



“As **violence, persecution and civil strife** continue to uproot millions, the **coronavirus** pandemic is **destabilizing** entire sectors of the **economy**, with **millions** depending on fragile incomes that are **now at risk**, (...) In these unprecedented times, the world needs to **broaden its focus** making sure **displaced populations** and their generous but **under-resourced hosts** are **not forgotten**. The time to **step up support** is now.”

Kelly T. Clements

UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees

You can read the press release [HERE](#).

Situational Highlights

According to PAHO/WHO, COVID-19 caseloads were stabilizing this week both in the US and in Brazil. Still, the two countries continue to have the world's highest number of coronavirus cases (with 6.4M cases in the US and 4.3M in Brazil). Peru, which has over 729,000 cases, is also reporting a decline in the number of new infections, although ICU beds in the Andean country remain limited. Colombia reported 716,000 cases and almost 23,000 deaths. Venezuela reported 61,569 cases, although testing capacity remains low. After more than 170 days of

lockdown, Argentina overtook Chile in terms of the number of cases and is now among the globe's 10 most-affected nations.

With COVID-19 restrictions being progressively lifted across Central America, UNHCR is returning to communities throughout the region. Tropical storms affected several countries in the region, including Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, causing floods, landslides, and damage to infrastructure. The rainy season also raises the specter of outbreaks of malaria, dengue, and leptospirosis, which would place additional

pressure on national healthcare systems already strained by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Brazil extended for its emergency aid – which has benefitted at least 30,000 Venezuelans – for four additional months, although payouts will now be US\$60 per month, or around half the prior amount. Though borders remain closed throughout the region, asylum claims continue to be filed in some areas, with at least 27,250 claims filed remotely in Peru since June, and 24,250 claims filed in Mexico as of 31 August.



Challenges



Throughout Latin America, the housing situation for Venezuelans continues to deteriorate as a result of the pandemic. As lockdown measures drag on, it has grown increasingly difficult to find sustainable accommodations for individuals or families who have been evicted. Shelters and rented locations are often operating at full capacity or closed to new cases, due to coronavirus-prevention measures. While some countries, including Argentina, have put a freeze on evictions amid the health crisis, UNHCR has received reports of landlords threatening to cut off utilities as a way of forcing tenants out. (In Argentina, nightly temperatures amid the Southern Hemisphere winter drop to as low as 5 degrees Celsius). Episodes of xenophobia and gender-based violence have also been reported.

UNHCR and its partner agencies are providing assistance to vulnerable persons of concern, or PoCs, who were evicted or are facing an imminent risk of eviction. UNHCR is also working closely with the authorities to prevent future evictions and provide housing subsidies, whenever possible. In Colombia, the Inter Agency Group on Mixed Movements reported that, between 12 June and 9 September, 1,260 at-risk Venezuelans had been identified.

In Guatemala, concerns were raised over the number of refugee and asylum-seeker children dropping out of school, and UNHCR has responded by offering parents counseling about the importance of continuing their children's education in their host country. In the eastern border region of Izabal, UNHCR and partners have seen a spike in mixed movements (principally among Hondurans and Cubans) and requests for support, including face masks, phone calls and internet.

UNHCR's response in the Americas



Despite the pandemic-related restrictions, UNHCR is 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. Urgent action is required to help the most vulnerable refugees and IDPs, particularly those in countries where they are unable to access state-run social protection schemes. With the coronavirus crisis exacerbating already dire humanitarian needs globally, timely and flexible support from governments, the private sector and individuals remains critical. Click [HERE](#) to consult an update on UNHCR's COVID-19 emergency response in the Americas since March, 2020.



UPDATES FROM COUNTRIES

(Please note that the list is not exhaustive and mostly reflects the reporting period.)



Brazil: UNHCR is working with partners to spread reliable information about personal hygiene and COVID-19 prevention methods. Information sessions were organized in the Amazonian metropolis of Manaus – at the city's Documentation and Interiorization Centre, the Bus Station Support Space and the Manaus Transit Centre. Around 500 people took part in the sessions. In addition, special efforts are being made to ensure indigenous communities receive information via culturally-appropriate sessions, which are coordinated weekly with Instituto Mana, a UNHCR partner.



Colombia: Around 100 Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the border communities of Arauca and Cúcuta received sexual and reproductive health assistance through partner Profamilia. An additional 109 people at the Support Space in the southern town of Catambuco received general medical attention, family planning services, as well as specialized health services, focusing on HIV and COVID-19.



Costa Rica: Led by UNHCR, the UN country team provided basic medical equipment, personal hygiene items, and educational materials to the country's temporary attention centres for people in transit. More than 100 refugees and asylum seekers received cash assistance via prepaid cards from 31 August- 3 September. To date, over 2,700 refugee households have benefitted from such cash-based assistance.



Ecuador: Since March, UNHCR hotlines have provided assistance to 17,628 cases (77% of them Venezuelans, and 19% Colombians). A little over half the calls were requests for cash assistance to help meet essential needs, such as food or housing. Since March, UNHCR has provided 13,902 households with cash via a remote system, applying qualification criteria that was widened as a result of the health crisis. The second most common request via the hotlines was for legal assistance to address questions about asylum procedures and access to migratory alternatives.



Mexico: Under a new pilot programme, an initial group of refugee families have been relocated from the southern border city of Tapachula to San Luis Potosi, in the centre of the country. Adults were referred to appliances manufacturer Mabe to seek jobs, and families will also be provided support enrolling their children in local public schools. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 11 teams have been monitoring the local integration of refugees relocated to cities in northern Mexico and have provided support to 5,156 refugees and asylum-seekers.



North of Central America: El Salvador saw the launch of the "Familia Activa" programme, which aims to provide residents of eight different communities around the eastern town of San Miguel with information about the rights of internally displaced persons and the LGBTI community, child protection, and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. The programme seeks to help facilitate the integration of displaced people and strengthen national protection mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Guatemala, 22 child-friendly spaces were set up in the offices of partners and government institutions in Guatemala City, Esquipulas, Jutiapa, Puerto Barrios, San Benito, and Tecun Uman. In Honduras, 8,160 bars of soap and 200 hygiene kits were delivered to schools and vulnerable people in high-risk communities in Tegucigalpa.



Panama: August saw a record number of visits to the local Help.unhcr, with more than 9,000 hits. The site's most-visited section was the one devoted to the COVID-19 situation, which contains information on the government's contagion-prevention measures, as well as details on assistance offered through UNHCR and its partners. Additionally, as a part of the effort to support Panama's national health response, cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment were donated to the Migrant Reception Centre in Los Planes, in the central Chiriquí Province. The Centre is currently providing 700 people with accommodations.



Southern Cone: Since the start of the COVID-19 emergency, UNHCR has provided shelter to vulnerable refugees and migrants in Argentina. In the first half of September alone, 70 individuals were provided shelter. In the Chilean border city of Arica, 60 people received financial assistance to cover rent payments. In Bolivia, shelters run by UNHCR partners in the capital, La Paz, resumed receiving new cases under protocols developed to guard against the spread of COVID-19. Twelve people, including families with children, were admitted to the shelters after having crossed irregularly into Bolivia from Argentina.



Venezuela: In the centre-north state of Miranda, UNHCR and its partner AVESOC organized health brigades in the communities of El Ingenio and Barrio Bolívar, during which 400 people received medical assistance, as well as medication for chronic illnesses. During the event, information desks provided more than 100 people with advice on COVID-19 prevention, mental health and the prevention of fraud and corruption. An additional 280 people in the state – including women, single parents, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses and others with special needs – received blankets, sleeping mats, solar lamps, mosquito nets, buckets and kitchen sets.

Stories from the field

Nicaraguan refugee heals wounds of persecution in Costa Rica

It had been many years since Catalina* had finished her law degree when fear for her family's safety and anger over what was happening in her native Nicaragua compelled her to move in with protesting students on a university campus as part of mass antigovernment demonstrations in 2018.

One night, a homemade explosive was lobbed through the window and detonated on her right foot. Though she underwent surgery to save her foot, the serious injuries she sustained in the explosion required extensive treatment.

Then she heard of an initiative by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, that gives 6,000 refugees and asylum seekers access to Costa Rica's robust public health system. To read more about Catalina's story, by UNHCR public information officer Jean Pierre Mora in San José, please click [HERE](#).



Coordination and Response to date

R4V

The Regional Platform is working on a new COVID-19 update, covering activities carried out during the pandemic by Platforms and Regional Sectors. In addition, the Regional Platform is monitoring the return of refugees and migrants to Venezuela and is compiling inputs received from Platforms into an internal update. To access the latest update on helplines and remote assistance services for refugees and migrants in Colombia, click [HERE](#).

MIRPS

UNHCR and UNDP presented the Regional Local Governance Framework, a joint initiative aimed at seeking local responses to needs of PoCs amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The Regional Framework will establish a Toolkit for municipalities affected by forced displacement, to help them identify needs and capacities and mainstream forced displacement into development planning. Countries including El Salvador progressed in the

qualification exercise under the MIRPS national plan. In Guatemala, UNHCR signed agreements with municipalities, formalizing their participation in the MIRPS Cities of Solidarity initiative.





Don't miss...

FIRST CHAPTER OF THE "ACORTEMOS DISTANCIAS" VIDEO SERIES LAUNCHED

Following its launch last August, the **Regional Inter-Agency Anti-Xenophobia Campaign "Acortemos Distancias"** (One Step Closer in English) has made the first chapter of an ongoing video series available.



THIRD EDITION OF REFUGIARTE LAUNCHED

RefugiArte is an exhibition that uses art to promote inclusion and solidarity and create awareness about the protection needs of refugees and internally displaced people. UNHCR launched the first edition of the exhibition in 2015, within the framework of the 50th anniversary of the UNHCR Regional Office for South Latin America. The second edition of RefugiArte was launched in 2018.



HEAR THE NEW ANTI-XENOPHOBIA SONG UNHCR AND IOM

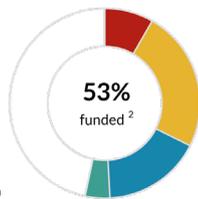
Click [HERE](#) to hear a new song that is part of UNHCR and IOM's joint anti-xenophobia campaign #somoslomismo.



Funding the response

Financial Information

UNHCR AMERICAS - Funding Update



THE AMERICAS
as of 14 September 2020

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

\$ 611.8 million
UNHCR's financial requirements 2020¹

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, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Venezuela.
2. The percentage funded (53%) and total funding amount (\$326.279.710) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$285.558.663 representing 47% of the financial requirements.

While seeking funds to carry out COVID-19 preventative measures and response activities, UNHCR stresses the need for support to be in addition to the existing critical funding requirements laid out in UNHCR's regular Global Appeal for 2020. It is vital that the

international community keep supporting the millions of refugees and internally displaced people already living a precarious existence, for whom already limited self-reliance opportunities are likely to shrink further as a result of the economic impact of the crisis.

Total contributed or pledged to the COVID-19 appeal:

USD 462M

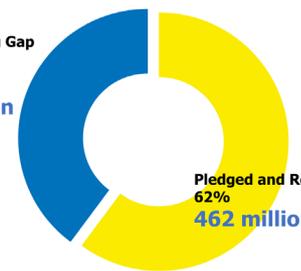
Including:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| United States | \$186.3M |
| Germany | \$62.7M |
| European Union | \$47.0M |
| United Kingdom | \$28.0M |
| Japan | \$23.9M |
| African Development Bank | \$18.3M |
| Denmark | \$14.6M |
| Private donors | \$14.6M |
| United Nations Foundation | \$10.0M |
| CERF | \$6.9M |
| Canada | \$6.4M |
| Education Cannot Wait | \$5.5M |
| Unilever | \$5.3M |
| Qatar Charity | \$3.5M |
| Spain | \$3.4M |
| France | \$3.4M |
| Ireland | \$3.3M |
| Sweden | \$3.0M |
| Sony Corporation | \$2.9M |
| Austria | \$2.5M |
| Finland | \$2.4M |
| Latter-day Saints Charities | \$2.0M |

FUNDING (AS OF 09 SEPTEMBER)
USD 745 million

requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally until the end of the year

Funding Gap 38%
283 million



Pledged and Recorded 62%
462 million

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 2020:



And to our private donors:

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