



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



# PROTECTION MONITORING

## VENEZUELA SITUATION

UPDATE #2

JULY - DECEMBER 2019

*This report provides a narrative explanation for the findings of UNHCR and its partners protection monitoring activities carried out from July to December 2019. The structure of this report mirrors the sequence of the questions asked of participating individuals. This reports is not intended to be a protection assessment nor does it replace any UNHCR policy or legal guidance.*

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# 1. OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

The Latin American and Caribbean region continues to face an unprecedented movement of refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereinafter Venezuela). With no clear prospects that this massive population outflow will cease in the foreseeable future, it is estimated that the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide will increase from 4.8 million recorded in December 2019 to 6.5 million in December 2020<sup>1</sup>. The vast majority of displaced Venezuelans, 80%, remain in countries of the Americas, placing considerable pressure on governments and host communities. To ensure that the humanitarian, protection, and integration needs of

refugees and migrants from Venezuela and of affected host communities are identified, planned for and met, a coordinated and coherent approach is required in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) .

Since the onset of the crisis, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have demonstrated continuous solidarity with and generosity towards Venezuelans, with many of them maintaining an open border policy and adjusting legislation to meet the needs of refugees and migrants. However, this solidarity is at risk.



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*Ecuador. Venezuelans wait at a border crossing point between Colombia and Ecuador.*

Governments in the region have resorted mostly to the use of temporary legal stay arrangements to address the situation of Venezuelans residing within their borders. The introduction of temporary permits (PEP in Colombia, PTP in Peru) or the issuance of special stay visas (Chile and more recently Ecuador) have allowed Venezuelans to access most of the countries within the region during the last years. By the end of 2019, governments had granted more than two million residency permits to Venezuelans.

Nonetheless, the unprecedented displacement of refugees and migrants from Venezuela has had significant demographic impact in recent months, putting more pressure on transit and destination countries. The unparalleled influx continues to place immense strain on host countries, ranging from stresses on public services and budgets to negative public opinions towards the Venezuelan population. New or revised entry requirements for refugees and migrants from Venezuela in several countries have been implemented leading to increased irregular border crossings and associated protection risks for refugees and migrants. In this context, a rising number of Venezuelans remain in irregular situations for reasons that include lack of documentation, length of administrative procedures and restrictions, long waiting periods and high application fees for visas, among others. Venezuelans who are not able to regularize their status have become more vulnerable

to different forms of exploitation, abuse, violence and discrimination, smuggling, trafficking and negative coping mechanisms<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the response to the Venezuelan Situation has been considerably underfunded if compared to other forced displacement crisis around the world.

More than 760,000 Venezuelan asylum applications had been registered by end 2019<sup>3</sup>. Existing asylum systems have proven to face challenges to address the increasing demand and process claims in a manner that is sufficiently expedited and flexible. In December 2019, a good precedent was set by the Brazilian CONARE, as the regional refugee definition was applied for a group of some 20,095 asylum seekers who have been recognized in an expedited manner. Other governments with similar backlogs are encouraged to take similar approaches to facilitate the access to international protection of those in need<sup>4</sup>. The 2020 response to the outflow of refugees and migrants requires a dual approach, which should not forget the importance of addressing the most urgent protection needs and concerns, while ensuring that we work towards more sustainable models and solutions from a longer-term perspective. In this regard, data-collection and analysis continue playing a key role to enable evidence-based decisions and actions for the protection, assistance and support to the local integration of refugees and migrants from Venezuela and their hosting communities.

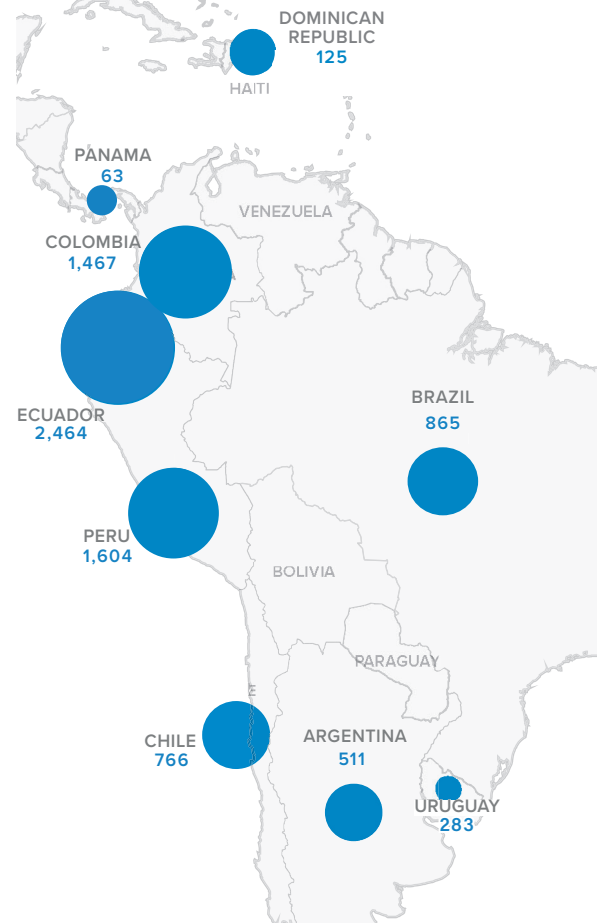
## 2. METHODOLOGY

To collect, analyze and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data and information on the protection environment, protection trends, protection risks - threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities of the Venezuelan refugees and migrants, UNHCR operations in the Americas have embarked in the implementation of Protection Monitoring activities at a regional level. Through the implementation of a regional Protection Monitoring Tool, UNHCR Offices in the Americas have been systematically and regularly collecting, verifying and analyzing information in transit and destination countries over an extended period of time in order to identify violations of rights and protection risks for populations of concern for the purpose of informing effective responses<sup>5</sup>.

Protection monitoring is a core UNHCR activity which aims at ensuring an adequate, thorough and timely understanding of the protection situation of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons from the onset of their displacement cycle and until a solution is found. The action-oriented nature of protection monitoring allows UNHCR to identify and analyze trends regarding vulnerabilities, protection risks and priority needs based on evidence and to adapt to the needs and priorities of our beneficiaries. Protection monitoring is conducted through different methods, including individual interviews, focus groups discussions, and observations of UNHCR and partners in countries of origin, transit and destination.

### Number of individuals monitored during the period

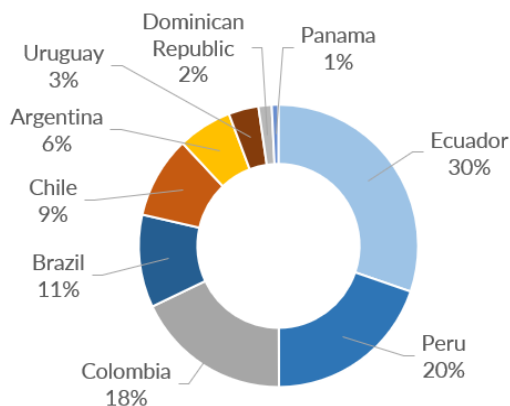
The distribution of the population surveyed by country is shown in the map and it is represented by a circle.



The analysis contained in this report is mostly based on individual/household interviews obtained through a convenience sampling approach. The primary data is complemented with information available to UNHCR through other means, including thematic assessments, and reports from partners and other stakeholders. During the period cover by this report, UNHCR and its partners have conducted **8,147 protection monitoring interviews** with Venezuelan refugee and migrant households in **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay**.



**INTERVIEWS PER COUNTRY**



\* Access to Rights sections (Employment, Housing, Education, Health and Food Security) the total number of interviews is 5,141, comprised of households who had been in the host country for over 3 months.

The questionnaire included questions for the individuals interviewed as well as the persons that conform the household (reaching over **22,084 individuals**). Adults between 18 – 59 represent 67% of those covered by Protection Monitoring activities in the region, 31% are children and 2% are persons over 60 years old. The gender composition of the sample is balanced, with 51% of persons who self-identified as males and 49% as females.

Data collection for Protection Monitoring was conducted at border points, and in urban areas where there was a reported concentration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. Interviews were conducted in migration and asylum offices, reception centers, NGO premises, bus terminals and other public areas. It should be noted that protection monitoring in nature implies a continuous collection of protection data.

## 3. HIGHLIGHTS

### Access to territory and asylum

- The irregular status of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in countries of destination remains a key concern. The percentage of persons interviewed without any form of regular stay rose from **34%** in the first semester of 2019 to **44%** in the second semester. At the same time, persons residing in destination countries on a tourist visa went from **29% to 14%**. Revised requirements for the access to the territory, lack of documentation, lengthy administrative procedures, long waiting periods and expensive visa application fees have increased the risk of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to remain in irregular situations.
- The Protection Monitoring activities observed an increase in the number of irregular entries across borders. **23% of the population surveyed mentioned to have resorted to irregular entry** mostly due to lack of documentation (74%). **8%** of the persons interviewed said to have been refused entry. Out of those who have reported denial of entry at borders, 37% referred to denial of entry in Chile, 23% in Ecuador, 16% in Colombia, and 12% in Peru. Revised requirement for the access to the territory in countries of the region have caused the number of irregular border crossings to increase (See section on Access to territory).
- Protection Monitoring evidences increasing number of Venezuelans intending to apply for asylum. Moreover, the percentage of persons interviewed who have applied for asylum rose from **16% to 20%**, which is likely to have been caused by the increasing obstacles to cross-borders movements and the



*Colombia. Thousands of refugees and migrants from Venezuela wait to enter Ecuador from Colombia ahead of new entry visa requirements.*

ongoing rejections due to lack of compliance with the new requirements. Among those who had not applied for asylum, **31% expressed their intention to apply** either in the country of monitoring or in

another country. Out of those who did not apply, 48% was not aware of the existing procedures or entitlements, revealing persistent challenges in the access to information by persons of concern.

### Priority needs

- **Employment, access to legal stay arrangements/regularization, and documentation** remain the three main priority needs as expressed by interviewed Venezuelan refugees and migrants. If compared with the results of the first semester, it could be observed that access to employment remains as the most relevant priority for Venezuelans, while access to legal stay/regularization has become the second priority - instead of access to housing- and documentation comes third.
- **60%** of those interviewed reported to be either **unemployed or working informally**. 21% of them reported to be working as street sellers. The employment situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela has seriously deteriorated because of displacement. If compared with the main occupation prior to leaving their country of origin, only 13% of interviewees were unemployed or working informally.
- Information reported in the context of Protection Monitoring interviews have revealed a series of

- labour/professional occupations, that according to identified risk profiles, could potentially be in need of international protection under the 1951 Convention, including civil servants (7%), business owners (5%), military personnel (2%), police officers (1%), University professors (1%) and journalists (1%).
- **Access to legal stay arrangements/regularization and documentation** come across as the second and third priorities for those interviewed. This is explained by the fact that **87% of the Venezuelans interviewed in the context of the Protection Monitoring did not have any form of medium or long term solution for their legal status in the hosting country**, including 44% already staying in an irregular situation. Regularization initiatives implemented by Governments in the region through the implementation of temporary stay permits and/or humanitarian visas remain a key priority to overcome this challenge and stabilize the existing population in their territories.



## Persons at risk and protection incidents

- 18% of families interviewed in the context of the Protection Monitoring had to resort to **serious negative coping mechanisms**. Among them, 39% had at least one member **at risk due to their specific demographic profile** or because they had to resort to serious negative coping mechanisms, including survival sex, begging or sending children under 14 to work.
- 22% of the total numbers of individuals covered by the exercise had reported **one or more specific needs\*** (4,932), including single heads of household (2,787), persons with critical or chronic medical condition (2,029 persons), pregnant or lactating women (1,485), persons with disability (1,174), separated children (134), unaccompanied children (59), and elders at risk (189).
- **Protection incidents were reported by 22%** of the respondents. Those interviewed reported one or more protection incidents suffered or witnessed by themselves, and/or his/her family members, of which the most prevalent was robbery (28%), followed by intimidation and threat (18%) and physical violence (17%). In total, 2,444 protection incidents in countries of origin, transit and destination have been recorded, of which 67% of the incidents reported took place in Venezuela, followed by Peru with 14%, Colombia with 13% and Ecuador with 11% .



Peru. UNHCR meets Venezuelan refugees and migrants at a bus station to better understand their needs.

*\* In every emergency, some refugee or IDP groups or individuals face heightened protection risks because of their circumstances or the context. Those at higher risk include persons commonly known as 'persons with specific needs' who face specific barriers due to discrimination, their identity, or other factors that prevent them from fully enjoying their rights or accessing services they need. See UNHCR, Guidance on the Use of Standardized Specific Needs Codes, 2009<sup>7</sup>*

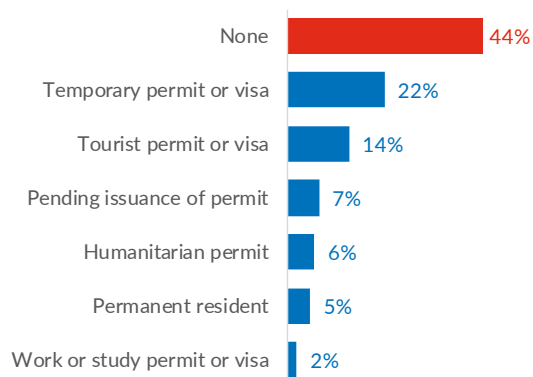
## 4. LEGAL STATUS

### 1. Legal status and documentation

The irregular status of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in countries of destination remains a key concern that seriously affects their protection situation and local integration perspectives. **44% of the population covered by UNHCR Protection Monitoring activities was not in possession of any type of legal stay or residence permit in the country of destination**, which includes individuals who entered irregularly, as well as those who overstayed their visas or stay permits and are not able to access pathways to regularization. 14% of interviewed cases reported to hold a tourist permit or visa, 22% referred to a temporary permit, and only 5% were holding some type of permanent residence in the hosting country.

To address the challenge of irregularity faced by many Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region, States continued advancing during the second half of 2019 the implementation of a series of pathways to facilitate the regularization of Venezuelan refugees and migrants as a way to stabilize their existing populations and put in place regularization mechanisms. Positive developments have been registered in Ecuador where the Government announced the implementation of an Administrative Registry and the possibility to access a temporary residence visa based on humanitarian grounds for Venezuelans who meet certain requirements. In Colombia, the government renewed the special state permit for Venezuelans (PEP).

#### Type of residence permit or visa



**44% do not have any type of legal stay or residence permit**

The [Quito Process](#) provides States with an adequate environment for multilateral cooperation and responsibility sharing in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees<sup>6</sup>. [Legal stay and access to documentation](#) has been a cornerstone of the technical and political discussions and was referred to in the Quito Declaration in September 2018 and the Quito Action Plan in November 2018. The roadmap of the Buenos Aires Chapter and the Colombia Chapter outline some interventions to harmonize the approach to the Venezuelan displacement, and ensure access to the territory and rights for those in need.

Protection Monitoring activities implemented by UNHCR and its partners continued exploring the situation of documentation of the Venezuela population, and collected information on the type of documents held by the respondents and their validity. **61% of the respondents mentioned not to be in possession of a valid passport**, and 42% of the respondents claimed that they did not have or did not carry a birth certificate. However, most of the respondents (89%) confirmed to have a valid ID document from their country of origin.

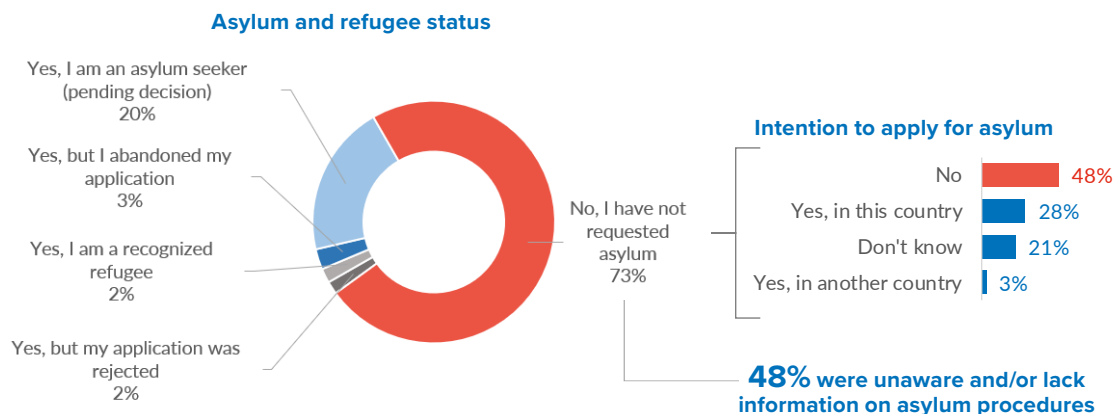
Regarding the passport validity and taking into consideration the obstacles faced by Venezuelans to have their passport renewed, several host countries have put in place exceptions to recognize the validity of expired Venezuelan passports for the purpose of visa/residence permit processing.

UNHCR Protection Monitoring activities continued collecting information on the access of children born to Venezuelan parents abroad to register the birth of the child. **97% of births reported by interviewed cases have been registered.** Colombian authorities adopted an exceptional and temporary measure to prevent the risk of statelessness by granting the access to Colombian nationality to children born to Venezuelan parents. The measure benefits children born in Colombia between 1 January 2015 and up to two years from the date the measure was adopted (until August 2021).



*Brazil. A Venezuelan family registered on arrival to Brazil.*

## 2. Asylum and international refugee protection considerations



20% of those interviewed in the context of Protection Monitoring activities affirmed to have lodged an asylum application (as compared to 16% in the first semester).

In addition, intention to apply for asylum either in the country of monitoring or elsewhere has **risen from 26% in the first semester to 28% in the reporting period.**

48% of the persons who did not apply for asylum mentioned that they were unaware and/or lack information on asylum procedures. Data collected highlights the need for reinvigorated efforts to provide information to persons on the move so that informed decisions can be made. In addition, over 22% referred to their preference for alternative legal stay pathways which are considered faster or less confusing or

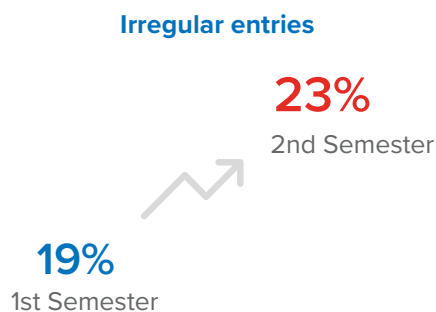
complicated and did not see an added value in applying for asylum.

In line with UNHCR Guidance Note on the International Protection of Venezuelans<sup>4</sup> issued in May 2019, UNHCR encourages States to explore the use of differentiated case processing modalities, including group-based approaches to determine the status of Venezuelan refugees, and to base their decisions not only on the Geneva Convention grounds, but also in the regional refugee definition of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. The experience of Brazil has allowed asylum authorities to diligently manage their backlog, while applying solid international protection considerations to the situation of Venezuelans who seek asylum in Brazil.

### 3. Regular entry

Protection Monitoring activities observed an increase in the number of irregular entries along some borders. The overall percentage of reported irregular entry **increased from 19% to 23%** if compared to the first semester report. The highest percentage of irregular entry was reported in Colombia (61%), followed by Chile, (27%), Ecuador (22%), and Peru (17%). By contrast, the percentages reported in Argentina and Uruguay are smaller than 1%.

In Colombia, refugees and migrants from Venezuela continue to face protection risks associated with irregular access to the territory, particularly in areas with the presence of illegal armed groups. Population movements across the Colombian-Venezuelan border are further complicated due to the presence of armed actors. At the Colombian borders with Venezuela and Ecuador, a reconfiguration of illegal armed actors and criminal activities has been observed, mainly due to



the transformation and territorial reorganization of the illegal armed structures present in the Colombian territory, as well as guerrilla groups.

Around the middle of 2019, several states in the region began to implement visa (new or renewed) requirements for entry which might have resulted in increasing irregular movements across borders, and the challenge of refugees and migrants undertaking new and potentially more risk-prone routes to irregularly transit or access destination countries.

As of June 2019, all Venezuelan nationals who visit Chile must obtain a tourist visa that allows them to enter the country and remain in Chile for a maximum period of 90 days. In addition, Venezuelans could request a democratic responsibility visa (DRV) which allows a temporary residence permits for special reasons. The visa can be requested in Chilean consulates abroad and can take up to several months. Decisions on safe passage are discretionary.

In Ecuador, Executive Decree No. 826 adopted on 26 July 2019 established the requirement for Venezuelan nationals to obtain an entry visa in order to enter Ecuador. Since the decree entered into force, a significant reduction of regular entries to Ecuador was registered, with an average of 23 daily regular entries recorded during the month of September, compared to an average of over 2,000 throughout the year.

Resolution No. 000177-2019 adopted by the Peruvian national migration authority established the requirement to produce a visa for Venezuelans to enter Peru as of 15 June 2019. Although the visa is free of charge and can be obtained at the Peruvian consulates in Venezuela, Colombia and Peru, the documentary requirements to obtain the visa include a passport (valid or expired) and certified criminal record. Exceptions on humanitarian grounds are foreseen in cases of family reunification (children and nuclear family members), pregnant women and other adults in situation of “extreme vulnerability”, adults of 60 years of age.

Given the new entry requirements, persons who would have been previously allowed entry along the Andean corridor had to look for alternatives to reach their destination, including irregular crossings, remaining at the border countries (Colombia and Brazil) or requesting asylum, if/when allowed. Increased situations of rejection at borders have been registered in the course of Protection Monitoring activities. 605 individuals reported to have been refused entry, including 218 in Chile, 135 in Ecuador, 93 in Colombia and 68 in Peru.



*Colombia. Good Samaritan opens her home to Venezuelans in need.*

## 5. PROTECTION INCIDENTS

8,147 Interviews

2,444 Incidents



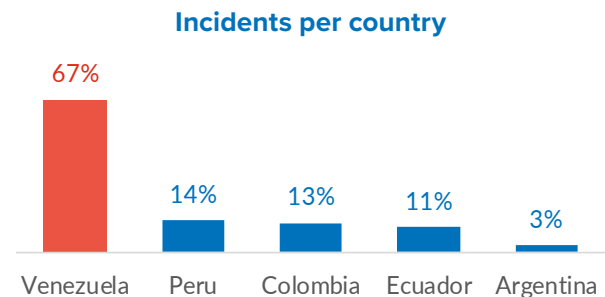
Refugees and migrants from Venezuela continued to be exposed to protection-related and security incidents in the country of origin, transit and destination. **2,444 protection incidents** have been reported, affecting **22% of the families** covered by this exercise, who either suffered (73%) or witnessed (27%) the incidents.

**67% of the incidents** reported by respondents took place in **Venezuela**, with a relatively high percentage of intimidation or threats (19%), physical violence (16%), inhuman or degrading treatment (6%), extortion (6%), kidnapping (5%) and arbitrary arrest (4%). Caracas/DC, Zulia, Carabobo, Aragua, Lara and Bolívar are the areas of Venezuela that concentrate most of the reported incidents.

Incidents reported outside Venezuela are more prevalent in Peru (14%), Colombia (13%), Ecuador (11%) and Argentina (3%). Incidents of sexual harassment and labor exploitation have been reported as protections

risks mainly affecting Venezuelan refugees and migrants in transit and host countries. 66% of the incidents related to labour exploitation are reported in Ecuador and Peru alone and 84% of the incidents on sexual harassment were reported in Peru, Colombia and Ecuador. Sexual harassment incidents (50) were mainly reported by female interviewees between 18-59 years old, while reported situations of forced labour (38) have mainly affected both men and women between 18-59 years old.

Among the incidents reported in transit and destination countries, **40% of situations were reported by individuals in an irregular situation** (with no permit or visa); 20% by individuals who hold some type of temporary permit or visa, and 13% by individuals holding a tourist permit or visa. It is worth to mention that approximately 1 in 5 interviewees with no permit or visa have reported some sort of protection and/or security-related incident.

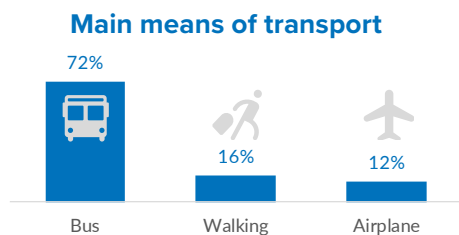


## 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT

Regarding the cycle of displacement, **14% of the families** interviewed mentioned that they had **changed their place of residence within Venezuela** prior to leaving the country of origin. Families who reported having been displaced were mainly from Caracas, Zulia and Carabobo departments. The most commonly used mean of transport by Venezuelan refugees and migrants is bus (72%) followed by walking (16%) and airplane (12%).

This varies substantially depending on the country of monitoring. Those who arrived in Argentina reported to have predominantly used airplanes (63%), buses (37%) or cars (1%), while those who arrived in Ecuador did it by bus (66%), walking (30%) or hitch hiking (5%).

One of the most common consequences of displacement is family separation. **74% of the respondents mentioned that they have been separated from one or more members of the family** with whom they were residing in Venezuela.



\* For more information about Communication Needs Assessment: <https://r4v.info/es/documents/download/73683>

The reasons for the separation were mostly related to family members remaining in country of origin (75%), or country of transit (12%), family members moving forward (7%) and, in some cases, separation due to protection incidents affecting family unity, like arbitrary detention and/or arrest.

Venezuelan refugees and migrants are still struggling to meet their basic needs with **23% of the persons** interviewed resorting to some kind of **negative coping strategy** to be able to survive along the displacement route. Begging, collecting food leftovers, sending children to work and resorting to survival sex are among the negative coping mechanisms referred by respondents during Protection Monitoring interviews. Other coping mechanisms which were also used included the reduction in the quantity of the food eaten to prioritize children, resorting to family support, selling property, asking for loans or relying on humanitarian assistance to survive.

Regarding the means used by Venezuelan refugees and migrants to plan their journey, 3,308 persons reported that their main source of information was **talking to other co-nationals** along the route, followed by **WhatsApp** (3,255) and **Facebook** (1,823), Internet browsers, and Instagram.

**79%** of sources of information used by interviewers were based on Internet\*



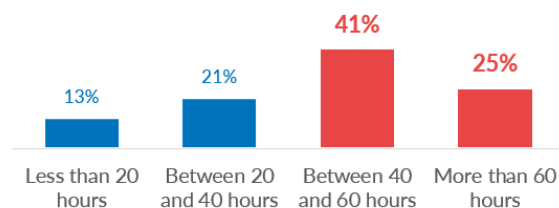
## 7. PRIORITY NEEDS

The main priority needs identified by respondents are **employment, access to legal stay arrangements/regularization, and documentation** (as well as access to work, housing and food), in contrast with the previous semester, when access to housing was considered the second priority need. Some of the rationale behind the shift has been explained above (See Section on Legal status).

Access to employment is key to the process of integration but it is proven to be challenging when a population is characterized by lack of legal forms of stay and documentation, as well as poor socio economic conditions. It is of concern that over **80% of the interviewees do not have a contract**, 65% work over 40 hours week, of which 25% work over 60 hours, which shows the precarious and often exploitative conditions that refugees and migrants from Venezuela are exposed to. (See Employment section).

Access to housing, food and health are also considered key priorities. Along this line, the data collected also reveals that **65% of those interviewed mentioned to face difficulties to cover the most pressing survival needs** (food, water, transport, rent and utilities) and only 22% have no difficulties paying pressing or other needs.

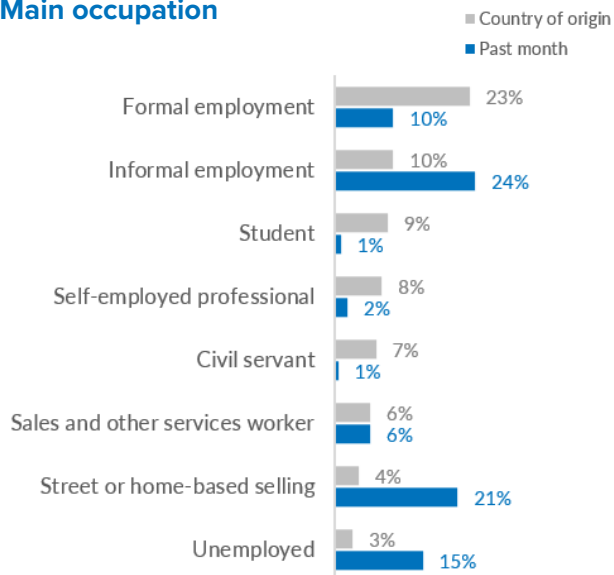
Hours of work per week



## 8. EMPLOYMENT

One key challenge referred by interviewed refugees and migrants from Venezuela is access to the formal labour market. Precarious working conditions are the norm rather than the exception, with 80% of interviewed individuals working without any contractual arrangement and over 66% exceeding 40 hours of work per week, and 25% working over 60 hours a week. In addition, several protection incidents in the workplace were reported, including perceived discrimination due to the nationality, harassment, including sexual harassment.

### Main occupation



Respondents also refer to the limited use of their knowledge and skills in the countries of asylum. We can observe a potential underuse of talent, and a tendency to resort to informal jobs if we compare their main occupation in their country of origin and their current occupation.

If compared with the main occupation prior to leaving the country of origin, we observe that the percentage of informality and unemployment goes down to 13%. **60% of those interviewed reported to be either unemployed or working informally** and 21% of them are street sellers.



Colombia. Employment represents one of the main priority needs identified by Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

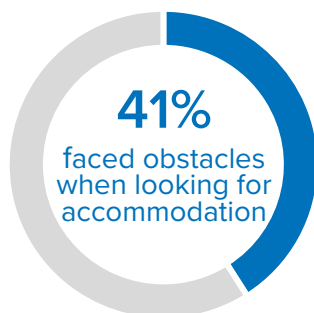
## 9. HOUSING

41% of the respondents confirmed to have faced obstacles when looking for accommodation, mostly due to lack of resources, discrimination based on nationality, lack of guarantors and documentation among others.

81% of Venezuelan refugee and migrant families covered by the Protection Monitoring are in rental arrangements, of which 18% referred to rent a room. 27% of the sample mentioned that between 2-5 members of the family are living in single bedroom apartments and 50% referred to only have access

to shared bathrooms, 46% to private toilets, and 4% reported not to have access to toilets.

The housing typology shows the prevalence of an urban refugee population which often faces difficulties to integrate, particularly in the first months after their arrival to the host country. It should be noted that only 3% of those interviewed mentioned that they were staying in collective shelters. The situation of households living in the streets is relatively small in terms of percentage, but it is still used as a coping mechanism by 3% of the respondents and their families.



### Main obstacles found

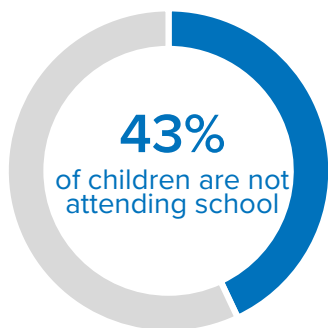


# 10. EDUCATION

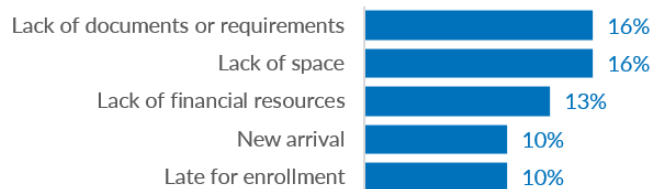
Access to education for children continues to be a challenge. **43% of the children** represented by the sample were reportedly **not attending school** during the second half of 2019. This represents a decrease of 10% if compared with the results of the first semester. The reasons for not attending school seem to have also shifted considerably. While the previously reported reasons were linked to respondents and their family members being on transit or having arrived recently, the most prevalent reason mentioned in the last 6 months of 2019 refers to **lack of space/quotas** in educational institutions (16%), followed by **lack of documentation** (16%) required by schools for the enrollment of refugee and migrant children.



*Peru. A young boy writes his journal at the national border centre in Tumbes, border between Ecuador and Peru.*



## Main reasons for not attending school

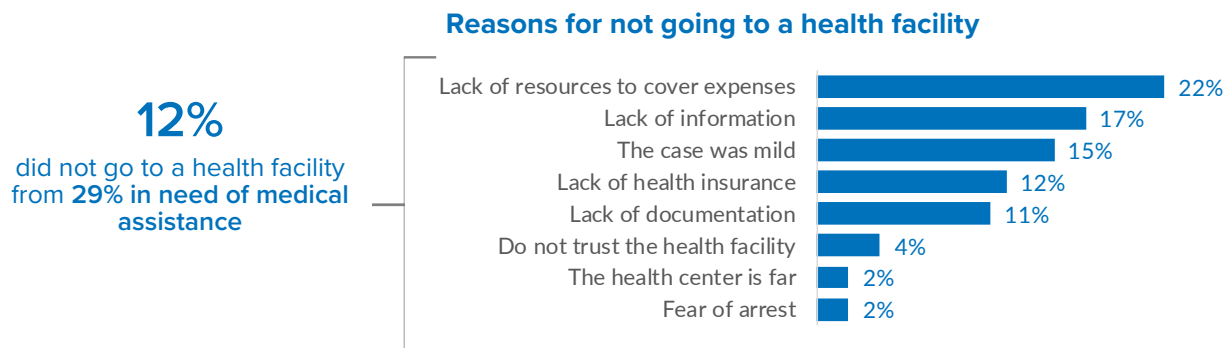


# 11. HEALTH

Twenty-nine percent of the persons interviewed mentioned to have faced some health-related issue during their stay in the country of monitoring. Out of those, 88% approached a health facility, and 89% of them received some sort of medical attention. This shows that there is mostly a reliance on public health systems, which are perceived as mostly accessible and available for refugees and migrants despite the fact that a considerable proportion of them are not in possession of any type of legal stay or residence permit in the country of destination.

For those who decided not to approach a health facility when they faced a health-related issue, the lack of necessary resources to cover certain

expenses (medicines, specialist doctors, etc.), lack of documentation, and lack of health insurance were mentioned as the main reasons. It should be noted that access to healthcare services varies considerably from country to country and regional data aggregates the information. In the case of Colombia, the percentage of persons who referred to obstacles to access health facilities is relatively higher and reaches 28% (in comparison with the regional average -13%-), mostly due to the fact that a substantial percentage of those interviewed did not have any form of documentation due to their irregular migratory status which determines their access to public health care.



## 12. FOOD SECURITY

Respondent households participating in the Protection Monitoring were asked about their average daily food consumption, and 60% confirmed to eat an average of 3 meals a day, 29% two meals a day, and 5% only one meal a day.

1,738 respondents reported that they had decided to reduce the quality or quantity of food consumption to cover other basic needs, and 1,408 adults mentioned

that they had reduced their food consumption to prioritize their children.

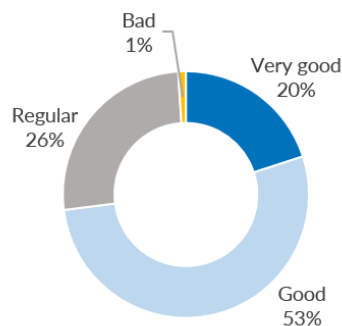
Moreover, access to food is still considered among the most pressing priority needs expressed by Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the Protection Monitoring interviews, after access to employment, access to legal stay arrangements/regularization, documentation and access to housing.

## 13. PROSPECT FOR INTEGRATION / DISCRIMINATION

Eighty-four percent of the respondents confirmed to feel safe in the place where they live and 73% evaluated their relationship with local community as very good or good, which shows a similar trend to the information collected during the first half of 2019.

However, 44% of the households interviewed mentioned to have felt discriminated in the country of transit or asylum, mostly due to their nationality. Data collected in the context of Protection Monitoring activities is consistent with available reports on the increasing prevalence of xenophobic attitudes and toxic discourses in social media directed to Venezuelans in transit and receiving countries.

Interaction with the local community



# 14. NEGATIVE COPING MECHANISMS ON ROUTE AND IN COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM

To make up for economic shortcomings, over **23%** of Venezuelan refugees and migrants who participated in Protection Monitoring interviews continue to apply a **variety of negative coping strategies**. Food-related coping strategies range from reducing the number of meals per day to prioritize children access to food, while livelihood strategies range from incurring in begging activities, putting children to work and even reported cases of survival sex.

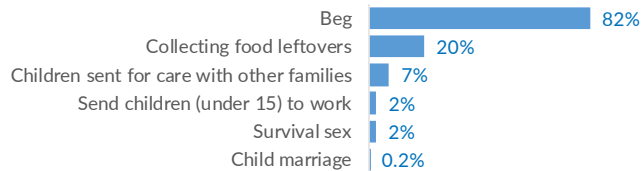
The need to resort to serious negative coping mechanisms are reported more prominently along the route (23%) than in **countries of destination (18%)**, which shows the strategic importance of ensuring that humanitarian assistance is rightly placed and shaped to mitigate most acute protection risks. The types

of serious negative coping mechanisms used in the different stages of displacement also differ, even if the most commonly reported is begging, followed by collecting food leftovers in both situations (over 400 respondents).

The Protection Monitoring methodology has limitations to capture the dimension and trends of some risky forms of coping mechanisms, such as survival sex affecting men, women, boys and girls displaced from Venezuela. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that in the course of Protection Monitoring activities serious negative coping mechanisms (survival sex and child labour) have been reported by interviewees as situations affecting them in countries of destination.

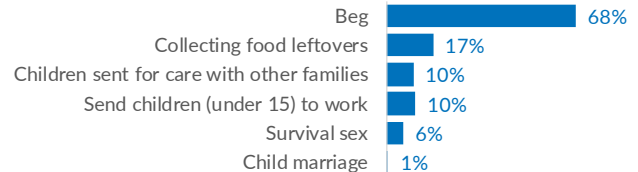
**23%** resort to serious negative coping mechanisms along the route

### Risky activities along the route \*



**18%** resort to serious negative coping mechanisms at country of monitoring

### Risky activities at country of monitoring \*



\* Multiple choice question - total will not sum 100%

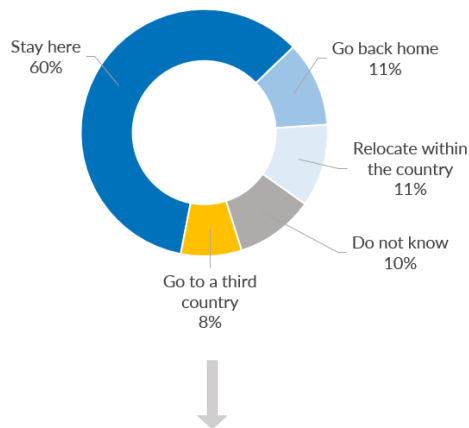
# 15. INTENTIONS

60% of the respondents mentioned that they would like to **stay in the place where they are residing** at the moment of the Protection Monitoring interview, which is considerably higher than the 48% reported in July.

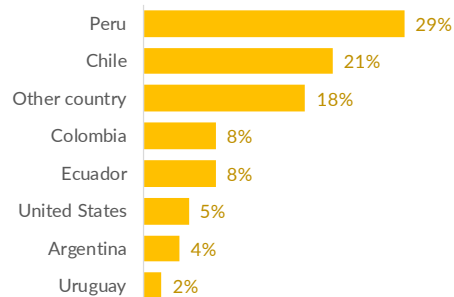
Protection Monitoring results indicate that on a regional average 11% of the respondents are hopeful to return to Venezuela, while 8% are planning to relocate in a third country, and 11% expressed their wish to relocate in a different city or area within the host country.

A significant percentage of respondents maintain that **they do not plan to return to Venezuela in the short-term** and opt to remain in their current place of residence. Those willing to settle in a third country within the region mention Peru (29%), Chile (21%), Ecuador (8%) and Colombia (8%) among the top 5 countries of destination. While intentions can shift over time depending on dynamics inside the country of origin and across the region, the size of this cohort underscores the necessity of continuing to support host countries and communities that so generously continue to host large-scale refugee and migrant populations. It also stresses the importance of expanding pathways towards regularization including simplified mechanism to facilitate the access of Venezuelan refugees and migrants to legal stay arrangements/regularization, and documentation with appropriate protection safeguards in order to ensure their rights and promote their inclusion, and enhance their positive impact on local communities.

Plans to settle (near future)



Third country





# 16. POTENTIAL RISKS UPON RETURN

When asked about the risks which they could suffer if they wish or had to return to Venezuela, respondents most often refer to a combination of causes which includes violent incidents which may affect themselves individually, their families, or their communities as well as serious violations of human rights and obstacles to access fundamental rights and/or secure a minimum standard of living.

Out of the 8,147 households interviewed in the context of Protection Monitoring activities, **41% mentioned**

**risks which are either purely linked with the likelihood that the interviewee or their family members would be exposed to serious harm or forms of violence upon return** that might eventually fall under the refugee definition of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the Cartagena Declaration of Refugees.

In addition, **27% referred to a combination of factors which include potential violence and serious obstacles to access basic rights.**

## References

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3. R4V Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, <https://r4v.info/en/situations/platform>

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