

## UPDATE #9 ON UNHCR COVID-19 RESPONSE IN COLOMBIA



UNHCR in cooperation with the Ombudsperson's Offices in Manizales and Villamaría and the Aires de Esperanza Foundation distributed hygiene, baby and household item kits to 650 Venezuelan and Colombian families in the Coffee Region.  
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### CURRENT CONTEXT

The Colombian Ministry of Health confirmed **257,101 cases of COVID-19** as of Monday, 27 July with Bogota concentrating the highest number (86,857 confirmed cases). A total of 8,777 individuals have died from COVID-19 and **131,161** cases have recovered.

Between 4 April and 27 July, 56,660 Venezuelans are known to have returned to Venezuela from or via Colombia.

The Constitutional Court delivered a follow-up decision concerning its sentence T-025 from 2004 on the Unconstitutional State of Affairs on Internal Displacement, urging the national government to ensure that IDPs have access to programmes and services related to the COVID-19 response.

As per UNHCR monitoring, during the month of June there were 18 reported cases of evictions (17 in Arauca and 1 in Tame) affecting 82 Venezuelans. Another 3 Venezuelans were identified as being at risk of eviction. In Apartadó, UNHCR has identified 65 cases of evictions of Venezuelans, which are being addressed through the Ombudsperson's Office. Moreover, the GIFMM has registered 182 incidents of evictions, (overwhelmingly among Venezuelan refugees and migrants but also including a small percentage of Colombian-Venezuelan families and Colombian returnees) affecting a total of 753 individuals, with an additional 221 individuals at risk of eviction; further details can be viewed [here](#). UNHCR has developed an Action Plan to address situations of evictions, outlining institutions and steps to advocate at the local, national and interagency levels.

Following confrontations between ELN and the Rastrojos, 70 Venezuelans were displaced on 24 June to Banco de Arena, a rural area near Cucuta. UNHCR responded by advocating with the Ombudsman's Office while also coordinating a GIFMM response. On 24 July, UNHCR conducted a monitoring mission and distribution of humanitarian assistance together with GIFMM partners, assisting 50 families (168 individuals) of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, including 15 indigenous Wayuu families, as well as displaced Colombian people. A delegate from the Cúcuta Mayor's Office indicated that a response under Law 1448 will be activated, and that the people will be relocated to another space with more adequate conditions and that accompaniment will be provided for those wishing to return to their farms or relocating to other parts of Colombia.

In Pasto, protests took place by migrants of various nationalities (121 Haitians, 12 Brazilians, 8 Chileans, 2 Congolese and 2 Angolans), demanding the establishment of a humanitarian corridor to enter Panama. Migración Colombia issued 6 letters of safe-conduct to enable pregnant women to access healthcare. UNHCR has supported the mayor of Pasto with orientation and technical assistance on cases with specific needs.

The Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) reported that 867 Venezuelan children (of whom 161 were unaccompanied) entered child protective services between February and May 2020, an increase of 19.6% compared to the same period in 2019. 131 entered the penal system. Additionally, the Coalition Against the Involvement of Children and Youth in the Colombian Armed Conflict (COALICO) reported 190 cases of recruitment and use of children, including Venezuelans, by illegal armed groups between 1 January and 30 June, compared to 38 cases in the same period in 2019.

The Ministry of Health reported 1,098 cases of SGBV against Venezuelans between 25 March and 5 July, a 19.9% increase compared to last year, of which 553 were committed against adult women, 336 against girls, 167 cases against boys, 41 against adult men, and 1 case against an elderly woman. Additionally, the Ministry of Health reported that from 25 March to 5 July there have been 862 cases of SGBV against indigenous women and 308 cases of SGBV against indigenous men, of which 16 were committed against Venezuelan indigenous women and 6 were committed against Venezuelan indigenous men. They also reported 1,155 cases of SGBV against Afro-Colombian women and 313 cases of SGBV against Afro-Colombian men of which 36 cases were committed against Venezuelan Afro-

descendent women and 8 cases against Venezuelan Afro- descendent men.

The Colombian National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences reported that 12 Venezuelan were killed between 25 March and 30 June. There were also 4 suicides, 145 cases of interpersonal violence, 250 cases of intimate partner violence, 40 cases of domestic violence and 131 cases of sexual violence against Venezuelan women in the same period. From 16 March to 14 July, UNHCR registered 1,584 cases of women at risk and 176 cases of SGBV (Venezuelans and Colombians).

## COVID-19 RESPONSE IN NUMBERS

From 15 March to 15 July:

- UNHCR has donated **383 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs)** and **119 tents** to hospitals, clinics, UNHCR-supported shelters, and local health authorities in 10 departments.
- A total of **463 vulnerable persons** have been sheltered in the hotel network in Riohacha and Maicao.
- **382 people** with special protection needs sheltered at the Integrated Assistance Centre (CAI) in Maicao, La Guajira since March.
- UNHCR has remotely registered 19,922 families (**73,253 individuals, 74% female**) in PRIMES. The locations with the highest number of calls were Bogota (25%), Norte de Santander (16%) La Guajira (14%) and Antioquia (14%). 55% of calls were related to legal and physical protection needs including access to assistance, followed by issues of children at risk (12%), serious medical conditions (11%) single parents (10%); women at risk (6%).
- Emergency cash assistance covering a 2-month period provided to **over 14,881 individuals** across the country through 10 different partners.
- A [video](#) on how to prevent COVID-19 contagion reached **over 43,163 people** through social media, and [specific messages](#) on how to prevent COVID-19 contagion and

recommendations targeting people living with HIV reached **over 11,507 people** through social media and YouTube.

## **UNHCR'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN THE PAST 4 WEEKS**

### **Health and hygiene/prevention measures**

UNHCR delivered 18 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds to health authorities in Arauca, distributed between the San Vicente Hospital in Arauca and the Sarare Hospital in Saravena. A total of 1,505 individuals were assisted at the Las Margaritas primary health care centre in Villa del Rosario, while 65 cases in Cucuta and 61 cases in Arauca received general and sexual and reproductive health services through UNHCR's partner, Profamilia.

### **Protection**

In Cucuta and Arauca, 82 children and adolescents were identified as at-risk (75 at risk of not attending school, 11 separated children, 4 pregnant teenagers, 1 child with special education needs). At the Transitory Health Attention Centre (CAST in Spanish) at the Tienditas International Bridge in Norte de Santander, 3 cases of children at risk (2 unaccompanied and 1 separated) were identified and protection mechanisms were activated by the authorities. In Pasto, UNHCR held a virtual workshop on protection issues for internally displaced children in collaboration with internally displaced youth, partner Corporación Infancia y Desarrollo and the municipal government of Ipiales, and another workshop with Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) staff from Nariño.

UNHCR conducted additional virtual training workshops on institutional routes for protecting the rights of Venezuelan children in Medellin, attended by 300 new staff from the child protection unit of the Mayor's Office; in Quibdo, UNHCR conducted a virtual workshop on international protection and childcare routes with the participation of 120 staff from the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF).

A total of 722 cases were supported and oriented through the 6 Ombudsperson's Offices (*Personerías*) in Norte de Santander and another

660 cases in Arauca. 31 cases were referred to University Legal Clinics in Arauca and Cucuta to assist with the asylum process.

A new reception room was inaugurated at Santander University Hospital in Bucaramanga for pregnant and lactating women and SGBV survivors. Part of the Regional Safe Spaces Network (RSSN), the reception room has directly benefited 492 pregnant and lactating women and identified 14 at-risk women and 10 SGBV cases which were referred for assistance and support to UNHCR's safe spaces. In Pasto, UNHCR held three meetings to provide technical support for the implementation of an Emergency House for SGBV survivors with the participation of the municipality and Governor's Office of Nariño.

A video showcasing refugees and migrants [making masks](#) in Cucuta with the collaboration of a well-known local designer. INVAMER survey results published in June show a notable decrease in the negative perception of Venezuelans living in Colombia, from 81% registered in April to 65% registered in June. In Cucuta, UNHCR is working with the local media agency La Opinión, which will support 2,265 persons via chat in its web portal *Estoy En La Frontera*, as well as transmit publications related to the *Somos Panas Colombia* campaign and develop digital products on the access to services and rights for Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

### **Livelihoods**

UNHCR, in cooperation with ILO and IOM, is conducting a labour market study in Medellín, Barranquilla, Bogotá, Cucuta, Cali and Bucaramanga whose main objective is to identify employment opportunities for Venezuelans bearing in mind the COVID-19 risks and safety measures for workers. Additionally, UNHCR will participate in trainings delivered by the Ministry of Labour and ILO focused on instructing labour inspectors on rights for Venezuelan workers.

### **Shelter, NFIs and WASH**

In Bucaramanga, 46 families (159 individuals) were assisted at the Villa Asunción temporary shelter which completed its last phase of operation with this group; over 400 refugees continue to be assisted in the UNHCR network of shelters in La Guajira, though only SGBV and child protection

cases continue to be housed in UNHCR shelters in Riohacha and Maicao due to a shortage of funding. UNHCR installed two Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) at the San Lorenzo de Arauquita Hospital and one in Cravo Norte in Arauca. UNHCR donated 5 RHUs to the Mayor’s Office of Cali to be used for COVID-19 healthcare and 6 tents to be used as an isolation area.

In Barranquilla, UNHCR distributed 1,142 condoms donated by UNFPA to the Venezuelan organization Fuvadis; in Apartado, UNHCR distributed 200 N95 face masks, 3 gallons of hypochlorite, 250 litres of alcohol, 100 nitrile gloves, 40 male hygiene kits, 40 female hygiene kits, 40 child hygiene kits, and 100 diapers for different ages in the municipality of Turbo. Additionally, 100 N95 face masks, 3 gallons of hypochlorite, 80 litres of alcohol, 200 nitrile gloves, 60 bottles of liquid soap, and 60 bottles of antibacterial gel were distributed to rural displaced indigenous and afro-Colombian communities in Riosucio.

UNHCR in Medellin in cooperation with the Ombudsperson’s Offices in Manizales and Villamaría and the Aires de Esperanza Foundation distributed hygiene, baby and household item kits to Venezuelan and Colombian to a total of 650 families in the Coffee Region.

The human rights office and the emergency response unit within the Public Health Ministry in Medellin were provided with personal protective equipment (PPE); in Arauca, UNHCR distributed 2,025 disposable gowns to health authorities and in La Guajira, UNHCR donated handwashing stations to Migración Colombia and the Maicao Hospital.

## FUNDING NEEDS

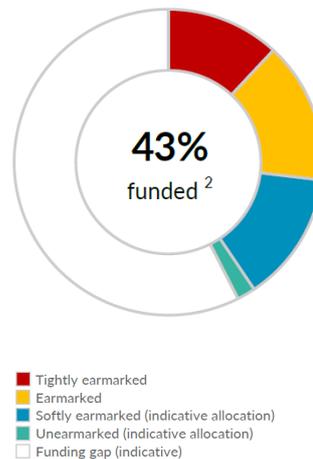
Under its revised Coronavirus Emergency Appeal, UNHCR is appealing for USD 745 million globally, including USD 17.3 million in Colombia. UNHCR’s Global Appeal is now funded at 52%, with USD 387 million contribution received. Overall, UNHCR Colombia is currently funded at 43%.

### UNHCR’s response in Colombia is possible thanks to the contribution of private donors and:

Austria, Canada, Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Chanel Foundation, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, KOICA, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Oro Molido Foundation, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Human Security Trust Fund (UN HSTF), UN Peacebuilding Fund, United Kingdom, United States of America, and USA for UNHCR.

**\$96.7 million**

UNHCR’s financial requirements 2020



Bogota, 28 July 2020