

THE CARTAGENA DECLARATION AND THE CARTAGENA+40 PROCESS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees** is one of the most important legal, political, and strategic instruments of the last few decades on protection and solutions in Latin America and the Caribbean. It marked a milestone and consolidated cooperation across a region that has traditionally shown solidarity, as well as offered asylum and protection, to refugees.

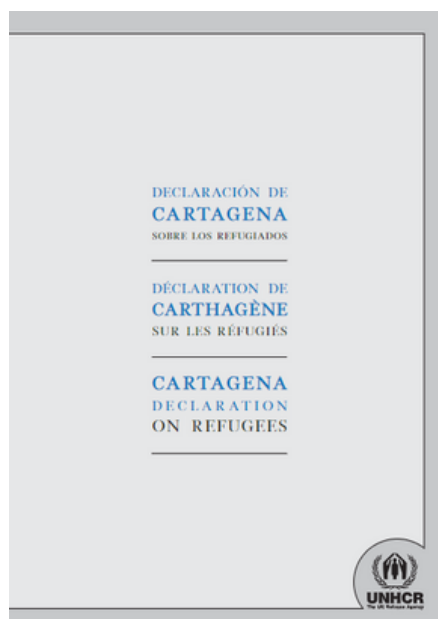
The **Cartagena Process**, an innovative regional collaboration and shared-responsibility model that focuses on promoting solutions, was born following the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration. Since 2004, the region has adopted 10-year strategic plans

– namely, the Mexico Plan of Action and the Brazil Plan of Action – to address the challenges posed by displacement.

The 40th anniversary of the **Cartagena Declaration** falls in 2024. This declaration triggered the **Cartagena +40 Process**, whereby countries in Latin America and the Caribbean will collaborate in the adoption of the **2024-2034 Chile Declaration and Plan of Action, a new 10-year regional strategic plan**.

The Global Compact on Refugees will be applied and adapted to the region through this plan, which will abide by the principles of cooperation, solidarity, and shared responsibility. It will also conform to a humanitarian and apolitical spirit, and will be practical, innovative, and visionary.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CARTAGENA DECLARATION



What is the Cartagena Declaration?

The [Cartagena Declaration on Refugees](#) is a legal, political, and strategic instrument that is fundamental as regards international refugee protection in Latin America and the Caribbean. Adopted in 1984 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, this declaration broadened the definition of ‘refugee’ – beyond that set forth in the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.

Honoring the **spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and shared responsibility** that has characterized a long-standing tradition of protection in **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the Cartagena Declaration, which is both practical and innovative, proposed humanitarian and legal solutions to respond to emerging challenges across the region.

Why is the Cartagena Declaration important and what does it imply for people seeking protection in Latin America and the Caribbean?

The Cartagena Declaration broadened the definition of ‘refugee’ for it to include people impacted by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive human rights violations, and other circumstances that seriously disturb public order. As a result, States have been able to protect a higher number of displaced people in the region, a gesture that upholds a tradition of solidarity in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The importance of the Cartagena Declaration lies on its humanitarian approach and the fact that it has adapted to a regional reality, where many displacement situations are not due to persecution alone.

Which have been the most significant achievements made as regards the protection of displaced people in the last decade?

In light of unprecedented challenges, such as large-scale displacement and the COVID-19 pandemic, the countries in the region adapted their protection systems and innovated the search for solutions through the Brazil Plan of Action. Concrete advances over the last decade include the strengthening of asylum systems, socioeconomic integration policies for displaced people, access to healthcare and social security services, as well as preventing and eradicating statelessness throughout the continent.

For further information on the progress made over the last decade, read the report [2014-2024 Brazil Plan of Action: Summary of the Most Significant Progress of the Last Decade](#)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CARTAGENA PROCESS

What is the Cartagena Process?

Following the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration, Latin America resolved to commemorate it and to strengthen it every ten years. This is how the **Cartagena Process** started.

The Cartagena Process is a continuous and growing effort in Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen an international system that protects refugees, forcibly displaced people, and stateless people. Through declarations and plans of action, including specific programs and concrete goals, this process has upheld countries’ commitment to address legal and humanitarian challenges related to protection and durable solutions.

Since 2004, countries in the Americas have incorporated **common strategic plans** to rise to changing protection-related challenges posed by displacement.

On a global level, the Cartagena Process is a unique regional collaboration and shared-responsibility model that focuses on promoting solutions. Every ten years (since the process started), countries in Latin America and the Caribbean gather to adopt a new plan of action that will guide their humanitarian response throughout the following decade.

After this declaration was adopted, the region resolved to commemorate its adoption every ten years. Not only is this how the Cartagena Process started, but it also inspired a **“Cartagena Spirit”**.

What is the ‘Cartagena Spirit’?

The ‘Cartagena Spirit’ could be defined as a collective and humanitarian commitment towards comprehensive protection and a search for durable solutions for refugees and stateless people in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is characterized by several **fundamental principles**:

1. Priority focus on protection and solutions.
2. Convergence between existing protection mechanisms and frameworks.
3. Focus on people’s human rights
4. Addressing protection challenges in a pacific and humanitarian manner.
5. Evolutionary, pragmatic, flexible and visionary nature of protection.
6. Solidarity, shared responsibility, and burden distribution among States.

It was all built throughout time, as the Cartagena Process reached several stages.

- 1984** — **CARTAGENA DECLARATION ON REFUGEES**
- 1994** — **CARTAGENA +10 SAN JOSE DECLARATION**

The [San Jose Declaration on Refugees and Displaced Personas](#) was adopted in Costa Rica in 1994. It analyzed the importance of the Cartagena Declaration as a protection tool. Additionally, it examined the need to address the plight of internally displaced people. The San Jose Declaration led to a series of principles on internal displacement years before the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were drafted.
- 2004** — **CARTAGENA+20 - MEXICO DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION**

The Mexico Declaration and [Plan of Action to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees in Latin America](#) was adopted in 2004.

This declaration was groundbreaking, as it included a regional 10-year action plan that introduced three innovative protection and durable solutions programs: Cities of Solidarity, Solidarity Resettlement, and Borders of Solidarity.
- 2014** — **CARTAGENA+30 - BRAZIL DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION**

This declaration was the first one to incorporate Caribbean countries as members of the process. The Brazil Plan of Action established a roadmap that applied the principles of solidarity, international cooperation, and shared responsibility, which were later included in the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees. The plan of action also incorporated statelessness, quality asylum, and solutions within the protection scope. Furthermore, considering the complex scenarios in North America and the Caribbean, it formulated strategies for both subregions.
- 2014** — **CARTAGENA+40 - CHILE DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION**

To be adopted in 2024, in Santiago de Chile, Chile.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE CARTAGENA +40 PROCESS

What is the Cartagena + 40 Process?

Led by Chile, the Cartagena +40 Process is a consultation mechanism that will operate throughout 2024. The results will be shown in Chile, in December, as Latin American and Caribbean governments will gather in Santiago de Chile on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration. The purpose is to adopt the **2024-2034 Chile Declaration and Plan of Action**.

The main purpose of the Cartagena +40 Process is to reflect on current displacement challenges to design a common **Roadmap** that guides the first regional implementation of the **Global Compact on Refugees** and all 352 pledges made by countries in the Americas at the last **Global Refugee Forum**.

On this road to Santiago, the Cartagena +40 Process also seeks to promote shared solutions to the current context of human mobility and statelessness; to regionalize national best practices as regards protection and solutions, in order to promote the standardization of the highest humanitarian standards; to align with regional (Palenque, Los Angeles Declaration), as well as subregional mechanisms (MIRPS, CRM, CSM, Quito Process, etc.), so that the actions undertaken collectively may be better coordinated and more effective.

How will the Cartagena +40 consultation process be carried out?

Three consultations will be conducted as regards issues representing pressing needs today: protection, solutions and natural disasters.

Considering that the Cartagena Process is inclusive in nature, in addition to Latin American and Caribbean States, civil society, organizations led by refugees and displaced people, academia, the private sector, and development actors will also intervene.

Similarly, in the spirit of shared responsibility, donors and collaborators will also take part in the Cartagena Process, in order to support the execution of the programs that will be created. To that end, a Support Platform for the Chile Plan of Action could be created following the adoption of the plan.

The Cartagena +40 Process **emphasizes the need to provide comprehensive protection and solutions along the route**. This approach requires addressing the need for protection, integration, and solutions of those who need international and other forms of protection although they have not been recognized as refugees. Additionally, it safeguards fundamental rights, including education, health, employment and livelihoods, documentation, birth registration, and access to a nationality.

1

I Protecting people on the move and stateless people

México - 04 and 05 April, 2024

2

II Comprehensive solution strategy

Brazil - 16 and 17 May, 2024

3

III Forced displacement caused by natural disasters and subregional consultation with the Caribbean

Bogotá - 19 to 21 June, 2024

How are the Cartagena +40 Process and the Global Refugee Forum related?

As part of the Global Refugee Forum, which took place in December 2023, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean [announced a regional pledge](#) to work collaboratively to adopt the **2024 Chile Declaration and Plan of Action** within the following decade. This refreshed a Latin American and Caribbean tradition that offers protection and solutions to people on the move, with the purpose of preparing and implementing a significant and concrete contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees by pursuing its goals and abiding by its principles.

Likewise, during the Global Refugee Forum, 352 pledges were announced in connection with the Americas. In that regard, the Cartagena +40 Process and the Plan of Action could foster matching pledges, as well as make a tangible contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees.

It is expected that the Chile Declaration and Plan of Action be a realistic mechanism to implement the pledges made by Latin America and the Caribbean at the Global Refugee Forum, which focuses on practical protection responses and solutions.

What role does UNHCR play in the Cartagena +40 Process?

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has been acting as Technical Secretary of the Cartagena +40 Process since it was launched, in December 2023 – as part of the Global Refugee Forum. As such, UNHCR supports the Chilean Government. Throughout 2024, UNHCR will provide technical support, which will include preparing and developing Thematic and Sub-regional consultations in the Caribbean, negotiating and drafting the Chile Declaration and Plan of Action in Geneva, as well as holding a high-level meeting in December 2024, in Santiago de Chile, where the 2024-2034 Chile Declaration and Plan of Action are to be approved by acclamation.

1 Meeting with Civil Society August, 2024

2 Negotiations Political Declaration and Action Plan Geneva - September to November, 2024

3 High Level Event for Adoption Declaration and Plan of Action Chile - 11 to 12 December, 2024

USEFUL LINKS

- Cartagena Declaration on Refugees - [LINK](#)
- Cartagena+40 and the Global Refugee Forum: Multistakeholder Pledge - [LINK](#)
- Updates about Cartagena +40 - [LINK](#)

CONTACTS

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