

# Colombia

April 2021

On 1 March 2021, President Iván Duque signed a decree creating the **Temporary Protection Status (TPS)** for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia.

On 28 April, a Resolution detailing the three phases of the TPS was issued: pre-registration, biometric registration and issuance of **Temporary Protection Permits**.

On 5 May, online pre-registration for the TPS began. Migración Colombia reported **681,567 registrations** (e.g. user name and password created) by 25 May.

## VENEZUELAN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**1,763,012**

Source: Government of Colombia (28 February 2021)

## RESIDENCE PERMITS AND REGULAR STAY GRANTED

**759,584**

Source: Government of Colombia (31 January 2021)

## TOTAL NEW INTERNAL DISPLACEMENTS SINCE THE 2016 PEACE AGREEMENT

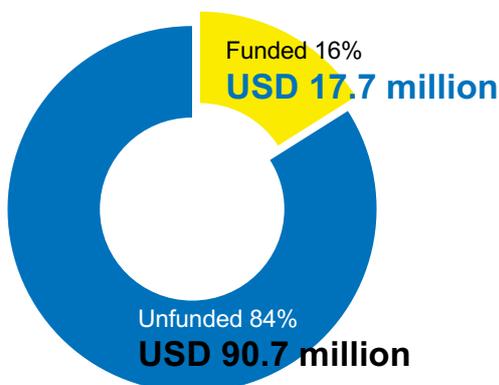
**516,363**

Source: Government of Colombia (28 February 2021)

## FUNDING (AS OF 18 MAY 2021)

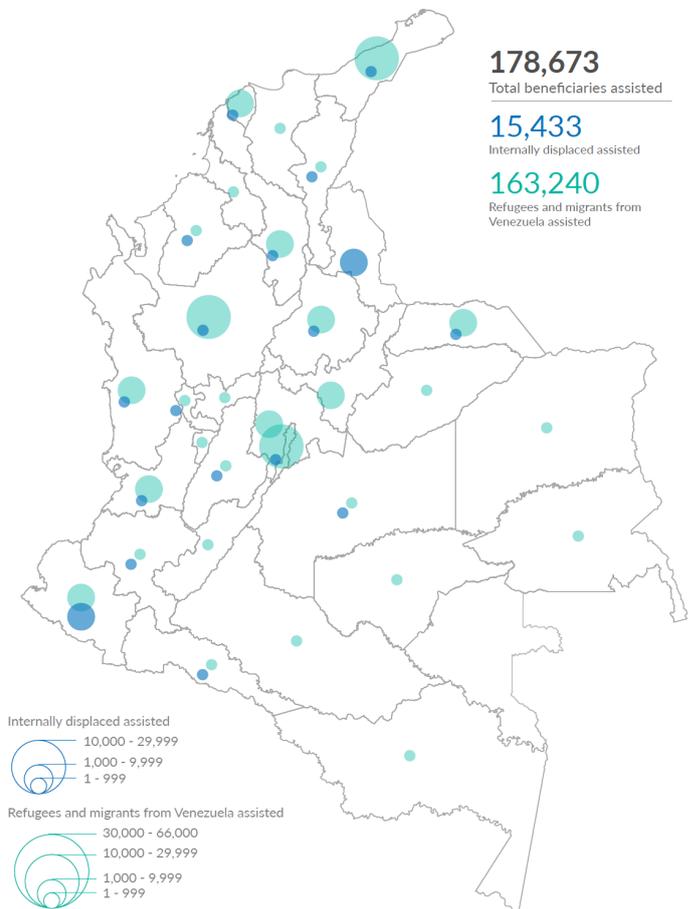
**USD 108.4 million**

requested for Colombia



## UNHCR Response Colombia

January to April 2021



## Operational Context

A nationwide strike began on 28 April and has since had serious adverse impacts across the country, including in the humanitarian response to Venezuelan refugees and migrants and conflict affected populations, particularly in the south and along the Pacific Coast. Roadblocks prevented national authorities from accessing areas affected by confinements and large-group displacements while local institutional capacity was saturated. Supply chains for medicine and food in most cities in Colombia were interrupted. Xenophobia towards Venezuelans also spiked during this period.

On 5 May, the Government of Colombia began the first phase of the TPS implementation by opening the online platform for pre-registration in the Unique Registry for Venezuelans (RUMV). In anticipation of this start date, UNHCR, alongside its partners in the national interagency coordination platform (GIFMM by its Spanish acronym), had already started to scale up capacity to support the Government and Venezuelans seeking to access the TPS. Please refer to [UNHCR's support to the TPS in Colombia](#) for further information.

In March, insecurity in Venezuela's State of Apure generated an outflow of more than 5,800 people into Colombia – a mixed population of Colombian returnees and Venezuelans. The GIFMM coordinated response in Arauquita has now stabilized and more and more Venezuelans are caught up in circular movements, briefly travelling to their farms in Venezuela and then returning to Colombia to seek safety. UNHCR continues to provide orientation and protection services in both organized and spontaneous reception centers/points while coordinating cash-based interventions.

### POPULATION TRENDS

- According to UNHCR monitoring as of 30 April 2021, 21,216 people (6,162 families) have been uprooted since the start of 2021 by 44 large-group displacement events. The majority (87%) of these IDPs belong to communities in the Colombian Pacific region. Five other departments (Antioquia, Chocó, Cauca, Nariño and Valle del Cauca) have recorded confinements affecting 21,139 people (5,3640 families).
- According to Migración Colombia, over 130,000 refugees and migrants returned to Venezuela from or through Colombia since the border closure on 14 March 2020.
- In Arauquita, the Mayor's office together with Defensa Civil conducted a census of 2,215 Venezuelan and Colombian returnees in 28 formal and informal reception points. An additional 1,272 people previously identified by the Mayor's Office and the GIFMM are pending to be confirmed. During an April GIFMM profiling of the population being hosted in Arauquita, 52% of the respondents said they intended to stay in Colombia, 14% said they intended to return to Venezuela, 1% said they intended to move to another department in Colombia and 34% said they did not know or did not respond.
- In Norte de Santander, as per monitoring carried out by partner Samaritan's Purse, more than 4,400 Venezuelans entered Colombia in April. In Arauca, Personerías reported around 16,000 entries in April, although the majority of these were attributed to circular movements. Meanwhile, impediments to transport caused by the national strike and roadblocks resulted in more than 1,500 Venezuelans being stuck at the Arauca transport terminal.
- In Riohacha, the number of irregular entries currently varies between 200 and 1,000 per day, depending on the COVID-19 measures being applied on the Venezuela side of the border. Again, the majority of these movements are circular and include indigenous Wayyu.



UNHCR's temporary reception point Alcide Ceballos in Arauquita set up as a response to the shelter needs of Venezuelan refugees and Colombian returnees forced to flee Venezuela  
 © UNHCR/Karolina Rojas Linares

- In Nariño, the support space in Remolino on the border with Ecuador provided assistance to 440 Venezuelans. Additionally, UNHCR's monitoring mission at Cuaspud (Carlosama) reported around 600 people of different nationalities irregularly crossing into Colombia from Ecuador per day, many with via smuggling networks.

## Achievements

### PROTECTION

- UNHCR facilitated trainings on international protection and access to the TPS in various locations across the country. The 372 participants included Venezuelans and their community leaders, local authorities and local Migración Colombia offices.
- UNHCR offered orientation, counselling and legal advice to more than 335 Venezuelan asylum seekers in April.
- UNHCR partner Alianza por la Solidaridad and the local office of the Ombudsperson identified 18 Venezuelan families (about 47 people) affected by large group displacement in Argelia (Cúcuta). Out of this population, 14 people received psychosocial care and legal guidance and 17 people applied for asylum.
- UNHCR received an award from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Gender Equity Secretary of the Mayor's Office of Cúcuta for the work carried out in preventing, identifying and responding to cases of gender-based violence (GBV) within the Venezuelan and IDP populations.
- UNHCR identified an informal urban settlement in Medellín's María Cano Carambolas neighbourhood with 700 people of concern to UNHCR (200 families), out of whom 70% are in need of international protection, 20% are internally displaced and 10% belong to the host community. UNHCR has notified the local authorities and is monitoring the situation.
- Via 71 telephone reception points nationwide, UNHCR and its partners provided information and orientation to more than 22,048 people (80% female) in April.

### HEALTH

- Colombia is the third most affected country by COVID-19 in the Americas region. The pandemic is challenging Colombia's health and social welfare systems, with Venezuelan refugees and migrants among the most vulnerable.
- Colombia reported 2,905,254 cases of COVID-19 and 75,164 deaths, as of 3 May. This includes 29,596 cases of Venezuelans in Colombia (including 346 deaths).
- As of 5 May, 5,112,694 doses of COVID-19 vaccines (1,700,471 second doses) have been administered within Colombia's National Vaccination Plan, which is now entering its 3<sup>rd</sup> stage. This represents 56.7% of the over 9 million doses in Colombia.
- UNHCR joined the Red Cross in a two-month campaign entitled "Smart Clinic," conducting 500 rapid COVID-19 tests in Barranquilla.
- As part of the GIFMM Health Roundtable, the Mayor's Office of Medellín announced plans to vaccinate people in an irregular situation that are chronically ill and over the age of 60.

## EDUCATION

- A total of 277 school kits were distributed to Venezuelans and host communities in April.
- Two-hundred-fifty-seven children participated in recreational activities carried out by Corprodinco in commemoration of the International Children's Day in Norte de Santander. Parents and caregivers participated in workshops on children's rights.
- UNHCR delivered 40 school kits to Venezuelan families at the Antonio Roldán Betancur Educational Institution in Necocli.

## SHELTER/ NFIs

- During the month of April, around 1,686 households (approximately 6,306 individuals) received assistance through cash transfers, of which 71% were multipurpose cash grants, 13% cash for rent, 7% medical expenses, 6% cash for livelihoods, 2% for funeral costs and 1% for legal documentation.
- Responding to the humanitarian needs of Venezuelans and Colombians forced to flee Venezuela, UNHCR has provided 85 family tents and 10 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs), 1,553 mattresses, 290 blankets, 115 liters of sanitary gel, 9,000 facemasks and 3,851 hygiene items/kits for women, children, men, lactating and pregnant women in Arauquita. Special attention is given to identifying and referring cases with specific needs to targeted services, conducting community mediation and providing psychosocial care and legal assistance.
- In April, 246 people (86 families) entered the Integrated Assistance Center (CAI) in Maicao which brings the total number of people assisted at CAI to 420 (111 families). Fifteen people from nine families who tested positive for COVID-19 were provided with alternative accommodations during their recovery. UNHCR and the Secretary of Health took actions to strengthen the network of hotels providing shelter to COVID-19 positive cases.
- UNHCR donated 30 RHUs to the Secretary of Health and Metrosalud in Medellín so as to expand the capacity of the public hospital during the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in the city heavily impacted by the pandemic.



UNHCR staff member delivers cash assistance to Venezuelan refugee families in Medellín.  
© UNHCR/Catalina Betancur Sánchez

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE**

- UNHCR and Fundación Renacer signed a partnership agreement on the prevention and response to GBV and trafficking in the Caribbean region.
- Participatory assessment exercises were carried out in informal settlements of Arauquita (Bosque) and Fortul as part of the project “Comunidades Tejedoras de Paz”. Solar lights, kits for men, women, and lactating mothers were donated to 14 families of the indigenous Enepa community.
- UNHCR organized a virtual participatory assessment with 20 women from Comuna 13 in Medellín to identify protection risks.
- Computers were donated to Venezuelan organizations in Risaralda and Quindío to enhance their capacity to support Venezuelans in accessing the TPS.



UNHCR meeting with a group of Venezuelan refugee women in Bello Oriente on tackling the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence through theater.  
© UNHCR/Catalina Betancur Sánchez

## Working in partnership

- UNHCR, together with IOM, co-leads the Inter-Agency Mixed Migration Flows Group (GIFFM), which includes 76 members, UN agencies, international and local NGOs and members of the Red Cross movement. Its main objective is to coordinate the response to the needs of Venezuelan refugees, migrants, Colombian returnees, and the host population in a complementary manner with the Government. Please also refer to the [6th GIFMM update](#).

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