

CHILE

March 2021

During the first weeks of 2021, more than 4,500 persons, most of them from Venezuela, crossed from Bolivia to Colchane, the first town in the Chilean borders with no more than 1,600 habitants and some 4,500 meters of altitude and temperatures going from 26 during the day to minus 10 degrees during the night. Many of them were sleeping on the streets without safe drinking water and basic sanitation measures.

In spite of not having a presence in the area, UNHCR has closely followed up on these developments and has been monitoring the situation in the Tarapacá Region: Huara, Colchane (this city has 32

entry points), Pozo Almonte, Alto Hospicio, the Loa and Iquique; so as to provide a coordinated response with the other actors on the ground.

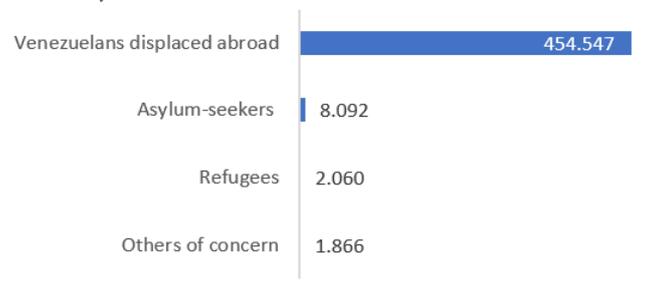
Thanks to donors support and in coordination with partners, UNHCR has been providing humanitarian assistance and orientation to alleviate the most urgent needs of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in the area.

Between February and March the UNHCR supported the Municipalities of Colchane, Huara and Iquique, with more than 3,000 food boxes and hygiene kits to be delivered to refugees and migrants.

It should be noted that during 2020, in spite of the challenging COVID-19 context, UNHCR managed to assist more than 38,000 people of concern (PoC) with a total of USD 4,8 million. More information on UNHCR's work in the country during 2020 can be found at its yearbook entitled [Chile: Humanitarian assistance in Pandemic context. Work in the field by UNHCR partners and Donors in 2020](#) (Chile: Asistencia humanitaria en Pandemia. Trabajo en terreno de ACNUR, socios y donantes 2020).

POPULATION OF CONCERN:

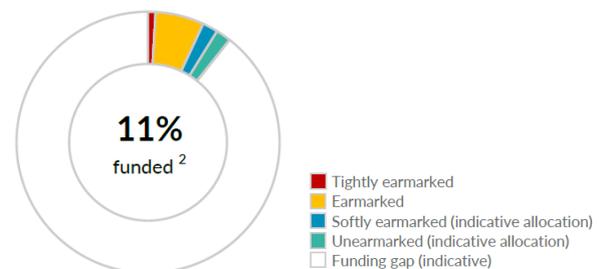
466,565



FUNDING (AS OF 24 MARCH, 2021)

USD 38.9 M

requested for the UNHCR operation MCO Argentina (incl. Chile).



UNHCR PRESENCE

The UNHCR Multi-country Office for Southern Latin America based in Buenos Aires covers operations in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Staff in Argentina and Chile:

- 71 National staff and affiliated workforce
- 12 International staff

Offices in Chile:

- 1 National Office in Santiago
- 1 Field Unit in Arica



Working with Partners

- In line with the “whole of society approach” envisaged by the Global Compact on Refugees and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, **UNHCR works closely with the national government, refugee communities, municipalities, civil society organizations, academy and private sector to ensure refugees’ and migrants’ protection and durable solutions.**
- UNHCR has entered into partnership agreements with **World Vision International, the National Human Rights Institute, Municipality of Santiago, Social Aid Foundation of Christian Churches (FASIC), Scalabrini Foundation, Jesuit Migrant Service (SJM), Diego Portales University (UDP), International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and Vicaría Pastoral Social**, to provide shelter, food, hygiene and winter kits, legal counselling, medical and psycho-social assistance to Venezuelan refugees arriving in the country.
- A total of **six Chilean localities signed a Cities of Solidarity** agreement with UNHCR. Despite the difficult situation related to COVID19 crisis, **Estación Central, Santiago, La Pintana, Recoleta, Ñuñoa and Valparaíso** expressed their interest to join the initiative and signed the agreement. This operational partnership allowed these municipalities to improve the reception strategies for Refugees and Migrants and provide humanitarian assistance for their needs.
- **UNHCR and IOM co-lead the National Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, made out of 17 partners**, and work closely with other UN sister agencies on ensuring holistic responses to their plight.

Main Activities

Protection

- **Identify protection risks and main needs of Venezuelans in Chile** to plan for all protection activities and making sure they will serve everyone whatever their age, gender or needs. A rapid needs assessment was conducted early March, to identify the **change in needs** in the Chilean border (Colchane). UNHCR has assisted refugees and migrants with legal advice, counselling, housing assistance and referrals to specialized services. The Agency also held various meetings with members of Venezuelan organizations, in order to develop strategies to support and empower these institutions as well as to collect information on the living conditions and challenges experienced by Venezuelans in the country.
- **Provide legal assistance to Venezuelan refugees and migrants and conduct border monitoring** through partnerships with the National Human Rights Institute (NHRI), the Legal Clinic of University Diego Portales and the Jesuit Migrant Service - the latter with the online app "**MIGRAPP**"
- **Support efforts to strengthen national protection frameworks**, through technical legal assistance and capacity building activities.
- **Implement “Support spaces” in Chile.** Building on the regional network that has been established, UNHCR has supported the establishment of 14 such spaces. The spaces seek to ensure that refugees and migrants from Venezuela have access to information and basic assistance upon arrival in Chile. The support spaces have played an important role in providing food, information and referral to specialized services for refugees and migrants during the pandemic.
- **Provide psychosocial assistance** through partnership agreements with World Vision International (WVI), Municipality of Santiago, Scalabrini Foundation, FASIC and the International Federation of Red Cross.
- **Expand spaces for engagement with LGBTIQ + refugees and migrants.** The Foundation for Social Assistance of Christian Churches (FASIC) with the support of UNHCR, has established a national network of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees in Chile. The first of its kind, the network provides an important space for exchange and action.
- **Assist with cash transfers.** Pioneering the implementation of cash modalities in Chile, UNHCR and partner World Vision are delivering **CBI vouchers/gift cards** to the most vulnerable refugees and migrants.

Shelter, food and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- Assist the most vulnerable refugees and migrants, in coordination with the Regional Government, Municipalities and Carabineros during the pandemic with the **provision of shelter, food and hygiene kits**, specially for those recently arriving in the country in very vulnerable conditions, such as the ones entering the country from the border with Bolivia.
- **Promote an interinstitutional response to the most urgent needs of Venezuelan families living in the streets of Santiago City** through an interinstitutional coordination table with Santiago Municipality, IOM, ILO, World Vision International and Vicaría de la Pastoral Social.

Durable Solutions

- **Promote the "Cities of Solidarity" programme adopted within the framework of the Brazil Plan of Action** to facilitate the reception and integration of persons of concern. Within this initiative, a series of webinars were held with Chilean municipalities to deliver tools and strategies to face integration challenges during the pandemic. A total of 5 webinars took place during the last quarter of 2020.
- **Transitioning from emergency to early recovery.** UNHCR has increasingly supported livelihoods-oriented assistance for refugees and migrants, with a view to ensuring their effective inclusion in economic recuperation efforts in Chile, transitioning from a COVID-19 humanitarian to a post-COVID 19 recovery response in close coordination with private sector and municipalities.
- **Support the access of children to education through the provision of electronic devices (tablets)** to vulnerable children from Arica to Concepción. Sim cards were also provided thanks to the support from WOM.
- **Facilitate access to entrepreneurship training.** Together with World Vision International, refugees and migrant women participate in targeted trainings with small enterprises. The project seeks to reinforce refugee and migrant women entrepreneurs' inclusion in the labour market, supporting and amplifying the resilience and innovation of these (micro) entrepreneurs.
- **Promote the access to the public health system amongst people of concern.** UNHCR is supporting the organization of a health needs assessment for migrants that will be conducted in the north of Chile by Ministry of Health with the support of UNHCR's partner IFRC. This action is part of an interagency response for the health crisis in the north of Chile.
- Using a community-based approach, **teams of Venezuelan refugees and migrants are trained to reach refugees and migrants in different communities to facilitate and inform them about access to work, labour rights and the asylum procedure**, in an initiative jointly implemented by UNHCR and its partner **Vicaría Pastoral Social Caritas**.
- Under the Migration Multi-Partners Trust Fund of the Global Compact for Migration, **an economic integration project for 2020-2023 is being implemented jointly with ILO/IOM** to strengthen the socioeconomic integration of migrants and refugees through access to decent work, sustainable livelihoods, and social dialogue.

Public Information/ External Relations

- **Provide timely and adapted information to refugees and migrants.** UNHCR publishes simple information on the pandemic and mitigation measures for refugees, using the website help.unhcr.org. UNHCR develops simple infographics and information on protection services and assistance available to refugees and migrants in country.
- **Promoting more inclusive reporting on refugees and migrants.** UNHCR and Universidad Central de Chile are currently developing the IV edition of the project "Journalism Without Labels" (Periodismo Sin Etiquetas) that, during 2021, will consist of a virtual course for journalists on forced displacement and non-stigmatization as well as the launch of a journalistic excellence award which will reward the best journalistic pieces published about forced displacement and migrations. On the other hand, both institutions will work together in a monthly monitoring of social networks, in order to identify discriminatory or xenophobic trends in Chile.
- **Develop campaigns and communicational material to promote a more favourable environment.** UNHCR and IOM are working together in the creation of an anti-xenophobia campaign. The initiative will consider the launch of three (3) videos for social media, as well as the creation of printed material that will be distributed in various cities of Chile, with special focus in Santiago and the northern part of the country.
- **Actively participate in the development of a communication strategy for the United Nations System.** Together with UNICEF, UNHCR co-leads the Interagency Communications Group, in which communicators from all United Nations agencies in Chile participate, to develop communication strategies that allow the United Nations to position in the country and increase its institutional prestige and reputation.
- **Communicating with Communities (CwC).** UNHCR develops strategies to reinforce communication channels in order to ensure that people in need can quickly contact the agency and receive timely assistance. Likewise, designing innovative methods to ensure that refugees and migrants can access to timely and useful information. Among the CwC projects that are being considered by the office is the creation of a "chatbot", a computer program that is designed to simulate human conversation. Users communicate with these tools using a chat interface or via voice, just like they would converse with another person.
- **Educational campaigns for the refugee and migrant population:** UNHCR is working on the development of an audio-visual campaign, aimed at raising awareness among the refugee and migrant population about the main characteristics of migratory grief and the importance of taking care of their mental health during their integration processes in Chile. The campaign consists of three animated videos and informative brochures.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds in 2021

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LINKS

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