



In Numbers

5,949 people infected with COVID-19 in Colombia & **269** deaths as of 28 April

1.82 million Venezuelan migrants in Colombia (UNHCR/IOM, 2020)

381,433 people confined or with mobility restrictions in 2019 (OCHA, 2020)

Highlights

- The first case of COVID-19 in Colombia was confirmed on 06 March and the national Government and local administrations have taken strict containment measures: the country's lockdown has been extended until 11 May, and all non-essential domestic travel is prohibited; gatherings of over 50 people are not permitted, and school activities are suspended until 31 May.
- These measures have contributed to the slowing of infection rates; however, they have also severely impacted the livelihoods of already vulnerable people across the country, including Venezuelan migrants. Measures have also affected WFP regular operations.
- WFP has rapidly adapted its operational setting to ensure assistance continuity to those most in need while also identifying new COVID-19 related needs and scaling up operations to address them. WFP urgently requires additional funding to sustain these adjustments as well as to support around 300,000 newly affected people as a temporary measure in the context of COVID-19, including poor people in urban and rural areas. **Additional estimated funding for COVID-19 augmentation and response amounts to USD 51.4 million.**

Situation update

- The Colombian Government has [called](#) for increased international support to assist Venezuelan migrants amidst the COVID-19 crisis. As of 06 April there were 1.82 million [Venezuelans in Colombia](#), nearly 60 percent with an irregular migratory status.
- Due to the dire socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak, groups of Venezuelan migrants have started to [return](#) to their country through the bordering departments of Norte de Santander and Arauca.
- Despite a ceasefire announced by the National Liberation Army (ELN), active combat has caused further displacement and confinement in Chocó, Norte de Santander, Nariño and Valle del Cauca.
- Although an array of support measures have been put in place by the national and local administrations, protests and roadblocks have [sparked](#) across the country, calling for immediate relief assistance by the Government of Colombia.

Funding Situation May - October 2020 Crisis Response Needs

Strategic Outcome 2

Crisis-affected populations, including victims of violence, natural disasters and shocks, marginalised communities and vulnerable ethnic populations have adequate access at all times to nutritious foods and diversified diets and are supported in establishing or improving their livelihoods

USD 97.8 million
COVID-related
needs: USD 51.4m

WFP Operations

- WFP is implementing a comprehensive two-track approach in light of the escalating COVID-19 emergency, based on two primary objectives:
- **Sustaining current operations: WFP will maintain its assistance to some 300,000 Venezuelan migrants and host communities on average per month with the objective of scaling up to reach over 400,000 per month depending on needs. WFP will continue assisting approximately 48,000 people affected by armed violence every month. School feeding programme in support of 110,000 children in La Guajira and other departments will also continue.** Operational adaptations include the provision of cash-based transfers and in-kind food; the shift to the provision of take-home rations for school feeding programmes; double distributions to avoid unnecessary movement and; the closure of most community kitchens supporting migrants to avoid large gatherings in compliance with the Government's public health measures.
- **Scaling up to address rising needs:** the socioeconomic effects of the COVID-19 emergency have increased needs across all fronts, especially among poor people with informal jobs in urban areas. **Depending on funds available, WFP plans to scale-up assistance to reach an additional 300,000 newly affected vulnerable groups, mainly Colombians, as a temporary measure for up to 6 months on the basis of needs.**

Sustaining operations

- WFP is providing life-saving food assistance in 15 departments: Antioquia, Arauca, Atlántico, Caquetá, Cauca, Cesar, Chocó, Córdoba, Cundinamarca, La Guajira, Magdalena, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Putumayo and Valle del Cauca.
- Distributions were briefly disrupted in mid-March amidst the COVID-19 containment strategy, however WFP rapidly adapted its operations to the new circumstances and managed to resume planned distributions from the first week of April.
- Distributions are ongoing to reach 72,000 conflict and disaster-affected people in six departments. In areas with access constraints, WFP collaborates with local authorities to ensure assistance reaches those most in need.
- Support to migrants continues: voucher distributions for some 130,000 beneficiaries a month have been adapted to comply with COVID-19 measures; in-kind food rations are also being distributed for 25,000 people living in the remote region of Alta Guajira; cash transfers are ongoing as planned for 1,400 migrants in the Nariño department, which borders with Ecuador, and beneficiaries are receiving a transfer equivalent to two-months assistance to avoid unnecessary movements and support the prevention of infections.
- Although most community kitchens along the borders with Venezuela and Ecuador have closed, others remain open and are still supporting vulnerable people with hot meals in La Guajira, Nariño and Norte de Santander. Some of these kitchens operate inside of shelters for vulnerable Venezuelan migrants.
- In coordination with the Ministry of Education, WFP successfully started providing take-home rations for some 110,000 children who previously received school meals in five departments. Distributions in La Guajira are underway and some 25,000 migrant children in Atlántico, Cesar, Magdalena and Norte de Santander will start receiving rations in the coming week.
- WFP has put in place a remote monitoring plan to ensure regular and COVID-related activities are properly monitored under the current circumstances.

Scaling up to address rising needs

- So far, WFP has received direct requests of support for over 900,000 people affected by the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. WFP has developed tailored targeting criteria and has initially prioritised assistance with cash-based transfers to 51,000 of these people with resources immediately available.
- The current crisis is particularly affecting the livelihoods of the urban poor, including migrants with precarious, often informal sources of income. In response to these situations, WFP has started expanding its operational area to the cities of Bogotá, Soacha, Cali and Palmira.

- WFP provided food rations to 5,000 vulnerable migrants and host communities in Soacha, an urban area in the greater Bogotá.
- Preparations are ongoing to provide cash transfers to 20,000 vulnerable migrants in Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia. These migrants will receive support for three months to cover basic food and hygiene needs.
- In relation to spontaneous return movements to Venezuela, WFP has been closely monitoring protection risks and, occasionally, it has provided food kits with ready-to-eat food for returning migrants in particularly vulnerable conditions. Kits are delivered following strict sanitary protocols.

Vulnerability Assessment

- WFP is analysing the impact of the COVID-19 on the most vulnerable populations, aiming at informing prioritisation and targeting.
- WFP is supporting a Multisectoral Rapid Needs Assessment led by the Inter-Agency Group for Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM) to identify the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on needs and multisectoral priorities of Venezuelan migrant populations.
- WFP, jointly with FAO, will conduct a Market Functionality Index Rapid Assessment in 14 Colombian departments. This is the first time such study will include rural, as well as urban and peri-urban populations in Colombia.

Inter-Agency Coordination

- WFP is actively participating in inter-agency planning exercises for the COVID-19 response, coordinated by OCHA and the Inter-Agency Group for Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM).
- WFP co-leads the Food Security Cluster and the Cash Working Group in Colombia, together with FAO and the Colombian Red Cross, respectively. WFP also actively participates in the Education and Early Recovery clusters.
- A Logistics Working Group, led by WFP, has been created to streamline information and strengthen coordination in support of more efficient logistics processes; 20 partners have registered to date. WFP also steers the newly created Inter-Agency Procurement Group together with PAHO and UNDP.



Photo: Food preparation at a school in La Guajira. WFP/Photo library