

# Uruguay

June 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

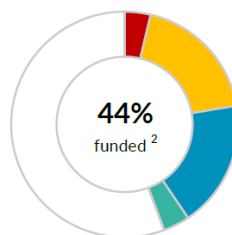
Refugees	516
Asylum-seekers	13,750
Others of concern*	2
Venezuelans displaced abroad	14,362

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

## FUNDING

USD 24 MILLION

requested for the **Regional Office including Uruguay**



**ARGENTINA MCO**

as of 22 July 2020

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

## 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.

## COVID-19 Situation (as of June, 2020)

- In June, UNHCR partner provided **remote advice and orientation** to **200 refugees and migrants** (82 Venezuelans). The partners also gave **multipurpose cash assistance** to **193 people**, 120 of them Venezuelans. Cases of homeless people or at risk of being so, family groups with difficulties for covering their accommodation, people with health problems, elderly, pregnant women, people who have lost formal or informal employment were prioritized. UNHCR partners noted that **refugees and migrants are no longer primarily located in the Montevideo metropolitan area** but have moved in search of more accessible accommodation and job opportunities (largely to the Department of San José and Rural Montevideo). UNHCR partners continue to **deliver government food baskets every 15 days**, each time reaching approximately 100 refugees and migrants.
- UNHCR partner continued providing **guidance to asylum-seekers so they could submit their asylum applications**. The partner, being member of the Permanent Secretariat of CORE, registered 65 asylum applications in June, whether at borders or remotely. As of 22 June, **UNHCR partner's eligibility officers began conducting face-to-face eligibility interviews for specific cases with urgent international protection needs**. UNHCR, the partner and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will work together to evaluate the possibility of conducting interviews remotely.
- UNHCR continued working with government counterparts and civil society partners to identify opportunities for the implementation of activities to support local integration, in line with the results of the national consultations for the **socioeconomic recovery of refugees and migrants in a post-pandemic scenario**, which were held in May and included the design of specific project proposals.
- UNHCR partner **conducted home visits to families who were resettled in rural communities of Uruguay from 2017-2019**, in order to verify and help mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 emergency on their housing, employment, education and psycho-social support situation. Most families have been able maintained their normal livelihoods with the support of their hosting communities and employers.
- 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.
- On 24 June **the Department of Canelones signed an agreement with UNHCR to join the Cities of Solidarity Initiative**. This agreement will further the inclusion of asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons of interest in social protection schemes, as well as in programs for their socio-economic integration.
- **UNHCR opened a field presence in Chuy through its partner**. The inter-agency standard operating procedure will be jointly developed with relevant stakeholders in order to coordinate referrals and assistance provided to persons of concern.
- **Information material regarding the constantly evolving national response and restrictions and quarantine has been made available for refugees**, and organizations requesting UNHCR advice and assistance, on UNHCR's website [unhcr.help.org](https://www.unhcr.org)

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

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## External Relations

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### LINKS

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