

9 JULY 2020

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA IN:
THE WORLD LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

5.1 M 4.3 M



FUNDING SITUATION*

16% FUNDED: USD 222.5 M
REQUIREMENTS: USD 1.41 BN

Situation

Since the beginning of the year, 1.6 million refugees and migrants and members of host communities were assisted with one or more services by R4V partners, including specifically to address urgent needs linked to the impact COVID-19. In late June, a [dashboard](#) was launched by the Regional Platform to monitor the implementation and reach of the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP). This tool provides a comprehensive analysis of assistance provided to refugees and migrants from Venezuela and host communities by Platform, country, sector and appealing organization, including COVID-19-related activities carried out by R4V partners in the region. It complements the R4V.info webpage's recent updates to include a dedicated RMRP [funding dashboard](#) and a [Regional Assessments Registry](#).

The ongoing return movements of thousands of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to their home country remains of great concern to R4V partners. Since April 2020, due to the increasingly precarious situation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, resulting primarily from their loss of livelihoods following measures put in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, it is estimated by government authorities that more than 70.000 have returned to Venezuela. As many refugees and migrants do not benefit from national social protection, health and social protection programmes, and with the loss of livelihoods to sustain themselves, the desperation has led many to leave their host countries. In addition, evictions have continued taking place despite preventative measures that governments in the region have taken. In light of these developments, the Regional Platform convened a technical workshop with National Platforms, Regional Sectors, the donor community and other key actors, and will develop a response framework to guide partners on addressing questions of return. In this respect, the Regional Platform and its partners highlight that the **priority focus of partners and donors needs to remain on supporting the assistance to refugees and migrants in their host communities** and thereby avoid additional exposure of vulnerable individuals to health and protection risks associated with return movements.

Platforms' Response**

In **Brazil**, R4V partners conducted a joint assessment of refugees and migrants who intend to return to Venezuela with a view to understand their demographic profile, their situation in Brazil and the push/pull factors impacting their decision-making process in the context of the COVID-19 emergency. Since 12 June, a group of ten enumerators conducted almost 200 interviews in the border city of Pacaraima. A comprehensive report is expected by end-July. Throughout June, R4V partners continued to support the COVID-19 response by strengthening the capacities of local health systems and providing specialized support to the implementation of the Emergency Contingency Plan of *Operação Acolhida*.

R4V partners in **Chile** continued to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In June, R4V partners assisted refugees and migrants with medical care, temporary shelter, and hygiene items, especially given the drop in temperature and the heavy rains which have exacerbated needs. On 16 June, the second meeting of the National Platform took place with the involvement of the coordinators of the Regional Platform. The meeting focused on an update of ongoing work, challenges, and the RMRP 2021 planning process.

In **Colombia**, the *Grupo Interagencial para Flujos Migratorios Mixtos (GIFMM)* worked on the second round of the joint needs assessment, which assesses multi-sectorial impacts of COVID-19 on refugees and migrants from Venezuela, as well as their main needs and priorities. The phone-based survey was implemented in 26 departments, reached over 2,500 households and was supported by over 30 partners. The report on its findings is expected to be published in July. In addition, the GIFMM is working on a strategy for monitoring of and response to evictions in the context of COVID-19, led by the Protection and Shelter sectors. The toolkit for preventing and tracking evictions designed in May-June has been shared and adjusted based on feedback received from partners. In June, local GIFMMs supported the government response to

For more information, please contact: Philippe Sacher: sacher@unhcr.org | Tim Howe: thowe@iom.int

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

**These are examples of activities carried out by National/Sub-Regional Platforms and/or Regional Sectors. For further details, please see R4V.info.

COVID-19 in different areas including in the delivery of food kits, provision of psychosocial support, supporting healthcare efforts, enhancing WASH and shelters.

The Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes (GTRM) in Ecuador prioritized activities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Partners of the GTRM provided humanitarian aid such as food, NFI, hygiene products, medicines and health assistance, and cash. In addition, partners prioritized protection and integration activities, including legal mediation to prevent evictions and activities to promote livelihoods and social cohesion with host communities. Prioritized activities also included strengthening government capacities (e.g. training of civil servants and providing equipment), interventions in host communities to strengthen community protection /prevention mechanisms, and capacity building of civil society actors.



In Colombia, the Support Spaces are mostly operating virtually with direct and individualized attention.

In Peru, the GTRM continued preventing and mitigating protection risks amid the COVID-19 emergency with trainings on gender-based violence (GBV), child protection and human trafficking and smuggling. This month, R4V partners conducted consultations to validate a protocol for regional cooperation on the protection of children's rights in the context of human mobility. The GTRM supported access to birth registration for refugee and migrant parents with babies born during the COVID-19 emergency. In addition, partners continued supporting those in need with food kits and cash. Health partners mapped shelters with confirmed COVID-19 cases among refugees and migrants. R4V partners also coordinated with the Ministry of Health on the elaboration of information material, providing frontline workers with mental health support, distributing protective equipment to personnel in hospitals, providing basic health services and contributing to expand hospital infrastructures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

R4V partners in the Caribbean sub-regional platform increased their responses providing shelter support to Venezuelan families at risk of being evicted, as they have been unable to pay rent due to the economic consequences of the pandemic. Food assistance, CBI, NFI distribution, including hygiene and dignity kits, as well as remote psychosocial and health support continued to be provided to refugees and migrants from Venezuela and the host communities. In June, R4V partners have also re-initiated some in-person service provisions. In Guyana, enhanced containment measures for COVID-19, such as screening, testing and checkpoints were enforced and WASH services including handwashing stations were provided to ensure supplies of clean water to the refugees and migrants from Venezuela and host communities.

In Central America and Mexico, R4V partners are assisting refugees and migrants from Venezuela with food, psychosocial support, counseling and healthcare, among other efforts implemented. In Costa Rica, R4V partners distributed food to nearly 400 refugees and migrants. In Mexico, partners have supported local health efforts by procuring medicine and medical devices and provided accommodation for frontline health workers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, R4V partners in Panama launched a COVID-19 focussed anti-xenophobia campaign ("*Detrás de la mascarilla, Todos Somos Lo Mismo*"). The campaign consisted of delivering 400 fabric face masks, made by Venezuelans, in different locations in Panama City.

In the Southern Cone, R4V partners provided shelter solutions, NFIs (especially winter clothes), food assistance and cash-based interventions to refugees and migrants in border areas and urban centres. Some of the assistance continues to be limited to remote attention, especially in terms of information-provision or psychosocial support. Messages reinforcing the information on the risks of returning to Venezuela under current conditions were developed jointly with all national partners. In Bolivia, partners monitored the birth registration and documentation of children, as birth registration offices remained closed during the quarantine. In addition, partners provided constant support to authorities in the sub-region for the reinforcement and establishment of emergency health care facilities, including the provision of medical supplies and shelter where refugees and migrants could comply with the self-isolation measures.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Regional Sectors**

The Regional **Protection Sector** conducted a **country of origin information session with 143 participants to identify trends and risk profiles, as well as conditions of those returning to Venezuela** to be shared with national protection sectors. As part of its strategy for the mitigation of risks/impacts of evictions, the Regional Sector conducted a webinar on international standards, good community-based practices and normative developments to improve national sectors' technical capacity as well as for the design/adjustment of national protection strategies. In order to better define gaps and needs during COVID-19, the Protection Sector planned focus group discussions with refugees and migrants with disabilities in nine countries. Semi-structured interviews were conducted also with service providers. Key findings of this exercise will be disseminated to raise awareness. The **Human Trafficking and Smuggling** sub-sector finalized its regional work plan including a regional campaign to prevent trafficking in persons and smuggling. In addition, the sub-sector supported the development and implementation of SOPs at the national, cross-border and local level for the identification, referencing and assistance of cases of victims of trafficking, while developing rapid assessment tools for countries to assess the impact of the pandemic on law enforcement and justice capacities. The **GBV** sub-sector conducted an analysis of RMRP submissions and consultations with partners to prioritize activities between July-December 2020.

The Regional **Health Sector** supported the **resumption of public health programmes in countries where the lockdown, imposed as consequence of COVID-19, ended**. In addition, the Health Sector reinforced the overall management of information concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to refugees and migrants from Venezuela as well as monitored and collected information about the spread of COVID-19 among those returning to Venezuela.

The Regional **Integration Sector** organized a series of webinars on relevant **best practices and concrete programming** examples from the platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. These webinars, to be delivered over the coming weeks, will allow for an exchange of ideas, examples and discussions between platforms and activities at regional level.

The Regional **Food Security Sector** together with R4V partners supported **refugees and migrants from Venezuela with in-kind or cash-based interventions**. In addition, the Sector expanded its support to refugees and migrants depending on informal jobs in urban areas, and supported shock-responsive social protection programmes together with national governments.

The Regional **Shelter, NFI and Humanitarian Transportation Sectors** strengthened national sector coordination and disseminated **guidance on operational standards**. Throughout June, hundreds of refugees and migrants were accommodated at the border between Colombia with Venezuela. The Shelter sector also developed tools for national platforms for an exercise of mapping collective shelters across the region. Partners also distributed NFIs, such as household items and winter kits in Chile and Argentina.

The Regional **Education Sector** has been **actively working to respond to the COVID-19 crisis**. The Sector advanced with several regional activities aimed to support regional actors in reestablishing the education services in the region. During June, the Education Sector worked in different areas including providing guidance to adapt curricula during COVID-19 or developing regional webinars on the current COVID-19 response. The Sector continued developing an inter-sectoral guidance for national authorities and another for schools to ensure their safe reopening in the region. Each guidance will include a checklist to support the reopening process.

The regional **WASH Sector** worked on **addressing WASH needs and services during the COVID-19 pandemic for refugees and migrants from Venezuela**. In particular, the opening of shelters and spaces to host Venezuelans returning to their home country near border areas continue to require immediate WASH interventions in accordance with national standards. In addition, the Sector is conducting a market analysis to understand WASH interventions as prices of hygiene products across the region have increased due to COVID-19 related inflation.

The Regional **Cash-Based Intervention Working Group (WG)**, together with the **Integration Sector**, worked on **promoting linkages with social protection** initiatives across the region. Partners shared their experiences in different webinars and regional meetings. The WG is also preparing a workplan to support the RMRP 2021 planning process.