

Situation

As of July 15, Chile has exceeded 321,000 COVID-19 positive cases. Meanwhile, Chile's Central Bank stated that the effect of the pandemic on the economy will be devastating, noting that it would be the biggest economic crisis in 35 years. ECLAC confirmed that the economy is expected to contract by 7.9% next year.

The continued deterioration of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that the number of the stranded refugees and migrants of all nationalities requesting humanitarian flights home will continue to increase. The Government of Chile has estimated that around 2-3 per cent of the Venezuelan population in Chile may express the wish to return to their country of origin. This is in line with the reports of R4V Partners, which have estimated that around 4,500 Venezuelans are willing to return.

Following the launch of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Humanitarian Returns Plan", private sector actors, supported by some NGOs, are arranging six humanitarian flights for the return of more than a thousand migrants to Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti. The first flight took place on July 13 with 180 people to the Dominican Republic.

Response

R4V partners have been assisting the groups of Venezuelans located in shelters around Santiago, Arica and Antofagasta with basic humanitarian aid – including access to medical care, daily food and hygiene items – and coordinating the operation of both shelters throughout the month, R4V partners provided cash-based support to **123 households**, providing access to basic goods and covering rent payments. In addition, emergency assistance was provided to **around 1500 households**, addressing immediate food, NFI and hygiene needs.

The second meeting of the National Platform took place on 16 June. The meeting focused on an update of ongoing work, challenges, and the 2021 planning process. Likewise, the Protection Sector met for internal coordination of operational activities and a discussion of strategic priorities for 2021.

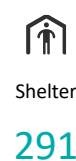
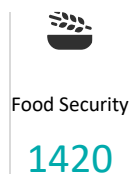
Other interventions have been the development of **psychosocial support activities** and the participation of R4V partners in awareness-raising events such as the launch of the Guide on Human Rights, companies and migrants, by the Casa de la Paz.

Moreover, in Antofagasta which still has one of the highest numbers of COVID-19 in the country, the activities continued through informative sessions on different themes such as the

Social Registration of Households (the national social protection net to ensure access to emergency assistance provided by the Government, challenges in the labour market in the region and COVID-19 prevention and control. All these activities have counted with the participation of more than 150 people, including community leaders, NGOs and public officials, with the aim of contributing to the local response.

Regarding the Quito Process, platform co-leaders are engaged in the agenda and are contributing to the discussions, including on returns. Meanwhile, in line with the guidelines received, the platform has focused on assisting the much larger group of Venezuelans that wish to remain in Chile, by focusing on the following:

- Advocating for the inclusion of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the Social Registration of Households;
- **Providing information** to Venezuelan refugees and migrants and the civil society organizations working with them on evictions and housing-related challenges to mitigate the swiftly developing housing crisis at the municipal level;
- Providing access to basic assistance and supporting the improvement of their livelihoods.



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* From 01/01/2020 | **Source: FTS Website. Recent funding contributions to the Platform in Chile will be reflected shortly.