

Venezuelan refugees and migrants' figures update- October 2020

Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the world: **5.5 M**

Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean: **4.6 M**

Context

- Starting in March 2020, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted measures to curb the COVID-19 pandemic, including border closures and movement restrictions, which considerably limited the **regular flow** of refugees and migrants.
- Over the past months, refugees and migrants from Venezuela have become even more vulnerable, including loss of their already limited social and economic support to cover basic needs especially in vital areas such as shelter, food, protection and healthcare.
- For those on the move and in densely populated areas, physical distancing became virtually impossible to implement, facing additional stigma by host communities, including negative perceptions associated with a fear of the spread of the virus.
- Different sources estimate that over 100,000 Venezuelans have returned to their home country since early April. Nevertheless, the exodus of refugees and migrants from Venezuela continues to be the biggest population movement in Latin America's recent history and one of the largest external displacements in the world.
- In the context of the development of the comprehensive Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) for 2021, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V), commends the governments in the region for developing and enhancing their methodologies to reflect accurate figures of refugees and migrants from Venezuela currently in their countries.

What is the rationale behind the increase in the recent number of refugees/migrants from Venezuela?

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, governments in the region have implemented measures to curb the spread of pandemic, such as movement restrictions, borders closures and physical distancing. While such measures would reasonably imply a decrease in the movements of Venezuelans between countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the October update of population figures of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the region have led to increases in some countries and based on the information provided by the authorities of the concerned governments.

The increase in figures in some countries can be attributed to the efforts of national authorities to update their population records and estimates of the total number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela present in each country. Specifically, as of October 2020, the authorities of the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Peru have in their methodologies for the first time **taken into account Venezuelans who are in an irregular situation**; a practice previously implemented only in Colombia.

The inclusion of Venezuelans in irregular situations in the aforementioned countries is considered a positive step that not only leads to more precise planning by humanitarian partners.

Dominican Republic: The Dominican Republic reported a notable increase (+80k) in the number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela due to the **retroactive recognition of Venezuelans** previously present in the country. This change came about specifically due to a change of the source of data used by the government (*Encuesta Nacional de Inmigrantes ENI 2017 / Dirección General de Migración DGM*), which now considers **the number of Venezuelans in an irregular situation in the country**. It therefore does not represent a regular monthly increase.

Ecuador: Ecuador reported a notable increase (+54k). This is based on a change in the methodology, which **now considers the number of Venezuelans who have entered the country through unofficial border points**. The new methodology, endorsed by Ecuadorian authorities, is based on the difference between entries and exits (migratory balance), plus the populations who have entered the country using irregular crossing points. The resulting total figure **takes into account retroactive changes**, which accounts for populations in irregular situations that were already present in the country. It therefore does not represent a regular monthly increase.

Mexico: Mexican authorities have **included the number of FMM (*Forma Migratoria Múltiple*)** entry permit and visa holders in the methodology, which resulted in an increase of +39.6K Venezuelans in the country. Furthermore, the increase takes into account retroactive changes, since **this population was previously present in the country** and does not account for new arrivals over the past month.

Peru: The significant increase in the number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Peru (+213.7k) is explained by a change in the methodology which **now considers the number of Venezuelans who are in an irregular situation as well as asylum seekers** in its population figures. As a result, the new methodology is based on the difference between regular entries and exits (migratory balance), plus the populations who entered the country irregularly and are in an irregular situation as well as **asylum seekers**. The resulting total figure **takes into account retroactive changes**, which accounts for populations in irregular situations that were already present in the country. It therefore does not represent a regular monthly increase.

How are these figures calculated?

Population figures reported by the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for refugees and migrants from Venezuela (R4V) refer to the official totals provided by respective host governments throughout the region. Depending on the country, this is comprised of revising and adding-up the available figures from different registration, asylum and other forms of residence systems that capture the numbers of Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in the country. 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. In some countries, authorities may use the migratory balance, i.e. the difference between regular entries and exits to arrive at the total number of refugees and migrants in their country. Many government sources do not account for Venezuelans without a regular status, which is why the total number of Venezuelans is likely to be higher than the officially reported figures.

What about Venezuelans entering countries in an irregular manner?

It is important to note that the officially reported population figures largely refer to regular movements (with exception of Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Peru). It is assumed that if all irregular movements were to be considered, the total number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region could be higher than 4.6 million.

Annex 1- Venezuelan refugees and migrants per country			
	September 2020	October 2020	Increase/Decrease
Colombia	1.8 M	1.8 M	
Peru	829.7 K	1.0 M	+213.7 K
Chile	455.5 K	457.3 K	+1.8k
Ecuador	362.9 K	417.2 K	+54.3K
Brazil	264.2 K	262.5 K	-1.7 K
Panama	120.5 K	120.5 K	
Mexico	62 K	101.6 K	+39.6 K
Costa Rica	29.8 K	29.8 K	
Argentina	179.1 K	179.2 K	+134
Uruguay	14.9 K	14.9 K	+41
Bolivia	5.8 K	5.8 K	
Paraguay	3.8 K	4.8 K	+1 K
Dominican Republic	34 K	114.5 K	+80 K
Trinidad and Tobago	24 K	24 K	+169
Guyana	22 K	23.3 K	+1.3K
Aruba	17 K	17 K	
Curacao	16.5 K	17 K	+500
Other countries	885.4 K	885.4 K	