

BRAZIL

Situation Report – February 2019



Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela

Border closure. On 21 February, Venezuela's President Maduro ordered closure of the country's border with Brazil. Days after, tensions increased over the entry of aid and clashes occurred with Venezuelan security forces. The border remains closed to both pedestrian and traffic.

Irregular green pathways (*trochas*) Venezuelans, mainly inhabitants of the border town of Santa Elena, are using irregular crossing points in order to access food, medicine and other basic supplies in Pacaraima (Brazil) and then returning to Venezuela. 1,197 people crossed between 21-28 February.

Arrival of indigenous communities. The increasing violence in Venezuela against indigenous communities has compelled at least 675 members of the Pemón community to seek refuge in the indigenous communities of Tarau-Paru and Bananal in Brazil.

KEY FIGURES

The Brazilian Federal Police shared the following figures:

- Cumulative number of refugees/asylum seekers: 94,844 as of February 21st
- Cumulative number of temporary residents: 64,707 as of February 21st
- Daily average of 474 entries and 105 exits in Pacaraima border in February

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

- Trends in population movements changed during the last weeks of February due to the rise of violence against indigenous (Pemon and Warao) communities in border areas of Venezuela. The number of indigenous people crossing through informal pathways has increased, including the 675 Pemons who arrived in Pacaraima, Roraima. Additionally, 591 Warao arrived this month in Belem and Santarem, Pará state. The Warao people often travel in "pendular" movements between Brazil and Venezuela. Among many protection risks, cases of SGBV and unaccompanied children at risk of human trafficking have been identified. Lack of access to health services, education and shelter for new arrivals remains an on-going challenge as public services in Roraima are over-burdened and shelters at capacity.
- Despite the border closure, a significant number of people continue to cross the border into Brazil in search of safety. Shelters in Pacaraima and Boa Vista are filled to capacity while many people remain sleeping on the street. UN Agencies, civil society and other partners are strengthening their contingency plans and preparing for a potential increase in arrivals if and when the border opens. A key element in this response and in this preparation is the freeing of space in shelters through the voluntary internal relocation process, known as "interiorization", which moves refugees and migrants to cities throughout Brazil where integration prospects are higher. The Brazilian government is working with platform partners to scale up this process in March.
- UN personnel in documentation centres in the border state of Roraima have reported increasing talks amongst refugees and migrants of changes in Brazilian legislation, specifically that asylum-seeker status would no longer be recognized. UNHCR, in coordination with Government authorities, is working to dispel this misinformation.
- In Pacaraima, unaccompanied children are reporting fear of being recruited by Venezuelan militias. Statements of shootings and widespread violence in Santa Elena and surroundings have been reported.

RESPONSE OVERVIEW AND FUNDING UPDATE

Area of Intervention 1: Direct Emergency Assistance

Through a joint project implemented by UNICEF and ADRA, 5,173 people (1,068 women, 1,118 men, 1,434 girls and 1,563 boys) received improved access to safe water in shelters in Boa Vista.

UNHCR continued to support over 6,000 Venezuelans in shelters managed through AVSI, Fraternidade, and NRC with community-based shelter management and protection referrals.

Outside of shelters in the state of Roraima, IOM reached 954 Venezuelans with rental assistance. An additional 2,908 Venezuelans received food assistance through cash transfers. With support and monitoring from the IOM field team, this was done in partnership with Caritas Brasileira, who identify the beneficiaries, houses for rental, and manage the cash transfer.

In response to a request from the Government of Brazil, IOM supported 3 shelters with the temporary provision of food, benefitting a total of 272 persons (102 people in São Paulo, São Paulo, 102 people in Porto Velho, Roraima and 68 people in Palhoça, Santa Catarina). This assistance complements the regular food distribution provided by the Ministry of Defence. Cáritas Brazil. They offer accommodation of up to three months and a wide range of services such as psychosocial support, job intermediation, coordination with local education and health services to Venezuelans who are voluntarily relocated from Roraima. The shelters, which are managed by partners (São Paulo/Porto Velho) and the State Government of Santa Catarina (Palhoça), intend to enhance the autonomy of refugees and migrants.

In affected areas, 2,129 people (822 women, 571 men, 408 girls and 328 boys) received messages on life saving skills and protective practices and behaviours in WASH, Health and Nutrition. 68 children under 5 years old (35 girls and 33 boys) received primary health care at UNICEF supported facilities and 288 children between 6 and 59 months (143 girls and 145 boys) received nutrition supplements to prevent undernourishment. 341 children (167 girls and 174 boys) had access to at least the minimum set of vaccines according to Brazil standards.

The Brazilian Army, UNHCR and UNICEF conducted an assessment visit to a Brazilian Pemon community located close to the border city of Pacaraima. According to recent arrivals from Venezuela to the community, they were attacked and forcibly displaced by the Venezuelan National Guard. 675 indigenous Pemon people crossed the border to seek refuge in the indigenous communities of Tarau-Paru and Bananal in Brazil. As an immediate response, UNHCR distributed NFI to support the indigenous Pemon and the Brazilian indigenous community hosting them.

In order to assess protection concerns, partners and UNHCR conducted a joint mission to the State of Pará (Santarém and Belém) in response to the increasing flux of indigenous Warao from Venezuela (591 persons of concern). In Santarém, a joint work-plan for the emergency response was developed with local authorities in Belem to standardize shelter procedures. As part of the assessment, UNHCR visited shelters, a social assistance centre and high vulnerability areas where persons of concern are living. A total of 7 shelters have been identified, 2 managed by the state of Para, 1 by the municipality, and 4 by civil society.

ADRA, together with UNHCR assisted 778 refugees and migrants in the Reference Centre for Refugees and Migrants in Manaus through 294 donations of food and non-food items as well as the provision of 443 services that included scheduling of appointments for documentation, registration for social assistance programmes, psychosocial support, international calls and inscription in Portuguese classes, among others.

ADRA provided food vouchers to 1,763 Venezuelans living out of the shelters in the State of Roraima. The vouchers are distributed monthly. Families currently living in the streets and not receiving any assistance were identified by ADRA workers. There is also a need to provide support to undernourished children and elderly with degenerative diseases currently living inside public shelters, where the food being served is not appropriate to meet their specific needs.

Area of Intervention 2: Protection

In February, 9,785 Venezuelan refugees and migrants¹ received support of OIM and UNHCR in processing asylum (4,124) and residency applications (5,661) in the two Documentation Centres in Boa Vista and Pacaraima, as well as the Reference Centre at the Federal University of Roraima. Together with this service, IOM also informed and provided information material on prevention of human trafficking and labour exploitation. In partnership with IOM, the Federal Public Defenders Office (DPU in Portuguese) distributed 300 pocket cards which outline the basic migrant and refugee rights as defined and protected by law 13.445/2017. They also contain the important informational websites and emergency numbers.

UNICEF provided psychological support to 4,304 children (2,177 girls and 2,127 boys) including access to Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) with intersectoral programming interventions. 39 children were identified, supported and referred to the local Child Protection network and six (6) children born of foreign parents received birth registration. 2,933 children (1,440 girls and 1,553 boys) on the move, including adolescents accessed informal learning activities. 620 children (308 girls and 312 boys) benefited from early childhood development activities.

In liaison, UNHCR, IOM and UNFPA took part in the revision of referrals to protection services by offering technical and logistical support, promoting coordination with local governments and civil society, identifying people with specific protection needs, and conducting workshops. In February, a total of 4,131 people were assisted with information or protection referrals by UNFPA at the Documentation Centre in Pacaraima (2,626) and at the Centre in in Boa Vista (1,505).

UNFPA distributed condoms and lubricants in the Documentation Centres in Pacaraima and Boa Vista as well as in the Reference Centre for Refugees and Migrants in Boa Vista. Additionally, informational materials on GBV, rights, health services, social assistance and security services reached 809 persons at the Documentation Centre in Pacaraima. This included the distribution of 517 booklets with life-saving information on GBV, with tangible solutions to improve quality and access to survivor-centered, multi-sectoral services and referral systems to respond in a timely manner to GBV incidents; 120 booklets on HIV-AIDS; 90 booklets on regularization options and 82 booklets on the federal government hotline (Disque 100). Moreover, the agency organised informative sessions on the rights and duties of the refugees and migrants. They also support a safe house for people living with HIV that benefits 12 people with daily meals, social assistance and follow-up to Antiretroviral (ARV) treatment as well as a psycho-social care centre for migrants and refugees.

Between 1-21 February, UN Women distributed multipurpose, unconditional and unrestricted cash to 47 migrant, asylum seeker and refugee women, in partnership with Instituto Migrações e Direitos Humanos (IMDH), a Brazilian NGO implementing CBI, pre-documentation, as well as integration support. This emergency cash-based intervention (CBI) targeted women in extremely vulnerable conditions serving as an alternative for negative coping mechanisms that may expose women to sexual exploitation and trafficking.

UN Women's multidisciplinary team, composed of one psychologist, one social assistant and one lawyer, provided emergency psychosocial support through a case management approach to 153 migrant, asylum-seeker and refugee women in vulnerable conditions. From this total, 29 women received follow-up assistance, 21 women received psychological support and 36 women received legal advice.

Between 2-7 February, IOM conducted an assessment of Venezuelans sleeping in the streets of Boa Vista, 10 spots of the city were targeted. A total 1125 Venezuelans of which 528 were men, 306 women and 291 children/youth, were identified.

¹ Federal Police data 20 February

Area of Intervention 3: Socio Economic and Cultural Integration

421 Venezuelan refugees and migrants were voluntarily relocated to other parts of Brazil due to family reunification (78), because they were either matched with employment (117), or to be received in shelters managed by civil society or municipalities (226). Among these: a. 212 flew on planes operated by the Brazilian Armed Forces; b. 110 received flight tickets on commercial airlines by IOM; and c. 99 were transported by a charter flight organised by IOM (the first since the beginning of the relocation process).

The latest group was selected for employment in Dourados, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Upon arrival in the city, each Venezuelan received a one-off cash grant from UNHCR to help support themselves during the first month in the new city.

Through its implementing partner Brazilian NGO Ação Social do Paraná (ASP), IOM manages a coordinated response, manages a transit shelter for the “Interiorization” Strategy in the city of Curitiba, State of Paraná. The shelter offers comprehensive assistance to Venezuelan migrants and refugees besides food and shelter, such as psychosocial support. On 15 February 2019, the shelter received a new group of 90 Venezuelans, who will stay there for a maximum period of 3 months.

In February, 226 Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants arrived to shelters through “Interiorization”, while the total population supported was 333 (employment-based modality (108) + shelter to shelter modality (226)). In the employment-based modality, Venezuelans are recruited by private companies to work in their dependencies throughout the country, while in the shelter to shelter modality, Venezuelans are identified and referred to public and private shelters in different Brazilian municipalities according to particular profiles. In Belo Horizonte 37 Venezuelans were sheltered by *Jesuítas*, with the support of UNHCR, who organized a support network called *Acolhe Minas* composed of civil society organizations and a community support system of Venezuelans. In this reporting month, UNHCR continues to support relocation shelters in other 4 municipalities in partnership with *Aldeias Infantis*. Upon arrival in the cities predetermined for “Interiorization”, Venezuelans were supported by UNHCR in partnership with Caritas São Paulo, Caritas Rio de Janeiro, Caritas Parana e ASAV in the areas of documentation, referral to essential local services, Portuguese language lessons, psycho social support and access to the labor market.

The Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), issued a call for applications for the first time for admission with a quota for refugees. The opportunity was shared with partners, on the Help platform and on Twitter and 24 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have successfully applied. The Protection Unit continues to provide technical support to the university to ensure that all refugees and asylum seekers are able to enrol despite the lack of country of origin documentation.

Following UNHCR advocacy, the Municipal Secretary of Manaus enrolled 1,310 students in primary school (Ensino Fundamental) and 1.991 students enrolled in high school (Ensino Medio) originally from Venezuela, including 31 of Warao ethnicity. The number of Venezuelan students has increased by 300% compared to previous years (Per The Secretary of Education of Amazonas State).

The Women’s Empowerment HUB (WEB) is an initiative that intends to strengthen women’s economic empowerment, resilience and peaceful coexistence with host communities through the organization of lectures, leadership trainings, recreational activities and the creation of safe spaces. In February, UN women and partners reached some 500 women and men with the following activities:

- *Valores* is a two-hour financial education class with a Venezuelan instructor who runs her own business in Boa Vista - 49 women reached;
- *Professional Qualification*: In partnership with UN Women and Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial (SENAC), whose professors received trainings on women’s human rights, gender equality and empowerment, the following courses were offered: Portuguese language with a focus on customer service (30 participants, 40 hours); Quality in customer service (30 participants, 15 hours) and Personal marketing (30 participants, 15 hours); Entrepreneurship in small business (30 participants, 15 hours);
- *Cozinha Brazil*, a four-hour cooking programme offered in partnership with Serviço Social da Indústria (SESI) - 111 women and men reached;

- *Valente não é Violento* is a three-hour class designed for Venezuelan men living in shelters. It focuses on expressing masculinity in a non-violent way, respecting women and promoting active participation in the domestic tasks/care of children- 57 men reached;
- *Facilitadoras de Diálogo* is a four-hour mediation course organised in partnership with the State Public Defensor's Office, which aimed at providing strategies to improve cohabitation, promoting women's solidarity and networking. 156 women and men reached.

Area of Intervention 4: Strengthening the capacity of host government

In partnership with the Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP), IOM organised a two-day workshop on migration governance and integration policies at the municipal level. The training brought together 12 local public managers, who presented, discussed and approved a set of indicators on local migration governance.

UNHCR Manaus met with the Federal Public Ministry (Public Prosecutor's Office) and local actors to discuss the strategies of sheltering indigenous Venezuelan populations. By the end of March, local actors should present an action plan for the improvement of existing shelter conditions for indigenous living on the outskirts of the Bus Station. Also in Manaus, activities were carried out with the local government, UNHCR and NGOs to establish a shelter referral pathway. The initial flow has been established and its final version will be approved during the next plenary of the Intersectoral Committee for Prevention of Human Trafficking and Attention to Refugees and Migrants of the State of Amazonas.

UNHCR met officers from the Labour Department of the Ministry of Economy to discuss a joint strategy to prevent labour exploitation of Venezuelans in Roraima and other Brazilian states, especially to prevent cases of forced labour. It was agreed to develop new informational materials on labour rights as well as on how to seek assistance in case of labour abuses.

In support of the Brazilian government's response to the emergency crisis, UNFPA have helped strengthen the institutional capacities of local governments to provide services, as well as to disseminate information on rights and to promote the community resilience of women, girls, adolescents, people living with HIV / AIDS, elderly people, persons with disabilities, youth and LGBTI population.

UNFPA organised a workshop was also organised for 36 UN and military personnel working at the documentation centre in Boa Vista on protection and referral flows for persons who have potentially suffered human rights violations.

UN Women, in coordination with UNFPA, and in partnership with the non-governmental organization CEPIA (Cidadania, Estudo, Pesquisa, Informação, Ação) held a training session offered to 53 service providers from the security, justice, social assistance and health sectors, as well as to civil society organizations to discuss gender in the context of humanitarian action, preventing and confronting gender-based violence, women's human rights and public policies for women.

UN Women partnered with the non-governmental organization Instituto Igarapé, and delivered three training sessions for 109 army personnel: one in Pacaraima and two in Boa Vista, for the contingents that arrived in the end of January. The content, also prepared in coordination with UNFPA, was on basic concepts on gender, women and girl's human rights and gender in the context of humanitarian action.

COORDINATION

In February, the first Task Force Meeting of the National Platform for Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees, under the framework of the Regional Refugee and Migrants Response Plan (RMRP), was held in Brasilia, with the attendance of international and national NGOs, and several UN agencies (ADRA, Aldeais Infantis, Caritas Brasileira, ICRC, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UNHCR, UNWOMEN). The discussion centred around the presentation of the terms of reference for the Brazil level task force, the establishment of working groups, development of reporting indicators, and meetings. Additionally, on the 7th of February, an interagency meeting was held in Boa Vista with the participation of R4V partners working on the local level (UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, UNFPA, UNWOMEN, and CMDH Diocese RR). The meeting focused on ensuring complementarity of coordination structures at the national and local levels as well as explaining reporting procedures, and discussion of the process for establishment of indicators.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Partners in the response are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors, contributing to their activities with un-earmarked and earmarked funds.

Brazil | CERF | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Holy See | Italy | Japan | Luxembourg | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Private donors | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

PLATFORM PARTNERS

| ADRA- Adventist Development and Relief Agency | Antonio Vieira Association - Jesuits of Brazil | ASBRAD Brazilian Association for the Defense of Women, Children and Youth | Caritas Brasileira | Caritas Rio de Janeiro | CMDH Roraima Centre for Migration and Human Rights | Félix Guattari Institute | IMDH Institute for Migration and Human Rights | IOM | Pastoral Service of Migrants | SEFRAS Franciscan Solidarity Association | SOS Children's Villages of Brazil | UNAIDS | UNDP | UNEP | UNESCO | UNFPA | UNHCR | UNICEF | UNODC | UNWOMEN

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