

# Venezuela Situation

January 2018

In Colombia a **growing number of Venezuelans** are arriving with **increasing humanitarian needs** and less means than those who arrived in earlier months.

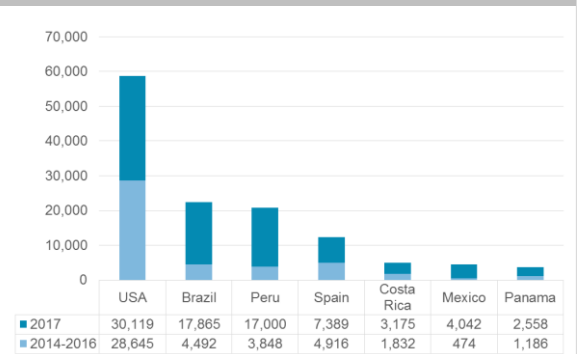
The Human Rights' Commission in Brazil reported **alarming conditions in two Roraima shelters** and asked to prioritize people with specific needs.

During the second half of January there was an average of **1,000 Venezuelans** crossing via Tumbes into **Peru on a daily basis**.

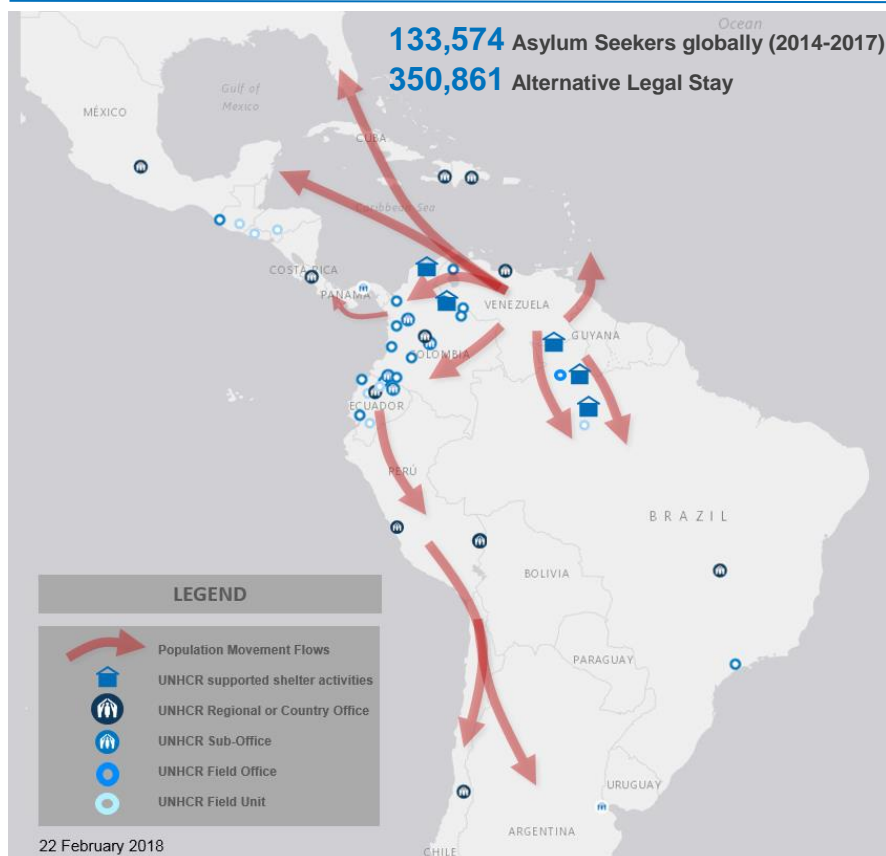
Many Venezuelans arriving in neighbouring countries are in need of international protection and humanitarian assistance, particularly access to shelter, health, education, and other essential services. Host countries and governments receiving Venezuelans have been working hard to provide them with an appropriate response but they are also under increasing strain. UNHCR has been working to complement governments' efforts and while there have been commendable actions, greater international support is needed in critical sectors, such as registration, documentation, shelter, health and education to ensure that communities have the necessary capacity to respond.

According to combined government estimates, over 130,000 Venezuelans have lodged asylum claims since 2014, over 80,000 in 2017 alone. The majority are living in the Americas. However, many more are also seeking protection through other means, such as other legal forms of stay that may be faster to access and provide the right to work, access to health and education.

Asylum-seekers in main host countries



**133,574** Asylum Seekers globally (2014-2017)  
**350,861** Alternative Legal Stay



\*All figures on asylum seekers or Venezuelans abroad are based on governments' data.



UNHCR registering people arriving in Brazil's Tancredo Neves shelter.

Alternative Legal Stay

Location name	Source	Data date	Population
Chile	Government	10 Feb 2018	24.1% 84,479
Colombia	Government	10 Feb 2018	19.6% 68,734
Ecuador	Government	10 Feb 2018	14.4% 50,502
Panama	Government	10 Feb 2018	13.9% 48,900
Argentina	Government	24 Nov 2017	11.7% 40,884
Peru	Government	10 Feb 2018	7.1% 25,000
Mexico	Government	10 Feb 2018	4.6% 16,220
Brazil	Government	10 Feb 2018	2.4% 8,470
Costa Rica	Government	24 Nov 2017	1.6% 5,600
Uruguay	Government	24 Nov 2017	0.6% 2,072

## Brazil

### Operational context

- The number of Venezuelan nationals seeking asylum or temporary residence permits has doubled in the second half of January in Boa Vista, capital of the border state of Roraima. The current registration capacity is of 150 people per day, while 407 people are requesting an appointment daily.
- As Venezuelans continue to arrive through Pacaraima into Roraima and move onward to Manaus, Amazonas state, authorities and communities are coming under increasing strain to provide essential services. The Brazilian National Human Rights Council (CNDH) went on mission to northern Brazil and recommended opening an Emergency Migration Management Office involving federal, state and municipal authorities, to improve integrated responses for Venezuelans arriving, and the adoption of referral protocols for the three Venezuelan indigenous groups. The CNDH also praised international organizations, including UNHCR, and other UN Agencies, for their efforts to address xenophobia and for technical advice on an “internalization” plan, aimed at voluntarily relocating Venezuelans to other parts of the country.<sup>1</sup>

### UNHCR’s response and partnerships



#### PROTECTION

- UNHCR delivered Recognition Letters to the Mayor of Manaus and the Governor of Amazonas for their work with the Warao during 2017. The Manaus government also agreed to reopen the Coroado shelter (closed 3 January due to the decreasing number of Warao beneficiaries) to host non-indigenous Venezuelans, as their number has increased substantially with over 3,000 staying in the city. The remaining indigenous living in the shelter were referred to houses rented by the Manaus’ municipality, which is also considering renting a new house to offer more shelter to those in need.
- UNHCR attended the first Pacaraima coordination meeting chaired by the Mayor of the border town. Three main topics were discussed: new arrivals and access to social services; Warao shelter and proposals for a coordinated response; authorities’ need to enhance security forces’ capacities to respond to a higher influx. The Mayor pointed out that they do not have the capacity nor the resources to properly respond to the current influx and therefore require more support.
- Despite efforts, in Manaus there is still a lack of prenatal care and shelter for pregnant Warao women or those with newborn children.



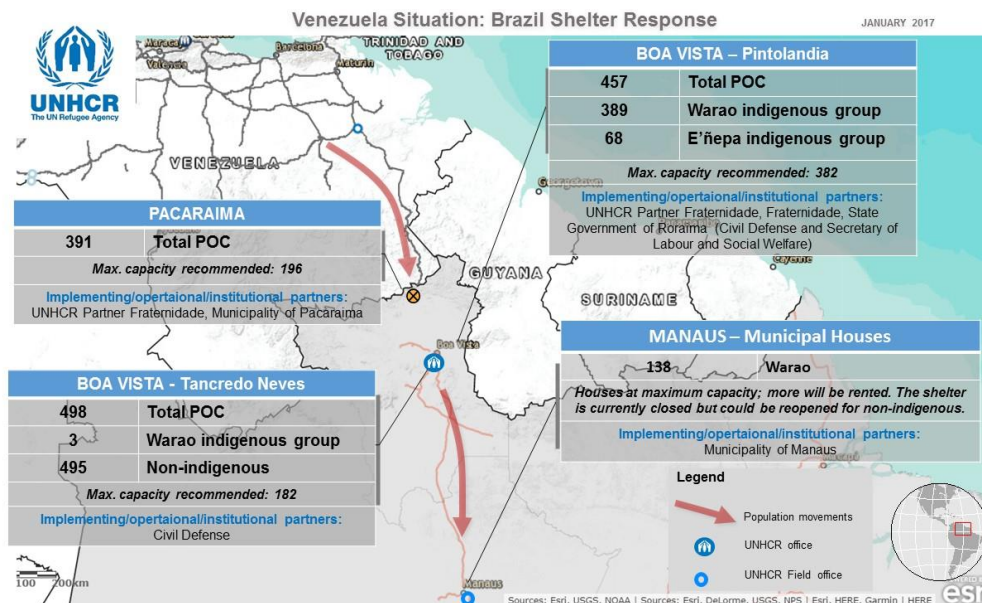
#### SHELTER

- The shelter response in Brazil extends along the corridor where Venezuelans are arriving which extends from Pacaraima to Manaus in the Amazonas State. Over 1,000 people are benefitting from the response led by the government and supported by UNHCR and its partners.
- Despite efforts, all three main shelters created in Roraima by the government and supported by UNHCR and its partners have exceeded the recommended capacity, and as a result people resort to sleeping on the streets or in public spaces. In Pacaraima, UNHCR and the Municipality are exploring shelter alternatives.
- In Boa Vista and Manaus UNHCR is complementing the response of the Federal Police, the entity responsible for receiving Venezuelans seeking asylum or special stay permits. UNHCR has sponsored volunteers who have increased registration capacities and who are applying a protection monitoring tool to better understand the needs of those arriving. UNHCR also provided material support, including technical equipment to shorten registration time and agreed to develop an online scheduling system to shorten long waiting periods.

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<sup>1</sup> See full report: <https://goo.gl/ugbWYu>

- Safety, hygiene and sanitary conditions are below accepted standards and continue to be a main concern for UNHCR. The CNDH reported alarming conditions in Pacaraima and Tancredo Neves shelters, and asked that due to the high number of individuals requesting shelter, priority be given to families, children, older persons and people with specific needs.



- UNHCR continues to support infrastructure improvements in the Pacaraima, Pintolandia, and Tancredo Neves shelters, including the construction of food storage spaces, sanitation and distribution areas.
- NGO ADRA, with UNHCR and Civil Defense's support, has administered 150 influenza vaccines in the Tancredo Neves shelter, prioritizing in accordance with the Age Gender and Diversity Policy.
- UNHCR also signed an agreement with Cooperativa Cinco Polos to provide food in the Pacaraima shelter until 13 March 2018, taking into account the particular nutrition needs of the Warao.


**EDUCATION**

- UNHCR, the Secretary of Education and FUNAI, the National Indigenous Foundation are working together to enroll children and adolescents living in the shelters, including those who don't have the necessary documentation, such as school records, translated to Portuguese, into the school system in Roraima. Considering the indigenous children and youth sheltered in Pintolandia, FUNAI is researching ways to minimize cultural misunderstandings, such as capacity-building courses for teachers and the possibility of hiring an indigenous school monitor.
- Meanwhile, indigenous children have been enrolled in schools in Manaus and a Warao teacher will be contracted for one of the houses<sup>2</sup> rented by the municipality.
- In addition, UNHCR and Fraternidade provided support to 17 indigenous Warao sheltered at Pintolandia to enroll in a Portuguese language class offered by the Education for Youth and Adults program.
- During 2017 UNHCR's partner NGO IMDH delivered 189 cash grants, benefiting 434 people in Roraima, with the number of beneficiaries gradually increasing throughout the year.


<sup>2</sup> On 19 January the Prosecutors Office, the Public Defender Office and the Labour Office issued Recommendation No. 01/2018 requesting that the State of Amazonas and Municipality of Manaus implement a SOP to facilitate access of PoC to public education network, based on Federal Ministry of Education laws that guarantees access for undocumented children and adolescents.

## Colombia

### Operational Context

- UNHCR's monitoring in five border departments confirms growing numbers of Venezuelans arriving with increasing humanitarian needs and less means than those who arrived in earlier months, forcing many to remain on the streets, and creating tensions in host communities. UNHCR is working with the government to expand shelter options and advocating for protection-oriented arrangements to reduce vulnerability and dependence on assistance.
- Meanwhile, the cease-fire between the government and the National Liberation Army guerilla (ELN by its Spanish acronym) expired at midnight on 9 January. Shortly thereafter the ELN resumed armed attacks, and in response the government decided to withdraw from further talks. Since the end of the cease-fire 14 attacks have been carried out, four in the border municipalities of Arauca, one in Norte de Santander and another in Boyacá. The situation has increased the risk to individuals in these departments, including Venezuelans and returning Colombians. Humanitarian access to these regions for UNHCR, UN and NGO partners continues to be limited.

### UNHCR's response and partnerships

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- PROTECTION**
- In response to a request by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and following discussions between President Santos and the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, UNHCR carried out a mission to Cúcuta, a border city with over 3,000 Venezuelans living on the streets, to evaluate sites for the establishment of reception centres in coordination with key partners. Within this context, authorities in the city asked approximately 700 Venezuelans sleeping in a public park to move on, evicting 180 people from this group on 24 January and taking them to the border to revise their documentation. UNHCR is working with local and national authorities to promote identification of Venezuelans in need of international protection and advocating for non-returns.
  - A network of law students supported by UNHCR to provide legal assistance to Venezuelans, has assisted 392 individuals (127 cases) in Arauca in the first three months of operation. The cases were almost equally divided between those related to Venezuelans seeking legal status in Colombia, those of mixed families seeking Colombian nationality for a child or naturalization procedures, and those related to birth registration.
  - In order to manage flows in a more orderly manner and place visibility material to increase information on access to asylum and services, UNHCR has contributed financially to the establishment of metallic barriers for the Simón Bolívar Bridge in Cúcuta, the main crossing point between Venezuela and Colombia.
  - UNHCR is working closely with the Office of the Mayor of Bucaramanga to develop a rights-based response for Venezuelans arriving, after UNHCR was asked for support in providing a humanitarian response and strengthening access to existing services. The city also joined UNHCR's "SomosPanasColombia" campaign to reduce xenophobia.
  - In the first weeks of January UNHCR carried out a monitoring mission to border Department of Vichada where authorities confirmed that Venezuelans are arriving through both the formal border crossing but also informal border crossings. Authorities reported that 13 Venezuelan children, mostly indigenous, had died due to malnutrition, while 229 under the age of five are at serious risk. In view of these and other protection challenges, UNHCR is reinforcing coordination with authorities and partners, e.g. with the Catholic Church, to enhance assistance.
  - On 28 December UNHCR and Caritas Colombia supported the local government of Riohacha (Guajira) in providing assistance, services and referrals for 300 Venezuelans. Those in need of international protection were referred to the asylum procedure.
  - By 31 December, UNHCR's anti-xenophobia "SomosPanas" campaign had reached over 2.6 million Colombians and hosted community events with Venezuelan and local populations in key border areas, with the aim of fostering understanding and reducing xenophobia. Authorities both at local and national level have welcomed the campaign.

## ECUADOR

- Based on official migration movement figures, UNHCR estimates that there could be as many as 93,000 Venezuelans currently in Ecuador.
- December registered a considerable increase in the arrivals of Venezuelans with 47,410<sup>3</sup> new arrivals, 86% of which were registered at the Rumichaca International Bridge.

### UNHCR's response and partnerships



PROTECTION

- UNHCR continues advocating with authorities for easier access of Venezuelans to migratory alternative pathways under the recently adopted Human Mobility Law (e.g. lessening of requirements, especially relating to the need to legalize documents in Venezuela.)
- The operation is also strengthening its presence at the border with Colombia where the majority of Venezuelans are arriving to increase protection outreach and service delivery.
- Legal and socio-economic orientation, humanitarian assistance and support to access livelihoods opportunities are provided to the most vulnerable families in need of protection through UNHCR's partners.
- UNHCR's partner HIAS assisted 31 asylum-seeker families comprising 85 persons during the first 2 weeks of January 2018. 3 families (15 people) received emergency shelter assistance and 4 families (9 persons) received support to access food.

## PERU

- According to the National Migration Office, by 25 January more than 75,000 Venezuelans who had entered Peru since August 2017 were still legally present as tourists. A further 25,000 obtained the Special Stay Permit (Permiso Especial de Permanencia -PTP) between February 2017 and January 2018.
- From 1 January to 23 January, the Special Commission for Refugees Secretariat (CEPR) in Lima received some 1,000 asylum claims.

### Operational Context

- On 23 January a new Supreme Decree<sup>4</sup> extended the PTP for Venezuelan nationals who arrive prior to 31 December 2018 and apply by 30 June 2019. The PTP new requirements include: 1) residence (legal or illegal) in the country; 2) Certificate of proof of absence of criminal records; 3) A fee of PEN 41.90 (USD 13.10); 4) It maintains the waiver of all previous migratory fines or fees, and allows flexibility in terms of proof of birth documentation.<sup>5</sup>
- According to the National Migration Office, during the first 24 hours following the issuance of the new PTP more than 1,700 appointments were registered online.

### UNHCR's response and partnerships



PROTECTION

- UNHCR has reinforced its presence in Lima, deploying a protection staff member to set up a National Office reporting to the UNHCR Regional Office in Buenos Aires, but co-located with UNDP.
- UNHCR's partner Encuentros-SJS, has reinforced its teams in Lima and Tumbes at the northern border with Ecuador. At the Encuentros national meeting, UNHCR conducted training on international refugee protection; planning, implementation and reporting and discussions on priority activities for 2018.

<sup>3</sup> These are official numbers of arrivals shared by the authorities, these do not necessarily represent people who stay in the country.

<sup>4</sup> (DS) No. 001-2018-IN

<sup>5</sup> The Decree is available at: <http://bit.ly/2DE5QmE>

- The CEPR has increased its capacity to register 800 cases a day in Lima, which includes the issuance of a provisional work permit. The high number of applicants continue to lead to long wait times for registration and issuance of documentation.
- UNHCR will propose a simplified referral mechanism for the CEPR to prioritize the provision of documentation and the analysis of cases identified by UNHCR or its partners, based on specific needs, persons manifestly in need of international protection or a protection intervention.
- UNHCR is also providing financial and technical support to design a new registry and data base system that decentralizes the procedure to the 9 offices of the MFA (ODEs).
- UNHCR partner is conducting regular visits to the PER-ECU border crossing point (CEBAF) and reported an increasing presence of Venezuelans entering irregularly and highlighted different situations which need to be addressed: 1) lack of travel documents (Passports or minors' IDs) due to difficulties in obtaining documentation in Venezuela; 2) Venezuelans who transit irregularly (through COL, ECU, PER); 3) Venezuelans with forged migration stamps from COL-ECU.
- Encuentros reported an increase of prices for local land transport tickets from Tumbes to Piura or to Chiclayo, routes Venezuelans use to continue their journey south to Lima or Chile.

## Southern Caribbean

- During the reporting period, the first confirmed deaths at sea of Venezuelans traveling by boat to Curacao were reported, when five bodies washed ashore after a boat was reported to be carrying some 30 persons was shipwrecked. Other survivors are still missing or believed to be in hiding in Curacao.
- UNHCR undertook a multi-country mission to Aruba, Curacao, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago from 8-16 January to assess the impact of increased Venezuelan arrivals.

### CONTACTS

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