

Situation Report July/August 2019

In August, the number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela reached the **4.3 million worldwide**, with 3.5 million hosted in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The **financial contributions** towards the RMRP reached a **29%** of the total requirements in late August, with 32% of the coverage being towards direct emergency assistance (Aol 1).

In July, the **Buenos Aires Chapter** of the **Quito Process** brought together representatives of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as donor countries and financial institutions.

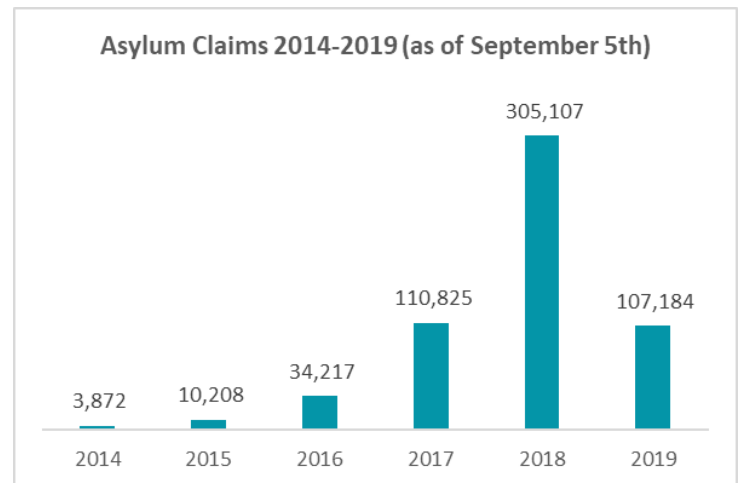
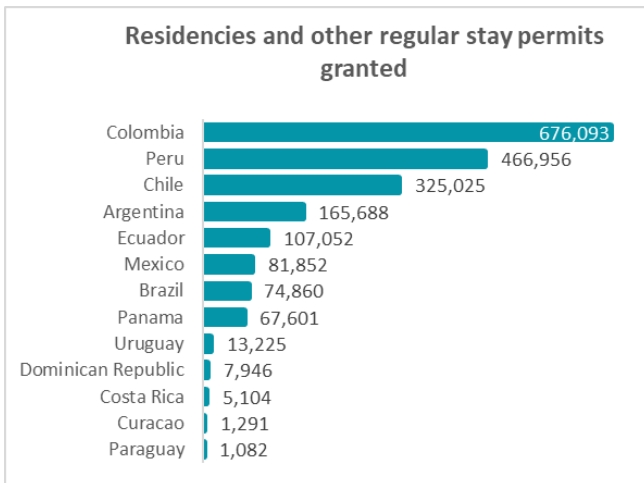
KEY FIGURES¹

4.3 Million

Venezuelans worldwide

3.5 Million

Venezuelans living in Latin America and the Caribbean



OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

The 4th Technical Meeting of the **Quito Process** (“Buenos Aires Chapter”) took place between the 4 and 5 July. The inter-governmental forum focused on five main issues: the development of a regional mobility document for Venezuelans; the fight against human trafficking and smuggling; the need for international cooperation; the support to National Refugee Commissions; and the socio-economic inclusion of Venezuelans into host communities. As a result of the meeting, 11 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean signed the Joint Declaration and 12 signed the Road Map of the Buenos Aires Chapter.

In Colombia, several options for **regularization** were made available in July. The Complementary Special Stay Permit (PECP, by its Spanish acronym), issued on 3 July, allowed asylum seekers whose applications were previously denied, to access formal employment. On 13 July, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly announced the creation of the Temporary Special Work Permit (PEPFF, by its Spanish acronym), which will allow refugees and migrants from Venezuela with irregular migratory status to access the formal labour market.

In Ecuador, the government confirmed the acceptance of **expired passports** for refugees and migrants from Venezuela for up to five years after the expiration date and announced the regularization process of Venezuelans who entered the

¹ Total population figures in this document represent the sum of Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers reported by host governments. It does not necessarily imply individual identification, nor registration of each individual, and may include a degree of estimation, as per each government’s statistical data processing methodology. As numerous government sources do not account for Venezuelans without a regular status, the total number of Venezuelans is likely to be higher. The figures of people with regular status do not include Venezuelans holding tourist visas, nor recognized refugees, or asylum-seekers. The figure of issued residencies and other form of regular status includes expired and valid residence permits, do not include tourist visas, and, in selected countries, do not necessarily account for the number of individuals but the number of administrative procedures.

country regularly before 26 July 2019 and the introduction of the **humanitarian visa** from 26 August. Similarly, in Guyana, the **registration process** continued, with 9,356 refugees and migrants registered and with the possibility of receiving a renewable 3-month stay permit. In Trinidad and Tobago, the government began with the issuance of registration cards after the process that took place between May and June, allowing the holders to regularly work for six months (with the possibility of another 6 month extension) and, in some cases, access banking services.

On the other hand, a proposal to reform Panama's **migration law** was presented to the National Assembly of Deputies; it foresees the creation of a migration field unit within the National Migration Service to oversee the processes of mass regularization, as well as sanctions and deportation. In the Caribbean, particularly Aruba and Curacao, the Fifth Periodic Review on the Netherlands for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) recognized the challenges posed by Venezuelans seeking international protection and expressed concern for the lack of legal frameworks governing asylum and the conditions of detention, to which it recommended the introduction of appropriate legislation, in line with international human rights and refugee laws, while establishing or strengthening their **asylum procedures**.

In terms of **population flows**, Peru noted a notable decrease of entries at its northern border after the entry into force of the Humanitarian Visa in Ecuador. The presence of refugees and migrants from Venezuela also decreased in Tacna (southern border) as the government of Chile announced that the newly introduced Democratic Responsibility Visa could only be processed in Lima.

RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

These response highlights do not provide an exhaustive overview of all response activities by partners under the regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP), but rather highlight some key activities implemented during the month. The R4V aims to support and complement national authorities' efforts across Latin America and the Caribbean, consistent with the principles outlined in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

Area of Intervention 1: Direct emergency assistance

Strategic outcome: *Refugees and migrants are provided with life-saving goods and services.*

Needs Assessments

Partners in **Brazil**, in coordination with the army, conducted two assessments of Venezuelans sleeping on the streets or occupying private or public buildings, with a total of 3,631 Venezuelans identified in Boa Vista, including 1,168 children, an increase of 300% compared to January. In Pacaraima, some 642 Venezuelans, including 102 children, were found in such conditions.

In the Southern Cone, monitoring and assessment exercises have taken place in Argentina and Paraguay. In **Argentina**, from April to July, 589 persons have been reached with these tools, with findings that, among other things, show that 50% of the interviewed held university degrees, 52% were processing a temporary resident permit and 40% were unemployed, while approximately 40% of Venezuelans employed, had informal jobs. Partners in **Paraguay** also started the roll-out of monitoring and assessment tools, so far reaching 115 persons.

Basic Needs and Essential Services

Partners provided **temporary accommodation** to 6,927 persons in Ecuador, 6,500 in Brazil and 25,900 in Peru. Additionally, 215 climate-adapted Refugee Housing Units (RHU) were installed in the northern and southern borders of Brazil, replacing 300 tents.

A **wireless internet network** was installed in a shelter in Quito (Ecuador), benefiting 63 families residing in the accommodation. This adds to the wireless internet services already installed in the northern and southern borders of the country, which in July reached 12,738 and 13,169 persons respectively. **Partners in Colombia also made communications and connectivity services available** to 670 individuals.

Food assistance was provided by partners in Brazil, reaching 10,614 refugees and migrants, including 634 indigenous persons and 5,788 living in the streets; Panama, with 73 persons reached with food coupons and information on available services; Colombia, through vouchers (102,600 persons), in-kind food assistance (8,000 persons) and community kitchens

(205,600); Peru, where 17,700 food rations were delivered; and Ecuador where over 122,000 people received vouchers to be exchanged for food in identified selling points or food kits as well as assistance provided through communal kitchens.

In the Southern Cone and Central America & Mexico, **humanitarian assistance** was also provided. In Argentina and Uruguay, 148 and 47 refugees and migrants from Venezuela respectively, were provided with temporary accommodation, humanitarian transportation, food assistance, non-food items and/or mental health and psychosocial support. While in Mexico, multi-purpose cash grants were delivered to 103 Venezuelans to meet basic needs, housing and utility bills.

Emergency services were also provided in Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, including 15,700 persons that were provided with **humanitarian transportation** in Peru, 4,677 in Ecuador, and 2,600 persons in Colombia. **Non-food items** were also provided in these three countries, with 9,400 and 6,586 kits delivered in the first two countries and 20,000 persons provided with kits in the latter.

Health and WASH

Medical assistance was provided by partners in Colombia and Peru. In **Colombia**, approximately 40,500 individuals received general medical care, 1,600 were provided with services related to sexual and reproductive health and 9,000 persons received mental and psychosocial support. While in **Peru**, 1,000 persons were provided with emergency medical assistance, including psychosocial support. Additionally, more than 770 gestating women benefited from prenatal care in five departments of Colombia and 7,800 children were provided with medical and first aid care. In Ecuador, 159 people were assisted with psychosocial assistance, 1,832 children provided with nutritional interventions, and 3,933 children assisted with health interventions during July and August.

In **Brazil**, on the other hand, the Warao indigenous community was found particularly vulnerable to the spread of infectious diseases such as Varicella and Tuberculosis, so partners are working with the Municipal Health Secretariat in Manaus to improve shelter conditions and on a vaccination campaign. In this regard, partners provided shelters with cleaning products and utensils to help prevent new outbreaks and carried out an awareness raising campaign to highlight the importance of seeking medical treatment and how to access the local Basic Health Unit. Also, partners in Brazil distributed over 5,300 male and female condoms and 500 lubricants in Roraima State, supporting access basic health items, to promote safe sex practices and prevent sexually transmitted infections. Furthermore, 151 dignity kits were delivered to women at risk, girls, survivors of GBV, LGBTI people and people with other specific needs.

WASH services were also provided in Peru, with over 11,000 litres of water distributed and Colombia, where 40,000 persons were supplied with improved sanitary services and 8,900 individuals benefited with a source of potable water. Also, in order to improve general knowledge on WASH, approximately 5,800 people in Colombia received training and almost 18,000 hygiene kits were delivered. In Ecuador, 17,768 people received hygiene kits and 2,337 families received items for improving water quality.

Area of Intervention 2: Protection

Strategic outcome: Refugees and migrants enjoy rights and protection.

Community Based Activities

A workshop on Community-Based Protection was provided to partners engaged in community participation in Boa Vista, **Brazil**, with the participation of 28 persons who were trained in identification of community protection risks, including causes and effects, and joint prevention and response decisions. In support to this, three protection assessments were conducted in Belém, at two shelters that host 250 persons and are managed by indigenous communities and the State, respectively; and Santarem, at a shelter managed by the municipality and which accommodates approximately 128 Warao persons.

Participatory Assessment and Protection Monitoring

In **Mexico**, partners carried out a participatory assessment with the participation of 35 refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The findings showed that refugee status determination procedures in Queretaro are advancing slowly, lasting

more than a year on average, while asylum-seeker certificates or humanitarian visitor cards take between five and eight months to be issued. The interviewees also manifested that public services remain generally available, except for health which continues to be a challenge (especially for HIV patients); and that lack of documentation and residence permits impedes them from finding formal employment.

In **Ecuador**, protection monitoring activities were carried out in Machala, Manta and Portoviejo. The results showed that in Machala, 30% of children and adolescents between 12 and 17 years of age, who have been in the country for more than six months, do not attend school; while in Manta, 46% of people surveyed are in irregular situation. Another finding shows the surveyed population integrated with the host community, with 20% evaluating their relationship as "very good" and 55% as "good". A challenge for refugees and migrants in Machala and Manta is that they have to travel to other cities in order to access international protection services or conduct related procedures (partners have supported these movements whenever possible).

In **Costa Rica**, a participatory assessment conducted with 43 persons from Venezuela, male and female, and of various ages showed that many Venezuelans are facing challenges when their first instance is denied. This places them in a legal limbo that constraints access to services. The assessment also highlighted concerns on the labour market lacking information on hiring persons of concern with valid work permits.

Access to Information, Referrals and Legal Support

Partners across the region provide refugees and migrants from Venezuela with information on protection and service pathways on a regular basis. During the reporting period, legal support and orientation/information on regularization and asylum, documentation, rights and obligations, soft skills, legal support available for GBV survivors, public and specialized services, anti-human trafficking, international protection, health and/or education were provided in **Costa Rica**, reaching more than 615 persons; **Panama** with approximately 153 individuals; **Argentina** with 429 persons; **Paraguay** with 343 refugees and migrants; **Colombia** with 20,600 persons; and, **Peru**, with over 200 individuals. In Ecuador, 68,517 people reached with provision of information on access to basic services, access to asylum and regularization.

Additionally, in **Chile**, partners provide legal counselling to refugees and migrants from Venezuelans twice a week, in person and via telephone. While in **Peru**, 80 pregnant women and children below the age of five were referred to health centres.

GBV and Human Trafficking prevention and response

Partners in **Peru** carried out community dialogues to raise awareness among women from Venezuela and host communities on how to recognize and respond to cases of gender-based violence (GBV) and/or human trafficking. Community brigades on GBV prevention are operating in two districts in Lima and work towards the dissemination of information and the increase of preventive measures took place in Arequipa, in coordination with the roundtable for human trafficking. In **Costa Rica**, partners carried out two training on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health. A #MeToo campaign was launched in August in Costa Rica. The campaign promoted spaces to exchange information and learn about gender-based violence and access to sexual and reproductive rights.

Partners in **Colombia** provided nearly 1,000 survivors of GBV with access to prevention and care pathways, while more than 24,000 persons were oriented on the prevention and protection against human trafficking, smuggling and labour exploitation. Information and counselling on GBV, LGBTI rights, health services, social assistance and security services were also provided in **Brazil**, reaching 711 individuals in Boa Vista and 529 in Pacaraima.

Child Protection

In **Brazil**, 2,100 girls and 2,127 boys were provided with psychosocial support, non-formal education and early childhood development activities through Spaces for Education, Violence Protection and Psychosocial Support for Migrant and Refugee Children and Adolescents (EPAPs). While approximately 1,200 children and adolescents in **Colombia** benefited from protective and child-friendly environments, providing them with relief from the stress and trauma that their status as refugees or migrants could cause. In Ecuador, legal assistance was provided to 488 girls, 534 boys and their families in border areas. Among them 15 girls and 12 boys were unaccompanied and separated children who received support to benefit from specific protection measures.

Area of Intervention 3: Socio-economic and cultural integration

Strategic outcome: Refugees and migrants are socially, economically and culturally integrated in empowered communities.

Voluntary relocation programme

During the reporting period, a total of 1,893 Venezuelan refugees and migrants were voluntarily relocated inside **Brazil**. Some through the family and social reunification programme (684), while others were matched with employment opportunities (317), or to be received in shelters managed by civil society or municipalities (892).

Integration and self-reliance

Partners in Ecuador, Colombia, Costa Rica, Panama and Argentina provide regular **information and/or trainings** to refugees, migrants and Colombian returnees from Venezuela to improve their **income generation opportunities** and their integration in the host communities. These included, courses on business models/plans, advice on compliance with labour laws, how to access social services and the job market, online courses in accounting, finances and entrepreneurship, among others. During the reporting period, 150 persons were reached in Costa Rica; 37 refugees and migrants in Panama; and, approximately 2,360 in Argentina.

Other activities based on sports, art, culture, and communication took place in Colombia, aiming to promote human rights, reaching almost 14,600 individuals, including host community members.

Coordination with the private sector

Partners in Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador have been working with the private sector to support the socio-economic integration of the refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In **Brazil**, partners organized two fora on Employment and Entrepreneurship in Curitiba and Sao Paulo. In Curitiba, policy makers and private companies debated on the benefits that refugees and migrants provide in terms of knowledge, expertise and diversity; exchanged best practices; and, addressed misconceptions and needed information on recruitment of refugees and migrants. The forum in Sao Paulo had the participation of 60 representatives of different companies who, together with State authorities and RMRP partners, discussed joint efforts to better respond to the present context in the country. Additionally, a Policy Guide which includes options, measures and initiatives that can be adopted by government and other stakeholders to encourage entrepreneurship was presented in the forum in Curitiba.

In **Colombia**, five alliances were formed with private companies in Bogotá and Atlántico, and more than five coordination meetings were held in Antioquia aiming at improving formal hiring of Venezuelans. In **Ecuador**, on the other hand, under the "Sin Fronteras" project, private companies have shown willingness to support refugees and migrants technically and also with resources to contribute to their economic inclusion.

Anti-xenophobia and anti-discrimination initiatives

Partners in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Peru have developed different activities or campaigns to combat discrimination and xenophobia towards refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In **Chile**, communications actions have reached approximately 1,000 persons so far; while in **Colombia**, several campaigns and dialogues have taken place across seven departments, including the sensitization of journalists in four of them.

In **Panama**, 7,918 persons were reached on social media with the campaign #SomosLoMismo; while in **Mexico**, 52 Venezuelans and 43 Mexicans were reached with a cultural event called "Entre panas y cuates" and in **Peru**, 450 persons attended a fair held in the framework of the #TuCausaEsMiCausa campaign. Also, the first *Gracias Causa Brigade* was established and, together with the Ombudsperson's Office, distributed 250 blankets to Peruvian elderly and children. In Ecuador, the "Tu voz en la frontera" campaign against xenophobia reached around 8,415 in August.

Intervention 4: Strengthening capacities of the host government

Strategic outcome: Government institutions' capacity to manage situations of refugees and migrants from Venezuela is strengthened.

Technical and material support

Partners continue to support national authorities across the region with human resources, infrastructure and technical assistance. In Mexico, Costa and Uruguay, partners supported with **human resources**, including individual contractors, which allowed for 355 Venezuelans in Costa Rica to receive assistance and 407 in Uruguay to initiate their **regularization process**.

Also, in Uruguay, a set of tools for teachers to work on the **inclusion of refugee and migrant children** and a systematization of good practices on student inclusion was presented to the National Administration of Public Education. And, in Colombia, 47 **health centres** in Maicao and Barranquilla received biometric equipment, and local health facilities in Apartadó were provided with 420 mosquito nets to address the **dengue emergency**.

Capacity Building Support

In **Costa Rica**, 117 government officials of the National Institute for Children, the Judicial Branch, and the Social Welfare Institute were provided with capacity building activities. While in **Argentina**, 63 public officials were provided with trainings on standards and practices of assistance, protection and integration.

In **Colombia**, 112 officials in Arauca received training on food and nutritional security in migration contexts with a focus on protection and management of agro-climatic risks, and 143 officials were trained on the protection of persons with special needs, including the provision of protection against trafficking and smuggling and a mechanisms of international protection available to refugees and migrants.

In **Brazil**, partners continue to support the House of Brazilian Women, a government centre for women in situations of violence. During a meeting held in July, partners, together with 25 representatives of public agencies and civil society organisations, drafted recommendations to serve as a basis for the formulation of State policies for women in Roraima. Similarly, in **Colombia**, partners have supported at least 60 institutions to implement changes to improve assistance for refugees and migrants, as well as improve their access to rights, including regularization; and, in border departments, 295 entities received support in the design of municipal-level institutional emergency plans.

In **Ecuador**, partners continue to work in a survey with children engaged in negative coping mechanisms in the city of Machala. Also, meetings with Government institutions on the inclusion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in community settings and the protection of children and adolescents took place. In Quito, the Human Rights and Education round table was formed to assess the state of education from a rights perspective. Furthermore, 1,160 civil servants and 1,116 health personnel were trained in July and August.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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RMRP PARTNERS

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