

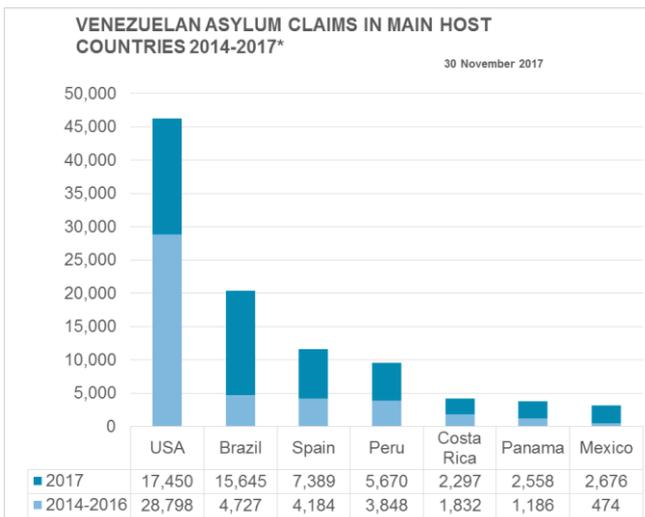
# Venezuela Situation

December 2017

Venezuelans continue to leave their homes and cross into neighbouring countries. Many are in need of **protection, shelter, food and medicine.**

Based on official migration movement figures, UNHCR estimates that there could be as many as **93,000 Venezuelans** currently in Ecuador.

In Brazil over **15,600 Venezuelans** have **lodged asylum claims** in 2017 and **1,680** Temporary Residence Permits have been granted in 2017 according to Government figures.



\*\* All data on Venezuelan arrivals and asylum claims is based on government sources.



Many Venezuelans arriving in neighbouring countries are in need of protection and shelter, UNHCR is providing assistance and working together with Governments to develop a comprehensive response.

## CONTEXT INFORMATION

Growing numbers of Venezuelans continue to leave their country. According to host Government estimates, there are over one million Venezuelans who have departed. While over 100,000 Venezuelans have sought asylum since 2014, more than half did so in 2017 alone; many others are applying for visas and temporary residence permits. Many of those interviewed say that they fear for their lives, if they return. Across the region, approximately 190,000 persons have requested alternative legal status. A significant number chooses these alternatives, because on average these are easier to acquire and allow access to employment and other basic services. However, a very significant number of those leaving the country do not have access to any legal status and find it increasingly difficult to regularize their stay.

Monitoring and profiling exercises in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, the Southern Caribbean and Central America indicate that Venezuelans claim that they are leaving for a variety of reasons, including on account of their individual profiles, insecurity and violence, lack of access to food, medicine and essential services, as well as loss of income as a result of the current economic situation.

\*\* All data on Venezuelan arrivals and asylum claims is based on government sources.



## Operational Context

### Brazil

- The number of Venezuelans arriving in Brazil continues to rise. Many are staying in border areas, mainly in Roraima or Manaus, because they lack resources. Among the main challenges for Venezuelans is accessing food, medicines, housing, education for children and employment. The local communities have opened their doors but are struggling to support them in their quest for dignified living conditions.
- Within this framework, UNHCR is working with the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Ministry of Labour in Boa Vista (Roraima) to analyse the labour market and evaluate employment opportunities for Venezuelans arriving.
- Meanwhile, Venezuelans are increasingly seeking assistance from the Pastoral in Manaus, which is offering financial assistance; opportunities for short-term professional training and information to new arrivals, with the help of new staff, made possible in part by the financial support offered by UNHCR.
- In addition, UNHCR acquired seven tents for partners in Roraima to improve local infrastructure. Five tents will be destined for shelter usage (Pintolandia and Pacaraima), one is for the Federal Police in Boa Vista, and one for the Project Canarinhos da Amazonia.

### Colombia

- In Colombia, UNHCR is co-leading the UN-interagency response at the borders. The first Binational Meeting (5 to 7 December) with partner organizations was held in order to establish a Binational

Protection Network in the regions of Zulia (VEN) and La Guajira (COL)<sup>1</sup>. The participants discussed regional trends; responses; protection needs and profiles, which led to the identification of possible binational activities and a work plan for 2018. Partners welcomed UNHCR's leadership.

- In addition, the fourth binational meeting of Catholic parishes of Apure state (VEN) and Arauca (COL) was convened with the support of UNHCR to strengthen the protection network along the border region. The network focuses on providing information and assistance to Venezuelans, asylum-seekers and others that might require protection, as well as Colombian returnees. As a result, a task team was established, which will be replicated in some 20 parishes at the border with Colombia.
- Meanwhile, the third meeting of the network for border and asylum issues (Red Manos Tendidas Darién-Urabá) took place in Turbo, at the Panama border, with the presence of UNHCR, human rights advocates, community leaders and IOM. The discussion focused on the area's context after Panama closed its border; a workshop with Migration authorities, and programming for 2018.
- UNHCR Colombia has also continued to expand its activities in non-border areas that are receiving large numbers of Venezuelans, carrying out exploratory missions, meeting with local authorities and communities and setting up protection networks, with considerable advances in Medellín and Aburrá Valley, and new efforts in Bucaramanga, Bogotá, Quibdó and Pasto, among others.
- Between 13 and 15 December, the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, George Okoth-Obbo, carried out a mission and met with high ranking Government officials, UN agencies and donors. During his mission, he reiterated UNHCR's commitment to strengthen the operation in Colombia in light of current challenges and opportunities support the Government in its lead actions on protection efforts and reinforce the Agency's coordination capacity in responding to the needs of Venezuelans.

#### **Ecuador**

- As Venezuelans continue to cross from Colombia into Ecuador on a daily basis, UNHCR, has reinforced its Field Unit in Tulcán to strengthen border monitoring, identification and referral of persons in need of protection/assistance, and the implementation of profiling activities.

#### **Peru**

- The flow of Venezuelans also extends from Ecuador into Peru, where UNHCR's partner Encuentros has established a fixed presence in the border town of Tumbes, and has begun receiving referrals of Colombian and Venezuelan families in need of support from local authorities, reflecting an effective interinstitutional coordination. Encuentros is also coordinating with the migration authorities at the border crossing point to develop joint visits, share information and the referral of people with specific needs.

#### **Southern Caribbean**

- In Trinidad and Tobago, UNHCR organised and facilitated the first sensitization training for 23 police officers on international protection, as well as reception and registration procedures. This is part of a series of sensitization projects that will continue in 2018.
- The UNHCR Senior Community-Based Advisor conducted a mission to Trinidad and Tobago to identify opportunities and requirements to implement community-based protection approaches in 2018.
- In Curacao UNHCR undertook two missions to interview refugees for resettlement, and to meet with officials at the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Justice.

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<sup>1</sup> The meeting was attended by 20 participants: UNHCR Venezuela and Colombia operations, HIAS, RET, Caritas, Zulia Red Cross and the Guajira's Human Rights Committee and Colombia: UNHCR, Pastoral Social, Maicao Red Cross, RET and NRC. ICRC Venezuela also attended as an observer.

## UNHCR Response



### Protection

#### Brazil

- UNHCR has successfully rolled out ProgresV4, a UNHCR platform for registration and case management, in Boa Vista, Roraima. Some 300 people in the Tancredo Neves Shelter have been registered. The aim is to continue applying this tool to consolidate a data base showing needs and profiles of Venezuelan arrivals. The data offers information to support the response of State Authorities.
- As the number of asylum requests increases in Manaus, UNHCR, the Amazonas Human Rights Secretary and the Public Defenders' Office (DPU) agreed that UNHCR and the DPU will provide support to the Federal Police through volunteers and equipment to accelerate the registration of asylum claims, and prevent longer waiting periods.
- Within the framework of the campaign "16 Days of Activism," UNHCR, UNFPA and SETRABES (Secretariat for Work and Social Welfare of Roraima) organized discussions between Venezuelan women living in the Tancredo Neves shelter and Brazilian women residing in Boa Vista. The results showed the need to continue promoting safe spaces for women and supporting community-based coping strategies. Women captured their needs and dreams in a graffiti with support of Grafita Roraima.
- In addition, UNHCR and UNFPA promoted two trainings to strengthen local Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) protection networks for Venezuelan asylum-seekers or in need of international protection in Boa Vista and Pacaraima (Roraima.) Civil society organizations, government officials and IOM attended. A coordination group was created in Pacaraima to enhance communication within the protection network, and case management communication channels were set for the Boa Vista network.
- UNHCR, UNFPA and IOM participated in the initiative "Action for human rights and citizenship of women" led by SETRABES in Pacaraima. Through a caravan called "Carro Lilás" women's access to rights were promoted, and several services were offered, including health, as well as documentation and employment orientation. Some 50 Venezuelan women benefited from the above-named services.
- Following a mission of UNHCR and the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Roraima, UNHCR will lead a working group to address the needs of Venezuelan children and youth.

#### Colombia

- UNHCR, as leader and Gender Focal Point of Arauca's Local Coordination Team, joined the UN Women profiling exercise for Venezuelan women and helped organize the mission, contacting focal groups and key institutions to be interviewed. This exercise is helping to identify the circumstances that led many to flee, as well as the protection risks -especially sexual violence and exploitation- that they face in Colombia. Save The Children and Lutheran World Federation have also joined.
- The head of the Public Hospital in Arauca emphasized that new births are being treated as emergency care, and therefore can be attended, while prenatal care is not being provided because it is not an emergency and also due to a lack of financial resources.

#### Perú

- The government's registration and documentation capacity remains limited, delays to obtain documentation for new asylum seekers extend to between 5-6 months. Daily long queues and waiting periods are increasing in front of the Peruvian Special Commission for Refugees (CEPR) premises in Lima. With support of UNHCR, the CEPR has expanded its assistance area, obtained more equipment and contracted new staff, hence registration capacity is expected to increase. UNHCR is also coordinating with the CEPR to implement an improved registration process.

- The CEPR and UNHCR have facilitated the access of asylum-seekers with specific needs, such as pregnant women, children and new-borns to the Universal Health Insurance System under a temporary scheme. However, these initiatives were agreed upon when Peru handled only a hundred asylum cases per year, and access to the programme is still blocked for other adult family members. With the exponential increase of asylum-seekers, UNHCR will support the CEPR to outline a new strategy.



## SHELTER

### Brazil

- The shelter response in Brazil is being deployed in three areas: Pacaraima town, Boa Vista, capital of Roraima state, bordering Venezuela; and Manaus, capital of Amazonas State. The response locations correlate with current arrival trends. While progress continues to be made, particularly regarding the involvement of local authorities and infrastructure improvements, living conditions remain precarious, particularly regarding safety, and Water, Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) and health services.



- In the Pintolandia shelter, 480 indigenous, mainly Warao, reside, even if the maximum recommended capacity is 382. The Tancredo Neves shelter hosts 495 non indigenous, when the maximum capacity is 182. In the Pacaraima shelter, there are 220 Warao people instead of the recommended 196. With the announced closure of the Warao shelter in Manaus, 47 remain expecting to be relocated to houses rented by the Municipality, even though they have reached their recommended capacity of 73 people.
- As the Tancredo Neves shelter has yet to meet minimum safety and protection standards, UNHCR has delivered a work plan proposal to Roraima authorities, with whom collaboration has been key. It asks for effective coordination based on four pillars: Nutrition; security; infrastructure and management.
- UNHCR completed the distribution of the ID-cards for the beneficiaries of the Pintolandia shelter.

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