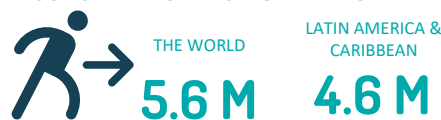


### REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA IN:



### PEOPLE REACHED IN 2021 WITH SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE\*\*

**853 K**

### FUNDING SITUATION\*



**1.7%**

FUNDED: **23.9 M**

REQUIREMENTS: **1.44 BN**

## Situation

In the first three months of 2021, Latin American and Caribbean countries began to implement their COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. **R4V partners worked to ensure the inclusion of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in national vaccination plans**, whose roll-out in many countries occurred simultaneously with the second wave of COVID-19 bringing renewed movement restrictions and border closures. Based on the principle that vaccination for all is a shared public health concern (*“nobody is safe until everyone is safe”*) [R4V platforms called on host governments to ensure refugees’ and migrants’ access to COVID-19 vaccines](#), irrespective of their nationality and legal status, in line with the priority groups identified by national and local health authorities. R4V partners also offered logistical, technical and material support in implementing vaccine efforts in multiple countries (details in country sections that follow).

Meanwhile, **March marked one year of border closures throughout much of the region due to COVID-19**. In the early months of 2021, increased military presences along some borders and a lack of regular pathways for movement resulted in **increased protection risks for refugees and migrants**, including human trafficking and smuggling, denial of access to territory, returns and deportations. The situation led the Ombudsperson’s offices in Peru, Ecuador and Colombia to release a [joint statement](#) calling on their governments to adopt more humanitarian approaches, while the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) released a [statement](#) expressing concern over the growing militarization of borders and urging states to adopt migration and border management policies that ensure respect for human rights and access to protection.

Despite these dynamics, **multiple countries also continued or expanded documentation and regularization initiatives for Venezuelans**, including Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Dominican Republic (details below).

Finally, on 8 March **R4V partners across the region engaged in events to mark International Women’s Day**.

## Main Developments

In **Brazil**, the Federal Government launched its [National Vaccination Plan against COVID-19](#), including refugees and migrants no matter their legal status. On 4 March, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a virtual event to present the Brazilian chapter of the 2021 RMRP. Meanwhile, on 23 March, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued Ordinance 19/2021, which **eased documentation requirements for Venezuelan nationals seeking legal status**. Nevertheless, Ordinance 652/2021 also remained in place, restricting entry by land and sea for

all foreigners, including Venezuelans, without exceptions for asylum-seekers. On 21 March, a Federal Judge in Roraima issued a temporary injunction that halted the deportation of refugees and migrants and requested the authorities to ensure individuals have access to regular status under the migration or refugee laws. Some 1,400 refugees and migrants had access to expedited documentation procedures in the week that followed, until the Regional Federal Court reversed the ruling on 30 March, citing sanitary concerns and reinstating the previous orders, which prevent



PEOPLE REACHED IN 2021\*\*

Education  
**65K**

Food Security  
**582K**

Health  
**307K**

Hum. Transp.  
**16K**

Integration  
**44K**

Nutrition  
**13K**

Protection  
**185K**

Shelter  
**91K**

WASH  
**175K**

CVA  
**192K**

Venezuelans who entered the country after March 2020 from seeking regular status.

In **Chile**, after a group of some 1,600 refugees and migrants from Venezuela formed in the border town of Colchane awaiting onward movement, **on 4 February the government declared reinforced border control measures with the Armed Forces under Decree 265**. Days later, 138 Venezuelans and Colombians were expelled from the country, in events [widely covered in the media](#). Meanwhile, by the last week of March, Chile reported more than 6,000 active COVID-19 cases per day, and most of the country returned to complete lockdown. Chile also began its COVID-19 vaccination efforts, and Supreme Decree 67 clarified that all refugees and migrants could access healthcare – and the vaccine – regardless of their legal status. At the same time, the Chilean Government launched a campaign against irregular migration, with a focus on cities in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia from which Venezuelans travel on to Chile, in which it emphasized military border monitoring and expulsions.

In **Colombia**, President Iván Duque signed **Decree 216 on 1 March, which officially created the Temporary Protection Statute (ETPV) for Venezuelans**. The ETPV seeks to [regularize 1.8 million Venezuelans by August 2022](#) and will also facilitate access to public services, such as health and education. Meanwhile, Colombia began its COVID-19 National Vaccination Plan on 17 February, which includes refugees and migrants with regular status. Beginning on 21 March, [over 5,800 Venezuelans with protection needs and Colombians returning from Venezuela](#) entered Arauquita, Colombia due to clashes between the Venezuelan Air Force (*Fuerza Area Nacional Bolivariana* or FANB) and an organized armed group in Venezuela.

In **Ecuador**, at the end of January the Government of Peru increased military presence on the border with Ecuador, to prevent the irregular movement of refugees and migrants from Venezuela through informal crossings. This resulted in growing agglomerations of persons in the city of Huaquillas, without adequate

biosecurity measures, water or sanitation facilities, shelter or health services. R4V partners observed a subsequent decrease in departures through Ecuador's southern border, with Venezuelans reportedly resorting to routes which are more dangerous due to the presence of delinquent groups and networks of traffickers and smugglers of migrants – as a result many refugees and migrants crossing the border are assaulted. On the one-year anniversary of the closure of borders with Peru and Colombia, in March, R4V partners reported an increase in violence in border areas, linked to robberies, attacks, trafficking networks, sexual exploitation, and precarious social and economic conditions, including an increase in persons in a situation of homelessness in border cities such as Ibarra, Tulcán, Huaquillas and Machala.

In **Peru**, the pre-registration process to obtain a new stay permit (*Carné de Permiso Temporal de Permanencia*, CPP) began in January and continued throughout March. At its conclusion, the Superintendence of Migration (SNM) announced that some 368,000 foreigners, 98 per cent of them Venezuelans, had submitted their pre-registration. The SNM also announced that the CPP would be used to include foreigners living in Peru in the COVID-19 vaccination plan, which began on 8 February. Meanwhile, on 21 January, the Army, National Police and SNM began joint border control operations along the northern border with Ecuador, which continued throughout February, but ceased in March, after the aforementioned joint advocacy efforts of the Ombudsperson's offices of Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. The increased presence of the military on the border originally came in response to a [call from the regional government of Tumbes](#) following a substantial increase in irregular entries of refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

**COVID-19 vaccination campaigns were launched in several Caribbean countries in February**, four out of five of which confirmed that their national vaccination plans

\* Source: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1021/summary>

\*\*These are examples of activities carried out by National/Sub-Regional Platforms and/or Sectors. For further details, please see [R4V.info](#). Numbers concerning people reached are available on the [RMRP 2021 Dashboard](#)

included refugees and migrants, in line with prioritized groups (Aruba, Curaçao, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago). Meanwhile, starting in January, Venezuelans were required to apply for a visa in Caracas before being allowed to enter both Aruba and Curaçao. There was also progress on registration for Venezuelans in three countries: in **Trinidad and Tobago**, a re-registration exercise of Venezuelans took place to [extend legal stay and work authorizations for six months for people previously registered in 2019](#), and by 29 March, the Ministry of National Security announced that some 13,800 Venezuelans had registered. The **Dominican Republic** published [Resolution N° 00119-2021](#) on 22 January, which will allow Venezuelans to apply for non-resident visas and obtain work and student stay permits beginning in April. And in mid-March, the Minister of Justice in **Curaçao** [announced](#) that Venezuelans residing there irregularly for over a year and meeting certain conditions would be able to apply for a residence permit. apply for a residence permit.

In **Central America and Mexico**, Costa Rica's Special Category of Temporary Complementary Protection for Venezuelans entered into force on 9 February. Meanwhile, **Panama's** National Migration Service (SNM) restored attention to the public in January, while **Mexico's** regularization processes continued to be on

## Response highlights\*\*

In **Brazil**, as a result of advocacy efforts coordinated by the Education Sector of the national R4V Platform, in February the education departments of **Amazonas State** and **Manaus** committed to ensuring equal access to public schools for refugee and migrant children who lack the required documentation. To support local integration efforts, in February, **R4V partners launched the Refugee Entrepreneurs Platform**, an online tool to give visibility to refugee-led businesses and foster engagement with the private sector; and in March, launched *Caminhando Juntos* (Walking Together), an online course to prepare young refugees and migrants (18-24 years old) to enter the labour market.

hold due to governmental measures against COVID-19. There was a notable increase in Venezuelans entering **Panama** through the Darien Gap land border with Colombia: by end-February 2021, more Venezuelans had entered through this route than in all of 2020 (over 20 refugees and migrants).

In the **Southern Cone**, **Uruguay** adopted Decree 16/021 establishing an exception for entering the country for refugees and for family reunification purposes, and subsequently reported an increase in asylum-seekers beginning in the last week of January. Meanwhile, after the increased presence of the military on the border by the Government of Chile in February, there was a decrease in Venezuelan refugees and migrants crossing from **Bolivia**. COVID-19 case rates rose sharply in March in **Uruguay** and **Paraguay**, putting those countries' health systems under strain; **Argentina** suspended flights from Brazil, Chile and Mexico in an attempt to limit new cases; and **Bolivia** announced the closure of its border with Brazil effective as of 2 April. In terms of COVID-19 vaccination efforts, **Argentina** included refugees and migrants in its national vaccination plan regardless of their status, while **documentation requirements for vaccination registration procedures in Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay proved to be barriers for Venezuelans in an irregular situation in those countries.**

Meanwhile, in response to rising numbers of homeless refugees and migrants in Roraima and strain on local shelter capacities, **R4V partners reopened the Nova Canaã shelter in Boa Vista** to receive members of indigenous communities and ease pressure on shelters in Pacaraima. WASH partners also conducted and presented to Operation Welcome a **comprehensive technical assessment on WASH conditions in all shelters in Boa Vista and Pacaraima.**

In **Chile**, in response to the notable increase in the number of homeless refugee and migrant families in the Metropolitan Region beginning in January, R4V partners

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established an intersectoral roundtable with the Santiago Municipality to coordinate an appropriate response. In March, R4V partners held the first plenary session of the year of its national R4V Platform and presented the RMRP 2021 to the Chilean Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Following hostilities along the border with Venezuela, in **Colombia**, the GIFMM (the R4V Platform in Colombia) coordinated the humanitarian response to the influx of over 5,800 Venezuelans with protection needs and Colombians returning from Venezuela in Arauquita beginning on 21 March, during which over 800 people received some form of assistance. From January to March >550,400 refugees and migrants from Venezuela and members of host communities received assistance from the 58 members of the GIFMM in 32 different departments across Colombia. Of that response, 53 percent of activities were in the areas of protection and its sub-sectors (child protection, gender-based violence, and human trafficking and smuggling) and the remaining 47 percent in integration, shelter, food security, education, WASH and multi-sector services.

In **Ecuador**, in February the GTRM (the R4V Platform in Ecuador) carried out a Rapid Inter-Agency Assessment (ERI) in Huaquillas (in response to the situation detailed above) which allowed for an immediate humanitarian response coordinated together with the government. In March, in connection with rising COVID-19 case rates in the country, R4V partners stepped up technical assistance and the donation of essential medical supplies to respond to the health emergency, including through the installation of more than 20 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) to enhance the response capacity of various public institutions, including hospitals.

In **Peru**, to support the regularization efforts of the SNM (detailed above), from January to March **R4V partners provided specialized orientation and legal counseling to over 5,000 refugees and migrants, including those interested in pre-registration for the new CPP.** R4V

partners also closely monitored and responded to the situation along the northern border with Ecuador, and conducted a survey which showed that the percentage of Venezuelans traveling by foot decreased from 31 percent in January to 26 percent in March, while those using motor vehicles increased from 36 to 51 percent.

In the **Caribbean** sub-region, R4V partners in the Dominican Republic prepared for the regularization process of refugees and migrants to begin on 12 April, collaborating on an awareness campaign and working with Venezuelan community-based organizations to open seven Help Desks in major cities to ensure access to information and legal guidance on the procedure. Meanwhile, an **R4V partner in Curaçao facilitated refugees' and migrants' access to vaccinations by working as one of the three vaccination units** on the island approved by the government, carrying out outreach specifically with the community of Venezuelans with an irregular status, and registering over 3,000 Venezuelans in order to facilitate their access to the vaccinations.

In **Central America and Mexico**, R4V partners in Costa Rica helped facilitate access to the new Special Category of Temporary Complementary Protection by providing legal counseling to 774 Venezuelans between February and March, including on how to apply for this temporary protection status. Meanwhile, in **Mexico**, an R4V partner developed and implemented a 10-hour-long Virtual Course for Refugee and Migrant Entrepreneurship.

In the **Southern Cone**, R4V partners in Bolivia and the Bolivian Migration Service conducted a needs assessment of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Pisiga in February, identifying needs in shelter, food, hygiene and biosecurity items. In **Argentina**, four R4V partners coordinated assistance at the La Quiaca border and established an assistance pathway. National R4V Platform plenary sessions also took place in February with governments and donors in **Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay.**

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