

Bolivia

January 2024

Hosting some **16,810 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, most of them from Venezuela**, and estimating **more than 70,000 people in transit** through the country in 2023, 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, hygiene kits, and **cash assistance**. Moreover, UNHCR supports the country through strengthening their autonomous businesses. UNHCR provides its presence in border areas and limited **assistance, protection and livelihoods** support in **main urban centres** (La Paz, available for them. These risks are El Alto and Santa Cruz de la Sierra), **and** exacerbated by the increase of **border areas**, with established support spaces in Desaguadero and Oruro, and **against forcibly displaced people** in regular monitoring of Pisiga. **increased risks** due to adverse weather and geographical conditions (high altitude), limited State protection response mechanisms in border areas and limited **discrimination and xenophobia** against forcibly displaced people in host communities.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

16,810

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

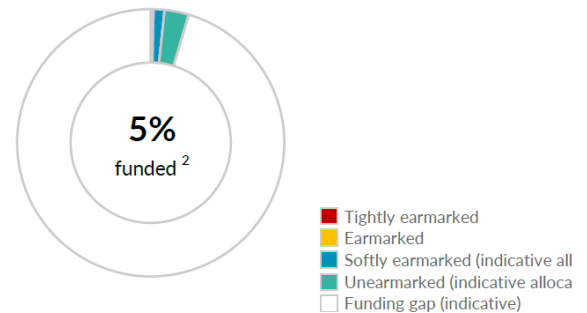
Source: Official information provided by the Government, as of June 2023

FUNDING

USD 56.2 MILLION

requested for the Argentina

Multi-Country Office including Bolivia



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 and Bolivia:

- 31 National staff and affiliated workforce
- 6 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

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. 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, and Offices of Comprehensive Legal Services for GBV situations**.
- UNHCR and the **National Office of the Ombudsperson** have a cooperation agreement, whose main objective is the strengthening of technical capacities to provide orientation and legal assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees in Bolivia, among other joint activities that benefit forcibly displaced people. UNHCR is supporting the Office of the Ombudsperson in Desaguadero, within the border Assistance and Orientation Point (PAO). With this presence, it is possible to benefit six other rural municipalities in the border area.
- UNHCR supports the work of several international and local civil society organizations to implement activities not only in **La Paz**, but also in **El Alto, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Oruro** and at border places such as **Desaguadero** (border with Peru) and to **Pisiga** (border with Chile).
- UNHCR has partnership agreements with **World Vision, Caritas Bolivia, Caritas Switzerland and Fundación Scalabrini Bolivia (FUSB)**. With **Caritas Bolivia**, UNHCR provides basic humanitarian assistance to forcibly displaced people, mostly through cash assistance. In partnership with **World Vision**, who cooperates with the **National Office of the Ombudsperson's Office**, provides child protection services, 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. 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** and supports entrepreneurship and labour inclusion through NGO **Conexión**.
- 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 2024 for the **Southern Cone** complementing Governmental capacities in main urban and border areas of the region.

Main Activities

- Through UNHCR's partner agencies, forcibly displaced people receive **information and orientation** regarding access to rights, protection and local integration opportunities.
- Improve reception conditions and capacities at the main entry land **border** of forcibly displaced people (Desaguadero, border with Peru) through joint **support spaces** - called Assistance and Orientation Points (PAO)- acting as a "one-stop" point where they have **access to information**, connectivity and communication services, **legal orientation** and **primary humanitarian assistance**, including accommodation, food and warm clothes. As of 2024 a new PAO is in place Oruro (on the route to the border with Chile), strengthening UNHCR's response capacity along the transit route of forcibly displaced people.
- Provide **humanitarian assistance** to vulnerable forcibly displaced people upon arrival in main urban centres and at borders to ensure that their basic needs are covered using in-kind (including warm clothes and first aid kits) assistance. For those most vulnerable wanting to stay in Bolivia, UNHCR provides as well **cash-based assistance**.
- Provide **temporary shelter** to the most vulnerable forcibly displaced people on the route, whether in shelters run by UNHCR partners or through a network of hostels. UNHCR also supports infrastructure improvements of **shelters** to improve the quality of assistance provided to forcibly displaced people.
- Shelters run by partners have **child-friendly spaces** which provide a safe space for forcibly displaced children to learn and play. UNHCR and its partners also provide 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.
- 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. UNHCR and partners carry out regular protection dialogues and empowerment activities with refugee women, on top of the assistance to individual cases.
- Provide **seed capital, and capacity building** to forcibly displaced people enabling them to successfully **generate their own income**, either by starting their own business or reinforcing already set up entrepreneurship.
- 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.
- 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.

- Provide **training and advice to other national and departmental authorities** involved in humanitarian response and access to fundamental rights of forcibly displaced people (i.e., National Migration Directorate, Office of Public Defenders for Children and Adolescents, gender protection local authorities, security forces, among others).
- UNHCR also advocates 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.

Results in 2023

- In 2023, UNHCR through its partners has provided support to **1,566** persons in vulnerable situations through **multi-purpose cash assistance**, 85 per cent of the assistance was spent in local stores or markets, evidencing the multiplier effect of cash assistance in the host communities. Some other **1,948** with **in-kind assistance** to cover their basic needs; **2,695** vulnerable individuals were provided with **temporary accommodation**; **3,561** individuals were provided with **free legal assistance, orientation, information** and referral to various public services providers; **886 refugee and migrant children and adolescents received specialised child protection services by UNHCR** and/or partners. Additionally, some **1,143** people received **primary health care** attention, while some **841** people received **support to join the labour market** and **678** people received **training in international protection and refugee law**.

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 | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | Migration MPTF | UN Programme On HIV/AIDS | Private donors Argentina | Private donors Australia | Private donors China | Private donors Germany | Private donors Italy | Private donors Japan | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors Spain | Private donors Sweden | Private donors United Kingdom | Private donors USA

External Relations

CONTACTS

José Manuel Cáceres, Regional Reporting Officer, Regional Office for Southern Latin America, caceres@unhcr.org, Tel: +54 11 4815-7870

LINKS

- Website: <https://acnur.org/pais/bolivia>
- X: [@ACNURSuramerica](#)
- Facebook: [/ACNUR](#)
- Instagram: [acnur](#)