



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN THE REGION

**253,000**


PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME FORM OF ASSISTANCE\*

**2,127**


FUNDING SITUATION\*\*

**0%**

 FUNDED: *not yet reported*  
 REQUIREMENT: **24.15 M**

## Situation

### PANAMA

- [Draft Bill 578](#), which seeks to modify Law 3 of 2008 (the "Immigration Law") is currently up for debate in the National Assembly. This bill seeks to limit legal immigration and would repeal the general migratory regularization processes (known as "Crisol de Razas") and restrict who is eligible for permanent residence.
- Refugees and migrants continue to depend on humanitarian assistance provided by partner organizations: many have reported debt accumulation due to the impossibility to pay rent and services (water and electricity) for more than 6 months.
- Despite the gradual reopening of some sectors of the economy, families requested financial support from R4V partners to cover food and rent expenses. Based on home visits conducted by R4V partners in March, many Venezuelan families are facing nutritional challenges, vulnerable to poor nutrition and low food security. Although arbitrary evictions were not reported in March, the risk of eviction remains high, due to delays in the payment of rent of 80% of the Venezuelan population supported.
- As an important step towards equal access to education, the Ministry of Education and the National Authority for Government Innovation launched the Solidarity Educational Plan, which includes mobile data for the use of WhatsApp and access to technological platforms. Students and public school teachers will be able to connect to virtual platforms for free throughout the 2021 school year.
- During the first quarter of the year, there has been a slight increase in asylum applications from Venezuelans, compared to the first quarter of last year: of the 90 applications received, 23 were by Venezuelan nationals, representing 25.5 percent. To date, there are some 2,517 applications from Venezuelans pending decision, making Venezuelans – after Nicaraguans – the second nationality with the most pending cases. With other Venezuelans notified that their asylum applications had been rejected, the number of Venezuelans in an irregular situation increased (as returning to Venezuela is not being considered as an alternative).
- Venezuelans continued to enter through the Darien and request information about the refugee status determination process. According to monitoring by R4V partners, as of March 29, 14 Venezuelans were in Migrant Reception Stations (ERM) in Lajas Blancas, 4 in ERM San Vicente and 28 in Bajo Chiquito, many having arrived at the reception stations in poor health, with dermatological and gastrointestinal problems.



### COSTA RICA

- Decree No. 42690-MGP-S (first issued on 30 October 2020) was updated and published on 26 March. The Government of Costa Rica [announced](#) that it will open land routes as of 5 April and is adapting procedures for that purpose. Venezuelans must meet the immigration and health requirements established for entry and stay in Costa Rica. Entry by land will be allowed for all those who do not require a consular visa to enter Costa Rica, meaning Costa Rican nationals, permanent and temporary residents, persons who have special categories for stay, as well as people who have tourist visas. Venezuelans do not require visas to travel to Costa Rica, and hence would be allowed to enter as tourists.
- As of 24 March, 213,438.00 cases of COVID-19 were reported in Costa Rica. A new wave of infections was expected during April. As of 25 March, cases of infection had increased by 20% compared to the first days of March. By March 22, 190,088 people had received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, but only 57,994 had received the second. The latter is the real number of immunized people.
- During March 2021, a total of 223 asylum claims for Venezuelans were formalized.



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\* From 01/02/2021 | \*\*Source: FTS Website.

## MEXICO

- Due to the ongoing economic impact of COVID-19, many Venezuelan refugees and migrants working in the service sector, or for medium and small enterprises, have seen their salaries reduced or have been laid off.
- A substantial proportion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants are still in need of regularization of their status; many regularization processes have been put on hold due to governmental measures against COVID-19. Those in irregular situations are unable to access basic services and face heightened protection risks and the inability to access national responses or support programs to alleviate economic plight. Some measures taken by partners to alleviate and expand integration opportunities for refugees and migrants, include access to formal employment, skills training, livelihood opportunities and social cohesion activities.

## Response

- **Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA).** In *Panama*, 169 Venezuelans (88 women) received multipurpose cash assistance to support them while they await government refugee status determination (RSD) procedures. In addition, 94 people (48 men/46 women) received multipurpose cash assistance to cover basic needs such as food, shelter, health, and medicines. Almost 41% of the beneficiaries were children. In *Costa Rica*, 231 Venezuelan families received cash-based interventions, including COVID-19 grants.
- **Protection services and legal assistance.** In *Panama*, 89 people (56 women) received legal information, orientation and assistance in RSD, regularization procedures and access to rights. The main concerns shared related to the lengthy RSD process and the limited access to rights due to lack of documentation. In *Costa Rica*, 270 people received information and legal assistance and in qualified cases received legal representation. This included consultations on the new Temporary Special Category of Complementary Protection.
- **GBV.** In *Panama*, 112 Venezuelans participated in sessions given by R4V partners to maintain communication and provide services related to gender-based violence.
- **Integration.** In *Costa Rica*, 101 Venezuelans participated in training activities for entrepreneurship and to improve their employability and socioeconomic integration in the country. In *Mexico*, a 10-hour-long Virtual Course for Migrant Entrepreneurship was developed and implemented based on the Manual for Migrant Entrepreneurship. The main objective was to provide the tools and knowledge necessary for the creation of entrepreneurship projects or self-employment opportunities. A total of 37 Venezuelan refugees and migrants participated in the course (27 women / 10 men), most located in the states of Quintana Roo and Mexico City. In *Panama*, 66 Venezuelans (M13/W53) received capacity-building and support for self-employment or entrepreneurship initiatives. In addition, 28 people participated in activities to promote integration of refugees through a virtual meal, of these 5 are Venezuelan (M2/W3).
- **Health.** In *Costa Rica*, 692 Venezuelans have received medical insurance as of March under a special agreement with Costa Rica's social security entity. In addition, 25 Venezuelans received psychosocial attention and 24 participated in emotional wellbeing workshops. In *Panama*, partners provided face-to-face psychosocial support to 84 Venezuelans (M6/W78) in individual and group sessions. In the individual sessions, emotional fatigue, feelings of anxiety, stress and depression were observed, manifested especially as anguish about the present and future to cover their basic needs, generating significant psychological discomfort for the beneficiaries. Group workshops were developed on a cognitive-behavioural basis to provide practical tools that help the population to counteract their discomfort.
- **Food assistance.** In *Costa Rica*, 118 Venezuelans received food assistance in the form of food baskets and prepaid cards. In *Panama*, 43 families (101 children and adolescents and 37 women) received bags of food, one bag for each family member, in coordination with the program "feeds a life" from the food bank.
- **Shelter.** In *Costa Rica*, 16 Venezuelan households received rental assistance from R4V partners.
- **WASH.** In *Costa Rica*, 50 Venezuelans received baskets with basic hygiene products, COVID-19 masks or diapers.



PEOPLE REACHED\*



Education

92



Food Security

256



Health

826



Integration

151



Nutrition

0



Protection

812



Shelter

16



WASH

50



CBI

494