

# Venezuela Situation

As of May 2018

The number of **Venezuelans seeking asylum** has **risen yearly** since 2014. Between 2014 and 2018, some **170,169 asylum claims** have been lodged, over 94,000 in 2017 alone and **4,225** recognized as refugees

The majority of Venezuelans who have left their country have no regular status, and are therefore **more vulnerable** to any form of **exploitation, abuse, violence, trafficking** and **discrimination**.

Thousands continue to **legally enter daily in neighbouring countries**. It is expected that **people will continue to leave** in 2018. **UNHCR** is stepping up its response accordingly.



## KEY FIGURES

# Over 1.5 million

Venezuelans have left their country since 2014

# 2,000% increase

in the number of Venezuelan nationals seeking asylum worldwide since 2014

# 507,353

beneficiaries of alternative protection arrangements since 2014

# 4,662

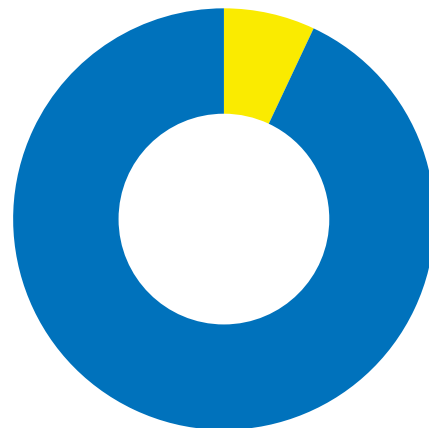
individuals reached through protection monitoring

## FUNDING (AS OF 16 MAY 2018)

# USD 46 M

requested for the Venezuela situation

Funded 7%  
**3.3M**



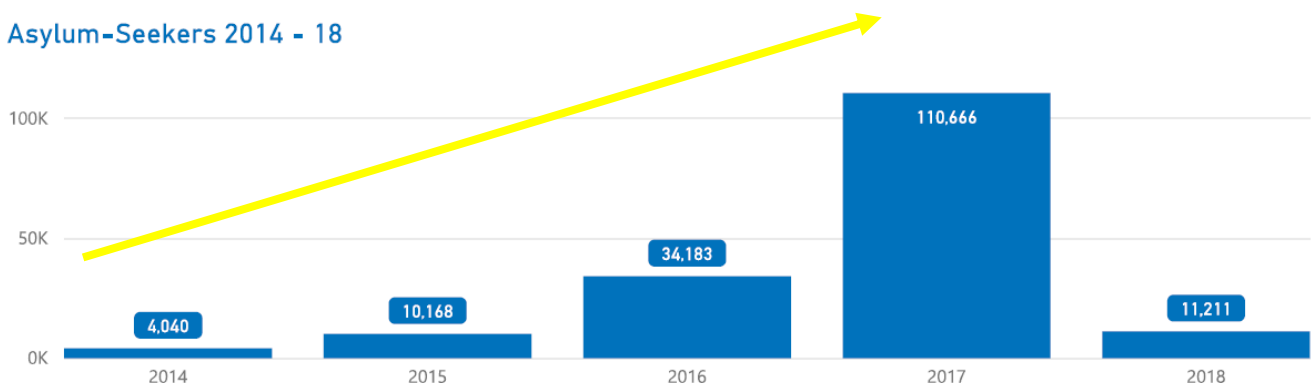
Funding gap 93%  
**42.7 M**



## Venezuela Situation

### Asylum-seekers from Venezuela from 2014 to 2018

#### Asylum-Seekers 2014 - 18



## Operational Context

Growing numbers of people continue to leave Venezuela for different reasons, including insecurity and violence, lack of food, medicine or access to essential social services, as well as loss of income. Based on conservative government figures, over 1.5 million Venezuelan nationals have left the country since 2014. While not all may be refugees, it is evident that a significant number are in need of international protection. Some 170,000 have filed asylum claims globally to date while an estimated 500,000 have accessed alternative legal forms of stay in Latin America. However, an estimated 60% of Venezuelans remain in an irregular situation, without documentation, including those not able to apply for asylum or another legal status because of bureaucratic obstacles, long waiting periods, or high application fees.

Host countries have become increasingly strained, and over half of all Venezuelans in these countries have no regular status. This makes them more vulnerable to multiple protection risks, such as labour and sexual exploitation. In countries where irregular armed groups and criminal gangs are actively recruiting, there is an additional risk that Venezuelans without other options may be tempted or forced to join these groups.

UNHCR is working with Governments to address the protection and essential needs of Venezuelans in host countries and continues to call for protection-oriented responses, such as humanitarian visas, special stay arrangements or other regional migratory frameworks, with the relevant protection safeguards. UNHCR has developed a regional response plan that covers eight countries and the Caribbean sub-region.



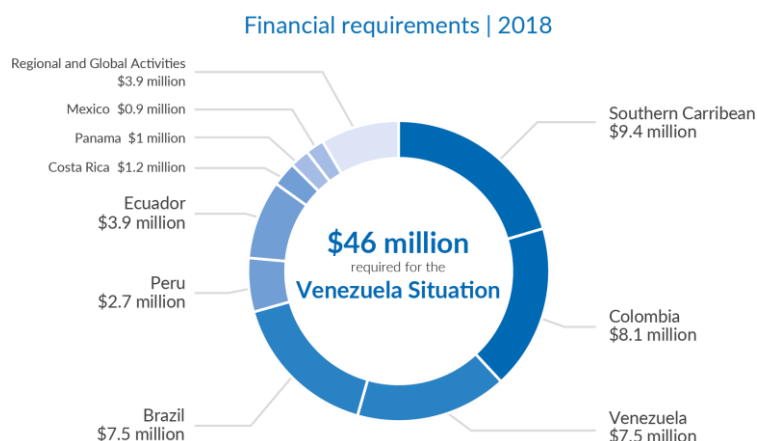
*After arriving in Boa Vista, Brazil, with only the things they could carry, this young family found refuge in the Tancredo Neves shelter. As there is no more space inside the shelter, they sleep together in a hammock they brought with them. Some 400 Venezuelans are currently living in the shelter set up in Boa Vista, even though the maximum capacity is for some 300 people. © UNHCR / R. Portilla*

## UNHCR response

In close collaboration with host governments, partner organizations, faith-based organizations, UN Agencies, particularly IOM, and civil society in the region, UNHCR undertakes the following activities:

- Establishing a **coordinated, comprehensive and regional response** for Venezuelans trying to start over their lives outside their country, with governments, host communities and local organizations;
- **Collecting data and information** (population studies, registration and/or monitoring exercises depending the country) to better understand the specific needs of Venezuelan nationals;
- Improving **access to documentation**, which is key to remaining legally in any country;
- Reinforcing **refugee procedures** while also working to identify and **support other legal forms of stay** for Venezuelans that include protection safeguards;
- Providing assistance to meet Venezuelans' **basic needs**, including legal assistance, shelter, cash-based assistance, health, and education;
- Working with national and local authorities on their **preparedness** measures and protection-based response plans.
- Strengthening **protection responses** for unaccompanied and separated children, indigenous communities, elderly people, LGBTI persons, people with disabilities, and others with specific needs.
- Developing awareness and **solidarity campaigns** to combat discrimination and xenophobia towards Venezuelans; and
- supporting mass **information campaigns for persons in need of international protection** to raise awareness about their rights and responsibilities.

Within this context UNHCR has launched a Supplementary Appeal for US\$46 million to cover the initial response in nine UNHCR operations with a focus on the main host countries: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and the Southern Caribbean. The Appeal will also cover interventions in Venezuela.



## Highlights



### Profiling and Protection Monitoring exercises activated in the region

UNHCR is implementing profiling and protection monitoring exercises to better understand the needs and risks faced by Venezuelans arriving in host countries and to provide a more tailored response. So far, over 4,600 individuals have been reached through the latest protection monitoring exercises carried along the borders in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Chile to identify risks, in particular with regards to access to territory, SGBV, trafficking and child protection. A significant number of people interviewed cited direct threats, insecurity, general violence, presence of armed groups and fear for their life as reasons for leaving Venezuela, and are therefore in urgent need of international protection.



### Registration

UNHCR is supporting the Government of Colombia's effort to conduct an administrative registration of Venezuelans with irregular status present in the country. The exercise known as Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos (RAMV) started on April 6th and will run until June 8th and aims at informing public policies on humanitarian assistance for Venezuelans. First results show that 203,989 individuals (106,476 families) have been registered. 23% of them are children with only 49% of those in school-age currently studying. 98% of the registered individuals are not part of the national health system. UNHCR is also supporting Government's registration efforts in Peru and Brazil.



### Providing shelter

In Brazil, UNHCR is supporting the Brazilian Government in providing safe shelter to Venezuelans arriving to border cities. So far, nine temporary shelters opened in Boa Vista and Pacaraima are providing protection and shelter to almost 4,000 Venezuelans. UNHCR supports the authorities through site planning, the provision of UNHCR tents, non-food items, drinking fountains, registration through biometrics, community mobilisation, information dissemination and site management. UNHCR is also supporting the relocation of Venezuelans from the border area of Boa Vista to other cities with wider employment opportunities and services. Since early April, when this initiative started, 528 Venezuelans have been part of the relocation program.



### Assistance

UNHCR has stepped up its presence in border areas across the region to respond to the needs of Venezuelans leaving their country as well as providing support and legal orientation on arrival. New offices have opened in Peru and the Caribbean to respond to the increasing number of arriving Venezuelans. In Tumbes (border between Peru and Ecuador), UNHCR has distributed drinkable water (more than 1,200 litres of water to 3,200 individuals so far) and dignity kits (to 250 families) in less than a week. UNHCR is also providing cash-based assistance to the most vulnerable Venezuelans in Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia.



### Campaigns against xenophobia

In an effort to curb xenophobia against Venezuelans and promote solidarity with people forced to flee, UNHCR launched the “SomosPanasColombia” campaign in December 2017. To date, over 8 million individuals have been reached, including opinion leaders, through social media and targeted communication activities and partnerships. Other countries in the region, notably Panama, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Trinidad and Tobago will be launching similar initiatives in 2018.



### Working with partners

UNHCR’s response to the Venezuela situation will be pursued with all levels of government and with the participation of people of concern and host communities. This is done in close partnership with other UN agencies, NGOs, faith-based and civil society organizations and academia to forge networks to help ease the burden on host communities. IOM and UNHCR are closely working together in responding to the needs of Venezuelans across the region. Furthermore, both agencies are working towards establishing a Regional Coordination Platform to include relevant stakeholders and steer the operational response to the Venezuela Situation.

## Remaining Challenges

- Protection risks for Venezuelan nationals in countries in the region remain a priority concern, including access to refugee procedures, physical security, access to documentation, sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse, and access to services;
- While alternative legal pathways are in place for Venezuelans, they do not always include protection safeguards, and have restrictions and fees that limit their accessibility;
- In some cases the shortage of efficient, secure and legal ways to reach safety is forcing desperate Venezuelans on the move into life-threatening situations including trafficking, sexual exploitation, armed violence and deadly sea crossings;
- UNHCR is also concerned about the situation in border areas, where there are heightened security risks, including forced recruitment by illegal armed groups or criminal gangs, including child recruitment;
- Despite positive efforts in a number of countries, reception capacity for Venezuelan arrivals remains limited. A worrying numbers of Venezuelans continue to live on the streets, where they remain at risk of exploitation and abuse;
- In the Caribbean, while the overall numbers are relatively small, the increase in the number of Venezuelan arrivals has placed significant pressure on the reception and processing capacity of these island States;
- While the responses of States have been generous, some are reaching a saturation point and are beginning to institute restrictive measures, including deportations and denial of access to territory and increasing incidents of discrimination and xenophobia.

## Financial Information

Agencies are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operations.

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS

Italy | European Union | Switzerland | Private donors

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### LINKS

[Venezuela Data Portal](#)

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<sup>1</sup> The broadly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for the Venezuela Situation due to their earmarking to a related region, sub-region, country or theme. The total amount of the contributions is shown for donors who have contributed \$2 million and more.

<sup>2</sup> The total amount of unearmarked contributions is shown for donors who have contributed \$10 million and more.