

AMERICAS

January 2021

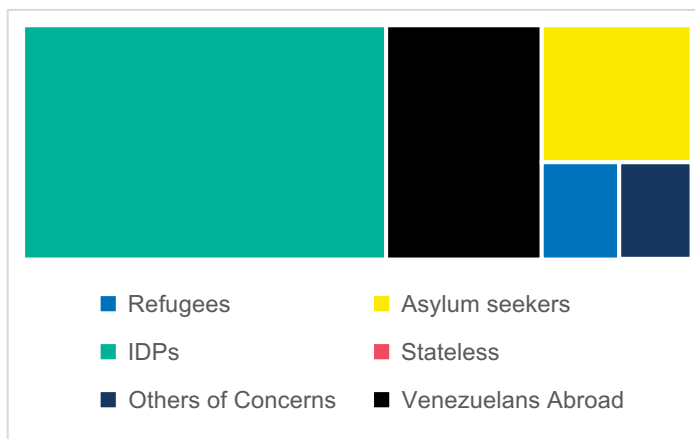
Almost **one in every five persons of concern to UNHCR** live in the **Americas in 2020**, a region severely impacted by the pandemic and its socio-economic downturn.

UNHCR two-fold strategy in 2021 prioritizes **emergency assistance and protection needs**, as well as **long-term solutions** with a focus on regularization and inclusion.

Lack of funds in the first part of 2021 will hamper efforts to mitigate the impact of the **pandemic on destitute refugees** and other displaced populations in the region.

POPULATION OF CONCERN IN 2020

15.38* million people

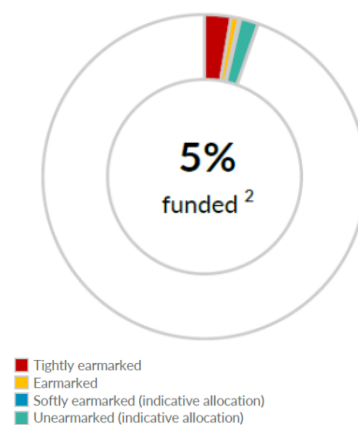


*Source: *Mid Year Trends 2020, UNHCR, 2020.*

FUNDING (AS OF 12 JANUARY)

USD 638.8 M

requested for the AMERICAS in 2021



Operational context

The **Americas** is facing an unprecedented level of displacement. By June 2020, over **18 per cent of the global population of concern to UNHCR**, or around 15.38 million people uprooted, lived the region. Of them, **4.5 million were refugees and migrants from Venezuela**, of which 808,000 were asylum seekers and 136,000 refugees. Over **8.3 million IDPs** lived in **Colombia, El Salvador and Honduras**, in addition to other refugees, including some **80,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Nicaragua** in Costa Rica. Population numbers have grown by 25% since 2019 and are expected to rise again in 2021, particularly when borders re-open as the COVID 19 pandemic is brought under control.

The region is one of the worst affected regions by the COVID 19 pandemic. In addition to the public health crisis, millions of people, including many refugees and IDPs, have lost their livelihoods. Governments in the region have been leading and coordinating the response but, as national capacities become strained, the well-being and safety of refugees and their host communities is at risk.

REGIONAL PRESENCE in
88 locations and
22 countries

Staff: 1,480 National Staff,
 446 International Staff
 Women **61%**
 Men **39%**

Offices: 11 Country Offices,
 3 Multi-Country Offices,
 2 Chiefs of Mission, 4 Sub
 Office, 24 Field Offices, 39
 Field Units, 4 National
 Offices

Strategy and main activities in 2021



UNHCR in the Americas will adopt a two-fold strategy in 2021 aiming to provide immediate assistance for basic **and protection needs**; as well as to promote mid to long-term solutions with a focus on **regularization and inclusion**. In the context of a pandemic, advocating for the inclusion of the population of concern to UNHCR in **national vaccination programs, safety nets and socio-economic recovery activities** will be critical. The success and range 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.

Provision of lifesaving assistance

- Across the region, UNHCR will respond to the **immediate needs** of increasing numbers of people of concern impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of those in dire need is expected to grow in the first half of 2021, presenting an unprecedented need for **food, safe water, sanitation supplies, basic relief items and emergency shelter**.
- **Cash assistance** will be ever more important to meet basic needs such as food, rent or medicines.
- Health systems: Promote the inclusion of refugees into health systems and national vaccination campaigns

Ensuring access to protection

- In a context of reduced access to territory and overwhelmed asylum systems, strengthening **asylum capacities** and protection-sensitive migration management will become urgent.
- By means of case management, **registration** and referral mechanisms, UNHCR will focus on identifying and assisting the most vulnerable.
- Investing in **protection monitoring**, evidence-based programming and analysis will be at the core of regional strategies oriented by age, gender and diversity considerations, ensuring protection from exploitation and abuse.
- Through a strengthened network of **support spaces**, the provision of information and orientation will help prevent exploitation and abuse as cross border movements remain largely irregular due to closed

borders and other restrictions imposed to contain the spread of COVID 19.

Pursuing durable solutions

- Through a whole-of-society approach, UNHCR will foster **partnerships to mobilize support** for the inclusion of refugees in national systems and the labour market.
- UNHCR will advocate and support national efforts to provide regular stay (as temporary or permanent schemes, professional or working related permits, education programmes...) facilitating longer term solutions for those lacking prospects for a safe future, especially for women or girls at risk.

Fostering community engagement, participation and peaceful coexistence

- To prevent displacement, mitigate protection risks and build on the resilience of affected communities, operations will prioritize **community-centred interventions**, including support to community leaders and self-management structures, identification and referral of cases with specific needs, as well as enhanced access to information and complaint mechanisms.
- UNHCR will boost feedback and complaint mechanisms across the region, allowing for constant communication with the affected population to ensure the response adapts to their needs, particularly in environments increasingly risky as borders.

2021 PLANNING FIGURES

Provision of lifesaving assistance

10,000	households will receive cash assistance in Ecuador
1,500	individuals will receive material and psychosocial support in Guatemala
15,000	persons at risk will be assisted Venezuela
40,000	individuals will receive cash and/or in-kind assistance (non-food items kits, hygiene kits, winter kits) to cover their basic needs in Southern Cone countries

Ensuring access to protection

30,000	IDPs and 50,000 Venezuelans will be provided with civil status documentation in Colombia
19,000	people will be registered for further assistance in Costa Rica , most of them Nicaraguans
91,400	stateless persons or people still at risk of statelessness in the Dominican Republic will be provided with legal aid
800	survivors of gender-based violence and 350 unaccompanied and separated children will receive in Ecuador support, including access to safe spaces, psychological or legal assistance
43	information helpdesks will provide assistance and protection in Guatemala
78,300	people of concern to UNHCR supported by with specialized services and assistance through local protection networks in Honduras
70%	of applicants will benefit from refugee status determination procedure in Mexico
2,000	of individuals will receive legal assistance in Panama and the southern Caribbean countries
40,000	applicants will be provided with information on government refugee status determination procedures in Peru

Pursuing durable solutions

30,000	individuals will receive support for voluntary relocation across Brazil
200	persons of concern supported with arrangements for resettlement in El Salvador
30	strategic cooperation agreements will be expanded through the Cities of Solidarity programme to improve protection services in the Southern Cone countries.

Fostering community engagement, participation and enhancing peaceful coexistence

50	public awareness campaigns to mitigate the impact of xenophobia will be implemented in Panama and the southern Caribbean countries
25	peaceful coexistence projects will be implemented in Peru
25,000	community members will participate in peaceful coexistence, community-building and awareness activities in Venezuela

Working with Partners

- Prioritization of lifesaving assistance will go hand in hand with efforts to find long term solutions by fostering cooperation with a wide array of actors, including [local authorities](#) and the [private sector](#), to provide livelihoods opportunities and promote inclusion into national systems. With growing anti-foreigner sentiment in the region, exacerbated by a contracting socio-economic environment, combatting xenophobia will require an innovative and inclusive approach.
- UNHCR will continue to co-lead the interagency response to the situation of the Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela with IOM to implement the [Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan](#) across 17 countries, and through technical support to Governmental coordination in the [Quito Process](#)—an initiative of several **Latin American countries** that seeks to harmonize domestic policies in receiving countries.
- In **Central America and Mexico**, support to the [Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework for Central America and Mexico \(MIRPS\)](#) and the implementation of national plans will be key, as well as to work with the Organization of American States (OAS) to expand the MIRPS Support Platform.
- In **Colombia**, UNHCR will continue to co-lead the [Protection Cluster](#) (with Norwegian Refugee Council) and within the humanitarian coordination architecture and coordinate with respective authorities and institutions.
- In 2021, UNHCR will work within the framework of the [Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\)](#) for people who spontaneously returned to **Venezuela**, IDPs, persons at risk of displacement, refugees, asylum seekers, and persons at risk of statelessness who will require protection safeguards and humanitarian assistance.
- At the regional level, UNHCR will engage actively in UN system coordination structures, including the new Regional Collaboration Platforms and the Issue Based Coalitions – in particular the one on human mobility – as well as with various other regional bodies, including the OAS, ECLAC and others. This will be particularly important to promote inclusion of Persons of Concern to UNHCR in national vaccination programmes and to address root causes driving forced displacement for north of Central America.

Funding

In **2021**, UNHCR in the Americas will require [\\$638.8 million](#) to respond to the needs of millions of refugees and others seeking safety and dignified lives. For the first half of 2021, UNHCR needs to secure additional funds to [ensure the continuity of lifesaving activities](#) in the region, including multi-purpose cash for refugees and IDPs; distribution of core and hygiene items; provision of emergency shelter in border areas and for those facing evictions, and support to States for regularization and documentation. UNHCR's [overall requirements](#) for its comprehensive response in the Americas by the end of **2020** totalled [\\$611.8 million, of which 65 per cent funded by the end year](#).

UNHCR's humanitarian response in the Americas is made possible thanks to the generous support of major donors who have contributed unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations, and to donors who have generously contributed directly to UNHCR Central Americas operations.

Thanks to all our donors in 2021 (As of 12 January)

[Belgium](#) | [Denmark](#) | [European Union](#) | [Germany](#) | [Netherlands](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [Sweden](#) | [United States of America](#) | [UN MPTF on migration](#)

And thanks to our private donors

CONTACTS

Sonia Giannone, Senior Donor Relations Officer, giannone@unhcr.org

Sonia Aguilar, Reporting Officer, aguilars@unhcr.org

For media, please reach:

Olga Sarrado, Communications Officer, sarrado@unhcr.org

Sibylla Brodzinsky, Communications Officer, brodzins@unhcr.org

