2020&data_finder%5Byear_rangeTo%5D=2026&data_finder%5Bcoo_displayType%5D=custom&data_finder%5Bcoo_country%5D%5B%5D=44&data_finder=on&data_finder%5Bcoa_displayType%5D=custom&data_finder%5Bcoa_country%5D%5B%5D=132&data_finder%5Byear_%5D=&data_finder%5Bcoo_%5D=&data_finder%5Bcoa_%5D=&data_finder%5Badvanced_%5D=&data_finder%5Bsubmit%5D=)
- <sup>31</sup> <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2024-08-26/local/Sex-worker-from-Colombia-testifies-in-human-trafficking-case-against-nine-defendants-6736263747>; <https://lovinmalta.com/international/sex-trafficking-ring-with-links-to-malta-busted-17-arrested/> ; [https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/court\\_and\\_police/139920/second\\_alleged\\_victim\\_recounts\\_threats\\_passports\\_withheld\\_in\\_traffic\\_king\\_case\\_against\\_fabio\\_vespa](https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/court_and_police/139920/second_alleged_victim_recounts_threats_passports_withheld_in_traffic_king_case_against_fabio_vespa)

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This factsheet was compiled by Adri van den Berg for BDE. Adri worked for many years as a Country of Origin Information (COI) researcher, her final post before retiring being with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in Malta.

