

“ We must not let COVID-19 thwart the exceptional **progress** that has been made in expanding **resettlement** and **complementary pathways**. While they are not a substitute for resettlement and **humanitarian admissions**, which offer more robust and longer-term forms of **legal protection**, they are **safe** and orderly forms of **admission** that can **save lives** and **benefit** many refugees.”

**Gillian Triggs**

UNHCR's International Protection Chief

You can read the press release about how the pandemic is threatening progress on refugee admissions [HERE](#).



## Situational Highlights

Between January and April, 2021, more than 25 million cases of COVID-19 were reported in the **Americas**, and over 600,000 people died from the illness, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and PAHO. WHO also warned of spikes in coronavirus throughout Latin America, where new daily cases are approaching the highest levels seen at any time in the pandemic and efforts to staunch its spread are being hampered by limited vaccine supplies. And of the four countries worldwide with highest death tolls, three are in the Americas (the United States, Brazil and Mexico).

Nearly every country in **Central America** is reporting a rise in the number of infections. Hospitalizations are at an all-time high in **Costa Rica**, and **Guatemala's** hospitals have also reached maximum capacity. In **St. Vincent and the Grenadines**, cases are increasing

among internally displaced people, following the recent eruption of La Soufriere volcano. The COVID-19 situation is also worsening across **South America**, where cases are mounting almost daily.

**Brazil** and **Argentina** were among the ten countries in the world registering the highest number of new infections, and Ecuador has declared a national state of emergency running through 20 May.

Immunization is moving slowly in **Latin America and the Caribbean**, where PAHO has delivered more than 7 million vaccines from the COVAX mechanism to 29 countries. Countries including **Belize** and **Paraguay** recently announced that asylum-seekers and refugees are included in their national **vaccination plans**. [Click HERE to read more about the vaccination of refugees in Latin America.](#)

Many countries have ratcheted up

public health measures by extending curfews, limiting re-openings, and imposing new stay-at-home orders. **Chile** enacted a law tightening migration protocols and border controls.

The **United States** announced a US\$310 million aid package aimed at supporting **El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras** in addressing the root causes of human mobility, as well as at strengthening democracy and the rule of law.

As of the end of March, the UNHCR/IOM/UNICEF operation supporting the US government's decision to end the the **Migrant Protection Protocol - MPP** program had helped 9,501 asylum-seekers re-enter the United States in order to continue the asylum process from there.



## Operational Context

Displacement persists across the **Americas**, despite the surge in COVID-19 cases and new mobility restrictions. It is possible that the situation could trigger renewed reverse movements among refugees and migrants who are struggling to survive amid lockdown. Recently in **Colombia**, restrictions and widespread protests stoked distress and fear in many refugees and migrants from Venezuela, pushing some to move further south, onward to Ecuador and Peru.

In addition, beefed-up border restrictions and controls are pushing those on the move to resort to increasingly dangerous journeys, with many traveling at night and through isolated areas to avoid being caught. UNHCR is aware that new routes are being used in **Peru** and **Chile**. On 22 April, [a boat carrying 24 Venezuelans sunk on its way from Venezuela's eastern state of Delta Amacuro, en route to Trinidad & Tobago](#). Only seven people survived. It was but the latest of several incidents in which boats carrying Venezuelan refugees and migrants to Caribbean islands capsized.

Crossings of **people in mixed movement** is on the rise. In **Panama**, the number of arrivals spiked after the border with **Colombia** was opened in early April. Thousands of people had been stranded there after borders closures went into effect. Chronic violence in **El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras** places members of the LGBTIQ+ community at heightened risk. This month, UNHCR [condemned](#) the killing of a transgender woman from El Salvador who had been forcibly displaced within the country following threats from criminal gangs.

In **Colombia**, large group displacements increased 64 per cent, compared to 2020. Between January and March alone, 15,937 people were on the move in 32 large group displacements.















## — 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 - 30 April 2021 —

 <p><b>40,123</b> people supported with health consultations (primary, secondary, tertiary, as well as mental, sexual and reproductive health).</p>	 <p><b>235,674</b> individuals receiving Non-Food Items (NFIs).</p>	 <p><b>63,014</b> individuals receiving legal assistance.</p>
 <p><b>38,912</b> people of concern to UNHCR benefitting from improved access to safe water.</p>	 <p><b>73,051</b> people receiving cash grants or vouchers.</p>	 <p><b>6,692</b> children and adolescents of concern to UNHCR provided with educational support (materials, enrollment support, or other).</p>
 <p><b>198,729</b> people benefitting from improved hygiene conditions (including through the distribution of hygiene kits, the construction of latrines and/or other interventions).</p>	 <p><b>124,625</b> individuals registered by UNHCR and/or implementing partner(s) - age/gender breakdown.</p>	 <p><b>1,982</b> survivors of sexual and gender-based violence supported by UNHCR and/or implementing partners (with legal assistance, psychosocial counselling, or by being provided a safe space).</p>
 <p><b>68,784</b> people of concern to UNHCR supported with shelter, settlement or temporary collective accommodation solutions.</p>	 <p><b>455,470</b> people provided with information by UNHCR and/or implementing partners (in-person or remotely, ex. Hotlines/call centres, WhatsApp, etc.).</p>	 <p><b>6,270</b> children supported by UNHCR and/or implementing partners (via case management).</p>

### Ongoing initiatives...

In **Chile**, UNHCR delivered 700 **tablets** to refugee and migrant children and adolescents in six cities to allow them to continue with their online classes.

Visits to the **Help Panama page** were up 157 per cent in March, with a total of 193,793 views – most of them to the section with information on COVID-19 vaccination.

Thus far in 2021, 1,072 households in **Costa Rica** were provided with a total of US\$742,406, aimed at helping them meet their basic needs.

In **Venezuela**, around 421 people were able to access health care and the courts, and 161 children received birth certificates in Bolivar state.

Coronavirus personal protective equipment was delivered to six health districts in Guatemala’s northeastern Petén department, where 88 health workers were also trained in international protection.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Equal Place programme provides remote education to over 1,300 children who would otherwise be out of school.

## — Stories from the field —

### Relocations in Brazil offer dignity and hope to thousands of Venezuelans

More than 50,000 Venezuelans have been relocated from Brazil’s isolated northern state of Roraima to 675 Brazilian cities, thanks to a model national initiative. Since the relocation strategy was launched three years ago, it has helped nearly one in five Venezuelans in the country to significantly improve their quality of life by relocating them from the remote border region of Roraima to more populous parts of the country, with better job prospects.

A **survey** carried out by UNHCR among 360 relocated Venezuelan families showed that over 77 per cent had found employment within weeks of their arrival to their destination. (By comparison, only seven per cent of refugees and migrants in Roraima are employed.) As a result, the families surveyed reported that within six to eight weeks of settling in a new city, their incomes had increased. Read the full story [HERE](#).



## — Coordination and partnership —

### R4V

A briefing for donors, ahead of the 17 June **International Donor’s Conference**, included the presence of High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and Special Envoy Eduardo Stein. The **R4V Regional Platform** published

the official calendar of sector side events leading up to the Conference, which is available [here](#). The events are being hosted from 10-28 May by each of the nine regional sectors coordinated by the Regional Platform.



## MIRPS

On 8-9 April, the **MIRPS Support Platform** organized the first **roundtable sessions** on asylum systems with the MIRPS countries and UNHCR support. The **annual plan** was finalized and shared, with the most updated dashboard already available. **Business leaders expressed a strong commitment** to support durable

solutions for forcibly displaced people in Central America and Mexico during a MIRPS Business Roundtable on April 27. The **Working Group on Internal Displacement** held its first working session. Representatives from civil society who participate at the MIRPS national dialogue mechanisms held their first meeting.



## Don't miss...

Entitled **"SAFE PATHWAYS FOR REFUGEES II"** the latest report by UNHCR and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, examines people from seven countries propelling displacement – Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Syria and Venezuela – from 2010 to 2019.



**CENTRAL AMERICAN AND MEXICAN ENTREPRENEURS SUPPORT EFFORTS OF MIRPS COUNTRIES IN RESPONSE TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT.** Read more about how the private sector has become a key partner in the comprehensive response to forced displacement.

Take a look at **"HIDDEN VOICES"**, an initiative that captures in images the reality of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Curacao.



See UNHCR's latest report on **"PROTECTING FORCIBLY DISPLACED WOMEN AND GIRLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC"**



## Funding the response in 2021

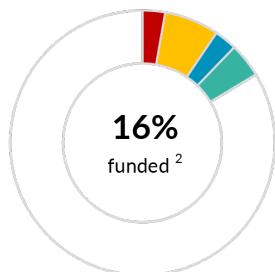
UNHCR is grateful for the critical and generous support provided by donors to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation globally, and to the Americas, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked funding.

### THE AMERICAS as of 18 May 2021

**\$ 712.3 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2021<sup>1</sup>

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



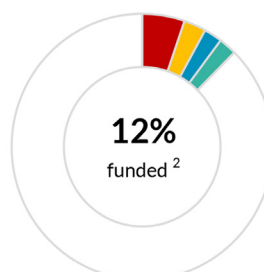
Notes:  
1. The financial requirements for The Americas are for the operations in Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Venezuela.  
2. The percentage funded (16%) and total funding amount (\$116,622,424) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$595,727,956 representing 84% of the financial requirements.

### CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTARY NEEDS as of 18 May 2021

**\$ 445.0 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2021<sup>3</sup>

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



Notes:  
1. The financial requirements of the Coronavirus Emergency include requirements in Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina Regional Office, Armenia, Aruba, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Rep of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, MCO, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, New Or, Additional Mandate Nam, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, MCO, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The Republic of the Congo, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.  
2. The percentage funded (12%) and total funding amount (\$56,677,716) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$398,322,284 representing 88% of the financial requirements.  
3. For 2021, \$469 million of UNHCR's COVID-19-related needs has been mainstreamed into its Global Appeal and \$455 million are supplementary needs bringing the total COVID-19 related requirements in 2021 to \$924 million.

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

### Thanks to donors in 2021:



### And to our private donors:

The L'Oreal Foundation | Major League Baseball Players Trust (MLBPT) | Private donors Australia | Private donors Brazil | Private donors France | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors Spain | Private donor US | USA for UNHCR