

Venezuela Situation

February 2018

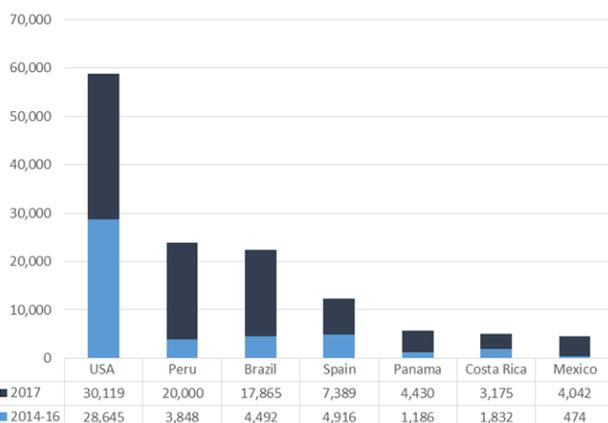
The number of **Venezuelans seeking asylum** has **risen yearly** since 2014. Between 2014 and 2018, some **146,000 asylum claims** have been lodged.

Venezuelans arriving recently have **stronger humanitarian needs** and less financial resources to cover them, and are therefore **more vulnerable** and in need of assistance.

Colombia, Brazil and Guyana announced **new measures** to address the arrivals of Venezuelans, as border areas are increasingly overstretched.



Asylum applications 2014-17 in primary countries of asylum



*Figures in the map have been rounded off for visualization purposes.
**All figures on this page derive from Government sources.

444,820 Venezuelans with Alternative Legal Stay

Location name	Source	Data date	Population
Colombia	Government	7 Mar 2018	155,000
Chile	Government	10 Feb 2018	84,479
Ecuador	Government	10 Feb 2018	50,502
Panama	Government	10 Feb 2018	48,900
Argentina	Government	24 Nov 2017	40,884
Peru	Government	7 Mar 2018	30,200
Mexico	Government	10 Feb 2018	16,220
Brazil	Government	7 Mar 2018	10,963
Costa Rica	Government	24 Nov 2017	5,600
Uruguay	Government	24 Nov 2017	2,072

Brazil

Operational Context

- 24,818 asylum claims have been lodged since 2014, 2,461 asylum in 2018 alone. 7,216 Venezuelans are still pending registration. A total of 2,493 of 10,963 Temporary Residence Permits have been granted. In 2018, the Federal Police estimate that 18,348 Venezuelans entered and remained in Brazil.
- Following President Temer's visit to Roraima on 8 February, a provisional measure and a presidential decree¹ were issued addressing the emergency assistance provided to migratory influxes. The decree came into effect immediately, highlighting the necessity of a humanitarian response at the border. The Presidential visit raised the profile of the situation and opened opportunities for new stakeholders. It also led to an increased Army and Police presence in the Brazilian border with Venezuela, in particular in Pacaraima.

UNHCR's response and partnerships



PROTECTION

- On 23 February, UNHCR, the Municipality of Boa Vista and the Federal Police, built a task force to identify people interested in the voluntary relocation programme known as "interiorization programme", starting with asylum-seekers living in the Tancredo Neves shelter. Those willing to participate have undergone a medical screening and vaccination, and obtained valid documentation. Approximately 350 people have been cleared to participate. Manaus and Sao Paulo appear to be the main destinations. UNHCR is following up with both municipalities.
- Meanwhile, UNHCR continues applying its Protection Monitoring Tool with the Federal Police. Overall 305 interviews have been conducted: 78% are willing to participate in a relocation program; 91% want to stay in Brazil.
- UNHCR, the Federal Police and the Prosecutors' Office signed an agreement to strengthen the task force receiving asylum-seekers in Manaus. From 1-24 January, 386 people were registered, increasing the registration capacity from 10 to 30 people/day with support of ten UNHCR sponsored volunteers.
- Boa Vista hosted UNHCR's Senior Regional Protection Officer, who led the elaboration of a plan of action for Child Protection and Sexual and Gender Based Violence, which includes the development of a Safe Spaces Network and improve the capacity of national protection staff.



SHELTER

- UNHCR is liaising with the Army regarding the renovation of the Tancredo Neves Shelter. UNHCR has registered 599 people (179 women, 331 men and 89 children.) On 5 February, containers donated by the Canadian Embassy for education and health activities were inaugurated.
- In the Pacaraima shelter, UNHCR registered 391 refugees (167 women, 224 men and 218 children.) The data collected will serve for food and non-food items distribution.
- Cáritas Manaus started a project supported by UNHCR to assist PoC, focusing on social and legal assistance.
- The PAHO/WHO and the Minister of Health will scale up their presence and response in Boa Vista, following a UNHCR led visit to the Pintolandia and Tancredo Neves shelters, where they could observe the main gaps in health and WASH conditions.
- With the support of UNCHR, the Center of Integration Enterprise-School (CIEE) presented their Youth Apprentice program to PoC, and Venezuelans have begun to be enrolled.
- The Manaus Municipality created an emergency plan to introduce the Warao children to the public education network.



EDUCATION

¹ For full details of the provisional measure see: <https://goo.gl/PNy83T>, Presidential Decree <https://goo.gl/NyDZnK>

Colombia

Operational context

- On 8 February President Santos announced new measures to respond to the arrivals of Venezuelan nationals. Key measures include: stricter border controls; the requirement to have a passport or Border Mobility Card in order to enter the country; 3,000 members of the armed forces deployed to the border; the creation of the Special Migratory Group (GEP by its Spanish acronym); end of allocation of Border Mobility Cards (TMFs); registration of Venezuelans in Ombudsperson's offices; construction of the Centre for the Attention of Migrants in Cúcuta with support from UNHCR, WFP and IOM².
- UNHCR in Colombia continues to step up border monitoring and training of migration and police officials to raise awareness on the responsibilities and obligations under International Refugee Law.

UNHCR's response and partnerships



PROTECTION

- UNHCR is providing recommendations on how to guarantee a protection focus during registration exercises and will support the roll-out and implementation of the registration campaign by the Government through the Ombudspersons' offices. UNHCR is also sharing its expertise and providing operational support to Felipe Muñoz, the national-level Manager newly appointed by President Santos to coordinate the response for Venezuelan arrivals.
- Increased utilization of informal crossing points by Venezuelans, may expose them to risks derived from the presence and actions of the presence of illegal armed groups, including recruitment
- UNHCR is concerned about the indigenous Yukpa people arriving from Venezuela and living in Norte de Santander, and will continue to seek a protection-oriented response with the competent authorities.
- UNHCR and the Department of La Guajira signed a Letter of Intention to strengthen border policy in the department and the initiative "Orientation Centers in Border Areas" was developed by UNHCR to strengthen the capacity of the municipality of Maicao

Ecuador

Operational Context

- According to the Ecuadorian Migration Service, 62,506 arrivals from Venezuela were registered in January 2018. Women represented 39% of this figure. Approximately 90% entered through the Rumichaca Bridge, at the border with Colombia, where they arrived at an average of 1,800 individuals per day.
- Approximately 60-70% of Venezuelans seem to be in transit to countries further South (mainly Peru and Chile).
- During January and February 2018, 209 people of concern were registered with UNHCR's partner, HIAS. 109 Venezuelan cases received orientation and legal assistance by the Public Defender's Office, 68 cases were assisted in the framework of Refugee Status Determinations (RSD) procedures and 41 on alternative stay arrangements.

UNHCR's response and partnerships



PROTECTION

- UNHCR maintains its monitoring presence at the Rumichaca International Bridge. An office close to the border has been made available to UNHCR by the Mayor of Tulcán. UNHCR's activities at the border area are focused on ensuring access to the territory; conducting profiling activities of Venezuelans arriving, as well as identifying cases in need of protection and assistance to refer them to the available mechanisms/services.

² More information: <http://es.presidencia.gov.co/noticia/180208-Mas-de-3-mil-miembros-de-la-Fuerza-Publica-reforzaran-el-control-y-la-atencion-a-la-migracion-de-Venezuela>

- UNHCR continues advocating for the adoption of simplified procedures and requirements to facilitate the access of Venezuelans to migratory alternatives.
- UNHCR will conduct binational border monitoring on both sides of the Rumichaca Bridge, focusing on bus terminals and health care centres initially.

Panama

Operational Context

- Authorities register 15,046 average daily arrivals, with 12,760 daily departures as of February 2018. The great majority enter through airports.

UNCHR response and partnerships

- In line with the approval of additional funds and after a recent coordination meeting with IOM, UNHCR is developing an initial proposal for the Profiling of Venezuelan Population in Panama. The profiling exercise seeks to gather information about the current situation of Venezuelan nationals in the country, an estimate of those in need of protection and other needs, their profiles, socioeconomic status, reasons for leaving their country, as well as gaps or challenges that they have faced.
- UNHCR has been working with local partners to reinforce protection monitoring with a special focus on the situation of Venezuelans. Within this context, an international staff member for general protection-border monitoring of POCs of all nationalities - has been recruited.
- UNHCR provides direct legal orientation to Venezuelans. In addition, two legal partners - NRC and CEALP- are providing information and orientation, and conducting daily information sessions in the waiting area of the asylum office in Panama City. Legal assistance is also provided in their offices.

Peru

Operational Context

- On 31 January, the Superintendence of Migration issued a new resolution³ establishing "Guidelines to obtain the Temporary Permanence Permit (PTP)". This was a much expected regulation, which has renewed the legal status to Venezuelans who's PTPs were about to expire. This measure will benefit an estimated 30,000 individuals.
- UNHCR recognizes the Government's efforts, as 30,200 PTPs had been issued to Venezuelan nationals as of 23 February.

UNHCR's response and partnerships

- The Special Commission for Refugees (CEPR) has implemented a system of online appointments and a temporary registration premise, equipped with a waiting area and chemical toilets.
- A joint mission to Tumbes was conducted during the last week of February with partner Encuentros, and Peruvian authorities to assess the situation and identify current protection gaps and humanitarian needs of Venezuelans arriving through the northern border.
- Encuentros conducted trainings on labour opportunities, including seed capital loans for people with business plans, and referrals to government employment services, with the Municipalities of Miraflores and Lima, as well as the Ministries of Production and Employment.

Southern Caribbean

Operational Context

- All land and sea borders between the ABC islands and Venezuela remain closed. Local and international media attention has increasingly focused on the humanitarian situation of Venezuelans in Curacao after the shipwreck in January which resulted in several deaths-at-sea.

³ Res. No. 00043-2018-MIGRACIONES

UNHCR's response and partnerships



PROTECTION

Trinidad and Tobago

- UNHCR launched the site: help.unhcr.org/trinidadtobago to provide information about the asylum procedure and the situation of persons of concern in the country.

Aruba

- On 15 February a UNHCR Associate Protection Officer arrived in Aruba (the first UNHCR presence on the island)
- UNHCR will collaborate with the Department for Integration and Management of Foreigners (DIMAS) of the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of General Affairs, and its long-standing local partner, the Aruba Red Cross, to support the protection and assistance of asylum-seekers and refugees in Aruba.

Guyana

- UNHCR welcomed that decision of the Government of Guyana to accede to the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its *1967 Protocol*. UNHCR also offered its full support for the process of assessing the practical and legal implications of accession.



PROTECTION

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