

The government is in civilian control and the armed forces are specifically prohibited by the constitution from participating in political activities. Colombia has been able to achieve economic success and to maintain a civilian democratic regime in the face of many economic and political problems that have caused governments to collapse elsewhere.

The People

The estimated population in Colombia in mid-1987 was 30.6 million with an annual growth of about 1.7 per cent. Almost 90 per cent of the population lives in the western half of the country, in the temperate valleys, the highland plateaus of the Andes and on the Caribbean seaboard. Fifty-eight per cent of the population is Mestizo of mixed Spanish-Indian blood, 20 per cent is Caucasian, 14 per cent is Mulatto, 4 per cent is Negro, 3 per cent is Negro-Indian and 1 per cent is Indian.

Bogotá is the political capital of the country and one of the most important industrial and commercial centres. The city's population of about 5 million is growing at a rate of one-quarter million persons per year.

There are 20 cities in Colombia with more than 100 000 inhabitants. The main centres, other than Bogotá, include:

City	Population (1988 estimate)
Medellín	2.2 million
Cali	1.5 million
Barranquilla	1.2 million
Bucaramanga	0.6 million
Pereira	0.4 million
Cartagena (plus industrial area of Mamonal)	0.4 million
Manizales	0.4 million