

# VENEZUELAN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN COLOMBIA

January – September 2018

According to official Colombian government figures, by the end of October 2018 more than **1 million Venezuelans** are estimated to be living in Colombia. This is an increase from less than 39,000

Venezuelans living in Colombia at the end of 2015. Refugees and migrants have settled not only in border areas, but also in urban centres across the county. More than 23.5% are in Bogota alone.

People are arriving with progressively more urgent humanitarian and protection needs. The GIFMM supports the Government with technical assistance to respond to these needs.

*This report covers activities from the first nine months of the year and data published on 31 October. It is produced by the national Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM) and consolidates information from its members regarding the operational response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela, returning Colombians and host communities.*

## CONTEXT

- The movement of refugees and migrants from Venezuela to Colombia includes: people who have a Special Stay Permit; those who are in transit towards Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Argentina; those who enter temporarily to acquire food, medicine and other basic products, and visit relatives; and Colombian returnees and mixed families.
- More than 1 million Venezuelans have settled not only in border areas, but also in urban centres across the county. In addition, returning Colombians and mixed Colombian-Venezuelan families are settling in Colombia. Transnational indigenous people (Yukpa, Mutilon Bari and Wayuu), who have lived on the Venezuelan side, are entering Colombia in vulnerable conditions.
- A total of 233,806 of 442,000 Venezuelans registered in a mass registration exercise (RAMV for its Spanish acronym) which was led by the government between April and July, have obtained a Special Stay Permit (PEP) enabling them to remain in Colombia regularly for up to two years, with full access to their basic rights.
- Venezuelan refugees and migrants continue to cross Colombia by foot (known as 'walkers') towards key cities in the country, or towards Ecuador and other countries. The most direct route to Ecuador from Cúcuta is 1,430 kilometres, which can take more than one month of walking in difficult and dangerous conditions. The first section of the journey, the 195 kilometres between Cúcuta and Bucaramanga, includes an ascent from 320 to 2,900 metres above sea level (Páramo de Berlin) and through areas controlled by armed groups.
- Refugees and migrants have urgent humanitarian and protection needs. Access to health, shelter, education and drinking water are some of the pressing needs identified. For example, only 48.7% of school age children registered in the government's mass registration exercise (RAMV), are currently attending school.
- Lack of regular status creates key protection risks including labour and sexual exploitation, situations of discrimination and difficulty in accessing basic services.

## KEY STATISTICS\*

- **1,032,000** refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Colombia.
- Of these, **573,322** are in a regular situation, including those with a PEP - **415,298** - and visas.
- **218,098** Venezuelans are in an irregular situation.
- As of 15 October, more than **549,485** Venezuelans have crossed into Colombia and exited the country in 2018 via the Rumichaca International Bridge, on the southern border with Ecuador.
- More than **1.5 million** Venezuelans have Border Mobility Cards enabling them to enter Colombia for up to 7 days to obtain basic goods and services, until the initiative was suspended in February 2018.
- More than **250,000** Colombians have returned from Venezuela in 2018.

*\*Figures published 31 October.*

## OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

*This information includes activities of members of the GIFMM until the end of September, including activities that benefit refugees and migrants coming from Venezuela, returning Colombians and host communities.*

### 1. DIRECT EMERGENCY RESPONSE

#### 1.1 HEALTH

- **The Pan American Health Organization / the World Health Organization (PAHO / WHO)** has supported the immunization of 26,714 refugees and migrants with 61,670 vaccinations; provided mental health care to 742 people; in Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Arauca and Ipiales **PAHO** has installed health assessment reception rooms equipped with medicines, basic supplies and the provision of rapid tests for the care of more than 9,000 refugees and migrants; and trained more than 700 local health professionals in public health in emergencies.
- **PAHO** has supported the Ministry of Health in the mapping of actors as well as the creation and functioning of departmental health boards in Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Arauca and Ipiales.
- **The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** delivered 2,248 long-term and emergency contraceptive methods to public hospitals and other health centres, with 850 women being treated and more than 1,200 women receiving training on prevention of sexual violence and available services.
- **UNFPA** provided training on sexual violence, contraceptive care and voluntary interruption of pregnancy to 12 institutions in 8 municipalities in Norte de Santander, and 13 health centres in 9 municipalities in La Guajira.
- **The Jesuit Refugee Service** contributed to the cost of medical expenses (ultrasound, laboratory tests, specialised medical appointments) for 53 pregnant and lactating women in Cúcuta, Barrancabermeja and Pasto.

#### 1.2 WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

- Arauca, La Guajira and Norte de Santander **Save the Children** delivered 13,900 hygiene kits for children, babies and women, as well as 3,000 dental kits, along with recreational activities that reinforce knowledge about healthy living habits and hygiene.
- In Arauca the Lutheran World Foundation (LWF), in partnership with ACIDI-VOCA, the Christian and Lutheran churches and **UNICEF**, has supported 533 families (1,802 people) through the improvement of water supply wells, delivery of filters, vouchers to purchase hygiene products, training in healthy hygiene habits which collectively has improved the hygiene and living conditions of 800 people. A further 2,400 people have improved access to safe water, personal hygiene kits, menstrual kits and improved health units thanks to these projects.
- **The Colombian Red Cross** installed community drinking fountains in the Immigration Control Post at the Rumichaca International Bridge in Nariño and in the offices of the Colombian Red Cross in Arauca.
- **UNICEF** is rehabilitating water and sanitation systems in Nariño, La Guajira and Arauca.

#### 1.3 HUMANITARIAN TRANSPORT

- Between July 2017- October 2018, **IOM** provided humanitarian transport to more than 3,000 refugees and migrants who have left, either temporarily or permanently, to a place of origin, transit or destination within Colombia or whom are in transit to a third country.

#### 1.4 FOOD SECURITY

**The World Food Program (WFP)** has aided about 90,000 highly vulnerable people facing food insecurity in Arauca, La Guajira, Nariño and Norte de Santander, including hot meals in community kitchens, distribution of unconditional food vouchers and emergency support to school feeding programs. In Cúcuta, Villa del Rosario and Los Patio, **WFP** in partnership with **World Vision International (WVI)**, have supported 2,042 people with food vouchers.



Humanitarian transport assistance for Venezuelans arriving in Ipiales © IOM

- Between May and August, the **UNHCR** and local government supported Orientation and Attention Points in Paraguachón (La Guajira), provided 9,750 units of liquid nutritional supplements to 3,250 Venezuelan children from the ages of 1-5.
- **The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** is working with 1,000 families (approximately 7,000 people), from 17 communities including Wayuu, afro-descendent and peasant communities in the municipalities of Manaure, Riohacha, Maicao, Albania and Uribia of La Guajira, in the rapid recovery of autonomous food production and the protection of their key productive livestock assets.
- **The Adventist Agency for Development and Assistance Resources (ADRA)** has soup kitchens in Villa del Rosario, Santa Marta (temporarily closed due to lack of resources) and a dining room in Arauca. In Bucaramanga, Cali and Medellín, 1,286 families received food packages and workshops on food security and nutrition that were delivered by **WVI**.
- **The Colombian Red Cross (CRC)** delivered 3,248 travel food kits to Venezuelans walking across the departments of: La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Valle del Cauca and Nariño.
- In Arauca the **Lutheran World Foundation (LWF)** provided food assistance through vouchers to 200 Venezuelan families for a three-month period.

### 1.5 NON-FOOD ITEMS

- 1,000 families in Arauca and 1,000 families in the municipality of Tame received solar lamps from **Save the Children**. **The Colombian Red Cross**, with the support of UNHC, delivered 1,259 toilet kits for women and 1259 toilet kits for men.

### 1.6 TEMPORARY ACCOMODATION

- The **IOM**, with the **Colombian Red Cross** and the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) have launched the Migrant Care Centre (CATM) in the border area with Venezuela. The Centre has capacity to receive 240 people. From November 2017-September 2018, more than 4,000 people have been assisted to find temporary lodging. Temporary accommodation assistance has also been provided to more than 2,000 refugees and migrants in other cities including Maicao, Barranquilla, Cúcuta, Bogotá, Cali and Ipiales.

### 1.7 EDUCATION

- **Save the Children**, **The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** and **UNHCR** have developed workshops with 354 teachers and administration personnel from educational institutions in Arauca, Tame, Saravena in Arauca and in the municipalities of Maicao, Riohacha, Villanueva and San Juan in La Guajira. School feeding activities have supported some 7,000 Colombian and Venezuelan children.
- **Save the Children** delivered 1,800 educational kits for students, 60 kits for counsellors and 24 kits for teachers. **UNHCR** delivered 8,000 school kits facilitate access to education in Medellín, Quibdó, Buenaventura, Putumayo, Pasto, Guajira, Arauca, Cúcuta, Barranquilla and Bogotá.
- **UNICEF** manages 19 temporary classrooms within educational institutions in La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Bolívar and Atlántico.
- **WVI** delivered 202 vouchers to children in Cucuta, Villa del Rosario and Los Patios for the purchase of school kits and school hygiene kits.

## 2. PROTECTION RESPONSE

### 2.1 REGISTRATION AND REGULARISATION

- Between April and June, **UNHCR** and **IOM** supported the Colombian government in a mass registration exercise (RAMV for its Spanish acronym) of Venezuelans living irregularly in Colombia. More than 442,000 people were registered in 30 departments of the country.
- **UNHCR** supported more than 34,000 people in this process. Venezuelans registered in the RAMV exercise are eligible to apply for Special Stay Permit and as of 31 October, 233,806 Venezuelans had obtained their Special Stay Permit, more than 16,000 of whom were assisted by **UNHCR**.

## 2.2 INFORMATION AND ORIENTATION

- **UNHCR** has established a network of 13 Orientation and Attention Points (PAOs) providing orientation services and access to rights in key border areas. As of the end of September, more than 5,000 Venezuelans had accessed the PAOs for information. In partnership with El Tiempo, **UNHCR** supported the creation of a micro-site providing information such as safe migratory routes for Venezuelans.
- The **UNHCR** supported Network of Legal Clinics has provided assistance to 633 people as of the end of September. Between July and September, UNHCR assisted 6,000 Venezuelans with information through their partner, Pastoral Social. Additionally, the Colombian National Registry of Civil Status (UDPAV) mobile unit has helped both returned Colombians, as well as Venezuelan children of Colombian parents, in their documentation process. The UDPAV has assisted a total of 20,507 Colombian returnees from Venezuela during the reporting period. The Colombian Red Cross has provided attention to returning Colombians through the National System of Humanitarian Assistance to Return, in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## 2.3 CHILDREN

- **NRC** operates 4 friendly spaces in Arauca and La Guajira which have welcomed 1,695 children and adolescents and 480 adults. These are in addition to 9 child friendly spaces supported by **UNICEF** in La Guajira, Arauca and Nariño (in collaboration with WFP) and mobile units in Atlántico and Arauca.
- **World Vision International (WVI)**, in collaboration with 10 educational institutions and secretariats, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) and religious organisations, have provided 833 children with friendly spaces in schools in Cúcuta, Villa del Rosario y Los Patios. In Bucaramanga, Cali y Medellín, 1,702 children participated in protected spaces in host communities and 1,940 adults participated in training on child protection.
- **WVI** in collaboration with **UNICEF** has provided child friendly spaces to 2,351 children and adolescents from 10 educational institutions in Riohacha, Maicao, Manuare, Fonseca y San Juan del Cesar, 466 teachers have participated in training activities and 587 parents have taken part in parenting workshops.
- **UNHCR**, together with **IOM**, **ICBF** and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has coordinated the creation of 12 protection environments for children in La Guajira, Atlántico, Bogota, Bolivar, Arauca and Cucuta.
- **UNHCR** has designed and implemented 5,000 copies of the "[Mi Viaje](#)" pedagogical booklet, in all of the areas it has an organisational presence in Colombia, to address the needs and rights of children crossing the border.



Venezuelans receive orientation and food assistance at an Orientation and Attention Point in Paraguachón, La Guajira. © UNHCR

## 2.4 SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

- **UNHCR** has developed a Network of Safe Spaces for the protection and prevention of survivors of SGBV and for the protection of children Arauca and Cucuta.

## 2.5 CAMPAIGN AGAINST XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION

- Led by **UNHCR** and supported by **Save the Children**, **UNICEF**, **Plan Foundation**, **UN Women** and other actors, the "Somos Panas Colombia" campaign against xenophobia had reached more than 20 million people by the end of September and has developed specific content to combat the xenophobia faced by Venezuelan women and children.

### 3.0 SOCIOECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INCLUSION

- **WVI** has supported 574 people who have received entrepreneurship training coordinated in partnership with the [National Learning Service](#) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 people from the group have been supported through productive working cooperatives.
- In Arauca, **LWF** improved the livelihoods of 375 families through vouchers and training in income generation. From July to September, **UNHCR** has assisted 250 highly vulnerable Venezuelans with cash-based interventions through their partner Pastoral Social.

## DATA AND ANALYSIS

- **WFP, FAO and UNICEF** have conducted a joint study on food security and nutrition. WFP has assessed the needs of "walkers" in the Department of Nariño.
- **Terre des Hommes-Lausanne, The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and ADRA** carried out exploratory missions on the border with Venezuela to assess the most urgent humanitarian needs.
- **IOM** continued to monitor migration flows with its *Displacement Tracking Matrix* (DTM) tool. The DTM provides an overview of the situation in general and the characteristics of the migratory flow including people who are in transit, crossing and staying in Colombia. The results have served for the formulation of the *Humanitarian Needs Overview*, the *Humanitarian Response Plan*, and the *Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants*.

## COORDINATION

The Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM for its Spanish acronym) works as the strategic coordination space for the operational response in Colombia for refugees and migrants. It is co-led by UNHCR and IOM and has 38 members. The GIFMM has its origins in the Interagency Border Group (GIF) created at the end of 2016, and in 2017 its mandate was expanded. In 2018, it was established as the Interagency Group on Mixed Migration Flows, which broadens and consolidates its mission with the objective of strengthening the operational response. The GIFMM is the national expression of the [regional platform](#), established by UNHCR and IOM, following the decision of the Secretary General.

## MEMBERS OF GIFMM

Action Against Hunger (ACH), Blumont, Caritas Germany, Caritas Switzerland, Colombian Red Cross (CRC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Help in Action, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Labor Organization (ILO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). International Rescue Committee (IRC), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Mercy Corps, Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Office of the Resident Coordinator (ORC) and its Colombia Information Management and Analysis Unit (UMAIC), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH), Oxfam, Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO / WHO), Panamerican Foundation for Development, Pastoral Social, Plan International, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes Lausanne (TdH), the Adventist Agency for Development and Relief Resources (ADRA), UN Habitat, UN Women, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Food Organization and Agriculture (FAO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Program (WFP) and World Vision International.

**For more information please contact:**

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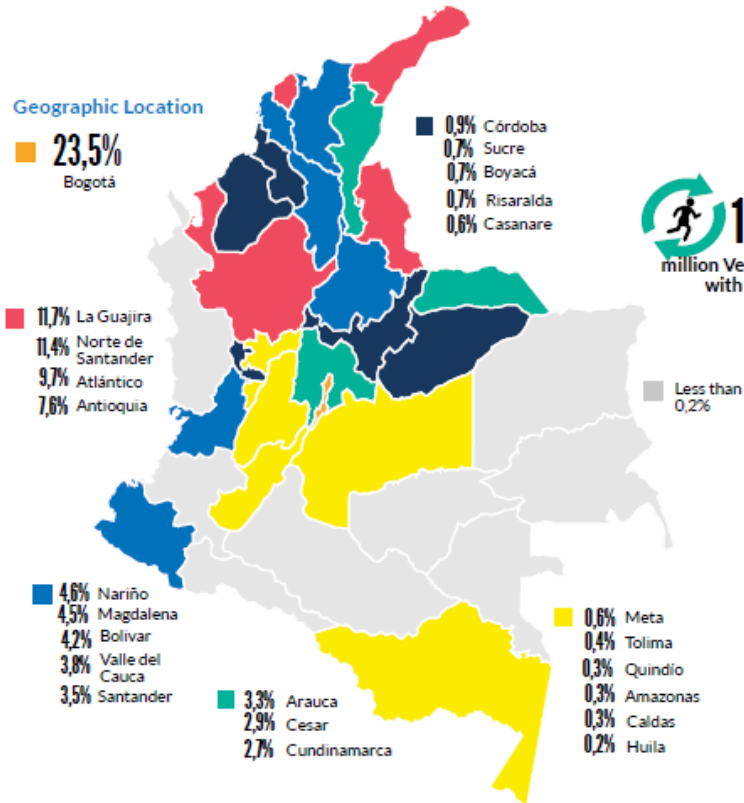
**IOM:** Andrea Lamprea - [alamprea@iom.int](mailto:alamprea@iom.int)

# Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants

Date: 31 of October 2018

# 1,032,016

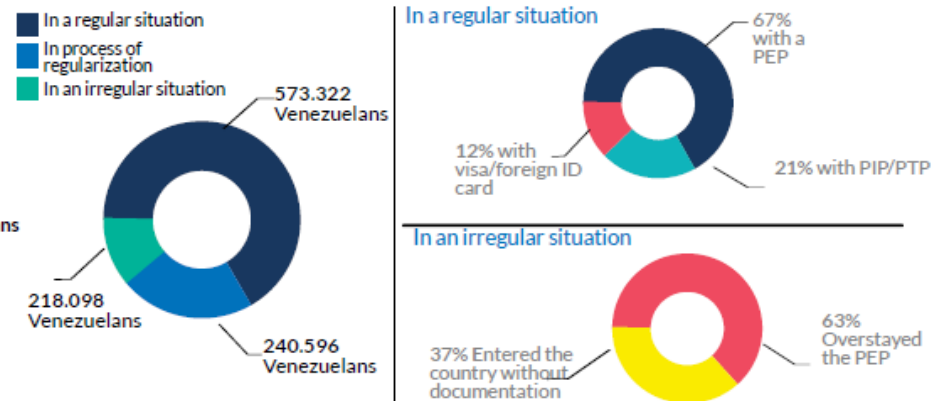
Venezuelans in Colombia



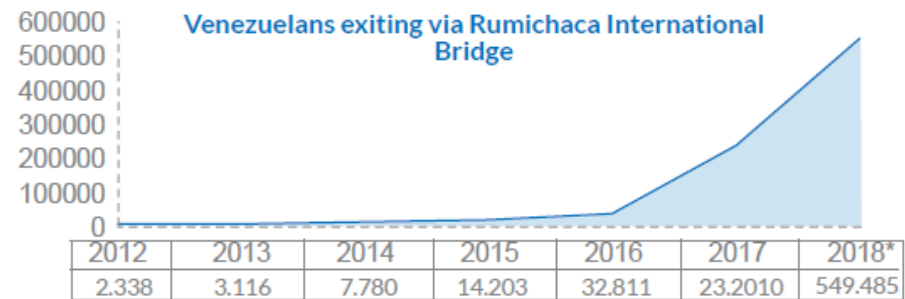
Colombia and Venezuela share a 2,219 km land border, along which there are 7 migratory control points and an undetermined number of informal crossing. Since 2015, the situation in Venezuela has caused an increase in the arrival of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to Colombia

Source: Data from Migración Colombia

## Legal Status of Venezuelans with a Special Stay Permit



Note: Numbers as of 30 September 2018



Note: Numbers as of 15 October 2018