



Situation

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, refugees and migrants now form an even greater proportion of the poorest quintile in the region. This finding is based on a [R4V partner¹ report](#) that while informal workers are increasingly included in social protection programmes, despite enhanced efforts by R4V actors to advocate for the inclusion of refugees and migrants into national social protection mechanisms across the region, to the majority of refugees and migrants engaged in the informal work sector do not benefit from such vital treatment.

The situation of violence and armed conflict in some countries of the region continues to affect the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population. Through its early warning system, which monitors the risk of the civil population (including Venezuelans) amidst internal armed conflicts, the Colombian Ombudsperson's Office identified that Venezuelans are at a heightened risk of being victims of homicide, forced displacement, sexual exploitation, as well as recruitment by and involvement in illegal activities perpetrated by irregular armed groups. According to a gender analysis² conducted in Ecuador, the increased vulnerability of refugees and migrants also contributes and exacerbates their risk of becoming victims of human trafficking.

Evictions of Venezuelan women topped 400 a day in Colombia and Ecuador, leaving many homeless and exposed to protection risks. According to data collected by the Integrated Information System on Gender Violence (SIVIGILA) and the Ministry of Health in Colombia, there has been a significant increase of gender-based violence (GBV). Based on the same report, from January to August, 78 per cent of reported GBV cases were perpetrated against Venezuelan women and girls.

Platforms' Response**

In Brazil, R4V partners continued disseminating vital information on COVID-19 prevention measures. In Manaus, around 392 refugees and migrants received information about personal hygiene and COVID-19 prevention methods through awareness-raising sessions held by R4V partners at the Documentation and Interiorization Centre (PITRIG) and the Bus Station Support Space (PRA). In Boa Vista, partners distributed information materials in Spanish and Warao on the mandatory use of masks at supermarkets, bus stops and other public spaces.

R4V partners in Chile focused their efforts on the provision of humanitarian assistance in the form of NFI and food kits for almost 100 refugee and migrant 'caminantes' in the northern regions, as well as on the provision of orientation and information, specifically about quarantine and sanitary measures established by the government. According to authorities, the number of irregular entries continues to increase, and as of 30 September, Chile accounts for a total of 462,991 confirmed COVID-19 cases throughout the entire country.

In Colombia, the local *Grupo Interagencial para Flujos Migratorios Mixtos (GIFMM)* prioritized the reactivation of services in accordance with the new measures of selective isolation, including the intersectoral response for refugees and migrants in transit, support to the authorities' responses in key locations along the borders with Venezuela and Ecuador, support to local authorities in profiling refugees and migrants, a complementary health response, the launch of referral mechanisms for CBI for rental support, virtual education strategies and information sessions on employability and training opportunities for refugees and migrants.

In Ecuador, access to public education and keeping students in education were top priorities for the *Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes (GTRM)* in September as the pandemic-related closure of schools has meant that many Venezuelan families have been unable to keep their children in some form of education. Besides economic and technological barriers, Venezuelan students still face xenophobia and discrimination, negatively impacting their access to education. The GTRM is working alongside the Ministry of Education to monitor and assist out-of-school children who were not able to enroll.

In Peru, the GTRM assisted refugee and migrant women and adolescent survivors of GBV with counselling, case management and psychosocial support. The GTRM also developed the capacities of officials working in relevant institutions

¹ ILO: <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowWiki.action?id=3417&lang=ES>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/unequal-emergency-care-rapid-gender-analysis-refugee-and-migrant-crisis-colombia>

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* Source: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/944/summary>

**These are examples of activities carried out by National/Sub-Regional Platforms and/or Regional Sectors. For further details, please see R4V.info.

through workshops with a strong focus on protection and human trafficking, highlighting officials' responsibilities under the national legal system and in accordance with applicable international protection standards. Financial support to prevent evictions remains a main request by vulnerable refugees and migrants, and partners have been delivering entrepreneurship programmes and training to improve livelihood opportunities for refugees and migrants.

In the Caribbean sub-region, food assistance has been a priority, particularly in Aruba, Curacao and Guyana. In Aruba, increased funding enabled the distribution of 50,000 meals in September. R4V partners continued to provide multipurpose CBI in all five countries. Partners in the sub-region also provided temporary shelter support in the form of rental subsidies while scaling up the identification of shelter options for vulnerable Venezuelans.

In Central America and Mexico, R4V partners prioritized regularization and documentation of Venezuelans in Mexico and increased multipurpose CBI in Costa Rica. In Panama, partners delivered the third session of the online workshop for women refugees, focusing on services and care for GBV survivors provided by the GBV sub-sector and government institutions.

In the Southern Cone, partners note a deteriorating housing situation among refugees and migrants from Venezuela. They continue to assist people with specific protection needs that were evicted or are in imminent risk of being evicted and are working closely with the authorities to prevent future evictions and provide housing subsidies whenever possible. R4V partners in Uruguay provided humanitarian assistance (shelter and food) for Venezuelans who entered the territory through the Paysandú-Colón international bridge from Argentina claiming refugee status.

Regional Sectors**

The Regional Education Sector has developed two guidance notes on the reopening of schools in the context of COVID-19, including a specific focus on refugee and migrant children from Venezuela. It is based on the global framework for school reopening, aiming to provide recommendations and technical guidance to ministries of education, school directors and administrators for the preparation and implementation of the safe reopening of schools.

The Regional Health Sector is monitoring the public measures being taken to reduce the increase in numbers of cases after the reopening of more social and economic activities. The sector has supported the reopening of immunization, sexual and reproductive health, and other public primary health programmes to address health needs of the refugee and migrant population, as well as host communities.

The Regional Integration Sector is developing an initiative to identify and analyze socio-economic policies that have been adopted and implemented by governments in the region and which have included refugees and migrants. The study will equally investigate barriers to their implementation and develop recommendations to promote further inclusion of refugees and migrants within COVID-19 national response and recovery activities.

The Regional Protection Sector facilitated an information exchange session with various national sectors and OHCHR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR), to assess the impact of the human rights developments in the region and to develop an action plan to increase the visibility of double affectation on the public agenda, and to promote victims' access to protection mechanisms at national and regional levels.

The regional Human trafficking & smuggling Sub-sector supported the implementation of SOPs in Ecuador to manage identified cases of trafficking and conducted a training and awareness-raising exercise on emergency assistance and disseminated information products on human trafficking.

The Child Protection Sub-sector adapted an in-person training package to a virtual format to strengthen capacities in child protection and continued providing support to national sub-sectors to strengthen care for children without parental care.

The GBV Sub-sector elaborated a situational analysis on the heightened GBV risks faced by Venezuelan women in March-September 2020 during which confinement measures were imposed. In partnership with a communications company, a regional R4V campaign on GBV prevention began. It will address gender equality through the lens of positive masculinity.

The Regional Shelter, NFI and Humanitarian Transportation Sectors continue to prioritize cash-for-rent to contribute to the prevention of evictions throughout the region. The provision of NFIs continued to be a priority to address the basic needs of Venezuelans, and transportation services increased as in-country travel restrictions relaxed in some countries.

The Regional WASH Sector organized a session on WASH in health care facilities and with the Education sector in a session on WASH preparation for the return to school during COVID-19. In addition, markets and CBI trainings were organized in collaboration with the CBI working group, and Platforms in Brazil and Paraguay were supported with WASH monitoring tools.