

Update on the Normalization Plan for Venezuelans (PNV)

Dominican Republic, January 2023

Background

The humanitarian crisis has led more than 7 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela to leave their country in search of safety and stability. The Dominican Republic is one of their main destinations in the Caribbean, hosting approximately 116,000 Venezuelans.

The majority of these individuals arrived in the territory through regular immigration channels, as they were granted entry with a tourist card on arrival. However, as of December 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implemented a new regulation via Resolution No. 006-2019, mandating the need for a tourist visa for Venezuelan nationals.

Due to the expired tourist visas and cards which placed them in an irregular situation, Venezuelans have become vulnerable and their basic rights, including access to the labour market, security, health, and education, have been severely impacted.

In parallel, the COVID-19 health emergency created further obstacles for mobility and regularization access. Lockdowns and other pandemic-related restrictions also adversely impacted the job security and livelihood prospects of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, leading to constrained financial means.

On 19 January 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labour published a joint ministerial resolution ([Resolución 00119-2021](#)) adopting the *Plan de Normalización de los Venezolanos* (PNV) which offered an alternative legal stay arrangement for Venezuelans who entered the country regularly between January 2014 and March 2020. The process innovatively applies existing Dominican law to allow Venezuelans to apply for a visa without returning to their country of origin. Those who complete the process receive a one-year, renewable non-resident stay permit valid for work or study.

Key Figures

➔ **116,000** Venezuelans reside in Dominican Republic

📄 **37%** applied for the PNV

💰 R4V Partners requested **\$8.65M USD** to support the PNV in the 2023-2024 RMRP

Phase 1

Extension of initial tourist visa

- 📅 12 Apr 2021 – 12 May 2021
- 💰 6,500 DOP/adults, 2,000 DOP/children

➔ **38,000** approved

Phase 2

Application for non-resident visa

- 📅 28 June 2021 - present
- 💰 4,950 DOP/ temporary worker, 2,750 DOP/student

➔ **23,625** issued

Phase 3

Issuance of permit and ID card

- 📅 16 Oct 2021 - present
- 💰 1,000 DOP

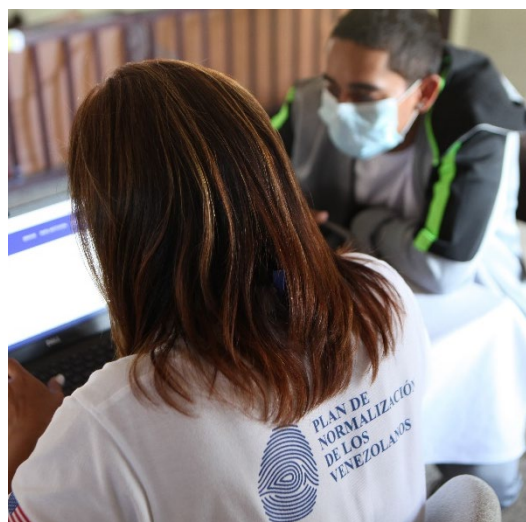
➔ **19,225** issued

Implementation

The collaboration between government, UN agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector, with the support of the R4V Platform, has been key to the successful roll-out of the PNV.

Information and orientation centers (“*ventanillas*”) run by Venezuelan-led civil society organizations in various communities around the country provide local access for Venezuelans to register for Phase 1 and to get support with the further phases as well as other types of assistance. The *ventanillas* are coordinated by the president of the Dominican-Venezuelan Chamber of Commerce, which also helped secure support from the private sector in the form of physical spaces for their operations.

Phases 2 and 3 are implemented directly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Directorate General of Migration.



A PNV Ventanilla, © UNHCR/Juan C. González

With the close collaboration of Venezuelan-led CSOs and private sector entities, the PNV represents a unique regularization plan that is by Venezuelans, for Venezuelans.

Good Practices



“Are you Venezuelan and need information about the normalization process in Dominican Republic?”

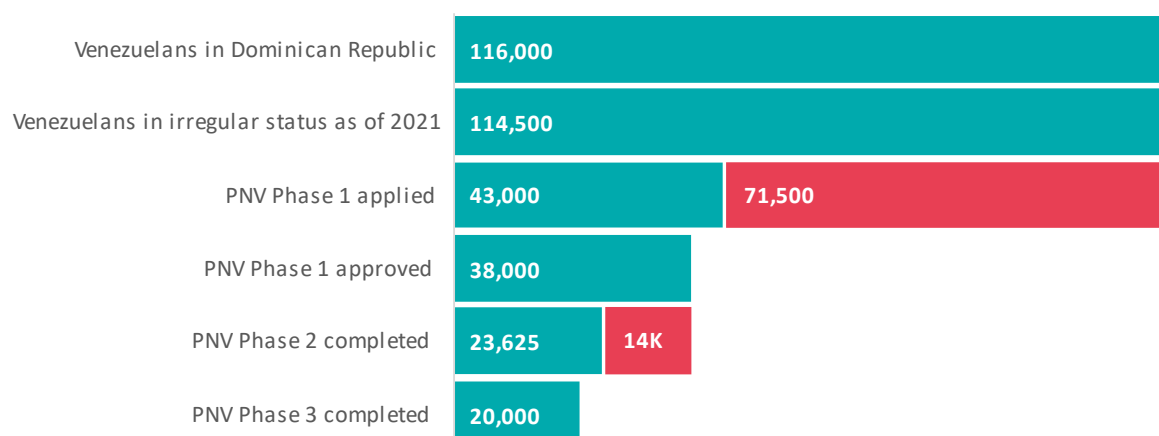
Social media post for a *ventanilla* in Santiago

Prior to the Normalization Plan, Venezuelans in the DR were required to return to Venezuela to be eligible for visas which would confer regular status. However, the plan allows visas to be issued within the Dominican territory, and expired passports to be accepted in the process. This resolution not only provides broader accessibility, but also allows R4V partners to contribute to the humanitarian crisis response.

The *ventanillas* (information centers), together with Globalizate Radio, a Venezuelan-led internet media platform and R4V partner, served as examples of effective communication with communities, empowering the Venezuelan diaspora to find their own solutions. Brochures, posters, and social media posts were designed to provide updated information on the Plan and ensure maximum diffusion. R4V Partners also used mobile orientation spaces in addition to the strategically located *ventanillas* in a combined effort to bring the PNV and its objectives closer to Venezuelan communities, particularly those located in remote areas of the DR.



Needs and Gaps



An estimated 63 per cent of Venezuelans in the country were unable to access the PNV due to ineligibility or barriers such as financial limitations, lack of identification documentation, and limited access to transportation from provinces to the capital where services are centralized.

- Approximately 71,500 persons did not or could not apply for Phase 1. **R4V Partners are advocating for the reopening of this phase to allow eligible persons who were not yet able to access the Plan to register.**
- Government counterparts indicated that the majority of non-approvals in Phase 1 were due to incomplete applications, duplications, or ineligibility per the criteria in the resolution. The reopening of Phase 1 may allow persons with incomplete applications to re-register.
- 14,375 persons approved in Phase 1 were not able to complete Phase 2 to receive their visa. Partners estimate that many these “drop-outs” were due to cost: The process costs between 85 to 200 US dollars, and due to documentation requirements and the protracted nature of the process, additional expenses such as taxes, transportation, and document legalization fees are likely to be incurred by the applicants. R4V Partners are providing direct financial support for the most vulnerable cases and **have requested \$4.5M in the 2023-2024 RMRP toward covering the fees for persons who cannot afford them.**
- The resolution does not permit asylum-seekers to proceed with their asylum request and apply to the Plan simultaneously. This has led approximately **360 individuals to withdraw their asylum claims** and apply for the Normalization Plan. The R4V Platform continues to advocate for the Dominican authorities to take into consideration the claims of individuals in need of international protection.
- Permits are granted individually, and family applications are not accepted. Some members of the same family unit may not be eligible for visas alongside their family members. Furthermore, minor children born in the DR to Venezuelan parents are also not included in the plan. **Partners are advocating for a mechanism to include children born in the DR to Venezuelan parents who access to PNV.**
- Additionally, Venezuelans who entered the DR irregularly or before January 2014 and after March 2020 are ineligible for the Plan.

Despite the challenges, the Plan has been a significant step forward to promote the inclusion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. It has lifted legal barriers for Venezuelans to access the formal labor market and education systems in the Dominican Republic and thus remains an example to other countries in the region.