

# BRAZIL OPERATION

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

JULY 2021



UNHCR supported the inauguration of Rondon 4 shelter in Boa Vista

### OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

As of 31 July, Brazil reached a total of 19,938,358 confirmed cases and 556,834 deaths from COVID-19.

On 12 July, the Government of Brazil announced the release of BRL 6.5 million, equivalent to USD 1.2 million, for a set of municipalities that are hosting Venezuelan refugees and migrants who have fled the social, economic, and political crisis in their home country. The resources allocated will support social assistance and reception actions.

On 28 July, President Bolsonaro officially appointed Senator Ciro Nogueira, replacing General Ramos, as Chief of Staff of the Presidency (Casa Civil), which chairs the Federal Committee for Emergency Assistance, the coordination mechanism of Operation Welcome. Moreover, on 31 July, General Sergio Schwingel assumed the coordination of Operation Welcome in Roraima and Manaus, together with the role of Executive Secretary for Coordination of Emergency Assistance Actions. This is the third military to carry out this function, after General Eduardo Pazuello and General Antonio Manoel Barros: the handover ceremony will be celebrated at the end of August.

28 July marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, a key international treaty establishing the rights of people forced to flee. Recommitting to its spirit and fundamental principles is more urgent today than ever, and UNHCR Brazil organized and participated in a roundtable with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CONARE, Public Defender's office, Federal Prosecutor's office, civil society and academia. This anniversary comes only a few months after UNHCR itself marked seven decades as the world's mandated organization for the protection of the forcibly displaced.

### KEY RISKS AND GAPS

**Access to territory and asylum:** With the border from the Venezuelan side still closed, free transit between "twin cities" has not yet resumed which impacts the entry through the official border. Protection risks such as abuse and exploitation are still present, and many are left with no other option than continuing to cross irregularly in very vulnerable conditions.

**Access to humanitarian assistance:** With the inflow of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, the socio-economic structures of border cities such as Pacaraima and Boa Vista are experiencing additional pressure. The capacity of Operation Welcome's shelters, although being expanded, needs to be linked with continued efforts on registration and documentation, along with relocation opportunities to other cities in Brazil.

**UNHCR RESPONSE****Strengthening shelter support and ensuring access to basic items**

**Shelter:** On 2 July, UNHCR, in coordination with the Operation Welcome Task Force, led the opening of the Rondon 4 Shelter as part of the Operation's Contingency Plan, intending to increase the existing shelter capacity to better provide support to Venezuelan refugees and migrants. The shelter is currently housing approximately 640 people out of its 750 slots available. In July only, 1,115 refugees and migrants were allocated to Operation Welcome's shelters in Roraima. Overall, 8,152 Venezuelans are residing in 14 shelters, including 5 indigenous shelters and one Transit Centre (BV8), in Roraima.

In the context of UNHCR's protection mapping to identify refugees and migrants in a vulnerable situation at the Manaus Bus Station Support Space (PRA), 20 people were accommodated in the municipal shelters in the month of July.

On 21 July, UNHCR and IOM started a three-day CCCM training for about 35 civil servants from the municipal social assistance team of Belém. The training focuses on expanding local capacities on shelter management and improving the reception conditions and overall wellbeing of refugees and migrants living at the municipal shelter.

UNHCR together with AVSI Brazil released a report on the "[Autonomy and local integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants welcomed in shelters in Boa Vista](#)". The document sheds light on the socio-demographic and labour profile of the non-indigenous population living in five temporary shelters and underlines that employment opportunities are the main factor for refugees and migrants to define a permanent place of residence in the host country.

**Food and non-food items (NFIs) distribution:** In July, UNHCR delivered 3,669 family and individual hygiene kits, 2,766 bags, 3,021 family cleaning kits, 2,923 masks, 700 mattresses, 1,225 waterproof mattress covers, 1,361 packs of baby diapers, 125 packs of geriatric diapers, 185 jerrycans, 225 buckets, 228 mosquito nets, 32 tarpaulins and 108 solar lamps to support refugees and migrants sheltered in Roraima. Basic assistance provided to Venezuelan refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations remains key to ensure improved reception conditions in the northern regions of Brazil.

**Ensuring protection and supporting integration processes**

**Integration:** In July, 180 refugees and migrants were voluntarily relocated from Amazonas and Roraima states to other parts of Brazil by bus or flight through the institutional modality. UNHCR supported 1,377 individuals with the Fit for Travel (FFT) process.

On 13 July, 16 refugee women participants of the VI edition of the Project "Empoderando Refugiadas" graduated from the customer services and sales classes offered in partnership with SENAC Roraima and with AVSI support, and another 20 women started their own training cycle a week later. Partner companies of the project have already interviewed the first group of Venezuelan women, who will integrate the local job market in Roraima or relocate for employment opportunities in other states of Brazil.

On 26 July, UNHCR and Centro de Integração Empresa-Escola (CIEE), with the support of the Global Compact Network Brazil and ILO, launched the booklet "Apprenticeship - Hiring young refugees: Questions and answers for employers".

On 29 July, UNHCR, together with JOCA and Hands On Human Rights, inaugurated two community libraries in different shelters of Boa Vista. Under the scope of the "Mi Casa, Tu Casa" project, the Rondon 1 shelter received 4 thousand books and exclusive library space, while the former library of São Vicente 2 shelter was renovated and equipped with another 2 thousand books.

In Manaus, UNHCR and Hermanitos started two professional qualification courses for 32 refugees and



migrants. Moreover, UNHCR referred 15 young refugees and migrants to apprenticeship programs with the private sector, after conducting job interview preparation workshops to better perform in the selection processes.

In July, UNHCR provided financial assistance through multi-purpose cash grants to 581 families (1,859 individuals), 95% of them being of Venezuelan nationality.

**Protection:** In July, 1,585 refugees and migrants contacted UNHCR protection line in Manaus for queries related to access to documentation, urgent material support, financial assistance, and other protection issues.

Due to the increasing number of individuals being denied access to the territory at the Guarulhos International Airport, UNHCR conducted shadow interviews to analyze the practices of the Humanized Post (Posto Avançado de Atendimento Humanizado ao Migrante – PAAHM). Within the scope of the Technical Cooperation Agreement between UNHCR, the Federal Public Ministry, the Municipality of Guarulhos, and the Public Defender's Office, the activity had the aim to improve the established flows and interview techniques, ensuring that all protection and humanitarian needs are appropriately monitored and referred to specialized social networks.

On 7 July, UNHCR and other UN agencies participated in a seminar on the Safe Reopening of Schools, attended by more than 1,000 people. In the discussion, which focused on the implications of schools' closures, the challenges that Brazil faces to ensure a safe and sustainable reopening, and the steps towards this, UNHCR highlighted the impacts of schools' closure on refugees and asylum-seekers in Brazil.

In the last week of the month, UNHCR formally began to technically support the elaboration of the first State Plan of Policies for Refugees in Minas Gerais. UNHCR will assist in implementing participatory consultancies with persons of concern and host communities in Minas Gerais, in preparation of the plan itself. This process is being coordinated by the State under the Committee for Refugees, Migrants, and Stateless, and the Plan is expected to be launched in June 2022.

On 27-28 July, UNHCR and IOM, in the context of CRISP, organized a virtual Regional Workshop on Good Practices on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, as an opportunity for governments from Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay to share good practices and lessons learned in resettlement and complementary pathways programmes. In addition, a few European resettlement experiences, like Italy and Portugal, were presented as an example of process adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic that could inspire others in Latin America.

**Indigenous:** During July, 50 indigenous persons were notified by UNHCR, on behalf of CONARE, of their recognition as refugees in Brazil and were delivered their refugee recognition certificate. In addition, these people received support by UNHCR and partners to prepare the necessary documentation to request their refugee IDs and schedule appointments at the PITrig to conclude their documentation process with the Federal Police.

On 2 July, UNHCR, together with Fraternidade Internacional and the Ministry of Citizenship, delivered a CCCM training to 40 people currently working with the indigenous population in Teresina, State of Piauí. The activity aimed to provide tools and methodologies to respond to the higher influx of indigenous Venezuelans in the northeast of Brazil.

In Campinas, state of São Paulo, UNHCR held a training session for 50 people of the local network, including civil servants from the Secretariats of Social Assistance, Health, Education, and Human Rights, as well as guardianship counsellors from the region. The training addressed the cultural aspects of Warao ethnic group, their dynamics of forced displacement in Brazil, UNHCR's actions towards their protection and integration, and good practices in meeting their needs in a culturally sensitive manner.



**Documentation and Registration:** In July, in Boa Vista and Pacaraima, UNHCR and partners registered in proGres v4 4,878 persons and generated 3,569 shelter IDs. The numbers reflect registration efforts targeting PoCs supported through shelter allocation, CBI assistance or included within the voluntary relocation strategy promoted by the federal government. Additionally, UNHCR in partnership with AVSI, supported the documentation of 1,478 individuals at the Reception and Documentation Centres (PITrig) in Boa Vista and Pacaraima.

As for Manaus, UNHCR referred 632 asylum seekers and 173 refugees for documentation procedures during the month of July.

### Celebrating refugee athletes as Tokyo Games begin

This month, UNHCR released the campaign Reflection in an effort to encourage the Brazilian public to get to know the Refugee Olympic and Paralympic team in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. For that, UNHCR Brazil launched [a thematic page](#) in its website where it is possible to learn more about the athletes and follow their participation.

### Supporting partnerships' efforts in the R4V context

Following a capacity building programme on fundraising carried out in 2020, in the context of the R4V – Response for Venezuelans platform, UNHCR Brazil released the [Fundraising Programme Manual for R4V Organizations](#). The manual comprises key information on strategies for small-scale organizations under five chapters, aiming towards strengthening the fundraising profiles of these partners, while covering topics such as grant writing, individual fundraising strategies and relationships with partners.

### Contacts:

Chiara Orsini – Associate Reporting Officer ([orsini@unhcr.org](mailto:orsini@unhcr.org))

Vivianne Barbosa – Senior Reporting Assistant ([barbosas@unhcr.org](mailto:barbosas@unhcr.org))

#### Parceiros do ACNUR no Brasil – UNHCR partners in Brazil



UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support of:  
 O ACNUR, a Agência da ONU para Refugiados, agradece o apoio de:



With the support of the following organizations and private sector partners:  
 Com o apoio das seguintes organizações e parceiros da iniciativa privada:



O ACNUR Brasil agradece o grande apoio e parceria com todas as outras agências da ONU, autoridades brasileiras (a nível federal, estadual e municipal) e organizações da sociedade civil envolvidas na resposta de emergência e nos programas regulares da operação brasileira.