



UNHCR's support to the Temporary Protection Status in Colombia

“In the current context, the decision to regularize hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans has even greater relevance. In addition to the legal protection for the Venezuelan population, registration will allow for a wider coverage of the COVID-19 vaccination.”

- Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR is gearing up to support the regularization of Venezuelan refugees and migrants after Colombia announced in February 2021 it would grant a ten-year Temporary Protection Status (TPS) to the more than 1.74 million Venezuelans in its territory.

Colombia is home to by far the largest number of Venezuelans displaced by the socioeconomic and political crisis in their homeland. Nearly 60% are in an irregular situation.

Colombia's TPS announcement comes as Latin America faces the devastating impact of a second year of COVID-19. The TPS paves the way for effective enjoyment of rights and for solutions. Integration will also boost the development of the communities hosting Venezuelans.

Thanks to the TPS, more than 1.74 million Venezuelans currently in Colombia, as well as those arriving through official border points over the next two years, will have access to identification documents, formal employment and state services, including the COVID-19 vaccination. With better access to education, skills training and income, Venezuelans will integrate in their communities and will contribute to local development and post COVID-recovery.

Refugees and migrants from Venezuela

5.6 million
people globally

4.6 million
in Latin America and the Caribbean

1.74 million
in Colombia, including over 983,000 that lack regular status



The TPS offers unique opportunities to be harnessed now. UNHCR has developed a response plan to implement the TPS in collaboration with local and national authorities and humanitarian and development partners. This plan spans the initial phase of outreach and documentation to the longer-term opportunities for inclusion and integration.

Within the framework of the [Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform](#), UNHCR already provides Venezuelans with lifesaving assistance and promotes and enhances their access to and enjoyment of rights, such as documentation, education and employment. UNHCR also actively promotes peaceful coexistence with host communities. The implementation of the TPS, however, requires a rapid

and significant scale-up of UNHCR's activities.

There is no time to be lost: the first phase of the TPS starts early May with online pre-registration. UNHCR is already **working closely with the Government of Colombia and members of the [Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows \(GIFMM\)](#)** to enable Venezuelans with specific needs and those residing in hard-to-reach or conflict-affected areas to have the necessary information and access to pre-register. The second phase of TPS – individual in-person biometric registration – will begin in August. During the third phase of the TPS, Colombia will issue identity documents, reaching a target of 800,000 Venezuelans by the end of 2021.

UNHCR's Action Plan: IMPROVED ACCESS TO RIGHTS

UNHCR total funding requirements for the TPS Action Plan = \$16 million

As a mandated protection agency with a long-standing field presence in Colombia, UNHCR will support access to the TPS through a three-pronged plan of action:



Pillar 1: Registration and documentation

UNHCR will support the Government of Colombia to **register and deliver documentation** to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, by:

- 1. Procuring mobile units to support the biometric registration process.** Mobile units will facilitate access to registration for Venezuelans living in urban and hard-to-reach areas.
- 2. Setting up registration points.** UNHCR will support national and municipal authorities in establishing and operating registration points, particularly in cities.
- 3. Delivering information campaigns:** UNHCR will support the authorities in delivering comprehensive and systematic information about the TPS through a wide variety of platforms.



Pillar I funding requirements =
\$4.8 million



Pillar 2: Outreach, orientation and communication



Pillar II funding requirements =
\$5.3 million

The second pillar focusses on **ensuring that all Venezuelans can access** the TPS and **no-one is left behind**, by:

- 1. Providing orientation and building trust with communities, especially those in hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas.** UNHCR will work with community-based organizations and volunteers to reach women, children, elderly people, young people, people with disabilities, LGBTI people and indigenous people.
- 2. Strengthening the network of legal clinics** that will support those facing difficulties accessing or being granted the TPS. As co-lead of the the Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM) Protection Sector, UNHCR will develop guidance on legal orientation for Venezuelans.
- 3. Providing assistance and orientation** by increasing the capacity in existing support centres, opening new ones in underserved areas and deploying mobile units.
- 4. Setting up internet kiosks** to facilitate access to the TPS, in particular pre-registration.
- 5. Establishing a national call centre** to provide information and orientation on modalities to access TPS and to refer Venezuelans as necessary to targeted services (e.g. legal aid).



Pillar 3: Reception and basic needs

For more than a year, the Colombia-Venezuela border has been closed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Even so, more than 1,000 people a day are crossing into Colombia and far more are expected once borders reopen. UNHCR is stepping up its reception and assistance capacity, in compliance with biosecurity measures, including:

1. **Expanding the network of reception and transit centres in border areas**, together with authorities, and shelters operated countrywide by NGO partners.
2. **Stepping up protection monitoring** with a focus on identifying the most vulnerable, including those forced to enter through irregular routes and at risk of trafficking, exploitation and sexual violence.
3. **Expanding capacity to conduct pre-registration in UNHCR's corporate system PRIMES** to facilitate individual case management.
4. **Ramping up cash-based assistance** in underserved areas to meet the basic needs of new arrivals, many of whom are suffering malnutrition and extreme poverty.
5. **Offering protection services** with a focus on psychosocial support and assistance for survivors and those at risk of gender-based violence.



Pillar III funding requirements = \$5.9 million

Funding the response

The successful implementation of the TPS — from registration and documentation, to access and enjoyment of rights, and also towards inclusion in national systems — demands significant financial resources.

While needs are growing, the Venezuela Situation remains one of the most underfunded emergencies in the world. Funding for Colombia is now more urgent than ever. The TPS provides a unique pathway for formal employment, access to education and non-emergency healthcare. At the same time, registering and documenting 1.74 million Venezuelans, in addition to those who will enter Colombia over the next two years, will involve a large-scale logistical effort.

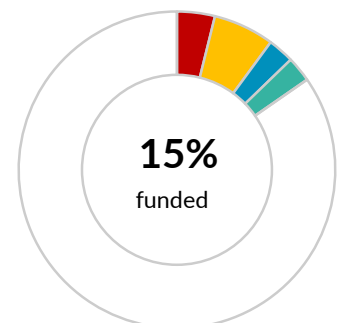
Adequate financing is a pre-condition for the success of the TPS. The additional needs related to the TPS mean that the effects of underfunding will be felt even more acutely across all areas of UNHCR's response, from protection, to assistance and resilience activities, to solutions.

On the positive side: successful implementation will lead to inclusion of refugees into national systems, socio-economic recovery plans and the formal economy, which will be a major focus of UNHCR's efforts in 2022. In the medium to long run, this will translate into lower dependence on humanitarian assistance.

UNHCR response in Colombia requires

108.4 USD Million

AS OF 4 MAY 2021



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

Consequences of Underfunding

Without additional funding, the risk is that assistance and protection activities under all three pillars of UNHCR's action plan will come to a halt. Timely and flexible funding is needed to harness fully the potential of the TPS and to address the most acute and pressing needs of the current and anticipated Venezuelan population in Colombia.

A late arrival of funds will delay the delivery of much needed protection and assistance, as well as the rollout of the TPS itself. For example:

- **Without sufficient funds, nearly one million Venezuelans currently in an irregular situation will remain unable to access formal employment and non-urgent medical care**, including access to the COVID-19 vaccination.
- Without opportunities to achieve self-reliance, **some 1.64 million Venezuelans in Colombia will have to rely on humanitarian assistance** to access basic needs, services and protection.
- Without regularization, Venezuelans will **remain vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, gender-based violence and discrimination.**
- Once the border reopens, **limited funds will prevent UNHCR from scaling-up registration and providing arriving Venezuelans with life-saving assistance and protection services** in border areas.

For more information, please contact:

Sonia Giannone | Senior Donor Relations Officer | giannone@unhcr.org
Natalie Schmidthaeussler | External Relations Officer | SCHMIDTH@unhcr.org