AMERICAS
OPERATIONAL UPDATE

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2024

Haiti. Raouf Mazou (first to the right) at the office of UNHCR partner ICDH in Port-au-Prince. ©David Lorens Mentor

The surge in gang violence in Haiti since February forced more than 700,000 people to flee their homes as of end September and continued to generate heightened protection risks for internally displaced persons (IDP). In this context, UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Raouf Mazou, concluded on 3 October a three-day visit to Haiti, where he witnessed the devastating impact of the country's dire security situation in IDP sites in Port-au-Prince. He also visited the Ouanaminthe border crossing. Mazou, accompanied by UNHCR´s Director of Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS), Shoko Shimozawa, and UNHCR Regional Director for the Americas, José Samaniego, met with key government officials, including former Prime Minister Garry Conille, Foreign Affairs Minister Dupuy and Humanitarian Affairs Minister Gaspard, as well as UN agency heads and UNHCR local partners.

The press release is available here

HIGHLIGHTS

UNHCR and IOM on 2 September **praised Ecuador's new presidential decree introducing an extraordinary regularization process for Venezuelans and their families** who currently lack regular status in the country. **This initiative is expected to benefit some 100,000 people**, according to Government estimates. Ecuador hosts the fifth largest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the Americas. The regularization will assist thousands who registered for a previous process in 2022 but were unable to complete the necessary steps to finally obtain their visas. They could not obtain regular status because of practical barriers to meeting the requirements, including providing necessary documentation such as passports or valid national IDs, and covering the costs of additional paperwork. The process will allow Venezuelans who are in Ecuador irregularly to access a type of visa called Temporary Residence of Exception, which initially lasts two years and can be renewed for another two years. Beneficiaries will join the approximately 97,000 people already regularized.

The Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) on 5 September published the **Refugee and Migrant Needs Analysis (RMNA)** for 2024. This document provides a comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of the situation and needs of refugees and migrants in 17 Latin American and Caribbean countries covered by the R4V response. The findings of the RMNA 2024 highlight that **4.2 million Venezuelans living in the region still face difficulties in accessing essential services and formal employment**, despite the laudable achievements of host countries in providing humanitarian assistance, protection, and integration opportunities. The RMNA draws on a regionally harmonized framework for joint needs assessments, developed and implemented in an inter-agency manner among regional and national partners. More than 14,000 household surveys were conducted in 15 of the 17 R4V countries, corresponding to more than 41,500 migrants' and refugees' views. The RMNA findings will inform the Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants (RMRP) for 2025-2026, which will be presented in December 2024.

According to UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF´s **Mixed Movements Monitoring Q2 2024 report** released on 27 September, **multiple interconnected factors continue to push individuals into situations of displacement and migration**. Two out of five respondents cited having left their countries both because of violence and difficulties in accessing fundamental rights and basic needs. Seventy-two per cent of respondents experienced or witnessed protection incidents along the route. Respondents traveling with children reported protection incidents or threats slightly more frequently than the ones without children in their travel groups (75 per cent).

UNHCR´s Special Advisor on Climate Action, Andrew Harper, visited Brazil on 22-24 June where he attended a conference about climate change and displacement and visited the Rio Grande do Sul state, severely affected by unprecedent heavy rains in May and home of thousands of refugees and others in need of international protection. Harper claimed that **cities must adapt themselves against the pervasive, negative effects of climate change**. Otherwise, extreme events will increase internal displacement and affect disproportionally refugees and others already displaced by conflicts, persecution, and human rights violation. On the places visited in Rio Grande do Sul, Harper said that devastation caused by the heavy rains is a **warning sign of more disasters to come throughout the Americas because of climate change.**

UNHCR'S RESPONSE IN THE AMERICAS

Between May and September 2024, UNHCR responded to severe flooding in **Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil**, which affected over 2.3 million people, caused 173 deaths, and displaced more than 422,000 individuals. In July, UNHCR launched a call for expressions of interest for Small Grants to Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs). By September, over 25 RLOs were selected to support UNHCR in delivering basic protection services, including identifying and referring protection cases, producing, and translating communication materials, and providing multicultural mediation.

As of the end of September, UNHCR provided financial assistance to 1,944 families (5,605 individuals), with 51% being Venezuelans, 27% Haitians, and 73% female-headed households. Additionally, UNHCR distributed 17 tons of relief items and 308 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) to the Government of Rio Grande do Sul, accommodating more than 1,800 people (up to six people per unit) displaced by the floods.

UNHCR expanded its cash assistance response so that forcibly displaced people in Brazil can meet their needs with dignity, are protected, and can become more resilient, while boosting the local economy. In Rio Grande do Sul, the provision of cash assistance was carried out in close coordination with UNHCR partners and local authorities to ensure it complements public efforts.

On 5 September, a group of 135 **Nicaraguan** political prisoners were released and received were voluntarily relocated to in **Guatemala** under the framework of a U.S. led diplomatic negotiation with concerned countries. The group was received by Guatemalan and U.S. authorities upon their arrival in Guatemala.

UNHCR, IOM and partners were mobilized to support reception arrangements. UNHCR registered and interviewed all individuals in the group to identify and process protection alternatives, including access to asylum in Guatemala, resettlement or other legal pathways to the United States of America, or possible admission to third countries through family reunification or any other available legal avenues. UNHCR and partner Refugio de la Niñez are also supporting reception and humanitarian assistance efforts, including the provision of accommodation in hotels, food, and access to medical care and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services.

RESPONSE IN PROGRESS: AS OF SEPTEMBER 2024

- **272,624** people who **received non-food items**
- **169,403** people who received **shelter and housing assistance**
- **30,026** children and caregivers who received **child protection services**
- **89,940** people receiving **cash assistance**
- **24,859** people who benefitted from **specialized gender-based violence programmes**
- **110,737** people supported to **obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation**
- **289,935** people reached through **information, awareness, and/or sensitization sessions**
- **69,445** people participating in **peaceful coexistence projects**
- **61,687** people who benefitted from **livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions**
- **302,204** people accessing **community centres, support spaces, or other structures**
- **73,142** consultations in UNHCR supported **mental health and psychosocial support services**
- **200,963** people who **received legal assistance**

ONGOING INITIATIVES...

ARGENTINA: MAIPÚ JOINS THE "SOLIDARITY CITIES" INITIATIVE

Maipú Municipality joined the Cities of Solidarity Initiative in partnership with UNHCR. This commitment aims to support refugees and migrants in accessing local government services. Through this agreement, Maipú will ease requirements for individuals with refugee or migrant legal status. The initiative fosters collaboration among municipalities to promote inclusion and protection for refugees and migrants. **Read more here.**

BELIZE: ADVANCES IN INTEGRATION OF ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Asylum-seekers in Belize have benefitted from the Belize Amnesty Program, which allowed them to access permanent residency cards in an expedited manner setting a path for naturalization. The residency cards were distributed on 2 September during an Amnesty Ceremony at the University of Belize Conference Centre in Belmopan City. **Read more here.**

COLOMBIA: A DISPLACED LEADER PROMOTES INTEGRATION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Thanks to his work with the Caminos Foundation, children, adolescents, young people, and elderly women have found hope and resilience through community work and climate action. Sixteen years ago, Wilmar Quintero's dream began to take shape with the Caminos Foundation, an initiative supported by UNHCR that aims to provide educational opportunities and safe spaces for the community of Bello Oriente through community work. **Read more here.**

ECUADOR: LOCAL GOVERNMENTS COMMIT TO FINDING JOINT SOLUTIONS TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Local governments in Ecuador's provinces of Imbabura, Pichincha, Guayas, and others committed to addressing the needs of forcibly displaced persons during the Local Governments Encounter for Inclusive Economic Development. Aligned with Ecuador's commitments to refugees and the Los Angeles Declaration, municipalities aim to create durable solutions to forced displacement. UNHCR's collaborative efforts with local governments play a crucial role in supporting refugees and migrants to rebuild their lives within urban settings. **Read more here.**

OUR WORK IN ACTION

BRAZIL: SYRIAN REFUGEE SEIZES EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE IN HIS NEW LIFE

Abdul is among the over 4,000 Syrian refugees embraced by Brazil since becoming the first country in the Americas to offer special humanitarian visas to those fleeing Syria in 2013. A simplified asylum process ensures swift recognition and integration of refugees, currently totaling around 140,000 from countries like Venezuela, Syria, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During a recent visit to Brazil, Raouf Mazou, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, praised the country's "commitment to inclusive policies for refugees." Brazil's example illustrates that providing documentation, asylum, and comprehensive support are essential for creating durable solutions. **Read more here.**

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

On 4 July, UNHCR launched in Costa Rica the **Living Inclusion rebranding and website**, along with the sixth edition of the annual Living Inclusion Seal. The event featured participation from both new and historical allies. Participants engaged in discussions about education challenges and strategic alliances, emphasizing a whole-society approach for sustainable and innovative solutions.

Representatives from the 13 member states of the Quito Process and various sectors of society attended the first in-person workshop on "Safe Routes & Protection in Mixed Movements in the Region" in San José, Costa Rica, from 2 to 4 July. The event addressed multiple strategies to improve the safety and protection of refugees and migrants, emphasizing the importance of a regional approach and

the adequate provision of protection services according to specific needs. Over 100 participants, both in person and virtually, including country delegations, UN agencies, civil society representatives, universities, the World Bank, and the Executive Secretariat of the Regional Conference on Migration (CRM), were present.

On 10-11 September, the Quito Process held a regional meeting in Bogota on "Regular Pathways for Human Mobility: Family Reunification & Residence Permits with a focus on Child Protection." Around 90 participants attended, among them 13 States, civil society, private sector, and academia representations. Also, the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), the Caribbean Council of Civil Registry, Identity and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV) and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR) actively participated. During this second in person meeting the study **"Family Reunification Procedures: Good Practices and Challenges within the framework of the Quito Process"** was launched and a discussion about the elaboration of a regional operational guideline to facilitate family **reunification procedures** within Quito Process State members took place.

Under the leadership of the Government of Belize, as the MIRPS 2024 Pro-tempore Presidency, MIRPS states attended a Results-based Management (RBM) and Communications Workshop on 4-5 September in Panama City. During the workshop, representatives from the seven MIRPS States finalized the Theories of Change and Results Frameworks on strengthening asylum systems and labour integration. Participants also reviewed the existing indicators included in their MIRPS national action plans and started discussions to identify common regional indicators to better monitor progress and results.

With the support of the United States of America on behalf of the MIRPS Support Platform, the Government of Guatemala hosted the "Second Cities of Solidarity National Conference and the Regional Meeting of the MIRPS Regional Technical Team on Local Governance" in Guatemala City on 25-26 September. The exchange benefited from field visits organized by the Municipality of Guatemala to see initiatives that provide protection and integration support to displaced persons, including an Attention Center for Migrants and Refugees (CAPMIR) and the Escuela Taller Municipal. Uruguay, as a MIRPS Support Platform Member, shared good practices led by the Municipality of Montevideo's Secretariat of Ethnic Racial Equity and Migrant Populations. The National Conference, with the participation of the Vice President of Guatemala, commemorated the milestone of 19 municipalities being part of the Cities of Solidarity initiative, and the signing of a Declaration that reiterated the commitment of local authorities in Guatemala to promote the legal, socio-economic, and cultural integration of refugees.

DON'T MISS...

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: COMMUNITY LEADER PREVENTS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Zulema Uvrí Minaya has dedicated herself to serving her community in Juan Felipe, Elías Piña province. Despite challenges including limited services and poverty, Zulema, a community promoter, provides guidance on health and family issues. She highlights the struggles faced within her rural community, emphasizing the need for proper documentation, access to water, and youth employment. With UNHCR's support, Zulema underwent training on gender-based violence prevention, becoming an advocate and educator. She now supports gender-based violence survivors, emphasizing prevention and unity within communities. **Read more here.**

PANAMA: FROM THE LIMBO OF STATELESSNESS TO BELONGING IN PANAMA

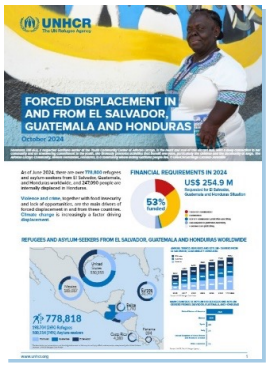
After moving to Panama from Colombia at the age of 20, Hermelinda spent much of the next 50 years living in fear because she lacked a legal identity. In 2023, UNHCR recognized her as a person at risk of statelessness and referred her case to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In January 2024, Panama officially recognized her as a stateless person. She received an ID, and now, for the first time in 72 years, she holds undeniable proof of her existence. **Read more here.**

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: UNHCR DONATES BOOKS, UNIFORMS TO REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITY CHILDREN

On 30 August, UNHCR distributed education kits to 17 refugee children who will study at national schools in Trinidad and Tobago for the first time. The distribution, including kits for seven local children, is a UNHCR-led initiative with support from members of the Education Working Group, including UNICEF and the Catholic Education Board of Management. Students entering the September 2024 school term received books, book bags, writing materials, uniforms, shoes, and other essential tools to support their academic journeys. **Read more here.**

SPOTLIGHT PUBLICATIONS IN THE AMERICAS

REGIONAL:
Americas Factsheet- October 2024



REGIONAL:
Forced Displacement in and from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras- October 2024

REGIONAL:
R4V Mixed Movements Report- Q2

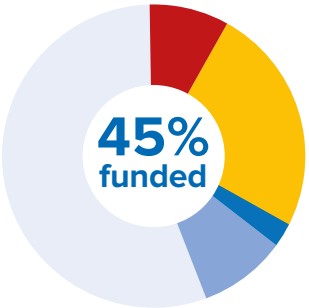
REGIONAL:
Regional: Venezuela Situation Factsheet- October 2024

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

FUNDING THE RESPONSE IN 2024

(as of 30 November 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 30 November, donors had pledged $ 373 million.



$834.6 milion

UNHCR's financial requirements 2024

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

THANKS TO **ALL OUR DONORS IN 2024** (As of 30 November 2024)

Argentina | Australia | Belgium | Brazil | Canada | China | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Guyana | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Luxembourg | Mexico | Norway | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America | CERF | International Organization for Migration | Leaving No One Behind – The Internal Displacement Solutions Fund | United Nations Children's Fund | UN Joint Programmes | UN-Habitat | Joint 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 Chile | 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 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Private donors in the United States of America | Sweden for UNHCR | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | USA for UNHCR

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