

“ Stopping the virus and offering protection is not – and must not be – a zero-sum equation. Both are possible, and lives can be saved. We cannot allow xenophobic reactions, only meant to draw facile consensus and electoral votes, to shape responses to challenges that are complex, but manageable. ”

Filippo Grandi

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

You can read this Press Release [HERE](#).

Situational Highlights

According to WHO, the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Mexico are still seeing the highest weekly number of new coronavirus cases in the Americas. Argentina, Bahamas, Costa Rica and Saint Martin have the highest numbers of new cases-per-million inhabitants, with all reporting more than 1,600 cases-per-million over the past weeks. **Argentina** has Latin America's highest number of new cases-per-million, with over 2,000 new cases-per-million inhabitants.

Although the region continues to struggle to contain the virus, dire economic pressures are leading to

the resumption of activities, as well as the lifting of border restrictions throughout the region. Both **Paraguay** or **Peru** have recently lifted border restrictions, and **Costa Rica** is expected to do so shortly. Other countries in the regions are taking a different track, such as the US, which restricted all non-essential travel across its borders for an additional month.

As the situation evolves, measures that had suspended migratory procedures amid the pandemic are being adapted to the current context. **Brazil** announced that documentation deadlines for

refugees and migrants, suspended back in March, will resume on 3 November. In Peru, a series of measures have been put in place to swiftly regularize the immigration status of foreign citizens who entered the country irregularly or overstayed their visas. The measures require those aiming to regularize their status to have a valid travel document and clean criminal records.



Challenges

As mobility restrictions are progressively lifted in certain countries, UNHCR is seeing increased movements within Venezuela, as well as rising numbers of Venezuelans in **Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil** and **Bolivia**. (Additionally, the Caribbean has seen a rise in the arrivals of boats carrying Venezuelan refugees and migrants.) At the same time, Venezuelans are continuing to return home from abroad, with some 116,000 individuals having crossed back to Venezuela from or through Colombia since mid-March, according to Colombian migration authorities.



Food and drug shortages and insecurity appear to be among the main factors pushing Venezuelans to decamp, a quick survey conducted by UNHCR along the Colombian border suggested. Half of those surveyed said they intended to stay irregularly in Colombia, while the others said they were planning to travel on to other countries throughout the region.

Given that most borders remain closed, refugees and migrants are facing heightened protection risks as they resort to using informal border crossings – areas which are often controlled by trafficking networks, smugglers and irregular armed groups. UNHCR is ratcheting up its presence in border regions in order to monitor the situation and deliver lifesaving assistance to those in need.

Despite the fact that restrictions remain in place across **Central America**, groups of people are on the move throughout the region, often attempting to slip across borders at informal crossings. Some groups have found themselves stranded in **Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica** and **Honduras**.

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 see 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.)

 **Argentina:** In coordination with the Ministry of Social Development, UNHCR is implementing *Potenciar*, an initiative aimed at providing refugees and migrants with economic opportunities amid the ongoing economic crisis, sparked by the pandemic. This pilot project provides small-scale entrepreneurs with technical assistance, learning opportunities and social support to start new businesses or expand existing ones. As part of the process, 90 individuals will receive grants to help launch their startups.

 **Brazil:** Working hand in hand with the Brazilian government's *Operation Welcome*, UNHCR secured spots in shelters for 42 refugees and migrants who had been living on the streets of the northern city of Boa Vista. UNHCR also helped relocate 180 refugees and migrants from Boa Vista and the Amazonian city of Manaus to shelters in the southeastern cities of Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba and Porto Alegre.

 **Colombia:** UNHCR donated 40 Refugee Housing Units, or RHUs, and 13 family tents to several municipalities in the southern Nariño department to help beef up the area's health care capacity. The RHU installed at the Orientation and Assistance Point in Catambuco, near the department capital of Pasto, increased the size of facilities used to provide support to the so-called "caminantes" – Venezuelans travelling through the region, en route to neighbouring Ecuador and beyond.

 **Mexico:** Under a UNHCR initiative aimed at supporting access to higher education, 21 grants will be awarded to refugee and asylum-seeker students throughout Mexico. These new grants will bring to 136 the number of scholarships that UNHCR has awarded in Mexico this year to date.

 **North of Central America:** In **El Salvador**, UNHCR and the Ministry of Culture wrapped up the distribution of 1,030 biosafety and hygiene kits to Nahuizalco indigenous people in nine communities in the western department of Sonsonate. In **Honduras**, two mobile handwashing stations were delivered – one to a school and the other to a community centre. The donation also included hygiene supplies, informational materials, as well as instructional sessions on proper handwashing techniques, as part of *Blueprint*, a joint initiative with UNICEF. In **Guatemala**, the Health Department in the western city of Quetzaltenango distributed eco-filters, handwashing stations, antibacterial gel and masks donated by UNHCR. These items benefitted both the local population and individuals with protection needs at border areas. Around 3,500 bars of soap were also distributed to health centres in various municipalities.

 **Panama:** In coordination with the UN, UNHCR is supporting Panama's migration authority's efforts to improve reception conditions for mixed movement populations in the country. Following the donation of 48 Refugee Housing Units to expand facilities in the southern Darien border area, UNHCR recently delivered fire extinguishers, evacuation route signs and other safety supplies.

 **Peru:** The Municipality of Lima and UNHCR produced a series of three webinars on the subject of "new masculinities" as part of efforts to prevent sexual and gender-based violence among both the local population and refugee and migrant communities. So far, the webinars have reached more than 3,000 people via social media.

 **Trinidad and Tobago:** In cooperation with partners, 180 refugees and migrants in Trinidad and Tobago received sexual and reproductive health consultations, either at clinics or remotely. In September, 125 refugees and asylum-seekers were provided psychosocial support to help them cope with trauma. Recipients included survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

 **Venezuela:** UNHCR and the local civil registry office in the western border state of Apure organized a registration and documentation brigade that provided birth certificates to 30 children and teens. Additionally, 90 adults filed requests to renew or replace lost or expired identification documents.

Stories from the field

Peruvian football club Alianza Lima partners with UNHCR to support refugees

Peru's Alianza Lima has become the country's first professional football club to partner with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, to support refugee integration. The club has pledged to provide talented young refugees and migrants with sports scholarships to attend its football academies and is also working with UNHCR to train coaches so they can better support Peruvian and refugee students and foster the values of inclusion and understanding. The club and its players are also joining advocacy efforts to further welcome refugees and fight against xenophobia.

To read the full story, click [HERE](#).



Coordination and Response to date

MIRPS

As part of the efforts of the MIRPS Support Platform for countries in the North of Central America, a 'twinning' initiative aims to pair municipalities in the platform's member countries with cities in MIRPS countries. In addition, a series of virtual or in-person sessions are being organized to exchange experiences on the refugee status determination process among members of countries' refugee commissions.



Coordination and Response to date

RMRP

Preparations are on track for the external launch of the 2021 Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) on 10 December. On 19 October, a ministerial meeting was held to discuss the main agreements of the technical meeting held in Santiago on 24-25 September. Organized by Chile, which holds the pro tempore presidency, the meeting included such participants as the UNCHR High Commissioner, IOM's Director General and the Joint Special Representative Eduardo Stein, as well as the Group of Friends (donor countries) of the Quito Process.



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MEXICAN APPLIANCE-MAKER MABE STEPS UP TO SAVE LIVES WITH HELP FROM REFUGEE EMPLOYEES.

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BRAZIL ELECTED PRESIDENT OF UNHCR'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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'GIVE US A SEAT AT THE TABLE AND WE'LL CHANGE THE WORLD'

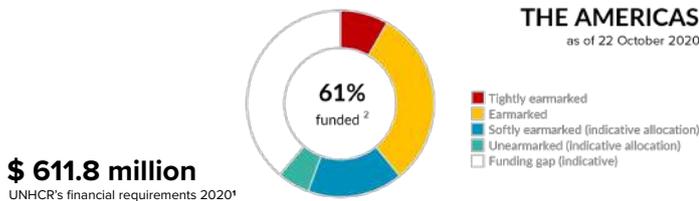
At the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges, participants stressed that forcibly displaced people are eager and qualified to help rebuild communities devastated by COVID-19. Carmen Parra, a Venezuelan-born doctor working in Peru, explains how she's contributing to her host community:



Funding the response

Financial Information

UNHCR AMERICAS - Funding Update



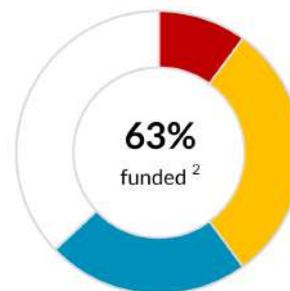
Notes:
1. The financial requirements for The Americas are for the operations in Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Venezuela.
2. The percentage funded (61%) and total funding amount (\$374,292,300) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$237,546,073 representing 39% 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.

CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY
as of 22 October 2020

\$ 745.1 million
UNHCR's financial requirements 2020¹



Notes:
1. The financial requirements of the Coronavirus Emergency include requirements in Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico and Zimbabwe.
2. The percentage funded (63%) and total funding amount (\$469,298,375) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$275,831,124 representing 37% of the financial requirements.

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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