Situation

At the northern border in Tumbes, Peruvian armed forces significantly reduced their presence and lifted the blockade of the Panamerican Highway, a main entry and transit point. The military ceased performing border control operations which they had done since the militarization of the border in January amid an increase in irregular flows, these controls have been fully taken over by the Superintendence of Migration (SNM), in line with the advocacy efforts made by GTRM partners and Ombudsperson’s offices. Partners reported increased flexibility from authorities towards vulnerable groups crossing the border such as pregnant women and persons in need of medical attention, and recent operations focused on targeting members of human trafficking rings. Some 430 Venezuelans were reported crossing into Peru from Ecuador just on 30 March.¹ According to surveys conducted by GTRM partners, the percentage of Venezuelans traveling by foot decreased from 31 per cent in January to 26 per cent in March, while those using motor vehicles increased from 36 to 51 per cent. In Puno, between 50 (Wednesday and weekends) to 100 (Monday and Thursdays) Venezuelan refugees and migrants were crossing the border to Bolivia. Some 67 per cent of key informants surveyed mentioned being also aware of returns to Peru through Bolivia.²

On 26 March, the SNM extended the pre-registration process to obtain a new stay permit (Carné de Permiso Temporal de Permanencia, or CPP) up to 7 April 2021. On the same date, it announced that some 350,000 foreigners living in Peru, mainly Venezuelans, had submitted their pre-registration so far, including over 100,000 asylum-seekers. The SNM announced that this data will be used to include foreigners living in Peru in the COVID-19 vaccination plan. GTRM partners reported during the monthly Protection Working Group meeting that the pre-registration database will not only be used for the new CPP procedure, but also for a pilot sample for the new humanitarian residency scheme, an initiative supported by the GTRM. The humanitarian residency process aims to provide the carné de extranjería (issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or MFA) to over 500,000 asylum-seekers in the country, which would grant them access to the National Health Insurance system and other social protection and financial inclusion benefits. Partners also informed that some 105 persons were granted refugee status in the latest session of the Special Commission for Refugees (CEPR for its acronym in Spanish).

Response

The GTRM has been closely monitoring and responding to the concerns of refugees and migrants in an irregular situation in Cusco and Madre de Dios, who received home visits and notifications from the SNM. They have been advised and informed about the pre-registration procedure as a first step to regularize their situation. Partners are also pushing for access to the asylum system through the MFA’s Mesa de Partes Virtual, an online platform to ensure the continuous provision of services from the Ministry.

GTRM Partners assisted almost 6,000 refugees and migrants with general protection orientations (3,530) and with legal counselling (2,240), mainly to clarify questions on the preregistration process for the new CPP stay permit. Partners further supported some 1,630 Venezuelans through case management. Some 1,480 persons received psychosocial assistance, focusing on socioemotional support, empowerment, wellbeing, and resilience. Over 150 women and adolescent survivors of gender-based violence were assisted, including 30 cases referred to specialized services. This assistance included case management and the facilitation of access to legal and health services, as well as the provision of professional psychological therapy.

GTRM partners assisted over 850 children and their parents through 12 online and physical support spaces. This included through the opening of five community spaces for early stimulation for children under three years old and for adolescents. Some 140 highly vulnerable refugees and migrants benefited from alternative accommodations in hotels and 150 benefited through assistance provided in 12 shelters, including psychological support. Some 1,100 persons received kitchen sets to improve their shelter arrangements and 250 baby kits were also distributed to highly vulnerable families. GTRM Partners distributed over 19,000 hot and cold meals and almost 2,000 snacks to support almost 9,000 highly vulnerable refugees, migrants, and host community members. Some 1,430 family food kits were distributed, reaching some 3,860 persons. In addition, almost 4,000 persons had access to food through over 30 soup-kitchens.

² DTM. Site Assessment. March 2021.
supported and nearly 40,640 received Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) to support food security, doubling this kind of CBI assistance in comparison to the previous month due to the prevalence of food insecurity. As part of WASH efforts, partners distributed 3,660 hygiene kits, including over 500 dignity kits and 340 kits for babies to assist nearly 7,280 highly vulnerable refugees and migrants, including those in transit, and members of host communities.

For the beginning of the school year, partners distributed school kits to some 830 students to support their permanence in the public education system. This included the provision of tablets to help close the digital divide that increases desertion rates among the most economically vulnerable students, who could not follow online classes due to lack of access to technology.

GTRM partners facilitated the validation of some 13 professional degrees to enable health professionals from refugee and migrant communities to pursue and practice their professions and join the efforts to respond to the current pandemic.

As part of the efforts on financial inclusion, 280 refugees and migrants received financial education. With initiatives to boost self-reliance as a strategy to break cycles of poverty and poverty traps, almost 1,400 persons received training and participated in entrepreneurship programmes to increase their livelihoods opportunities. Some 430 persons benefited from CBI for livelihoods, including seed capital and microfinancing for entrepreneurs. In addition to capacity development and capital transfers, GTRM partners also worked hand in hand with the municipality of Lima to organize the Feria Panas y Causas.

where over 100 refugee and migrant entrepreneurs displayed and sold their produce. As a highlight, clients were able to see the products in advance through a virtual catalogue and could then visit the fair, following all health protocols, to buy and meet the entrepreneurs. This initiative not only aimed to contribute to the reactivation of the local economy and provide livelihoods to refugee and migrants entrepreneurs, but also to contribute to their social inclusion.

GTRM partners provided six health centres with basic medical equipment, such as thermometers. Some 2,400 persons received alcohol in gel and masks as part of partners’ efforts to provide vulnerable persons with some means to protect themselves from contagion. As part of the efforts on sexual and reproductive health (SRH), 1,100 persons in transit received contraceptives. Some 330 persons received CBI support to access health services and treatment, while another 560 benefited from remote mental health services. A total of two million USD was distributed to assist 19,570 persons through multisectoral CBI, which shows an upward trend in the usage of CBIs among GTRM partners to meet health needs in the current pandemic scenario.

Coordination

GTRM’s preparedness efforts have enabled its 80 partners to coordinate a sectorial approach to the R4V emergency response. The GTRM focused its efforts on the organization of the first meeting between GTRM partners and financial service providers in Peru, which will be held during the first week of April. This is a joint effort with the CBI working group to improve access to current financial services offered in the market and to adjust to the current needs of the GTRM partners’ response.

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