

Venezuela

January – March 2021

The first quarter of the year has registered an almost complete stop to spontaneous returns from the Colombian side of the border, with very limited returns trickling in from Brazil and a few hundred repatriations through the Government airlift scheme Plan Vuelta a la Patria. At the same time, the numbers of Venezuelans leaving the country has increased gradually to an estimated level of over 2,000 daily exits into Colombia and a few hundred into Brazil. UNHCR and allies have been setting up information and basic relief waystations along the main routes taken by the *caminantes* heading on foot towards the border.

At the same time, especially following the lifting of restrictions for the Carnival celebrations, the levels of contagion from the COVID-19 epidemic have picked up pace, leading the Government to introduce an extended nationwide lockdown beginning mid-March. Official figures on cases and deaths have increased but still depict a relatively reassuring scenario when compared to the situation in neighbouring countries - and are widely believed to underestimate the real extent of the emergency.

On March 21, fighting erupted in the western border state of Apure between the Government's National Bolivarian Armed Forces (FANB) and the dissident guerillas of the FARC 10th Front, leading to the displacement into Colombia of several thousand people from the area of La Victoria - for the most part Venezuelans, but also significant numbers of Colombians who had settled in Venezuela. All humanitarian operations have been suspended in the area, which has been declared a closed security zone.

HIGHLIGHTS

ESTIMATED POPULATION OF CONCERN

787,200 (2021)

REFUGEES & ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Refugees 9,310

Asylum-Seekers 340

Source: National Commission for Refugees Venezuela

Persons in refugee-like situation: 58,810

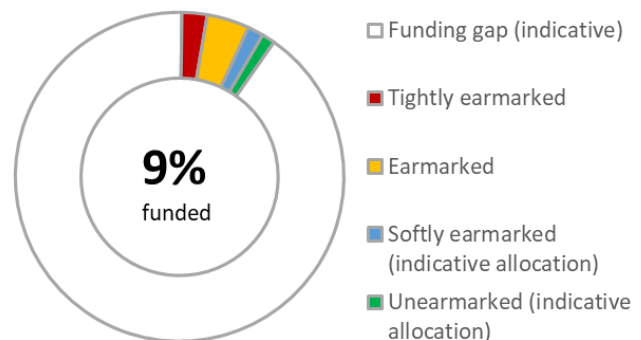
COVID-19 CASES

Reported in Venezuela 160,497 / 1,602 deaths

FUNDING (AS OF MARCH 2021)

USD 53.7 million

requested for Venezuela



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

118 Personnel:

94 national staff

2 affiliate workforce deployees

0 national interns

22 international staff

Offices:

1 Representation in Caracas

4 Field Offices in

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

2 Field Units in Caracas and San Antonio (Táchira)



Working with Partners

- UNHCR is implementing activities in 71 prioritised communities in 12 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 13 implementing partners (Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Zulia Red Cross, Falcón Red Cross, Fundación Luz y Vida, Fundación Vivienda Popular, Instituto Radiofónico Fe y Alegría (IRFA), Sociedad Wills Wilde, Fogones y Banderas, Comitato Internazionale Per Lo Sviluppo Dei Popoli (CISP), Refugee Education Trust (RET) and Fundación Amigos del Niño que Amerita Protección (Fundana), as well as other local actors, including government institutions and NGOs.
- UNHCR leads the Protection and Shelter, Energy and NFI Clusters within the framework of the Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan.
- UNHCR's main institutional counterparts are the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE) and the Office of the Ombudsperson (DdP).

Main Activities

- UNHCR promotes and strengthens the protection and dignity of the most vulnerable population affected by the crisis in Venezuela, improving these persons' access to goods and services, mitigating the risks to which they are exposed and helping ensure their survival and well-being.
- UNHCR is working with community structures, including outreach volunteers, women's networks and youth networks, to engage communities in the implementation of projects identified by the communities themselves, seeking to improve community response and ensuring the sustainability of projects and community processes. UNHCR and its partners have also been supporting the implementation of community projects related to nutrition, health, water and sanitation and education.
- UNHCR supports a national protection network that provides assistance and counselling to persons in transit and safe spaces for the attention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) survivors and children at risk. The safe spaces provide confidential case management, counselling, psychosocial support, medical aid and legal services.
- 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 248 persons of concern.
- Within the framework of the Humanitarian Response Plan and its leadership role in the Protection Cluster and the Shelter, Energy and NFI Cluster, UNHCR participates in the UN interagency response to the COVID-19 emergency in Venezuela.

Activities implemented January – March 2021

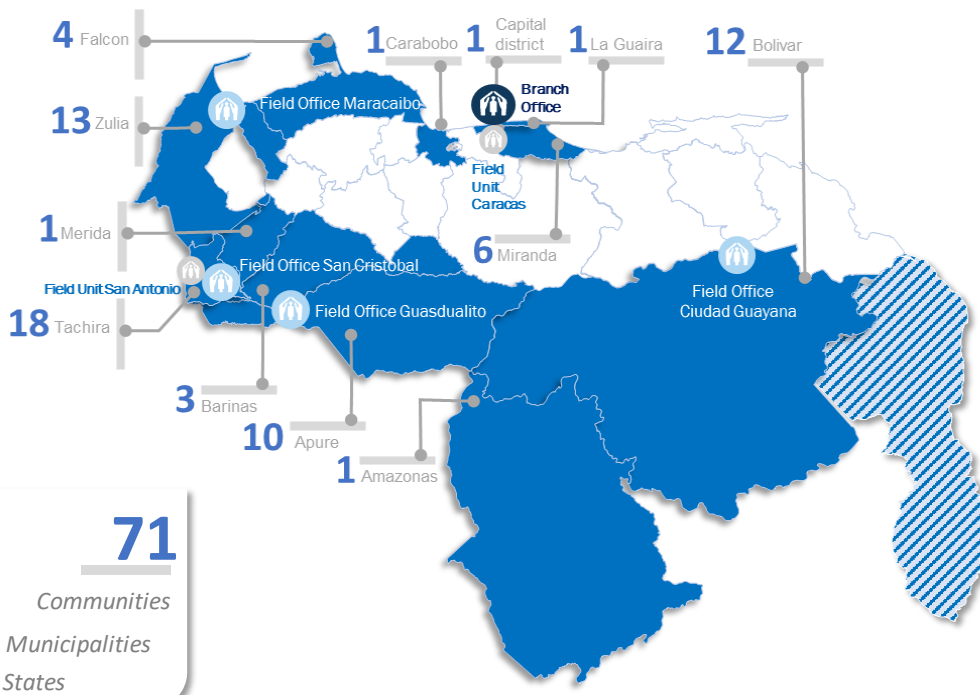
Operational highlights

- UNHCR delivered **329** jerry-cans, **329** buckets, **255** mosquito nets and **423** water purification tablets to **150** indigenous families with specific needs in Shirapta, Zulia, benefitting **465** indigenous persons.
- UNHCR delivered **535** buckets and **500** mosquito nets to **240** families in the municipality of Colina, Falcón, in response to the local dengue fever outbreak. In coordination with partner Red Cross Falcón, UNHCR also delivered **717** NFIs (including solar lamps, mosquito nets, kitchen sets, blankets and buckets) for another **70** families with specific needs affected by flooding at end of 2020 and the dengue outbreak.
- UNHCR delivered **380** sleeping mattresses in the communities of Brisas del Sur and Che Guevara, Bolívar, benefitting **380** persons with specific needs in overcrowded and unsafe living conditions, as well as sleeping mattresses to **100** indigenous Warao families in Cambalache. UNHCR also donated **157** biosecurity kits to the women and youth networks in these communities and **4** hand sanitiser dispensers to support community health centres and school cafeterias.
- UNHCR delivered sleeping mats, kitchen sets, solar streetlights, hygiene kits, portable air conditioning units and biosecurity gear to NGO Caritas Carúpano, benefitting some **500** persons in situations of vulnerability in Carúpano and Güiría, Sucre. UNHCR also donated **8** RHUs for the Antonio Patricio de Alcalá Hospital in Cumaná (along with **8** solar lamps and biosecurity gear), **6** RHUs for medical consultations at the local church in Carúpano and **3** RHUs for temporary accommodation at Caritas Güiría.
- UNHCR delivered and furnished **6** RHUs and **3** family tents for the Puerto Cabello Red Cross and Valencia Red Cross, also installing a 7,500-litre water tank at the former, supporting their response capacity in Carabobo during the COVID-19 emergency.
- UNHCR delivered and installed **13** RHUs and **6** solar streetlights to support the response at the university hospital in El Vigía, Mérida, expected to benefit some **10,800** patients by June of 2021.
- UNHCR delivered **5** RHUs to support the COVID-19 response at two hospitals in San Cristóbal, Táchira, along with **28** plastic chairs, **2** desks, other furniture and plastic sheets, benefitting some **5,000** patients per month.
- UNHCR installed and equipped **2** RHUs in La Vela de Coro, Falcón, to support the response of the Falcón Red Cross to the dengue fever outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic, installing water tanks as well for the community. UNHCR also delivered biosecurity gear and cleaning supplies to the main local outpatient clinic, which provides assistance to **540** patients each week.
- UNHCR, in coordination with the Guasualito Red Cross, donated and installed **3** RHUs, NFIs and office supplies to support medical staff who provide care each month to some **250** persons in human mobility traveling towards the Colombia-Venezuela border.
- UNHCR delivered solar streetlights for the Fuerte Murachí housing complex in Torbes, Táchira, benefitting some **5,200** persons in mobility at the former and 40 families affected by floods in at the latter.
- UNHCR delivered biosecurity gear to the bus terminals in San Antonio and San Cristóbal, Táchira, as well as solar streetlights to the former, benefitting some **80,000** persons (including persons in human mobility) who use these terminals.
- UNHCR, in coordination with partner HIAS, installed water tanks at health centres in Shirapta and El Tukuko, Zulia, benefitting some **7,000** indigenous persons with specific needs. UNHCR also donated tyres to municipal authorities in Machiques de Perija
- UNHCR donated tyres to municipal authorities in Machiques de Perija, Zulia, for the truck that transports water to the local water tank, ensuring access to safe water for **1,500** indigenous Yukpa families.
- UNHCR delivered **80** hygiene kits and biosecurity gear to El Sembrador Nursing Home in San Cristóbal, Táchira, benefitting **110** older persons.
- UNHCR delivered **1,000kg** of charcoal to two community soup kitchens in Boca del Grita, Táchira, supporting families who lost their livelihoods during the COVID-19 pandemic (benefitting **953** persons with specific needs).
- UNHCR, together with the local Roman Catholic Church, delivered solar lamps to **382** vulnerable families in El Nula, Apure, in response to constant power shortages. UNHCR delivered **467** hygiene kits, **187** kitchen kits, water filters and solar lamps to **187** vulnerable families in El Guafita.

- UNHCR, in coordination with the Safe Spaces Network, delivered NFIs (including solar lamps, hygiene kits, water filters and mattresses) to support over **120** women GBV survivors in Apure.
- UNHCR delivered mattresses and bedsheets to **34** persons with specific needs (including asylum-seekers and refugees) in La Banera, Carabobo, complementing habitat kits they received in late 2020.
- UNHCR provided orientation, habitat kits and hygiene kits to **37** persons in human mobility and **6** refugees in Táchira.
- UNHCR donated educational kits for **719** children in El Amparo, Guafita and El Nula, all in Apure, in anticipation of a “partial” return to in-person classes at school.
- UNHCR donated **2** recreational kits for children in Zulia: one to the community of El Tukuko and the other to the temporary shelter for Yukpa indigenous persons in Maracaibo, run by the Ojenke Foundation.
- UNHCR delivered **20** buckets, **10** solar lamps, **5** soccer balls, tables, chairs and a kitchen to support the temporary shelter run by the indigenous Bari Association in Venezuela (ASOBARIVEN) in Machiques, Zulia, which hosts approximately **50** persons every month.
- UNHCR delivered tables, chairs and fans to the Punto Fijo airport in Falcón, to support assistance provided to spontaneous returnees from the ABC islands that tested positive for COVID-19.
- UNHCR delivered biosecurity gear to **13** health facilities in Zulia, benefitting a total of **11,001** persons.
- UNHCR delivered biosecurity gear (including **9,600** disposable gloves, **2,410** face masks and **205** litres of hypochlorite) to **13** health centres and outpatient clinics in Táchira, the Virgen de Lourdes Elementary Special Education Institute in Aguas Calientes, Táchira, and the Faculty of Pharmacy at University of the Andes in Mérida, benefitting some **3,250** patients, health workers, persons in human mobility and children with disabilities per month in Táchira and Mérida.
- UNHCR delivered biosecurity gear to the Subteniente Omaira Rodríguez Municipal Hospital in Ciudad Bolívar, Bolívar, which provides free health services to some **2,780** persons per month. UNHCR also delivered **2** hand sanitiser dispensers to the regional Office of the Ombudsperson.
- UNHCR donated water purification tablets, medical equipment and biosecurity gear to support the care provided by two hospitals in Guasdalito and Elorza, Apure, to some **2,500** persons in the region.
- UNHCR delivered biosecurity gear to the local geriatric centre and Caritas Barinas in Barinas, benefitting **72** older persons housed in the former and **120** patients to whom the latter provides free medical services each month.
- UNHCR delivered biosecurity gear to **35** community leaders in El Cafetal (Capital District), San Isidro and El Ingenio (Miranda), Greater Caracas, to support the activities they carry out in their respective communities.
- UNHCR delivered biosecurity gear to **8** health centres in Carabobo, Capital District, La Guaira and Miranda, as well as to the Los Caracas Isolation Centre in La Guaira, benefitting **24,692** persons that receive medical care at these centres.
- UNHCR delivered solar lamps, buckets, wheelchairs, kitchen sets and other NFIs to health centres in health centres in Valencia and Tocuyito, Carabobo, enhancing their capacity to provide adequate medical care during the COVID-19 emergency. UNHCR also delivered **41** Pap tests to the health centre in Tocuyito, for women with specific needs who receive care at this centre.
- UNHCR installed **1** 2,100-litre water tank for and delivered biosecurity gear to the Child Protection Council in the municipality of Libertador, Carabobo, supporting the assistance it provides to **350** children per month, as it previously had reduced its operating hours during water supply shortages. UNHCR also donated biosecurity gear to CONARE employees in Caracas, to ensure the continuity of its services for persons in need of international protection.
- UNHCR delivered **150** mattresses, **150** blankets, **20** mosquito nets, **12** buckets, **2** automotive batteries, **2** water filters, **2** kitchen sets and biosecurity gear to the regional CONARE office in Táchira, Civil Defence in Samuel Darío Maldonado (Táchira) and the Offices of the Ombudsperson in Mérida and Táchira, supporting the responses of these institutions in benefitting some **5,350** persons with specific needs and staff members in Táchira and Mérida.
- UNHCR delivered kitchen sets and supplies to the Campo Escuela facility, managed by the Guasdalito Boy Scouts and which will tentatively serve to provide care to COVID-19 patients and host activities promoting child protection. This facility in Apure can accommodate up to **100** persons.
- UNHCR conducted a joint mission with the Civil Registry Office to La Soledad, Apure, delivering solar lamps, habitat kits, hygiene kits and jerry-cans to **253** Jivi indigenous persons. The local Civil

Registry Office also issued birth certificates confirming the nationality of **48** children in the community.

- UNHCR delivered office supplies to Civil Registry offices in seven communities in Apure, supporting administrative procedures for some **1,000** children and adolescents lacking IDs.
- UNHCR conducted a joint mission with HIAS and local institutions to Santa Elena de Uairén, Bolívar, during which the National Electoral Council delivered **5** birth certificates and provided assistance to **32** persons relating to identity documents.
- UNHCR continues to support the Centre for Social Services for Families (CASF) in Bolívar, which was reactivated as a quarantine centre and is hosting **74** spontaneous returnees from Brazil as of March.
- Partner Vivienda Popular completed the refurbishment and repair work at the Don Tito Salas school in San Isidro, Petare, Miranda (Greater Caracas), which serves **723** children in the community and provides a meeting space for community structures.
- UNHCR completed refurbishment and reparation work to the Offices of the Ombudsperson in Caracas and Guatire, Miranda, supporting their work in providing assistance to some **530** persons per month. During the event celebrating the official reopening of the office in Guatire, CONARE distributed provisional asylum documents to Colombian refugees.
- CONARE reported the recognition of **22** new Colombian refugees during the reporting period, as well as **78** new asylum claims, **25** of which were registered during a joint mission with UNHCR and partner HIAS to Villa del Rosario, Zulia.
- UNHCR, in coordination with the local Child Protection Council, refurbished a shelter in Guasualito that will serve as the first temporary shelter for children at risk in the municipality of Páez, Apure, furnishing it with beds, refrigerators, kitchens and other NFIs to benefit some **10** children per month. Together with IOM, UNFPA and partners HIAS and CISP, UNHCR conducted training on the best interests of the child for Child Protection Council staff, as well as staff and foster mothers who will work at the shelter.
- UNHCR held training on the identification of specific needs, referral pathways and UNHCR's mandate for **107** community outreach volunteers and community leaders in prioritised communities in Táchira.
- UNHCR held training for partner Zulia Red Cross on the community-based complaints mechanism that will be implemented in **3** prioritised communities in Zulia.
- UNHCR and its partners organised **12** workshops on the identification of special needs and referral pathways for UNHCR-supported community structures in **6** prioritised communities in the states of Carabobo, La Guaira and Miranda (Greater Caracas). UNHCR also conducted the same workshop for Puerto Cabello Red Cross staff in Carabobo. **209** persons participated in these workshops.
- UNHCR, together with HIAS, CONARE and the Office of the Ombudsperson, provided a workshop on Refugee Law for **25** police officers in the municipality of Libertador, Carabobo.
- UNHCR, together with NGO Venezuelan Confederation of Deaf People (CONSORVEN), organised a workshop on interaction with and inclusion of persons with disabilities for community structures in El Ingenio, Miranda.
- UNHCR organised **2** virtual information sessions in Antonio José de Sucre, Miranda, on child protection and the prevention of sexual abuse and harassment for **154** persons.
- UNHCR organised an information session in the new prioritised community of Anare, La Guaira, on UNHCR's mandate and the establishment of community structures.
- UNHCR and the Office of the Ombudsperson held information sessions on the rights of indigenous persons with **70** community members in Río Negro, Paraguaipoa, El Tukuko and Marewa, as well as with ASOBARIVEN leaders.


VENEZUELA 2021
 La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados


377K were indirect beneficiaries (mainly in WASH and Shelter activities: NFI endowment, rehabilitation or construction) and 14K were direct beneficiaries (mainly in Protection activities: training, information sessions, individual attention and material assistance). More than 266K beneficiaries (68%) were newly assisted persons and 125K recurring beneficiaries (32%).

JANUARY - MARCH
Donors

UNHCR Venezuela wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors - United States of America, Switzerland, European Union - and the following donors of non-earmarked funds: Norway, Sweden Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Belgium, as well as private donors in Spain.

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