The Americas

Venezuelans continue to make perilous journeys in search of safety. This family of 17 has been walking for five days. They are trying to warm up in the sun after leaving their shelter early in the morning for the city of Cali, Colombia, where they will stay with family members.

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“The Americas is experiencing one of the biggest forced displacement crises in the world, yet the humanitarian response remains considerably underfunded. Solidarity and support from the international community to countries receiving refugees is needed more than ever.”

Renata Dubini
Director, Regional Bureau for the Americas

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Provision of lifesaving assistance
In 2020, the displacement situation in the Americas will reach unprecedented levels for the region. An estimated 6.5 million Venezuelans will have fled their country by the end of 2020. In addition, forced displacement from the North of Central America (NCA), refugee outflows from Nicaragua and internal displacement in Colombia are expected to rise.

UNHCR will respond to the urgent and immediate needs of the region’s people of concern by delivering assistance to 1.9 million people. This assistance will include food, potable water and sanitation supplies, core relief items and emergency shelter. Multi-purpose cash transfers targeting the most vulnerable will cover more than 140,000 families and 600,000 people to meet their basic needs. More than 332,000 people will receive public information materials, such as leaflets and booklets, with information on asylum procedures.

For 2020-2021, the Americas region has prioritized community-based interventions, including establishing community structures, strengthening community-based complaint mechanisms and supporting community leaders and self-management. These interventions prevent displacement, mitigate protection risks and build the resilience of affected communities while strengthening the ability of national services to benefit displaced populations and host communities alike.

Ensuring access to protection
There are almost 2.5 million new displacements foreseen in the region in 2020, reaching an estimated 18.7 million people displaced in the Americas.

UNHCR’s strategy will centre on advocating asylum-seekers’ access to territory and efficient asylum procedures, as well as for alternative legal pathways that include protection safeguards under national and regional frameworks. UNHCR
will support asylum authorities with the processing of some 2.6 million asylum claims, and will work with partners to ensure registration and reception, as well as access to legal orientation and representation.

The Office will support efforts by States, civil society and others to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and reinforce the Regional Safe Spaces Network to provide specialized services for some 10,000 SGBV survivors and children at risk. These services include legal and psychosocial counselling, safe houses and livelihood support.

Given the complexity of ongoing mixed movements, a regional, timely and comparable source of data is crucial for a robust, efficient and evidence-based response. Through its protection-monitoring activities in 2020, UNHCR will reach an estimated 130,000 people of concern—will be strengthened and expanded through the roll-out of the cities’ self-assessment methodology.

### Pursuing durable solutions for people of concern

Advocating inclusion and social cohesion, resettlement and the promotion of complementary pathways for admission are at the forefront of UNHCR’s work in the Americas. In 2020, more than 6,500 people, including women and girls at risk, will be in need of resettlement across the region. Through the “Global strategy for livelihoods” in the Americas, UNHCR will advocate an enabling environment where refugees have legal and de facto access to livelihood opportunities. It will also promote their inclusion in national systems and services.

To ensure refugees can enjoy economic, socio-cultural, civil-political and legal rights in urban settings, the Cities of Solidarity initiative—a model for refugee integration in urban areas aimed at recognizing local governments’ efforts to provide protection and enhance the integration of UNHCR’s people of concern—will be strengthened and expanded through the roll-out of the cities’ self-assessment methodology.

This recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of institutional efforts to help refugees and other populations of concern integrate locally. This will help build inclusive public policies that protect displaced people, foster co-existence with host communities, ensure respect for human rights during displacement and support local integration, including long-term stay.

With an estimated 8.5 million IDPs in the region in 2020, and in line with UNHCR’s new IDP Policy, the Office will respond to the immediate protection needs of those internally displaced while strengthening the resilience of affected communities with solutions-oriented programming. It will prioritize access to national services in support of areas hosting uprooted populations. In a “whole-of-society” approach, building partnerships with non-traditional actors, including the private sector, will be central to mobilizing long-term and greater support for hosting communities—preventing xenophobia and promoting social and economic inclusion.

### Enhancing regional cooperation

In line with the roadmap established by the 2014 Brazil Plan of Action, and anticipated commitments made during the Global Refugee Forum, addressing forced displacement through a regional, multi-stakeholder and inclusive approach remains key in the Americas.

The Venezuela situation poses major challenges to regional stability. UNHCR will work with governments to consolidate and strengthen a regional and multilateral approach and response through the Quito Process—an initiative of several Latin American countries that seeks to harmonize domestic policies in receiving countries. This will harmonize States’ responses, the exchange of good practices on protection, social and economic integration; and a constructive dialogue with key stakeholders, such as cooperating States, UN agencies and international financial institutions. The Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan will continue to support the efforts of receiving countries, coordinating the humanitarian inter-agency response for Venezuelans in need of protection.

UNHCR will support the implementation of the MIRPS, the regional Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, to respond to forced displacement from the NCA and to foster regional cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination for greater responsibility-sharing on prevention, protection and solutions.

Lastly, UNHCR will engage with States in the region under the Towards Zero Statelessness mechanism to make the Americas the first continent to eradicate statelessness by 2024.
MAJOR SITUATIONS IN THE AMERICAS IN 2020

VENezUELA

Venezuelans continue to leave their country in significant numbers, primarily on foot over land borders in the largest outflow in the region’s recent history. By the end of 2020, it is estimated that more than 6.5 million refugees and migrants would have left the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, mainly to neighbouring countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Half of Venezuelans on the move face acute risks because of their age, gender, health or other needs, or because they are compelled to employ negative coping mechanisms. Those in irregular situations are exposed to heightened risks of exploitation and abuse.

With displacement from the country at a rate exceeding the capacities and resources of neighbouring states, UNHCR is supporting regional governments address the protection and essential needs of those most at risk and of their host communities. The Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants, co-led by UNHCR and IOM, is the primary inter-agency tool for the coordinated provision of protection, assistance and integration of Venezuelans in need and host communities.

Inside the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, even if a solution to the political crisis is reached in 2020, humanitarian needs will persist until basic services are restored. An inter-agency humanitarian response plan for needs within the country is being developed, building on the one launched in August 2019.

UNHCR uses community-based sectoral interventions to prevent displacement, mitigate risks and promote the resilience of affected communities while providing international protection to refugees and asylum-seekers and to prevent statelessness.

COLOMBIA

Forced displacement persists in parts of the country, with continued disputes among armed actors regarding territorial control and a high number of homicides targeting community leaders. These incidents have hampered the implementation of the peace agreement in many neglected and poor rural areas. Indigenous people and Afro-Colombians are the most affected, with more than 15,000 people internally displaced in 2019.

UNHCR’s presence is concentrated in border areas and along the Pacific Coast where most displacement and human rights violations occur. UNHCR will advance the implementation of a strong legal framework and durable solutions for an estimated 8.1 million IDPs through the Victims and Land Restitution Law. The number of Colombian asylum-seekers is slightly increasing in Ecuador and is likely to continue in 2020.

NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA

There were already more than 387,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from NCA countries worldwide by mid-2019. Forced to flee because of violence, persecution and insecurity, compounded by deteriorating socioeconomic conditions. In the first half of 2019 alone, nearly 54,000 new asylum applications from NCA nationals were lodged—86% more than the same period in 2018. In addition, there are an estimated 318,600 IDPs in El Salvador and Honduras.

Under the MRPS, UNHCR will expand its presence and operations in 2020 to strengthen protection capacities in countries of origin, assist with immediate humanitarian needs, enhance asylum systems in receiving countries, and promote integration and durable solutions across the region.

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua has been in social and political crisis since April 2018. Human rights violations had forced nearly 50,000 Nicaraguans to flee by mid-2019. The majority have fled to neighbouring Costa Rica, where there are more than 46,000 registered asylum-seekers and more than 30,000 waiting to formalize their claims.

UNHCR’s 2020 response will strengthen reception capacities in Costa Rica, as well as in El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and Panama. In Costa Rica in particular, UNHCR will enhance community-based protection, support refugee status determination procedures and other alternative protection pathways, and strengthen its cash-based interventions to support vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers.

The Americas will continue experiencing unprecedented numbers of displacement, with an estimated 18.7 million people of concern in 2020. The numbers will put additional pressure on host communities who have been generously welcoming people in need of international protection. Only a comprehensive, predictable and coordinated response will allow the region to cope with the needs of its growing displaced population.

18.7 million
2020 PLANNING FIGURES FOR PEOPLE OF CONCERN IN THE AMERICAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugees</td>
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<td>Asylum-seekers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Returned refugees</td>
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<td>IDPs</td>
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<td>Stateless persons</td>
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<td>Others of concern</td>
<td>6.2 million</td>
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Regional summaries

- 80% UNHCR GLOBAL APPEAL 2020-2021
- UNHCR GLOBAL APPEAL 2020-2021 81

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The Americas 2020 Budget

$468 Million

United States of America | 19%
Regional Bureau for the Americas 1
Regional activities for the Americas 1

Canada 2
Regional Bureau for the Americas 1
Regional activities for the Americas 1

United States of America Multi-Country Office | 9%

Costa Rica | 6%
Regional Bureau for the Americas 1
Regional activities for the Americas 1

Regional activities: Peru | 8%
Regional activities: Bolivia (Republic of) | 11%
Regional activities: Panama Multi-Country Office | 9%
Regional activities: Mexico | 13%
Regional activities: Honduras | 2%

EUROPE 1%

AFRICA 3%

ASIA 9%

LATIN AMERICA 11%
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
Regional Refugee Coordinating Office

THE AMERICAS
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Regional activities for the Americas 1

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