At the Margins of Protection: Climate Change, Conflict, and Afro-Colombian Internal Displacement from the Chocó to Medellín

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Internal Displacement at the Margins of Protection

Seventy-five years after the adoption of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the international protection regime for displaced populations remains grounded in legal categories developed in the aftermath of World War II. While the Convention provides a framework for the protection of individuals who cross international borders due to persecution, it does not extend to those displaced within their own countries, nor does it adequately capture the increasingly complex drivers of contemporary displacement. As a result, internally displaced persons (IDPs) - who constitute the majority of the world's displaced - remain largely outside the scope of binding international protection, relying instead on softer normative frameworks, regional instruments and uneven national responses (IDMC, 2026; UNHCR, 2025).

Since 1951, the dynamics of forced migration have evolved significantly. While armed conflict and violence remain central drivers, environmental degradation, climate variability, and slow-onset ecological changes are increasingly shaping patterns of human mobility, especially internal displacement (IDMC, 2026). Importantly, these factors rarely operate in isolation. A growing body of literature emphasizes the multicausal nature of displacement, highlighting how environmental stressors intersect with socio-economic inequalities, political instability, and historical marginalization to produce complex mobility outcomes. In this sense, climate change is better understood not as a direct cause of displacement, but as a 'threat multiplier' that exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and intensifies pressures on already fragile communities.[2]

This multidimensional reality poses a significant challenge to policy frameworks that remain largely structured around linear and mono-causal understandings of displacement. In many contexts, including Colombia, internal displacement continues to be framed predominantly through a conflict-centric lens. While this reflects the country's long history of armed violence, it risks obscuring the growing role of environmental stressors and their interaction with other structural drivers. Such a narrow framing can limit both the recognition of affected populations and the scope of policy responses designed to support them.

This article examines these dynamics through the lived experiences of Afro-Colombian IDPs displaced from the rural areas of the Chocó to the marginalized urban peripheries of Medellín. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork I have conducted between 2023 and 2024, it explores how displacement is experienced, understood, and navigated in a context where environmental pressures, armed conflict, and socio-economic exclusion converge. The central argument is that displacement in Colombia cannot be adequately explained through single-cause narratives;

rather, it must be analysed through a multidimensional lens that accounts for the interplay between conflict, climate variability, environmental degradation, historical marginalization, socio-economic inequality, and uneven policy implementation.

By foregrounding the perspectives of displaced individuals, this article contributes to ongoing debates at the intersection of displacement, climate change, and governance. It highlights how IDPs negotiate depleting sources of livelihood, escape ongoing situations of violence, navigate fragmented protection regimes, and adapt to new urban environments while confronting persistent institutional gaps. In doing so, it engages directly with the experience of displacement and policy by demonstrating that a persistent disjuncture between lived realities and policy frameworks continues to shape outcomes on the ground.

Ultimately, the article calls for a rethinking of displacement governance in light of contemporary challenges. Bridging the gap between lived experience and policy requires moving beyond rigid legal categories and analytical frameworks and embracing more integrated approaches that reflect the complexity of displacement processes. Only then can the promise of protection begin to align with the realities of forced migration in the twenty-first century.

IDPs in Colombia: Caught Between Armed Conflict and a Changing Climate

Colombia represents one of the most protracted and complex contexts of internal displacement worldwide. With more than 7.2 million IDPs - the second highest globally - the country has long been shaped by decades of armed conflict involving state forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitary organizations, and more recently fragmented non-state actors (Unidad de Víctimas, 2026; IDMC, 2026).[3] This history has profoundly influenced both public narratives and institutional responses, framing displacement primarily as a direct consequence of violence, insecurity, and territorial disputes. While this conflict-centred understanding has enabled the development of relatively advanced legal and policy frameworks, it also risks obscuring the broader set of dynamics that shape contemporary displacement patterns (Ibáñez, 2009).

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the role of environmental stressors in influencing mobility decisions. Climate variability in Colombia manifests through erratic rainfall patterns, recurrent flooding, landslides, droughts, and gradual shifts in agricultural productivity (IDEAM, 2018). These changes disproportionately affect rural populations whose livelihoods depend on natural resources, particularly smallholder farmers and riverine communities. Even relatively small environmental disruptions can have cascading effects on food security, income stability, and long-term resilience, thereby shaping decisions about whether to remain or move (World Bank, 2021).

Crucially, as environmental factors need to be understood as 'threat multipliers', climate change-induced degradation in the Colombian context can intensify multidimensional poverty, weaken local economies, and increase vulnerability in the face of armed actors. For instance, declining agricultural yields or repeated flooding may erode livelihoods, pushing households into precarious situations where displacement becomes more likely, whether due to direct environmental pressures or heightened insecurity (Black et al., 2011; McMichael et al., 2020).

The Chocó Department provides a particularly illustrative example of these intersecting dynamics. As Afro-Colombian communities represent more than 80% of the population, the Chocó has historically been characterized by structural marginalization, state abandonment, and high levels of multidimensional poverty. At the same time, it is one of the regions most exposed to environmental risks, including flooding, droughts, riverbank erosion, deforestation, and ecosystem degradation. These environmental pressures directly undermine subsistence livelihoods, while ongoing insecurity and weak institutional support further constrain local adaptive capacity (Oslender, 2016; Restrepo, 2013).

Displacement from the Chocó often unfolds as a gradual and cumulative process rather than a single, abrupt event. Households frequently attempt to cope through local adaptation strategies - such as diversifying livelihoods or engaging in temporary migration - but empirical data from the field show that repeated shocks threaten these capacities over time. As a result, decisions to migrate are made within increasingly constrained sets of options, challenging conventional distinctions between clear-cut 'forced' and 'voluntary' movement dichotomies (Piguet et al., 2011; Zickgraf, 2018).

Urban centres such as Medellín have consequently emerged as key destinations for displaced populations, including Afro-Colombians from the Chocó. The city offers some level of security (at least from conflicts between armed actors in rural areas), economic opportunities, and established diasporic networks that facilitate relocation. However, testimonies gathered during my fieldwork show that arrival in a marginalized urban environment often marks the beginning of new forms of vulnerability. Many IDPs settle in peripheral *barrios* and *comunas* characterized by precarious housing, limited access to services and infrastructure, and exposure to environmental risks such as landslides in the city's Valle de Aburrá - on top of urban forms of violence and insecurity. Displacement, therefore, should not be understood as a singular event but as an ongoing process shaped by shifting conditions across both rural and urban spaces.

Multicausal Displacement and Policy Gaps: Findings from the Field

This research is based on 40 semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted in Spanish between September 2023 and May 2024 with Afro-Colombian IDPs living in marginalized areas of Medellín. Participants were selected through purposive sampling according to three criteria: self-identification as Afro-Colombian, displacement from rural areas of the Chocó within the last 25 years, and current residence in one of the city's predominantly Afro-

Colombian areas. Recruitment was carried out through local community leaders, grassroots organizations, religious actors, and snowball sampling, which helped reach participants who might otherwise have been difficult to access. The interviews lasted between 30 and 120 minutes and were complemented by field observation and community gatherings, which helped build trust, contextualize the testimonies, and refine the research focus. This approach allowed the study to capture a diverse range of experiences across age, gender, education, socio-economic characteristics, household composition, and displacement history.

The Limits of Mono-causal Narratives

A central issue emerging from my research is that of the challenge to mono-causal narratives in both policy and public discourse. During my fieldwork I came across that internal displacement in Colombia is overwhelmingly framed as a consequence of armed conflict. While this framing has enabled significant legal advancements - such as recognition of IDPs' rights - it also marginalizes other drivers of displacement, particularly those linked to environmental stress and socio-economic precarity.

Findings from my study challenge this dominant narrative by showing that displacement is rarely experienced as conflict alone. Afro-Colombian IDPs interviewed in Medellín consistently described their mobility as the result of accumulating pressures rather than a single triggering event. Participants highlighted declining agricultural productivity, recurrent flooding, loss of land, extractive pressures, and the absence of viable economic opportunities as key factors shaping their decisions to move. These dynamics often preceded or unfolded alongside episodes of violence, creating a context in which displacement became increasingly unavoidable over time. As one interviewee explained:

> "There are so many reasons why we eventually decided to move, we couldn't take it anymore, between the violence, the guerilla, the paramilitaries, the floods and the droughts destroying our crops and killing our small animals, we couldn't live there anymore… when you are born into poverty, surviving becomes a daily struggle, it builds up until you can't take it anymore and you move somewhere else to hope for a better life for you and your family…".

This reflects a broader pattern across the data: displacement is understood by those experiencing it as a convergence of pressures rather than a linear cause-and-effect process.

Moreover, participants frequently emphasized the temporal dimension of displacement, describing long periods of gradual deterioration before departure. Environmental degradation - such as soil exhaustion and unpredictable rainfall - was often identified as an early destabilizing factor, weakening livelihoods and reducing resilience. Over time, these pressures compounded insecurity and economic marginalization, narrowing the range of viable coping

strategies. In this sense, mobility emerges not as an immediate reaction to crisis, but as the outcome of prolonged exposure to overlapping risks.

Such experiences fundamentally challenge the binary distinction between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration. As the findings demonstrate, decisions to move are made within highly constrained environments, where remaining in place is no longer sustainable but leaving entails significant uncertainty. The apparent 'choice' to migrate is therefore deeply shaped by structural conditions that limit agency. This blurring of categories has important implications for policy, as existing frameworks often rely on rigid classifications that fail to capture the lived realities of displacement in contexts shaped by environmental change and chronic marginalization.

Policy Fragmentation and Institutional Gaps

The Colombian policy framework for IDPs is often regarded as one of the most advanced globally, grounded in a rights-based approach that formally guarantees access to assistance, reparations, and social services. However, findings from this research reveal that, in practice, these protections remain unevenly implemented and insufficiently adapted to the lived realities of displacement in contexts shaped by multiple, overlapping drivers. In particular, the framework's strong emphasis on conflict-induced displacement limits its capacity to recognise and respond to the environmental and socio-economic dimensions that feature prominently in displaced persons' narrated experiences.

Interview data from Afro-Colombian IDPs in Medellín highlight how these conceptual limitations translate into concrete barriers to protection. Many participants reported difficulties in accessing assistance due to the narrow criteria used to determine eligibility, which often require displacement to be clearly attributed to armed conflict. Yet, as the findings show, such distinctions are rarely meaningful in practice. Individuals whose mobility was shaped by a combination of environmental degradation, livelihood loss, and conflict-related insecurity frequently struggled to have their experiences fully recognized within institutional frameworks. As one participant noted:

> "It wasn't just the bullets or the rain, it was everything together. You can't live from the land anymore, and you can't live in peace either."

This reflects a stringent disconnect between policy categories and the lived realities where these issues are all deeply interconnected. Beyond issues of recognition, participants also described navigating a fragmented and often opaque institutional landscape upon arrival in Medellín. Responsibilities for housing, employment support, healthcare, and social protection are distributed across multiple agencies, with limited coordination between them. As a result, IDPs are frequently required to engage with several institutions simultaneously, each addressing only a partial dimension of their needs. This fragmentation places a significant administrative and

emotional burden on displaced individuals, particularly those with limited resources or unfamiliarity with bureaucratic processes.

The findings further indicate that environmental drivers of displacement fall into a policy blind spot. While Colombia has developed climate adaptation strategies and disaster risk management frameworks, these are rarely integrated with displacement policies. Consequently, individuals displaced in part due to environmental stressors are not systematically targeted by either system. This institutional gap reinforces patterns of exclusion and contributes to uneven protection outcomes, particularly for Afro-Colombian communities already affected by historical marginalization and state abandonment.

Taken together, these dynamics point to a fundamental misalignment between the complexity of displacement experiences and the structure of policy responses. Without greater integration across policy domains and a broader recognition of multicausal displacement, existing frameworks risk reproducing the very vulnerabilities they seek to address.

Legal and Policy Frameworks

National Framework

Colombia has developed one of the most extensive legal and institutional frameworks for the protection of IDPs globally. Anchored in a rights-based approach, this framework includes registration systems, reparations mechanisms, and access to social services, largely institutionalized through landmark legislation such as Law 1448 of 2011 (the Victims and Land Restitution Law). These measures have positioned Colombia as a reference point in international discussions on internal displacement governance (Arroyave Velásquez et al., 2025). However, this framework did not emerge in isolation. It builds upon earlier legal developments, most notably Law 387 of 1997, which constituted the first formal recognition by the Colombian state of the existence of internal displacement linked to the armed conflict. Law 387 established initial mechanisms for the prevention of displacement, the protection and assistance of displaced populations, and the stabilization of affected communities, marking a critical shift from denial to institutional acknowledgment of the phenomenon (Bustos, 2024).

The transition from Law 387 of 1997 to Law 1448 of 2011 reflects a significant evolution in both the conceptualization and governance of displacement in Colombia. While Law 387 focused primarily on humanitarian assistance and emergency response, Law 1448 expanded the scope of state responsibility by embedding displacement within a broader framework of victims' rights, including truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition. This shift signalled a move from a reactive to a more comprehensive and rights-oriented approach, recognizing displaced persons not only as beneficiaries of aid but as rights-holders entitled to restitution and long-term support. It also strengthened institutional coordination and introduced

more structured mechanisms for land restitution, thereby addressing one of the root causes of displacement (Bustos, 2024).

More recently, this framework has been reinforced through the adoption of Law 2421 of 2024, which seeks to strengthen comprehensive reparation, assistance, and socio-economic stabilization for victims of the armed conflict. The reform introduces more agile reparation mechanisms, improves interinstitutional coordination, and expands protection through a differentiated approach that prioritizes particularly vulnerable groups, notably children orphaned by conflict. It also extends protective measures to social leaders, human rights defenders, and environmental actors, while establishing new financing mechanisms to support implementation and reinforcing victims' participation in decision-making processes. This new statute represents an attempt by the state to bridge the persistent gap between formal legal recognition and effective delivery of rights (Perez Llain et al., 2026).

A more consequential development followed in May 2026, when the Colombian Congress enacted Law 2577 of 2026. The law formally recognises internal forced displacement caused by climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters. It defines this form of displacement as occurring when individuals, families, groups, or communities are compelled to leave their homes or habitual residences - or do so to avert serious effects - because environmental factors, climate change, or natural disasters seriously endanger life, health, or physical integrity.

Law 2577 creates the *Registro Único de Desplazamiento Ambiental* (Unified Registry of Environmental Displacement), covering people, families, communities, and identified social groups who are at risk of, or already experiencing, environmentally induced internal displacement, as well as people preventively evacuated within Colombia. It further establishes state obligations to identify and characterise affected populations and to develop a public-policy response aimed at prevention, protection, humanitarian assistance, adaptation, and durable solutions. The legislation therefore creates a legal route beyond the prior division between conflict-displaced persons, commonly recognised as *desplazados*, and persons affected by disasters, more commonly treated as *damnificados* within a narrower emergency-response framework (Sánchez-Mojica, 2021).

This legislative development follows the Colombian Constitutional Court's Judgment T-123 of 2024, which recognised internal forced displacement caused by environmental factors as constitutionally relevant. The Court treated displacement associated with disasters, climate-change-related events, and environmental degradation as a multidimensional human-rights concern and required authorities to adopt structural, rights-based protection measures. T-123 therefore provided an important constitutional opening for Law 2577, challenging the previously dominant assumption that forced displacement was legally intelligible primarily through armed conflict.

Law 2577 accordingly marks a significant normative shift. Whereas Law 2421 reinforced protections within the conflict-victim framework established by Law 1448, Law 2577 formally incorporates environmental, climatic, and disaster-related drivers of forced internal displacement into Colombian law. It is particularly important for regions such as the Chocó, where displacement is shaped by the interaction of recurrent flooding, environmental degradation, declining livelihood opportunities, armed violence, and long-standing socio-economic marginalisation. The new law is therefore more compatible with the multicausal realities documented in this study.

Nevertheless, the legal recognition created by Law 2577 should not be equated with effective protection in practice. Its implementation will depend on the operational design and accessibility of the new registry; adequate funding; coordination among the institutions responsible for victim assistance, disaster-risk management, climate adaptation, and territorial governance; and the meaningful participation of affected communities. These issues are especially salient for Afro-Colombian communities, for whom displacement frequently entails not only loss of housing or income but also collective territorial, cultural, and political harms.

Taken together, the legal trajectory from Law 387, through Law 1448 and Law 2421, to Law 2577 illustrates the progressive, although uneven, institutionalisation of internal displacement governance in Colombia. Law 387 established recognition of conflict-induced displacement; Law 1448 consolidated a more comprehensive victims' rights regime; Law 2421 strengthened aspects of reparation and implementation; and Law 2577 extends formal recognition to displacement driven by climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters.

The key question now is whether Law 2577 will translate this formal recognition into accessible, coordinated, territorially sensitive protection for people experiencing multicausal displacement. Its promise lies in its potential to move Colombia beyond a strictly conflict-centred approach; its limitations will depend on whether the new institutional architecture can overcome the fragmentation that has historically separated displacement law, climate governance, and disaster-risk management.

International and Regional Frameworks

At the international level, the protection of IDPs is primarily guided by soft-law instruments, most notably the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998). These principles represent a significant normative development, as they explicitly recognize that internal displacement may result from a wide range of causes, namely: "*armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters*". In doing so, they move beyond the narrower scope of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which is limited to cross-border displacement linked to a specific understanding of the manifestations of persecution. While the 1998 signatories most probably didn't think of phenomena such as climate change or climate variability (the most prominent of the latter being El Niño Southern Oscillation - ENSO - also known as El Niño/La Niña), contemporary legal analysis could argue

for their inclusion. However, despite their conceptual breadth, the Guiding Principles remain non-binding, and their implementation depends heavily on national legal frameworks and political will, resulting in uneven application across contexts.

The Colombian Constitutional Court's jurisprudence - particularly decision T-123 of 2024 - can be understood as an important effort to operationalize these international norms at the domestic level. The ruling attempts to align national practice with the broader understanding of displacement embedded in the Guiding Principles by acknowledging the complex and overlapping drivers that shape mobility. In doing so, it implicitly challenges the rigid categorizations that dominate international refugee law, particularly those derived from the 1951 Convention. While the Convention remains a cornerstone of international protection, its focus on individualized persecution and cross-border movement renders it ill-suited to address the realities of internal displacement and climate-related displacement, both categories representing the majority of contemporary forced displacements around the globe (McAdam, 2012).

Regional frameworks in Latin America have also sought to address some of these gaps. The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (1984) expanded the regional refugee definition to include persons whose lives, safety, or freedom are threatened by: "generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order." Although non-binding, the Cartagena Declaration has had substantial normative influence across the region and may offer interpretive scope where climate impacts interact with violence, serious human rights violations, or broader social disruption. However, its refugee definition was not designed specifically to address environmental mobility and may therefore provide an incomplete basis for protection in cases of climate-related displacement (Cantor, 2020). Building on this legacy, the Cartagena +40 Process culminated in the 2024 Chile Declaration and Plan of Action, which recognises climate change and disasters as aggravating drivers of displacement and calls for stronger legal and policy responses. This framework also being non-binding, its effectiveness will depend on whether participating states translate its objectives into domestic measures capable of addressing both sudden-onset events and slower, cumulative forms of displacement.

The Inter-American human rights system, particularly through the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, has further contributed to the development of protection standards for displaced populations.[4] These bodies have emphasized states' obligations to prevent displacement, protect affected populations, and ensure conditions for safe and dignified return. Importantly, they have increasingly engaged with issues related to environmental harm and the rights of vulnerable communities, thereby opening potential avenues for addressing climate-related displacement within a human rights framework. Nevertheless, enforcement challenges and the reliance on state compliance limit the transformative potential of these norms in practice.

Comparatively, the Kampala Convention (2009) stands as the most advanced legally binding regional instrument on internal displacement, incorporating the definition set out in the 1998 Guiding Principles and broadening its scope to include displacement triggered by large-scale development projects. More importantly, it explicitly stipulates that: "States Parties shall take measures to protect and assist persons who have been internally displaced due to natural or human made disasters, including climate change", thereby addressing a key gap in global protection frameworks. The Convention also imposes clear obligations on states to prevent displacement, protect affected populations, and support durable solutions. While geographically limited to the African context, it provides an important model for how legal frameworks can evolve to reflect the multidimensional nature of displacement.

Taken together, these international and regional instruments, as well as the jurisprudence mentioned above, reveal both progress and persistent gaps in the governance of displacement. While there is growing recognition of the need to move beyond narrow, conflict-based or persecution-based frameworks, legal and policy responses remain fragmented and uneven. As the analysis of T-123 demonstrates, domestic jurisprudence can play a crucial role in bridging these gaps by interpreting existing norms in more expansive and context-sensitive ways. However, without corresponding developments at the international and regional levels, significant protection deficits are likely to persist. Addressing these challenges ultimately requires a shift toward more integrated frameworks that move beyond rigid legal categories and better reflect the multicausal realities of displacement in contexts shaped by environmental change, conflict, and structural inequality.

Conclusion

Seventy-five years after the adoption of the 1951 Refugee Convention, the global protection regime for displaced populations remains poorly equipped to address the realities of climate-related internal displacement. Although conflict and persecution have historically structured dominant protection categories, recent legal developments - including Colombia's Law 2577 of 2026 - demonstrate an emerging shift towards recognising environmental and climate-related drivers of forced mobility.

The experiences of Afro-Colombian IDPs from the Chocó living in Medellín show that displacement is rarely attributable to a single cause or reducible to a discrete event. Rather, recurrent flooding, environmental degradation, declining agricultural viability, territorial dispossession, armed conflict, and racialised marginalisation progressively erode livelihoods and narrow the options available to households. Movement may consequently appear voluntary in formal administrative terms, while occurring under conditions of deeply constrained agency. This cumulative rural-urban process challenges rigid distinctions between environmental and conflict-related displacement, as well as between voluntary and forced mobility.

Arrival in Medellín does not necessarily resolve these vulnerabilities. Many displaced people enter peripheral urban areas characterised by precarious housing, limited access to public

services and infrastructure, environmental risk, and continuing insecurity. Displacement must therefore be understood not as a completed movement from a rural origin to an urban destination, but as an ongoing process in which vulnerabilities are transformed and frequently reproduced.

Taken together, these experiences reveal a persistent mismatch between Afro-Colombian IDPs' multicausal displacement trajectories and the institutional frameworks intended to protect them. Colombia's legal framework has nevertheless undergone an important recent transformation. Its historically sophisticated system for conflict-related displacement - developed through Law 387 of 1997, Law 1448 of 2011, and Law 2421 of 2024 - provided important rights-based protections but long struggled to recognise mobility shaped by overlapping environmental and conflict-related pressures. Judgment T-123 of 2024 marked a critical constitutional opening by recognising environmentally induced internal displacement, including displacement linked to sudden-onset disasters and cumulative environmental deterioration. Law 2577 of 2026 subsequently gave legislative form to this development by recognising forced internal displacement associated with climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters, and by creating a unified registry and a public-policy mandate covering prevention, humanitarian assistance, and durable solutions. Yet its practical significance will depend on accessible registration, adequate funding, effective institutional coordination, and meaningful ethnic-differential and territorial participation.

At the international and regional levels, important gaps remain. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide a broader, though non-binding, basis for recognising disaster-related displacement. The Cartagena +40 Process, culminating in the 2024 Chile Declaration and Plan of Action, signals a regional commitment to rights-based responses to climate- and disaster-related mobility, but depends on domestic implementation to address both sudden-onset and cumulative displacement. The Inter-American human rights system has developed standards on prevention, protection, and dignified return in contexts of environmental harm, yet enforcement remains dependent on state compliance. The Kampala Convention provides the clearest binding model: it defines IDPs to include persons displaced by natural or human-made disasters, expressly requires protection and assistance for those displaced by disasters, including climate change, as well as establishes safeguards against displacement by development projects. Its application, however, remains limited to Africa.

Legal recognition is necessary, but it is not protection. Closing the remaining gap requires multicausal, rights-based, and territorially grounded responses that reflect how forced displacement is experienced: through the intersection of armed conflict, environmental change, racialised inequality, territorial loss, and urban precarity. For Afro-Colombian communities displaced from the Chocó to Medellín, effective protection must move beyond formal recognition and emergency assistance towards durable solutions that address these lived realities.

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[2] See for example: Adger et al., 2015; Black et al., 2011; Foresight, 2011; Ionesco et al., 2016; Kelman, 2019; McMichael et al., 2012; McMichael et al., 2020; Piguet et al., 2011, Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015.

[3] For more information, see: https://www.unidadvictimas.gov.co/registro-unico-de-victimas-ruv/ (accessed 4 September 2026).

[4] See the Inter-American Court of Human Rights' (IACtHR) Advisory Opinion OC-32/25 on *Climate Emergency and Human Rights*, as well as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)'s Resolution No. 2/24.