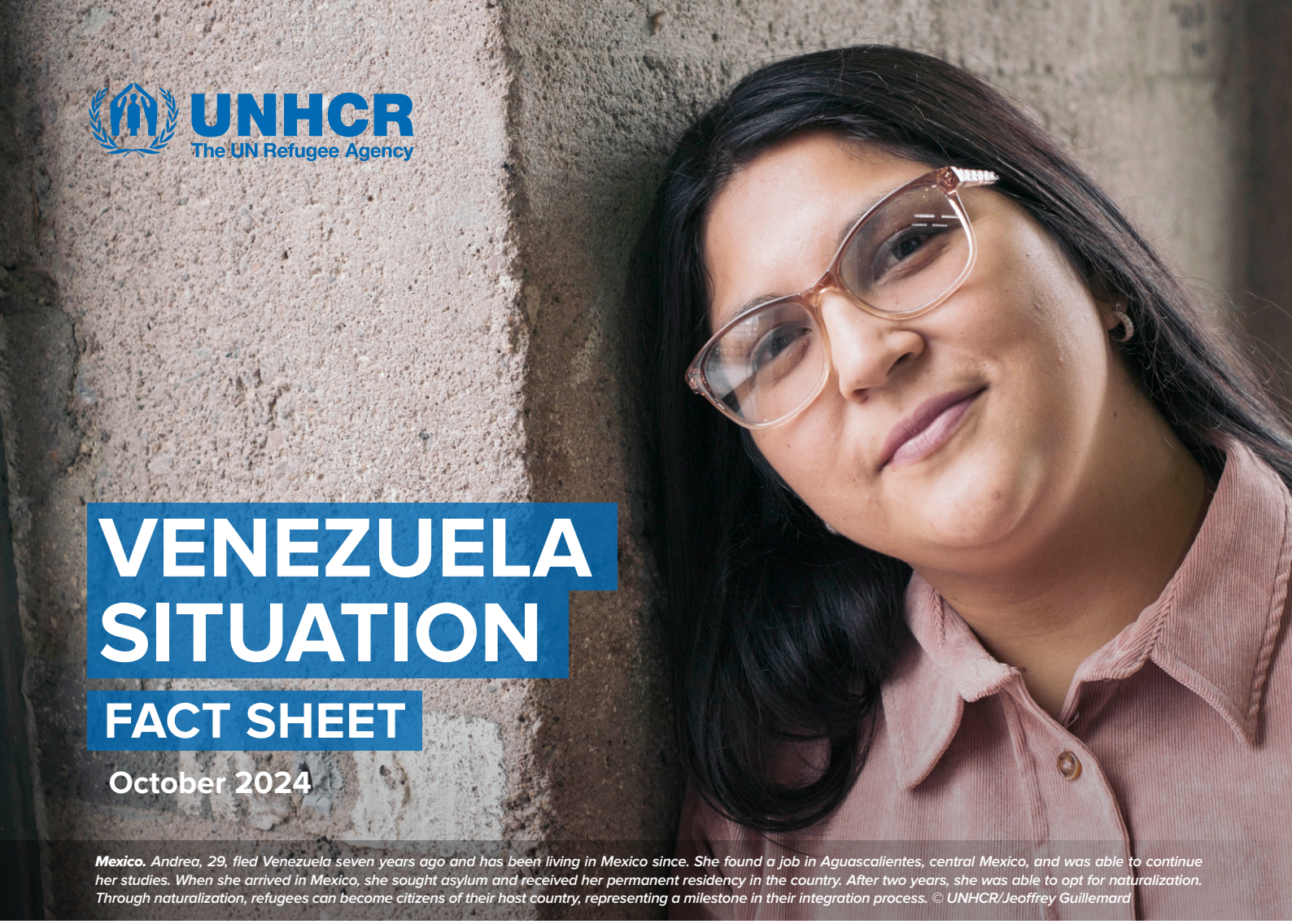
UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

VENEZUELA SITUATION

FACT SHEET

October 2024



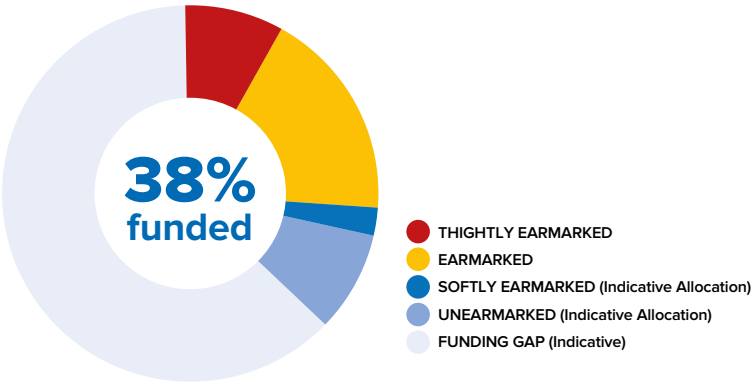
Mexico. *Andrea, 29, fled Venezuela seven years ago and has been living in Mexico since. She found a job in Aguascalientes, central Mexico, and was able to continue her studies. When she arrived in Mexico, she sought asylum and received her permanent residency in the country. After two years, she was able to opt for naturalization. Through naturalization, refugees can become citizens of their host country, representing a milestone in their integration process. © UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard*

Findings from the RMNA conducted by R4V highlight that **4.2 million Venezuelans in the region still face difficulties in accessing essential services** and formal employment, despite the laudable achievements of host countries in providing humanitarian assistance, protection, and integration opportunities.

According to the R4V, while across the region, nearly 68 per cent of refugees and migrants from Venezuela have succeeded in obtaining a regular migratory status or refugee recognition, **some 2.2 million are in an irregular situation**, predominantly owed to high costs and strict entry and visa requirements.

UNHCR supports host governments in preventing and responding to forced displacement and implementing **protection and solution responses**, including access to territory, dignified reception, fair and efficient asylum procedures, other legal-stay arrangements, socio-economic inclusion and third country solutions.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS IN 2024 (AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2024)



US$ 400 M

Requested for the Venezuela situation**

***The UNHCR financial requirements for the Venezuela Situation include the following countries : Argentina, Aruba, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela.*

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Cross-border displacement and mixed movements from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela continue. According to the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), co-led by UNHCR and IOM, as of May 2024, there were over 7.77 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide, of whom 85% (6.59 million) are in Latin America and the Caribbean. By mid-2024, there were over 365,500 recognized refugees from Venezuela, and almost 1.3 million asylum-seekers. In 2024, as a key partner of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP), and as part of a hemispheric approach, UNHCR and its partners planned to support over 2.93 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region by providing direct assistance and enhancing the operational coordination of the inter-agency response through its leadership role in the R4V Regional Platform.

Lack of more viable options and opportunities in an increasing number of host countries drive many to move in search of a more stable future.

Onward movements of refugees and migrants between host countries, including northbound ones, significantly increased in 2023 and continued in the first semester of 2024 as Venezuelans and other nationals (increasingly Ecuadorians, but also Haitians and Colombians) with heightened vulnerabilities seek sustainable protection and integration solutions. According to R4V, throughout the first half of 2024, return intentions among Venezuelan refugees and migrants were generally low. Only some 4 per cent of those in-destination in Brazil and Colombia, respectively, considered a return option. Also, among those already engaging in transit or onward movements, some 10 per cent were returning to Venezuela. Owed to the post-electoral situation in Venezuela, movement dynamics have slightly changed so far, with Venezuelans weighing their options as events unfold, including more interest on family reunification. Regular updates on the movements of Venezuelans are provided via the **R4V Movements Report.**

In 2023, Venezuelans represented 63% of those crossing the Darien jungle; nearly half of them travelled directly from Venezuela according to Protection Monitoring reports. As of 31 August 2024, some 238,000 people of various nationalities (of those more than 158,000 from Venezuela) crossed the Darién, heading northwards. This represents a 30 per cent decrease compared to the same period last year. Venezuelans continue to be the main nationality represented, followed by Colombians and Ecuadorians. There has been a notable change in displacement patterns in the region, with new routes being used across Central America and the Caribbean.

Amidst a chronically underfunded R4V response (as of 13 September 2024, only 15.4% or USD 244.4 million are funded, out of USD 1.59 billion that are required in 2024), more investments from the international community, the private sector, and international development and financial institutions in longer-term solutions are key for refugees and migrants to achieve self-reliance and inclusion, and to mitigate risks of onward movements.

ECUADOR. UNHCR and IOM on 2 September praised Ecuador's new presidential decree introducing an extraordinary regularization process for Venezuelans and their families who currently lack regular status in the country.

This initiative is expected to benefit some 100,000 people, according to Government estimates. Ecuador hosts the fifth largest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the Americas. The regularization will assist thousands who registered for a previous process in 2022, but who were unable to complete the necessary steps to finally obtain their visas. They could not obtain regular status because of practical barriers to meeting the requirements, including providing necessary documentation such as passports or valid national IDs, and covering the costs of additional paperwork. The process will allow Venezuelans who are in Ecuador irregularly to access a type of visa called Temporary Residence of Exception, which initially lasts two years and can be renewed for another two years. Beneficiaries will join the approximately 97,000 people who already regularized. Read more **here**

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- UNHCR co-leads with IOM the regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (**R4V**), coordinating with 248 organizations who are implementing the **2023-2024 Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP)** across 17 countries. The RMRP's priorities follow findings of the **Regional Refugee and Migrant Needs Analysis (RMNA),** which draws on a regionally harmonized framework for joint needs assessments, developed and implemented in an inter-agency manner among regional and national partners. More than 14,000 household surveys were conducted in 15 of the 17 R4V countries, corresponding to more than 41,500 migrants' and refugees' views: in addition to a plethora of secondary data. The RMRP 2025-2026 will be presented in early December 2024.

- Synergies between the RMRP and Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) were reinforced in 2024, focusing on activities implemented in border areas, reception and reintegration of returnees, the issuance of personal documentation, access to health and education, support to national and regional campaigns against discrimination and xenophobia and joint resource mobilization initiatives.

- Similarly, synergies with other regional and national coordination mechanisms were enhanced, including through the UNSG's Flagship Initiative in Colombia, and with the regional RedLAC forum, paving the way for more efficient coordination of hemispheric mixed movements across the region.

- UNHCR and IOM also provide technical support to the regional inter-governmental coordination forum, the **Quito Process**, a state-led initiative that includes 13 Latin American and Caribbean countries that seeks to harmonize domestic policies and responses to displacement in receiving countries, currently under the Presidency protempore of Costa Rica.

- To promote comprehensive, coherent, and coordinated regional responses, UNHCR also engages with governments at national and local level and other stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, and development and financial institutions, in the implementation of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection. The Declaration aims to bolster pledges that enhance protection-sensitive entry systems; ensure access to asylum and other protection-oriented legal stay arrangements; stabilize populations in communities of origin, transit, destination, and return; and expand legal pathways for regular migration and access to international protection, including strengthening national asylum systems and resettlement.

- Inside Venezuela, UNHCR operates within the inter-agency framework of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) to assist the most vulnerable populations in the country. UNHCR takes a leadership role in the Humanitarian Response Plan, focusing on the Protection, Shelter, Energy & NFI clusters. In the latter, UNHCR focuses on addressing climate-related emergencies and assistance to institutions tasked with responding to them. Within the Protection Cluster, UNHCR tackles issues related to human trafficking, and protection concerns arising from human mobility, as well as new protection profiles emerging from the post-electoral crisis. This assistance includes support for individuals in mobility, both outbound and inbound, returnee reintegration efforts, and the provision of essential medical services and temporary shelter facilities.

- UNHCR has a strong commitment to finding solutions for returnees in Venezuela. It has led the establishment of an Inter-agency Group on Human Mobility and Reintegration and has actively implemented pilot projects in strategic locations with sister agencies IOM, UNDP and FAO. These projects are being implemented through a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach that aims to provide vulnerable Venezuelans with practical options to stay in their country, fostering sustainable reintegration and contributing to broader humanitarian goals.

STRATEGY

STRENGTHENING ASYLUM SYSTEMS AND PROTECTION ALTERNATIVES

Countries hosting refugees and migrants have made commendable efforts to strengthen asylum and expand legal stay arrangements for people in need of international protection. However, increasing numbers and limited regular migration alternatives are overwhelming the asylum systems. In light of the suspension of diplomatic and consular relations involving seven countries in the region with Venezuela, refugees and migrants from Venezuela are encountering significant barriers in obtaining essential civil registration documents, notarial services, as well as travel and identity documents typically provided through consular assistance. These impediments are anticipated to hinder Venezuelans' access to social services and their ability to secure legal status in various countries, particularly those offering regularisation schemes that necessitate identity documentation, and might also hinder return prospects. UNHCR continues to urge host States in the region to implement flexible requirements and administrative facilitation measures for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, thereby ensuring their protection and integration.

- UNHCR stepped-up its presence in border areas across the region to contribute to expanding reception conditions, responding to the basic needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, while ensuring access to territory and prevent forced return. UNHCR field presence along border areas is also aimed at providing legal aid and counselling on access to asylum and other legal stay arrangements. In addition, UNHCR assists local authorities and organizations with presence on the ground on preparedness and contingency planning for any potential increase on arrivals.

- UNHCR conducts protection monitoring regularly on all countries hosting Venezuelans, which supports evidence-based advocacy and programming. Socio-economic inclusion of Venezuelan refugees abroad is also central to UNHCR´s Protection Strategy in host countries and reduces reliance on humanitarian assistance.

- UNHCR works in close partnership with governments across the region to strengthen national asylum systems, and supports countries hosting Venezuelan refugees and migrants, including Argentina, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay with the planning and implementation of temporary protection and other legal stay arrangements, including regularization schemes, by providing technical and material support and sharing information with Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

- UNHCR as co-lead of the **regional GBV Subsector**, together with UNFPA and Save the Children, is enhancing the capacities of the R4V national platforms to better prevent and respond to GBV. This year over 500 people (NGOs/INGOs, government officials, and faith-based organizations), have been reached through capacity building and advocacy efforts. UNHCR, as co-lead of the R4V Platform, implements the regional **Support Spaces Network**, providing information, orientation and basic services to refugees and migrants from Venezuela through a coordinated network of 211 spaces in 9 countries in the region.

- The **Regional Protection Sector** of the R4V Platform, co-led by UNHCR and NRC, focuses on legal protection from risks of refoulement, deportation and rejection at borders, prolonged arbitrary detention, and abuses of authority; legal assistance to ensure access to asylum, temporary protection, regularization, and other legal stay arrangements for Venezuelans; safe access to territory, regular entry into countries and transit; access to basic services and specialized protection services, and sustainable long-term solutions, particularly to disproportionately affected population groups, from an age, gender and diversity perspective.

- As part of its community-based protection strategy, UNHCR works with community-based organizations and other key actors, including refugees and forcibly displaced people to improve the protection environment and ensure two-way communication and accountability. Information materials on the prevention and risk mitigation of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse (SEA), among others, have been developed and disseminated through different communication channels.

- Across the region, many of the Venezuelan refugee-and migrant-led organizations are represented by an umbrella organization called "Coalición por Venezuela," which is an important stakeholder for R4V.These actors (now amounting to a quarter of all appealing partners in the Platform) are part of the RMRP's programme cycle, both at regional and national levels, providing valued contributions in the development of the planning assumptions and strategy, as well as operational inputs.

Brazil. Warao refugee plays football with grandchildren at Boa Vista shelter. Close to 1,500 Venezuelans from indigenous groups including the Warao, Pemon, Kariña, E'ñepa, and Wayúu, live at the UNHCR-supported Waraotuma a Tuaranoko shelter. © UNHCR/Manoela Bonaldo

ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES

The unprecedented mixed movement of refugees and migrants in the Americas is linked to complex and often overlapping drivers of displacement and population movements that have persisted and intensified, forcing, or leaving people with few options, but to leave home.

- **UNHCR works with States and other stakeholders in developing and implementing legal frameworks and public policies** that respond to the needs of displaced populations. UNHCR also promotes the community empowerment of displaced populations.

- **UNHCR supports States in increasing their climate preparedness** through strengthening: 1) legal protection responses for those forced to flee because of climate change and disasters, and 2) the inclusion of displaced people in the climate response of host countries in the region (national adaptation and resilience plans).

EXPANDING RESETTLEMENT AND SAFE PATHWAYS

***A responsive third-country solutions framework** includes family reunification options, resettlement, and complementary admission pathways for refugees, as well as regular options for migrants. Predictable and accessible safe admission pathways have the potential to reduce onward movement and dangerous journeys of refugees and migrants and contribute to responsibility-sharing between States.*

- As part oof a wider comprehensive strategy to address human mobility in the region, UNHCR, together with IOM, supports the Movilidad Segura (Safe Mobility), an initiative led by the United States of America. Safe Mobility Offices (SMO) are operational in Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Ecuador and open to Venezuelan nationals in all those countries, except Guatemala.

ENHANCING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND EFFORTS TO COUNTERACT MISINFORMATION

Unprecedented complex mixed movements throughout the Americas have led to growing humanitarian crises, with refugees and migrants on the move facing grave protection risks along their journey. States as well as international and humanitarian organizations are providing life-saving humanitarian assistance, shelter, legal advice, psychosocial support, reliable information, and dedicated multi-stakeholder coordination platforms.

- The situation of collective emergency shelters is exacerbated by the accommodation needs of those engaging in onward and transit movements, including those from other nationalities. UNHCR country operations continue to provide support to partners to strengthen the collective and individual emergency shelter response, while also investing in physical area-based infrastructure prioritizing hosting territories.

- UNHCR has seen an increase in the number of Venezuelans unable to meet basic needs, as well as an increasing number of requests for assistance. UNHCR uses cash transfers to help them temporarily meet their needs, providing assistance for rent, food, and utilities. UNHCR provides cash assistance so that Venezuelans become contributing members of the local economy, by purchasing their goods in neighbourhood markets and paying rent to local landlords. Since 2019 until September 2024, UNHCR delivered cash assistance to some 782,290 Venezuelans across Latin America and the Caribbean.

- In the face of growing challenges inside Venezuela, UNHCR is prioritizing the strengthening of community resilience and supporting the safe return of displaced individuals. To achieve this, UNHCR is working on multiple fronts: empowering community networks to engage in project implementation, providing essential goods and services to vulnerable populations, establishing safe spaces for SGBV survivors and at-risk children, implementing reintegration pilots in strategic locations, and working to help repair the social fabric of communities affected by the post-electoral crisis. Additionally, UNHCR is strengthening the capacity of local authorities and communities to respond to emergencies and address the needs of displaced populations.

- In an effort to curb growing discrimination and xenophobia against Venezuelans and promote respect and 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. Campaigns such as "**Somos Panas**" " in Colombia reached more than 113,000 followers on social media and more than 190,000 people have participated in the campaign's face-to-face events. As part of the campaign, more than one thousand journalists have been trained. In Chile, "**La Camiseta por Chile**" was launched, a campaign on the sidelines of the 2023 Pan American Games. In Peru, in 2022 the campaign "**Tu Causa Es Mi Causa**" reached over 3 million people through digital channels. Also, as part of the campaign "**Solidaridad Azul**" in partnership with local football team Club Alianza Lima, during World Refugee Day messages of solidarity and inclusion of refugees and migrants from Venezuela were communicated at a football match, reaching more than 30,000 fans at the stadium and other thousands on the national TV. The campaign **"Gracias Dominicana"** reached more than 2 million people on digital media since it was launched.

- In April 2024, R4V published the documentary "**The Journey that Never Ends**", a firsthand insight into the challenges, fears, dreams, and contributions of refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

INVESTING IN INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

Legal stay arrangements, documentation, access to services, and livelihoods help ensure that people in need of protection and others on the move can thrive in host communities. Through an area-based approach, projects and activities implemented also benefit hosting communities. Some countries have made great strides in creating welcoming policies and conditions that facilitate integration and inclusion, yet many challenges remain. National services and labour markets in many host communities have become overstretched and further investment is needed.

- To strengthen refugees' inclusion in the labour market, UNHCR partnered with the private sector to foster initiatives like the **Local Integration Programme** (PIL) in Mexico that since 2016 has relocated more than 45,000 refugees and asylum-seekers of different nationalities including 349 Venezuelans from cities in southern Mexico to 11 municipalities in the central and northern regions offering better integration opportunities, including employment and education. In Brazil, since April 2018, more than 137,000 people from Venezuela have been relocated to more than 1,000 cities throughout the country; of those 8,850 Venezuelans were relocated with the support of UNHCR through both the institutional and the employment-based modalities. In Ecuador (Empresas con los **Refugiados**) and in Brazil (Empresas com **Refugiados** and **Refugee Entrepreneurs**), UNHCR in conjunction with the UN Global Compact developed online platforms to promote the integration of forcibly displaced in the labour market. Initiatives in Costa Rica (Living the Inclusion), Peru (**Integrating Companies**), and Ecuador (**Inclusive Companies**) are awarding seals recognising companies' good practices in promoting socioeconomic inclusion of forcibly displaced, i.e. equitable hiring, inclusion of their products and services in value chains, and supply processes, developing technical and soft skills, promoting financial inclusion.

- **Initiatives like Together for Inclusion and Territories of Inclusion** in Colombia; and Inclusive Market in Chile are enhancing employability, facilitating labour insertion, and strengthening the entrepreneurial skills of Venezuelans. In 2024, UNHCR, in cooperation with Peru's Ministry of Health, facilitated the inclusion of 172 Venezuelan doctors in clinics operating in under-served areas.

- Working with UNHCR, the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)** targeted projects to advance labour market integration of displaced populations across Latin America and the Caribbean. UNHCR also strengthened ties with the **International Financial Corporation (CAF)** to expand financial inclusion and job opportunities for the people with and for whom UNHCR works.

- On 25 and 26 April 2024, 16 local governments and representatives of international organizations gathered under the "Cities of Solidarity" initiative to exchange good practices and presented their recommendations to be incorporated into Chile's Declaration and Plan of Action within the framework of Cartagena+40 process. The meeting was jointly organized by UNHCR, with the support of the Montevideo Municipality, and with the sponsorship of the Government of Chile. The meeting concluded with the adoption of the **Montevideo Declaration** on Contributions of Cities of Solidarity to Chile's Declaration and Plan of Action (2024-2034). This Declaration is a firm commitment from local authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean to address the humanitarian and social challenges posed by the reception and integration of refugees and migrants in the region's transit and destination cities and communities. Four cities joined the initiative in 2024, Maipú (Argentina), El Estor, Morales, and Los Amates (Guatemala).

RETURNS AND REINTEGRATION

UNHCR works to enhance the support to reception and reintegration programmes in countries of origin to ensure the rights and dignity of returnees, including the monitoring of the situation of forced returns for people not in need of international protection.

- As return movements to Venezuela increased in 2023 and 2024, support to communities receiving returnees was required. In this context, UNHCR works in close coordination with national and local institutions, the private sector, and existing networks to implement community based interventions in States prioritized by the HRP.

WEB STORY

COLOMBIA: VENEZUELAN ENTREPRENEURS RUN THRIVING BUSINESSES IN COLOMBIA THANKS TO UNHCR PROGRAMME

Launched in 2019, the Graduation Model helps forcibly displaced Venezuelans rebuild their lives in Colombia with dignity and the prospect of financial stability. The Graduation Model uses a series of workshops, trainings and mentorship to help refugees and displaced people build small businesses and become economically self-sufficient. Graduation Model participants learn small business, finance, marketing and customer service skills. Read more **here.**

TIMELY FUNDING

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.

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS IN 2024 (AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2024)

Australia | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Luxembourg | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Norway | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America | Leaving No One Behind- The Internal Displacement Solutions Fund

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CONTACT

SALVADOR SANTIESTEBAN, Reporting Officer, ***santiest@unhcr.org***