The unprecedented socio-economic impacts of the pandemic are leaving many lives in peril. We are seeing extremely worrying increases in reports of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, forced marriages, child labour and adolescent pregnancies.”

Filippo Grandi
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

You can read the press release on International Women’s Day HERE.

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**Situational Highlights**

As reported by WHO/PAHO, the drop-in COVID-19 cases in the Americas is largely driven by dramatic reductions in new infections in the U.S. but also in South America (Colombia, Ecuador and Uruguay report reductions). Nevertheless, the virus continues to spread at levels roughly equivalent to those in mid-2020. Brazil's surge reached new level as daily COVID-related deaths pass 2,000 for the first time and infection rates soar. Peru is experiencing new outbreaks along its Amazonian border with Brazil and Colombia. In the Caribbean, smaller islands like Barbados, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Turks and Caicos are reporting a rise in new infections. Some 28 countries and territories (out of 54) have started delivering COVID vaccinations in the Americas after securing bilateral deals with manufacturers or receiving small donations from other countries. As a measure to contain the spread, land border closures were extended in Colombia (1 June) and Peru (31 March).

Scandals and political distrust linked to vaccines are spreading in the region. Health ministers in Argentina, Ecuador and Peru resigned, while others are facing criticism for misuse of funds and/or jumping vaccination queues. Colombia became the first country in the Americas to receive a shipment of coronavirus vaccines through the United Nations-backed COVAX programme, receiving 117,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on 1 March. El Salvador and Honduras followed in the first half of March. However, vaccination plans are still progressing slowly in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Countries are tightening border restrictions as infection rates rise. According to UNHCR’s monitoring on the impact of the pandemic on protection, asylum seekers are denied access to 14 countries in the region while. some 20 countries maintain the asylum system operational or partially operational in the Americas. Colombia approved a decree to grant Temporary Protected Status for to 10 years to up to two million Venezuelans living in the country. The national interagency platform (GIFMM by its Spanish acronym) will create a technical working group to support its implementation. Later in the month, the Biden administration announced that Venezuelans living in the United States will qualify for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). The decision will allow Venezuelans to stay in the country and work legally for 18 months.

With the progressive end of the Migrant Protection Protocol - MPP (or “Remain in Mexico”) policy beginning February 19, 1,127 people with active cases had been admitted from Mexico to the USA by March 5. Read HERE about UNHCR’s role in supporting the operation. Despite efforts to disseminate information on the restricted scope of the program which applies only to those with active MPP cases, a new wave of people is reaching southern Mexico expecting to access the United States.

Bottlenecks of stranded population in border areas of Ecuador and Chile triggered increased xenophobic expressions, including of public officials.

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**Operational Context**

Displacement across the Americas continues and will likely rise despite border restrictions that continue in place. Outflows from countries experiencing a difficult internal environment, such as Venezuela, Honduras or Guatemala, are compounded by spontaneous reverse movements, also in search of better future prospects.

With borders still closed, most crossings are irregular and refugees and migrants are increasingly exposed to abuse, human trafficking, and other risks for their security, with women and indigenous communities being hit particularly hard. Tightened control on borders by security forces is triggering the use of non-traditional routes in isolated areas receiving displaced people. In many cases, those remote spots lack services and resources to respond to the needs of people travelling with children or individuals at heightened risk. Refugees travelling with other population in mixed movements, included children, might be experiencing forced returns to countries where their lives might be at risk if protection needs are inadequately addressed. Large group displacements such as those seen in early 2021, along with continued small group movements, are expected to continue.

Considering that high levels of contagion persist in most Latin America and Caribbean countries, overstretched health capacities add tension to an environment increasingly scapegoating displaced populations and others on the move often accused of spreading the disease, generating crime or competing for scarce jobs.
UNHCR’s response in the Americas

Since March 2020, UNHCR has been working to provide emergency assistance, including safe shelter spaces and cash-based assistance, as well as to advocate for the inclusion of refugees in national public health responses, social safety nets and emergency assistance plans. In 2021, UNHCR in the Americas adopted a two-fold strategy aimed at providing immediate assistance for basic need and protection, as well as promoting mid- to long-term solutions with a focus on regularization and inclusion. UNHCR’s advocacy for the inclusion of people of concern in national plans is key, particularly amid the coronavirus pandemic. The scope and success of such initiatives will depend on the amount of funding the region receives, both in terms of humanitarian grants and financial loans to receiving States.

Response in progress: 1 January - 28 February 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Action</strong></th>
<th><strong>Count</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People supported with health consultations (primary, secondary, tertiary, as well as mental, sexual and reproductive health)</td>
<td>20,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals receiving Non-Food Items (NFIs)</td>
<td>193,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals receiving legal assistance</td>
<td>17,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of concern to UNHCR benefiting from improved access to safe water</td>
<td>36,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People receiving cash grants or vouchers</td>
<td>21,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and adolescents of concern to UNHCR provided with education support (materials, enrolment support, or other)</td>
<td>2,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People benefitting from improved hygiene conditions (including through distribution of hygiene kits, construction of latrines or other intervention)</td>
<td>10,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals registered by UNHCR and/or implementing partner(s) - age/gender breakdown</td>
<td>35,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence supported by UNHCR and/or implementing partners (with legal assistance, psychosocial counselling, or being provided a safe space)</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of concern to UNHCR supported with shelter, settlement or temporary collective accommodation solutions</td>
<td>56,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People provided with information by UNHCR and/or implementing partners (in-person or remotely, ex. Hotlines/call centres, WhatsApp, etc.)</td>
<td>143,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of child protection cases supported by UNHCR and/or implementing partners (via case management)</td>
<td>1,999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Highlights from the field

- **220 beds** provided allow expansion of public healthcare facilities in Amazonas state (Brazil)
- **8,000 face masks** produced by Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Guyana
- **2,900 hygiene kits** provided to Venezuelan migrants and refugees at Ecuador’s borders
- **2,900 hygiene kits** provided to Venezuelan migrants and refugees at Ecuador’s borders
- **400 refugees and migrant children receive tablet computers** to ensure access to online educational programmes in Trinidad and Tobago.
- **20,137 People supported with health consultations (primary, secondary, tertiary, as well as mental, sexual and reproductive health)**
- **193,664 Individuals receiving Non-Food Items (NFIs)**
- **17,724 Individuals receiving legal assistance**
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Stories from the field

**Displaced choir leader founds refugee orchestra in Chile**

Former choir director Ana Marvez could not stand to see the musical skills of her fellow Venezuelans go to waste in their host country. So, she started an orchestra.

One of the most wrenching aspects of being forced to leave one’s home is having to give up your profession, says Ana Marvez, a 34-year-old music teacher and choir director who left Venezuela to seek safety in Chile around five years ago. Ana considers herself lucky. Not only did she find work within weeks of her arrival in the Chilean capital, Santiago, but she also managed to secure a position that was at least tangentially related to her former career – a minimum wage job as a secretary in an arts school. Read the full story [HERE](#).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category</strong></th>
<th><strong>Details</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>R4V</td>
<td>Following inter-agency consultations across the region, the Regional Platform issued its formal position on the issue access to Covid-19 vaccinations for refugee and migrants. Additionally, the bi-monthly Population Movements Report, was issued, showing recent movement trends and increased irregularity amidst increasingly militarized and closed borders. This issue also featured heavily during a beginning-of-year briefing with BPRM, which continued its support for the work of the Platform and RMRP, while noting great interest for the upcoming Donor Conference. The next plenary meeting of the Regional Platform is scheduled for 16 March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUITO PROCESS</td>
<td>On 8 February, the first meeting of the Pro-tempore Presidency of the Quito Process was held. The Pro-tempore Presidency (Peru) included the vaccination topic has on the agenda, while a potential regional registration platform has also been included in discussion topics.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
MIRPs

Guatemala, as the 2021 MIRPs Pro-tempore Presidency presented their priorities at the Support Platform’s technical meeting on Feb. 24. As part of Guatemala’s MIRPs commitments, a new office of the Refugee Status Recognition Department of Guatemala’s Migration Institute, supported by UNHCR, was inaugurated. Costa Rica’s President confirmed the extension of Costa Rica’s CRRF National Chapter.

UNHCR’s response in the Americas

COVID-19 SUPPLEMENTARY APPEAL 2021

To respond to the most pressing needs resulting from the pandemic, UNHCR is appealing for $455 million in funding for the Americas in 2021.

THE AMERICAS

as of 09 March 2021

$ 712.3 million
UNHCR’s financial requirements 2021

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

10% funded ²

Notes:
² The financial requirements for The Americas are for the operations in Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Venezuela.

CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY

as of 09 March 2021

$ 445.0 million
UNHCR’s financial requirements 2021

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

6% funded ²

Notes:
² The financial requirements of the Coronavirus Emergency include requirements in Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina Regional Office, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy MCO, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Northern Tanzania, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Spain MCO, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Do you want more info? Check https://reporting.unhcr.org/

UNHCR is grateful for the critical and generous support provided by donors to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation globally, and to the Americas, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked funding.

Thanks to donors in 2021:

And to our private donors:
The L’Oreal Foundation | Major League Baseball Players Trust (MLBPT) | Private donor Brazil | Private donors France | Private donors Spain
Private donor US

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