

# Population Movements in the Andean Region

## Increased Population Movements and Humanitarian Response

*This flash update provides a snapshot of the current situation of people coming from Venezuela to Colombia, Ecuador and Peru following the reopening of the main border crossing points between Colombia and Venezuela and Peru's Government introduction of a humanitarian visa for Venezuelans to enter the country. It includes updates on the regional movements observed and the preparedness and response put in place by the mentioned countries. This flash update is produced in the context of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela.*

### Context

The re-opening of the main border crossing points between Colombia and Venezuela on 8 June 2019, after their closure on 23 February, led to changes in the entry dynamics at Colombia's main entry points in Norte de Santander. Although overall entry figures in Colombia remain similar to previous months, the number of entries through regular border crossing points on 8 June increased in approximately 47% from the day before the reopening of the borders.



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Meanwhile in Peru, as of 15 June 2019, Venezuelan citizens are required to have a passport (valid or expired) and a "humanitarian visa" to enter the country. This visa needs to be obtained at a Peruvian consulate in Venezuela, and exceptionally in Colombia or Ecuador, before arriving in Peru. The humanitarian visa is free of charge and granted to Venezuelans with a passport and a certified criminal record, challenging to obtain for many Venezuelans. Venezuelans are able to seek asylum at the border, even if they do not have a passport or a visa. Additionally, the Government of Peru put in place a set of exceptions based on humanitarian reasons for Venezuelans arriving without the required documents.

The number of Venezuelans trying to enter Peru from Ecuador increased before the entry into force of the new visa requirements reaching 8,093 on 14 June. This outflow increase was also noticed in Rumichaca, on the border between Colombia and Ecuador, with a peak on 14 June with more than



8,000 arrivals in the northern border. As a result of the increased flows, Venezuelans have been queuing for long hours with some having to spend the night at the border centres waiting to undergo migratory procedures. Since 14 June, numbers of refugees and migrants from Venezuela at the border have gradually decreased to reach usual flows.

## Colombia

Colombia has responded to an increase in the number of arrivals in the northern border with Venezuela following the reopening of the main crossing points on 8 June 2019, after their closure on 23 February. Simultaneously, the flow of refugees and migrants from Venezuela leaving Colombia to Ecuador also increased requiring increased presence of both authorities and humanitarian organizations.



**700** available spaces daily and transportation to the shelters provided



**24h** health services and nutritional attention



**3** hot meals a day for **700** people

### i. Population movements

Since the reopening of the Colombia-Venezuela border, overall figures of population flows remain similar to those observed in previous months at the Simon Bolivar International Bridge. Yet, the number of people using regular border crossing points have increased. On the day of the reopening, a 25% increase of the entries of refugees and migrants from Venezuela was observed in comparison with the first seven days of June. This comes in addition to ongoing significant pendular movement at the Venezuela-Colombia border.

During the past days, Colombia also had to respond to an increase flow in the country's southern border with Ecuador. The day before the humanitarian visa came into force (14 June), a total of 6,058 exits from Colombia to Ecuador were recorded, while on 15 June, this number decreased to 5,016 exits at the same border crossing.

### ii. Preparedness and response

In Rumichaca, authorities and humanitarian organizations are working hand in hand to respond to the increase of arrivals. The Ministry of Public Health is vaccinating children while the Colombian National Police maintains 55 police units available to guarantee order and security at the national border centre (CENAF). Civil Defense personnel also remains at Rumichaca providing 24-hour first-aid services. Five officers from the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (ICBF), including a Family Advocate, are supporting case management and protection of children and adolescents.

Partners of Colombia's Interagency Group for Mixed Flows (GIFMM) are providing information on new requirements for entry into Peru including access to asylum, as well as delivering emergency kits (mainly non-perishable food, hygiene kits and blankets), providing transportation and 24-hour health services and nutritional attention to Venezuelans waiting to cross to Ecuador. Around 700 spaces per day are available for temporary shelter and transportation service from Rumichaca to the shelters is provided. Information materials on sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention have been also distributed to some 500 women.

Within the framework of the local GIFMM, information and orientation and temporary shelter is being provided in Bogota and in other six main cities that are part of the main routes followed by Venezuelans during their transit through Colombia.

## Ecuador

Peru's new visa requirements for Venezuelans have also had a major impact on Ecuador's northern border with Colombia, with an increase of people arriving and facing severe congestion at those areas. In addition, teams in Huaquillas are responding to the needs of Venezuelans willing to cross to Peru.



**27** refugee housing units prepositioned at the southern border



**22** buses provided transportation



**300** dignity kits distributed to women and girls

### i. Population movements

According to Ecuadorian authorities, the number of arrivals in Ecuador showed an increase from 12 June, with over 5,000 entries recorded to peak on Friday, 14 June, when over 8,000 Venezuelans entered the country through the Rumichaca and San Miguel border crossings with Colombia. The number of entries of Venezuelan refugees and migrants has decreased since then to 2,600 entries on Sunday, 16 June. Likewise, congestion started to significantly reduce starting from 15 June.

### ii. Preparedness and response

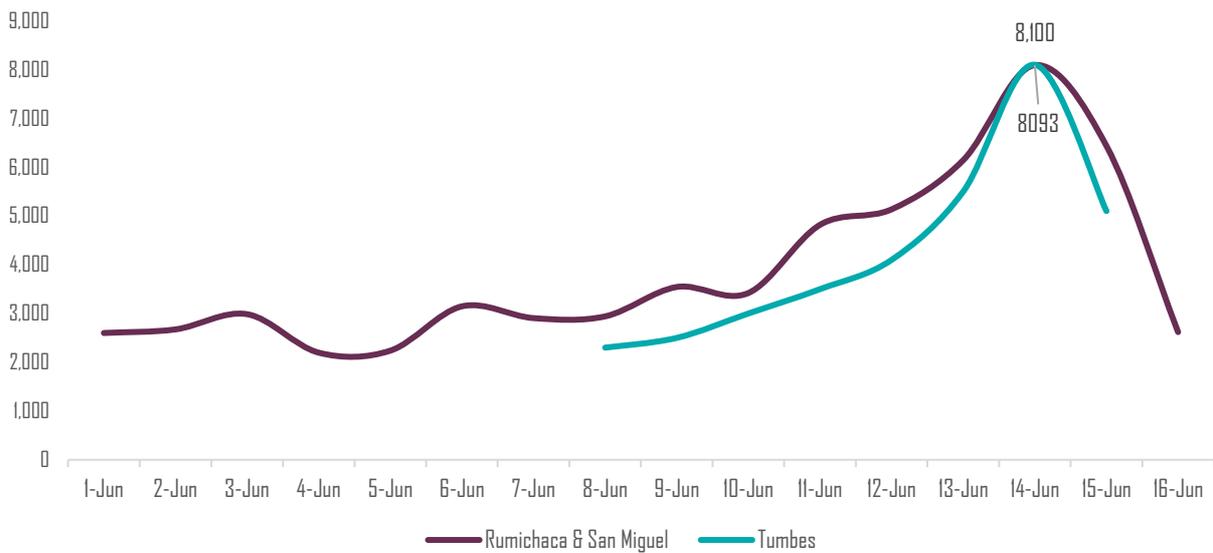
Due to the increased flows of Venezuelan refugees and migrants crossing the border of Colombia to Ecuador, the Ecuadorian authorities (in particular migration, police and health authorities) have increased their presence to process record numbers of people and respond to their needs. Up to 18 migration booths were reported to be operational during peaks of arrivals in Rumichaca. Scaling-up of health and nutritional attention was also observed in the different border areas, with more than 1,200 children vaccinated in Rumichaca over 3 days (13, 14 and 15 June), two mobile points deployed in San Miguel and a contingency planning activated in Huaquillas, through deployment of medical staff and provision of medicine and equipment.

In support, humanitarian organizations have also deployed extra resources to cope with the influx. Temporary shelter was provided to vulnerable cases through provision of vouchers and tents and refugee housing units were also habilitated to increase the capacity to host refugees and migrants spending the night at the border. A total of 27 refugee housing units were prepositioned at the southern border with a capacity of 150-200 beds, a scale-up from the seven units initially present in this location.

Food assistance was also provided in the form of food packages, food rations, breakfasts and hot meals. 600 food packages were sent to the southern border for distribution. Additionally, a variety of items including hygiene, blankets and clothes as well as cash assistance were also regularly distributed by partners in all border areas for vulnerable profiles. The response in water and sanitation was also reinforced, with the delivery of additional water tanks and reinforcement of WASH facilities. Women and girls received 300 dignity kits and approximately 500 women received information on sexual and reproductive health and prevention of gender-based violence.

In terms of protection, identification and support to profiles presenting specific needs is ongoing, combined with delivery of information on access to regular status and asylum, new conditions to enter Peru and access to services. Binational coordination was crucial in that aspect, as well as to activate and where necessary revise protection and referral pathways. Humanitarian transport was provided through the deployment of 22 buses (12 and 13 June) and then suspended given the limited number of persons able to comply with the new requirements established by Peru.

Arrivals in Rumichaca & San Miguel (Ecuador) and Tumbes (Peru)



## Peru

The days prior to the enforcement of the entry requirements of the humanitarian visa, the main land border between Ecuador and Peru in Tumbes registered long lines of Venezuelans trying to enter Peru. Some of the Venezuelans had been travelling for several days, by bus or, in some cases, by foot to reach the Peruvian border. The intense heat increased the risk of dehydration, particularly for children, the elderly and other persons with specific needs.



Temporary shelter provided to about **200** people daily.



About **650** individuals provided transportation to Tumbes and beyond.



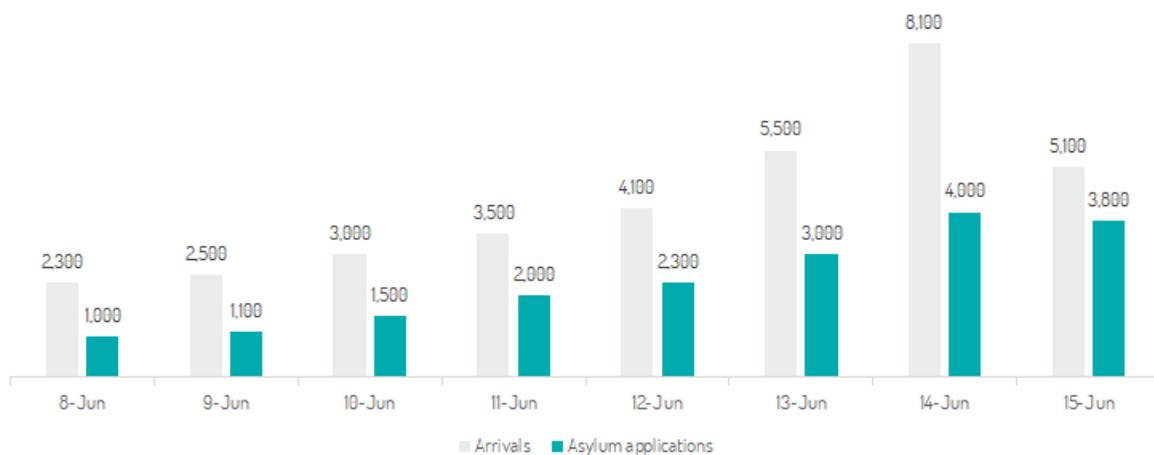
**3,500** people received information on services and assistance.

### i. Population movements

Following an increase on arrivals since 12 June - with 4,100 entries were recorded and 2,300 asylum claims filed at the border - the highest number of arrivals and asylum applications was recorded on 14 June with over 8,000 arrivals, of which 4,000 individuals applied for asylum.

These are the figures of Venezuelans entering Peru through the land border in Tumbes (asylum applications are included in the numbers of arrivals):

Arrivals and Asylum applications in Tumbes (Peru)



## ii. Preparedness and response

A contingency plan has been activated by the Peruvian authorities and the humanitarian organizations present at the Binational Border Centre (CEBAF by its Spanish acronym) to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable Venezuelans.

Under the coordination of Peru's Inter-agency Platform (GTRM), UN agencies (IOM, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO) and NGOs (ADRA, COOPI, Red Cross Peru, Encuentros, IFRC, Plan, Prisma, RET, Save the Children and World Vision) deployed extra staff and resources to support the institutional response at the border and provide 24-hour a day services.

In addition to supporting the Peruvian authorities to strengthen their response, Peru's Inter-agency Platform partners are providing emergency assistance including water distribution, food (over 2,000 meals provided daily), hygiene kits and medical attention. Information and legal support has also been provided at the CEBAF to over 3,500 refugees and migrants from Venezuela on a daily basis. With the help of State institutions, the Peruvian Army and NGOs, transportation is also being provided to over 650 vulnerable individuals daily from the CEBAF to Tumbes and other provinces in the country. Shelter units installed in the CEBAF have served as temporary accommodation to 80 extremely vulnerable individuals (mostly mothers with small babies) daily. In addition, temporary shelter has been provided to about 100 individuals daily in Tumbes.