

ECUADOR

Situation Report – August 2019



- On 26 August, the visa requirement for Venezuelans to access the Ecuadorian territory entered into force, as established by the Executive Decree 826 and the Inter-Ministerial agreement 000103/2019. Some peaks in regular entries were registered the previous days before the measure was implemented.
 - From 26 August, regular entries of Venezuelan refugees and migrants through the northern and southern borders decreased significantly, with less than 30 daily entries registered until the end of the month.
- **142,682 people assisted in total.^{1 2}**
 - **114,670 people received humanitarian assistance.**
 - **26,526 people received protection assistance.**
 - **1,492 people were assisted in economic, social, and cultural integration.**
 - **28% of people assisted were women and 56% children.³**
 - **640 public servers were trained on health, human rights, human mobility, and access to refugee status and child protection.**

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

During the reporting period, the influx of Venezuelan refugees and migrants entering Ecuador increased until the 26 August, when a humanitarian visa requirement was established to enter Ecuador.⁴ Entries of approximately 86,000 Venezuelans were registered through the different border points, with daily peaks of 6,000 people the days before the measure entered into force. Less than 30 daily entries were registered from 26 August until the end of the month.

A Contingency Plan for the Province of Carchi, in which the members of the local GTRM and local authorities participated, was activated some days before the implementation of the humanitarian visa requirement. The plan included emergency measures in the expectation that the influx of refugees and migrants allowed to enter without a visa until August 25 could increase. Among others, the following measures were implemented: increase of front desks at the Migration offices, 24-hour operation, strengthening health care points, and installation of temporary rest spaces. On the other hand, it was reported that the authorities deployed police controls in 36 irregular crossing points.

From 26 August (00:00 hours) until the end of the month, the entries of Venezuelans into Ecuadorian territory dropped to a daily average of approximately 30 people. The implementation of the measure caused some 400 Venezuelans to be

¹ The quantitative data measure direct assistance and do not include advocacy or information activities. The numbers displayed correspond to people assisted and not to other measurement units (e.g., institutions, shelters).

² The numbers of people assisted reflect direct and individual assistance interventions. However, those figures may include people who have been assisted through different interventions.

³ Children and teenagers.

⁴ The Executive Decree 826 establishes the requirement of a humanitarian visa exception- or any visa granted by Ecuadorian consulates - for the entry of persons of Venezuelan nationality arriving in Ecuador. It was implemented on 26 August 2019. It also establishes a process of immigration regularization for Venezuelans who had entered the country regularly, before the date of publication of Decree 826, and that meet the documentation requirements (passport, criminal records apostilled and birth certificate for minors) and who have not violated the law in the country.

stranded on the northern border (Rumichaca) and around 250 on the southern border (Huaquillas) during the days following the implementation of the humanitarian visa requirement.

The visa of exception for humanitarian reasons is valid for two years and is processed, initially, online through the Virtual Consulate on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador. Once the application form is completed and if the requirements⁵ are met, a payment of USD 50 for the form is made. Then, the incumbent is placed to be interviewed at the consulates in Caracas, Bogota or Lima. For Venezuelans in Ecuador, this procedure will be carried out at the offices of the Foreign Ministry nationwide. Citizens who entered Ecuador between July 26 and August 25 may apply to other visas that are provided by the Human Mobility Law.

Through the Executive Decree 826, a process of regularization of Venezuelan citizens who already reside in Ecuador and who meet several requirements (having entered Ecuador regularly until 26 August 2019, not having any criminal records, and presenting a passport), was also announced to enter into force on 26 October.

RESPONSE OVERVIEW

AREA OF INTERVENTION 1: DIRECT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

- **114,670** people assisted in August 2019, **70%** of the total assistance registered.
- **62%** were **children and adolescents**, **24%** were **women**, and **14% men**
- **639** families were benefited through supplies⁶
- **4.671** people assisted with **multipurpose cash transfers**.
- **91.950** people received **food security** assistance

WASH | Emergency shelter | Non-Food Items (NFI)

GTRM partners continued to improve water and sanitation systems provided to the Venezuelan migrant and refugee population through the implementation of filtration and chlorination processes. This procedure benefited 5,420 people in the CEBAF (binational border office) in Huaquillas. Also, through the treatment system installed at the border point of Huaquillas, granulated chlorine was supplied for toilets, showers, and sinks. The same procedure was carried out in the "Casa de Paso de El Juncal", which benefited 3,355 people. It was also considered to hire a cleaning service (seven days a week, 12 hours a day) for showers, hygienic services, control of the use of WASH facilities, and provision of hygiene supplies for the CEBAF in Huaquillas.

Regarding resting areas, support was provided to 1,420 women, 72 men, 1,140 girls, and 1,329 boys at the border point of Huaquillas. At the border point of Lago Agrio, 788 women, 174 men, 616 girls, and 576 boys were benefited. Some 3,646 blankets were delivered in Huaquillas and 454 blankets in Lago Agrio.

Health and Nutrition

During the reporting period, 362 girls and 394 boys received nutritional supplements in Rumichaca and Lago Agrio to prevent malnutrition. 471 and 521 boys had a nutritional evaluation; of those, 4 girls and 8 boys were referred to specialized health services. On the other hand, 1,000 girls, 1,004 boys, and 183 mothers received "integral health cards". These cards are used as medical records, for medical care such as vaccines, medical and prenatal visits for pregnant

⁵ Passport, up to five years after the expiration date; Criminal record certificate apostilled, legalized, or validated by Venezuelan authorities, 50 USD.

⁶ Supplies to improve the water quality include granulated chlorine, treatment, filtration, and chlorination system.

mothers. Finally, 426 girls, 382 boys, and 777 mothers benefited from the spaces for breastfeeding women and information on nutrition for boys and girls in Rumichaca.

GTRM partners, in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health (MSP), maintain health care points in Rumichaca, San Miguel, Mira, Mascarilla, El Chaco, Ambato, Riobamba, and Huaquillas; also, contingency plans that are activated with the support of health mobile units, ambulances, and health and mental health personnel. These posts work between 8 and 24 hours, depending on the flow of people. Pre-hospital care is articulated with the ECU 911 System. By August, the health situation remained within the epidemiological profile of the country, with particular emphasis on monitoring the possible reintroduction of contagious diseases in a state of control or elimination such as measles, malaria, and HIV⁷.

A total of 1,711 health care interventions were provided in the CEBAF of Huaquillas to date⁸ and an increase in the number of pregnant women in mobility was reported. This situation represents a challenge for the medical center as it had to take care of pregnant patients in the period of expulsion, by activating the referral network, deriving to the primary hospital that has the necessary conditions for the birth assistance.⁹ In the CEBAF, the first prenatal control consultations were carried out. Until 8 August 2019, at the northern border, 101,150 Venezuelan people under 15 years-old were screened to verify their measles vaccination history; 45,118 doses of MMR and MR vaccines were administered to those who did not have the complete vaccination scheme. Similarly, in the CENAF (national border office), 223 first prenatal control consultations were carried out to date.¹⁰ During August, at CEBAF San Miguel (Lago Agrio), 1,250 medical interventions were performed, 850 women and 350 men, including 357 children under 15 years-old, 60 prenatal controls were performed.

Technical support continues to be provided, as well as capacity building for the health care network, especially by the delivering of equipment for health units at the northern, and southern borders, and humanitarian corridor; in the areas of mental health; epidemiological surveillance; hiring of vaccinators and kits for health personnel; crisis communication; and obstetric emergencies. In total, 13 nurses have been hired until November 2019: four in the northern border, four in Quito, and five in the southern border. Capacity building of the health teams in the care and promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) continues, such as the recognition of danger signals, access to long-term contraceptive methods (Implants), as well as the strengthening of intersectoral coordination for an adequate response.

Finally, in the health sector, specific needs to be covered have been identified, such as medical equipment for doctor's offices that includes assistance for GBV survivors in the Southern Border; installation of three health care posts and immunizations at the irregular border crossings points, that include tents, tables and chairs; hygiene kits for people living in migration, birth and newborn care kits and training on obstetric emergencies; and, training on MHGAP¹¹ to support mental health care.

Access to Information

Free Wi-Fi service continue to be provided to refugees and migrants arriving in Ecuador. During the reporting period, 12,738 people benefited from this service in the city of Tulcán: 272 girls, 483 boys, 4,595 women, and 7,388 men. At the border point in Huaquillas, this service has benefited 13,169 people: 275 girls, 500 boys, 4,752 women, and 7,642 men.

⁷ In 2019, there were no cases of measles; in 2018, there were 19 cases, 11 imported (Venezuela) and eight associated with importing. Malaria has less than 2 per cent of imported cases of Venezuelan origin; so far, it has not represented any risk of reintroduction in the human mobility route.

⁸ January - August 2019.

⁹ Thirty-two deliveries were attended at the primary hospital in Huaquillas in June.

¹⁰ Data for January - August 2019.

¹¹ Mental Health Gap Action Program

The GTRM partners continue to conduct informative sessions in which personalized information and guidance on procedures to access migration processes, asylum, and basic services are provided. A total of 46,527 people benefited from this service in several cities: Cuenca, Esmeraldas, Guayaquil, Quito, Huaquillas, Lago Agrio, San Lorenzo, Santo Domingo, Tulcán, Ambato, Manabí, Arenillas, Ibarra, and Machala.

AREA OF INTERVENTION 2: PROTECTION

- **26,526** people assisted in August 2019, **28%** of the total assistance registered.
- **36%** were **women**, **22% men** and **38%** were **children and adolescents**.
- **20,335** people received an orientation on **access to asylum** and **migratory regularization systems**.

Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking

In several cities in the country, the GTRM partners coordinate actions with GBV specialized shelters that provide various types of services, such as the management of school quotas for primary education of children; transportation for children and adolescents to their schools in order to have their enrollment tests; health assistance for women victims of violence (medical prescriptions, psychiatric consultations, psychological care), referral of the gender-based violence cases and other types of violence.

Permanent work is carried out to strengthen the response routes for cases of abuse/exploitation involving staff from the organizations that are present in the CEBAF of San Miguel. The priority is to offer assistance to the victim, maintaining confidentiality, and avoiding re-victimization. In Lago Agrio, 25 public servants from the Health District were trained on the care routes for gender-based violence cases. The safe space in San Miguel for women in human mobility and case management remains active. Additionally, GTRM partners organized the VBG eradication roundtable in Sucumbíos; 41 women and 35 men attended this workshop.

In the province of Carchi, female sex workers from Venezuelan and other nationalities that attend health care services were trained in sexual health and violence prevention. Besides, lectures on the prevention of GBV for women in transit were offered at CEBAF.

The Seminar *“Awareness on gender-based violence and protection measures”* organized by the Network of Integral Protection in Cases of Domestic and Gender Violence of Imbabura (RED VIF-GXI), and a training on *“The effects of human mobility at the psychosocial level and the psychological consequences of torture”* with public servants from the Ministry of Public Health were held.

Child Protection

During the reporting period, 488 girls, 534 boys, and their families received legal advice at the border points, of which 15 girls and 12 boys separated or unaccompanied were accompanied to the special protection processes. In the Child-Friendly Spaces, 584 girls and 602 boys received socio-emotional support and participated in risk prevention activities. Temporary shelter for unaccompanied adolescents in Rumichaca assisted three male teenagers and one female teenager. Socio-emotional support, legal guidance, and counseling for family reunification were provided.

Protection for LGBTI

In August, information was gathered to improve the protocols for attention, reference, and data collection, given the possibility that the Project of the Information and Reference Center *“Mi casa fuera de casa”* for LGBTI people would have a regional scope.

AREA OF INTERVENTION 3: SOCIOECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

- **1,492** people assisted in August 2019, **1.5%** of the total assistance registered.
- **33%** were **women**, **22% men**, and **45%** were **children and adolescents**.
- **345 interventions** were done to facilitate job access and promote social cohesion.
- **846** people involved in strengthening spaces for participation, leadership, or support networks between the refugee and migrant populations and the host community.
- **482** individual services to facilitate **access to education**.

Education

The education system in the Sierra and Amazon regions closed its registration process for extraordinary enrollments by the end of August; however, GTRM members continued advocacy processes with the Education Districts to increase the number of seats granted to children. The Ministry of Education reported that for families who arrived after August 20 and passed over the deadline, a belated registration process would be enabled from 9 September.

Sixty people attended a workshop in Manta addressed to the psychologists of the Department of Student Counseling (DECE) of the educational institutions. Through the workshops, the situation of the Venezuelan population in Manta was analyzed. Also, the capacities of the public servants from the education sector were strengthened. In Machala, an action plan was designed to work together with the Ombudsman's Office to generate school integration for children who have not received a formal education. Additionally, several partners are managing an educational art project together with the Municipality of Huaquillas, to promote an adequate social integration with children of Venezuelan and Ecuadorian nationality.

Through agreements reached by GTRM partners with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES), case referral routes have been established to access the “*growing with our children*” child daycare centers, for girls and boys up to five years. During the reporting period, 14 cases were referred, of which one entered MIES services.

It has been identified that some education districts requested original and apostilled documents for the enrollment process of Venezuelan children and adolescents in the public education system. Therefore, a workshop was managed with the Ministry of Education to disseminate both the requirements and the registration process for the population in human mobility.

Regarding tertiary education, the GTRM members started the interview processes for potential DAFI¹² scholarships. In this regard, meetings have been held with representatives from the Luis Vargas Torres University in Esmeraldas to inform them about the DAFI Program, its objectives, and benefits for the inclusion of people in the move within the education system at the undergraduate level.

Livelihoods

The GTRM partners continue the process of rapprochement with public and/or private institutions to expand the offer of services provided. Physical space was managed in an area of the *Universidad Nacional de Educación* to carry out practices and installation of organic gardens with Colombian and Venezuelan families. A legal orientation and community strengthening workshop was carried out with a livelihood approach with the Venezuelan population at the Las Peñas-Eloy Alfaro Parish Board, that was coordinated with the Las Peñas Parish Government. “*Guayaquil Emprende*” was also

¹² Albert Einstein Refugee Scholarship Program, which support refugee population to access tertiary education in Ecuador. The program is funded by the German Government.

approached; this is a project designed by the Municipality of Guayaquil that develops pre and post incubation training of enterprises, which Venezuelan citizens can access free of charge, only with a passport. Informative and awareness sessions were held so that this type of training can be accessed with the humanitarian visa or the Venezuelan ID.

A process of job reference was initiated, prioritizing female household heads. During the reporting period, 12 women were referred to companies such as Fybeca, Pharmaenlace, Las Fragancias, and cleaning service companies. Through the “A Ganar” project, the process of technical training for employment or self-employment continues, which has benefited 62 people.

The GTRM partners have focused on improving public-private mechanisms for the promotion of inclusive businesses and entrepreneurship. In that sense, several Venezuelan refugees and migrants presented their gastronomy and crafts in the Gastronomic and Cultural Entrepreneurship Fair, organized by the *Universidad Técnica del Norte* in Ibarra. Moreover, in coordination with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES), inclusive fairs were held in different provinces. Four entrepreneurs participated in the “TANDANAFEST” fair focused on the marketing of vegan products. Through this intervention, commercial networks were strengthened, and their income increased. For example, in Santo Domingo, three entrepreneurs were linked to the monthly fair organized by the Directorate of Economic Development of the Municipality of Santo Domingo.

Regarding advocacy with the public and private sector for access to work, the GTRM partners held meetings with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAGAP) to include the Venezuelan refugees and migrants whose livelihoods are within the rural sector. The members of the GTRM held a meeting with the Ibarra economic and cultural development directorates to include the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population in the activities programmed by the Decentralized Autonomous Government (GAD). This initiative led to a broader participation of entrepreneurs in gastronomic and cultural fairs for the activities scheduled during the second half of 2019.

As a technical assistance process to promote access to employment, the GTRM partners, together with MIES, have organized workshops to share best practices for the eradication of poverty in vulnerable groups.

Social cohesion

In Huaquillas, the “*Telas de araña*” workshop was held. This workshop allows Venezuelan mothers as well as children and adolescents to participate in recreational spaces, bookbinding workshops, and activities with relaxation exercises, dance dynamics, and body exercises.

In Portoviejo, the “*Activados*” project was disseminated, in which leaders from Ecuadorian civil society organizations live and share experiences with the Venezuelan community. These spaces promote community ties and bring the realities of both the refugee and migrant populations and the host community closer.

As for communication campaigns to raise public awareness about the need to fight xenophobia, the “*Tu voz en la frontera*” (Your voice at the border) program broadcasted in the province of Sucumbíos and later nationwide by the CORAPE network reached approximately 8,415 people. Regarding the United Nations system campaign “*Abrazos que Unen*” (Hugs that unite), 16,063 women and 19,487 men were reached by the campaign through social media in August.

AREA OF INTERVENTION 4: SUPPORT TO THE HOST GOVERNMENT

- **640** public servants **trained**.
- **126** public health servants **trained**.

Capacity-building initiatives

The GTRM partners continued with training processes addressed to authorities and public servants of the Office of the Public Defender and the Ombudsman's Office, in the border city of Tulcán. The training focused on knowledge, skills, and abilities in human mobility contexts so that the trainees could identify and know the basic principles of international protection, minimum standards for child protection, and routes and protocols for effective assistance of children and adolescents in emergencies and human mobility situations.

Also, on 7 and 8 August, in Guayaquil, a workshop focused on training the local coordinators of the different provincial areas of Ecuador on the correct use of the work guide in human mobility took place. As a result of the workshop, local coordinators should replicate the knowledge with the staff of each of their organizations. Likewise, at the end of August, training for public servants of MIES was held regarding the child protection for people in human mobility.

The GTRM partners carried out the "*Primer Respondiente*" (First Respondent) workshop, coordinated with the support of the Ministry of Tourism, the Municipality of Tulcán, and the Cantonal Council for the Protection of Rights. This workshop sought to raise awareness for the ECU 911 system to open the call so that hosting and food providers that assist population in human mobility could participate and strengthen their attention and response capabilities. Workshops on preventing human trafficking and smuggling and first psychological aid were included among the topics.

Finally, training for the National Police within their human rights program was carried out. The training addressed the following topics: response to people of interest in Rumichaca; Human Mobility Law and socialization of the movie *Capernaum*¹³, strengthening skills and knowledge so those police officers could identify and provide guidance to people in emergencies, human mobility, and international protection.

Coordination with the Government

Due to the significant presence of Venezuelan population living in the streets, on bridges, or in the terrestrial terminal, GTRM partners held meetings to discuss security issues with authorities of the Land Terminal and of the Security Directorate of the Municipality of Guayaquil. MIES and the Ministry of Public Health participated in these meetings. It was identified a need to generate a Contingency Plan by the Municipality to respond to the influx of people who do not have the resources to settle. On the other hand, in the inter-institutional meeting, the risks faced by the Venezuelan population to the exercise of their rights, security, and local integration were exposed, so that local support plans can be designed.

The partners are working on family reunification processes. This coordination allowed the construction of a local assistance and referral route to adequately manage the required documentation, round-trip transportation, and the follow-up of families to assure that the process is successful and to diminish the protection risks, with special attention to children and adolescents.

COORDINATION

- The **Food Security** working group records progress in the integration of computes for children under one year old in food kits that are delivered to the Venezuelan population in transit. This scenario allows the expanding food alternatives for families with members of this age group. The working group analyzed the situation of refugees and migrants in Huaquillas, whose dynamics have changed after the migration measures

¹³ *Capernaum*: Lebanese director Nadine Labaki, nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2018, won the Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival. The film tells the story of Zain (Zain al-Rafeea), a 12-year-old Lebanese boy who denounces his parents for the "crime" of having him born. The film follows Zain as he runs away from his negligent parents, surviving with cunning in the streets, where he meets the Ethiopian migrant worker Rahil, who provides him with shelter and food. Zain, the leading actor, is a Syrian refugee child.

implemented by the Government of Peru. Since food insecurity has increased, the implementation of humanitarian and community kitchens in the area was proposed. This initiative responds to the need to provide hot meals to the population that lags in the city, waiting for a Peruvian visa.

- The first meetings of the thematic subgroups belonging to the **cash based-intervention working group** were held. Regarding targeting and eligibility, an analysis of the criteria applied by the partners was carried out, which proposed targeting and vulnerability alternatives that could be applied by all organizations. Regarding **transfer values**, it is not sought to find different amounts, but to develop a tool and methodology that can be used for all organizations to carry out their calculations for transfers, agreeing that the analysis will be based on the basic basket of the Government. For the **procurement** process, it was agreed to develop a joint matrix of banking and financial institutions to evaluate the pros and cons of each institution. Besides, the pilot of the Pichincha Bank program to withdraw money without a card will start. Finally, the CBI training process was completed through the CaLP methodology. The course is scheduled from 11 to 15 November 2019.
- The **Protection** working group held an extraordinary meeting (22 August) with its partners to analyze the possible consequences once the humanitarian visa requirement to enter the country is activated. It was agreed to share information and move towards conducting a joint monitoring. Each partner is meeting their border teams, monitoring and identifying cases that require priority attention.
- The **Integration** working group analyzed all programs conducted by each partner in the area of employment, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion to know in greater detail what type of assistance is provided to the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population, and to analyze the possibility of developing joint interventions.
- The **Water and Sanitation / Emergency Shelter / NFI (WEN)** working group agreed on a standardization document for NFI Kits that will allow all partners to manage minimum standards for the humanitarian response. Also, it initiated the mapping and assessment of shelters at the national level (51), to which an evaluation form will be applied.
- The **Education** working group held its first group meeting, where the terms of reference were validated. Besides, it was agreed to work together in order to identify the working areas of each partner for 2019, to avoid duplicating efforts and to identify the intervention needs for next year.

GTRM MEMBERS¹⁴

ADRA | CARE | CSMM-PIDHDD | Diálogo Diverso | FUDELA | Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) | ILO | IOM | Jesuit Refugee Service Ecuador | Misión Scalabriniana | Norwegian Refugee Council | Plan International Ecuador | Red Cross Ecuador | RET International | UNDP | UNESCO | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNOCHA-OCR | UNWOMEN | World Vision Ecuador | WFP | WHO/OPS

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¹⁴ The SitReps are based on GTRM members' monitoring activities that are part of the 2019 Refugee and Migrant Response Plan. The list of GTRM members is broader than the one shown.