

NORTHERN CHILE END-YEAR UPDATE

[REGIONS OF ARICA AND PARINACOTA, TARAPACÁ AND ANTOFAGASTA]

Operational context

According to official data, [irregular entry reports to Chile decreased](#) by five percent in 2022 compared to 2021 (56,586 vs. 53,875). However, the [Tarapacá region](#) experienced an increase of 19.1% in the number of reports recorded during the year, reaching [15,577 reports](#) on the Bolivia-Chile border.



Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the Colchane border area, wetlands sector. UNHCR/Rafael Numi

Situation at the border

- The [Colchane](#) sector, located on the border with Bolivia in the Tarapacá region, became the [main gateway to the national territory for people entering Chile irregularly in 2022](#); **21,553** refugees and migrants, mainly Venezuelans, entered Chile irregularly through Colchane (**5,657 children**), placing the commune in first place nationwide¹.
- [Chacalluta](#), the northern gate of Chile, and the border with Perú (just 16 km from Arica) also registered [a considerable number of entry attempts through both authorized and non-authorized border crossings in the second semester of 2022](#). However, the neighboring country's complex socio-political scenario has affected border movements since December (and may continue to affect them), with figures decreasing substantially compared to previous months when they had reached an upturn since the pandemic.

Homelessness and informal settlements

- In recent years, [the presence of refugees and migrants in a homeless situation has been a constant feature in northern cities](#), which is mainly explained by the lack of ways to regularize their legal status, the scarcity of inclusion mechanisms, and the over-demand in cities with low housing capacity and high rental prices.

¹ Source: Presidency of the Republic of Chile (Interview given by the President of the Republic, Gabriel Boric, to Radio Paulina in Iquique on 15 March 2023). (1) [Presidencia de Chile en Twitter: "AHORA | En el marco de la #GiraTarapacá, Presidente @GabrielBoric sostiene entrevista con @RadioPaulina de Iquique. https://t.co/2DrxKZCb61" / Twitter](#)

- The lack of documentation has generated challenging obstacles in accessing rights and social benefits (e.g., housing subsidies, food benefits for public school children, health system access, etc.), leading to overcrowding of the existing informal settlements.

*According to the Chilean Ministry of Housing and Urbanism, **40 percent of the heads of household in the informal settlements in Chile are refugees and migrants**, and more than half of the foreign population living in these kinds of settlements in Chile is concentrated in the regions of Tarapacá (27 percent) and Antofagasta (24 percent), both northern regions.*

Discrimination and xenophobia

Informal settlements and crimes of great social connotation associated with refugees and migrants have triggered demonstrations against delinquency and human mobility in the northern macrozone, with physical and verbal attacks against them and the destruction and burning of their belongings (including tents, strollers, and cribs).

Operational response

Throughout 2022, UNHCR provided diverse and comprehensive humanitarian assistance, directly and in coordination with public institutions and implementing partners, to people in Human Mobility and its host communities in northern Chile.



Delivery of humanitarian kits in the vicinity of the Colchane's border post. UNHCR/Paulina Martínez

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- Donations of equipment for the governmental first reception center in Colchane and transitory center in Lobito, Iquique, comprising, e.g., of refugee housing units (RHUs), beds, mattresses, blankets, and hygiene, health, food, and recreational kits. Additionally, multipurpose cash grants in points of high influx of refugees and migrants were distributed.
- Kitchen donation/implementation and food provision for the "Casa Esperanza" center in Calama, Antofagasta region, an initiative of Caritas Chile supported by the Ministry of Social Development and Family for refugees and migrants.
- A Mobile Clinic was donated to the Municipality of Arica, which offers general medicine, dentistry, and gynecology services, in support of both refugees and migrants and host communities.

ORIENTATION AND INFORMATION SESSIONS

- **On 18 November**, UNHCR counselled approximately 50 refugees and migrants with children enrolled at the República de Argentina school in Arica on **legal status and regularization**.
- **On 15 September**, the 'Plaza de Servicios' activity in Iquique involved nearly 20 government institutions and civil society organizations that gave **legal information to over 100 refugees and migrants in the region**.
- **On 17 November and 1 December**, some 200 refugee and migrant parents/guardians of two community schools in Antofagasta received **guidance** on the humanitarian visa for children, access to the refugee status determination procedure, and the regularization of legal conditions.

TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

- **13 workers** of the Colchane Reception Center were trained on 2 November to **install human capacities and to reinforce the protection of people forced to flee and of others in need of international protection**. UNHCR also conducted several interagency sessions for police units and regional public officials.
- **18 Carabineros officers** of the II zone of Antofagasta participated in a **workshop on the refugee status determination procedure** delivered by UNHCR in coordination with the Human Rights National Institute on 26 October.
- **76 officials of public institutions** participated in a workshop organized by the Court of Appeals of Iquique, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNHCR, given the situation in the northern zone, to **discuss issues related to refugee and migrant children and adolescents, especially those unaccompanied or separated**.



Training sessions for Carabineros in the Tarapacá region. UNHCR/Tito Carlos

LOCAL INTEGRATION AND HOST COMMUNITIES

Engaging with local communities is especially relevant when considering that they have been the most affected by the impact of human mobility in the country. Among the main activities during 2022, it is worth highlighting:

- The intercultural fair on 13 September in Arica to promote diversity and strengthen integration between refugees, migrants, and their host communities. Approximately 200 people attended the activity.
- The project 'Y si fueras tú' ('And if it were you'), carried out by UNHCR and World Vision, sought to raise awareness on issues of discrimination and xenophobia by portraying daily life-damaging situations that are often normalized. In the inaugural exhibition on 25 November in Iquique, 40 refugee and migrant children and their families participated.
- Interventions at the Plácido Villarroel intercultural school on 11 and 12 October in Iquique, in which awareness-raising activities on discrimination and xenophobia were carried out with 120 children.
- A neighborhood integration initiative organized by UNHCR, IOM, and Fútbol Más Foundation within the framework of the R4V Platform, which benefited more than 140 children through sports in Iquique.
- Improvement of 400 square meters in the "Ike Ike" kindergarten in Iquique, setting up new outdoor educational spaces. This initiative benefited 152 children and the members of the teaching and auxiliary teams.

KEY RESPONSE INDICATORS

8,902

People were assisted, and over **30,800** assistances were delivered in Northern Chile during 2022

46%

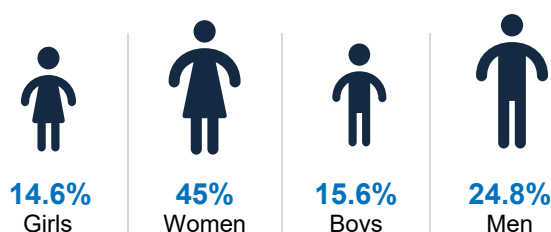
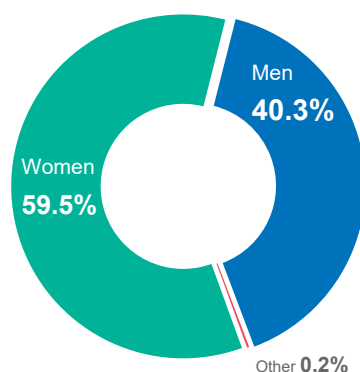
of the assistance carried by UNHCR and partners in Chile was delivered in the regions of Arica and Parinacota, Antofagasta, and Tarapacá.

78%

of direct assistance was delivered to **Venezuelan refugees and migrants**, while **4.5%** reached people from host communities

89%

of the total assistance was related to Protection services (**68%**), Shelter (**11%**), and Multipurpose cash interventions (**10%**).



* Sex and gender disaggregation is per total number of assistances delivered

Main Challenges and New Opportunities



- Refugees and migrants face different challenges in complying with the requirements established by the legal framework for regularization of their legal status, including access to the asylum system. **UNHCR is working with legal partners to provide legal advice and orientation to support them.**



- **Access to the territory** and reception conditions

- Proper and timely **access to basic public services**



- **Registration and identification** of cases with specific needs

- Implementation of adequate and articulated **support spaces**

- The safety of the population forced to flee and others in need of international protection, threatened by increased **discrimination and xenophobia**



- Obtainment of figures on flows and **cross-border movements**, particularly entries and exits through unauthorized border crossings



- **Coordination with key actors** (UNS agencies, CSOs, NGOs, and public institutions), considering the complementarity of the UNHCR's response (e.g., through the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants of Tarapacá, the regional operative arm of the R4V National Platform)

[CONTACT US]

Rafael Numi

Senior Reporting Assistant
numi@unhcr.org

Carolina Fuentes

Senior Reporting Assistant
fuentesca@unhcr.org

Information Management Team

im.chile@unhcr.org

www.unhcr.org



Improvement of educational spaces in Iquique. UNHCR/Paulina Martinez