

The Americas



Venezuelans continue to make perilous journeys in search of safety. This family of 17 has been walking for five days. They are trying to warm up in the sun after leaving their shelter early in the morning for the city of Cali, Colombia, where they will stay with family members.

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“The Americas is experiencing one of the biggest forced displacement crises in the world, yet the humanitarian response remains considerably underfunded. Solidarity and support from the international community to countries receiving refugees is needed more than ever.”

Renata Dubini

Director, Regional Bureau for the Americas

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Provision of lifesaving assistance

In 2020, the displacement situation in the Americas will reach unprecedented levels for the region. An estimated 6.5 million Venezuelans will have fled their country by the end of 2020. In addition, forced displacement from the North of Central America (NCA), refugee outflows from Nicaragua and internal displacement in Colombia are expected to rise.

UNHCR will respond to the urgent and immediate needs of the region’s people of concern by delivering assistance to 1.9 million people. This assistance will include food, potable water and sanitation supplies, core relief items and emergency shelter. Multi-purpose cash transfers targeting the most vulnerable will cover more than 140,000 families and 600,000 people to meet their basic needs. More than 332,000 people will receive public information materials, such as leaflets and booklets, with information on asylum procedures.

For 2020-2021, the Americas region has prioritized community-based interventions, including establishing community structures, strengthening community-based complaint mechanisms and supporting community leaders and self-management. These interventions prevent displacement, mitigate protection risks and build the resilience of affected communities while strengthening the ability of national services to benefit displaced populations and host communities alike.

Ensuring access to protection

There are almost 2.5 million new displacements foreseen in the region in 2020, reaching an estimated 18.7 million people displaced in the Americas. UNHCR’s strategy will centre on advocating asylum-seekers’ access to territory and efficient asylum procedures, as well as for alternative legal pathways that include protection safeguards under national and regional frameworks. UNHCR

will support asylum authorities with the processing of some 2.6 million asylum claims, and will work with partners to ensure registration and reception, as well as access to legal orientation and representation.

The Office will support efforts by States, civil society and others to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and reinforce the Regional Safe Spaces Network to provide specialized services for some 10,000 SGBV survivors and children at risk. These services include legal and psychosocial counselling, safe houses and livelihood support.

Given the complexity of ongoing mixed movements, a regional, timely and comparable source of data is crucial for a robust, efficient and evidence-based response. Through its protection-monitoring activities in 2020, UNHCR will reach an estimated 130,000 people of concern by expanding its geographical coverage and engaging with a wider range of partners and actors, including public defenders and local authorities.

Pursuing durable solutions for people of concern

Advocating inclusion and social cohesion, resettlement and the promotion of complementary pathways for admission are at the forefront of UNHCR's work in the Americas. In 2020, more than 6,500 people, including women and girls at risk, will be in need of resettlement across the region. Through the "Global strategy for livelihoods" in the Americas, UNHCR will advocate an enabling environment where refugees have legal and de facto access to livelihood opportunities. It will also promote their inclusion in national systems and services.

To ensure refugees can enjoy economic, socio-cultural, civil-political and legal rights in urban settings, the Cities of Solidarity initiative—a model for refugee integration in urban areas aimed at recognizing local governments' efforts to provide protection and enhance the integration of UNHCR's people of concern—will be strengthened and expanded through the roll-out of the cities' self-assessment methodology.

This recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of institutional efforts to help refugees and other populations of concern integrate locally. This will help build inclusive public policies that protect displaced people, foster co-existence with host communities, ensure respect for human rights during displacement and support local integration, including long-term stay.

With an estimated 8.5 million IDPs in the region in 2020, and in line with UNHCR's new IDP Policy, the Office will respond to the immediate protection needs of those internally displaced while strengthening the resilience of affected communities with solutions-oriented programming. It will prioritize access to national services in support of areas hosting uprooted populations. In a "whole-of-society" approach, building partnerships with non-traditional actors, including the private sector, will be central to mobilizing long-term and greater support for hosting communities—preventing xenophobia and promoting social and economic inclusion.

Enhancing regional cooperation

In line with the roadmap established by the 2014 Brazil Plan of Action, and anticipated commitments made during the Global Refugee Forum, addressing forced displacement through a regional, multi-stakeholder and inclusive approach remains key in the Americas.

The Venezuela situation poses major challenges to regional stability. UNHCR will work with governments to consolidate and strengthen a regional and multilateral approach and response through the Quito Process—an initiative of several Latin American countries that seeks to harmonize domestic policies in receiving countries. This will harmonize States' responses; the exchange of good practices on protection, social and economic integration; and a constructive dialogue with key stakeholders, such as cooperating States, UN agencies and international financial institutions. The Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan will continue to support the efforts of receiving countries, coordinating the humanitarian inter-agency response for Venezuelans in need of protection.

UNHCR will support the implementation of the MIRPS, the regional Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, to respond to forced displacement from the NCA and to foster regional cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination for greater responsibility-sharing on prevention, protection and solutions.

Lastly, UNHCR will engage with States in the region under the Towards Zero Statelessness mechanism to make the Americas the first continent to eradicate statelessness by 2024.

The new Policy on "UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement"



Nicaraguan professionals seek safety in Costa Rica

Doctors, lawyers and professors are among professionals forced to flee their Central American homeland for doing their jobs.

"They forced us to flee the country ... Because if we didn't, it would have been death or prison."

—Sara, a Nicaraguan pediatrician, fled to Costa Rica after being persecuted for treating injured protesters in her native Nicaragua.



MAJOR SITUATIONS IN THE AMERICAS IN 2020



VENEZUELA

Venezuelans continue to leave their country in significant numbers, primarily on foot over land borders in the largest outflow in the region's recent history. By the end of 2020, it is estimated that more than 6.5 million refugees and migrants would have left the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, mainly to neighbouring countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Half of Venezuelans on the move face acute risks because of their age, gender, health or other needs, or because they are compelled to employ negative coping mechanisms. Those in irregular situations are exposed to heightened risks of exploitation and abuse.

With displacement from the country at a rate exceeding the capacities and resources of neighbouring states, UNHCR is supporting regional governments address the protection and essential needs of those most at risk and of their host communities. The Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants, co-led by UNHCR and IOM, is the primary inter-agency tool for the coordinated provision of protection, assistance and integration of Venezuelans in need and host communities.

Inside the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, even if a solution to the political crisis is reached in 2020, humanitarian needs will persist until basic services are restored. An inter-agency humanitarian response plan for needs within the country is being developed, building on the one launched in August 2019. UNHCR uses community-based sectoral interventions to prevent displacement, mitigate risks and promote the resilience of affected communities while providing international protection to refugees and asylum-seekers and to prevent statelessness.

33,000
REFUGEES
1.1 million
ASYLUM-SEEKERS
5.4 million
VENEZUELAN
DISPLACED ABROAD



COLOMBIA

Forced displacement persists in parts of the country, with continued disputes among armed actors regarding territorial control and a high number of homicides targeting community leaders. These incidents have hampered the implementation of the peace agreement in many neglected and poor rural areas. Indigenous people and Afro-Colombians are the most affected, with more than 15,000 people internally displaced in 2019.

UNHCR's presence is concentrated in border areas and along the Pacific Coast where most displacement and human rights violations occur. UNHCR will advocate the implementation of a strong legal framework and durable solutions for an estimated 8.1 million IDPs through the Victims and Land Restitution Law. The number of Colombian asylum-seekers is slightly increasing in Ecuador and is likely to continue in 2020.

8.1 million
INTERNALLY DISPLACED



NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA

There were already more than 387,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from NCA countries worldwide by mid-2019, forced to flee because of violence, persecution and insecurity, compounded by deteriorating socioeconomic conditions. In the first half of 2019 alone, nearly 54,000 new asylum applications from NCA nationals were lodged—86% more than the same period in 2018. In addition, there are an estimated 318,600 IDPs in El Salvador and Honduras.

Under the MIRPS, UNHCR will expand its presence and operations in 2020 to strengthen protection capacities in countries of origin, assist with immediate humanitarian needs, enhance asylum systems in receiving countries, and promote integration and durable solutions across the region.

109,800
REFUGEES
365,600
ASYLUM-SEEKERS
380,000
INTERNALLY DISPLACED



NICARAGUA

Nicaragua has been in social and political crisis since April 2018. Human rights violations had forced nearly 90,000 Nicaraguans to flee by mid-2019. The majority have fled to neighbouring Costa Rica, where there are more than 46,000 registered asylum-seekers and more than 30,000 waiting to formalize their claims.

UNHCR's 2020 response will strengthen reception capacities in Costa Rica, as well as in El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and Panama. In Costa Rica in particular, UNHCR will enhance community-based protection, support refugee status determination procedures and other alternative protection pathways, and strengthen its cash-based interventions to support vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers.

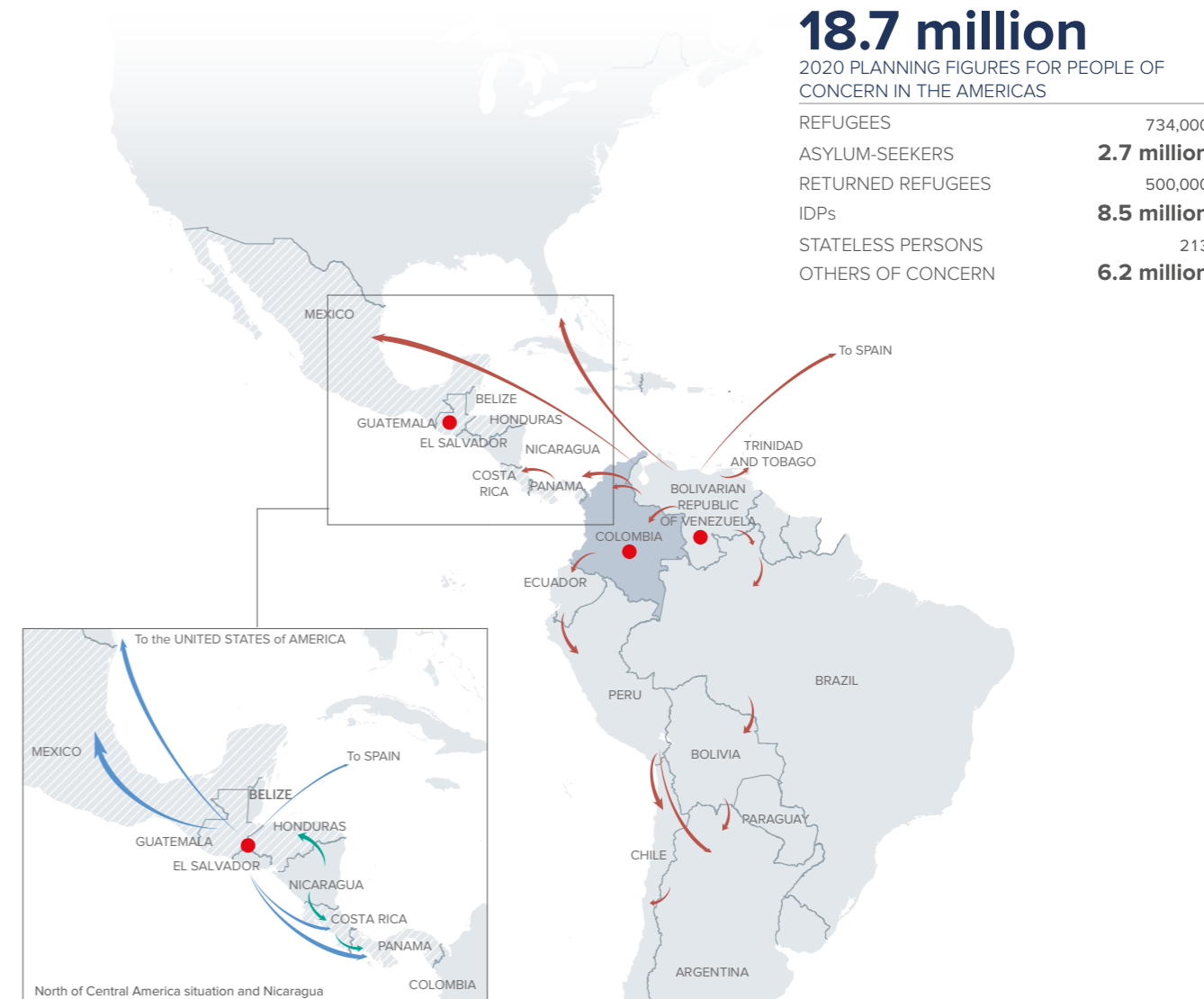
7,900
REFUGEES
50,500
ASYLUM-SEEKERS
55,400
PENDING REGISTRATION

The Americas will continue experiencing unprecedented numbers of displacement, with an estimated 18.7 million people of concern in 2020. The numbers will put additional pressure on host communities who have been generously welcoming people in need of international protection. Only a comprehensive, predictable and coordinated response will allow the region to cope with the needs of its growing displaced population.

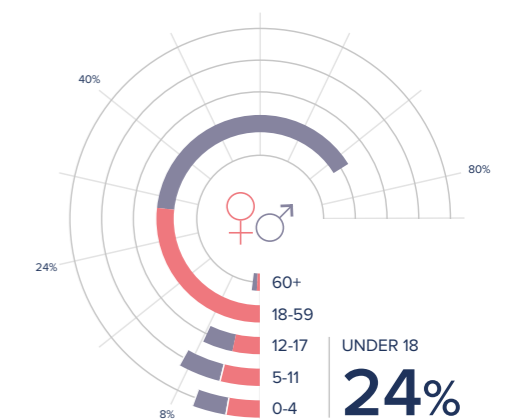
18.7 million

2020 PLANNING FIGURES FOR PEOPLE OF CONCERN IN THE AMERICAS

REFUGEES	734,000
ASYLUM-SEEKERS	2.7 million
RETURNED REFUGEES	500,000
IDPs	8.5 million
STATELESS PERSONS	213
OTHERS OF CONCERN	6.2 million



AGE AND GENDER BREAKDOWN
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS | January 2019



- Situation
- MIRPS country
- IDP initiative
- Nicaraguan outflow
- NCA outflow
Level 2 emergency in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico
- Venezuelan outflow
Level 2 emergency in Argentina, Aruba, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

IMPLICATIONS OF UNDERFUNDING

A lack of funds in 2020-2021 would drastically limit UNHCR's ability to deliver lifesaving assistance to displaced people across the region, leaving thousands to suffer and placing many at grave risk. If funding is insufficient, humanitarian assistance will need to be limited to the most vulnerable, resulting in a significant discrepancy between the projected populations of concern and the number of people the Office will be able to support.

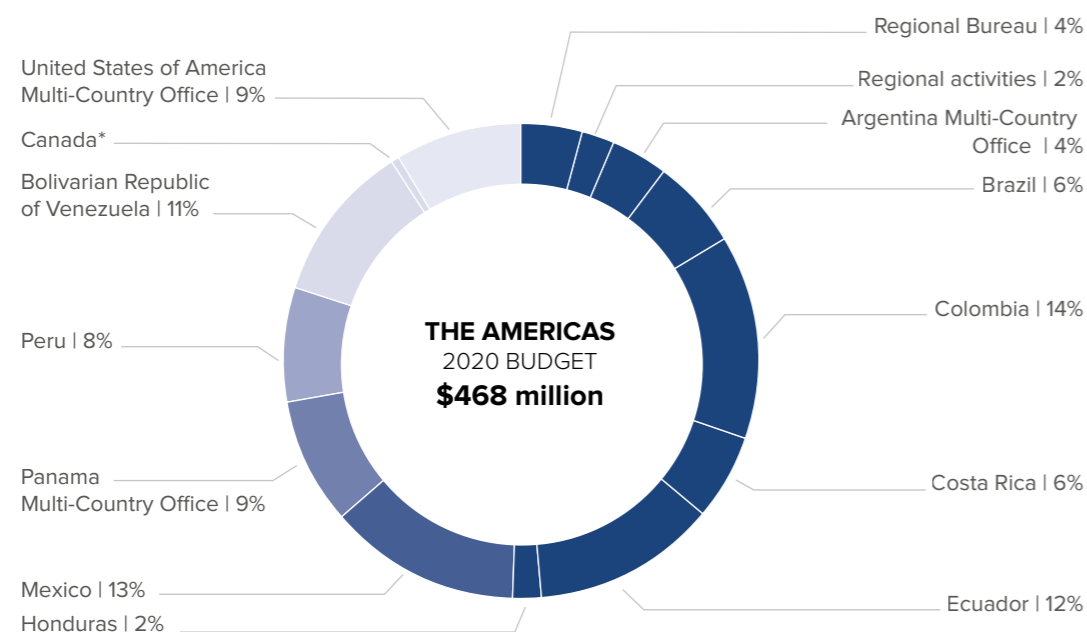
Restricted access to essential humanitarian assistance such as food, potable water, sanitation supplies, shelter or cash-based assistance could see families resort to negative coping mechanisms. Child labour and selling sex will be of increasing concern and could affect the already vulnerable populations of female-headed households and children. The ability to mitigate the risk of SGBV, of particular concern to vulnerable people on the move, will be exacerbated. Inadequate protection environments and the inability of displaced people in need to access territory, registration or documentation might force them to take new risks.

For example, recent measures restricting access to territory have significantly disrupted movements for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, leading to more irregular movements and, in turn, exposing them to smugglers, traffickers and other risks of exploitation

and abuse. Women, children and groups with specific needs will be disproportionately affected and there are increased risks for family separation. This could create a vicious downward cycle, exacerbating their current vulnerabilities.

Funding restrictions will prevent affected operations and partners from addressing the root causes of forced displacement from Central America in countries of origin, address mechanisms for reception and admission, respond to immediate humanitarian needs, support host countries and communities, and work towards durable solutions. Limited funds would also drastically reduce the number of people of concern receiving access to financial services, sustainable livelihoods, health and education, undermining efforts to foster durable solutions. Opportunities for local integration will be reduced which, coupled with competition over already limited job opportunities and a fragile security situation, will create a hostile environment for people in need of international protection.

Being prone to xenophobic attacks and exclusion, displaced people will face a growing range of protection risks. If funds are insufficient, it will be challenging to continue the large-scale, anti-xenophobia campaigns, such as UNHCR's "Somos panas" in Colombia or "Somos lo mismo" in Costa Rica, significantly reducing planned community outreach in host communities.



* Less than 0.5%

BUDGETS FOR THE AMERICAS | USD

OPERATION	2019 Current budget (as of 30 June 2019)	2020				TOTAL	2021 Proposed budget
		PILLAR 1 Refugee programmes	PILLAR 2 Stateless programmes	PILLAR 3 Reintegration projects	PILLAR 4 IDP projects		
THE AMERICAS							
Regional Bureau for the Americas ¹	3,838,884	20,619,144	-	-	-	20,619,144	21,988,058
Regional activities for the Americas ¹	7,862,316	9,527,340	-	-	-	9,527,340	8,149,211
SUBTOTAL	11,701,200	30,146,484	-	-	-	30,146,484	30,137,268
LATIN AMERICA							
Argentina Multi-Country Office ²	11,188,608	18,190,013	-	-	-	18,190,013	21,426,702
Brazil	26,564,616	29,541,219	-	-	-	29,541,219	30,090,223
Colombia	48,075,822	51,158,400	-	-	13,486,600	64,645,000	78,371,496
Costa Rica	13,688,907	27,698,885	-	-	-	27,698,885	21,284,121
Costa Rica Legal Unit	4,824,839	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ecuador	37,985,536	58,470,744	-	-	-	58,470,744	56,307,116
Honduras	1,148,333	110,000	-	-	7,976,307	8,086,307	8,086,307
Mexico	59,800,656	61,481,693	-	-	-	61,481,693	55,358,816
Panama Multi-Country Office ³	29,167,639	33,502,091	-	-	7,451,674	40,953,765	41,881,691
Peru	21,109,410	35,592,403	-	-	-	35,592,403	41,209,176
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	29,500,000	51,244,449	-	-	-	51,244,449	47,260,908
Venezuela Regional Refugee Coordination Office	8,650,174	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL	291,704,540	366,989,898	-	-	28,914,581	395,904,479	401,276,557
NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARRIBBEAN							
Canada	2,037,474	2,204,019	-	-	-	2,204,019	2,129,019
United States of America Multi-Country Office ⁴	35,302,653	33,443,056	6,333,500	-	-	39,776,556	40,193,556
SUBTOTAL	37,340,127	35,647,075	6,333,500	-	-	41,980,575	42,322,575
TOTAL	340,745,867	432,783,457	6,333,500	-	28,914,581	468,031,538	473,736,400

¹ Regional Bureau and regional activities cover the whole Americas region.

² Coordinates activities in Argentina and Chile.

³ Coordinates activities in Belize, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala and Panama.

⁴ Coordinates activities in Aruba, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America.