




Ecuador. Venezuelans wait to cross border from Colombia ahead of new visa laws © UNHCR/Jaime Giménez Sánchez de la Blanca

AMERICAS MONTHLY REPORT


This document provides 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.

 **4.3 MILLION** REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS from Venezuela living abroad (as of 5 September 2019)

 **3.5 MILLION** in Latin America and the Caribbean states (as of 5 September 2019)

 **613,256 REGISTERED ASYLUM-SEEKERS** (as of 5 September 2019)

287,114 IN PERU	103,697 IN BRAZIL	85,796 IN U.S.A
58,597 IN SPAIN		15,095 IN MEXICO

 **OVER 2 MILLION VENEZUELANAS WITH REGULAR STATUS** including resident permits (as of 5 September 2019)

VENEZUELA SITUATION

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

1. An International Solidarity Conference on the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Crisis will take place in Brussels on 28-29 October, hosted by the European Union, UNHCR and IOM. The conference aims at raising awareness on the displacement situation, reaffirming international solidarity of host countries and communities, taking stock of best practices and confirming international support for a regional coordinated response. It will also serve as a call for greater international technical and financial cooperation.

The decision of the Colombian government to grant nationality to children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents was signed into law and expanded to children born from the beginning of January 2015, instead of August 2015, as initially announced. This protection measure will now benefit more than 24,000 children at risks of statelessness and will prevent future cases.

Since the implementation of the visa requirement to enter Ecuador, the number of Venezuelan nationals entering the country in a regular manner has significantly dropped from an average of 2,000 per day since the beginning of the year to approximately 30 per day. For the moment, no exceptions to allow entry on humanitarian grounds have been announced.

2. In Trinidad and Tobago, according to country authorities, 3,091 registration cards have been issued so far, and 5,148 applicants have been verified by Interpol, Venezuelan and T&T authorities, and were recommended for Ministerial approval. A total of 16,523 Venezuelans participated in the exercise that took place from 31 May to 14 June.

UNHCR RESPONSE IN LINE WITH 2019 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

During the month of September, Venezuelans willing to cross from **Colombia** into **Ecuador** remained near the border crossing, hoping that entry requirements would be eased, spending several nights in the streets near the Rumichaca International Bridge or in nearby shelters. To provide direct emergency assistance and particularly in view of the cold temperatures at night, UNHCR focused efforts on referring and transferring individuals to shelters, specifically conducting night monitoring to identify highly vulnerable individuals.

On 26 September, national authorities in **Ecuador** started implementing the Administrative Registry of the Venezuelan population residing in Ecuador. UNHCR, in coordination with IOM, provides technical assistance and support by developing an information strategy and with the opening of additional registration centres in key areas of the country, mobile registration brigades, protection desks and referral mechanisms. There are more than 330,000 Venezuelans in Ecuador.

The first Information and Assistance Point for refugees and migrants at the border between **Argentina and Bolivia** opened on 11 September, where UNHCR partners will provide legal counselling and deliver direct emergency assistance and Cash Based Assistance. La Quiaca is an isolated border area at more than 3,800 meters of altitude and one of the more challenging land border crossing points for Venezuelans entering Argentina.

In **Colombia**, the 35 UNHCR-supported Information and Orientation Points (PAOs as per their Spanish acronym), have assisted over 38,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela in need by mid-September since January 2019, providing assistance related to regularization of their status, shelter and access to health care services.

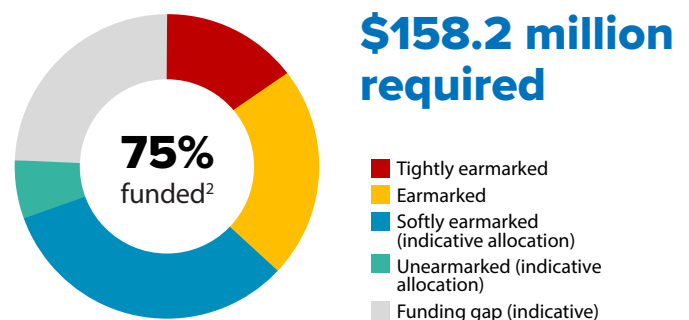
In Manaus, **Brazil**, UNHCR and partners supported the Army in the improvement of the Secure Sleeping Area nearby the Bus Station, along with the Municipality and Government of Amazonas. The new structure will provide special care for families, single men and women and people with specific needs in separate areas and it will have a capacity for 600 people. In Brazil, there are 2 reception centers where Venezuelans receive material psychosocial support upon arrival. There are currently 178,600 Venezuelans in the country.

During September, initiatives to support and promote school enrolment of refugee and asylum seekers kids were undertaken in the region. For example, in Lima, **Peru**, 800 school kits were distributed to vulnerable Venezuelans and Peruvians enrolled through the government's Lima Learns programme, with UNHCR's support.

UNHCR registration centre in **Trinidad and Tobago** enrolled refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in Equal Place, a joint education initiative of UNHCR, UNICEF, LWC and TTSOLNET to grant them access to accredited education through e-learning platforms in English and Spanish, with support from teachers at churches and existing local school spaces across the country. To date, 384 students have completed biometric enrolment into the program and almost 700 students have been attending the programme. UNHCR and partners are working to secure new learning spaces to accommodate at least 1,000 students by the end of 2019.

In **Brazil**, UNHCR and the State University of Amazonas (UEA) agreed in facilitating free diploma revalidation not only to recognized refugees, but also to asylum seekers and migrants from Venezuela. On 3 September, UNHCR and partners supported 40 Venezuelans in their diploma revalidation process, with 29 of them having their documents recognized. On 13 September, the UEA, in partnership with UNHCR, initiated a Portuguese course in the 'Operação Acolhida' facilities at the bus station in Manaus, Brazil. The UEA will carry out four Portuguese courses in partnership with UNHCR and partners until December.

UNHCR's financial requirements 2019 for the Venezuela Situation (2 October 2019)



INSIDE VENEZUELA

As most of the country is affected by power and telecommunication outages caused by massive blackouts, UNHCR has responded to some of the immediate needs in prioritised communities by the delivery of core relief items. In September, UNHCR delivered solar lamps, water purification tablets and jerry cans to 103 families in the indigenous community of Palomeco, Apure. Most of these families live in precarious conditions with no access to basic services such as water and electricity and tend to share the same living space with many family members.



NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA SITUATION

386,480
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM
SEEKERS from North of
Central America worldwide

53,810 NEW
ASYLUM APPLICATIONS
of NCA nationals in 2019,
86% higher compared to the
same period in 2018.

48,254 ASYLUM CLAIMS IN MEXICO SINCE JANUARY 2019
(approx. 231% increase over the same period of 2018).

318,590 IDPS IN HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR

188,200 DEPORTATIONS TO NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICAN
COUNTRIES between Jan-Sep 2019, a 34% increase compared to 2018

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The situation in the North of Central America continues to generate displacement, due to persistent levels of violence and illicit activities of gangs and armed groups, all heightened by poverty and socio-economic hardship. Asylum claims of people from the North of Central America have risen to nearly 54,000 in June 2019, with the majority of people fleeing Honduras. According to the National Human Rights Commission of Honduras, [CONADEH](#), nearly 2,000 people were either at risk of or had been internally displaced during the first half of the year. Furthermore, asylum claims from people fleeing El Salvador and Guatemala have risen 27% and 21% respectively, as compared to 2018.

3. On 7 September, 22 municipalities in **Guatemala** were declared in a State of Exception, five of which are located in Izabal and Petén, near the border with Honduras and Mexico, respectively. Freedom of movement is restricted and security measures on the main routes were increased. Since the signature of Asylum Cooperation Agreement between Guatemala and the United States, Guatemalan police presence has increased in the main routes transiting through Tecún Umán northwards and partners have assisted 37 per cent less people in transit than in June 2019 on a daily basis. In Esquipulas as well, there has been a 46 per cent drop in the number of people assisted in September, as compared to July.

4. In September, two additional agreements were signed by the governments of El Salvador and Honduras with the United States of America, with the aim of cooperating on asylum and security issues. The potential strain of these agreements on asylum systems have generated concerns particularly because these territories are and have been for long countries of origin for hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people and asylum seekers fleeing violence.

During September, **El Salvador** deployed 800 police officers and soldiers to patrol blind spots along its borders where people smugglers and transnational criminals operate. An additional 300 immigration officers will also be deployed. According to the Minister of Justice and Public Security, these actions are conducted to target criminal structures smuggling people from and through El Salvador.

Alongside Central Americans, people from other nationalities, including Cameroon, Bangladesh and Haiti, have also sought asylum in Mexico after perilous journeys through South and Central America. By August 2019, over 18,955 people had crossed from Colombia to Panama through the Darien Jungle, facing risks related to extreme weather, lack of food and exposure to criminal groups.



Deportations have been on the rise with policies changes in the United States and Mexico. Over 87,000 Hondurans and 78,000 Guatemalans have been deported from the United States and Mexico in 2019 alone. According to the Guatemalan Institute of Migration, deportations of Guatemalans from Mexico have increased from June to August 2019, with a total of 17,332 people deported in this period, which represents an 89.5% increase in comparison with same period in 2018.

In **Belize**, the national Development Center Help for Progress, now provides personal development training for asylum seekers between 12 and 17 years old, free of cost. Children over 14 years old are the most affected by national education policies, as they aren't allowed to register in primary schools and due to the language barrier and lack of social security cards don't have access to high schools.

UNHCR RESPONSE TO NCA IN LINE WITH 2019 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To provide a timely response to immediate and persistent humanitarian needs, UNHCR **Mexico** delivers multipurpose cash grants for asylum seekers and refugees with high protection risks. By the end of August, more than 26,700 refugees and asylum seekers benefited from Multipurpose Cash Grants in Mexico so far this year to meet basic needs such as: food, household and domestic products, and a contribution towards housing and utility bills.

As part of the provision of legal representation for refugees and asylum seekers, a UNHCR partner **Mexican** law firm with offices in Mexico City and Monterrey will provide pro bono legal services to refugees and asylum-seekers. They will handle appeals against asylum denials, and they will carry out legal representation for asylum-seekers following their asylum request (including drafting the request, preparation for the eligibility interview and other in-process legal requirements).

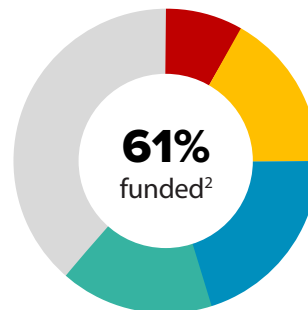
NICARAGUA SITUATION

In Nicaragua, the political process remains stalled. During September, a commission from the Organization of American States, seeking to help broker an end to a political crisis in Nicaragua, was barred entry to Nicaragua and could not "take diplomatic steps at the highest level to seek a pacific solution" to the crisis in the country, as it was mandated by the OAS. The commission was due to visit the country between 16 and 17 September.

New reports issued by the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights \(UNHCHR\)](#) and the [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights \(IACHR\)](#) warn about serious rights violations in Nicaragua and stated that forced displacement from Nicaragua stems from human rights abuses beginning on 18 April 2019. Since the onset of this crisis, 328 people have lost their lives and some 700 have been detained. At least 130 people are currently imprisoned due to involvement in public protests or for supporting them with food, medical treatment and shelter.

The majority are fleeing to Costa Rica, where UNHCR provides information, orientation and legal representation at the San José Information Center. The month of August saw an increase

UNHCR's financial requirements 2019 for NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA Situation (2 October 2019)




\$46.9 million required

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

An Inter-community Football Tournament organized by UNHCR and partners took place in Tegucigalpa, **Honduras**, with the participation of more than 100 young people, also from high risk communities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. This event encourages the participation of young people in UNHCR projects in high risk communities, and promotes key messages on recruitment, forced displacement and youth resilience as well as safe spaces and dialogue in communities controlled by gangs.

UNHCR and partners inaugurated a safe and friendly space in Aguaje Escondido, **El Salvador**, aiming at recuperating public spaces for the community, particularly children, teenagers and youth, and promote safe environments.

On 1 September, Casa del Migrante José, a shelter near the border of **Guatemala** with Honduras and El Salvador, moved to a new location, where a new one will be built with the support of UNHCR and partners. While the construction is finalised, tents were used to provide shelter for refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR and partners provide basic services to people on the move such as food, WASH and information on asylum procedures in Guatemala.

 **88,105 ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM NICARAGUA SINCE APRIL 2018** (includes registered asylum-seekers and those waiting to formalize their claim)

 **70,339 NICARAGUAN ASYLUM APPLICATIONS IN COSTA RICA** as of July

(40,268 had formally submitted their asylum application and the other 30,071 called the hotline to begin the asylum process and were awaiting to submit asylum applications).

in communications and UNHCR has thus increased the number of personnel. Additionally, to respond to urgent needs and provide basic services to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, UNHCR distributes Multipurpose Cash Grants, through prepaid cards. In September, 1,500 asylum seekers and refugees benefitted from these cash grants in the metropolitan area of San José and 500 in the northern region.

COLOMBIA SITUATION

In Putumayo, UNHCR and partners supported the community to access legal support in territorial protection claims, due to existing threats to their physical and cultural survival. Additionally, the oil exploitation in the Siona indigenous reservation of Piñuña Blanco, was suspended, recognizing the limits of the indigenous territory.

During the month of August, 307 people were displaced in Medio San Juan, Chocó department, after clashes and confrontations between armed groups and the army and 13 afro and indigenous communities (3,816 people) in Chocó remain confined due to landmines and UXO. To provide immediate and urgent response to basic needs, UNHCR delivered 340 food containers in the Juradó municipality.

In Putumayo, UNHCR, the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF in its Spanish acronym) and the Municipality, inaugurated a Child Development Centre (CDI) in the IDP community of Villa Rosa, which will benefit more than 60 children.

SEPTEMBER FEATURED STORIES



[Trans woman defies danger to champion LGBTI rights in El Salvador](#)

Bianka Rodríguez, regional winner for the Americas for the Nansen Refugee Award, champions the transgender community's rights.



[UN Refugee Chief praises Mexico's support for refugees](#)

As Central Americans' asylum claims soar 231 per cent in less than one year, Filippo Grandi calls for further resources to better cope with the flow.



[In a trek to safety, Venezuelans take on mountain peaks on foot](#)

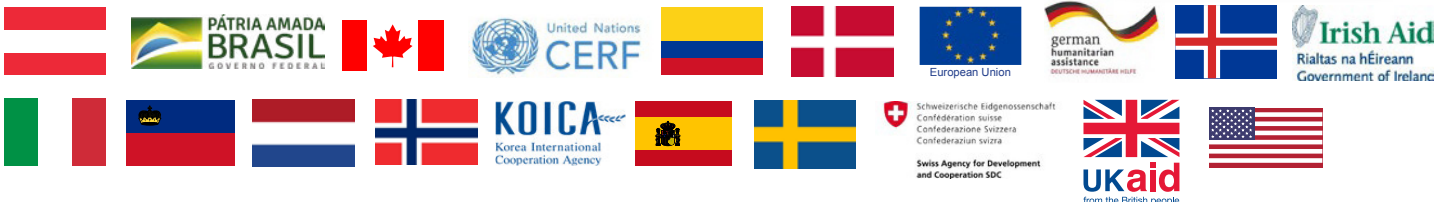
Weakened by hunger, hundreds of Venezuelan refugees and migrants cross the high Andes each day in search of safety in Colombia and beyond.



[Nicaraguan professionals seek safety in Costa Rica](#)

Doctors, lawyers and professors are among professionals forced to flee their Central American homeland for doing their jobs.

Special thanks to our donors:



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 **8.8** MILLION VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICT

 **7.9** MILLION INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE since 1985

 **51,775** PEOPLE DISPLACED IN INDIVIDUAL DISPLACEMENTS IN 2019

 **13,445** DISPLACED PEOPLE AFFECTED BY **43** LARGE GROUP DISPLACEMENTS in 2019

After four months of training, more than 60 young internally displaced people in Ituango, Antioquia, graduated with technical diplomas in Peacebuilding, offered by the Catholic University. This area is one of the most affected by internal conflicts and violence. The training was supported by UNHCR, USAID, OHCHR, IOM and the Department of Antioquia.



[¿Cómo es ser joven y refugiado en América Latina?](#)

Cinco testimonios, en primera persona, de jóvenes latinoamericanos que han tenido que dejar su país de origen.

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