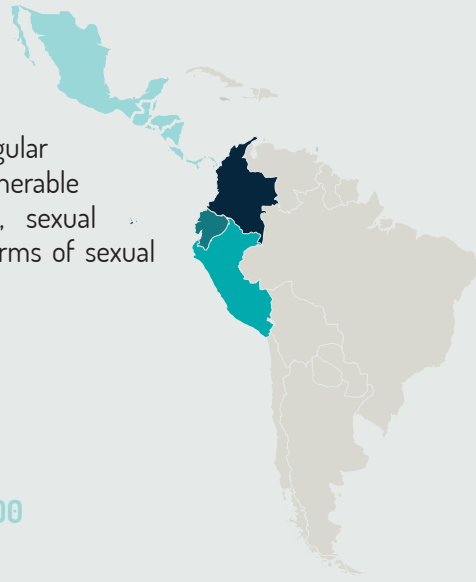


GENDER - BASED VIOLENCE

COVID-19 IMPACT

BORDER CLOSURE

Border closures have forced refugees and migrants from Venezuela to use irregular crossings, making women and girls more vulnerable to gender-based violence, including rape, sexual assault, survival sex, trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation¹.



“Caminantes” who will cross in 2021²:

Colombia: 162,000

Ecuador: 90,300

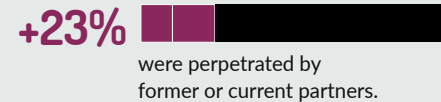
Peru: 75,600

Central America and Mexico: 2,900

PARTNER VIOLENCE

Women are increasingly exposed to physical, sexual and emotional violence at the hands of their partners during confinement.

49 feminicides | of Venezuelan women in different countries, between January and June 2021, according to Cepaz³.
9 attempted feminicides



RESOURCES

The economic crisis caused by the pandemic, political transitions and an environment of civil unrest in countries hosting Venezuelan refugees and migrants have significantly reduced the financial and human resources of those responding to gender-based violence. This has meant that women and girls face critical obstacles in accessing life-saving care.

Women and girls, including survivors of gender-based violence, are less able to obtain free medical care (including reproductive health), psychosocial support and access to justice and protection.

EVICIONS

Pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and heads of households are the population most affected by evictions. According to a survey conducted by the Protection Sector:

21% of the population evicted and at risk of a second eviction are pregnant or breastfeeding women.⁴

79% of those at risk of eviction are women⁵.

This condition, compounded by the informal nature of the tenancy arrangements and due to their irregular status, makes them particularly vulnerable to sexual assault and sexual exploitation, including malicious sexual advances initiated by landlords.

LGBTI PEOPLE

LGBTI people have less access to livelihoods, are more vulnerable to labour and sexual exploitation, and experience more barriers and discrimination by service providers and state actors.

19 OF 41 incidents of violence against LGBTI people that occurred between January and August 2020 in Colombia took place in the period of preventive isolation⁶.

This risk particularly affects transgender women in an irregular situation and LGBTI people in the sex industry/commercial sex work, who report police negligence in responding to incidents against them due to discrimination on the basis of nationality, gender identity and the type of work they exercise.

GIRLS AND ADOLESCENTS

The scale and scope of violence against girls and adolescents has increased⁷.

+19,4% cases of violence against Venezuelan girls in Colombia in 2021, according to the Family Welfare Institute. The population most at risk are girls under the age of 14.

Forms of violence affecting girls include⁸:

- 1 Early marriages and unions with older men
- 2 Trafficking and sexual exploitation
- 3 Being "handed over" to other families for care or in servitude.
- 4 Sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by family members

Although adolescent girls face disproportionate risks of being subjected to gender-based violence, anecdotal evidence suggests a growing trend of children and young adolescents engaging in survival sex.

KEY PRIORITIES

1 ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING SERVICES

Provide continued availability of and increased access to lifesaving multisectoral GBV services including those to provide treatment for GBV survivors living with HIV and individuals engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.

2 CAPACITY BUILDING

Continue to build capacity of GBV service providers to provide inclusive quality services to survivors and to make safe and ethical referrals to multisectoral services.

3 CASH-BASED ASSISTANCE

Increase projects that provide cash assistance to men and women and LGBTI populations to be used for rent support and basic needs, with a particular focus on women at risk of GBV (including transgender women and sex workers/individuals engaged commercial sexual exploitation) and GBV survivors seeking to advance towards self-sufficiency.

4 COMMUNITY SPACES

Strengthening community-based coping mechanisms such as women's group networks and women and girls' safe spaces that allow women to enhance their resilience and increase their self-protection capacities to mitigate the impact of Gender Based Violence in destination countries.

5 LIVELIHOODS SUPPORT

Prioritise livelihood support and continue partnerships with other sectors to implement practical projects that contribute to economic empowerment and reduce the risk of transactional sex among Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

6 INVESTIGATION

Promote the development of studies, assessments, reports on the risks faced by youth, adolescents and children to ensure effective identification of their needs and appropriate response, in particular for the mitigation of trafficking and smuggling.

Footnotes

1 In Peru, Colombia and Ecuador, according to Care's Rapid Gender study, Venezuelan women seeking employment reported having been harassed, or having received job offers in exchange for sexual favours. In Ecuador, nearly 80% of women interviewed reported being harassed. A large number of Venezuelan migrant and refugee women are pressured or forced into transactional or survival sex. (Care, pág. 29).

2 ACAP thematic report, "Los Caminantes: necesidades y vulnerabilidades de los refugiados y migrantes venezolanos que viajan a pie" (pg. 1)

3 <https://cepaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/INFORME-FEMICIDIO-JUNIO.pdf>

4 R4V. Regional Evictions Survey, Protection Sector. February 2021. <https://www.r4v.info/es/desalojo>

5 Regional Protection Sector, OAS, R4V. "Diagnóstico de necesidades de protección e impactos de la COVID-19 para las personas refugiadas y migrantes de Venezuela" (TBL pg. 16)

6 ICBF (June 2019) "Estrategia niñez migrante".

z Girls on the Move, (Save the Children. Pg. 21)

9 Despite the lack of quantitative data on the issue, the Gender-Based Violence Subsector considers that sexual violence against adolescents continues to exist given the nature of the context of human mobility and the deterioration of living conditions. See the R4V and OAS study "Diagnóstico de necesidades de protección e impactos de la COVID-19 para las personas refugiadas y migrantes".

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