

UPDATE #14 ON UNHCR COVID-19 RESPONSE IN COLOMBIA



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In Medellín, 60 baby carriers donated by BabyBjörn were distributed to Venezuelan mothers receiving assistance through UNHCR's partner, Famicove. ©UNHCR/Betancur,C.

CURRENT CONTEXT

The Colombian Ministry of Health confirmed 990,270 cases of COVID-19 as of Thursday, 22 October, with Bogotá concentrating the highest number (304,567 confirmed cases). A total of 29,636 individuals have died from COVID-19 and 893,712 cases have recovered.

According to Migración Colombia, 113,894 Venezuelans have returned to Venezuela from or through Colombia as of Tuesday, 13 October.

The number of Venezuelans stranded on the Colombian side of the border with the intention to return to Venezuela continues to decrease (e.g 664 Venezuelans seeking to enter Venezuela at present compared to 719 on 22 September). While the humanitarian corridor at the Puente Simon Bolivar in Cúcuta remains open on

weekdays, the corridor in Arauca is now open only once a week (Mondays), in Paraguachón on a needs only basis, due to the reduction in returns.

In addition, during the reporting period, 1,712 individuals (768 cases) returning to Venezuela were registered at the Transitory Health Attention Center (CAST in Spanish) at the Tienditas International Bridge near Cúcuta, of which 1,580 received information and orientation from UNHCR.

The Colombian Red Cross confirms that 73 percent of its interventions carried out on the route of the *caminantes* (people transiting on foot) during the month of September were for Venezuelans entering Colombia. According to media reports, the Colombian authorities estimate from 200,000 to 250,000 Venezuelans will enter Colombia before the end of 2020 with

the reactivation of economic activities in Colombia.

As per GIFMM monitoring, between 12 June and 19 October, 466 evictions reports were registered affecting 1,909 Venezuelans, as per the following breakdown: 53.9 percent females, 43.2 percent males and 0.4 percent others (2.5 percent does not have information disaggregated by gender). Additionally, 2,109 Venezuelans have identified themselves as being at risk of eviction.

The Territorial Committee for Transitional Justice reports a large-group displacement of 25 families (65 persons) in the indigenous territory Awá, Alto Ulbí Nunalbí (Nariño). Additionally, two confinements were reported in the location, affecting 20 families. UNHCR advocated for the participation of community representatives in the Committee and for families to be allowed to leave the region due to protection risks.

There are also reports of confinement risks in the Pital de la Costa village near Tumaco (Nariño) and of forced displacement in the indigenous community of Inda Sabaleta (Nariño), both caused by ongoing confrontations between illegal armed groups.

Five members of the National Peasants Association (ANUC in Spanish) displaced from the municipality of Balboa (Risaralda) were provided transportation to Popayan by the municipal administration and safe passage by the public forces. Four other members of ANUC, engaged in a land restitution process, were displaced from Mercaderes (Cauca).

During the reporting period, three massacres occurred in the municipalities of Cáceres (Antioquia), Jamundí (Valle del Cauca) and Planadas (Tolima).

According to UNHCR monitoring, there has been a mass displacement in the El Tigre II sector (Caucasia, Antioquia), which affected 53 families and 198 persons, all of them from the Zenu ethnic group. Additionally, the murder of the governor of the Tierralta indigenous reservation in the municipality of Alto Baudó (Chocó) was reported.

UNHCR'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN THE PAST 2 WEEKS

Health and hygiene/prevention measures

In Cali, UNHCR donated six Refugee Housing Units (RHUs), 59 beds and 10 crash carts to Cali's Municipal Public Health Secretariat. An additional three RHUs were delivered to hospitals in Puerto Tejada, El Tambo and El Bordo (Cauca).

In Cucuta, 12 cases received sexual and reproductive health services through UNHCR's partner Profamilia.

Protection

A total of 2,085 cases were supported and oriented through the 12 Local Ombudsperson's Offices (*Personerías*) and legal counsels in Norte de Santander and Arauca. UNHCR continues to refer cases to the University Legal Clinics for assistance with the asylum process in Arauca (24), Cucuta (33) and Barranquilla (2). In Arauca, 46 legal actions were filed (26 regarding guardianships, 18 rights petitions, 2 motions of contempt for non-compliance with guardianships).

In Apartadó and Turbo, UNHCR held a training session with local authorities and health companies on the new regulations for the provision of health care services to Venezuelan population in Colombia.

In Pasto, UNHCR shared within the Regional Safe Spaces Network (RSSN) framework the mapping of organizations, institutions and UN Agencies with capacity to respond and manage cases of SGBV survivors in the Nariño region.

In Cúcuta, six cases of SGBV and 33 women at risk were identified and referred for assistance. Three cases (seven people) were referred for support at UNHCR safe houses. 58 individual cases received psychosocial assistance, legal advice, nutritional assessment and activation of complementary pathways by La Casa que Abraza, an LGBTI support space.

In Barranquilla, UNHCR delivered training on Law 1257/08 (protection of women from violence) to

10 female leaders and community promoters, and on assistance routes to 15 volunteers of Pastoral Social in Cartagena. In addition, 42 Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) staff were trained on international protection.

In Medellin, eight unaccompanied or separated children cases and four cases of SGBV were identified and referred for assistance. In Arauca, six separated youths (one girl and five boys) and two unaccompanied children were identified and assisted by UNHCR partner, Apoyar.

In Cucuta, 21 cases of unaccompanied or separated children were referred to World Vision psychosocial professionals for evaluation and activation of the protection response in coordination with the authorities. Additionally, 56 children at risk were identified, 28 of whom correspond to children at risk of not attending school, three children engaged in the worst forms of child labour, two teenage pregnancies, one child with special education needs, one child engaged in other forms of child labour, 16 separated children and five unaccompanied children. Most of the separated (15) and unaccompanied (5) children were identified at the CAST during the registration process.

On 1 October, Mayerlín Vergara Pérez, Regional Coordinator for the Renacer Foundation, was announced as [the winner of the Nansen Refugee Award](#) for her work fighting against trafficking and sexual exploitation of refugee, migrant and internally displaced children in Colombia. A virtual ceremony was held on 5 October with the participation of UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, Isabel Allende, Alfonso Herrera, Juanes and other supporters of UNHCR.

Five posts produced through the project Estoyenlafrontera.com were published, including infographics targeted towards Venezuelan refugees and migrants related to access to rights, services and potential risks, while another one is part of the Somos Panas Colombia campaign, posted on the website of the local newspaper [La Opinión](#) where it had more than 800 visits.

The Maternidad Sin Fronteras (Motherhood without borders) contest was held in commemoration of the Worldwide Week for

Breastfeeding during which mothers from Norte de Santander and the Venezuelan states of Zulia, Apure and Táchira presented their stories. The event was supported by the Somos Panas Colombia campaign, UNHCR partner Corprodinco and the Cúcuta Book Fair.

Cash-Based Assistance

To date, around 42,000 individuals (10,500 families) have received multipurpose cash, representing 83 percent of the total planned. 1,109 surveys have been carried out as part of the post distribution monitoring, which represent 71 per cent of the target sample.

Livelihoods

UNHCR is collaborating with the United Nations Information Centre in Colombia to raise awareness and advertise refugee and migrant entrepreneurship initiatives supported by UN agencies in Colombia. UNHCR will promote some 18 initiatives in Bogotá and Medellin. UNHCR is also working with the Government and ILO on an orientation guide for civil servants on rights of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to access the Colombian labor market.

Following a meeting with the bank manager of Banco Caja Social in Cali, within the framework of the socio-economic inclusion project with Cuso Internacional and the Carvajal Foundation, information sharing sessions with bank managers across Cali's Caja Social branches were agreed on regulatory framework for opening bank accounts for the Venezuelan population.

Shelter, NFIs and WASH

At the Integrated Assistance Centre (CAI) in Maicao, a total of 18 families (90 people) entered phase IV after following the biosecurity protocol at the Social Attention Center (CAS).

Two emergency classrooms were completed in Cristo Vive and Impacto de Dios neighborhoods in Maicao, built by Aldeas Infantiles with the support of UNHCR.

UNHCR offices across the country are in the process of distributing an in-kind contribution of

5,000 baby carriers received from BabyBjörn, benefiting mothers with children up to 2 years old.

UNHCR delivered school kits to 150 children from the Santafé Las Playas Educational Institution in Pescadores (Antioquia) in order to improve access with dignity to education and recreation in the context of virtual classes due to COVID-19.

UNHCR coordinated, together with partners Corprodinco and COSPAS, the delivery of hygiene kits donated by World Vision to 400 families. An additional 540 children were supported with oral hygiene kits donated by Colgate.

The Multi-functional Space and Shelter for Victims (Espacio multifuncional y albergue para víctimas), a local government initiative supported by UNHCR to strengthen the response to victims of the armed conflict, was completed and handed over to the Municipality of Hacari (Catatumbo, Norte de Santander). In addition, 57 cases were referred to WFP in Arauca for food aid.

FUNDING NEEDS

Under its revised Coronavirus Emergency Appeal, UNHCR is appealing for USD 745 million globally, including USD 17.3 million in Colombia. UNHCR's Global Appeal is now funded at 62%, with USD 465.2 million in contributions received. Overall, UNHCR Colombia is currently funded at 61%.

UNHCR's response in Colombia is possible thanks to the contribution of private donors and:

Austria, Canada, Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Chanel Foundation, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, KOICA, Latter-day Saints Charities, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Major League Baseball Players Trust (MLBPT), Spain, Spain for UNHCR, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Human Security Trust Fund (UN HSTF), UN Peacebuilding Fund, UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Kingdom, United States of America, and USA for UNHCR.

\$96.6 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2020

