

Protection Monitoring Report

UNHCR Brazil

November 2021

I. Introduction and Context

In 2018, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, set up a regional tool to monitor the protection needs and situation of persons that have been forced to leave their country, focusing initially on the Venezuelan Situation. Protection Monitoring is a key process of UNHCR's response and entails the systematic verification and analysis of the violation of rights and protection needs of persons of concern (PoCs) over an extended period. Prior to the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, UNHCR Brazil and partners conducted face-to-face interviews with PoCs with a geographical focus on the state of Roraima.

The current COVID-19 context and measures adopted by States in response to the pandemic required UNHCR and partners to adapt its data collection methodology. This report covers the results of the final of four rounds of data collection, repeated on a quarterly basis, throughout 2021. Data collection was conducted nationwide from 03 to 17 of November 2021.

II. Methodology

The fourth round of UNHCR's 2021 protection monitoring data collection included two different modalities. It focused on (i) a self-administered questionnaire accessed by asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants via online channels (UNHCR and partners disseminated links to the online questionnaire through existing communication channels¹ to respondents who submitted their results through mobile phones or electronic devices), and (ii) remote interviews as well as in-person interviews, specifically in the state of Roraima.

The sampling of this exercise followed a convenience / non-probability methodology, i.e., sample was selected based on accessibility to the population, as respondents most likely would have had prior contact with UNHCR and/or partners and/or access to mobile phones or electronic devices with internet connection.

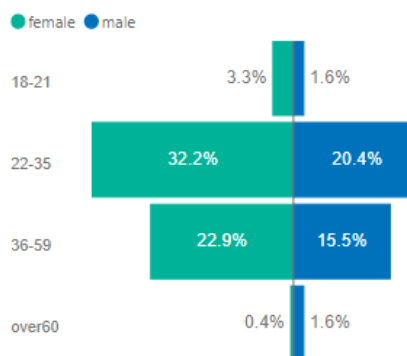
Therefore, the results below are not statistically representative and cannot be extrapolated to the whole population. 71 responses were obtained via the self-administered channel, 291 via remote/in-person interviews totaling 362 responses.

¹ Dissemination included existing and trusted information and communication channels with persons of concern such as the UNHCR Help Platform, social media, WhatsApp groups and community networks.



- **362** questionnaires / **1260** individuals
- **6** distinct nationalities
- Residing in **12** States in Brazil

Head of family ²:



III. Demographic information

- **Average family size:** 3.38 members
- **Heads of family:** 59% of those who identified as heads of family are female.
- **Children:** 65% of families have at least one child.
- **LGBTIQ+:** 5% of those who answered the question on sexual orientation and gender identity, identified themselves as a member of the LGBTIQ+ community.
- **Nationalities:** 97% of the population surveyed are Venezuelan refugees and migrants. The remaining respondents are from Colombia, Cuba, Syria, Nigeria and Dominican Republic.
- **Ethnic group:** 48% of respondents identified as mixed (two or more races / bi-racial); 20% identified as Caucasians; 8% identified as Black or of African descent, 4% indicated indigenous or native and 8% indicated they are unsure about their ethnicity.
- **Time of arrival to the country:** 58% of respondents arrived to Brazil within the last 6 months; 18% arrived between 6 months and 2 years ago; and 22% arrived more than 2 years ago.

IV. Highlights

- **A large number of respondents (41%) identify with one or more specific protection needs.** In comparison, around 30% of persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Brazil³ identify as having at least one specific protection need.
- **41% stated they would face risks upon return to their country of origin.** Main risks identified include lack of food, access to medical services, unemployment, as well as a risk of danger due to insecurity.
- **16% do not possess legal documentation in Brazil,** which in practice may limit access to rights and services, including non-urgent medical care, formal employment, and education. The result reflects the same percentage obtained in the third round of protection monitoring. This may be explained by Ordinance 655, of 23 June 2021, and subsequent Ordinances such as 658, of 05 October 2021, which allow Venezuelans and those affected by the situation in Venezuela to enter Brazil by land through any border point⁴. They also

² Age/sex pyramid – 362 questionnaires, out of which 254 head of families identified their age and sex.

³ Source: proGres V4.

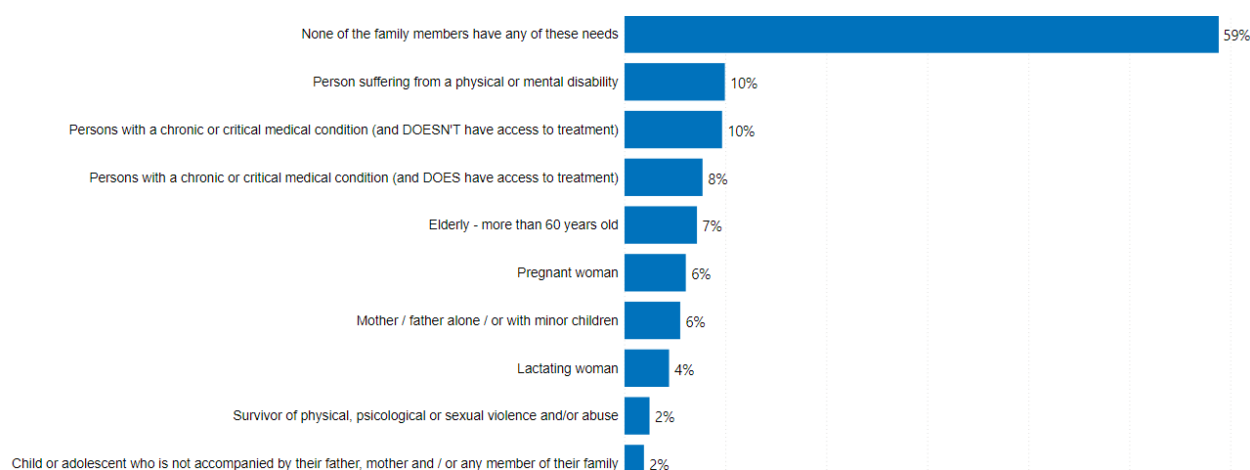
⁴ At the time of publication, the most recent Ordinance is n. 663, of 20 December 2021.

allow for access to asylum or migratory residence permits for Venezuelans and those affected by the situation in Venezuela who entered Brazil irregularly during the pandemic, that is, as of March 18, 2020.

- **60% of families that have school-age children stated that they have at least one child out of school.** Moreover, only **39% do not have the necessary resources to access their children's education virtually** in times of COVID-19.
- **25% of respondents are currently receiving social assistance benefits.**

V. Specific Protection Needs

Approximately **41%** identified with **at least one specific protection need**, including people identifying as having a physical or mental disability, people with a chronic or critical medical condition, pregnant or lactating women and elderly persons at risk:



VI. Legal status and access to territory

Access to territory and protection from *non-refoulement* are key protection considerations for refugees and other persons in need of international protection.

41% of respondents agree or strongly agree that their **family members would be at risk if they had to return to their place of initial residence or home country**. 27% indicated lack of food and lack of job opportunities; 25% indicated lack of access to medical services; and 12% indicate risk of insecurity in the country of origin.

A. Entry to the country

70% of interviewees stated they entered the country in a regular or legal manner and registered their entry with the Brazilian immigration authorities. Since March 2020 when the Brazil-Venezuela border closure took effect on account of the Covid-19 pandemic, irregular entries to Brazil increased through informal border crossings mainly through Pacaraima, in the northern state of Roraima. However, Ordinance 655, from 23 June 2021, and subsequent Ordinances such as 658, of 05 October 2021, effective at the time of the fourth round of data collection, allow Venezuelans and those affected by the situation in Venezuela to enter Brazil by land or air through any border point. It also allows the access to asylum or migratory residence permits for Venezuelans and those affected by the situation in Venezuela who entered Brazil irregularly during the pandemic, that is, as of March 18, 2020.

Although **97% of respondents indicated not having experienced any negative incidents with state authorities in Brazil** (e.g, refusal of entry, deportation, or forced return), the results reveal respondents experienced issues related to their safety and security since having left

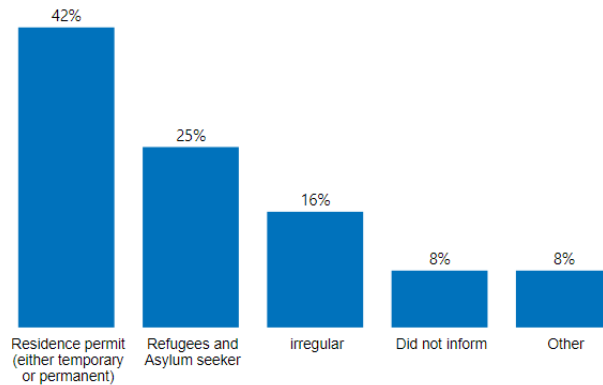
their homes. **13% of respondents indicated they or family members have suffered from or witnessed a protection incident, primarily theft, or physical threats.**

This figure is similar to data collected in the third round of UNHCR’s protection monitoring during August 2021. One explanation might be the outreach scope of the data collection methodology. Both the online questionnaire, via the self-administered and remote channels favor individuals who have access to electronic devices and internet connectivity.

Moreover, **77% of the population surveyed mentioned they have at least one dependent or family member who remained in the country of origin.**

B. Legal Status

16% of respondents represent individuals who entered Brazil irregularly and/or do not have a current legal status. This is a lower percentage of undocumented respondents when compared to previous rounds of the protection monitoring exercise conducted by UNHCR and partners. As of Ordinance 655, of 23 June 2021, Brazil has been issuing documentation to Venezuelans and those affected by the situation in Venezuela who entered irregularly after March 2020.



C. Asylum in Brazil

17% of respondents indicate the intention to apply for asylum though they are yet to do so which may be attributed to the pandemic and delays or difficulties in obtaining appointments to initiate or finalize documentation as well as lack of information.

Around **19%**, indicated that they have already applied, and a decision is pending. However, **49%** of the interviewees stated that they have no intention to apply for asylum. This may be explained by the lack of information about the differences between asylum and temporary residence procedures and/or the perception that the asylum seeker protocol is not always accepted by service providers as a valid ID document. Brazil has begun issuing the *Documento Provisório de Registro Nacional Migratório* (DPRNM)⁵ which addresses these concerns.

VII. Access to rights and services

A. Access to education

- **60% of families that have school-age children stated that they have at least one child out of school.** This may be attributed to being new arrivals as many interviewees arrived to Brazil during the second semester of 2021 (58% arrived to Brazil within 6 months) or due to transit, lack of documents or lack of available placements **though the survey does not allow respondents to further detail these challenges.**
- **Even though families have their children enrolled in school (40%), 39% do not have the necessary resources to access and receive their education virtually in times of COVID-19.**
- The study “Integration of Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Brazil” conducted by UNHCR and the World Bank⁶ also pointed to a high number of school-age children out of school. Its results indicate that improvements in school capacity and accreditation of Venezuelan education and degrees may facilitate integration in education.

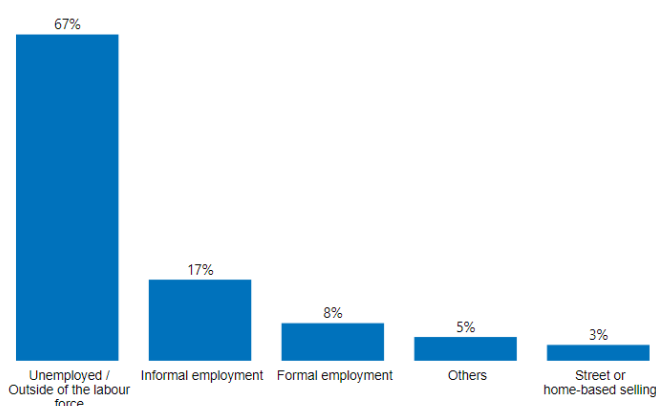
⁵ Please see Decreto 9.277/2018, available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2018/Decreto/D9277.htm.

⁶ [Integration of Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Brazil](#) (UNHCR/ World Bank)

B. Employment

A total of 245 family groups were consulted on employment.

67% responded that they are unemployed. This category includes persons in the **labor force available and looking for a job** as well as **jobless persons not available and /or not looking for a job**. This may be attributed to the significant percentage of respondents during the 4th round who are new arrivals as 58% arrived within 6 months of which 81% indicated as unemployed/outside the labor force.



Moreover, 17% are engaged in informal employment activities to meet the needs of their families and **8% are engaged in formal employment**.

The UNHCR and World Bank analysis suggests that Venezuelan refugees and migrants have faced downgraded opportunities in employment occupations and are more likely to take on inferior jobs characterized by their temporary nature, lower wages and longer hours worked. It describes the profile of Venezuelan refugees and migrants employed in the formal sector, when compared to Brazilian host communities as: younger, less likely to be female or white, and more likely to have completed high school. The study concludes that having stronger labor market activation programs that include job intermediation as well as skills and language training should help in overcoming search barriers and matching friction.

C. Social assistance

- **25%** of respondents answered they are **receiving social assistance** (cash allowance).
 - Out of those, **54%** reported it is from a non-governmental organization and/or United Nations, while **33%** stated they are receiving cash assistance from the government, such as the national cash-transfer program “Bolsa Família” and the “COVID-19 Emergency Assistance”.

Brazil represents a best practice in terms of providing non-nationals access to social assistance programs, regardless of their legal status. Data analysis⁷ shows that Venezuelans are increasingly accessing Brazil's main social assistance networks. The rate of Venezuelan families in *Bolsa Família*⁸ is lower when compared to the host community but is on an upward trend.

Analysis also demonstrates that Venezuelans registered in *Cadastro Único* (instrument for collecting data and information that aims to identify all low-income families in the country for inclusion in social assistance and income redistribution programs) are poorer but more educated than their Brazilian counterparts. The study suggests that lower access may be on account of refugees and migrants' lack of knowledge of their rights and their guaranteed access, suggesting the need to continue providing information and assistance to overcome language barriers.

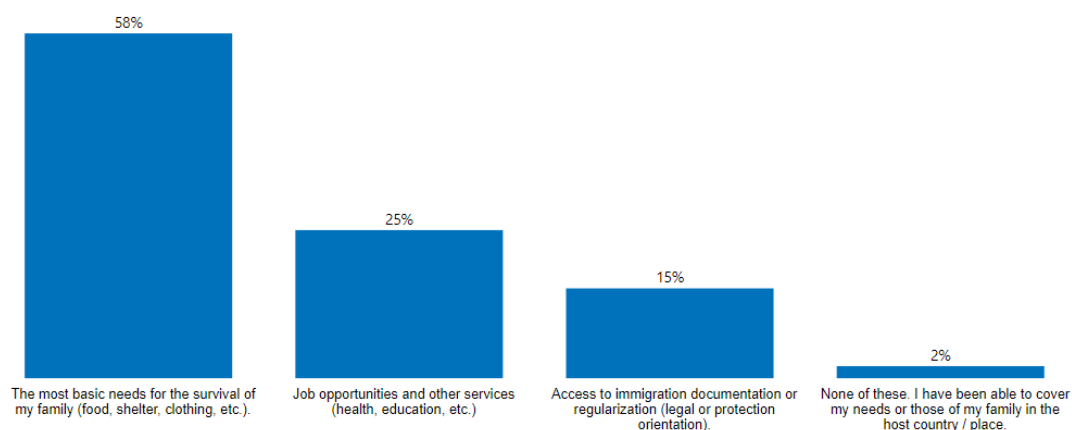
⁷ [Integration of Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Brazil](#) (UNHCR/ World Bank)

⁸ *Medida Provisória* 1.061, of 09 August 2021, creates a new social program, called *Auxílio Brasil*, which substitutes *Bolsa Família*. However, *Auxílio Brasil* started to be implemented [on 17 November](#), last day covered by the Data Collection of this Report.

VIII. Priority Needs

When asked what their most urgent needs and priorities were in the month prior to the survey, **57%** answered **basic needs for the survival of their family** such as food, shelter, clothing, among others - which represents an increase in this need when compared to previous rounds of the protection monitoring exercise conducted by UNHCR and partners.

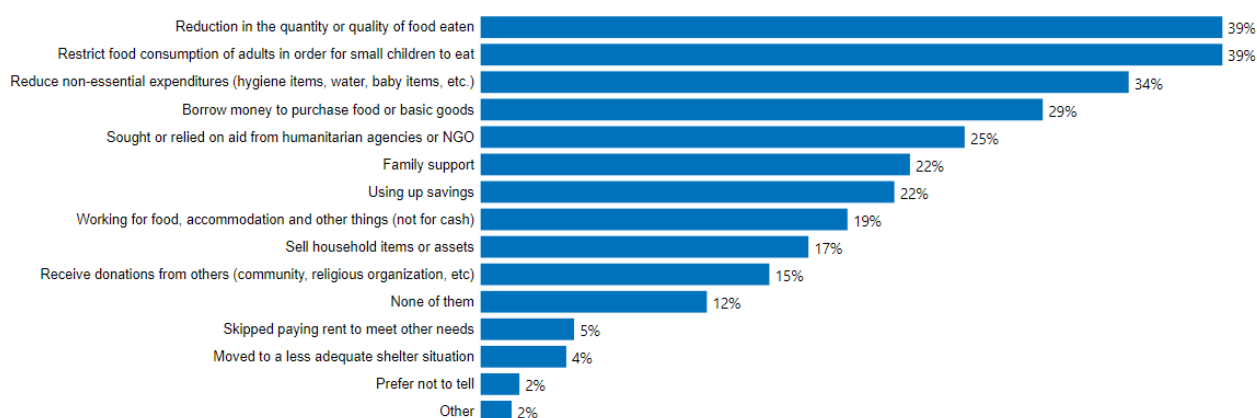
In addition, 25% reported that their priority needs are linked to job opportunities and other services (e.g., health, education). Other priority needs mentioned by 18% of the population surveyed is access to documentation (legal or protection orientation).



IX. Coping mechanisms

The survey also asked if in the three months prior to data collection, the family members had to resort to coping mechanisms to cover their own / family members' basic needs.

- 39% **limit the food consumption** of adults for the benefit of children
- 39% reported they had to **reduce food, or the quality of food eaten**
- 34% **reduce non-essential expenditures** (hygiene items, water, baby items, etc.)
- 29% **borrow money to purchase food or basic goods**



X. Well-being

A total of 245 family groups were consulted on well-being and, as the previous protection monitoring rounds, demonstrated positive indicators in this area.

Most of the population surveyed **consider their interaction/relationship with the local population positive or very positive** (60%) and mentioned they feel safe in the area or community where they now live (72%).

Nonetheless, many of them reported that, during the time they have been living in Brazil, they have felt **lonely or socially isolated** (55%). Furthermore, 20% state that they were **discriminated against**, with the perception that it was on account of their **nationality** (85%), because the person is a woman (12%) and ethnicity or skin color (10%).

XI. Future plans

- **46%** planned to **stay where they currently are** when asked if they have expected to move or change their residence in the short or medium-term.
- **42%** answered that they **plan to relocate**. Of those, most of them (87%) responded they are planning to move **to other cities within Brazil**, mainly to another region, south and southeast of Brazil.
- **26%** reported they have been part of the voluntary internal relocation strategy (*interiorização*). By December of 2021, as per the monitoring panel⁹, more than 64,000 Venezuelans were internally relocated.

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⁹ To access the Interiorization Dashboard, please click [here](#).