

Operation: Argentina Regional Office

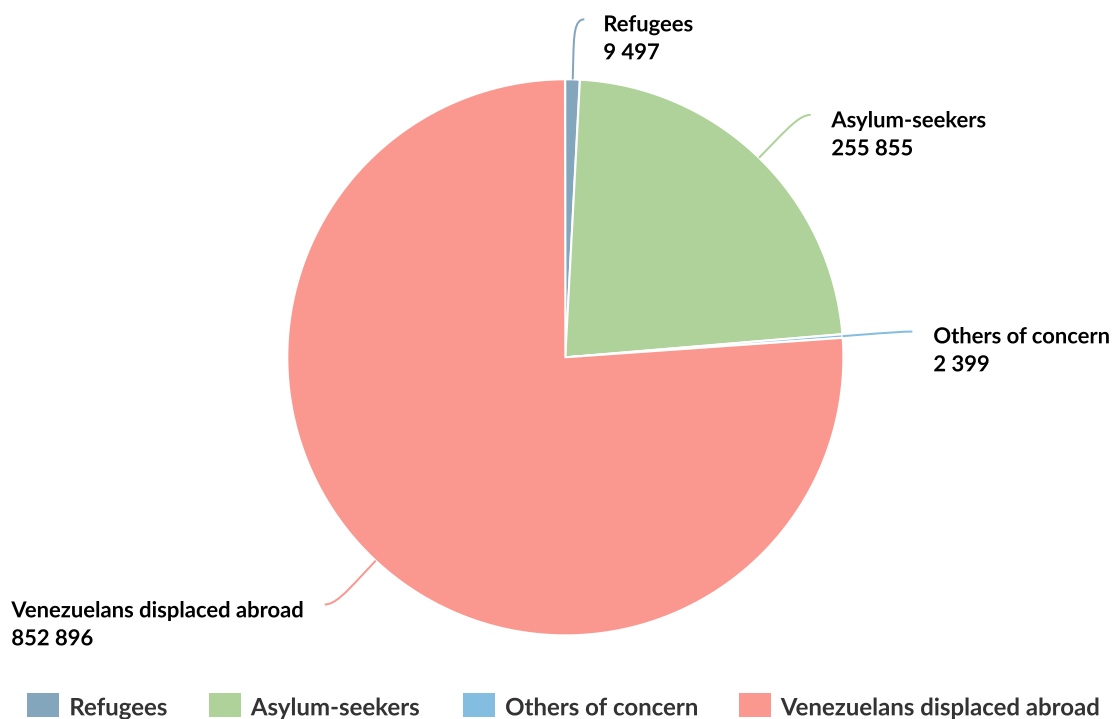


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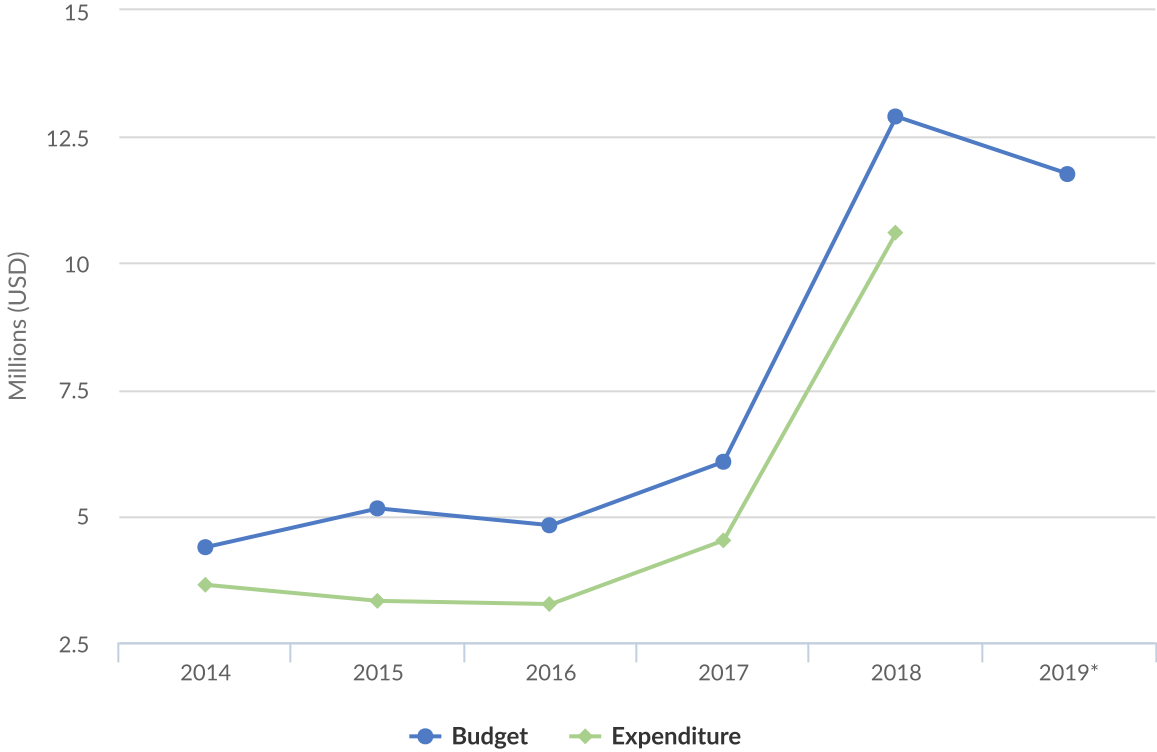
People of Concern

INCREASE IN
363% 2018

2018	1,120,647
2017	241,989
2016	20,175



Budgets and Expenditure for Argentina Regional Office



Operational context

During 2018, UNHCR's operations in the six countries covered by the Regional Office in Argentina were largely characterized by the deteriorating situation in Venezuela, which forced Venezuelans to flee to neighboring countries and beyond. This resulted in a more complex protection environment with stronger legal barriers to access the territory and the asylum systems, difficulties in attaining documents and accessing basic services, and restricted access to health care.

In Bolivia, recurring changes of authorities in the CONARE have put the already limited capacities of the asylum system under strain. People of concern, especially Venezuelans, had difficulties accessing the asylum procedure, and delays in the refugee status determination procedure and documentation occurred.

Regarding resettlement, in Argentina, UNHCR maintained support for the Syria Programme, despite considerable challenges posed by the financial situation in the country. In Chile, the new Government demanded significant advocacy was needed to maintain the ongoing resettlement programme.

In Peru, despite changes in the political environment, the Government maintained, rather consistently, a very generous policy vis-à-vis the Venezuelan nationals, despite Peru hosting the largest number of Venezuelan asylum-seekers in the region.

Population trends

At the end of 2018, according to the statistical information provided by States, the population of concern to UNHCR in the six countries amounted to some 348,500 people. This includes 25,000 asylum-seekers, 7,000 refugees and 316,500 others of concern, constituting a 104% increase from 2017. For Bolivia, only mid-year figures are available and therefore the final figure may be slightly different.

A large majority of the people of concern were from Venezuela, followed by Peru, Colombia, and Cuba, however there were also people of concern from Africa, (primarily Senegalese, as well as from the Syrian Arab Republic.

Key achievements

UNHCR maintained its technical support to the Governments of Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay for the reinforcement of RSD procedures, which were stretched due to large-scale influx from Venezuela. Its role continued through: regular participation in CONARE meetings; technical support in the analysis/adjudication of individual claims; and strengthening CONAREs' capacities through training of technical secretariats.

UNHCR advocated for all laws relating to refugees to be consistent with international standards, even in light of the current Venezuela situation resulting in a significant increase in the backlog.

In the context of the L2 Emergency Declaration in Peru, UNHCR pursued to ensure immediate protection assistance; guarantee access to the territory and to asylum through strengthen border monitoring, as well as access to basic needs and humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people; strengthen the state capacity to respond to the emergency situation and advocate for the inclusion of people of concern in the social protection mechanism; promote social cohesion while strengthening the link with the host communities, in particular through the national inter-agency campaign "Tu causa es mi causa".

In August 2018 Paraguay approved a law for the protection and naturalization of stateless persons, which establishes a protection framework and creates a statelessness determination procedure, also addressing the situation of children of Paraguayan nationals born abroad. In October 2018, Uruguay Congress approved law for the recognition and protection of stateless persons, with measures to facilitate their naturalization and a statelessness determination procedure. In Argentina, a final draft law was approved by the Chamber of Deputies

in December.

In Argentina, UNHCR contributed to the development of a model of resettlement adapted and targeted to the local context. Argentinian Government offers access to regular public services while community-based sponsors cover assistance for one year. UNHCR, jointly with IOM, has been able to reach key accomplishments as laid out in the ERCM Plan of Action. A main achievement was the strong relationship fostered with the Government of Argentina, along with the establishment of formal structures and capacity strengthening.

In Chile, UNHCR provided technical advice and logistical support for Chile's Resettlement Working Group in the framework of the ERCM to support the local integration of resettled Syrian refugees and contributed to identify civil society and private sector actors to design a pilot model for a community-based sponsorship scheme.

In Uruguay, UNHCR continued supporting the Rural Resettlement Programme. The first four families from NCA who arrived in November 2017 and a second group of three families resettled in November 2018 were integrated successfully.

Unmet needs

Limited presence and funds available impacted on UNHCR's response to the Venezuela situation since the beginning of the crisis was critical in engaging new partners and further strengthening the capacity of current partners. Profiling studies in all countries were considered key, but were not possible due to limited funds. Additional funds to support the CONAREs would have been necessary to respond to the increased backlog and additional caseloads. Funds to expand border protection would also increase the Office's limited capacity to monitor protection issues and provide capacity building to public officials at the borders.

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