



AMERICAS MONTHLY REPORT

This document provides an overview of key developments affecting the displacement situation in the Americas and some of UNHCR response activities in line with the 2019 strategic objectives for the region.

VENEZUELA SITUATION

 **4.6 MILLION** REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS from Venezuela living abroad (as of 5 November 2019)

 **3.8 MILLION** in Latin America and the Caribbean states (as of 5 November 2019)

 **657,405 REGISTERED ASYLUM-SEEKERS** (as of 5 November 2019)

287,114 IN PERU	119,244 IN BRAZIL
58,597 IN SPAIN	102,856 IN U.S.A
16,291 IN MEXICO	

 **OVER 2 MILLION VENEZUELANES WITH REGULAR STATUS** including resident permits (as of 5 November 2019)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

1. The European Union, UNHCR and IOM, co-hosted on 28 and 29 October in Brussels the **International Solidarity Conference** on the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant crisis. The event was attended by 120 delegations, EU Institutions, UN agencies, NGOs, development actors and representatives from the private sector and financial institutions.
2. The Presidents of Peru and Chile signed the **Paracas Declaration** on 10 October, which contemplates two collaboration agreements related to the Venezuela Situation. They underline their agreement with respect to the political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and the importance of the collaborative work through the Lima Group. Additionally, they made a call to the international community to increase support to host countries and reiterated their commitment to working on regional responses through the Quito Process.
3. On 15 October, 11 countries from South, Central, and North America as well as the Caribbean rolled out the **Unified Vaccination Card**. This card intends to become a universal register of vaccinations for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, to protect and provide more efficient services to cardholders, avoiding duplication of vaccines and supporting public health efforts in regions where Venezuelans transit through or settle.
4. The second phase of the Registry for Venezuelans in **Ecuador** was launched on 15 October. It involves personal registration in 15 registration centers across the country and it will be open until March 2020. After the launch of the online phase of the process on 26 September, more than 102,000 Venezuelan nationals have registered to obtain regular status.

5. The President of Brazil, inaugurated the second phase of **Operação Acolhida** on 2 October. The objective of this phase is to increase the number of municipalities that receive Venezuelans through the voluntary internal relocation program. Additionally, an agreement was also signed between the Federal Government and the Banco do Brasil Foundation, creating a private fund to receive private donations to support Operação Acolhida. Furthermore, a new route will start relocating Venezuelans from Roraima to Belem using military airplanes and commercial flights.

6. During the first three days of registration in the crossing border with **Guyana**, 381 Venezuelans were registered and issued a “Government Person of Concern Household Registration Certificate”. This is the first government ID issued to Venezuelans in Guyana, as well as an important step for applying to a residence permit.

UNHCR RESPONSE IN LINE WITH 2019 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Since the opening of the Integrated Assistance Center on 8 March in La Guajira, Colombia, UNHCR and partners have provided direct humanitarian assistance to nearly 2,000 of the most vulnerable Venezuelan refugees and migrants, 97% of whom were previously living on the streets and nearly half of whom are children. To date in the Center, UNHCR and partners have served over 150,000 meals, carried out approximately 4,800 different type of medical attention and nearly 3,000 protection-related consultations.

UNHCR opened a new Orientation and Attention Point (PAO) in the city of Bucaramanga, Colombia, to respond to the increased humanitarian and protection needs of the city’s 60,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Bucaramanga is near the border with Venezuela and the second largest city along the route from Cucuta to the interior of the country. As of August 2019, a total of 36 Orientation and Attention Points (PAOs) were set up by UNHCR in key reception areas along Colombian territory.

In Tulcan, Ecuador, UNHCR set up a new information point at the Divine Child Community Canteen, for displaced people in need of food assistance. Since its opening, UNHCR assisted an average of 60 per cent of people in need of assistance based in Tulcan, and 40 per cent of people in transit, allowing to identify irregular entry routes, risks and specific protection needs.

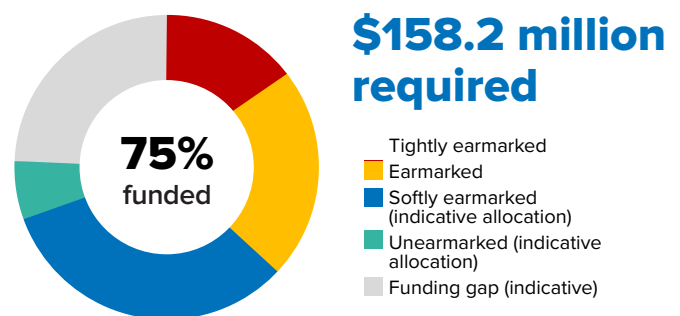
In line with the livelihoods and self-reliance strategy, UNHCR Brazil and partners carried out a workshop on entrepreneurial skills in Casa Miga Shelter, Manaus, offering CV writing and translation services to refugees and migrants. Participants presented their business plans and will be considered for financial support.

The first child friendly space opened at “Casa del Migrante” shelter in La Paz, Bolivia. Supported by UNHCR and partners, the space provides reception facilities and shelter for refugees and migrants and has now a safe space for children to play and interact with teachers and volunteers, providing wellbeing and psychosocial development support for young refugees and migrants.

A community-based project for children not enrolled in school, English as a Second Language, was established in Guyana to strengthen socioeconomic and cultural integration and empower refugees and migrants. UNHCR and the Ministry of Education of the Mabaruma sub-district, close to the border with Venezuela, identified safe spaces and trained volunteers. As a result, around 200 children from five communities will benefit from the project which is expected to further expand in 2020.



UNHCR's financial requirements 2019 for the Venezuela Situation (2 October 2019)



INSIDE VENEZUELA

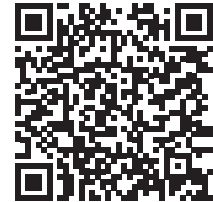
According to the **Humanitarian Response Plan of August 2019**, there is an estimate of 7 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in Venezuela, of which 2.7 million are in need of protection. UNHCR provides a response to affected population through a community-based approach, and delivery of emergency and relief items.

In October, UNHCR delivered solar lamps to the state-sponsored shelter Refugio de Amor y Paz, benefitting both the children under protection at the institute and the staff members. UNHCR and partners also delivered mobility kits to people in transit, looking to cross the border through Arauca.


UNHCR also coordinated a hygiene campaign with El Colibri community centre in Petare for children with specific needs, unaccompanied children, children with disabilities, young survivors of violence and children in extreme poverty.


Additionally, together with NGO Casa Bonita, UNHCR developed the Maternal Route in the indigenous community of Tukuko, where community leaders will encourage prenatal care of pregnant women and highlight the importance of civil registration of new-borns.

**Humanitarian
Response Plan of
August 2019**



NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA SITUATION

 **386,480**
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM
SEEKERS from North of
Central America worldwide

 **53,810** NEW
ASYLUM APPLICATIONS of
NCA nationals in 2019, 86%
higher compared to the same
period in 2018

62,299 ASYLUM CLAIMS IN MEXICO SINCE JANUARY 2019
(approx. 189% increase over the same period of 2018)

318,590 IDPS IN HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR

601,585 APPREHENSIONS OF NCA NATIONALS IN USA AND MEXICO
between Jan-Aug 2019, a 149% increase compared to 2018

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

UNHCR and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security of **El Salvador** signed a **Letter of Understanding** to strengthen the ongoing collaboration between both institutions with the aim of responding to the complexities of forced displacement in the country. The Minister expressed its commitment to respond and find durable solutions to forced displacement, a situation that has forced at least 71,500 people to abandon their homes, according to a Government's study.

On 28 October, the US Department of Homeland Security begun processing the return of asylum seekers and migrants to Mexico under the Migrant Protection Protocols at the Eagle Pass Port of Entry, which borders with Piedras Negras, Mexico.

A communique indicated that returned people will receive notices to appear in the temporary hearing facility in Laredo, Texas, for hearings two or four months in the future. According to the US Department of Homeland Security, more than 55,000 people have been returned to Tijuana, Mexicali, and Ciudad Juarez, Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros and almost 900 to their country of origin, through a total of six points of entry. Until September, more than 60% of those returned were still waiting for their first hearing.

For the first time in Petén, **Guatemala**, an asylum-seeker opened a bank account with the assistance of UNHCR and partners. Banrural is one of the banks with the largest network of branches in the rural areas of Guatemala. Having a bank account allows refugees and asylum seekers to be employed and have financial security, ask for loans and credits, as well as access services.

The third Roundtable of the Asylum Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI) for the Americas took place on 16 and 17 October in Mexico, aiming to contribute to the strengthening of national asylum systems by improving state capacities in determining refugee status in the context of large-scale mixed movements. It also contributed to the preparation of the first Global Refugee Forum, in particular through the identification of possible voluntary pledges and concrete contributions on strengthening asylum systems that countries might wish to present.

On 11 October, a boat carrying several Cameroonian nationals capsized off the coast of Tonalá, on their way to Oaxaca, in the south of **Mexico**. Eight people survived and two were reported dead. The route of Salina Cruz is known as a smuggling route, including for drugs. Over 1,200 people from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh are in the migratory detention centers of Oaxaca and Veracruz.

UNHCR RESPONSE TO NCA IN LINE WITH 2019 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

People from the North of Central America continue to leave their countries, fleeing violence, persecution and insecurity, as well as deteriorating economic conditions. Up to the first semester of 2019 there were 353,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from the North of Central America registered worldwide, almost 20 times more than at the end of 2011. Through its field presence and in collaboration with a wide range of civil society partners, UNHCR provides protection responses in the region, strengthening asylum systems, reception conditions and ramping up assistance capacity.

Due the drastic increase of claims in **Mexico**, asylum-seekers had to wait up to eight weeks to register their application in Tapachula. To ensure access to fair and efficient refugee status determination, UNHCR opened a **new Registration Center** on 28 September. As a result, by October, new arrivals can now register and receive documentation on the same day. Additionally, a **simplified procedure** for asylum-seekers from Honduras and El Salvador was implemented for the first time in Mexico, with the support of the Asylum Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI), led by UNHCR. This has increased the efficiency of the system, reducing the workload for eligibility officials by 30%.

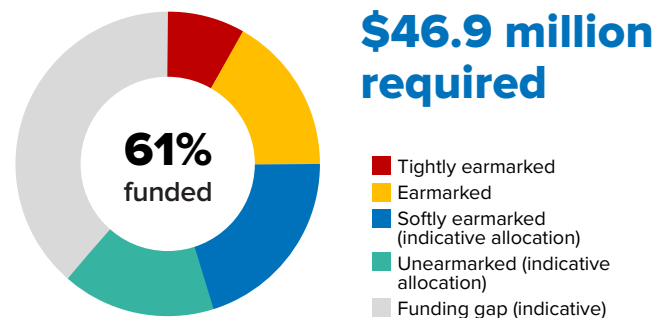
So far in 2019, 35,175 new individuals received **multipurpose cash grants** to meet their basic needs across the **Mexico** Operation to provide a timely response to immediate and persistent humanitarian needs and reduce protection risks, facilitate solutions while supporting local economies.

As part of the efforts to improve reception and living conditions of refugees and migrants in shelters, some 3,000 **blankets** have been donated by UNHCR to the 'Migrant Reception Station' in Chiriqui, **Panama**.


With the aim of setting durable solutions, local integration and livelihood opportunities, more than 4,000 people were **relocated** to central and northern cities in **Mexico** from January to end October.

To mitigate and address the impact of violence and forced displacement in communities of origin, UNHCR continues to support and strengthen community based protection initiatives. In San Pedro Sula, Honduras, a two day training for Community Art instructors was held in the framework of a local government-led pilot project targeting 200 teenagers.

UNHCR's financial requirements 2019 for NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA Situation (2 October 2019)



NICARAGUA SITUATION

 **96,996 NICARAGUANS FORCED TO FLEE SINCE APRIL 2018** (Including registered asylum-seekers and those waiting to formalize their claim)

THE COSTA RICAN GOVERNMENT REPORTS THAT 77,502

Nicaraguan asylum seekers are in the country as of October (47,335 formally submitted their asylum application and 30,167 are awaiting to submit asylum applications).

Since protests started in April 2018, thousands have fled Nicaragua due to the political unrest, seeking safety in neighboring countries, mostly in Nicaragua's neighbor to the south, Costa Rica. Nevertheless, aside from the clear impact on Costa Rica, the situation is also straining the limited asylum capacity in Honduras. While the situation remains stalled, a national opposition coalition is being conformed between the Civil Alliance and the Blue and White National Union and aligned organizations, with the aim of continuing to advocate towards "restoring freedoms, demanding justice for crimes committed during repression and to achieve democracy in Nicaragua".

UNHCR is implementing cash based interventions to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable asylum seekers. As a result, a total of 1,678 Nicaraguan households in Costa Rica received a three-month unconditional multipurpose cash grant to cover their basic needs. A fourth phase is foreseen for

mid-November in San Jose metropolitan area. In Mexico, until the end of October, 1,400 Nicaraguans benefitted from Multi-Purpose Cash Grants (MPG) to meet their basic needs such as food, household and domestic products, and a contribution towards housing and utility bills. In Panama, orientation was provided to around 400 asylum seekers, particularly on humanitarian assistance, shelter, local integration and legal procedures, among others.

COLOMBIA SITUATION

The local and regional elections took place on 27 October. The run-up to the elections however met with challenges, including several candidates killed or kidnapped and many more threatened across the country in the past months.

During October, the regions of Chocó and Putumayo continued to experience forced displacement. In Putumayo, 76 people of the Murui indigenous community were internally displaced after the murder of one of its leaders, half of them are children. UNHCR and the Victims Unit provided emergency assistance to more than 130 people, within the framework of the Return Plan of the Kichwa indigenous community of San Marcelino. Additionally, UNHCR is providing technical assistance to the Municipal Authorities of Puerto Asís, **Putumayo**, in the development of a municipal tool for responding to displacement and emergencies related to the armed conflict.

UNHCR analyzed the increased number of forced displacement, stranded communities and threats during previous months as a part of the protection cluster monitoring. There has been a 235% increase in confinement situations in 2019 compared to that of 2018. On 5 October alone 159 people (47 families) were displaced from Alto Baudó municipality in Chocó due to threats and clashes among the ELN and the Clan del Golfo armed groups. An estimated 91 children were affected. The Office of the Ombudsman in **Chocó** issued 13 Early Warnings for the civilian population.

 **8.9** MILLION VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICT

 **7.9** MILLION INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE since 1985

 **16,300** DISPLACED PEOPLE AFFECTED BY **49** LARGE GROUP DISPLACEMENTS in 2019

50,532 COLOMBIAN REFUGEES IN ECUADOR by the end of 2018
10,029 COLOMBIAN ASYLUM SEEKERS IN ECUADOR by the end of 2018

STORIES OF THE MONTH



[EU, IOM and UNHCR express solidarity with Venezuelan refugees and migrants](#)

International Solidarity Conference on the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant crisis, Brussels, 28-29 October 2019.



[New approach to refugee support is a 'game changer' – says UNHCR's Gillian Triggs](#)

The UN Refugee Agency's new Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, says the Global Compact on Refugees marks 'end to business as usual', although challenges remain.



[Solidarity conference calls for action as Venezuelans depart in droves](#)

Joint Press Release by the European Union, UNHCR and IOM



[After decades in the shadows, stateless activist says 'finally I exist'](#)

Actress and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Cate Blanchett interviews statelessness activist Maha Mamo about her 30-year-push to belong.



[Good Samaritan opens her home to Venezuelan women and children in need](#)

Colombian housewife decided to turn her home into a makeshift shelter for refugees and migrants on a grueling trek to safety.



[UN Refugee Chief praises Mexico's support for refugees](#)

As Central Americans' asylum claims soar 231 per cent in less than one year, Filippo Grandi calls for further resources to better cope with the flow.



[Nicaraguans make their home in an idle Costa Rican factory](#)

Uprooted by persecution, dozens of Nicaraguan journalists, teachers, labourers and accountants now rent a former San José tin factory as a shelter.



[Colombia gives Venezuela newborns a start in life](#)

New measure grants citizenship to the children born to Venezuelan parents on Colombia soil, helping thousands at risk of statelessness.

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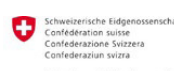
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