

# Covid-19 Situation Peru

March 24, 2020



## Situational Context

On 15 March Peru declared a State of National Sanitary Emergency for 90 days and closed all its borders for 15 days to curb COVID-19. The emergency decree includes suspension of schools, day-cares, and calls on citizens to a mandatory self-quarantine for 15 days, whilst allowing to reallocate resources for the response. Basic services such as water and electricity, hospitals, pharmacies and supermarkets will continue to be available. Also, flights from and to Europe and Asia have been suspended until 16 April. On 18 March the government further announced a state of exception and mandatory curfew from 8 pm to 5 am. Military and Police forces will support the oversight and enforcement of these measures.

Migration offices and the Special Commission for Refugees have suspended attention to the public and are evaluating how to respond through digital or other media, with the current restrictions. UNHCR has been advocating and supporting the CEPR to use virtual systems.

## Asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants' situation

Over **80 per cent** of refugees and migrants work in the informal sector, and **will have no income during the quarantine**, and even after, many will lose their livelihoods. These low-income households are the worst-hit. The lack of emergency savings, their living conditions, being in overcrowded shelters or apartments, will make social distancing very difficult, if not impossible. No resources to pay their rent is already causing evictions and some persons in transit are living on the streets.

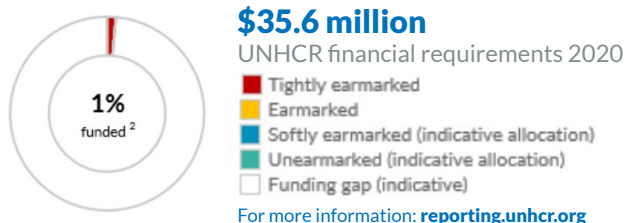
So far, **refugees and migrants will not be included** into government scheme to support the most vulnerable population through a bonus of 380 Soles (approximately \$110) per family, during the isolation period, despite UNHCR's and partners advocacy.

More than 200,000 refugees and migrants, primarily from Venezuela **are at heightened vulnerability** with their limited access to food, drinking water, shelter and health exacerbated during this period.

Additionally, **authorities are not recognizing the asylum-seeker identification document** for granting exceptions to the movement restrictions, meaning any could face detentions if they were to move to seek food or other essential items. UNHCR is advocating to revise the policy, while closely monitoring the 460 nationwide detentions for not following the isolation instructions, however, there is no disaggregated data by nationality.

Exceptionally, on 16 March **115 asylum requests were evaluated** in an accelerated procedure by the Special Commission for Refugees (CEPR for its acronym in Spanish) at the Binational Border Centre (CEBAF) at the northern border to meet the sanitary emergency requirements. With UNHCR and partners' support, these 200 asylum-seekers were placed in temporary shelters in Tumbes, where they will be provided with food rations and non-food item kits for the duration of the quarantine.

### UNHCR Peru Funding Update (As of 10 march 2020)



### HIGHLIGHT

UNHCR and the NGO Union Venezolana have been working closely with the Ministry of Health to include some **100 Venezuelan** doctors and health professionals in the COVID-19 response. More than 4,000 Venezuelan doctors and 10,000 nurses expressed their willingness to help the government.

# UNHCR Response

The response to basic needs of the population is a serious issue due to challenges in the physical provision of assistance. There is an urgent need of scaling up CBI (Cash-Based Interventions) solutions, food, drinking water and emergency shelter provision to reach persons of concern at risk to ensure their basic needs during the lockdown. This will require government permissions, a safe distribution strategy and strong logistics support.

## Remote support

UNHCR hotlines have been activated to enhance remote support and identification of vulnerable cases. Over **100** refugees and migrants, who have lost their livelihoods due to the current restrictions, have received orientation and have been directly registered for potential support, pending available funding and in accordance with their vulnerability.

## Humanitarian cash assistance

UNHCR and partners are reviewing how to adapt the CBI response considering the mobility restrictions and the increased needs to cover basic needs such as food and shelter. The following solutions are being evaluated:

- Vulnerable people who had previously received CBI support but are still in need will receive additional humanitarian cash assistance. Through partner Encuentros, **100 families** have already received said support.
- Together with partner HIAS a pilot is being conducted to provide beneficiaries without a bank account access to CBI. Some **30 families** have received a mobile money transfer through a specific transfer method with BBVA bank. However, there are strict and reduced limits on transfers per month. UNHCR continues to look for solutions.
- Alternatively, markets are being contacted to evaluate the possibility of introducing a voucher method.

## GAPS

Main gaps identified include lack of funds, inability to register and distribute cards in person and complexity in including new beneficiaries.

## Alternatives

### Shelter

While, temporary shelters will continue to host persons of concern, they are not allowed to receive new arrivals in a time where a lack of access to livelihoods is resulting in evictions. UNHCR is exploring alternatives for shelter, such as hotels and/or government supported infrastructure.

### Food

A partnership with the Food Bank is in progress. Together with partner Action Against Hunger, UNHCR received a donation of **1,300 chickens**. These were distributed to shelters and soup-kitchens assisting Peruvians and Venezuelans. A pilot initiative with a Venezuelan organization, taking the necessary health and hygiene precautions, is being conducted to distribute to vulnerable families dispersed in Lima.



# UNHCR Response

## Health



A **National ID** requirement has been reported to be needed for COVID-19 tests provisions. UNHCR and IFRC are closely monitoring test distribution, while waiting for the government's response for refugees and migrants. However, tests are known to be limited.



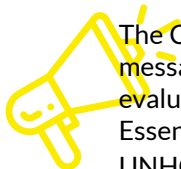
Health facilities run by IFRC will be suspended, instead they are strengthening the **dissemination of information** on COVID-19 for persons of concern. Psychosocial support through hotlines will be strengthened for persons of concern and humanitarian actors.



A Venezuelan health worker reported having symptoms, and requested UNHCR's support to access the test, as they were requiring the national ID. The **government agreed to include her in the response**. The case is being monitored.

## Coordination

UNHCR is co-leading the emergency coordination response for refugees and migrants through the **Working Group for Refugees and Migrants** (GTRM for its Spanish acronym) composed by 70 partners including donors, together with IOM. The GTRM is coordinating with the recently activated The Humanitarian Network. The GTRM has held daily emergency coordination meetings on Cash Based Interventions (CBI), protection, health, information management and communications, as well as with all sector leads to operationalize and channel assistance through. Actions taken:



The Communication working group shared a **kit with information and key messages** for partners to ensure messaging homogeneity and prevent an information overload, while a possibility for an interagency hotline is being evaluated. The VenInformado platform will be strengthened with information from the members of the GTRM. Essential messages and information related to the COVID-19 are being shared via local social media channels, the UNHCR communications tree and various networks.



The **#TuCausaEsMiCausa** solidarity campaign is being revised to increase social media activities to strengthen sensitization through alternative means, considering the inability to conduct community or mass events.

For more information, please download the GTRM Peru Flash Update No 1: COVID-19:

<https://r4v.info/es/documents/details/74728>

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