

CENTRAL AMERICA & MEXICO



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN THE REGION

198,600



PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE*

17.8 K



FUNDING SITUATION**

10.4%

FUNDED: 2.5 M

REQUIREMENT: 24.15 M

Situation

Regarding **COVID-19**, as of October 31, a total of 472,534 accumulated cases and 7,054 deaths due to COVID-19 were reported in Panama. In addition, since last January when the vaccination process began, 5,821,464 vaccine doses have been applied, meaning 77.4% of the population have a full immunization scheme. A shipment of 1.5 million doses of pediatric COVID-19 vaccines is expected to arrive in Panama in the 2022 Q1. The Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS) began a COVID-19 vaccination campaign from 8 October until 28 October that included all of the population residing in the country regardless of their migratory status and demonstration of roots. This means that for this period, the certificate issued by an R4V partner to asylum-seekers awaiting the provisional card was not required, but after 28 October, it will be required again. This R4V partner will continue providing asylum-seekers awaiting their provisional card a certificate that will allow them access to COVID-19 vaccinations. Also, on 11 October, the President of the Republic of Costa Rica and the Minister of Health signed a decree that makes the vaccine against COVID-19 mandatory in the public sector and that empowers private sector employers to establish possible sanctions. The decree establishes that public servants referenced by the Vaccination Commission must be immunized, except for those officials who, due to duly declared medical contraindication, are unable to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This decree came into force on 15 October.

On **issues impacting the subregion**, during her mission to Panamá, the United States Undersecretary of State for Civil Security, Democracy and Human Rights, Uzra Zeya, held a meeting with President Laurentino Cortizo of Panama, in which they addressed issues to establish a joint response to regional migration challenges, including refugees and migrants on the move; to combat money laundering and drug trafficking; and to strengthen respect for democratic principles throughout the region.

Related to the **protection environment**, on 15 October, an R4V partner in Panamá [expressed its concern](#) regarding the decline in access to basic rights for refugees in Panama due to the health emergency related to the pandemic. Around half of the people surveyed have not been able to pay rent in the last three months and 15% are at risk of eviction. In addition, 37 percent of school-age refugee children did not have access to resources or tools to access virtual education. In response, the R4V partner, in addition to providing humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, had enabled a psychosocial support service that remains in force, and delivered relief items such as blankets and mosquito nets to approximately 2,000 refugees, asylum-seekers and members of the host community.

On **official information** coming from governmental authorities, as of October the National Immigration Service in Panama extended the period to review fine exonerations for humanitarian reasons, allowing refugees and migrants in the country to update their immigration status. In Mexico, there were 13,406 encounters of Venezuelans with the United States Customs and Border Protection. CBP reported a 24% increase over September in the number of encounters with Venezuelan nationals at its Southwest land border, with 10,814 encounters in September.¹ Current recidivism rates are estimated to be at about 25%. Recidivism rates have fluctuated between 38% and 25% throughout the year. Data on these encounters demonstrates a continued trend of growing numbers of Venezuelans reaching the Mexico/US border as the year comes to an end.

Partners in Mexico finalized the Joint Needs Assessments (JNA) report to gain a better understanding of the **needs of the Venezuelan population** in Mexico. These focus groups were carried out in September and October in Querétaro, Monterrey, Puebla, Cancun and Playa del Carmen. 63 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants from Venezuela participated. In terms of the needs of the Venezuelan population, findings of the JNAs conclude that the most urgent are access to public services and documentation, food assistance, access to health services and economic integration. It was noted that the vast majority of the population who took part, mentioned wanting to stay in the city where they reside, in the short and medium term. Their main motivation was to wait for their naturalization process. This intention was expressed in interviews and focus groups despite the growing trend observed of Venezuelans transiting through México to reach the United States.

¹ It is important to note that this data refers to the number of instances of attempted entry to the US, and not the number of individuals arriving, as it is possible that an individual may attempt to cross the border multiple times in the same month.

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Response

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). In **Panamá**, 117 Venezuelans received CVA to cover basic needs, where 59% of beneficiaries were women and 39% were children. Furthermore, 3 Venezuelan children and 4 women received multipurpose cash assistance (MPC) to promote their effective access to/permanence in the education system. In **Costa Rica**, 179 Venezuelans in vulnerable conditions received CVA for basic needs. In **Mexico**, 144 asylum-seekers from Venezuela received CVA in October. 64 persons received MPC to meet their basic needs, such as food, household and domestic products, and a contribution towards housing and utility bills; while 80 Venezuelans received sectoral top-ups addressing protection-related risks identified (including contingency top-ups for COVID-19).

Integration. In **Panamá**, 119 Venezuelans were reached with support for self-employment/entrepreneurship initiatives and social cohesion activities. 12 people participated in a cohesion activity called "We are part of a single team" (Volleyball game) amongst public servants, hosted by the local community in Dolega, Chiriqui. In **Costa Rica**, 7 Venezuelans participated in business training and consulting services, while 131 Venezuelans received enrollment, follow-up and graduation support in short operational courses that improve professional skills, while 14 Venezuelans received disbursements of raw materials, equipment or materials needed to continue with their businesses. In **Mexico**, second editions of the Manual for Migrant Entrepreneurship were distributed to Venezuelans and partners.

Protection. In **Panama**, (including child protection, GBV and Protection-General): 110 Venezuelans participated in sessions (individual and/or group) about migratory regularization, refugee status determination (RSD) and access to rights. In **Costa**

Rica, 105 Venezuelans received information and legal assistance and, in qualified cases, support in the payment of fees for regularization and documentation procedures. This included consultations on the new Temporary Special Category of Complementary Protection.

Food Security: In **Costa Rica**, 145 Venezuelans received food assistance in the form of food baskets or prepaid cards.

Health. In **Costa Rica**, 85 Venezuelans received psychosocial support. Of these, 39 Venezuelans attended group workshops on emotional wellbeing. 1,166 Venezuelans received medical insurance during August and September under a special agreement with the Costa Rican social security entity. 3 Venezuelans participated in health promotion fairs. 1 Venezuelan person was referred to private health care services.

Shelter. In **Costa Rica**, 4 Venezuelans were supported with emergency shelter.

Education: In **Panamá**, 2 Venezuelans participated in information, awareness-raising, promotion and dissemination activities on the importance of the right to education. In **Costa Rica**, 56 Venezuelans received educational support. The actions included information on academic degree validation processes and training for the development of soft skills, empowerment and finances, technical training for income generation and identification of occupational profiles, among others. 2 Venezuelans received educational kits.

WASH: In **Costa Rica**, 112 Venezuelans received basic hygiene kits, 113 received masks and 11 minors received diapers.



PEOPLE REACHED*

Education	Food Security	Health	Hum. Transp.	Integration	NFI	Nutrition	Protection	Shelter	WASH	CBI
60	145	11,664	0	283	0	0	215	4	236	527