

FACT SHEET BRAZIL



**UNHCR
ACNUR**
Agência da ONU para Refugiados

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT



Venezuela Situation

More than 5.2 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela are living outside of their country and, with 4.3 million living in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region is experiencing the largest exodus in its modern history. **Brazil is hosting the fifth highest number of displaced Venezuelans**, with a total population of **over 264,000 individuals**. The primary point of entry for Venezuelans into Brazil has been the northern state of **Roraima**, which is geographically isolated from the rest of Brazil by the Amazon Rainforest, is sparsely populated and has the lowest per capita GDP in the country. A large number of arrivals have included pregnant women, single mothers with children, elderly persons, and people with health and nutrition problems, among other vulnerabilities, for whom access to basic services has been even more critical. Before the temporary closing of the borders in mid-March 2020, an average of **500 Venezuelans were entering Brazil every day**, many of whom were arriving in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

The national response to the influx of Venezuelans -known as Operação Acolhida (OA)- is led by the Federal Government with the support of the UN System and civil society organizations, the latter coordinated under the R4V (Response for Venezuelans) platform. **The three core pillars of the response are border management and documentation, emergency assistance and integration**. Venezuelans may opt to request asylum or apply for a two-year temporary residency permit, legal pathways which equally provide access to public services and the right to work. With regards to the asylum process, in June 2019 the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) recognized the situation in Venezuela as one amounting to serious and generalized human rights violations, in accordance with the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. Since then, Venezuelans who apply for refugee status and meet specific criteria established by CONARE undergo simplified and accelerated asylum procedures without the need for a status determination interview. Brazil has now recognized some 46,000 Venezuelans as refugees accounting for the largest recognized Venezuelan refugee population in Latin America. This *prima facie* procedure was extended at the end of August for 12 additional months. **Emergency assistance** is provided in temporary shelters where individuals can have access to emergency accommodation, food, health care, child friendly spaces, counselling and referral to services. **Integration** efforts are centered around the voluntary internal relocation program, known as “interiorization”, which enables the relocation of Venezuelans from the States of Roraima and Amazonas to more than 600 municipalities across all States in Brazil, offering better socio-economic prospects and relieving pressure on northern states.

UNHCR operates through its offices in Brasília, Boa Vista, Pacaraima, Manaus, Belem and Sao Paulo in partnership with 17 implementing partners throughout the country.

Key Figures

164,500 asylum-seekers (all nationalities)¹

Venezuelans have requested protection in Brazil including:

- **102,504** asylum-seekers¹
- **46,141** recognized refugees²
- **148,782** persons with residence permits³

41,146 Venezuelan refugees and migrants voluntarily relocated inside of Brazil⁴

138,048 Venezuelan refugees and migrants registered with UNHCR since April 2018

17,198 Venezuelan refugees and migrants sheltered in Roraima and throughout Brazil in 2020

Sources:

¹ Federal Police as of end of August 2020

² CONARE as of August 2020

³ Federal Police as of end of August 2020

⁴ As of end of August 2020



COVID-19 Situational Context

As of end-August 2020, the Americas was still considered the epicenter of the pandemic in the world and Brazil had the second highest number of both cases and deaths due to COVID-19 worldwide. All borders were closed in mid-March, and entry restrictions by land and sea remain in place today. The socio-economic impact of containment measures adopted in the context of COVID-19 has resulted in widespread loss of livelihoods for refugees, migrants and the local population. This includes around 5,000 indigenous Venezuelans (Warao, Eñepa, Pemón) whose health was already extremely vulnerable, leading to malnutrition, infections and respiratory diseases. Although refugees and migrants have access to public health services and to economic relief measures as part of the COVID-19 response, the prolongation of the health emergency continues to strain the capacity of the public sector to respond to the needs of the population.

In order to assist possible confirmed COVID-19 cases, Operação Acolhida developed a contingency plan in partnership with UNHCR and other actors in Roraima and Amazonas, including the establishment of the Protection and Care Area (APC), a field hospital in Boa Vista. The APC has a capacity to host up to 1,782 individuals and it is open both to Venezuelans and the host community. Additional isolation facilities were also established in the cities of Manaus and Belém. After a temporary closure at the outset of the pandemic, the Reception and Documentation Centers (PITRIGs) in Roraima and Manaus have begun to gradually resume activities since the beginning of August, with daily entrance quotas and requirements to observe preventive measures. The voluntary internal relocation programme continues to operate, following contingency protocols for COVID-19 prevention before and after boarding air travel.



Protection environment

Challenges linked to access to territory, documentation, as well as to assistance and protection services have been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As entry restrictions by land, sea, and some airports remain in place, refugees have found themselves stranded and unable to access Brazilian territory to seek asylum. Refugees also face challenges within Brazil in renewing legal documentation with practical consequences on their access to rights and services. For instance, access to social assistance programs is curtailed

owing to situations where local service providers wrongfully did not accept expired identify documentation although their validity has been officially extended during the emergency period. Local protection networks have suspended or reduced their services despite a growing need for assistance due to increased loss of livelihoods. As a result, the timely identification, response and monitoring of protection cases have been reduced. Additional consequences identified during the COVID-19 context (e.g. evictions, domestic violence, adverse coping mechanisms) have required additional effort to guarantee effective inclusion of refugees in national protection systems as well as concrete actions to mitigate identified protection risks.

COVID-19 Response

To strengthen the health response capacity, **UNHCR supported the establishment of the Protection and Care Area (APC) in Boa Vista**, inaugurated on 19 June. UNHCR contributed with site planning, the donation of 2,000 beds, 180 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and 250 refugee housing units (RHUs) used as isolation areas for suspected and confirmed cases. Since its opening, 2,257 patients have received medical screening and assistance in the APC, including 483 COVID-19 cases who have been hospitalized and discharged from the clinical area. UNHCR also provides **ad hoc support for the inclusion of indigenous communities in local health responses and safety nets** through capacity building and cooperation towards the reinforcement and expansion of isolation

areas in indigenous shelters in Manaus, Roraima and Belém. Another key intervention of UNHCR has been the **provision of non-food items, including hygiene and cleaning kits** in order to ensure proper housing arrangements and contain the spreading of the virus. Moreover, in line with its **Communicating with Communities (CWC) strategy**, UNHCR disseminates information on **COVID-19 prevention** through awareness-raising sessions and information materials translated in six languages which are posted in key locations and shared on UNHCR's [HELP platform](#) and Venezuelan groups on social networks. It is estimated that at least **16,000 persons with protection needs** have been already reached by these interventions.

UNHCR RESPONSE



Protection

UNHCR carries out its protection mandate by providing technical advice and assistance to Government authorities and by directly assisting persons of concern, either through staff deployed in the field or in partnership with civil society organizations. **Working closely with the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE)**, UNHCR advocates for the continuous strengthening of the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedure to adjudicate claims in a fair and efficient manner, in line with **international standards**. Between December 2019 and August 2020, the government of Brazil recognized over 46,000 Venezuelans as refugees on a *prima facie* basis, as part of a plan to recognize more eligible Venezuelan asylum-seekers with this simplified procedure.

Moreover, UNHCR conducts regular **protection monitoring** across different locations in order to identify and assist highly vulnerable cases, including persons of concern of around 90 nationalities with complex health issues, unaccompanied or separated children, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, LGBTIs at risk and persons with disabilities. UNHCR also promotes local protection networks and supports Cátedra Sérgio Vieira de Mello, a network of 25 Brazilian universities engaged in supporting refugees with legal counselling, facilitated university admission, language classes, as well as teaching and researching on International Refugee Law, among others.



Registration & Documentation

UNHCR provides **counselling and assistance to asylum-seekers on how to submit their claims** at the three Reception and Documentation Centres (PITRIGs) of Pacaraima, Boa Vista and Manaus. During the COVID-19 pandemic UNHCR has continued to operate at these centres aiming at identifying and assisting persons with protection needs, ensuring timely access to documentation for the most vulnerable cases. UNHCR also conducts registration through its ProGres V4 database, ensuring the identification of individuals most at risk, adequate case management and contributing to a broader protection analysis.



Basic Needs

In Roraima, UNHCR provides support to the Ministry of Citizenship with the site planning, equipment and management of **12 temporary shelters, one transit shelter (BV8) and one emergency site**. Overall, these shelters can provide temporary accommodation to a total of 7,508 persons, hosting 4,518 persons in September. As available slots in shelters are freed up through the relocation programme, UNHCR works to quickly fill them, prioritizing the most vulnerable cases that are identified through ongoing protection monitoring. Since January 2020, **more than 17,000 Venezuelans have benefited** from temporary shelter in Roraima and throughout Brazil.

In 2020, in terms of direct in-kind assistance, **UNHCR delivered a total of 36,431 non-food items (NFIs)** including 3,181 hygiene parcels, 2,900 household cleaning kits, 5,361 alcohol-based hand sanitizers, 1,073 women's intimate hygiene kits, 3,556 mattresses, 457 blankets, 379 tarpaulins, 421 hammocks and 1,989 school backpacks to populations in shelters in Boa Vista, Pacaraima and Manaus to help them meet their most basic needs. Some kits have been also distributed in other cities countrywide including Santarem, Belem, Porto Alegre, and Rio de Janeiro.

UNHCR, through partners, uses **cash-based interventions (CBI)** to provide protection and assistance to the most vulnerable. Since the launching of UNHCR's CBI scheme in June 2019, it has reached the mark of BRL 4.7 million benefiting nearly 16,000 at-risk individuals.



Relocation & Integration

UNHCR supports the Federal Government's **voluntary relocation programme** for Venezuelans, known as "interiorização", registering participants and directly supporting reception sites and integration activities in nine cities. UNHCR supports **local integration** of Venezuelan refugees and migrants through a number of labour and educational insertion initiatives, including entrepreneurial and vocational training, support for school enrolments for children, validation of academic credentials and Portuguese lessons. UNHCR also works alongside partners and development actors supporting **peaceful co-existence** projects to build bridges with host communities. Of the **41,146 Venezuelans who have been relocated until August 2020, 7,559 were accommodated in more than 30 shelters supported by UNHCR**, out of which 14 were shelters managed by UNHCR's Partners.



Indigenous Population

UNHCR advocates for the inclusion of Venezuelan indigenous refugees and migrants in public policies towards indigenous peoples and supports the Federal Government as well as receiving states and municipalities in the articulation of culturally-appropriate public responses. The institutional emergency response seeks to **empower this population through a community-based approach** where individuals and families play an active role in their own protection and to foster self-reliance through registration and pre-documentation assistance, the provision of shelter and core relief items, educational and cultural activities, the establishment of artisanal handicraft value-chains and support for integration into local agricultural enterprises, among others.



Resettlement

Brazil is implementing its first-ever **state-funded resettlement program** benefiting refugees from the North of Central America (NCA) who arrived in 2019 and settled in Rio Grande do Sul. The Ministry of Justice (MJ) is in charge of the program and ASAV is the NGO selected to implement the **assistance package** that includes support for up to 1 year in housing, basic furniture and household appliances, winter cloths, monthly stipend, psychosocial support, language and vocational training, as well as support in job placement. Under the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP), that aims to support States and key stakeholders to establish, expand or renew resettlement programmes and advance complementary pathways for admission of refugees, Brazil is also developing **community sponsorship pilots'** resettlement programmes, in line with its pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum. Sponsors will be responsible for the provision of **assistance and support** to the resettled refugees, under a legal framework that would enable individuals to obtain legal status and access to all services in **equal right to nationals**. All identification and referrals will be done thru UNHCR to ensure that the programme benefits the most in need and vulnerable refugees. The MJ will be monitoring the integration process along with UNHCR's technical support.



Private Sector Partnerships Service (PSP)

The Private Sector Partnerships Service (PSP) sits within UNHCR's Division of External Relations (DER) and is responsible for mobilizing resources from the private sector for refugees. A PSP Office started in Brazil in 2014 and is based in Sao Paulo. This strategy focuses on both **Individual Giving** and **Leadership Giving**. In order to bring necessary resources to the Organization, the Individual Giving section seeks to reach new audiences through advertising and engaging our current supporters and donors. The Leadership Giving section develops and strengthens long-term partnerships with companies, foundations and high-net worth individuals. These private partners are helping us to maximize UNHCR's impact and improve its capacity to make a difference by delivering life-saving assistance and sustainable solutions for millions of refugees and displaced people worldwide. In Boa Vista, PSP has established partnerships which have allowed for the contribution of personal protection equipment, hospital equipment, medicines and alcohol to the field hospital.



Donors

UNHCR Brazil wishes to **express its profound appreciation** to its donors – the United States of America, the European Union, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Italy, Luxembourg and private donors in Brazil – as well as donors of unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds that can potentially be used for this operation.



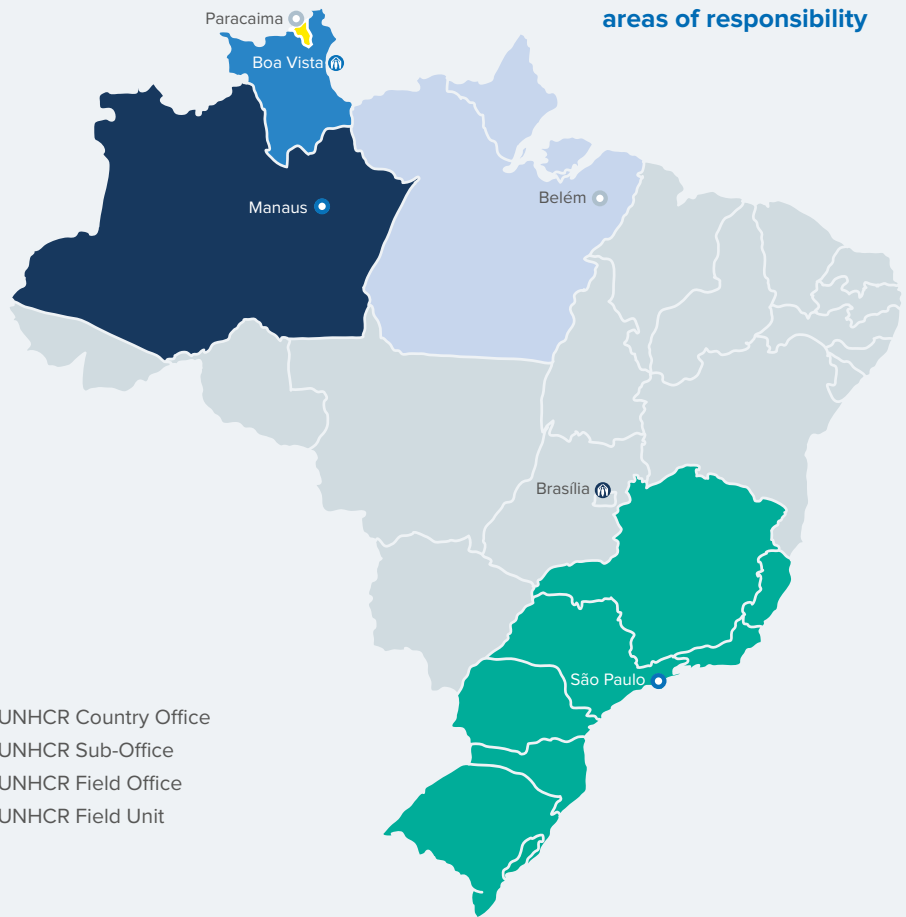
UNHCR Presence

Staff/TA/AWF

123 Nationals
26 Internationals

Office Locations:

- 1 Branch Office in Brasília
- 1 Sub-Office in Boa Vista
- 2 Field Offices in Sao Paulo and Manaus
- 2 Field Units in Pacaraima, and Belem
- 1 Private Sector Partnership (PSP) Office in Sao Paulo



- Pacaraima
 - Boa Vista
 - Manaus
 - Belem
 - Brasília
 - São Paulo
- UNHCR Country Office
 - UNHCR Sub-Office
 - UNHCR Field Office
 - UNHCR Field Unit

UNHCR Brazil is thankful for the support of donors and partners

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UNHCR Brazil donors:



UNHCR's private sector donors:



UNHCR Brazil is also thankful for the important support of and partnerships with other UN agencies, Brazilian authorities (at federal, state and municipal levels) and civil society organizations working together to deliver the emergency response and in the regular programmes of the Brazilian operation.