

# AMERICAS MONTHLY REPORT

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of key developments affecting the displacement situation in the Americas and some of UNHCR response activities in line with the 2019 strategic objectives for the region.



Colombia. A mother talks with a UNHCR protection officer after crossing the border. © UNHCR/Vincent Tremeau

## VENEZUELA SITUATION

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- 1 In **Ecuador**, entry requirements for Venezuelans, who had to present certified criminal records to enter the country were temporarily suspended by the Constitutional Court.
- 2 The **Government of Colombia** announced an “Impact Plan” to address the critical situation for Venezuelans and host communities along the border with Venezuela. It outlines an investment of USD 228 million in areas such as health, water, livelihoods and education. Additionally, employment restrictions for asylum seekers pending the outcome of their asylum claims were lifted.
- 3 **Chile** approved on 18th April a resolution allowing Venezuelans with expired passports and identity cards since 2013 to enter to the country. The resolution has a validity of two years.
- 4 Venezuelan nationals in **Trinidad and Tobago** will be able to register from 31 May to 14 June allowing them to work for a one year period and to contribute paying taxes. All Venezuelans in the country will be able to register irrespectively of their regular status.
- 5 A boat departing from Venezuela with 34 people shipwrecked en route towards Trinidad and Tobago on April 24. Most recent reports indicate that 12 survived while 2 were confirmed deceased, and the remainder went missing.

**3.7 million**

Venezuelans living abroad

**3 million**

left the country to Latin America and the Caribbean

**414,570**

registered asylum-seekers since 2014

**167,238**

in Peru

**83,893**

in Brazil

**72,722**

in United States of America

**29,603**

in Spain

**1.4 million** obtained some form of legal stay arrangement

## UNHCR RESPONSE TO THE VENEZUELA SITUATION

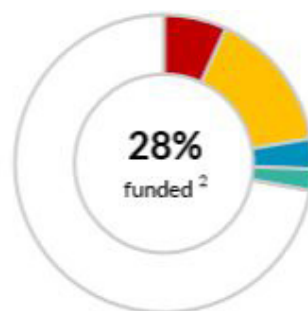
Since the beginning of 2019, at the **Colombian Border Assistance Center in Cúcuta**, 12,449 children have been assisted through recreational activities and 6,016 mothers through a safe breastfeeding space along their journey to safety.

UNHCR established presence in Belem, **Brazil**, on 1st April, to monitor the arrival of Venezuelan indigenous people, and provide technical support to the government. Additionally, UNHCR will take over the management of 3 transit centers in Boa Vista and Paracaima, operating 24 hours in all sites through shelter management partners.

In **Mexico**, over Asylum seekers from Venezuelans have benefitted from Multi-Purpose Cash Grants to meet their needs such as food, hygienic items and medicines, and as a contribution towards housing and utility bills. So far, 2,440 Venezuelans applied for asylum in Mexico, an increase of 92% when compared to the same period in 2018.

Over 200 cases of unaccompanied and separated children have been identified and assisted in **Ecuador** by UNHCR and its partners during 2019.

## FUNDING (as of 7 May 2019) UNHCR's financial requirements 2019 for the Venezuela Situation



**\$146,0 million required**

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

In **Peru**, the Venezuelan community has created the "Gracias Causa Brigade" with the support of UNHCR. Around 100 Venezuelan volunteers repaired a school at a low income neighbourhood and gathered to clean a beach managing to collect 100 kilos of waste.

During April, 2,000 vulnerable Venezuelans have been provided transportation from the Binational Border Center in the northern border of **Peru**. 600 were provided with shelter, 1,600 travel kits were delivered and 1,200 baby kits were distributed. In addition, 47 pre-paid multipurpose cards were activated and another 143 have been recharged.

## THE QUITO PROCESS

The Quito Process is a government-led initiative that aims at creating a collective strategy to harmonize policies and practices of countries in the region, coordinate the humanitarian response and improve access to services and enjoyment of rights.

Some of its priorities includes developing regularization procedures, fostering economic and social integration, encouraging international cooperation and guaranteeing full access to rights and social service.

### QUITO

### THE QUITO DECLARATION ON HUMAN MOBILITY OF VENEZUELAN CITIZENS IN THE REGION

4 September 2018 | Quito, ECUADOR

The Declaration adopted by eleven Latin American countries\* set general commitments to face the complex situation of the Venezuelan human mobility and the host communities. One of the main objectives is the exchange of information and good practices and to articulate a regional coordination to respond to the situation and adequately welcome Venezuelan citizens, especially those in vulnerable conditions.

### PLAN OF ACTION

22-23 November 2018 | Quito, ECUADOR

To achieve the objectives of the Declaration, concrete action with timelines were defined through the establishment of the Plan of Action of the Quito Process on Human Mobility for Venezuelan Nationals in the Region.\*\*

### QUITO II

### INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

8-9 April 2018 | Quito, ECUADOR

The results of the Plan of Action were evaluated and follow up mechanisms were established. The funding needs of governments in the region were analysed and the role of international support and cooperation was highlighted as determining factors for the sustainability of the regional response.

### QUITO III

### ARGENTINA TAKES THE NEXT CHAPTER

4-5 July 2018 | Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

The next round of meetings will include best practices on local integration as well as the mobilization of increased international support for the regional response through strengthened engagement with humanitarian donors, development actors and international financial institutions.

### QUITO IV

\* Adopted by Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.  
\*\* Signed by Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

## INSIDE VENEZUELA

UNHCR strategy in Venezuela is to protect communities by implementing projects that will benefit the collectivity. As such, UNHCR is implementing interventions in 54 prioritised host communities. UNHCR carried out nine activities through its partners in Tachira and Barinas states, rehabilitating water infrastructure of schools and local health centers and benefitting an estimated 3,000 people.

During 2018, UNHCR rehabilitated 344 water infrastructures in the whole country and provided hygiene kits, chlorination tablets, artesian tanks and household water filters in 18 communities. It also conducted 613 awareness sessions on water management and purification, safe water treatment and waterborne diseases.

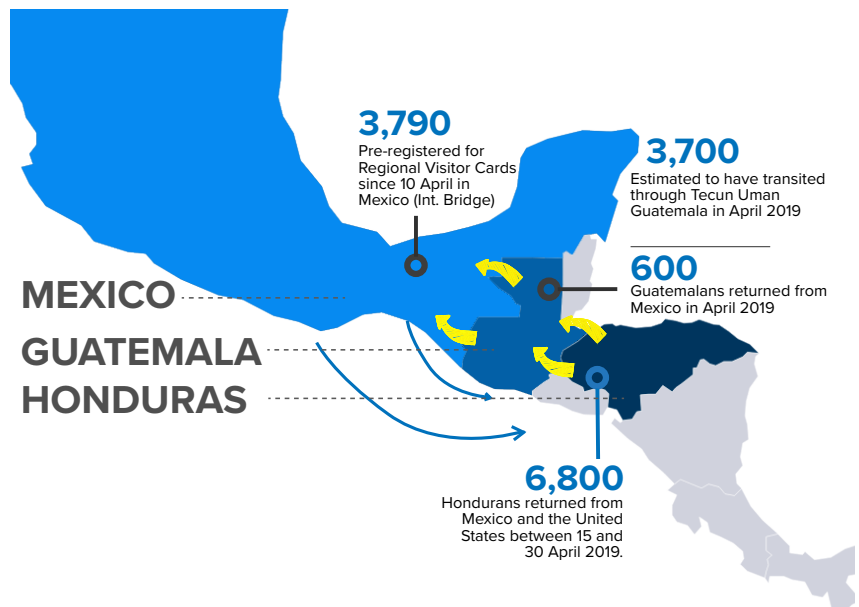


## NORTH OF CENTRAL CENTRAL AMERICA SITUATION

**367,000** people of concern to UNHCR in Central America

**349,000** refugees and asylum seekers from North of Central America worldwide

**18,145** asylum seekers in Mexico since January 2019



### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

**1** By the end of April, around 3,700 people have transited through the two main routes across Guatemala on their way to Mexico. Around the same number have registered with Mexican authorities to apply for the Regional Visitor Card at the International Hidalgo Bridge in the Guatemalan - Mexican border.

**2** In **Mexico**, Regional Visitor Cards that were traditionally forseen for Guatemalan and Belize nationals have been extended to people from El Salvador and Honduras.

**3** The Regional Visitor Card allows legal stay in **Mexico** for up to seven days in a row only in border states (Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco, Quintana Roo and Yucatan), and does not give individuals work permit nor protects them against refoulement. This is currently the only option for those who do not request asylum in Mexico. Persons who receive this card and later apply for asylum can change their status and receive a humanitarian visa.

**4** Since 12 April, up to 300 people daily arrived at the **Guatemalan town of Tecun Uman** aiming to cross into Mexico at the International Hidalgo Bridge. The majority were Hondurans (60%) and Cubans (30%). However other nationalities such as Nicaraguans, Salvadorians, Haitians and persons from Africa were also identified.

**5** The detention facilities in the south of **Mexico** are overstretched. The Mexican Migration Authority (INM) opened alternative spaces in Tapachula State.

**6** According to the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in **Honduras** around 30,000 people have returned to the country in 2019. Around 6,800 returned between 15 and 30 April.



## UNHCR RESPONSE TO THE NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA SITUATION

As part of the safe spaces and protection network established across the region, in Peten, Esquipulas and Tecun Uman, **Guatemala**, UNHCR has provided assistance to an average of 100 people per day, noting the presence of several families traveling with children, and LGBTI people. The main services provided are information regarding international protection in Guatemala and Mexico, legal and psychological support, primary healthcare, food and shelter.

A community-based programme has been launched in San Pedro Sula, **Honduras**, aiming at building community resilience as a mitigating measure against everyday violence, through education and psychosocial support, by empowering individuals and bringing state institutions closer to marginalised communities. As such, arts and sports initiatives have been launched, including an [Urban Youth Festival](#) where young men and women discussed issues related to the impact of violence in their lives and communities.

In the framework of UNHCR's alternative to detention programme, over 1,970 people have been released from detention in **Mexico** during 2019.

Since the beginning of the year, 927 people have been benefitted from **Mexico's relocation, job placement and local integration programme**.

## OTHER SITUATIONS

### NICARAGUA SITUATION

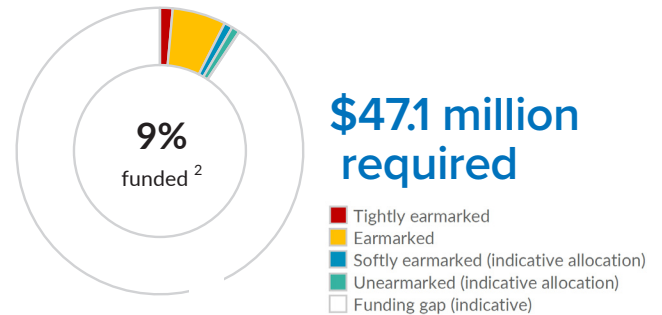
One year after the political and social crisis broke out in Nicaragua, a climate of insecurity and economic contraction persists. The national dialogue has not made significant progress. People are continuing to flee this situation, with now more than 62,000 Nicaraguans having sought asylum seekers since 2018.

Since April 2018, more than 55,000 fled to Costa Rica. UNHCR is developing an inter-agency Emergency Response Plan to provide emergency relief to Nicaraguan asylum seekers and their host communities, which will complement the Government mixed migration plan.



A family from Nicaragua wait to file their asylum application at the immigration office in San Jose, Costa Rica. © UNHCR/Roberto Carlos Sanchez

### FUNDING (as of 7 May 2019) UNHCR's financial requirements 2019 for the North Central America Situation



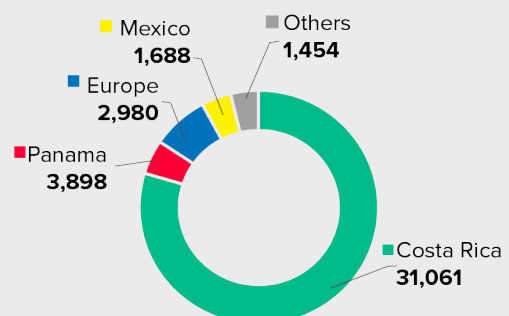
The relocation program has expanded and now the northern cities of Monterrey and Aguascalientes are joining the initiative. A first group of 25 asylum-seekers have already been relocated to Monterrey.

To support labour inclusion for refugees in key states of **Mexico**, ILO and UNHCR are working on a joint initiative to explore the possibility of absorbing UNHCR's existing local integration programme into a public policy.

UNHCR and partners are providing cash-based assistance to 704 Nicaraguans while legal assistance was provided to around 2,600 Nicaraguans.

In Mexico, since the beginning of the programme in 2016, 81 Nicaraguans participated in the relocation and job placement programme.

### Registered Asylum Applications from Nicaraguans since April 2018



## COLOMBIA SITUATION

Implementation of the peace agreement remains challenging. Forced displacement, restricted movement of increasingly vulnerable populations and attacks against community leaders persist.

At least 16 large group displacement events have been reported affecting over 5,950 people during 2019. Communities have been confined as a result of the presence of armed actors in the departments of Norte de Santander, Nariño, Chocó and Valle del Cauca, affecting more than 8,500 people.

To prevent violence against women in communities close to FARC-EP demobilization and reintegration zones UNHCR in Putumayo supported a psychosocial school for female community leaders and is constructing safe spaces for women and girls in three municipalities affected by internal displacement.

**8.8 million**  
victims of armed  
conflict

**7.8 million**  
internally displaced persons

**5,950**  
displaced persons in 2019

**50,532**  
Colombian refugees  
in Ecuador by the  
end of 2018

**10,029**  
Colombian asylum  
seekers in Ecuador  
by the end of 2018

The municipality's Mobile Justice Houses, supported by UNHCR, will provide legal assistance to about 10,000 refugees, returned Colombians and host communities in the neighborhoods of Cartagena, Bolivar department, Colombia.

## APRIL FEATURED STORIES



### Swollen rivers, mass crowding, add to risks at Venezuela borders

Despite Venezuela having officially closed its land borders with neighbouring Colombia and Brazil as of 23 February, thousands of people are still leaving the country daily.

Many are risking their lives in the process, either wading across torrential rivers or risking exploitation and abuse by armed groups controlling treacherous irregular paths.

### A year into sociopolitical crisis, thousands of Nicaraguans continue to flee

Since April 2018, Nicaragua has been wracked by a deep sociopolitical crisis, forcing over 60,000 people to flee. As raids in search of dissidents and protesters continue, Costa Rica has been receiving over 2,000 asylum requests per month from people crossing its northern border in search of safety.

After several attacks and being tipped off that people wanted him "dead or alive," Manuel abandoned the family's banana plantations and fled to Costa Rica with his wife, Andrea, and their two small children. "I'm sure if I go home they will hurt me," he says.



### Venezuelans living in the streets find safety at new reception centre in Colombia

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