

Venezuela Situation

As of June 2018

Between 2014 and 2018, some **282,180 asylum claims** have been lodged by Venezuelans, over 113,000 in 2017 alone. While refugee procedures are overwhelmed, **5,661** have been recognized as refugees thus far.

The majority of Venezuelans who have left their country have no regular status, and are therefore **more vulnerable** to any form of **exploitation, abuse, violence, trafficking** and **discrimination**.

Thousands continue leave Venezuela daily and **legally enter in neighbouring countries**. **UNHCR** is stepping up its response accordingly.



KEY FIGURES

Over 1.5 million

Venezuelans have left their country since 2014

2,000% increase

in the number of Venezuelan nationals seeking asylum worldwide since 2014

567,561

beneficiaries of alternative protection arrangements since 2014

6,192

individuals reached through protection monitoring

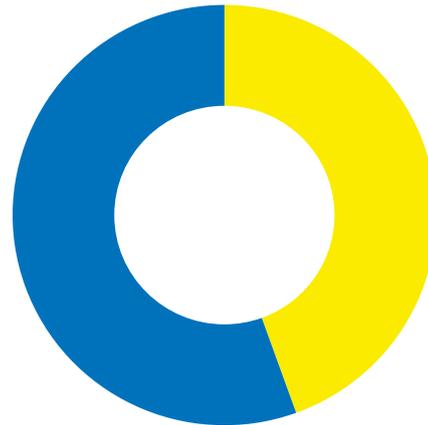
FUNDING (AS OF 13 JUNE 2018)

USD 46 M

requested for the Venezuela situation

Funded 44.5%

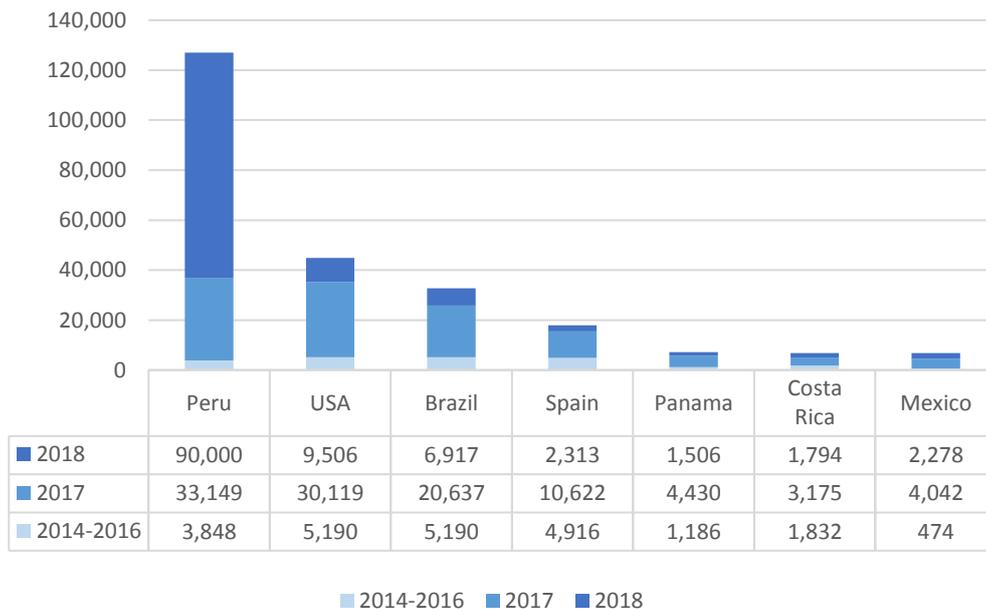
20.5M



Funding gap 55.5%

25.6 M

Asylum Applications 2014-18 Primary Countries of Asylum



Operational Context

Growing numbers of people continue to leave Venezuela for different reasons, including insecurity and violence, lack of food, medicine or access to essential social services, as well as loss of income. Based on conservative government figures, over 1.5 million Venezuelan nationals have left the country since 2014. While not all may be refugees, it is evident that a significant proportion are in need of international refugee protection. Some 282,180 have filed asylum claims globally to date while some 567,500 have accessed alternative legal forms of stay in Latin America. However, to date, an estimated 60% of Venezuelans remain in an irregular situation, without documentation, including those not able to apply for asylum or another legal status because of bureaucratic obstacles, long waiting periods, or high application fees.

Host countries have become increasingly strained. Venezuelan refugees and migrants with are more vulnerable to multiple protection risks, such as labour and sexual exploitation. In countries where irregular armed groups and criminal gangs are actively recruiting, there is an additional risk that Venezuelans without other options may be tempted or forced to join these groups.

UNHCR is working with Governments to address the protection and essential needs of Venezuelans in host countries and continues to call for protection-oriented responses, such as humanitarian visas, special stay arrangements or other regional migratory frameworks, with the relevant protection safeguards. UNHCR has developed a regional response plan that covers eight countries and the Caribbean sub-region.



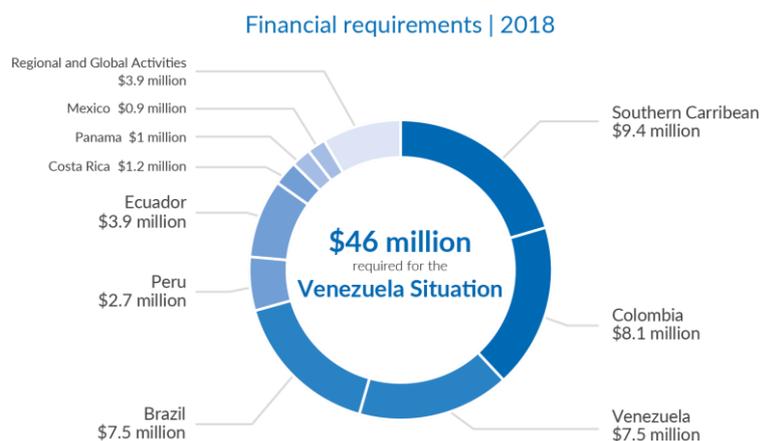
Here, a UNHCR Protection Officer talks to a young Venezuelan mother and her daughter who are living irregularly in Colombia. Between April 6 and June 8 2018, the Colombian Government with support from UNHCR and IOM conducted a mass registration exercise of undocumented Venezuelans living in Colombia. © UNHCR Colombia

UNHCR response

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

- Establishing a **coordinated, comprehensive and regional response** for Venezuelans trying to start over their lives outside their country, with governments, host communities and local organizations;
- **Collecting data and information** (population studies, registration and/or monitoring exercises depending the country) to better understand the specific needs of Venezuelan nationals;
- Improving **access to documentation**, which is key to remaining legally in any country;
- Reinforcing **refugee procedures** while also working to identify and **support other legal forms of stay** for Venezuelans that include protection safeguards;
- Providing assistance to meet Venezuelans' **basic needs**, including legal assistance, shelter, cash-based assistance, health, and education;
- Working with national and local authorities on their **preparedness** measures and protection-based response plans.
- Strengthening **protection responses** for unaccompanied and separated children, indigenous communities, elderly people, SGBV survivors, LGBTI persons, people with disabilities, and others with specific needs.
- Developing awareness and **solidarity campaigns** to combat discrimination and xenophobia towards Venezuelans; and
- Supporting mass **information campaigns for persons in need of international protection** to raise awareness about their rights and responsibilities.

Within this context UNHCR has launched a Supplementary Appeal for US\$46 million to cover the initial response in nine UNHCR operations with a focus on the main host countries: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and the Southern Caribbean. The Appeal will also cover interventions in Venezuela.



Highlights



Profiling and Protection Monitoring exercises activated in the region

UNHCR is implementing profiling and protection monitoring exercises to better understand the needs and risks faced by Venezuelans arriving in host countries and to provide a more tailored response. So far, over 6,192 individuals have been reached through the latest protection monitoring exercises carried along the borders in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Chile to identify risks, in particular with regards to access to territory, SGBV, trafficking and child protection. A significant number of people interviewed cited direct threats, insecurity, general violence, presence of armed groups and fear for their life as reasons for leaving Venezuela, and are therefore in need of international refugee protection.



Registration

UNHCR is supporting the Government of Colombia's effort to conduct an administrative registration of Venezuelans with irregular status present in the country. The exercise known as Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos (RAMV). The results will inform public policies to address the needs of these Venezuelans. The registration ended on June 8th with 442,462 individuals (235,575 families) registered. 27% of them are children with only 49% of those in school-age currently studying. 99% of the registered individuals are not part of the national health system. UNHCR is also supporting Government's registration efforts in Peru and Brazil.



Providing shelter

In Brazil, UNHCR is supporting the Brazilian Government in providing safe shelter to Venezuelans arriving to border cities. So far, nine temporary shelters opened in Boa Vista and Pacaraima are providing protection and shelter to over 4,000 Venezuelans. UNHCR supports the authorities through site planning, the provision of UNHCR tents, non-food items, drinking fountains, registration through biometrics, community mobilisation, information dissemination and site management. UNHCR is also supporting the relocation of Venezuelans from the border area of Boa Vista to other cities with wider employment opportunities and services. Since early April, when this initiative started, 527 Venezuelans have been part of the relocation program.



Assistance

UNHCR has stepped up its presence in border areas across the region to respond to the needs of Venezuelans leaving their country as well as providing support and legal orientation on arrival. New offices have opened in Peru and the Caribbean to respond to the increasing number of arriving Venezuelans. In Tumbes (border between Peru and Ecuador), UNHCR is distributing drinkable water, children kits and dignity kits for women to most vulnerable families. UNHCR is also providing cash-based assistance to the most vulnerable Venezuelans in Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia.



Campaigns against xenophobia

In an effort to curb xenophobia against Venezuelans and promote solidarity with people forced to flee, UNHCR launched the “SomosPanasColombia” campaign in December 2017. To date, over 8 million individuals have been reached, including opinion leaders, through social media and targeted communication activities and partnerships. Other countries in the region, notably Panama, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Trinidad and Tobago will be launching similar initiatives in 2018.



Working with partners

UNHCR’s response to the Venezuela situation will be pursued with all levels of government and with the participation of people of concern and host communities. This is done in close partnership with other UN agencies, NGOs, faith-based and civil society organizations and academia to forge networks to help ease the burden on host communities. IOM and UNHCR are closely working together in responding to the needs of Venezuelans across the region through the recent establishment of a Regional Inter-Agency Platform to include relevant stakeholders and steer the operational response to the Venezuela Situation.

Remaining Challenges

- Protection risks for Venezuelan nationals in countries in the region remain a priority concern, including access to refugee procedures, physical security, access to documentation, sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse, and access to services;
- While alternative legal pathways are in place for Venezuelans, they do not always include protection safeguards, and have restrictions and fees that limit their accessibility;
- In some cases the shortage of efficient, secure and legal ways to reach safety is forcing desperate Venezuelans refugees and migrants on the move into life-threatening situations including trafficking, sexual exploitation, armed violence and deadly sea crossings;
- UNHCR is also concerned about the situation in border areas, where there are heightened security risks, including forced recruitment by illegal armed groups or criminal gangs, including child recruitment;
- Despite positive efforts in a number of countries, reception capacity for Venezuelan arrivals remains limited. A worrying numbers of Venezuelans continue to live on the streets, where they remain at risk of exploitation and abuse;
- In the Caribbean, while the overall numbers are relatively small, the increase in the number of Venezuelan arrivals has placed significant pressure on the reception and processing capacity of these island States;
- While the responses of States have been generous, some are reaching a saturation point and are beginning to institute restrictive measures, including deportations and denial of access to territory and increasing incidents of discrimination and xenophobia.

Financial Information

Agencies are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operations.

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS

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LINKS

For more information visit: [Venezuela Data Portal](#)

¹ The broadly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for the Venezuela Situation due to their earmarking to a related region, sub-region, country or theme. The total amount of the contributions is shown for donors who have contributed \$2 million and more.

² The total amount of unearmarked contributions is shown for donors who have contributed \$10 million and more.