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FUNDING SITUATION\*

3%

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## Situation

**While border crossings in the region remain closed to contain the spread of COVID-19, irregular entries and exits of refugees and migrants continue to be reported.** During the past week, partners monitored an increase in the number of spontaneous returns of Venezuelans from Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Having lost (often informal) employment as a result of the COVID-19-related movement restrictions, many are now unable to afford accommodation, food and other basic needs. Unable to comply with the quarantine measures and social distancing, an increasing number of Venezuelans is left with no alternative but to consider returning to Venezuela. R4V partners have expressed concern about continued movements, including returns to Venezuela, also because of the risk of an increased spread of COVID-19, and increased exposure of refugees and migrants to exploitation and abuse by smugglers and traffickers.

**Xenophobia against refugees and migrants from Venezuela is on the rise in some locations.** This week, demonstrations took place in Colombia against the installation of temporary shelters for those in vulnerable situations, including homeless refugees and migrants living in the streets. In Ecuador, public manifestations were reported against Venezuelans in transit that were perceived as not respecting quarantine measures and not using protective items.

## Platforms' Response\*\*

**The review of the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) 2020 is in its second week,** with all partners now revising their RMRP activities in light of emerging COVID-19 needs and priorities. With the completion of this process, the updated RMRP targets and financial requirements will be included in the second iteration of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan - COVID-19 (GHRP), reflecting the alignment of the two response mechanisms. The Regional Platform has also developed regional [guidelines to its partners](#) on assistance to refugees, migrants and host communities in the context of COVID-19.

**In Colombia, the Inter-Agency Group for Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM) is coordinating the review of the RMRP's national chapter.** In this context, consultations with authorities and partners have taken place, leading already to the identification of sectoral response priorities. In coordination with local authorities national R4V actors are responding to the most urgent needs, with a focus on health, WASH, food security and nutrition, cash, and shelter to allow for preventive isolation of concerned refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

**In Brazil, the Platform, together with partners and authorities, developed information materials** for refugees and migrants to support access to additional cash assistance. Communication with Communities (CWC) groups are sharing information in Portuguese and Spanish, while partners have supported authorities in Manaus with the relocation of 120 Warao indigenous persons to new shelters. Over 3,600 personal hygiene kits were distributed in Boa Vista, Pacaraima and Manaus. R4V partners have maintained their presence in shelters and at the documentation centres of Roraima and Amazonas states, to provide information and to identify vulnerable cases for referral to available services.

**In Ecuador, the Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes (GTRM) conducted an inter-sectoral meeting for the review of the RMRP, to identify the main gaps, needs and sector priorities.** A Rapid Joint Needs Assessment, conducted in this context, has so far reached 1,200 households and will feed into the ongoing RMRP review process. The GTRM has prepared infographics on the impact of COVID-19-related [on refugees and migrant and related activities of partners](#).

**In Peru, partners of the GTRM, distributed 5,000 food kits to support 20,000 vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Lima and Callao.** The distribution conducted in a door-to-door manner as well as through soup kitchens. This week, R4V partners provided additional food rations to temporary shelters in Lima, Tacna and Tumbes. Cash distributions took place to over 11,000 refugees and migrants throughout Peru.

**In Chile, the Platform met with the UN Resident Coordinator to discuss the COVID-19 response proposal, to complement the national response plan of the Chilean authorities.** The proposal is composed of activities from the RMRP and will be presented in the context of the ongoing response for refugees and migrants at border crossings, as well as the national consultations on RMRP review.

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\* Source: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/944/summary>

\*\*These are examples of activities carried out by National/Sub-Regional Platforms and/or Regional Sectors. For further details, please see [R4V.info](http://R4V.info).

**The Sub-Regional Platform in the Caribbean is enhancing efforts in providing health care services to refugees and migrants from Venezuela.** The Platform is exploring solutions for additional requests for accommodation by Venezuelans affected by the COVID-19 situation. Partners have started reprogramming and funding reallocation to be able to provide prompt assistance. Main areas of interventions are related to food assistance, NFI and hygiene supplies, and cash, where possible.

**In Central America and Mexico, the Sub-Regional Platform is coordinating with national authorities the inclusion of refugees and migrants in the national COVID-19 response.** In Costa Rica, R4V partners are supporting refugees and migrants remotely, including through remote psychosocial support.

**The Sub-Regional Platform in the Southern Cone is advancing the review of the RMRP.** Meetings took place in all four countries to review activities responsive to the COVID-19 context. Levels of vulnerability among refugees and migrants from Venezuela continue to grow, especially relating to the ability to pay rent, and access livelihoods and food. To prepare vulnerable refugees and migrants for the impending winter partners in Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay have commenced the distribution of winter clothes and blankets.

## Regional Sectors\*\*

**The Regional Health Sector is concentrating its efforts to ensure that access to health services is maintained to vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela.** The Sector is concerned about unregulated and spontaneous movements of Venezuelans who have no personal protective equipment (PPE) and who move in spite of curfews and movement restrictions.

**The Regional Integration Sector is consulting national focal points to consolidate its regional strategy for the RMRP review.** The Sector is also conducting webinars on the [impacts of COVID-19 on employment](#) and on lessons learned on social protection systems during a pandemic, while having also prepared and disseminated a document with considerations on the impact of COVID-19 for refugees and migrants and the labour market. A set of cards and posters with awareness messages has been shared to highlight the need to safeguard the employment of refugees and migrants.

**In response to the increasing number of homeless refugees and migrants, the Regional Shelter, NFI and Humanitarian Transportation Sectors are focusing on providing temporary accommodation in hotels and on cash-for-rent programmes.** For existing shelters, isolation areas are also being constructed by R4V partners, while overcrowded shelters are being decongested. A compilation of key impacts needs and priorities from national sectors is ongoing with view to developing a revised regional Sector strategy for the RMRP.

**In response to the increase in spontaneous returns, the Regional Protection Sector has taken up discussions with partners from across the region to better monitor risks, identify gaps and devise a regional response strategy.** The Sector and its Sub-sectors also continued updating sectoral priorities as part of the RMRP review. The national **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** Sub-sectors are creating and updating GBV referral pathways to reflect operational service providers and adapted working modalities. In support thereof, the regional GBV Sub-sector is developing guidance on conducting remote GBV service mapping. In coordination with governmental institutions, the **Human Trafficking & Smuggling** Sub-sector is providing information to people at risk regarding the possible dangers caused by traffickers and smugglers. The **Child Protection** Sub-sector is developing a plan for the development of short videos providing guidance and resources to practitioners in the field, and conducted a webinar showcasing practical solutions on child protection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The Regional Education Sector is collecting and consolidating good practices on flexible distance home-based learning** delivered through on-line platforms, radio and TV, depending on connectivity, as schools in region remained closed. The Sector is further identifying and sharing good practices on psychosocial support for children, teachers and parents/caregivers.

**The Regional Food Security Sector is advocating for the maintenance of food supply chains between countries,** so to avoid scarcity and increases in costs of basic staples. Partners are working with Governments on technical support and advocacy to include refugees and migrants in their social protection schemes. In comparison to data collected last year, initial results indicate a worsening of the food security situation, with those having recently left Venezuela being the most affected.

**The Regional WASH Sector is supporting local and national response efforts and has highlighted the need for international procurement of PPEs** (face masks, gloves and medical gowns), among other critical supplies. Partners have mapped public WASH policies implemented by authorities in 13 countries in the region in response to COVID-19. Based on this mapping, a strategic note was produced documenting good practices and recommendations on WASH. The analysis was presented to all national WASH coordinators and government entities. Through partnerships with the private sector in-kind contributions of hygiene and handwashing supplies have been received.