

REGIONAL

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA IN:



THE WORLD

5.4 M

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

4.6 M



PEOPLE REACHED IN 2020 WITH SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE**

3.18 M



FUNDING SITUATION*

48,5%

FUNDED: 643 M
REQUIREMENTS: 1.41 BN

Situation

Since the beginning of 2020, more than 3.26 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela – as well as members of host communities – were assisted with one or more service by R4V partners, including assistance relating to needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. While some countries relaxed mobility restrictions related to COVID-19 during the reporting period, refugees and migrants from Venezuela faced pressing needs in accessing food, shelter and adequate housing, and difficulties adhering to sanitary measures, especially due to overcrowded accommodations and a lack of access to hygienic facilities and lack of income to purchase basic household and hygiene items.

By 8 October, National and Sub-Regional Platforms submitted their projections of populations, persons in need and corresponding financial requirements of R4V partners for consolidation of the Regional Refugee and Migrants Response Plan (RMRP) 2021 at the regional level. From October until December, the Regional Platform worked with National and Sub-regional Platforms to finalize their chapters, including to consolidate all narrative and data overview sections. The RMRP 2021 was finalized and formally presented to the Regional Platform on 1 December. On 10 December 2020, the RMRP 2021 was launched in a [virtual high-level panel event](#) featuring IOM Director General António Vitorino and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, which was [broadcasted internationally](#) to more than 1,200 participants. The RMRP 2021 reflects the joint planning of 159 appealing humanitarian and development partners in 17 countries and aims to assist 3.3 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela and host community members, based on a cumulative financial requirement of USD 1.44 billion. Similar to the 2020 focus, the 2021 RMRP will maintain its three main response priorities in the areas of: i) humanitarian assistance, ii) protection and iii) integration.

In late November, R4V partners, particularly those forming part of the Protection sector and the GBV sub-sector, joined efforts with local authorities across the region to celebrate the 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (details below on country-specific activities). Throughout the reporting period, reports of GBV increased and the regional GBV sub-sector worked to guide partners' efforts towards a response adapted to the COVID-19 situation, such as using remote assistance methods for children and women survivors of GBV.

Main Developments

In Brazil, entry restrictions for foreign nationals were extended indefinitely. The relating decree explicitly stated that exceptions (e.g. for family reunification or migratory visa status) would not apply to Venezuelans. Failure to comply can lead to deportation and disqualification of asylum claims submitted in violation of the aforementioned rule. On 19 October, the Federal Police extended all documents of refugees and migrants that expired after 11 March 2020 until 16 March 2021,

provided that the individual remained within the country throughout this period. On 13 November, the Ministry of Education issued [Resolution n. 1](#) on the right to enrolment of children and adolescent refugees, migrants, stateless persons and asylum seekers in the Brazilian public education system. The resolution establishes that, when requested, the enrolment of said children and adolescents shall be ensured without discrimination.



PEOPLE REACHED IN 2020**



Education

58 K



Food Security

1.1M



Health

397K



Hum. Transp.

13K



Integration

28K



NFI

124K



Nutrition

38K



Protection

178K



Shelter

40K



WASH

507K



CBI

226K

In **Chile**, R4V partners noted increasing concern about the situation of refugees and migrants entering the country irregularly, including linked to the prevalence of COVID-19 in the northern border regions and challenges in the health sector response for the host communities as well as refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In October, for example, the hospital bed occupancy rate in Tarapaca reached 97%. According to the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, between January and November 2020, 13,656 people entered the country through irregular border points (75% of them Venezuelans). Meanwhile, Chile was one of the first countries in the region to receive the vaccine for COVID-19, with some 10,000 doses arriving in December. The authorities aimed to inoculate 80% of Chile's 19 million population within the first semester of 2021.

On 9 October, the Government of **Colombia** announced a new Special Stay Permit (*Permiso Especial de Permanencia*, PEP for its Spanish acronym) for refugees and migrants who entered Colombia before 31 August 2020 with a stamped passport. The government also extended its “selective isolation” phase until mid-January 2021, including limits on activities that can lead to agglomerations of people to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as well as the closure of land, sea, and river borders. In December, the President announced that the National Vaccination Plan against COVID-19 will start in February 2021 and will include foreigners with regular status. According to Migracion Colombia, more than 12,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants entered through irregular crossings between 22 October-17 December.

In **Ecuador**, given the closure of land borders with Colombia and Peru, irregular movements of refugees and migrants from Venezuela continued through informal border crossings, exposing them to security and protection risks, especially human trafficking and smuggling. In October, with the gradual relaxing of restrictions, R4V partners noted a return to informal labour activities for Venezuelans. As COVID-19 cases increased throughout December, in order to avoid the health system being overwhelmed, the government declared a state of emergency and an additional curfew. Meanwhile, the number of irregular entries increased

by 35% from November to December to 350-400 per day, according to R4V partners' daily border monitoring reports.

In **Peru**, on 22 October, the Ministry of Interior published Decree 010-2020-IN approving special, exceptional and temporary measures to regularize foreigners whose stay permit had expired or who entered the country irregularly. The GTRM worked to clarify which travel documents refugees and migrants from Venezuela will need to apply for and obtain the new Temporary Residency Permit. In December, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations launched a “Join us to Eliminate Violence Against Women” campaign, which is significant given that calls to the national GBV hotline increased by over 50% from 2019 to 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the reporting period, the country saw nationwide demonstrations on issues of domestic politics leading to several changes in the Government. Peru assumed the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Quito Process on 27 November and announced its three key priorities: i. access to health and to the COVID-19 vaccine for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, ii. socio-economic integration, and iii. regularization.

The **Caribbean** sub-region witnessed arrivals of Venezuelans via irregular routes. Detention and deportation, including of children, was reported in Trinidad and Tobago, while Aruba, the DR and Curacao organized repatriation flights to Venezuela. Hygiene and distancing protocols remained in place in all Caribbean countries throughout the reporting period even as numbers of daily COVID-19 cases decreased, and additional restrictions were imposed during the holiday period in December for many countries. The Dominican Republic reported the highest number of cases and deaths in the sub-region as Venezuelans in the Caribbean continued to face the loss of jobs, housing and difficulties in meeting their basic needs.

In **Central America and Mexico**, Panama and Costa Rica partially re-opened their borders, while movements in and out of Mexico remained limited. In November, the Mexican government approved a legislative reform representing major progress on refugee and migrant children's rights, including the prohibition of child detention. A substantial increase in arrivals at

* Source: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/944/summary>

**These are examples of activities carried out by National/Sub-Regional Platforms and/or Sectors. For further details, please see R4V.info. Numbers concerning people reached are available on the [RMRP 2020 Dashboard](#)

immigration detention centers was also observed in Mexico. The Government of Costa Rica created a [new temporary stay permit](#), based on humanitarian grounds, for Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, and Cubans whose asylum claims are denied. The 2-year permit (with possibility of renewal) will allow holders to stay and work legally in Costa Rica. Meanwhile, cases of gender-based violence continued to increase in the sub-region, while the response to GBV was hampered by shelters reaching maximum capacities. In December, COVID-19 related restrictions increased while Costa Rica began implementing its vaccination campaign.

Response highlights**

In Brazil, to support refugees' and migrants' integration into the Brazilian labour market, through *Operation Welcome*, local government actors and R4V partners inaugurated a training and orientation centre in Pacaraima, the main entry point of refugees and migrants to Brazil. The centre offers vocational trainings to Venezuelans and Brazilians. Partners operated mobile health units in Roraima with doctors providing primary healthcare to refugees and migrants living in shelters and spontaneous settlements, as well as host communities. R4V partners held a workshop on "Breastfeeding in the time of Covid-19" in primary health care facilities of Manaus for pregnant and lactating women. The R4V Shelter Sector concluded a cycle of Training of Trainers (ToT) in Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) in Boa Vista and Manaus. A total of 75 humanitarian field professionals from local/state authorities, UN agencies, and civil society organisations are now certified CCCM trainers in Roraima and Amazonas. On 4 December, *Operation Welcome* officially closed the field hospital "Area of Protection and Care" (APC) in Boa Vista, due to budget cuts. Since its inauguration on 18 June 2020, 5,942 persons benefitted from healthcare assistance (also provided by R4V actors), including some 658 Venezuelans. Following its deactivation, a new shelter called Pricumã was established in the former protection area of the hospital, to host persons with disabilities and/or chronic diseases and their family members.

In Chile, in October, R4V partners joined efforts with local actors and authorities to assist 260 vulnerable Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Huara. Partners

In the Southern Cone sub-region, Argentina opened its borders in October to tourists and non-resident foreigners, while tightening restrictions in December. Uruguay maintained closed borders during the reporting period due to a surge in infections in November. Partners in Bolivia noted an increasing trend of entries of refugee and migrant families from Venezuela in Desaguadero, Bolivia, coming from Peru through unauthorized border crossing points while official borders remained closed.

provided shelter, food, NFIs, cash and voucher assistance (CVA) and protection for refugees and migrants, particularly in the northern regions.

In Colombia, the R4V national platform (GIFMM) published its [first press release](#) to celebrate the Government's decision to regularize Venezuelan refugees and migrants who entered the country prior to 31 August 2020, and also reiterated the offer of technical support to the Government to help find solutions for those who did not have their passports stamped upon entry. Meanwhile, GIFMM partners assisted an average of over 500,000 beneficiaries per month between October and December. The WASH sector carried out activities to commemorate International Handwashing Day (15 October) with events in informal settlements, public areas, and at the Tienditas Sanitary Attention Center (CAST). The GIFMM's anti-fraud campaign, launched in November, was fully implemented in December, including the creation and dissemination of information materials, and establishing reporting channels and feedback mechanisms between Communications and CwC teams and field partners to mitigate and respond to risks and incidents of fraud. From 3-13 November, the data collection phase of the fourth round of the GIFMM's Joint Needs Assessment took place. More than 3,100 surveys were carried out by interviewers from 34 GIFMM partners.

In Ecuador, livelihoods generation – including through direct support for employment and entrepreneurship – were a special focus of R4V partners. Other key areas

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included assistance with regularization and documentation, including access to the asylum procedure, and meeting basic needs so that refugees and migrants could direct household cash towards income-generating activities. R4V partners also reinforced connectivity strategies and the delivery of materials for Venezuelan children and adolescents to facilitate access to education. Partners maintained humanitarian assistance programmes to provide food, NFIs, CBI, rental support and temporary shelter to fill the needs gap, made more acute during the pandemic. As with previous months, assistance provided increased across multiple sectors in November, including a 50% increase in one-time multi-purpose cash transfers from October. In the integration sector, assistance refocused from remote trainings on employability towards more direct provision of seed capital. Assistance increased even further in December, particularly with in-kind assistance such as hygiene kits (with over 34,000 Venezuelan and host community members receiving kits) as well as in food assistance, education kits, and WASH and health support. This was consistent with month-by-month increases throughout 2020.

In Peru, with an increasingly dynamic protection environment, GTRM partners assisted refugees and migrants with protection orientation and legal counseling, case management and referrals of GBV survivors, psychosocial support, and online workshops on “parenting without violence” as part of the strategy to tackle the increasing rates of violence at home amid the pandemic. In November, GTRM partners joined the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) and several municipal activities to ensure the visibility of refugee and migrant women and the LGTBQ+ community in the “Join us to eliminate violence against women” campaign within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. GTRM partners also continued to provide shelter support, thermal blankets and winter kits due to the cold weather, as well as hygiene and food to meet basic needs.

In the Caribbean sub-region, R4V partners provided direct emergency assistance to vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela, especially in Aruba, Curacao and Trinidad and Tobago, through CVA (including multipurpose), hygiene kits, food assistance, rental support, medical and psychosocial services, protection and legal assistance, particularly to victims of trafficking. In the Dominican Republic, partners’ efforts focused on providing support for self-employment and entrepreneurship initiatives through grants to small businesses. In Guyana, Venezuelan adults received English classes, and sex workers received information on GBV prevention and response. Some 6,394 beneficiaries in the Caribbean received food assistance in December.

In Central America and Mexico, the response focused on health and psychosocial support, integration support through digital literacy programmes, and protection services such as GBV prevention and response in Panama and Costa Rica, while partners in Mexico focused on CVA to meet basic needs and provide financial support for education for refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In December, partners in Panama provided personalized legal counseling on the regularization process, as well as webinars on rights and obligations regarding housing, property and labour migration to prevent or mitigate the impact of evictions among refugees and migrants.

R4V partners intensified the provision of psychosocial support to Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the Southern Cone, and as some borders re-opened, partners provided humanitarian transportation beginning in October. On 20 November, the “U-Report - *Uniendo Voces*” tool was officially launched in **Bolivia**, with a soccer tournament organized in La Paz by R4V partners. Family reunifications were facilitated in **Uruguay** in December. In **Argentina**, integration activities throughout the reporting period included the provision of seed capital, and training on entrepreneurship. Partners in **Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay and Bolivia** provided psychosocial and legal advice to refugees and migrants on access to asylum and regularization procedures, access to basic social services and other documentation.