

Venezuela

June 2019

- The operational climate has shown signs of improvement, notwithstanding a scathing Twitter attack unleashed on UNHCR by Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza following the release of the latest UNHCR/IOM figures on the Venezuelan exodus marking the 4 million outflows milestone.
- A positive development came from President Nicolas Maduro's decision to reopen the border with Colombia, which had been closed on February 23 to forestall the opposition's attempt to bring humanitarian aid into the country. The decision has led to a significant increase in cross-border flows.
- On the other hand, power and telecommunications outages and fuel shortages have continued to impair activities by field offices, implementing partners and even institutional counterparts, while daily life in many prioritised communities is being affected by a growing control exercised by irregular armed groups.
- On 26 June, the UNHCR Representative, the President of the National Commission for Refugees and the Ombudsperson of the Republic took part in a ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' "Casa Amarilla" marking the launch of the new provisional document for asylum-seekers in Venezuela.
- Inter-agency Coordination-Clusters were activated under the aegis of the Humanitarian Response Plan and the Humanitarian Country Team led by the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator. UNHCR has been entrusted with the leadership of the Protection Cluster and the Shelter NFIs and Energy Cluster.

HIGHLIGHTS

TOTAL ESTIMATED HOST COMMUNITIES BENEFICIARIES

+ 270,000

PERSONS OF CONCERN (GOVERNMENT FIGURES)

Refugees 8,712

Asylum seekers 142

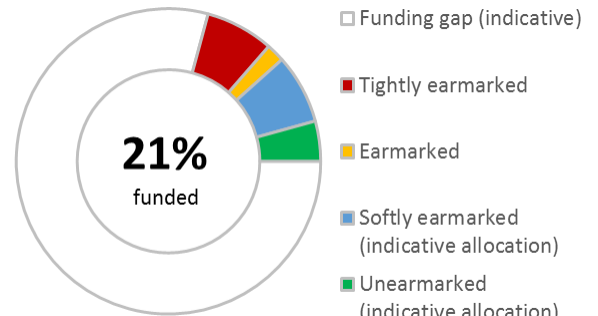
Source: National Refugee Commission Venezuela

Persons in refugee-like situation: 58,826

FUNDING (AS OF JUNE 2019)

USD 29.5 million

requested for Venezuela



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

87 Personnel:

70 national staff

1 affiliate workforce/employee

2 national interns

14 international staff

Offices:

1 Representation in Caracas

4 Field Offices in:

San Cristóbal (Táchira), Guasualito (Apure), Maracaibo (Zulia) and Ciudad Guayana (Bolívar)

1 Field Unit in Caracas



Working with Partners

- UNHCR is implementing community-based activities in 54 prioritised communities in eight states, primarily in the border areas with Colombia, Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago, but also in Greater Caracas and the nearby Miranda state. UNHCR is working with 15 implementing partners (Aliadas en Cadena, AZUL Positivo, Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Refugee Education Trust (RET), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Red Cross Zulia, Luz y Vida, Fe y Alegría, Sociedad Wills Wilde, Fogones y Banderas, Fundación Innocens, Fundación Casa Bonita and Fundación Soy un Guardian), as well as other local actors, including government institutions and NGOs.
- UNHCR holds regular coordination meetings with humanitarian and development actors to discuss the design, coordination and implementation of the protection response for persons of concern and host communities, including identification, provision of humanitarian assistance, monitoring of refugee rights and promotion of durable solutions.
- UNHCR liaises within the United Nations Country Team and with specific United Nations agencies to mainstream protection issues within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and other shared mechanisms.
- UNHCR leads the Protection Sector, an inter-agency space for joint analysis of protection gaps and coordination of protection response and advocacy.
- UNHCR's main Government partners are the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE), the Ombudsperson's Office and Child Protection Councils, as well as community councils.

Main Activities

Community-based Protection

- UNHCR promotes an innovative community-based approach to assess and respond to the protection needs and risks of persons of concern in Venezuela.
- UNHCR is strengthening communication with communities and organizing trainings for outreach volunteers and youth networks to enhance the identification and referrals of persons with specific needs.
- UNHCR is working with community structures such as community groups, women and youth networks to engage the community in the implementation of **projects** identified by the communities themselves, seeking to improve community response and ensuring the sustainability of projects and community processes. Since 2018, UNHCR and its partners have been implementing community projects on nutrition, health, water and sanitation and education.
- UNHCR is supporting a national protection network providing assistance and counselling to persons in transit, and safe spaces for the attention of sexual and gender-based survivors and children at risk. The safe spaces provide confidential case management, counselling, psychosocial support, medical aid and legal services.
- UNHCR supports a community centre in Caracas delivering multi-sectorial services from different actors to provide legal counselling, group information sessions on different topics such as rights and referral pathways, hygiene promotion, HIC prevention, as well as catch-up classes for children out of school and material assistance for persons with specific needs, among others.

Asylum and Durable Solutions

- UNHCR promotes international refugee law and refugee status determination procedures, encouraging State institutions to identify and refer persons in need of international protection to the asylum procedure. UNHCR and partners conduct capacity building activities with government institutions.
- In close coordination with UNHCR in Colombia, UNHCR Venezuela facilitates and supports the voluntary repatriation of refugees, ensuring that they are enabled to take well-informed and voluntary decisions and are repatriated in conditions of safety and dignity. Since 2015, UNHCR has supported the voluntary repatriation to Colombia of 194 persons of concern.

Activities implemented in June 2019

Working with Partners and Authorities

- The UNHCR-led Protection Cluster held its first inter-agency consultations with Government counterpart Maria Jimenez, National secretary of the “Sistema de Misiones y Grandes Misiones Hugo Chávez”. The meeting –focussed on Gender-Based Violence, Shelter, NFIs and Energy, General Protection and Child Protection- was also attended by representatives of the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Supreme Court, the Office of the Public Prosecutor and other relevant government institutions. Both the Humanitarian Needs Assessment and the Humanitarian Response Plan were presented and there was agreement on the need to establish a structured consultation process with Government.

World Refugee Day

- UNHCR conducted a number of activities in Field Offices and Caracas on the occasion of World Refugee Day. These included a recreational activity for children and adolescents in the Aramendi primary school in Guasdualito and information sessions on sexual and reproductive health in Puerto Paez, in the state of Apure, a photo exhibition in the main public library in San Cristobal and recreational activities in the Colinas de Maisanta community, in Táchira, a historical photographic exhibition in the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho University in Ciudad Bolivar, Bolivar, as well as community information activities in the Simon Bolivar I and Gran Sabana communities and a presentation of the 2018 Global Trends in Maracaibo, in the state of Zulia. In Caracas, UNHCR organised a community walk in the Antonio Jose de Sucre community in Petare, co-sponsored a marathon event in the context of the Step#WithRefugees global campaign and supported a ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ “Casa Amarilla” marking the launch of the new provisional document for asylum-seekers in Venezuela.

Community-based Protection

- UNHCR in the state of Bolivar organised and carried out a field mission by the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE) Caracas, the Regional Office of the Ombudsperson and partners HIAS and UNFPA in Santa Elena de Uairen and Tumeremo during which CONARE renewed 50 provisional asylum seeker documents and delivered six negative decisions. The field mission also visited the prioritised community of El Nazareno, where solar lamps were delivered to community organisations, community leaders and refugees, while UNFPA distributed dignity kits to local women. UNHCR Ciudad Guayana also delivered 225 solar-powered lamps, 425 jerry-cans, 225 water purification tablets and 225 hammocks to the community of Guanamo.
- UNHCR in the state of Apure distributed solar lamps and jerry cans in the community of Banco Largo, which will soon become inaccessible on account of the oncoming the rainy season. UNHCR Guasdualito also held informative sessions on the use of the menstrual cup in La Victoria and La Osa during which 49 of the 84 participants expressed their intention to use the device if provided with it. UNHCR Guasdualito also distributed jerry-cans and solar-powered lamps to 80 families in the community of Las Monas and to 29 families in the community of El Amparo, the latter distribution being implemented jointly with the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE).
- UNHCR in Zulia delivered solar lamps and jerry-cans to the SAIME immigration services and Migratory Police in Rio Limon, in the border region of the Guajira, as well as to the head of the local Integrated Defence Zone. UNHCR Maracaibo also delivered 91 solar lamps and 182 jerry-cans to various other community structures in the state of Zulia: 87% of beneficiaries were women, 10% of them pregnant or breastfeeding, and 22% were persons with disabilities, elderly or LGBTI persons.
- UNHCR in Táchira and partner HIAS carried out a joint mission to the prioritised community of Mata de Curo, Ayacucho Municipality, to present the WASH activities that will be carried out in the local school and walk-in clinic and deliver 110 jerry cans and 65 solar-powered lamps to the representatives of local community structures. Another 80 jerry-cans and 30 emergency lamps were delivered to community leaders in Colinas de Maisanta. Solar lamps and jerry-cans were

also delivered to vulnerable families in the Colinas de Maisanta prioritised community, the Regional Military Headquarters in San Cristóbal, the Migration Police and the SAIME immigration service in San Antonio.

- Within the CERF framework, UNHCR and the Red Cross in the state of Zulia carried out 44 nutritional evaluations in the Simon Bolivar I community, with 36% of persons examined being identified as malnourished, half of them boys under the age of 4 years and girls under the age of 17. UNHCR and the Red Cross also conducted 33 nutritional evaluations in the El Carmen community during which no cases of malnutrition were evidenced, but rather an increased incidence of obesity caused by unbalanced carbohydrate-heavy diets which may lead to diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Also within the CERF framework, UNHCR and the Red Cross delivered four information sessions on nutrition to 131 persons in two prioritized communities in Zulia. One case with severe malnutrition, a month-old child, was identified and referred to the local hospital and partner HIAS for transportation assistance. UNHCR also provided WASH information sessions to 127 community promoters and distributed 1,018 water purification tablets.
- UNHCR Field Office San Cristobal supported a CERF-funded nutritional brigade in the prioritised border community of Mata de Curo, in the Ayacucho Municipality of the state of Táchira. Staff from the regional National Nutrition Institute (INN) office evaluated 98 persons, three of whom –two children and one elderly person- were diagnosed as suffering from nutritional deficit. Anti-parasitic drugs were distributed for the children in the community. UNHCR also supported three CERF-funded nutritional brigades in the prioritised community of Laguna de García during which regional National Nutritional Institute staff evaluated 321 cases, of which 52 were diagnosed with a nutritional deficit.
- The UNHCR-supported Safe Spaces Network and UNFPA in Zulia delivered 98 dignity kits to women in transit in the prioritised community of Paraguaipoa, in the border Guajira Municipality. The activity provided the opportunity allowed to explain basic concepts of violence, existing referral pathway to the Safe Spaces Network and protection mechanisms.
- UNHCR partner Fundacion INNOCENS delivered three information sessions on the prevention of STD/HIV and early pregnancy in schools of the prioritized communities Simon Bolivar I and Villa Bolivariana I in the state of Zulia. The sessions were attended by 196 participants aged between 12 and 17, 38 of whom requested HIV testing and received individual counselling: 40% of participants admitted to not using birth control methods and protection against HIV and STDs.
- UNHCR and partner Fogones y Bandera, carried out a culinary integration activity in Los Caobos, in the state of Amazonas, between local refugees and asylum-seekers and indigenous leaders and populations of the Platanillal. The activity included the participation of the Amazonas Ombudsperson and students and teachers from the Jean Piaget Institute and the distribution of solar-powered lamps and jerry-cans. The same items were distributed to staff at the rural clinic in San José de el Ámparo and Red Cross volunteers, as well as to staff at the Barinas Office of the Ombudsperson, to communities, local actors, health centres and schools in Puerto Páez and the indigenous Jivi communities of Palomeco (Apure) and Sabaneta (Amazonas) and four vulnerable indigenous Yanomani families in Puerto Ayacucho.
- UNHCR partner Red Cross in the state of Bolivar carried out new anthropometric measurements in the communities of Cano Amarillo and Nuevas Claritas, reaching a total of 3,381 measurements, which represent 76% of the established goal (4,420 measurements). UNHCR held a meeting with the Red Cross to plan the delivery of nutritional kits to those who were identified as malnourished.
- UNHCR in Caracas and partners carried out 568 nutritional assessments in the San Isidro de Petare community.
- UNHCR and partner Red Cross Bolívar held a preventive health activity on Sexual and Reproductive Health in the bus terminal of Ciudad Bolívar, providing information on HIV, condoms and blood pressure and weight measurements to 144 persons. UNHCR also provided information on safe migration routes and on its mandate and compiled three profile questionnaires on people in mobility.
- UNHCR in the state of Táchira delivered an informative session on SGBV prevention and the regional safe spaces network to 30 women attending an activity in the local INTAMUJER women's protection institute in San Cristobal. A number of SGBV cases were identified and referred to the case manager. Jointly with INTAMUJER, UNFPA and IOM, UNHCR also visited the premises where a new women's safe house will be established. The premise needs major repairs and UNHCR will contribute to these following a technical evaluation.
- UNHC Field Office Guasualito supported a two-day Civil Registry Operation in the Platanillal indigenous community in the state of Amazonas that benefitted 367 local residents. The activity

was focused on reducing risks of statelessness and initiating documentation processes for children and involved over 70 officials from the local Office of the Ombudsperson, Civil Registry, Child Protection Council, Municipal Council for Children and Adolescents, National Electoral Council, SAIME migration and identification service and Municipal Indigenous Affairs Secretariat. During the operation, 67 files were opened to issue birth certificates to children and more than 120 cases related to problems of loss/expiry of identity card and first time emission were identified.

- UNHCR also supported the Platanilla health post to provide consultations for 265 persons, administer 165 doses of vaccines to 88 patients, mostly children, provide anti-parasitic medication to 107 people and hand out other medicines, including anti-malarials, to patients. Three very advanced malnutrition cases were identified, catalogued as emergencies and transported to hospital.
- Within the framework of the Safe Spaces Network in Zulia, UNHCR, partners and women's groups held a Sexual and Reproductive Health Brigade that provided gynaecological and obstetric services to 82 women, as well information on sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention during pregnancies, first aid for babies, hygiene, SGBV, individual counselling and psychosocial support. In addition, 50 persons, including 21 pregnant women, were tested for HIV and Syphilis.

Borders, Asylum and Durable Solutions

- UNHCR and institutional partner CONARE held joint workshops in the states of Apure, Táchira and Zulia to train staff in the management of the new SIGESREF (Sistema Integral de Gestion de Refugiados) database and registration system that will soon be launched by CONARE.
- UNHCR and partners in Bolivar provided logistical support to a visit to the state by CONARE Caracas in the course of which 29 provisional asylum-seeker documents were renewed and six negative decisions on applications were delivered in the community of Guarataro, Municipality of Sucre, four family groups applied for refugee status in the community of Morichalito, Municipality of Cedeno, and another four families in need of international protection were identified and attended to in Ciudad Guayana. The visit by CONARE Caracas also involved preparations for the opening of the local CONARE branch office in Bolivar.
- UNHCR and the Office of the Ombudsperson in the state of Bolivar held an eighth training session on International Refugee Law in Ciudad Bolívar. UNHCR in Ciudad Guayana also provided logistical support to the national President of CONARE in his visit to new regional office in Bolivar..
- UNHCR in Guasdalito held a workshop on human trafficking and asylum with the participation of representatives of the Office of the Ombudsperson office, IOM, the Criminal Judicial Circuit, CONARE and HIAS which was attended by 65 participants, including public officials, community promoters, law students and staff from humanitarian organizations.
- UNHCR in Zulia supported a CONARE task force in the finalisation of 60 Refugee Status Determination assessments for final decision in Caracas. All 60 cases, totalling 180 persons, were forwarded with a recommendation for the recognition of refugee status.
- UNHCR and CONARE in Zulia held a joint community information session on International refugee Law attended by 59 participants in the Simon Bolivar I community, including members of the UNHCR-supported youth and women's networks. On the occasion, CONARE registered two new cases of asylum seekers who were identified during the activity.
- In the framework of the joint work plan between UNHCR and the Office of the Ombudsperson in Zulia, three workshops on human rights and the responsibilities of the Ombudsperson were held in the prioritized communities of Guana, Paraguaipoa and El Carmen, with a total attendance of 70.
- UNHCR jointly with CONARE supported the delivery of Refugee Status verdicts and renewal of provisional documents, attending to 80 cases (132 persons) during an official act that took place in the Office of the Ombudsperson in the city of Barinas.
- UNHCR Field Office San Cristobal held jointly with IOM a training session on the prevention of human trafficking and its nexus with asylum that was attended by 27 participants from the national and municipal police, police cadets and civil servants.
- UNHCR Field Office Maracaibo held two workshops on international protection and regional protection mechanisms available to Venezuelans in transit for Caritas staff working in the new transit centre recently opened in the Guajira and to Jesuit Refugee Service staff in Zulia. UNHCR also provided solar lamps, jerry-cans and furniture for the new transit centre in the Guajira

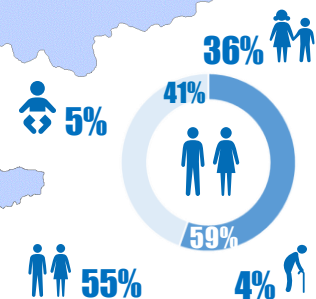
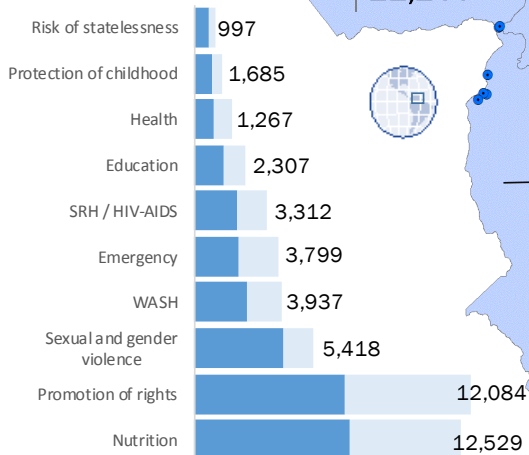
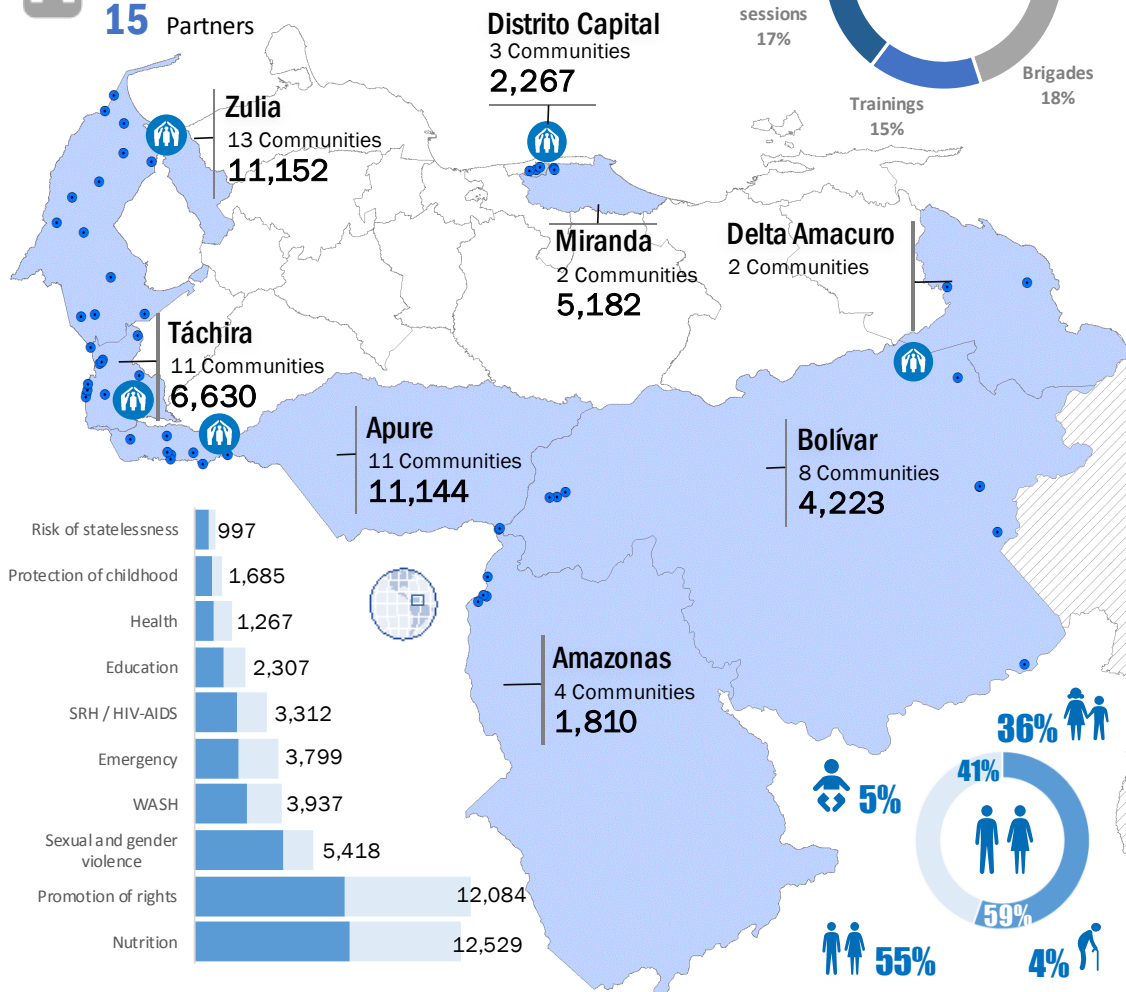
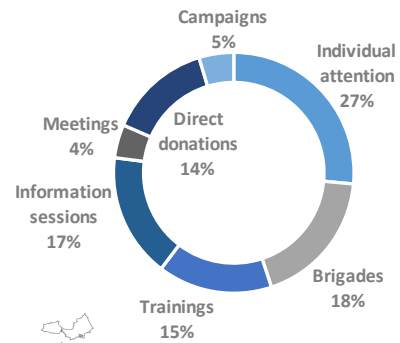

UNHCR
 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

PERSONS ASSISTED BY UNHCR

+47,000 Persons assisted


54 Communities


12 Project Partnership Agreements


15 Partners

JANUARY - JUNE 2019
Donors

UNHCR Venezuela wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors –the European Union, Italy and the UN Program on HIV/AIDS – and the following donors of non-earmarked funds: Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland and private donors in Spain and the Republic of Korea.

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