

Colombia

16 November - 30 November 2020



On the occasion of World Children's Day, UNHCR inaugurated a new water park and the remodelled El Araguaneý children's centre in Medellín, a child-friendly space for boys and girls. ©UNHCR/Catalina Betancur.

Current Context

The Colombian Ministry of Health confirmed 1.544.826 cases of COVID-19 as of 23 December, with Bogotá recording the highest number (438.854 confirmed cases). A total of 41.174 individuals have died from COVID-19 and 1.404.168 cases have recovered.

According to Migración Colombia, 122,397 Venezuelans returned to Venezuela from or through Colombia since the 14 March border closure (as of 3 December). During the reporting period, 1,531 Venezuelans returning to Venezuela were registered at the Transitory Health Attention Centre (CAST in Spanish) near the Colombia-Venezuela border. At the same time, several hundreds of Venezuelans continued to enter Colombia each day at the end of November, primarily via irregular border points (*trochas* in Spanish), despite the heavy rains that devastated the Caribbean coast. There was also an increase in Venezuelans travelling on foot to the southern border town of Puerto Leguízamo, as per reports from the local humanitarian coordination team in Putumayo.

Large group displacements occurred during this reporting period in the municipalities of Algeria (Cauca), Barbacoas (Nariño), Bajo Baudó (Chocó) and Cáceres (Antioquia), affecting 1,305 people. Confinements were reported in Litoral del San Juan (Chocó), mainly due to threats to the communities and fighting between armed groups, affecting 2,236 people. In Algeria, 538 people (192 families), mostly Venezuelans, were displaced from the communities of El Plateado, Puerto Rico, Belleza, Sinaí and Mango. In Barbacoas (Vereda Albi, Río Iguabí area), 88 people (33 families) were displaced. In Bajo Baudó, the communities of Villa Nueva, La Loma and Las Vacas, 446 people (93 families) were displaced. In Cáceres, 233 people (67 families) were displaced from Vereda Buenos Aires. Additionally, a confinement that affected 2,236 people (590 families) was reported in the following indigenous communities: Santa María de Pángala, Nuevo Haití, Nueva Jerusalem, Pueblo Nuevo, Estrella de Pángala, Unión Guaimía, as well as in the following Afro-descendant communities: Barrios Unidos, Pángalita, Munguidó, Las Delicias and Bella Victoria.

Between 24 and 27 November, UNHCR supported a humanitarian mission to Juradó (Chocó) in the framework of the Plan de Choque Chocó, together with local and national authorities. Priority needs of the communities (Dos Bocas, Afro communities and community councils of Juradó, Santa Martha de Curiche and Guayabal Indigenous Reserve - Unión Patató Community) were evaluated. Accordingly, 129 families received assistance from the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF). The Victims Unit (UARIV in Spanish) carried out a verification of humanitarian aid delivered to victims and compensation for people over 74 years of age. The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace conducted mine risk education workshop and the Ministry of the Interior, through the Directorates of Indigenous Community Affairs, compiled a number of findings in relation to, inter alia, internal conflicts and institutional strengthening needs. Finally, the Municipal Mayor's Office and the Government of Chocó identified community needs, making commitments relating to health and education.

UNHCR also complemented the response to a large group displacement in Argelia (Cauca) following ELN threats that affected 278 people (85 families), including a significant number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants forced to flee to cities such as Cali, Popayán, Pasto and Ipiales. Emergency shelter was provided by UNHCR's partner Pastoral Social to nine IDPs (including five children) in Pasto and 30 IDPs (including 12 children) in Ipiales. They were registered in PRIMES and referred to the local Ombudsperson's office.

Heavy rains devastated the Caribbean and Norte de Santander in the reporting period, resulting in a spike in humanitarian needs. According to a National Task Force for Emergencies (*Puesto de Mando Unificado*), which met on 19 November, 1,079 families were affected in Cúcuta (901 in urban areas and 178 in rural areas, including six deaths and seven people reported missing) and infrastructure in 147 neighborhoods damaged. UNHCR contributed to the government response to the crisis via its partner Corprodinco, in coordination with Cúcuta Diocese's Food Bank, with psychosocial care, legal orientation, food and non-food humanitarian assistance to 168 people (78 families) in Carmen de Tonchalá.

UNHCR has reopened four Information and Orientation Centres (PAOs in Spanish) for in-person orientation and information: Two in Norte de Santander (at the Francisco de Paula Santander International Bridge and in Los Patios), one in La Guajira and one in Valledupar, Cesar. The Centre in Los Patios provided information and services to 33 Venezuelans moving on foot, the majority of whom lack a legal status and expressed their intention to transit to Bogotá, Medellín, Cali or Barranquilla where they have support networks of friends or family. The Centres in La Guajira and Cesar

departments have received 624 people (114 new cases), of which 275 people were assisted and nine Special Stay Permits were renewed.

Response Highlights: Past 2 Weeks

Health and hygiene/prevention measures

A total of 33 cases in Arauca and 25 cases in Apartadó received sexual and reproductive health services through UNHCR's partner Profamilia. In Taminango (Nariño), UNHCR held a workshop on sexual and reproductive health, which offered general medical services, pap smear exams, support with family planning, donations of hygiene kits and rapid tests for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to around 255 people. In Pasto, UNHCR held a workshop on sexual and reproductive health for 41 female sex workers in coordination with the organization Colors of Equality (comprised of Venezuelan asylum-seekers and migrants), the Mayor's Office, the Colombian Red Cross, Profamilia and Heartland Alliance International (HAI). In Tumaco, UNHCR, HAI and Profamilia, held a health and sexual reproductive health workshop for 41 people, the majority of whom were Venezuelan female sex workers.

Protection

In Maicao between 20 October and 30 November, UNHCR supported the National Registry Office's (UDAPV) mobile unit to provide documentation services, including birth certificates, to 561 people and to grant Colombian nationality to 275 people. UNHCR furthermore identified more than 1,000 people at risk of statelessness due to the UDAPV regulations that came into force on 13 November. The ability to grant Colombian nationality by birth to children of refugees with a temporary M visa has also been suspended.

UNHCR participated in a meeting in Barranquilla with *Colombia Nos Une*, the Governor's Office and the Ombudsperson's Office to explore re-organizing mobile brigades to facilitate enrolment of Colombians returning from Venezuela in the Single Returnees Registry.

UNHCR continued to support a group of 12 personerías and legal counsels, who assisted 1,332 cases in Arauca and 1,724 in Cúcuta. UNHCR also referred 11 cases in Arauca and 34 cases in Cúcuta to legal clinics. In Arauca, 63 legal actions were filed (41 regarding guardianships, 30 prenatal controls and 13 of health issues 17 petition rights).

In Arauca, 21 separated youth (12 girls and nine boys) and 32 unaccompanied children (21 girls and 11 boys) were identified and attended to by UNHCR's partner Apoyar, in close coordination with ICBF.

In Cúcuta, 50 children at risk were identified, of which 35 correspond to children at risk of not attending school, eight teenage pregnancies, two children who are parents, three children who are spouses; 21 separated children and 17 unaccompanied children. UNHCR is reviewing each case in order to refer them to relevant partners and institutions.

At the CAST, 46 cases of unaccompanied or separated children were referred to World Vision psychosocial professionals for evaluation and activation of the protection response in coordination with the authorities.

UNHCR held a meeting with an organization that has identified some 150 Venezuelan women engaged in survival sex in the city of Medellín; UNHCR provided information on the available services at inter-agency level.

In Cúcuta, 20 SGBV cases and 150 women at risk were identified and referred for assistance. 9 cases (13 persons) were referred for support at the UNHCR safe houses. 46 individual cases received psychosocial assistance, legal advice, nutritional assessment and activation of complementary pathways by La Casa que Abraza, an LGBTI support space. In Arauca, 10 cases of SGBV were reported of which four cases in Arauquita.

UNHCR marked the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women through various activities held across the country: in Barranquilla a group discussion with 20 women participating in the Orquídea Program of the foundation Colombo-Venezuelan Women without Borders and distributed 200 shirts, 2,000 bracelets and 5,000 flyers raising awareness against SGBV in support of the Mayor's campaign #Soylibre; in Arauca and Apartadó various radio appearances; in Medellín, the production and the launching of 4 podcasts and 2 Radio programs on GBV, migration, refugees and COVID-19.

Somos Panas Colombia continued to disseminate the following key products: i) the third chapter of [Historias que continúan](#), which highlights success stories of Venezuelans who have managed to overcome difficulties in Colombia; ii) the [Guide to Labor Orientation](#) for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants Seeking Employment in Colombia; iii) information of interest for Venezuelan women, including attention routes, within the context of "[Valientes](#)"; iv) information on how to combat the coronavirus and discrimination, as part of [Super Panas](#) (a child-oriented campaign developed in collaboration with UNICEF); and v) information on [helplines](#) for PAOs.

Cash-Based Assistance

To date, around 47,534 persons of concern (11,883 families) have received multipurpose cash in 2020, representing 88 percent of the total number of families UNHCR has planned for CBI. In addition, 1,475 surveys have been carried out as part of the post distribution monitoring, which represents 95 percent of the target sample.

In Quibdó, UNHCR delivered 100 multipurpose vouchers for Venezuelan refugees and host communities.

Livelihoods

UNHCR, together with UNDP, the London School of Economics (LSE), PeaceStartup and the Rosario University organized a series of academic webinars entitled "Lessons of territorial peace in times of COVID-19: Private sector, use of technologies and territorial innovation strategies for peace" on 23, 24, 25 and 27 November. The event, supported by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNHSTF) was an exchange of good practices and lessons learned between academia, the private sector, government institutions and community representatives on generating innovative solutions in territories and communities affected by armed conflict. A total of 19 panelists and around 287 attendees participated in the event.

Shelter, NFIs and WASH

UNHCR admitted a total of 70 people (19 families) at the Integrated Assistance Center (CAI) in Maicao, which brings the total number of people assisted at the CAI to 250.

UNHCR provided shelter assistance to six people in Ipiales and 43 people in Pasto at the existing shelters during the period. 35 people out of the 43 assisted in Pasto were in transit to third countries and 8 expressed interest in staying in Colombia.

UNHCR in Chocó department installed three Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) in the municipalities of Alto Baudó, Medio Baudó and Bajo Baudó to strengthen the capacity response of local authorities to humanitarian needs generated by the armed conflict and Covid-19.

UNHCR complemented the government response to the devastating rains in the Caribbean Coast, donating more than 600 kitchen kits, 600 solar lamps, 500 mosquito nets and hygiene kits to the mayor's offices in Maicao and Riohacha. More than 2,400 humanitarian aid kits were distributed by the National Unit for Risk Management, coordinating the overall emergency response.

Funding Needs

As per its revised Coronavirus Emergency Appeal, UNHCR requires USD 745 million globally, including USD 17.3 million in Colombia. UNHCR's Global Appeal is now funded at 63%, with USD 472.8 million in contributions received. Overall, UNHCR Colombia is currently funded at 63%.

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

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