

5 JUNE 2020



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA IN:

THE WORLD LATIN AMERICA &amp; CARIBBEAN

5.1 M 4.3 M



FUNDING SITUATION\*

15% FUNDED: USD 209.4 M  
REQUIREMENTS: USD 1.41 BN

## Situation

Refugees and migrants with special protection needs such as persons with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), indigenous people and homeless people continue to be among the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the related measures adopted by states. This manifests in increased levels of xenophobia, a shortage of adequate services, and a lack of awareness, sensitivity, and training with regards to providing such groups adequate services. Borders remain porous, causing complications for the identification and monitoring of human trafficking and smuggling cases, and limiting the provision of protection and assistance to those exploited and at risk of abuse.

The Regional Platform notes with concern the disproportionate social and economic impacts of the pandemic on young refugees and migrants from Venezuela. Due to the interruption of their education or vocational training, or the loss of employment and income opportunities, affected refugees and migrants from Venezuelans are at risk of long-term social decline. Among other effects, a recent [report of the ILO](#) stated that affected Venezuelans may face great difficulties in finding decent employment throughout their lives.

Due to ongoing return movements of thousands of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to their home country, the Regional Platform hosted a technical workshop on returns on 5 June. More than 60 participants from various regional Sectors, National and Sub-regional Platforms, the donor community, as well as key R4V partners took stock of the current realities facing those who are returning and discussed the development of coherent responses by R4V actors and Platforms to support affected Venezuelans. Participants agreed that the health and protection risks, as well as long-term adverse impacts associated with these return movements can be mitigated through prioritized humanitarian and integration interventions that provide sustainable alternatives to returns.

## Platforms' Response\*\*

In Brazil, R4V partners are holding informative sessions in Pacaraima and Manaus on new movement restrictions and on COVID-19 prevention. The Warao radio community programme 'Yakera Jokonae' continued to disseminate prevention messages for the indigenous community living in shelters in Manaus. To ensure the constant availability of clean water, storage tanks have been installed and water trucking is operational in seven shelters in Boa Vista.

While governments in the Caribbean are generally relaxing COVID-19 mitigation measures, landlords have become more rigorous in evicting tenants, disregarding government's pleas for leniency. As a result, emergency shelter assistance has become a priority for R4V partners of the Sub-regional Platform. In Guyana, travel restrictions are also contributing to irregular crossings, making it difficult to monitor and identify specific needs of Venezuelans in Guyana.

In Central America and Mexico, partners of the Sub-regional Platform continue to support refugees and migrants from Venezuela through food cards, mental health and psychosocial support, WASH assistance and GBV prevention in high risk communities with a greater proportion of migrants and refugees. Costa Rica has been increasing movement restrictions, while Panama is relaxing some and is authorizing domestic work, benefitting refugees and migrants who depend on this sector for income.

R4V partners in Chile have been providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and migrants. R4V partners prepared a joint letter to the Government advocating for the inclusion of undocumented children and their parents in the *Registro Social de Hogares* (a national social protection net). Meanwhile, the national protection sector is strengthening its needs analysis and response activities.

In Colombia, the *Grupo Interagencial para Flujos Migratorios Mixtos (GIFMM)* is implementing the second phase of its Joint Needs Assessment. Over the last two weeks, 2,500 surveys were conducted via telephone in 25 departments by 29 partners. Additionally, R4V partners are delivering seed capital to support refugee and migrant micro-entrepreneurs, and are accompanying girls, boys and adolescents with distance learning activities while building the capacity of teachers. Partners

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\* Source: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/944/summary>

\*\*These are examples of activities carried out by National/Sub-Regional Platforms and/or Regional Sectors. For further details, please see [R4V.info](http://R4V.info).

also provided multisectoral assistance, including WASH services and kits, health screening and supply of hot meals, food kits and tents to refugees and migrants in multiple locations as well as at borders.

**The Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes (GTRM) in Ecuador** has been prioritizing livelihoods support, medical services and isolation spaces in the northern provinces of Carchi and Imbabura where there has been a peak of COVID-19 cases. The coordination team is also building the capacity of six local GTRMs in collecting and reporting data. These local GTRM reports are published on the [R4V site of the GTRM](#).

**In Peru**, the GTRM established an exit strategy for refugees and migrants staying in alternative shelters while stranded because of the emergency, based on registration of cases, confirmation of support networks, evaluation for cash assistance, and coordination of humanitarian transportation to destination cities. In response to the rising concerns over discrimination and heightened protection risks, GTRM partners are organizing a national consultation to validate a protocol for regional cooperation on the protection of children's rights in the context of human mobility. Partners are also prioritizing winterization efforts such as the distribution of blankets.

**In the Southern Cone**, R4V partners have supported the Bolivian government to establish an online and remote asylum application system which will make a substantial difference to refugees and asylum-seekers who reside outside La Paz. In Argentina, R4V partners are adapting regional child protection protocols, in the context of the Quito Process, to the national context, in collaboration with the National Directorate for Migration.

## Regional Sectors\*\*

**The Regional Health Sector** is delivering emergency health supplies for babies, boys, girls, and pregnant women in shelters. Different countries are now planning the partial lifting of restrictive measures based on which the Sector is following up on the potential restarting of essential services provided at local levels.

**The Regional Integration Sector** is collaborating with the CBI working group on the elaboration of a document on the linkages between social protection, CBI and integration of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the context of COVID-19. The document will also have links with the mitigation of GBV and support to GBV survivors, in coordination with the regional GBV sub-sector. The document will serve as a reference for National Platforms and will include best practices in the region.

**The Regional Protection Sector** conducted a focus group discussion with refugees and migrants from Venezuela in eight different countries, to identify the disproportionate protection impacts on population groups with specific needs. The results highlighted that access to services, information, connectivity, documentation, and protection was impaired for this group. The regional sector, building on the experience of Brazil's National Platform, established a plan to increase the visibility of indigenous refugees and migrants in the region and to improve the protection response for this group. The [Human Trafficking and Smuggling](#) sub-sector updated its SOPs and referral pathways for trafficking in persons, while the [Gender-based Violence](#) sub-sector is developing a tool for safe and appropriate communication of GBV awareness messages in the context of COVID-19. The [Child Protection](#) sub-sector conducted a consultation on a Regional Cooperation Protocol for the protection of children and adolescents on the move.

**The Regional Shelter, NFI and Humanitarian Transportation Sectors** continued coordinating with national sectors the mapping of services in the region, in collaboration with the Support Spaces working group; defining which services to map and their taxonomy. The Sectors are also developing a post-distribution monitoring framework for cash-based initiatives (CBI) used for shelter solutions in order to calculate expenditures and reach of sectoral shelter support using CBI.

**The WASH Sector** organized a webinar on financing, monitoring and Accountability to Affected Populations. The webinar included panel discussions with donors and "water.org" (a global non-profit organization) on the issue of financing of WASH utilities.

**The Regional Food Security Sector** continues to identify potential beneficiaries for food assistance, food vouchers/e-vouchers and emergency cash, across the region. In addition, a food security assessment was [published](#) by the Sector lead agency.

**The Regional Education Sector** continues to support Ministries of Education in the region in strategies for the reopening of schools under a multi-sectoral scheme including health, protection and WASH dimensions.