



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN THE REGION

253,000


PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE*

2,127


FUNDING SITUATION**

0%

 FUNDED: *not yet reported*
 REQUIREMENT: **24.15 M**

Situation

PANAMA

- As of February, 14 Venezuelans had requested refugee status in Panama in 2021, which represented a decrease from the previous year, likely related to COVID-19 restrictions and health measures. At the same time, the number of Venezuelans entering Panama through the Darien Gap with Colombia increased significantly: the National Border Service recorded 22 Venezuelans entering via this route already in 2021, while in 2020 and previous years, an average of 20 Venezuelans per year entered through the land border with Colombia.
- The Association of Foreign Residents and Naturalized Persons in Panama (ARENA), a civil society group which represents Venezuelans and other foreign nationals in Panama, expressed concern that a draft bill to repeal Executive Decree No. 249 of 2019 – which would reportedly strip residency from foreigners who were regularized through extraordinary regularization processes – could leave more than 60,000 people in an irregular condition, including Venezuelans with strong roots in Panama.
- As of 12 February, foreigners (including Venezuelans registered with the National Migration Service) could begin to [register to receive the COVID-19 vaccination](#) through an online system. Phase 1 of vaccination was completed and Phase 2 was scheduled to begin on 4 March. A total of 341,420 accumulated COVID-19 cases and 5,858 deaths were recorded by the end of February, for a virus lethality rate of 1.7%, and the first COVID-19 reinfection was detected. The Panamanian Government, with the support of Google and Apple, launched a contact tracing system called "Protegete Panama," aimed at stopping the spread of the virus and integrating COVID-19 positive people into a database.
- On 8 March, President Cortizo [signed into law new legislation that criminalizes political violence](#) and harassment against women in the political context, including limitations on women's access to elected positions or relevant appointments.
- According to a [gender profile exercise conducted by several UN agencies](#), women, girls and adolescents in Panama are in a greater situation of vulnerability and disadvantage in terms of gender-based violence (GBV), economic empowerment, food security, political participation, and representation.

COSTA RICA

- The Special Category of Temporary Complementary Protection for Venezuelans entered into force on 9 February. Inquiries received by local Information Centers thereafter significantly increased. All Venezuelans whose asylum claims have been rejected by the Administrative Migration Tribunal (on appeal) are eligible for this new visa.
- Although the Government of Costa Rica (GoCR) lifted most COVID-19 related mobility restrictions, it decreed that the land border would remain closed to foreigners until 1 March 2021, as per resolution No. 42690-MGP-S.
- Executive decree No. N° DJUR-01-01-2021-JM established that new asylum claims can be submitted at official border points, but only for new arrivals. Venezuelans already in the country can apply for asylum by going to the Refugee Unit in La Uruca.
- During February, the number of COVID-19 cases continued a decreasing trend in Costa Rica. As of 26 February, a total of 203,914 positive COVID-19 cases had been reported. The South African and British variants of the virus were identified in the country in February, while the vaccination campaign continued, mainly of elderly persons and health workers. The GoCR committed to provide vaccinations to all foreigners holding a valid ID, however, a mechanism to include asylum-seekers without proper documentation had yet to be developed.



MEXICO

- A substantial proportion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants continued to be in need of regularization; in February, many regularization processes continued to be on hold due to governmental measures against COVID-19. Those in irregular situations were unable to access basic public services or government economic support programs and faced heightened protection risks.
- Due to the ongoing economic impact of COVID-19, R4V partners noted a significant deterioration of living conditions of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households. Many workers within the service sector, or for medium and small enterprises, saw their working hours reduced, or were laid off, and the increase in unemployment translated into an increase in poverty among the refugee and migrant population.

Response

- **Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA).** In *Panama*, 473 people received CVA to cover basic needs such as food, shelter, health, and medicines. In *Costa Rica*, 175 Venezuelan families received CVA, including COVID-19 grants. In *Mexico*, 346 Venezuelans received CVA in January and February (94 of those were multi-purpose grants to meet basic needs, while 252 were sectoral top-ups addressing identified protection risks, including in the context of COVID-19).
 - **Protection services and legal assistance.** In *Panama*, 149 Venezuelans received support and legal orientation regarding regularization processes and Refugee Status Determination (RSD) through local legal service partners. In *Costa Rica*, 504 Venezuelans received legal information and assistance, including regarding the new Temporary Special Category of Complementary Protection, and qualified cases received legal representation.
 - **Integration.** In *Panama*, 90 Venezuelans received scholarships to participate in entrepreneurship initiatives and personalized mentoring with the General Entrepreneurship School. Meanwhile, R4V partners provided 254 people with capacity-building on regularization processes, sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), livelihoods, financial education, and mental health.
- In *Costa Rica*, 32 Venezuelans participated in entrepreneurship programs and livelihoods counseling sessions provided by R4V partners, to strengthen and adapt their business models to new demands and market conditions. In *Mexico*, R4V partners developed and launched a 10-hour, 5-session-long “Virtual Course for Migrant Entrepreneurship,” based on the “Manual for Migrant Entrepreneurship.” A total of 81 unique users participated in the training in February.
- **Health.** In *Costa Rica*, R4V partners assisted with negotiations for 705 Venezuelans to receive medical insurance during February, under a special agreement with Costa Rica’s social security entity.
 - **Food assistance.** In *Costa Rica*, 67 refugees and migrants received food baskets and prepaid cards.
 - **Health.** In *Costa Rica*, 60 Venezuelans received psychosocial attention or other therapeutic programs from R4V partners.
 - **Shelter.** In *Costa Rica*, 16 Venezuelan households received rental assistance from R4V partners.
 - **WASH.** In *Costa Rica*, 17 Venezuelans received basic hygiene products and diapers.



Education	Food Security	Health	Integration	Nutrition	Protection	Shelter	WASH	CBI
71	555	858	280	0	1,306	62	36	385