

# Venezuela Situation

As of January 2021

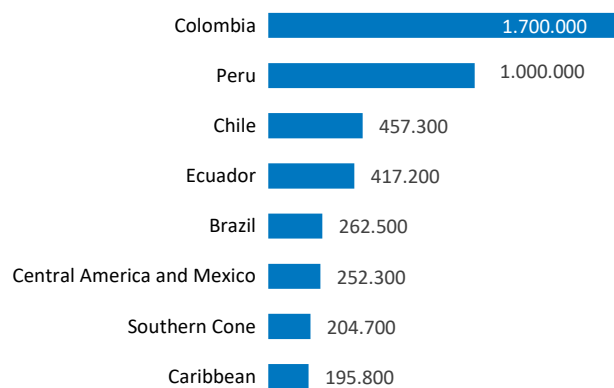
The outflow of Venezuelan refugees and migrants has become **one of the largest displacement crises in the world**. To date, **5.4 million** have left their homes, of which 4.6 million are in the Americas.

There are **143,532** Venezuelans **recognised as refugees** worldwide and some **793,862 pending asylum claims**. In addition, over **2.5 million regular stay permits** have been granted to Venezuelans since 2014.

With the support of receiving States, UNHCR continues to improve **reception conditions**, advocate for **legal stay and inclusion**, identify **protection risks** and ensure **access to basic services**.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Host Countries



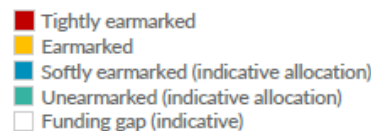
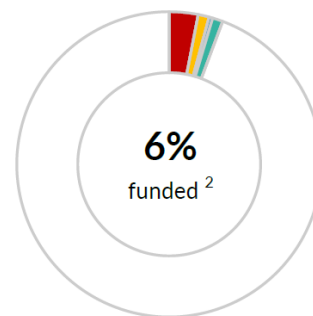
\* Source: Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform, March 2019

\*\* Caribbean sub-region includes data from: Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago; Southern Cone: Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay; Central America and Mexico: Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama.

## FUNDING (AS OF 12 JANUARY 2021)

**US\$ 299.3 M**

requested for the Venezuela situation



## Overview

COVID-19 has taken a heavy toll on Venezuelan refugees and migrants, many of whom were barely scraping by even before the pandemic hit. Many have lost all sources of income, exposing them to destitution, homelessness, exploitation, and abuse.

As a result, UNHCR's priorities in 2021 follow a two-track approach: basic needs support, mostly through cash transfers on the one hand; and promotion of inclusion of refugees and migrants into national system, starting with COVID 19 vaccination plan, as well as into the labour market.

The **Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V)** and the **Quito Process** remain key networks for harmonizing policies and practices, scaling up and coordinating the humanitarian response and improving access and enjoyment of rights.

In Venezuela, UNHCR operates within the interagency framework to assist the most vulnerable population groups inside the country. In 2020, UNHCR has concentrated its response in 68 communities, principally in border states.



Ecuador. A mother from Venezuela and her child wash their hands at a municipal canteen in the city of Ibarra, where most vulnerable families receive free meals. © UNHCR/Jaime Giménez Sánchez de la Blanca

## Working with partners

The Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V) was established at request of the UN Secretary-General to UNHCR and IOM on 12 April 2018, to lead and coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The Platform aims to address the protection, assistance and integration needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in affected Latin American and Caribbean States. In this context, 158 organizations have joined forces to establish the 2021 Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants (RMRP), which serves as a strategic and operational blueprint, a coordination template, and a funding mechanism.



2021 RMRP

## Main Activities

In close collaboration with host governments, partner organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations and UN Agencies, UNHCR undertakes the following activities:



### Safe and dignified reception conditions

UNHCR has stepped up its presence in border areas across the region to improve reception conditions and respond to the basic needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, provide legal aid and counselling on access to refugee status and alternative forms of stay; and give technical assistance to relevant authorities to develop an effective coordination and prepare local response plans.



### Support government registration, profiling and protection monitoring

Some 785,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela have been registered by UNHCR and its partners in proGres, at individual and family level. UNHCR continues to work in close partnership with Governments across the region in strengthening their registration system in shelters, screening centres and the asylum system, notably in Ecuador, Peru and Brazil. In 2020, UNHCR introduced new High Frequency Household Surveys with harmonized and strengthened data collection and analysis methodologies in all countries hosting Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Regularisation of refugees and migrants is a key priority and an essential step towards socio-economic inclusion.



### Providing emergency/temporary shelter

Key lines of intervention include access to temporary collective shelter, access to longer-term individual shelter solutions (such as rental schemes) and area-based approaches supporting refugees and host communities with access to communal infrastructures. To date, UNHCR has implemented over 1,000 shelter and settlements related projects in the region, both in border areas and in urban centres. Some of these shelters have been culturally adapted to accommodate Venezuelan indigenous population and people with specific needs and protection risks, including women safe house spaces. UNHCR has also stepped up support on public health amid the pandemic through the establishment or expansion of isolation and treatment facilities. About 67% of projects implemented during 2020 were related to the COVID-19 response.



### Direct humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs

Despite border closures due to the pandemic, population movements continue throughout the region with many new arrivals or persons in-transit in situations of heightened vulnerability. In response, UNHCR provides immediate support at border areas, along key routes and in principal receiving communities through non-food and hygiene assistance, access to potable water, as well as biosafety materials to protect against the pandemic. Multipurpose cash assistance has been prioritized to help mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID 19 and allow individuals and families cover essential needs, such as food, hygiene and accommodation



### Protection interventions in main hosting areas

Main protection risks faced by Venezuelans include Gender-Based Violence (GBV), human trafficking, discrimination and xenophobia, inability to access the asylum system, and lack of access to basic services, each of which significantly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The **Regional Safe Spaces Network** provides specialized services to GBV survivors and children at risk inside Venezuela and in host countries. Additionally, UNHCR and R4V partners implement the regional **Support Spaces Network** through which a minimum package of services is provided in hosting countries. As part of its community-based protection strategy, UNHCR works with outreach volunteers to improve the protection environment and ensure two-way communication and accountability. Information materials on the prevention and mitigation of GBV, COVID-19, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), among others, have been developed and disseminated by different communication channels. Besides, innovative digital solutions such as chatbots and a regional service mapping tool have been piloted and will be expanded in 2021.



### Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

Poverty rates among Venezuelans are dramatically increasing due to rising unemployment and lack of demand in sectors typically employing them as effects of the pandemic. UNHCR is strengthening ties with the **Private Sector** through initiatives like **Empresas con Refugiados** and **Talento sin Fronteras** focusing on employability and entrepreneurial skills of PoCs while sensitizing and informing private sector actors. Through the inter-agency project **Inclusive Cities** UNHCR, IOM and UN-Habitat are fostering local authorities' capacities of response and inclusive planning to reduce vulnerabilities of refugees and migrants from Venezuela. UNHCR has also been promoting **financial inclusion** of refugees' entrepreneurs by facilitating partnerships with financial institutions. Multisectoral consultations have been organized in Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay to identify gaps, challenges and capacities to respond to the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on refugees.



### Campaigns against xenophobia

In an effort to curb growing xenophobia against Venezuelans and promote solidarity with the host community, a regional digital campaign "**Acortemos Distancias**" was launched in August 2020 by the Regional R4V Platform reaching over 4 million people across the region. Inter-agency national initiatives accompany these efforts in Panama (**Somos lo Mismo**), Peru (**Tu Causa Es Mi Causa**), Colombia (**Somos Panas Colombia**), Ecuador and UNHCR Chile has started a series of workshops under **De Corazón** initiative.

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