

Uruguay

April 2020

Hosting some **28,630 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, most of them from Venezuela**, UNHCR works with the Uruguayan government and partners to **provide information on access to territory, asylum and regularization**, while providing with its partners support for **basic goods and services** such as psycho-social

support, health, education, both in cash and in-kind. UNHCR with its partners also facilitates the **socio-economic integration of refugees and migrants in the local market**. Moreover, UNHCR supports the Uruguayan government to implement a **Rural Resettlement Program** that has already permitted the arrival of 35 refugees from the North of Central America.

Uruguay is a State Party to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol since 1970. Uruguay acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons in 2004, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2001, having integrated both already into its national legislation.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

28,630

Refugees	516
Asylum-seekers	13,750
Others of concern*	2
Venezuelans displaced abroad	14,362

Source: Official information provided by the Government, as of December 2019
* Stateless status applicants

FUNDING

USD 22.7 MILLION

requested for the **Regional Office including Uruguay**



■ Tightly earmarked
■ Earmarked
■ Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
■ Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
□ Funding gap (indicative)

ARGENTINA MCO
as of 29 April 2020

UNHCR PRESENCE

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

Staff in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile:

- 41 National staff
- 10 International staff



Venezuelan family receiving winter items in Montevideo / ©UNHCR, J. di Benedictis, 2020

Working with Partners

- UNHCR works in close coordination with Government counterparts, namely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, and the **Refugee Commission (CORE)**, as well as with other UN agencies to provide protection and seek durable solutions for refugees. UNHCR is a member of the CORE.
- UNHCR works in close cooperation with the **local Government of the City of Montevideo and the Department of Canelones**, where most of the refugee and migrant reside.
- **SEDHU (Servicio Ecueménico para la Dignidad Humana)** is UNHCR's partner for providing counselling, basic humanitarian assistance, and support for self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods to refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR also works with **Idas y Vueltas**, both in Montevideo and in Chuy to provide legal assistance to persons of concern, to do border monitoring; train officials in direct border service posts; and support refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in their socio-economic integration.
- UNHCR is promoting a new strategy with the **private sector** in order to generate awareness and facilitate the labour insertion of refugees and migrants in the local market.
- UNHCR co-leads with IOM the Southern Cone chapter platform for the **Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) for Venezuelans**, in close cooperation with 13 partners.

Main Activities

Protection & Durable Solutions

- Provide technical support and advice to national authorities involved in the implementation of fair and efficient **Refugee Status Determination (RSD)** procedures. Capacity building activities are implemented to strengthen the CORE, and its permanent secretariat in order to ensure access to territory, due process in admission, registration, eligibility interviews, RSD assessments and right to appeal. UNHCR also provides **capacity building and training** to other relevant counterparts.
- Support the Uruguayan government to buttress its capacities to better **respond to continuous arrival of Venezuelans** and to **promote durable solutions for them**, while providing **emergency humanitarian assistance** and ensuring protection support for vulnerable cases.
- **Produce information** and identify **protection risks, promote human rights** and identify coping mechanisms of **Venezuelan nationals** no matter their migratory or refugee status through the implementation of the Protection Monitoring Tool, while at the same time referring individual cases with specific needs to partner agencies.
- Provide technical and financial support to the government and civil society to consolidate **sustainable resettlement programs and complementary pathways for admission** under the leadership of the CORE. This involves close collaboration with SEDHU and international partners in order to promote a stronger community and private sector participation in the co-sponsorship of refugees. The resettlement program is currently focused on receiving refugees from the North of Central America.
- Support the government which is progressively assuming the leadership of **local integration strategies**, inter alia, through the promotion of policies and the allocation of public funding for refugees.
- As part of its initiative **"Cities of Solidarity"**, UNHCR works with two local governments in Montevideo and Canelones to facilitate access to information, orientation and improve reception conditions as well as to better integrate refugees and migrants in their local communities, strengthening access to rights, employment, as well as social protection and employment promotion schemes.
- Advocate for the facilitation of the **naturalization procedure for refugees and statelessness persons** and provide the necessary information to ensure they can make an informed decision on this option.
- Promote actions addressed to prevent, identify and respond to situations of **Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGVBV)** affecting refugee women and children through regular protection dialogues and empowerment activities with refugee women and girls.
- Provide technical support for the implementation of the law for the recognition and protection of stateless persons.
- Enhance two-way communication through **communicating with communities** strategy, producing informative material about access to asylum, documentation and rights available on Help website.

Humanitarian Assistance, Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- UNHCR through its partners provides **humanitarian assistance** to vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees with special needs. The assistance consists of financial support as well as counselling. Its partners also assist on legal issues and documentation.
- UNHCR also works for the improvement of **self-reliance and livelihoods** of refugees and migrants, include vocational training activities organized through the **National Institute for Employment and Labour Training (INEFOP)**, and **Human Resources institutions**, and the inclusion of CVs in a database after the training sessions for a possible job matching.
- During the first quarter of the year, **112 most vulnerable individuals (32 families) received multi-purpose unconditional CBI to cover their basic needs, some 360 individuals were provided with free legal assistance, orientation, information and referral to various service providers, and psychosocial assistance was provided to 150 individuals.**

COVID-19 Situation (as of April, 2020)

- In April, UNHCR partner provided **remote advice and orientation** to 623 people, most of them Venezuelans and Cubans. The partners also gave **cash assistance** to 178 people, 130 of them Venezuelans. UNHCR partner continued to articulate with IOM for the **referral of cases with food and accommodation needs**, and with Ministry of Social Development so that the population can access the food baskets. In Chuy, partners managed to deliver some 50 governmental food baskets to PoCs, and 95 **hygiene kits** in Montevideo. In addition, some other 360 people were referred to other organizations for the delivery of hygiene and personal care kits. Partners are also buying **winter items** which they estimate will reach some 200 refugees and migrants.
- UNHCR has articulated with government institutions to ensure that public emergency assistance programs and other social services are adequately accessed by the most vulnerable refugees and migrants in order to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Partners continue to provide **psycho-social support to SGBV survivors** and information on available protection mechanisms and measures, in coordination with the National Institute for Women.
- **Information material regarding the constantly evolving national response and restrictions and quarantine has been made available for refugees**, as well as organizations requesting UNHCR advice and assistance, on UNHCR's website **unhcr.help.org**
- The government formally established a **procedure for registering asylum applications of people who are already in Uruguay's territory via e-mail**, both before SEDHU and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through this remote procedure, asylum-seekers have access to documentation and rights. So far, 25 persons of concern applied for asylum. UNHCR produced a flyer available on Help website, so that the population has clear information on how to make these requests and not risk falling in an irregular situation.
- Even though borders are still closed, the government established **exceptions to entry restrictions**. It is allowed the entry to the territory for persons in need of international protection and, specifically, in cases of family reunification. Since 24 March, 11 persons applied for asylum in Rivera border area with the assistance of UNHCR partners.

Special thanks to major donors who have provided funds for the Argentina Regional Office and at the global level in 2020:

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