

# AMERICAS OPERATIONAL UPDATE

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2023

*Brazil. Maintaining safe spaces and shelters in border areas is among the activities that can be impacted by the lack of funding for UNHCR in the Americas. © UNHCR/Vincent Tremeau*

*“We strongly support the generous response given by countries to those with humanitarian needs, highlighting the importance of adopting a hemispheric approach, as set out in the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection. Nevertheless, the lack of funds jeopardizes critical activities, including shelter and humanitarian assistance, as well as financial support to cover basic needs and provide health care, which further hinders people’s ability to integrate and contribute to their host communities.” (...) “Addressing human mobility in the region requires a combination of actions with rapid impact and medium- and long-term processes. UNHCR is fully committed to joining these initiatives and to working with States and other interested partners in strengthening protection and solutions in all phases of displacement.”*

**José Samaniego**

UNHCR’s Director of the Regional Bureau for the Americas.

The press release is available [here](#)

## HIGHLIGHTS

As the number of refugees and migrants crossing the Darién jungle between Panama and Colombia reached **record levels**, UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) [called](#) for a comprehensive, regional, and collaborative approach to address the **serious protection risks and urgent humanitarian needs** of people on the move in Latin America and the Caribbean. **Over 400,000 people** (63 per cent Venezuelans) crossed Panama’s Darién jungle by 28 September, representing an almost **threefold increase** compared to the same period in 2022.

More than 4.4 million people still face difficulties accessing food, shelter, health care, education and formal employment in Latin America and the Caribbean, despite generous efforts by host countries to regularize and integrate refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The [Refugee and Migrant Needs Analysis \(RMNA\)](#) for 2023, conducted by the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), which is co-led by UNHCR and IOM, shows that almost **70 per cent of those in-destination remain in need of humanitarian assistance**.

Faced with a record number of people on the move in the region, [UNHCR and its partners are confronting major challenges](#) in their capacity to respond due to insufficient funding for their operations. According to the [“Critical Needs in the Americas”](#) report released on 21 August, by end July **only**

**a third of UNHCR’s financial needs** in 2023 were covered – with donations received from individuals, the private sector and the international community. The report highlighted the **most critically underfunded operations**, with persistent needs in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Honduras, among others. Since the release of that report, donors stepped up their support to UNHCR in the Americas, reaching 41% level of funding as of 4 October 2023.

Given the urgent need to redouble efforts to address the crisis of human mobility and displacement in the region and look for solutions, while addressing the needs of women and girls and mitigating the risks they face, [UNHCR and UN Women signed a joint work plan](#) that will run until the end of 2024.














*Ecuador. Venezuelan woman steps in to bridge digital gap in Ecuadorian neighbourhood. © UNHCR/Santiago Arcos Veintimilla*

# UNHCR'S RESPONSE IN THE AMERICAS

By mid-2023, the Americas hosted 22.1 million people protected/assisted by UNHCR, surpassing the initial projections of 20.6 million in the 2023 Global Appeal. This poses new challenges and opportunities for UNHCR to provide protection and find solutions for those in need in the region.

UNHCR supports countries in the Americas to enhance protection-sensitive entry systems, ensure access to asylum, and other protection-oriented arrangements, stabilize populations in communities of destination, origin, transit, and return, and expand solutions via inclusion, integration, resettlement and complementary pathways. As part of its efforts to promote the legal and socio-economic inclusion of refugees and persons forcibly displaced, UNHCR also supports ongoing regularization efforts undertaken by governments in the region and works along with local and municipal governments (cities of solidarity initiative), as well as development and international financial institutions, and the private sector.

 <p><b>63,272</b> people who received <b>core relief items</b> (food or non-food items)</p>	 <p><b>122,487</b> people provided with <b>temporary collective shelter solutions</b></p>	 <p><b>414,790</b> people receiving <b>legal assistance</b></p>
 <p><b>96,139</b> people receiving <b>cash assistance</b></p>	 <p><b>43,205</b> people accessing two-way communication mechanisms to <b>voice their needs/concerns/feedback</b></p>	 <p><b>52,086</b> people who received <b>mental health/ psychosocial services</b></p>
 <p><b>204,865</b> people reached through <b>information, awareness, and/or sensitization sessions</b></p>	 <p><b>12,533</b> Identified <b>gender-based violence survivors</b> who <b>receive gender-based violence response services</b>.</p>	 <p><b>52,086</b> people who <b>received WASH-related kits</b></p>
 <p><b>211,761</b> Individuals accessing <b>community centres, support spaces, or other structures</b></p>	 <p><b>20,111</b> people participating in <b>peaceful coexistence projects</b></p>	

## ONGOING INITIATIVES...



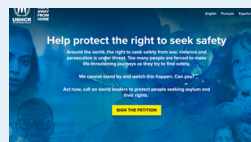
**PERU.** UNHCR [signed](#) an Interinstitutional Agreement with the National Superintendence of Migrations (SNM) to support the new regularization process.



**URUGUAY.** On 21 August, the Municipality of Montevideo [renewed its commitment to the Cities of Solidarity initiative](#) by signing a new cooperation framework with UNHCR.



**PANAMA.** [El Tucán](#), a UNHCR's Communication with Communities (CwC) initiative, informs about the risks of the crossing of the Darien jungle and contributes to evidence-based decision-making. By August, El Tucán had received 1,470,000 views on social media.



**GLOBAL.** UNHCR [launches](#) 'Hope Away from Home' campaign urging global action and solidarity with people forced to flee. In Panama, UNHCR and Alianza Francesa held a [photographic exhibition](#) to celebrate the campaign.



**EL SALVADOR.** In the frame of the [¡De Una! project](#), UNHCR, UNDP and ILO will implement initiatives to support youth in communities at most risk with the support from the UN Peacebuilding Fund. The project will put into practice innovative approaches to combat youth exclusion and prevent violence and forced displacement, including an approach that combines humanitarian, development, and peace responses.

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

### VENEZUELA: UNHCR HELPS INDIGENOUS VENEZUELANAS TO STAY ON THEIR LANDS



The Pemón people are the guardians of an immense nature reserve in southeastern Venezuela. But poverty is pushing many off their traditional lands. The collapse of wildcat mines is a common occurrence, and mining communities are rife with dengue and sexually transmitted infections, as well as alcoholism, violence, and drug abuse. UNHCR is helping improve daily life in communities by rehabilitating and stocking local first aid clinics and installing solar streetlights. Read more [here](#).



# COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

UNHCR and WFP’s “[Mixed Movements Monitoring Report](#)” corresponding to the second quarter 2023 highlights that **three out of every five respondents cited violence-related factors among the primary reasons for leaving their country of origin**. The report highlights a notable increase in the diversity of protection incidents, with particular rises in cases of bribery, physical threats, assault, abuse, and fraud. At the Panama-Costa Rica border, food security has further deteriorated compared to the first quarter, with more than half of the respondents (75 per cent) reporting that they consumed just one meal (42 per cent) or did not eat at all during the previous day (33 per cent). Data collection for this report took place from April to June 2023 in border areas and other key transit locations of the main countries along the route, including Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, and Honduras.

## DON'T MISS...



**COLOMBIA.** Colombian lawyer puts life on the line to [serve communities under threat](#).



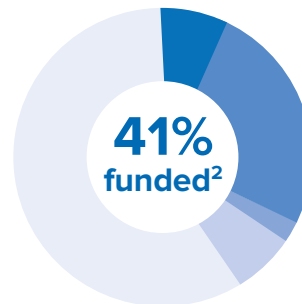
**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.** Faces of compassion: six humanitarians [helping](#) asylum-seekers at the U.S. southern border.



**BRAZIL.** “The [revalidation process](#) was very important for me; it was like rescuing a part of my identity.”

## FUNDING THE RESPONSE IN 2023 (AS OF 4 OCTOBER 2023)

UNHCR’s humanitarian response in the Americas is made possible thanks to the generous support of major donors who have contributed unrestricted funding to UNHCR’s global operations and to donors who have contributed directly to UNHCR operations in the Americas. UNHCR is appealing for \$827.4 million in funding in 2023 to respond to the most pressing needs in the Americas. As of 4 October, donors had pledged \$336.3 million.



**US\$ 827.4 million**

# SPOTLIGHT PUBLICATIONS IN THE AMERICAS



**ECUADOR.** Operational Update March-August 2023



**MEXICO.** Internal displacement in Mexico- July to December 2022



**MCO PANAMA:** Trust the Toucan Results Report



**REGIONAL:** Livelihoods thematic update- August 2023

### Thanks to all our donors in 2023 (as of 4 October):

Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Luxembourg | Norway | Netherlands | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe (CAF) | CERF | UN Children Fund | UN Joint Programmes | UN Peacebuilding Fund | UN Programme On HIV/AIDS | UNESCO | UN Women

### And to our private donors:

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