

Venezuela Situation

June 2022

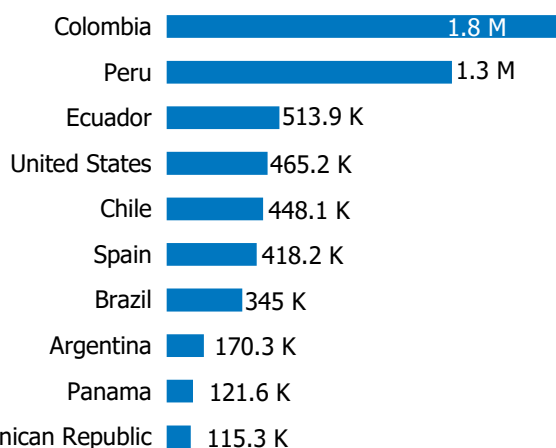
The outflow of Venezuelan refugees and migrants remains **one of the largest displacement crises in the world**. To date, over **6.1 million** have left their homes, of which 5 million are in the Americas.

There are **199,206** Venezuelans **recognised as refugees** worldwide and **971,170 pending asylum claims**. Over **2.7 million regular stay permits** have been granted to Venezuelans since 2014.

In support to receiving States, UNHCR improves **reception conditions**, advocates for **legal stay and inclusion**, mitigate **protection** risks and boost **access to basic services**.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Host Countries

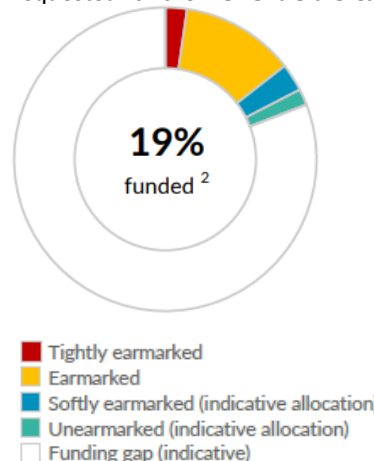


* Source: Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform, May 2022

FUNDING (AS OF 31 MAY 2022)

US\$ 366.2 M

requested for the **Venezuela situation**



Operational context

The socio-economic crisis triggered by the pandemic has taken a heavy toll on Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Many have lost all sources of income, exposing them to destitution, homelessness, exploitation, and abuse.

UNHCR's priorities in 2022 focus on support for basic needs, especially in border areas where needs often outstrip the capacities to respond in promoting the inclusion of Venezuelans into national social protection systems and local labour markets, and supporting government plans for long-term solutions, including asylum, regularization schemes and other means of facilitating legal stay. In Colombia, 1,000,000 Venezuelans were registered with biometric data to access the 10-year Temporary Protection Status.

The Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V) and the State-led Quito Process remain key regional mechanisms for harmonizing policies and practices, scaling up and coordinating the humanitarian response and improving access to basic rights. In Venezuela, UNHCR operates within an interagency framework to assist the most vulnerable population groups inside the country, including recent returnees.



Argentina. A Venezuelan entrepreneur showcases her Venezuelan sweet bread initiative. Her enterprise is called Mis Bizcochos and is one of the 32 initiatives that participated in the "Festival del Reencuentro".

© UNHCR/Labaus

Working with partners

The **Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform** (R4V) was established on 12 April 2018, in response to a request to UNHCR and IOM by the UN Secretary-General to lead and coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The Platform aims to address the protection, assistance and integration needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in affected Latin American and Caribbean States. In this context, 192 organizations have joined forces to establish the **2022 Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants** (RMRP), which serves as a strategic and operational blueprint, a coordination template, and a funding mechanism. Within the R4V Platform, UNHCR co-leads the Protection, Shelter and Human Transportation Sector, as well as the Support Spaces working group. Finally, since 2019, UNHCR works within the framework of the **Humanitarian Response Plan** (HRP) for people who spontaneously returned to Venezuela, IDPs, persons at risk of displacement, refugees, asylum-seekers, and persons at risk of statelessness who require humanitarian assistance and protection safeguards.

Priorities in 2022

In close collaboration with host governments, partner organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, and UN Agencies, UNHCR is undertaking the following activities:

Protect

Safe and dignified reception conditions: UNHCR stepped up its presence in border areas across the region to improve reception conditions and respond to the basic needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, including those in a street situation; provide legal aid and counselling on access to asylum and other forms of legal stay; assist relevant authorities to develop an effective coordination and prepare local response and contingency plans, and provide support for the internal relocation of those who would like to be reunited with their families or may access job opportunities elsewhere.

Support government registration, protection monitoring and regularization schemes: UNHCR works in close partnership with governments across the region to strengthen registration systems in shelters, screening centres and domestic asylum systems. An analysis of the data collected from all countries hosting Venezuelans allows for enhanced protection monitoring, as well as effective advocacy for long-term solutions that will promote socio-economic inclusion. UNHCR supports the countries hosting Venezuelan refugees and migrants, including Colombia, Dominican Republic and now Ecuador, with the implementation of regularization schemes by providing technical support and sharing information with Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

Assist

Providing access to shelter and settlement: UNHCR country operations continue supporting access to temporary collective shelters through infrastructure works and shelter management capacity building, with a focus on consolidating a regional response emergency accommodation network. Access to individual shelters through rental programming has been strengthened while settlement and community infrastructure interventions have been prioritized in hosting territories.

Direct humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs: Venezuelan refugees and migrants are still facing pandemic-related border restrictions, which creates heightened risks as they enter countries irregularly to seek protection and assistance. Host communities are also dealing with the negative impacts of the pandemic and the more recent impact of other humanitarian crises, including increased unemployment and inflation rates and stagnant economies, reducing the options of livelihoods opportunities. UNHCR has seen an increase in the number of 'settled' Venezuelans unable to meet their survival (basic) needs, as well as an increasing number of requests for assistance. UNHCR uses unconditional cash transfers to help POC temporarily meet their needs, providing assistance for rent, food and utilities. UNHCR gives cash so that Venezuelans can become contributing members of the local economy, by purchasing their goods in neighbourhood markets and paying rent to local landlords. In 2021, UNHCR delivered cash assistance to over 180,000 Venezuelans across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Empower

Campaigns against xenophobia: In an effort to curb growing xenophobia and discrimination against Venezuelans and promote solidarity in the host communities, the Regional R4V Platform launched a digital campaign **Acortemos Distancias** in August 2020. The campaign reached over 18 million internet users across the region, using social media to generate positive dialogue. Inter-Agency national initiatives accompany these efforts in Panama (Somos lo Mismo), Peru (Tu Causa Es Mi Causa), Colombia (Somos Panas Colombia and Juntos más Grandes), Ecuador (Humano), Dominican Republic (Gracias Dominicana).

Protection interventions in main hosting areas:

Main protection risks faced by Venezuelans include Gender-Based Violence (GBV), human trafficking and smuggling, discrimination and xenophobia, inability to access documentation, regularization and asylum systems, and lack of access to basic services, each of which significantly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The **Regional Safe Spaces Network** provides specialized services to GBV survivors and children at risk inside Venezuela and in host countries. UNHCR, as regional co-lead of the R4V platform, implements the **regional Support Spaces Network** through which services are provided in hosting countries. The **Regional Protection Sector** of the R4V Platform, co-led by UNHCR, focuses on regularization and legal stay arrangements for Venezuelans, access to national protection systems and improved protection response to disproportionately affected population groups. As part of its community-based protection strategy, UNHCR works with outreach volunteers to improve the protection environment and ensure two-way communication and accountability. Information materials on the prevention and mitigation of GBV, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), among others, have been developed and disseminated through different communication channels.

Solve

Livelihoods and economic inclusion: Despite efforts made by host communities and governments, Venezuelans face increasing challenges related to unemployment and poverty. The impact of the pandemic has further aggravated this situation. UNHCR is strengthening ties with the private sector through initiatives like **Empresas con Refugiados** in Brazil and Ecuador, **Talento sin Fronteras** in Panama and **Living the Integration** in Costa Rica focusing on employability and entrepreneurial skills of Venezuelans while sensitizing and informing private sector actors. In October 2021 UNHCR signed a regional agreement with ManpowerGroup (a global leader in workforce solutions) to facilitate new ways of working together that support PoC aspirations to find formal work. Through the Inter-Agency project Inclusive Cities UNHCR, IOM and UN-Habitat are fostering local authorities' capacities of response and inclusive planning to reduce vulnerabilities of refugees and migrants from Venezuela. UNHCR is promoting financial inclusion of refugees' entrepreneurs by facilitating partnerships with financial institutions. In 2022, UNHCR signed an agreement with the **Inter-American Development Bank** to address the forced displacement crisis and foster solutions to promote the inclusion of displaced populations in host communities.

Climate change

UNHCR and R4V partners take environmental considerations and climate action into account: According to the self-assessment exercise of RMRP 2022, more than half of all partners submitting projects have at least partially considered the inclusion of environmental factors into the design of their intervention; an additional quarter declared to intend to carry out environmental assessments before starting implementation. This is also in response to requests from donors, which increasingly include environmental and climate safeguards for funding.

For some partners, especially those that have recently joined the RMRP, environmental mainstreaming and climate action are still a new approach. Therefore, awareness of their importance and potential is being raised. Few, mostly international organizations, have access to specialized in-house knowledge or can afford external expertise to proactively integrate environmental considerations into program planning. In most cases, partners must rely on available general information to incorporate environmental aspects. Therefore, strategic sectoral approaches at the country level and improved access to context-appropriate planning tools will be an important way to incorporate environmental mainstreaming and climate action into project cycle management.

Innovation

UNHCR has been supporting operations in strengthening their digital engagement channels with refugees and migrants to underpin the delivery of UNHCR's protection mandate. As such, WhatsApp information lines have been established in Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and implementation is ongoing in Peru, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. In addition, through the Digital Inclusion Fund, the Innovation Service has been fostering new approaches to tackle digital challenges faced by refugees and migrants in the region.

In 2021, UNHCR worked together with indigenous communities in northern Colombia to design and implement a community network to facilitate access to information, communication with loved ones, access to ongoing regularization processes and educational resources, empowering individuals, and promoting Wayúu culture and traditions. Moreover, UNHCR explored leveraging existing community influencers online to strengthen UNHCR

communications efforts in Chile. Finally, UNHCR along with UN Global Pulse – the UN Secretariat’s initiative on big data and artificial intelligence – are jointly supporting UNHCR Boa Vista in Brazil working together to create a predictive analytics model to calculate and anticipate the number of displaced persons a) that have already crossed the Brazil-Venezuela border and b) that might potentially cross in order to understand their need for humanitarian support and overall strengthen contingency planning and protection efforts. UNHCR has recently launch a series of thematic funds – Digital Inclusion, Environment and Resilience, Data Innovation – to enable colleagues across UNHCR to develop, test and experiment with innovative solutions and make UNHCR more agile and effective in pursuing Strategic Directions.

UNHCR’s humanitarian response in the Americas is made possible thanks to the generous support of major donors who have contributed with unrestricted funding to UNHCR’s global operations, and to donors who have generously contributed to operations responding to the Venezuela situation.

Thanks to all our **donors in 2022 (as of 31 May)**:

Belgium | Canada | Colombia | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Luxembourg | Migration MPTF | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United States of America

And to our **private donors**:

International Olympic Committee | The L’Oreal Foundation | Private donors Japan | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donor Spain | Swedish Postcode Lottery | UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe

CONTACT

Sonia Giannone, Senior Donor Relations Officer, giannone@unhcr.org

Carla Calvo, Reporting Officer, calvoc@unhcr.org

Vanessa Villalibre, Associate Reporting Officer, villalib@unhcr.org