AMERICAS
OPERATIONAL UPDATE

APRIL TO JUNE 2024

***Brazil.** UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Raouf Mazou (second from right), attends a Cartagena+40 Process meeting in Brasilia. © UNHCR/Leonardo Prado*

*UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Raouf Mazou, **praised Brazil's exceptional solidarity with refugees and its inclusive response**, which focus on their protection and on finding solutions for them. In São Paulo and Manaus, Mazou visited on 20 May innovative projects empowering refugees from different nationalities through employment, helping them integrate into local communities. He also met with national authorities in the capital, Brasilia, and opened the second Cartagena+40 Process consultation on inclusion and integration.*

Raouf Mazou
UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations

The press release is available here

HIGHLIGHTS

UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, concluded on 10 April her first mission to Central America and Mexico, **highlighting that a hemispheric approach based on solidarity and solutions is the only way to protect** and stabilize the unprecedented number of forcibly displaced people in the region. The **new hemispheric approach** stresses the need to address these challenges comprehensively in countries of origin, transit, destination, and return. In support, Menikdiwela met with various levels of government and other stakeholders to enhance access to international protection and related arrangements – including strengthening asylum systems and promoting safe legal admission pathways.

UNHCR launched on 24 April the **UNHCR Climate Resilience Fund**, seeking to boost the protection of refugees and displaced communities who are most threatened by climate change. For the first time, the Fund will exclusively target financing efforts to protect the most threatened displaced communities, equipping them to prepare for, withstand and recover from climate-related shocks. **Ecuador** and **Honduras** are among 22 identified countries by UNHCR worldwide where data demonstrates that the impact of the climate crisis will only get worse by 2030. However, while these countries will have priority for funding from the Climate Resilience Fund, all UNHCR operations are eligible for funding.

UNHCR **renewed** its **call for a coordinated hemispheric approach** to address the magnitude and complexity of the mixed movement of refugees and migrants in the Americas, as underscored during the **Los Angeles Declaration** on Migration and Protection ministerial meeting hosted by the Government of Guatemala on 7 May. Addressing the participants, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, highlighted the personal stories and plight of hundreds of thousands of people embarking on long journeys across the continent, including some of those he

recently met during his visit to the Darien border area. He stressed the considerable progress achieved by various initiatives to address the urgent needs of refugees and migrants in the region to implement the Declaration's objectives, **urging increased efforts and coordination among all stakeholders**. The Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection is a crucial framework for regional cooperation, aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees.

On 29 May, the Refugee Commission of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay **approved a pilot plan that will allow prima facie refugee status recognition** to Venezuelan asylum-seekers, who meet certain basic requirements to access this legal status, without the need to conduct an interview. This measure could reach some **3,500 Venezuelans**, out of a total of 24,000 individuals of different nationalities who until the end of last year had sought asylum in Uruguay. At the same time, they will facilitate a regularization process for those who have links with the country either through family, studies or employment. Both measures announced by the Uruguayan government are in line with its pledges made during the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, and it is in line with the Los Angeles Declaration on stabilization and provision of solutions to human mobility in the Americas. **UNHCR is seeking additional resources to provide technical and material assistance** for the implementation of both programmes in partnership with the Uruguayan government.

UNHCR released in June its **two flagship reports**, the Global Trends and Global Report. Together, these reports present a global picture of crises continuing to erupt and unfold. The rise in overall forced displacement – to 120 million by May 2024 – was the 12th consecutive annual increase and reflects both new and mutating conflicts, and a failure to resolve long-standing crises. UNHCR warned against apathy and inaction amid spike in forced displacement. **In the Americas**, as global levels of forced displacement continued to rise, UNHCR highlighted progress on solutions. In the region, **23 million people were assisted or protected** by UNHCR in 2023 compared to **20 million people in 2022 and 16 million in 2021**.

The consultative phase of the Cartagena +40 Process was completed on 20 June after four consultations: Protection (Mexico, 4 and 5 April); Solutions (Brasilia, 16 and 17 May); Caribbean countries (Bogotá, 18 June); and Displacement in disasters (Bogota, 19 and 20 June). **More than 450 participants from 24 Latin American and Caribbean governments**, refugee-led and civil society organizations, academia, local governments and municipalities, UN agencies and international organizations, private sector, multilateral development banks, and observer States participated throughout this process. Conclusions and recommendations were drafted after each consultation, compiling more than **300 interventions**. These inputs have been included in the **drafts of both the Chile Declaration and its Plan of Action 2024-2034**. Additionally, Chile submitted a proposal for the establishment of a follow-up mechanism to the Cartagena+40 Process.

UNHCR'S RESPONSE IN THE AMERICAS

As of end June 2024, gang violence in **Haiti** had forced more than 578,074 people to leave their homes, according to IOM. This represented a 60% increase in internal displacement from March 2024. The number of internally displaced doubled between 2022 and 2023, and in the first five months of 2024 alone, more than 260,000 additional people were forced to flee because of insecurity. Gangs were estimated to control more than 80% of the capital and large parts of the neighboring Ouest and Artibonite departments.

In coordination with the Ministry of Justice, the Archives Nationales (ANH) and the National Office of Identification (ONI), UNHCR is working with Initiative Citoyenne pour les Droits de l'Homme (ICDH) to strengthen birth and civil registration and reduce the risk of statelessness in Haiti. Since May 2024, ICDH began the mobile campaign to help Haitians access birth certificates in Leogane, and 2,448 persons have been assisted in obtaining birth certificates to date. UNHCR will replicate the project in the Region of the Grand Sud, which is now hosting more than 140,000 IDPs. Furthermore, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), is conducting a mapping of current feedback channels used by humanitarian organizations in Haiti (funded by CERF) and 3,946 persons were reached in an information and communication needs assessment, with specific questions included in the Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA). UNHCR, in partnership with the local NGO, ODELPA, is also improving awareness and education related to services available for survivors of GBV and economic empowerment of young girls and women from disadvantaged neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince.

Between May and June 2024, UNHCR responded to the severe flooding crisis in Rio Grande do Sul, **Brazil,** which affected over 2.3 million people, left 173 dead, and displaced more than 422,000 individuals. With over 16,000 people in need of accommodation support in shelters, UNHCR intensified its efforts to support the most vulnerable populations, including 43,000 refugees and others in need of international protection. Key to UNHCR's response initial support was the distribution of 188 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs), providing temporary shelter for those who had lost their homes. In addition, UNHCR delivered essential non-food items, such as 5,040 blankets, 1,080 solar lamps, 520 kitchen sets, mosquito

nets, and hygiene kits, addressing immediate needs. These relief efforts were supported by a second shipment of RHUs and other materials delivered to affected areas, particularly in Canoas and Porto Alegre.

To ensure proper shelter management, UNHCR provided technical assistance in site planning and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) training to local shelter managers. By June, UNHCR had trained 36 shelter managers on humanitarian principles and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), enhancing the capacity to manage shelters effectively. In addition to shelter and material aid, UNHCR participated in mobile "one-stop shops," providing legal assistance, documentation services, and social protection access to displaced individuals. These initiatives helped over 1,220 individuals with documentation and protection counseling. Throughout this period, UNHCR worked closely with local authorities, including the Vice Governor's Office and the Ministry of Social Development, as well as other UN agencies and local partners, including refugee-led organizations, to ensure refugees were included in the broader response and recovery efforts, emphasizing the importance of rebuilding with a focus on the needs of displaced and vulnerable populations.

RESPONSE IN PROGRESS: AS OF JUNE 2024

- **241,169** people who **received non-food items**
- **121,048** people who received **shelter and housing assistance**
- **19,822** children and caregivers who received **child protection services**
- **49,291** people receiving **cash assistance**
- **17,783** people who benefitted from **specialized gender-based violence programmes**
- **80,920** people supported to **obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation**
- **209,671** people reached through **information, awareness, and/or sensitization sessions**
- **28,203** people participating in **peaceful coexistence projects**
- **36,185** people who benefitted from **livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions**
- **239,828** people accessing **community centres, support spaces, or other structures**
- **50,498** consultations in UNHCR supported **mental health and psychosocial support services**
- **98,623** people who **received legal assistance**

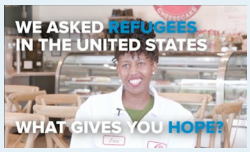
ONGOING INITIATIVES...

COLOMBIA

In the city of Turbo, in northern Colombia, the neighborhoods of Pescador 1 and 2 have welcomed people displaced from surrounding areas that have experienced conflict. Since 2018, UNHCR has been supporting the local integration process in these neighborhoods, where internally displaced people and people from other countries live together amid a mangrove reserve.

MCO PANAMA

On 1 May, UNHCR celebrated the first anniversary of the "Trust the Toucan" project, the initiative dedicated to challenging misinformation and false content while providing reliable information about the Darien jungle. With more than 16 million views over the last year, the "Trust the Toucan" profiles on Facebook and TikTok reach refugees and migrants in the region.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Hope Away from Home: Refugees find new beginnings across the U.S.

REGIONAL

With more than 300 participants from 16 countries, the third edition of the "Journalism Without Labels" course began. Organized by UN Chile, through the leadership of UNHCR, and the Central University of Chile, the course brought together communications professionals from countries in the Americas and Europe. Participants reflected on hate speech and xenophobia in the media and how it affects social cohesion.

VENEZUELA

Together with authorities, UN agencies and partner organizations, UNHCR works to provide protection services, access to rights and opportunities for returnees in Venezuela. As part of its protection strategy with a community-based approach, UNHCR strengthens spaces in different cities throughout the country so that refugees and returnees, as well as other vulnerable people, have access to identity, health, education and recreation services.

OUR WORK IN ACTION

MEXICO: NATURALIZATION HELPS REFUGEES FEEL AT HOME IN MEXICO

For Andrea and Johan, becoming Mexican citizens has meant gaining a sense of belonging to the country that has given them protection and stability. In recent years, Mexico has become a destination country for people in need of international protection. It received a record 140,000 asylum claims in 2023, making it among the top five countries with the highest number of asylum applications worldwide. UNHCR works closely with Mexican authorities to enable refugees to access citizenship. In 2022 and 2023, UNHCR and its partners supported nearly 800 refugees in their naturalization process, including Andrea and Johan. Read more here.

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The General Secretariat of the **Central American Integration System (SICA) and UNHCR** commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Collaboration Agreement signed on 7 April 2014. This historic agreement laid the foundations for strengthening cooperation and coordination in technical and political areas related to Central American integration and the strengthening of governmental and civil society institutions for the care and protection of refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced people and other persons in need of international protection.

On 25 and 26 April, 16 local governments and representatives of international organizations gathered under the **"Cities of Solidarity"** initiative presented their recommendations to be incorporated into Chile's Action Plan within the framework of Cartagena+40. The meeting was jointly organized by UNHCR, with the support of the Montevideo Intendancy, host of this inaugural gathering, and with the sponsorship of the Government of Chile. The meeting concluded with the **adoption of the** Montevideo Declaration on Contributions of Cities of Solidarity to Chile's Action Plan (2024-2034). This Declaration is a **firm commitment** from local authorities and solidarity cities in Latin America and the Caribbean **to address the humanitarian and social challenges** posed by the reception and integration of refugees and migrants in the region's transit and destination cities and communities.

DON'T MISS...

COLOMBIA

Nansen Award promotes women's empowerment on Colombia's Pacific Coast. The initiative "Indigenous and Afro-Colombian Women Building Peace" brings together 30 women leaders from the region, under the leadership of Elizabeth Moreno Barco, winner of UNHCR's Nansen Award for the Americas. The project has an ethnic and territorial focus and will involve the participation of 30 Afro-Colombian and Indigenous women who are victims of armed conflict and forced displacement. Each of these leaders will replicate activities in their community, benefiting women to strengthen territorial governance, participation in decision-making, and the development of public policies.

ECUADOR

UNHCR commended the efforts of the Government of Ecuador for providing durable solutions to refugees. For the first time in history, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, seven refugees were able to naturalize in the country, obtaining the Ecuadorian nationality. Ecuador is home to more than half a million people in human mobility, including a historic number of over 77,000 recognized refugees. Access to naturalization processes allows refugees to have the same rights as any Ecuadorian citizen and to fully integrate into society.

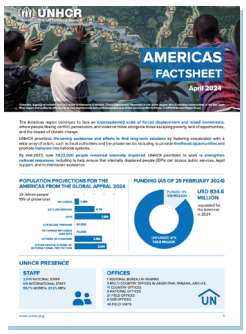
REGIONAL

People displaced in the context of the impacts of climate change and disasters require protection responses. Natural disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change can generate or exacerbate pre-existing social tensions, forcing affected people to internally displace and cross international borders in search of protection. This was noted by UNHCR during the 167th Session of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR Court) held on 29 May in Brazil.

R4V

The R4V Regional Platform issued on 29 April the End-Year Report on the implementation of the Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants (RMRP) in 2023. This report shows how 132 reporting organizations implemented 83,233 activities during 2023 to assist some 2.2 million refugees, migrants and affected host communities in Latin America and the Caribbean through the world's largest coordinated response to humanitarian, protection, and socio-economic integration needs.

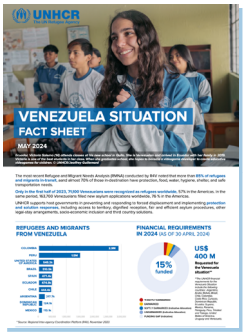
SPOTLIGHT PUBLICATIONS IN THE AMERICAS



REGIONAL:
Americas Factsheet
1 April 2024

REGIONAL:
Localization in UNHCR Americas- June 2024

REGIONAL:
R4V End Year Report- RMRP



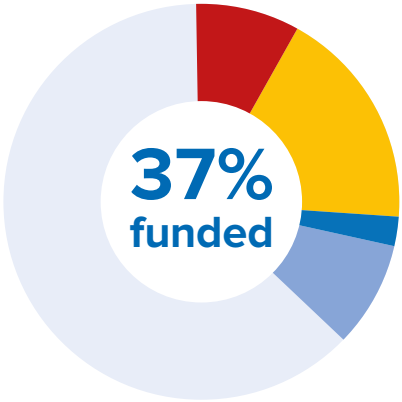
REGIONAL:
Venezuela Situation Factsheet- May 2024

Do you want more info? Check https://reporting.unhcr.org/americas

FUNDING THE RESPONSE IN 2024

(AS OF 31 AUGUST 2024)

UNHCR's humanitarian response in the Americas is made possible thanks to the generous support of major donors who have contributed unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations and to donors who have contributed directly to UNHCR operations in the Americas. UNHCR appealed for $834.6 million in funding in 2024 to respond to the most pressing needs in the Americas. As of 31 August, donors had pledged $304.9 million.



$834.6 milion

UNHCR's financial requirements 2024

- THIGHTLY EARMARKED
- EARMARKED
- SOFTLY EARMARKED (Indicative Allocation)
- UNEARMARKED (Indicative Allocation)
- FUNDING GAP (Indicative)

Thanks to all our donors in 2024 (as of 31 August 2024)

Australia | Belgium | Canada | China | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Luxembourg | Norway | Netherlands (Kingdom of) | Republic of Koreal Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America | CERF | Leaving No One Behind – The Internal Displacement Solutions Fund | United Nations Children's Fund | UN Programme On HIV/AIDS | World Food Programme

And to our private donors:

Argentina for UNHCR | Australia for UNHCR | España con ACNUR | Japan for UNHCR | Private donors in Brazil | Private donors in Canada | Private donors in Colombia | Private donors in Ecuador | Private donors in France | Private donors in Italy | Private donors in Mexico | Private donors in the Netherlands | Private donors in the Republic of Korea | Private donors in Spain | Private donors in Switzerland | Private donors in the United States of America | Sweden for UNHCR | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | USA for UNHCR

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