



# BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF)

## FACTSHEET

January 2017

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### Historical commitment to protection

Bolivia is a State Party to the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 Protocol since 1982. Bolivia acceded to the 1954 *Convention relating to the Status of Stateless People* and the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness* in 1983.

#### Naturalization

In 2016, Bolivia implemented a Resolution of the Ministry of Interior to simplify the procedures for the naturalization of refugees and stateless persons in line with Art. 32 of the 1951 Convention and Art. 34 of the 1954 Convention. Inter alia, the fees for naturalization were reduced by 90% to facilitate the access of the refugees and stateless persons to Bolivian nationality.

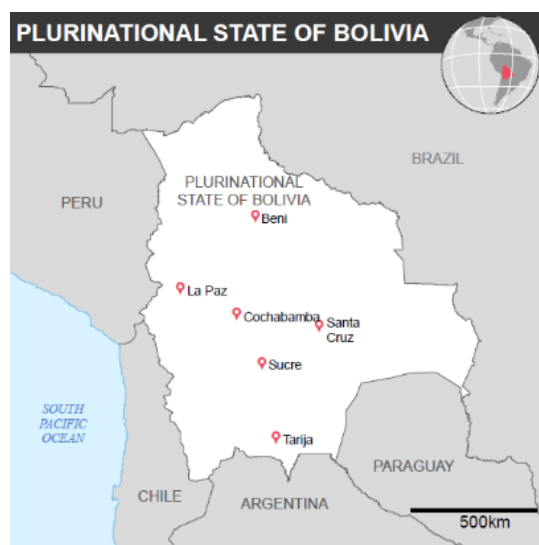
#### Documentation and Residence

The Bolivian CONARE introduced plastic identity cards for the documentation of asylum seekers. Recognized refugees are automatically granted permanent residency and personal documentation which is similar to the documentation of other foreigners legally residing in the country.

The UNHCR Regional Office for Southern Latin America based in Buenos Aires covers and financially manages operations in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

#### Context information

- The Bolivian Constitution of 2009 enshrines the right to asylum and the protection against *refoulement* as constitutional rights (Art. 29).
- The domestic legal framework dealing with refugees is set out in the 2012 Refugee Law N° 251 “*Ley de Protección a Personas Refugiadas*” and the Supreme Decree No. 1440, and enshrines high standards of protection, including the extended refugee definition in line with the 1984 Cartagena Declaration.
- Migration Law No. 370 incorporates protection-sensitive safeguards.
- The refugee legislation also establishes an *ad hoc* procedure for stateless status determination (SSD).
- Bolivia actively contributes to the consolidation of the Southern Cone as a “regional protection space”, through the adoption of the Brazil Declaration, the implementation of its Plan of Action (BPA), and the consolidation of the MERCOSUR National Refugee Commissions’ Forum.
- Bolivia grants nationality on the basis of the *ius solis* criteria which also benefits children of refugees and asylum seekers born in the country.
- Refugees and asylum seekers enjoy access to public education, health services and have the right to work.



Map Sources: UNCS, UNHCR  
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Printing date: 27 Sep 2016

**Funding Regional Office for Southern Latin America**  
USD 4.8 million



#### Population of concern 780

Refugees	778
Asylum Seekers (pending decisions)	2

Source: UNHCR Mid-year Statistical Report, June 2016

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- UNHCR works in close coordination with Government counterparts, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the National Directorate of Migration, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the National Refugee Commission (CONARE). UNHCR is a member of CONARE, with no voting rights.
- The Pastoral de Movilidad Humana (PMH) - CARITAS, is UNHCR's implementing partner executing operational projects aimed at providing counselling and basic humanitarian assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. PMH - CARITAS is also member of the CONARE, representing the civil society with voting rights.
- UNHCR is in the process of establishing a partnership agreement with the Bolivian Government through CONARE, which includes both a legal and a local integration component for the protection and access to durable solutions of asylum seekers and refugees in Bolivia. Close coordination and complementarity will be ensured between UNHCR's implementing partner in Bolivia, the Human Mobility Pastoral (PMH), and CONARE. A bi-annual tripartite framework agreement for 2017-2018 will be developed for this purpose together with an action plan.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

### Protection & Durable Solutions

- Provide technical support and advice to national authorities involved in the implementation of fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures (RSD). Capacity building activities are implemented to strengthen the National Refugee Commission, and its technical secretariat in order to ensure due process in admission, registration, eligibility interviews, RSD assessments and right to appeal.
- Support a Regional Border Protection Network that involves governmental agencies, national human rights institutions and NGOs working in the border areas of Bolivia, Chile and Peru to identify persons of concern to UNHCR, prevent their *refoulement* and support them through legal counselling, shelter and humanitarian assistance.
- Provide refugees with the necessary information to ensure they are able to make an informed decision on the option of naturalization.
- Promote, through CONARE, cooperation agreements with Departmental and Municipal authorities to facilitate the beneficiaries' access to social programmes and labour opportunities, with a focus on inclusion for refugees in social assistance (cash-transfer), employment programmes, and allows the public sale at fairs and markets.
- Promote actions addressed to prevent, identify and respond to situations of SGBV affecting refugee women and children in coordination with national authorities and local partners. Regular protection dialogues and empowerment activities are developed with refugee women.
- Advocate for the adoption of a law for the protection of stateless people and the establishment of a stateless determination procedure in line with the pledges made by the Government of Bolivia (Brazil Plan of Action).

### Humanitarian Assistance, Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- Provide humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers and refugees with specific needs through PMH-CARITAS, UNHCR's partner agency. The assistance consists of financial support as well as counselling, which enhance their local integration opportunities.
- Provide, through local partner agency PMH-CARITAS, counselling and basic humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers. Upon their arrival, vulnerable asylum seekers are referred to migrant shelters, community kitchens, health services and are offered Spanish classes. Tailored assistance is provided to individual cases concerning their access to more durable shelter solutions and development of income-generating activities.
- Carry out through PMH-CARITAS trainings in business plan developing. Grant seed capital to persons of concern to UNHCR to strengthen the productive skills as most of the labor market is in the informal sector.

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