

REGIONAL INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION PLATFORM FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA

September 2018



Regional Response: Situational update No1

Based on the latest official data available as of September 2018, it is estimated that over **2.6 million Venezuelans live outside their country.**

Over **186,800 asylum claims have been filed** worldwide in 2018, surpassing the 2017-year end figure. Peru has become the main country of asylum for Venezuelans.

IOM and UNHCR appointed Mr. Eduardo Stein as **Joint Special Representative**. Mr. Stein will be promoting a harmonized regional approach in coordination with governments and relevant actors.

This situation report series is produced by the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. These reports consolidate highlights in the operational response during the reporting period, as shared by the Platform's members.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Available official government data indicates that as of September 2018, there are **2,648,000** Venezuelans living outside their country; more than 1.9 million of them have left since 2015. About 70% (1,848,000) are in South American countries. Yet, the figure is likely to be higher as most data sources do not account for Venezuelans with irregular status. Venezuelans without a regular status in their host countries are particularly exposed to violence, discrimination, trafficking and other forms of exploitation and abuse.

The number of Venezuelans seeking asylum has risen yearly. Between 2014 and 2018, some 346,500 asylum claims have been lodged, with Peru heading as the main country of asylum with 133,400 claims. Additionally, between 2015 and September 2018, more than 966,000 applications for temporary or permanent visas or other regularization mechanisms have been filed by Venezuelan nationals.

Latest profiling and tracking activities reveals a worrying increase of the vulnerability of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, affecting in particular children and women on the move. It calls for an increased and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection to prevent further risks.

The commitment to a regional coordinated response to the outflow of Venezuelans has gained momentum and triggered high level meetings in Bogota, Quito, Geneva, Washington and New York. Eleven countries that participated in the Quito meeting agreed to cooperate on key issues such as access to regular status and asylum, documentation, humanitarian assistance, data collection, fight against sexual and gender based violence, trafficking, xenophobia, while calling for further support from the international community. Other regional initiatives bringing together migration authorities, ombudspersons and NGOs have taken place in the past weeks aiming at collaborating, sharing practices, promoting the rights of Venezuelans in the region and facilitating their access to essential services.

In line with these efforts, UNHCR and IOM have appointed Mr. Eduardo Stein as Joint Special Representative. He will work to promote dialogue and consensus necessary for the humanitarian response, including access to territory, refugee protection, legal stay arrangements and the identification of solutions for Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Mr. Stein will work in tandem with the Regional Coordination Inter-Agency Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela which focuses on the operational side of the response.

At national level most governments of the impacted countries continue to develop and adapt their institutional response to provide emergency assistance and protection to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as well as pave the way towards socio-economic and cultural integration. In Brazil, Ecuador and Peru, for example, national governments have declared the state of emergency in receiving areas and entry points allowing them to take extraordinary measures to address humanitarian needs and public health and security risks.

RESPONSE OVERVIEW

This section summarizes highlights in the operational response reported by the Platform members. It does not aim to provide an exhaustive account of all activities, but to inform on general response trends and priorities during the reporting period.

Data and analysis

IOM | OCHA
UNHCR | UNICEF

Collecting and providing relevant and updated data and the identification of critical vulnerabilities to inform the response, continues to be a priority. During the reporting period, flow monitoring, protection monitoring, and profiling activities were completed or are underway in [Argentina](#), [Chile](#), [Colombia](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Ecuador](#), [Guyana](#), [Panama](#), [Peru](#) and [Trinidad and Tobago](#). In [Brazil](#), [Ecuador](#) and [Trinidad and Tobago](#) special consideration was given to evaluate the protection and nutrition situation of Venezuelan children. In [Ecuador](#), protection monitoring activities have identified an increasing arrival of Venezuelans with specific protection needs: 24% of the surveyed households reported having specific needs (women at risk, children at risk, medical conditions, etc.) and 25% reported having suffered violence and/or abuse during their journey.

Local Capacity

IOM | UNICEF

Governments and their partners lead national responses and are also advancing towards regional cooperation and solutions. Members of the Interagency Coordination Platform complement the Governments response as needs increase and surpass installed capacities.

As of 30 September, at least 190 public officials have been trained on international assistance and protection standards in [Ecuador](#), [Brazil](#) and [Trinidad and Tobago](#), including response in cases on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Trafficking. Additionally, in [Trinidad and Tobago](#) 28 local facilitators were trained in psychosocial assistance strategies for children and their caregivers.

Direct Response

ADRA | FAO | HIAS | IOM |
UNHCR | UNICEF | WFP

Platform members are present in the field across the region providing direct emergency assistance and protection to Venezuelan refugees and migrants through a variety of sectoral and multi-sectoral activities.

Shelter, temporary accommodation and support centres. As of 30 September, around **29,000** Venezuelans have been provided temporary emergency shelter in

[Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Ecuador](#), [Peru](#) and [Trinidad and Tobago](#). Considering the growing needs in this area, Platform members made new agreements to expand shelter and temporary accommodation capacity in [Brazil](#) and [Peru](#).

More than **7,000** children have been received in child friendly spaces in [Brazil](#) and [Ecuador](#), and new ones are being set up in [Trinidad and Tobago](#) to enhance protection.

Food and nutrition security. Assistance varies from one-time distribution of basic food items to Venezuelans at entry points, to the distribution of hot meals, pre-paid cards for the purchase of food, and food vouchers to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as well as returnees and members of the host communities. Technical support to restore agricultural production capacity of returnees and the host communities is also being provided. More than **160,000** Venezuelans and members of host communities have so far been attended with this type of assistance in [Colombia](#), [Ecuador](#), [Brazil](#), [Guyana](#), [Peru](#) and [Trinidad and Tobago](#).

Non-Food Items and access to water and sanitation. More than **68,000** Venezuelans were assisted in [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Ecuador](#), [Guyana](#) and [Peru](#). Distribution of water, and basic hygiene supplies has been prioritized in reception areas. Connectivity with relatives and their support networks is critical for Venezuelan refugees and migrants. To this end Platform members have provided access to communication channels for approximately **163,000** Venezuelans, including international phone calls and access to Wi-Fi networks.

Transportation support and internal re-location. As of 30 September, more than **13,500** Venezuelans in transit have been assisted with transportation in [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#) and [Peru](#) as a protection measure to continue their journey safely. This figure includes 2,328 persons that have participated in ten rounds of voluntary internal re-location programme implemented by the Government of [Brazil](#) and supported by Platform members.

Orientation on documentation, regularization mechanisms and asylum procedures. Actions under this area actively continued in [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Ecuador](#), [Guyana](#), [Mexico](#), [Panama](#) and [Peru](#). As of 30 September, in [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Costa Rica](#) and [Ecuador](#), at least **55,500** Venezuelans and returnees (in [Colombia](#)) have received legal and general information on documentation regularization mechanisms, asylum or naturalization procedures. In [Ecuador](#), Platform members

supported the authorities in the development of an information guide for Venezuelans on the move including information on requirements for entry, access to migratory options and asylum, as well as information on reception arrangements, routes, and transportation fares.

On 24 September, a Documentation Centre opened in Boa Vista, [Brazil](#), with similar functions to the Reception Centre operating in Pacaraima. The Centre serves as an access point for emergency assistance, shelter referrals, vaccinations, and identification of individuals interested in participating in the internal relocation programme. Since its opening, 821 Venezuelans have received services at the centre.

Integration [HIAS](#) | [IOM](#) | [UNHCR](#) | [UNICEF](#) | [WFP](#)

Platform partners are increasingly giving priority to initiatives which facilitate socio-economic and cultural integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in their host communities.

In [Colombia](#) and [Costa Rica](#) positive messages have been broadly disseminated through stories and music pieces to tackle and prevent xenophobia, using press and social media. In [Brazil](#), [Ecuador](#) and [Panama](#) activities that aim to foster social cohesion and prevent conflicts have been initiated including shared recreational spaces, language skills promotion, and a social rent scheme.

In order to support the integration of Venezuelans into the Colombian schooling system, and support this social protection programme, school feeding activities have also benefitted 7,000 Venezuelan and Colombian children in border departments of Colombia.

Labour integration initiatives were implemented in [Costa Rica](#), [Ecuador](#), [Panama](#), [Peru](#) and [Trinidad and Tobago](#). Different arrangements of vocational, employability and entrepreneurship training and orientation have reached 379 Venezuelans in [Costa Rica](#) and [Peru](#) by the end of the month, and 117 Venezuelan refugees and migrants were engaged in sustainable livelihoods activities in [Ecuador](#) in September. Partnerships with the private sector, civil society and government agencies have been building blocks for these initiatives and others that are being set up on employability and financial inclusion.

Coordination

The first meeting of the [Regional Coordination Inter-Agency Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela](#) took place on 19 September in Panama.

To date, the Regional Platform is integrated by 15 UN agencies, 9 NGOs, 5 donors and with the participation of ICRC and IFRC. Platform members have started to work on key priorities and products, which will improve the coherence of the operational response at regional level such as the establishment of a network of support centres, communication with communities' initiatives, information management and campaigns against xenophobia, among others (Report can be found [here](#)). The Platform is coordinating the elaboration of the 2019 Regional Refugee and Migrants Response Plan to act as a common framework and appeal to the international community.

[National Inter-Agency Coordination Platforms](#) are already functioning in [Colombia](#), [Ecuador](#), [Peru](#) and [Brazil](#). Other national coordination structures are in process of being established in [Trinidad and Tobago](#) and [Dominican Republic](#).

CONTRIBUTIONS

Partners in the response are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, contributing to their activities with un-earmarked and earmarked funds.

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Highlights

ADRA

- In September, ADRA distributed hygiene kits, kitchen kits and domestic kits to 1,640 Venezuelans in Roraima, Brazil.
- ADRA also distributed 1,700 water purification tablets to Venezuelans in the Ecuadorian province of Carchi.

FAO

- Rapid recovery of food production with 3,000 vulnerable hosts and returnees from the Wayuu indigenous people, in the rural area of La Guajira, Colombia, through the delivery of agricultural inputs, the rehabilitation of water supply systems for human consumption and for agricultural production.
- Rehabilitation of food production benefitting 1,600 Colombian returnees, through the recovery of agricultural production and water supply infrastructure, focused on strengthening community and family capacities in risk management and generation of resilience in conditions of extreme drought, with the formation of community mechanisms for the preparation and prevention of emergencies.

HIAS

- Over 4,300 Venezuelans supported in Ecuador through orientation on documentation and information on the available regularization mechanisms and the asylum process.
- Support provided to 700 Venezuelan boys and girls in Ecuador through child friendly spaces in the country's northern border.

IOM

- In September, IOM Peru distributed 1,079 baby kits to 935 Venezuelan refugees and migrants at the Binational Border Centre (CEBAF) in Tumbes.
- During the reporting period, 756 Venezuelan refugees and migrants were assisted with transportation from Tumbes, main border crossing point into Peru, to main destination cities within the country. In 2018, IOM has assisted a total of 1.426 vulnerable Venezuelans with transportation from Tumbes to other cities in Peru.

UNHCR

- In Colombia, UNHCR and its partners have supported the expedition of over 14,900 Special Stay Permits for Venezuelans included in the mass registration exercise (RAMV). UNHCR is also reaching out to Venezuelans to ensure they come forward to obtain the documentation and providing guidance and referral to its legal partners in cases where the information registered in the RAMV requires corrections.
- In a partnership between UNHCR and Coursera, 42 Venezuelan refugees and asylum-seekers in Trinidad and Tobago are using the online educational platform to gain new skills and knowledge.

UNICEF

- In Brazil, UNICEF supported the State Government in carrying out a nutritional assessment of children under 5 years of age in six temporary shelters. Children identified at nutritional risk were referred to health services.
- In Guyana, and in collaboration with the Civil Defence Commission, essential WASH and shelter items have been procured to cover 180 Venezuelan families. As of 24 September, two rounds of distribution have covered the needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants and the host communities.

WFP

- WFP is providing hot meals, pre-paid cards for the purchase of food, food vouchers, food kits and school meals to vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela and members of host communities in Colombia and in Ecuador. By the end of September, these different types of food assistance benefitted 49,000 people in Ecuador and 85,000 people in Colombia.
- WFP is working with the government of Colombia to strengthen overburdened social protection programmes in the border areas of this country. It is currently supporting a school feeding initiative that benefits not only the integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants into the Colombian educational system but also contributes to the reduction of tensions with host communities through the additional assistance that is provided to vulnerable Colombian children in targeted schools.