

20 MARCH 2020



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA IN:

THE WORLD

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

4.9M

4.1M



FUNDING SITUATION*

2%

FUNDED: 24.2 M

REQUIREMENTS: 1.3 BN

Situation

On March 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak a pandemic disease, acknowledging it as a worldwide phenomenon in which the number of cases, deaths and affected countries will continue to increase. This situation is also affecting refugees and migrants from Venezuela hosted in the region from a health, protection and humanitarian standpoint.

Following the spread of the virus in Latin America and the Caribbean, most countries have adopted movement restrictions and closed their borders. These measures affect all population movements, and impact the journey of refugees and migrants within and between countries. Multiple countries have declared a state of national emergency and imposed curfews, as is the case of Panama, Colombia, Peru, Argentina and Chile, among others. National institutions, including those related to asylum or providing migration services operate remotely or at limited capacity.

Refugees and migrants, particularly those in irregular situations, are at a high risk of being left out of health responses while at the same time they continue to be particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse including violence and discrimination, smuggling & trafficking. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, refugees and migrants are increasingly unable to cover basic needs such as shelter, food and healthcare. For those on the move and in densely populated areas and/or in shelters, social distancing and limiting outdoor activities are very difficult to implement. Additionally, there is an increasing risk of stigmatization and increasing xenophobia towards refugees and migrants. All these considerations require continued and enhanced responses, including to support host communities.

Response**

The coordination of the response for refugees and migrants is conducted through the **Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform**, complemented by 8 National/Sub-Regional Platforms. Platforms work through a sector approach with the participation of 137 partners. The WHO/PAHO leads all COVID-19 and health-related aspects of the response.

In **Colombia**, the Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM by its Spanish acronym), in coordination with WHO/PAHO, is providing guidelines on COVID-19 to refugees and migrants. Given the new entry restrictions, humanitarian activities at borders, including in Support Spaces, have been suspended. Some partners have had to halt direct activities and reinforced mobile/remote services. Programme criticality exercises are ongoing.

In **Brazil**, partners of the Platform are involved in rapid needs assessments covering health and WASH in Roraima. Guidance is being provided on hygiene kits and to refugees and migrants on best practices to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Coordination efforts are ongoing in **Ecuador** to ensure information sharing among partners and authorities, and adapting assistance, including using remote modalities. Coordination is also ongoing between partners to avoid duplication.

In **Peru**, the Working Group for Refugees and Migrants (GTRM by its Spanish acronym) is supporting the mapping of shelters and coordinating the emergency response with national authorities. The GTRM and partners are also assessing protection risks and mapping concerns on access to shelters, food and employment.

The Sub-regional Platform in the **Caribbean** is supporting communication efforts by replicating messages of the WHO/PAHO and authorities concerning the COVID-19. Actors conducted distributions of food, non-food items and provided medical services to facilitate the detection of the virus among refugees and migrants.

In **Central America and Mexico**, partners are working with government counterparts to respond to the situation and to ensure that measures are in place to mitigate potential breaches in protection of refugees and migrants. Activities, such as registration, counselling and cash distribution will be conducted in alignment with pertinent WHO/PAHO recommendations.

The Sub-regional Platform in the **Southern Cone** is advocating with authorities for the inclusion of refugees and migrants in their emergency response plans. In Argentina, Support Spaces at the northern border are operational (limited capacity). Guidance on COVID-19 was developed and shared by platforms in Argentina and Uruguay. In **Chile**, partners adopted remote working modalities, while shelters continue to function, taking necessary precautions in line with national guidelines.

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

** These are examples of individual platforms' activities. For further details, please see R4V.info.