

# Venezuela Situation

December 2021

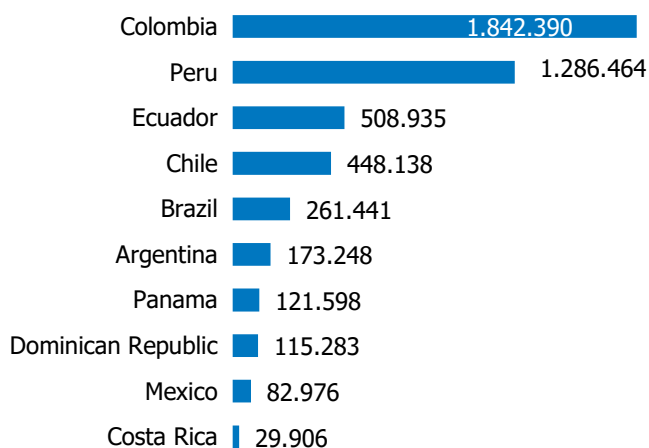
The outflow of Venezuelan refugees and migrants remains **one of the largest displacement crises in the world**. To date, **6 million** have left their homes, of which 4.9 million are in the Americas.

There are **186,832** Venezuelans recognised as refugees worldwide and **952,246 pending asylum claims**. Over **2.6 million regular stay permits** have been granted to Venezuelans since 2014.

In support to receiving States, UNHCR improves **reception conditions**, advocates for **legal stay and inclusion**, mitigate **protection** risks and boost **access to basic services**.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Host Countries

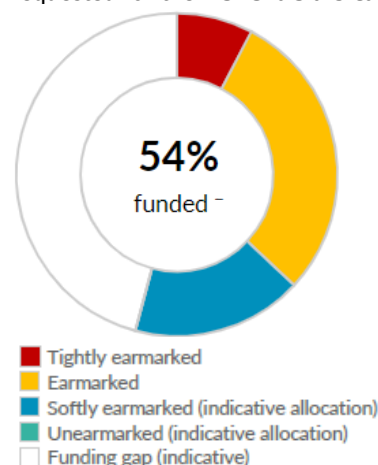


\* Source: Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform, December 2021

## FUNDING (AS OF 29 DECEMBER 2021)

### US\$ 315.2 M

requested for the **Venezuela situation**



## Operational context

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.



**Ecuador.** Deisy was an early childhood education teacher in Venezuela but had to leave her country with her family due to the economic and insecurity crisis. In Ecuador, the support provided by UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP allowed her to purchase a sewing machine that now provides her with a livelihood.  
 © UNHCR/Jaime Gimenez

## 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

## Priorities in 2021

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 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**

UNHCR works 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. UNHCR applies harmonized and strengthened data collection tools and analysis methodologies in all countries hosting Venezuelan refugees and migrants to monitor protection. 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 borders 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 safe house spaces for women. UNHCR also stepped up support on public health amid the pandemic through the establishment or expansion of isolation and treatment facilities.



### Direct humanitarian assistance to meet **basic needs**

Despite movement restrictions 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. Unrestricted 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.



### Campaigns **against xenophobia**

In an effort to curb growing xenophobia against Venezuelans and promote solidarity with the host community, the 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 and Juntos más Grandes), Ecuador (Abrazos que Unen), Dominican Republic (Gracias Dominicana). UNHCR Chile has started a series of workshops under De Corazón initiative.



### 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. Innovative digital solutions such as chatbots and a regional service mapping tool was 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 com 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 is 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.

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

Thanks to all our **donors in 2021 (as of 29 December)**:

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