

UNHCR IN RORAIMA

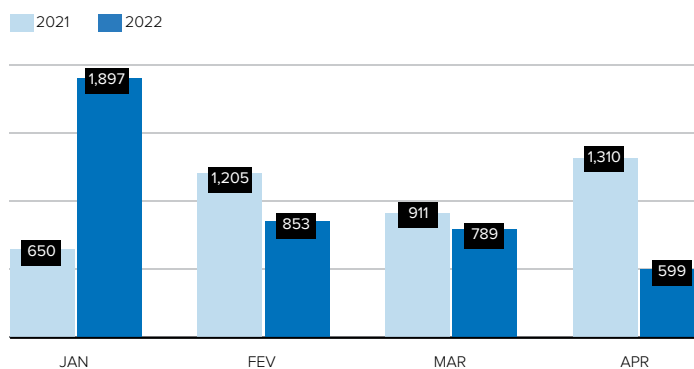


SHELTER

Between January and April 2022, UNHCR sheltered more than 4,000 refugees and migrants in Roraima. In 2021, UNHCR managed 13 emergency shelters in Roraima for vulnerable refugee and migrant population, including indigenous people. Currently, there are 9 shelters accommodating almost 7,000 individuals, with approximately 60% of the sheltered population staying less than 6 months. The average number of sheltered population in the first 4 months of 2022 did not change compared to the same period in 2021, which shows the effectiveness of the shelter consolidation process, as presented in the next section.

New entries in shelters per month (2021-2022)

Source: UNHCR Sub-Office Boa Vista



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SHELTER CONSOLIDATION PROCESS

Since mid-2021, UNHCR has given support to the Ministry of Citizenship and the Humanitarian and Logistic Task-Force (FT-Log) in the restructuring of the emergency shelters serving refugees and migrants in Boa Vista. This process entailed technical assessments, regular consultations with the sheltered communities, and operational coordination with authorities, partners and the Operation Welcome Task Force in an effort to ensure humanitarian standards.

In this context, on 24 February, the merging process of Rondon 1 and Rondon 4 shelters was concluded, achieving a capacity for 2,046 people, out of which 1,963 places were already occupied by end of April. This consolidation aimed to provide better reception conditions and services to the Venezuelan refugees and migrants residing in the new Rondon 1, while also introducing more standardized shelter management procedures and optimizing available resources.

In parallel, on 14 March, the new shelter Waraotuma a Tuaranoko was opened, after a complete restructuring of the old Rondon 3 shelter, to accommodate the indigenous population. The first group of residents to arrive at Tuaranoko consisted of 253 people from Tancredo Neves shelter, which was deactivated on the same day. In the following days, 280 people were relocated from Pintolândia shelter and 286 people were relocated from Nova Canaã, which was also deactivated. The relocation process of indigenous people followed a series of consultations and assemblies and was voluntary.

This shelter consolidation process aims to ensure minimum humanitarian standards for the sheltered families, given that the old facilities – especially in the case of indigenous people – were not fully adequate to that purpose, despite the interventions made in recent years.

Therefore, the results of specific needs and issues mapping in shelters, with shelter coordinators and sheltered community, led to the decision of the Federal Subcommittee on Reception and the Operation Welcome coordination for a shelter reorganization. A significant population growth, the limited living areas and the longer length of stay in shelters over the last months aggravated some of the problems, especially in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene, resulting in the need of rethinking Operation Welcome shelter spaces for indigenous people in Boa Vista.

The setting up of the new indigenous spaces reflected contributions from the communities that were going to live there and are conceived to meet the needs of the Warao indigenous people. Tuaranoko contains collective kitchens, double Refugee Housing Units with optimized air circulation, a soccer field, and a wide playground for children.

As planned by the Ministry of Citizenship and the FT-Log, in the context of the shelter response in Roraima, the indigenous shelter Pintolândia has been gradually deactivated. Just after the relocation process, around 180 people chose to remain in the space, receiving basic support from UNHCR until 8 April. Meanwhile, the unused local infrastructure was gradually demobilized by the FT-Log, while alternative options have been presented to the remaining population. Water supply, electricity and food delivery continue on site.



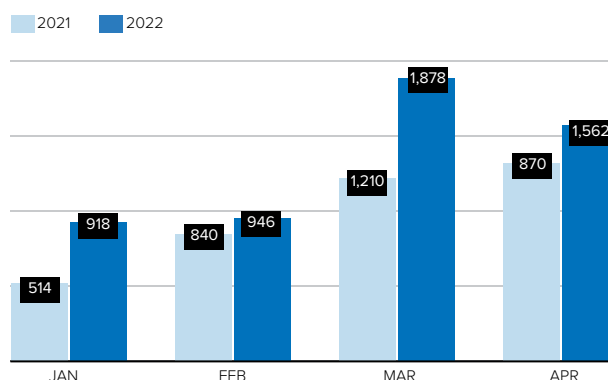
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REGISTRATION

So far in 2022, UNHCR has registered in Roraima around 5,304 new individuals, which correspond to a comparative growth of 150% of the numbers reached in the same period of the last year. The difference shows that the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the beginning of 2021 affected the number of migrants and refugees entering Brazil. Registration is a key process of the humanitarian response to ensure the integrity of protection systems, combating fraud, corruption, and crime, as well as supporting early identification of individual specific needs. To ensure an effective protection of the Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Roraima, UNHCR team registers people in the Reception and Documentation Centre (PITRIG) and in the shelters of Boa Vista and Pacaraima.

New registries per month (2021-2022)

Source: UNHCR Sub-Office Boa Vista



PROTECTION AND LOCAL INTEGRATION

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EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN PACARAIMA

Regular communication with the refugee and migrant communities on their needs are a key aspect of the UNHCR strategy while developing interventions for the autonomy of the affected population. Following this approach, in 2021, UNHCR conducted a participatory assessment in Sorocaima 1 and Tarau-Parú indigenous communities in Pacaraima, focused on indigenous youth perspectives for the future. Through this dialogue, the communities raised the lack of information regarding access to universities and scholarship opportunities as one of their main gaps.

On 23 and 24 February, UNHCR held feedback sessions in those communities, providing information on the right to education, special selective processes for indigenous and refugee persons in Brazilian universities, and public policies for student tenure in Brazil. In total, around 120 indigenous people participated in the activity. During the participatory assessment's feedback sessions, UNHCR donated school backpacks for all the students of the communities currently enrolled in schools. In Sorocaima 1, 197 persons received backpacks – of whom 115 Brazilian and 82 Venezuelan students. While strengthening the communication with the indigenous communities in Pacaraima, UNHCR seeks to empower not only refugees and migrants, but also the host community, contributing to their peaceful coexistence.

INITIATIVES TO BOOST INDIGENOUS PEOPLE INTEGRATION

Although the interiorization strategy has significantly contributed to the integration of more than 74,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Brazil, an important part of this population remains in the Roraima state. Solutions are designed to allow a sustainable transition towards self-reliance, especially for the indigenous Warao, Eñepa and Pemon populations living in shelters, who face more difficulties in accessing services and longer-term integration opportunities.

In Boa Vista, UNHCR together with the partner organization Serviço Jesuíta a Migrantes e Refugiados (SJMR) launched the Narunoko project (meaning “path” in Warao language), focused on providing support for up to 8 months to indigenous households in their transitioning out of shelters. The project envisages various components, such as trainings, cash assistance, core relief items distribution and protection follow-up, with monthly visits to the participating families. It is planned to initially support up to 30 indigenous families, who will receive information of financial planning, household budget management, social integration and cultural aspects of Brazil, prevention of gender-based violence, child and adolescent protection, prevention and reduction of the damages caused by the alcohol and drugs abuse in the community, as well as access to public services and social protection networks in Boa Vista.

After the training, the families will receive six instalments of financial support for housing expenses, and they will be monitored for the following two months to ensure a safe transition. As a complementary effort, along with other projects to provide more autonomy to Venezuelan indigenous people, “Narunoko” is expected to improve family income and reduce school dropout rates, allowing more and better opportunities to the most vulnerable refugees. In its first phase, the project is implemented in the Jardim Floresta and Waraotuma a Tuaranoko shelters.

Another important initiative focused on generating income and expand indigenous insertion in the local economy was the expansion of the partnership with the museum A Casa – Museu do Objeto Brasileiro, which was possible after communities of the Nova Canaã, Tancredo Neves and Pintolândia shelters started to live together in the Tuaranoko shelter. In order to integrate the new artisans, informative sessions about the project were held on 9 April, as well as workshops for mapping techniques, pricing and pre-registration in the Brazilian Handicraft Program. At the end of this process, around 65 new artisans were included in the project and are now participating in financial education activities and creation of artisanal associations in partnership with SJMR and other local partners.



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OPENING OF SUSTAINABILITY CENTER

Summing to global UNHCR’s effort to have greener practices and promote environmental protection, UNHCR in Boa Vista implemented the creation of a Sustainability Center as part of Operation Welcome. Located between the main shelters in Boa Vista city, the place was designed to disseminate technical knowledge about the environment and sustainability, with educational activities and cultural integration, involving Brazilians, refugees, and migrants. It was inaugurated on 5 April with the presence of the European Union Ambassador in Brazil, Ignacio Ybáñez, and local authorities. The place is run in partnership with Fraternidade Sem Fronteiras (FSF), working together with 7 young people from the Sustainability Committee, previously created in Boa Vista shelters.

Among the activities that take place on the center, there is a series of pilot projects, such as composting, biodigesters and aquaponics, where the participants learn about physical and chemical processes involved in generating energy, growing plants and recycling. There is also a seedbed and arboretum, planned to grow trees and ornamental plants that will be used on the afforestation of shelters and public areas in Boa Vista.

Julio César, a 15-year-old boy who lives in the 13 de Setembro shelter, is one proud participant of the activities. “The tree needs to be cared like a baby. If you don’t have the responsibility to give water and nutrients, make everything perfect, the plant will not grow properly. I learned how much water to put for each species and how deep to dig when planting. I like to have that knowledge”, he says.

Arturo de Nieves, officer in charge of Boa Vista sub-office highlighted during the inauguration of the space that “the doors of the Sustainability Center will be open so that schools, universities and other organizations can learn more about techniques for sustainable development and to get closer to the humanitarian response in the state and participating in activities promoted by these people for the environmental resilience of the region”.

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SCHOOL ACCESS

During the dialogues for relocation of people to the Tuaranoko shelter, an important need that arose among the indigenous population was the continuity of children in schools, since not all families would be able to immediately transfer their children to schools close to the new shelter. In response, in April, UNHCR started a project to guarantee transport vouchers for children who remained enrolled far from their new shelter, also guaranteeing transport for parents or guardians to accompany them. On 23 and 24 March, a mapping was carried out on the number of children who needed support with transport, with 97 children identified. Another 20 families were able to transfer their children to municipal and state schools in the 13 de Setembro neighbourhood, where the new shelter is located. The transport voucher is a palliative solution that seeks to ensure the continuity of these children's studies for up to 3 months, until access to schools close to the Tuaranoko shelter is guaranteed. At the same time, UNHCR has been advocating with the municipal and state education departments to facilitate de transfer enrolment procedures so that the children can go to schools in the surrounding area.

SUPPLY

Aiming to improve the logistic of the delivery of core relief items (hygiene and cleaning) to refugees and migrants sheltered in Boa Vista, UNHCR transitioned its warehouse management to a third part company located in Roraima. Since 9 February, the new management has allowed a more efficient response for emergency contexts and daily maintenance, while providing core relief items that will support the dignity and health of sheltered families in Boa Vista, Pacaraima and Manaus, but also support other states with deliveries of items to partners for distribution and in response to catastrophes.



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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.