

## DONOR UPDATE ON UNHCR COVID-19 RESPONSE IN COLOMBIA - #4



*In Urabá, Antioquia department, UNHCR supports the local government's COVID-19 response by distributing hygiene kits and diapers to Venezuelan refugees and migrants and IDPs. ©UNHCR/Mena, D.*

### CURRENT CONTEXT RELATED TO COVID-19 AND GOVERNMENT MEASURES

The Colombian Ministry of Health confirmed **3,105 cases of COVID-19** as of Wednesday 15 April, in 29 of the country's 32 departments, with Bogota concentrating the highest number of people infected (1,291 confirmed cases). In Colombia, a total of 131 individuals have died from COVID-19 and 452 cases have recovered. So far, one confirmed case, which resulted in the patient's death, was reported among Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

#### Government of Colombia measures related to COVID-19

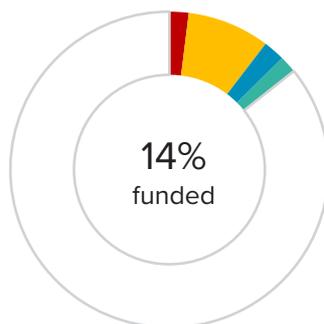
Essential staff of UN organizations and humanitarian partners directly involved in the COVID-19 response are authorized to continue

circulating to provide essential services during the mandatory COVID-19 quarantine announced by the government and currently planned until 27 April 2020.

Several municipalities have put in place alternating mobility restrictions so as to further limit movements, e.g. in Bogota men and women are required to circulate for buying food and other essential items on even and uneven dates respectively; in other cities a system based on the final number of a person's cedula (national identity card) is being implemented (known as *Pico y Placa*, based on the vehicle restrictions by license plate number that take place ordinarily).

UNHCR Colombia monitored an important

**\$83.5 million**  
 UNHCR's financial requirements 2020



- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

increase in the number of return movements of Venezuelans due to lack of livelihoods and inability to comply with the quarantine extended until 27 April, with a total of at least 5,500 individuals having returned to Venezuelan between 4-15 April, the majority (73%) via the International Bridge Simon Bolivar (Cucuta), and the rest via the International Bridge Jose Paez (Arauca) and the Paraguachon international border.

UNHCR has received requests from local authorities to support with organizing returns to Venezuela and has repeatedly clarified its position – reiterated and adopted by all GIFMM partners – that returns are not in line with the mandatory quarantine and do not comply with the principles of security, voluntariness and dignity. UNHCR and GIFMM members continue to discourage the return movements, in coordination with the national government.

**Orientación Jurídica, Solicitud de Asilo y Regularización**


**Si eres migrante, refugiado o colombiano que regresó desde Venezuela, puedes llamar a las siguientes líneas para acceder a servicios de:**

**ACNUR**

[www.estoyenlafrontera.com](http://www.estoyenlafrontera.com)  
 310 201 8098 / 310 201 7933  
 310 201 8177 / 313 889 2413  
 320 271 3142 / [colcu@unhcr.org](mailto:colcu@unhcr.org)

Lunes a viernes  
 8:00 a.m. a 1:00 p.m.  
 2:00 p.m. a 5:30 p.m.

**Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados Colombia**

310 228 0591  
 Lunes a viernes  
 8:00 a.m. a 4:00 p.m.

**OIM**  
 Orientación en trámites migratorios

323 229 0487 / 323 228 9239  
 323 229 0485 / 320 403 6332  
 Lunes a viernes  
 8:30 a.m. a 5:30 p.m.

**Corprodinco**

312 619 7707  
 Lunes a viernes  
 8:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m.  
 Sábado 8:00 a.m. a 12 m.

**Consejo Noruego para Refugiados (NRC)**

[co.neserviciosida@nrc.co](mailto:co.neserviciosida@nrc.co)



Legal advice for Venezuelan refugees and migrants is now available by phone and email, made possible in coordination with GIFMM.

UNHCR conducted 609 interviews (corresponding to 1,378 individuals) in Bucaramanga. Out of these, 590 heads of households expressed their intention to return to Venezuela and 19 to remain in Colombia. Of the 590 heads of households, 53% stated that they will return to Colombia once it becomes possible, 31% do not intend to return to Colombia and 16% answered that they did not know if they will return to Colombia.

Local authorities continue raising concerns of COVID-19 contagion at the border with Ecuador, with Sucumbíos province having registered 33 COVID-19 cases so far. Irregular armed groups in the pacific region of Nariño continue to restrict movements and cut off supply chains putting displaced communities at a high risk should a COVID-19 case be identified. Some communities in the region who host IDPs are only accessible by air or sea, and their supply routes have been completely cut off due to the national quarantine. In Putumayo, people with health needs referred to Pasto (Nariño), mostly pregnant women with difficult pregnancies, have difficulty returning home as the department has interrupted health returns for Venezuelan refugees and migrants who lack health insurance. UNHCR is following-up with the local Ombudsperson Office.

Demonstrations took place in Bogota against the planned installation of 15 temporary shelters for people in vulnerable situations living on the streets in the southwestern neighborhoods of Villas de Cafam, Nuevo Muzu, Villa de los Alpes and Quiroga. Residents rejected the initiative of the Mayor of Bogota, arguing that while the district's support will surely be temporary the Venezuelans will eventually remain in the neighborhoods and increase their vulnerability and crime rate.

## UNHCR'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19, INCLUDING REPRIORITIZATION

### Health and hygiene/prevention measures

In Arauca, UNHCR donated 3 air conditioners to the respiratory care unit and 2 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) to San Vicente Hospital.

Between 6-8 April, a total of 113 persons were assisted with general, sexual and reproductive health and psychosocial services at the at the UNHCR-supported Las Margaritas health centre in Villa del Rosario.



The UNHCR-supported Las Margaritas primary health care facility in Villa de Rosario, Norte de Santander. ©UNHCR/Hernandez,F.

Since the outbreak of the crisis, UNHCR in partnership with the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) has made available a total of 187 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs), of which 100 have already been installed in Bucaramanga, Cucuta, Pamplona, Arauca and Maicao. The additional 87 units are currently being transported to locations around the country. The RHUs are mostly used by hospitals as isolation and observation spaces.

### Protection

From 16 March to 14 April, UNHCR continued remote registration in PRIMES (UNHCR's registration, identity management and case management system) via telephone, registering 3,321 families or 12,514 individuals, of which 71% of the focal points were women, 28% men and 1% unspecified. The main reasons for which people contacted UNHCR were as follows: registration (27% of the total reasons for contact), assistance

(26%), reception (23%), legal (9%), documentation (5%) and health (4%).

In Arauca, UNHCR and the *Somos Panas* campaign held a teleconference with the Mayor's Office to coordinate on anti-xenophobia messaging during the COVID-19 pandemic to be shared with all municipal employees and a wider audience. Monitoring of various social media platforms shows manifestations of xenophobia as Colombians express their satisfaction about the COVID-induced return wave of Venezuelans, many expressing the hope for these returns to be permanent.



**¡Es momento de mantenernos unidos!**

**¡Conéctate ahora!**

Yesenia y Luciano quieren conversar contigo sobre cómo podemos ser solidarios con la situación de los venezolanos vulnerables en Colombia, y algunos canales que se han creado desde ACNUR y que impulsa la campaña **Somos Panas Colombia**, que ellos apoyan.

#Colombianos y venezolanos  
UNIDOS PALANTE

somospanascolombia.com

UNA CAMPAÑA DE:  
UNHCR  
La Agencia de la ONU  
para los Refugiados

The UNHCR-led *Somos Panas* anti-xenophobia campaign held a livestream event with Colombian influencers on showing solidarity with vulnerable Venezuelans in Colombia in the COVID-19 context.

### Shelter, NFIs and WASH

UNHCR Cucuta in partnership with COPRODINCO is preparing for the opening of a temporary shelter in Bucaramanga run by the Municipality which is planned to open by 17 April. The shelter has a capacity of 100 and will benefit Venezuelans who have been evicted from their previous housing. It is expected that the population will rotate out

once cash assistance is provided.

Integrated services continue to be delivered by UNHCR and partners at the Integrated Assistance Center (CAI) in La Guajira, including specialized hygiene kits and food for pregnant and lactating women. Some 27 cases referred by Government authorities and partners, including SGBV survivors and 53% children have been assisted by UNHCR through the hotel network



*Children wash their hands at the Integrated Assistance Center (CAI) in Maicao, La Guajira. ©UNHCR/Rada,A.*

In Cali, UNHCR is supplying 250 additional mattresses as a contingency measure and 125 bunk beds to complement the mattresses provided by IOM to a shelter identified by the municipality.

## UNHCR'S PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PRIORITIES

UNHCR Colombia is currently appealing for **USD 5.16 million for the COVID-19 response**. Thanks to donor contributions received as part of the UNHCR Global Appeal for the COVID-19 response. Thanks to donor contributions received against this appeal, UNHCR Colombia has thus far received USD 4.5 million which are being used to finance the activities outlined in the Colombia part of the Global Appeal, available [here](#).

Special thanks to the major donors (**Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and the United States of America, among others**) of softly earmarked contributions and pledges at the global level to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation giving UNHCR critical flexibility to rapidly respond to evolving needs.

Preparations for the revision of the 2020 Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) for the Venezuelan situation are currently underway.



*UNHCR supports food distribution for vulnerable host communities in Riohacha, La Guajira, led by the Government of Colombia on the local, state and federal levels. ©UNHCR/Ntuli,T.*

## GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

A request for UN support was received from State institutions involved in the implementation of the Peace Agreement to address COVID-related needs, available [here](#).

### UN SG's Remarks to the Security Council on the COVID-19 Pandemic

On 9 April, the UN Security Council held its first virtual debate on the COVID-19 pandemic. UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed concerns on eight particularly pressing risks and urged the Security Council to display unity for the "fight of a generation". He pointed out that refugees and internally displaced persons are particularly vulnerable to stigma, hate speech and exploitation, as well as to discrimination in accessing health services. Furthermore, he highlighted three priority areas where further support and action are needed:

- 1) Ensuring humanitarian access and opening corridors for the safe and timely movement of goods and personnel.
- 2) Mobilizing strong and flexible funding for the COVID-19 Response Plan and existing humanitarian appeals. Resources for one should not replace or divert from the other.
- 3) Protecting the most vulnerable populations and those least able to protect themselves. International humanitarian, human rights and refugee law continue to apply, even – and especially – in challenging times like these.

The SG's full remarks can be found [here](#).

**UNHCR's response in Colombia is possible thanks to the contribution of private donors and:**

Canada, Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Chanel Foundation, Denmark, European Union, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea, KOICA, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Human Security Trust Fund (UN HSTF), UN Peacebuilding Fund, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

15 April 2020



*A Venezuelan woman uses hand soap at the Integrated Assistance Center in La Guajira. ©UNHCR/Rada,A.*