



## Situation

### Costa Rica

- On 5 January the Venezuelan Embassy of the Interim Government of Juan Guaidó officially closed in Costa Rica, leading to significant repercussions for the issuance of documents to Venezuelans to leave Costa Rica (such as consular records or laissez-passer) as well as for the verification of documents for migratory regularization (such as criminal records and birth certificates). Following its closure, the Government of Costa Rica announced its intention to resume consular relations with the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. At the time of writing there was yet no timeline for the resumption of consular activities in Costa Rica.
- The Government of President Rodrigo Chaves requested financial assistance from the international community to help refugees and migrants on the move through Costa Rica, estimating that the arrival of refugees and migrants in transit will cost the country up to 300 million dollars.

### Panama

- According to official statistics from the National Migration Service (SNM), entries of Venezuelans increased during the first two months of 2023, representing the third nationality in irregular transit through the Darien, after Haitians and Ecuadorians. 2,337 Venezuelans irregularly entered the country through the Darien in January, increasing to 7,097 in February.
- On 17 January, 177 Venezuelans in an irregular situation, who were at the Temporary Migration Reception Centre (ERM) in los Planes de Gualaca (Chiriqui Province), returned to Venezuela on the first humanitarian returns flight supported by the Panamanian government. Half of the passengers were children and women.
- On 15 February, a bus transporting 66 refugees and migrants to the ERM in Los Planes de Gualaca in Chiriqui Province crashed killing 42 people. A temporary shelter was set up in Hogar Medalla Milagrosa for family members of passengers while they waited for the identification of survivors and victims, as well as for the recovery of survivors after hospitalization. On 25 February, another bus transporting 57 refugees and migrants en route to the ERM in Los Planes de Gualaca caught on fire. There were no reports of injuries or deaths.
- Due to the bus accidents in January and February, SNM decided on 25 February to temporarily suspend the transportation services from the ERMs in Darien (San Vicente and Lajas Blancas), to the one in Los Planes de Gualaca in the Chiriqui Province while investigations led by the Authority of Transit and Terrestrial Transportation (ATTT) were ongoing. As a result of this suspension which ended on 1 March, the ERMs in Darien were overcrowded by the end of February.



## Mexico

- On 5 January, the Government of the United States (U.S.) announced new migratory policy measures, including the expansion of Title 42 expulsions to three new nationalities (Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans) in addition to continuing such measures for Venezuelans. Based on an agreement with Mexico, up to 30,000 individuals from these nationalities can be expelled from the U.S. to Mexico per month. The measures also included new processing procedures at ports of entry (POE) using the CBP One app and the expansion of the Humanitarian Parole Program to Nicaraguans, Haitians, and Cubans (in addition to Venezuelans) allowing for the admission to the U.S. of up to 30,000 parolees per month.
- On 21 February, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) issued a proposed rule establishing a five-year ban to reentry to the U.S. for those who irregularly enter the country after transiting through other countries that are signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention. These refugees and migrants also become ineligible for asylum in the United States according to the proposed rule.
- During the reporting period, 2,116 Venezuelans filed asylum claims in Mexico (1,367 in January and 749 in February). Also, the National Migration Institute (INM) issued migratory cards (temporary visas for humanitarian reasons or permanent residence) to 50 Venezuelans.
- On 2 January, some five thousand refugees and migrants protested at the offices of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid (COMAR) in Tapachula, demanding the processing of their asylum claims. COMAR in Tapachula processed and delivered registration appointments to approximately 2,600 persons during the first three days of 2023 following the closure of its offices at the end of December due to the holidays. Meanwhile, Mexican citizens protested the agglomeration of refugees and migrants near the COMAR offices, which has affected local communities in Tapachula. In February, INM provided services within Tapachula's soccer stadium, to increase its capacity to assist refugees and migrants, issuing temporary stay permits for a period of 30 days.
- In January, INM reported the rescue of 10 refugees and migrants (5 Venezuelans) who were trying to cross the Rio Bravo, at the border of Choahuila with the U.S., in an operation carried out in coordination with the Ministry of National Defense (SEDENA), the National Guard, the state government and the municipality, to provide humanitarian support to the population in-transit in the border region of Ciudad Juarez.
- In the first months of 2023, significant groups of refugees and migrants have been reported moving from the South of Mexico to the Northern border, including a group of 100 refugees and migrants in January and another group of 1,000 people in February leaving Tapachula, Chiapas. The first group of refugees and migrants were reportedly intercepted by INM and the National Guard. Many were referred to Migration Centres where stay permits were issued for their permanence in Tapachula or to exit the country through the Southern border. INM agents also intercepted a group of 97 people in San Pedro Tapanatepec, Oaxaca.



- In the state of Puebla, 17 people died and 13 were injured when a transporting 45 refugees and migrants from the state of Oaxaca to the Northern border crashed.

## Response



In **Costa Rica**, 389 Venezuelans received food assistance in the form of food kits or cards for the purchase of food in authorized supermarkets. This assistance was supplemented with hygiene kits.



In **Costa Rica**, 1,628 Venezuelans benefited from Health Sector interventions. Of these, 1,481 Venezuelans received health insurance under the agreement between the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS) and an R4V partner. In addition, 147 Venezuelans received individual psychosocial support.

In **Mexico**, 246 Venezuelans benefited from primary health care consultations in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, 13 in Tijuana, Baja California and 35 in Matamoros, Tamaulipas.

In **Panama**, 1,829 Venezuelans (1,073 children and 756 adults) received specialized psychosocial care services.



In **Mexico**, R4V partners provided education support to 154 Venezuelans. As a result, 62 children enrolled in primary and secondary schools (49% girls, 51% boys) and 78 started their studies at the university level through a scholarship programme promoted by an R4V partner.



In **Costa Rica**, R4V partners provided temporary emergency shelter to 30 Venezuelans.

In **Mexico**, R4V partners provided shelter to 3,277 Venezuelans in the states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Chihuahua, Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Baja California, Nuevo León, Coahuila and Sonora.



In **Panama**, 206 hygiene kits were distributed to refugees and migrants (133 men, 60 women, and 13 children) in the ERM in Los Planes de Gualaca in January.

In **Costa Rica**, 122 Venezuelans received family hygiene kits and 2 children received diapers.

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\* From 01/01/2023 to 28/02/2023 | \*\*Source: FTS Website



In **Mexico City**, an R4V partner delivered 116 rehydration kits to refugee and migrant families and individuals without access to potable water.



### INTEGRATION

In **Mexico**, 5 refugees and migrants received support to strengthen their entrepreneurship skills through a technical knowledge workshop.

Likewise, 14 refugees and migrants received financial support to cover expenses for the revalidation of their diplomas in Mexico.

In **Panama**, R4V partners provided entrepreneurship and vocational training to 105 Venezuelans to improve their employability and socio-economic integration in the country.



### CVA

In **Costa Rica**, 78 Venezuelans in vulnerable situations received cash and voucher assistance (CVA) as emergency support.

In **Panama**, 163 Venezuelans (135 women) received multipurpose cash assistance.



### PROTECTION

#### Panama

In February, capacity-building was carried out with the National Commission against Trafficking in Persons in the Darien Province in Panama to strengthen local capacity to combat trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants. As a result, 149 officials were trained (114 men and 35 women).

135 refugees and migrants received orientation and accessed legal counselling services. 230 people (83 women) were supported with orientation on refugee status determination procedures in Panama.

Among R4V interventions for populations in transit in Panama, 844 children and adolescents had access to child-friendly spaces (428 boys and 416 girls) as well as 286 parents and/or caregivers (40 men and 246 women). A total of 672 refugees and migrants (312 women, 158 men, 138 girls and 64 boys) had access to Safe Spaces, and 27 children and adolescents (19 boys and 8 girls) were assisted with protection case management.

#### Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, 30 Venezuelans received legal orientation on refugee status determination and regularization pathways.

#### Mexico

In Mexico City, R4V partners monitored the North Central Bus Station (Terminal de Autobuses del Norte) to address protection needs and make referrals to shelters and health services. During the reporting period, 34 refugees and migrants received information on shelter and health support.



In Mexico, 50 Venezuelans received cash support and counseling on regularization procedures and received migratory cards (either a temporary visa for humanitarian reasons or permanent residence) issued by the National Migration Institute.

41 Venezuelans received financial support and legal counseling from R4V partners in Mexico to petition for their naturalization process, submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is expected to reach a final decision in the second semester of the year. Similarly, in Mexico 35 Venezuelans received information on documentation through workshops on regularization, visas and naturalization.

To counter misconceptions and rumors, R4V partners provided information on the CBP One app through sessions along the northern border area in Mexico.



In **Panama**, R4V partners collaborating with the Municipality of La Chorrera provided capacity-building to 32 people (8 men and 24 women) on the management of essential services in the Community Development Center.

In **Mexico**, R4V partners referred 53 Venezuelan gender-based violence (GBV) survivors to multisectoral response services. Additionally, 61 GBV risk mitigation activities were undertaken by R4V partners.



In **Mexico**, R4V partners supported 16 Venezuelans to voluntarily relocate from municipalities in the South of Mexico (Tapachula, Tenosique, Palenque) to localities in the Centre and North of the country, including the main destinations of Aguascalientes, Coahuila, San Luis Potosí and Nuevo León. They also received integration support in these locations.

