

# Bolivia

August 2023

Hosting some **16,810 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, most of them from Venezuela**, UNHCR works with the Bolivian government and partners to

**guarantee their rights, advocate for their access to territory, asylum and regularization**, while providing with partners **basic goods and services**, such as temporary accommodation, food and hygiene kits, as well as supporting the livelihoods of refugees and migrants through strengthening their autonomous

businesses. In 2021, UNHCR's operational capacity was expanded through agreements with new partners, to **provide assistance, protection and livelihoods**

**support in main urban centres** (La Paz, El Alto and Santa Cruz de la Sierra), **and border areas** (Desaguadero, Oruro, Pisiga, Villazón and Villamontes). Bolivia remains a **destination and a transit country** for asylum-seekers, refugees as well as for migrants.

The aftermath of COVID-19 still requires the strengthening of the humanitarian response in terms of access to shelter, food, water, clothing

and hygiene kits for an increasing number of persons in need as well as strategic support to enhance refugees and migrants' capacity to develop socioeconomic independence in Bolivia.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

16,810

Refugees	1,131
Asylum-seekers	70
Other People in Need of International Protection	15,609

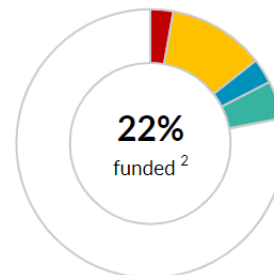
Source: Official information provided by the Government, as of June 2023

## FUNDING

**USD 56.2 MILLION**

requested for the Argentina

**Multi-Country Office including Bolivia**



- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

## UNHCR PRESENCE

The UNHCR Regional Office for Southern Latin America based in Buenos Aires covers operations in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

### Staff in Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay:

**29** National staff and affiliated workforce

**10** International staff

### Offices:

**1** Field presence in La Paz



Refugee family in transit in Bolivia hosted in a temporary shelter in La Paz © UNHCR/ S. Aliaga, 2023

## Results in 2022

- In 2022, UNHCR through its partners has provided support to **1,729** persons in vulnerable situations through **multi-purpose cash assistance**, 81 percent of the assistance was spent in local stores or markets, evidencing the multiplier effect of cash assistance in the host communities. Some other **5,296** with **in-kind assistance** to cover their basic needs; **1,439** vulnerable individuals were provided with **temporary accommodation**; **7,691** individuals were provided with **free legal assistance, orientation, information** and referral to various public services providers; **241 cases of child protection were treated and supported by UNHCR** and/or partners. Additionally, some **3,059** people received **primary health care** attention, while some **85** people received **livelihoods training or support** and 427 people received **training in international protection and refugee law**.

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR works in close coordination with government counterparts, namely the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, that presides the **National Refugee Commission (CONARE)**, with representatives of the **National Directorate of Migration** and the **Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency**, where UNHCR is a member with voice together with a partner agency from the civil society (**Pastoral Social Caritas Boliviana**). Also, UNHCR works closely with the **National Office of the Ombudsperson**, and other decentralized organisms, such as the **Offices of Public Defense for Children and Adolescents**.
- A bilateral cooperation agreement was signed between UNHCR and the **National Office of the Ombudsperson in 2019**. The agreement's main objective is the strengthening of technical capacities to provide orientation and legal assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees in Bolivia and to conduct border monitoring, among other joint activities that benefit forcibly displaced people. Currently, UNHCR is supporting the Office of the Ombudsperson in Desaguadero, within the border Assistance and Orientation Point (PAO).
- UNHCR has broadened the network of partners to scale up the operational capacity on the ground including activities not only in **La Paz**, but also in **El Alto, Santa Cruz de la Sierra** and at the **borders**. With **Pastoral Social Caritas Boliviana (PSCB)**, UNHCR provides basic humanitarian assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. In addition, UNHCR partnership with **World Vision Bolivia**, who cooperates with **Red Cross Bolivia** and the **National Office of the Ombudsperson's Office**, provides child protection services, primary health care, information services and legal orientation and assistance. UNHCR also has an agreement with **Fundación Scalabrini Bolivia** through which it provides and improves shelters for refugees and migrants and supports entrepreneurship. In partnership with **Caritas Switzerland**, UNHCR also assists **sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** survivors, provides legal counsel and child protection through available services, supports children to access remote education, and engages with local communities, through local NGO **Fundación Munasim Kullakita**.
- UNHCR co-leads jointly with IOM the **National Response Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela where 11 partners –UN, CSOs, Refugee's and Migrants' organizations** implement the Response Plan 2021 for the **Southern Cone** complementing Governmental capacities in main urban and border areas of the region.

## Main Activities

### Protection & Durable Solutions

- Provide technical support and advice at the request of national authorities involved in the implementation of fair and efficient **refugee status determination procedures (RSD)** and participate in CONARE's sessions, as established by the law.
- Provide training and advice to other national and departmental authorities involved in humanitarian response and access to fundamental rights of refugees and migrants (i.e., National Migration Directorate, Office of Public Defenders for Children and Adolescents, gender protection local authorities, security forces, among others).
- Improve reception conditions and capacities at the main entry land **border** of refugees and migrants (Desaguadero, border with Peru) through joint **support spaces**- called Assistance and Orientation Points (PAO)- acting as a "one-stop" point where refugees and migrants have access to information, connectivity and communication services, legal orientation and primary humanitarian assistance including accommodation, food and health care services. In other border areas, UNHCR with its partners are strengthening monitoring and response capacities (border with Chile)
- Strengthen institutional capacities of the **National Office of the Ombudsperson** to ensure asylum-seekers and refugees have access to legal orientation and assistance with a focus on refugee status determination and migration procedures.
- Promote actions addressed to prevent, identify and respond to situations of **gender-based violence (GBV)** affecting refugee women and children in coordination with local partners. Regular protection dialogues and empowerment activities are developed with refugee women along with assistance to individual cases.
- Promote activities to meet the specific protection and developmental needs of girls and boys and their families.

UNHCR has reinforced shelters by including **child-friendly spaces** which provide a safe space to learn and play. This has been recognized as a good practice world-wide. UNHCR and its partners are also providing community psycho-social support and engagement through a mobile service which functions as an informal “classroom” for children, where also families, and especially women and children, benefit from an active listening service by trained staff in La Paz, El Alto and Santa Cruz.

- Advocate for: (i) the adoption of a law for the protection of **stateless people** and the establishment of a stateless determination procedure in line with the pledges made by the Government of Bolivia (Brazil Plan of Action); (ii) the inclusion of **refugee protection safeguards** in the amendment process of the Human Trafficking Law; (iii) the adoption of accessible regularization alternatives for persons in need of international protection that cannot access the asylum system.

## Humanitarian Assistance, Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- **Humanitarian assistance** is provided to vulnerable refugees and migrants upon arrival and in main urban centres and at the borders to ensure that their basic needs are covered using in-kind (including warm clothes, first aid kits and kitchen sets) and cash-based assistance.
- Through UNHCR’s partner agencies, asylum-seekers and other forcibly displaced people receive **information and orientation** regarding access to rights, protection and local integration, and vulnerable cases are referred to migrant shelters and community kitchens. **Durable shelter solutions and socio-economic inclusion** are achieved by using counselling, referrals to specialized services and the provision of multi-purpose cash grants.
- Support infrastructure improvements **of shelters** to improve the quality of assistance provided to refugees and migrants.

### Special thanks to major donors who have provided funds for the Regional Office and at the global level in 2023:

Argentina | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | Migration MPTF | UN Programme On HIV/AIDS | The L’Oreal Foundation | Private donors Argentina | Private donors Australia | Private donors Italy | Private donors Japan | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors Spain | Private donors United Kingdom | Private donors USA

## External Relations

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### LINKS

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