



HIGHLIGHTS

7,522

Recognized refugees by Venezuelan authorities, the majority of whom originate from neighboring Colombia

167,000

Persons living in refugee-like situations who have not accessed the asylum system mainly due to unawareness and limitations to reach the competent authorities

67%

Persons of concern assisted in 2015 reported limitations to access health care, medicines, staple foods and school certification

Context Information

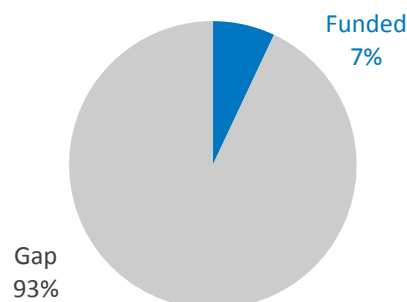
Venezuela has generously hosted numerous Colombian persons of concern for decades; however, the majority of them remain unregistered and are being particularly affected by a deteriorating economic situation, increased migratory controls and insecurity.

UNHCR's 2016-2018 protection and solutions strategy in Venezuela focuses on facilitating access to documentation and strategically promoting integral solutions for all persons of concern, in the context of new regional dynamics and the Brazil Plan of Action.

Based in a multi-year National Human Rights Plan and a new survey on the needs of persons of concern, including refugees and stateless persons, UNHCR and Venezuelan authorities are working to secure solutions for them through documentation and effective access to rights.

Funding Requirements

USD 3.2 million requested



UNHCR Presence

Staff:

- 12 national staff
- 35 affiliated workforce
- 10 international staff (3 vacant JPO positions)

Offices:

- 1 Branch Office in Caracas
- 3 Field Offices in San Cristóbal (Táchira), Maracaibo (Zulia) and Ciudad Guayana (Bolívar)
- 2 Field Units in Guasualito (Apure) and Caracas (Center)



WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- The Venezuelan Government has assumed its primary responsibility to protect refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR maintains active cooperation with the National Refugee Commission (CONARE) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Service for Identification, Migration and Foreigners (SAIME) within the Ministry of Interior; the National Institute for Statistics (INE) within the Ministry of Planning; the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defense; the Ombudsperson's Office; the National Institute of Children's Rights (IDENNA); as well as other authorities playing a key role in local integration policies at the national level such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry for the Communes, Ministry for Food, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Communication, as well as at the regional level including Governors, Mayors and community structures.
- The civil society remains a very important partner in the design, coordination and implementation of the protection response for persons of concern, including identification, provision of humanitarian assistance, monitoring of refugee rights and promotion of durable solutions. Main partners include HIAS, NRC, RET, Zulian Red Cross, Caritas, JRS and IOM, as well as refugee stakeholders such as the Voluntariado de Refugiados and Asociación de Colombianos (local refugee volunteering organizations).
- Alliances through the UNCT and specific UN agencies (e.g. UNICEF, FAO, WHO, UNFPA, PNUD) are essential to mainstream protection issues in the UNDAF, UPR and other shared responsibilities. Cooperation with the academia has allowed strengthening local capacities and broadening research activities.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Protection for Solutions

- **Access to Territory and Border Cooperation-** Strengthen the presence of UNHCR field offices in border areas to support Venezuelan Government's efforts to build borders of solidarity and safety, according to the commitments contained in the Brazil Plan of Action.
- **Quality of Asylum-** Promote the strengthening of the individual Refugee Status Determination system through an effective access, objective and substantiated decisions in a timely manner, and adequate documentation for all persons of concern. Provide information, legal aid and representation to asylum seekers to facilitate the access to the national asylum process.
- **Local integration-** Advocate for the regularization of persons in need of international protection through documentation with protection safeguards that allows them to access basic rights including access to naturalization, thereby enhancing socio-economic integration prospects for them.
- **Self-Reliance-** Support local institutions and civil society actors in assisting persons of concern to access social welfare programmes and engage in livelihood opportunities including access to formal labor, land, housing and services.
- **Community Empowerment-** In close coordination with the UNCT, promote development programmes in key communities in border areas under UNDAF to complement the Government's "Borders of Peace" project. Implement peaceful coexistence activities supported by development actors and local governments.
- **Protection of Children and Survivors of SGBV-** Ensure non-discriminatory access of refugee children and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence to national protection mechanisms. Support access of refugee children to the national educational system through advocacy and parental orientation.
- **Voluntary Repatriation and Resettlement-** Facilitate and support the voluntary return of persons of concern through well-informed and voluntary decisions, in the context of Colombia's Peace Process. Promote resettlement strategically for a small number of cases with high priority specific needs.
- **Statelessness-** Join global and regional efforts to eradicate statelessness by supporting the Venezuelan Government in establishing statelessness determination procedures and amending national legislation, including accession to the 1954 and 1961 Conventions, as well as ascertaining the prevalence and risk of statelessness in Venezuela through a national survey.
- **Advocacy, Capacity Building and Anti-Xenophobia Campaigns-** Conduct high-level advocacy in strategic policy areas, build capacity amongst all relevant actors, implement sensitization activities and improve coordination within institutional and community-based protection networks.
- **Data Management-** Produce updated and reliable data on the profile, location and needs of persons of concern as means to enhance their protection and bring about effective solutions.

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