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Colombia and Ecuador: Population Movement

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Category allocated to the disaster: Yellow	<p>Focal point in Colombia: Nadia Khoury; Operation Manager for Colombia; email: nadia.khoury@ifrc.org Edwin Armenta; Migration officer in Andean Countries; edwin.armenta@ifrc.org</p> <p>Focal points for Ecuador: Roger Calabuig; Head of Country Office; email: roger.calabuig@ifrc.org</p> <p>Focal points at Regional Office: Santiago Luengo ; Migration Cell Coordinator; santiago.luengo@ifrc.org</p>
National Societies currently involved: Colombian Red Cross and Ecuadorian Red Cross. Partner National Societies as American Red Cross, German Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross; International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.	
Other partner organizations involved in the operation:	
<p>Colombia: Action Against Hunger, ADRA, Amiceres, Aldeas Infantiles, Ayuda en Acción, BLUMONT, Bethany International, Caritas Germany, Caritas Switzerland, Diakonie, DRC, FAO, Global Communities, Halü, Humanity & Inclusion, ILO, iMMAP, IOM, IRC, JRS Colombia, JRS Latin America and the Caribbean, Lutheran World Federation, Malteser International, Mercy Corps, Médecins Sans Frontières, NRC, OACNUDH, OCHA, OCR, OXFAM, FUPAD, Pastoral Social, Plan International, Premiere Urgence, RET International, Save the Children, TdH Lausanne, UN Habitat, Un Techo Para Mi País, UN Women, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, War Child, WFP, WHO/PAHO, World Vision.</p> <p>Ecuador: ADRA, CAR, CSMM-PIDHDD Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos - Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo, Dialogo Diverso, FUDELA Fundacion de las Americas, HIAS Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, ILO, IOM, Jesuit Refugee Service Ecuador, Misión Scalabrini, Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan International Ecuador, RET International, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UNWOMEN, World Vision Ecuador, WFP and WHO</p>	

This bulletin is being issued for information and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Red Cross Societies of Colombia and Ecuador, with the support of the Emergency Appeals launched by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), are seeking funding and other assistance from donors.

The situation

Since August 23, 2019, Ecuador has witnessed an increased number of Venezuelan nationals entering through the international bridge of Rumichaca, due to new migratory measures established by the Ecuadorian Government.

According to the new measures announced by the Government, as of from 26 August 2019, all Venezuelan citizens will need a humanitarian visa to Enter Ecuador. Because of these new regulations, the flow of people entering Ecuador has increased considerably over the past days (according to Migracion Colombia, the Colombian national migration authority, this increased by 30 percent compared to previous weeks) and reached peaks of 3,000 people entering daily in Ecuador. The measure is based on

Executive Decree 826 of July 25 and aims to organize migratory flows under the principles of orderly, regular and safe migration. On 23 August 2019, the Colombian municipality of Ipiales declared a state of emergency following the announcement of this measure and to respond to an increased number of people trying to cross to Ecuador. On 26 August, a sanitary emergency was declared by the municipality of Ipiales as there was no running water due to damage to an aquaduct; by the following day, the damage had mostly been repaired. In the evening of 26 August, protests at the border were reported; police were deployed to both sides of the border.

Migracion Colombia [reports](#) that on the weekend of 24 and 25 August, more than 11,000 Venezuelan citizens were able to complete the migratory process to leave Colombian territory through the Rumichaca border. In the morning of 27 August, a significant decrease in the flow of migrants between the north-eastern border of Colombia and Venezuela (Norte de Santander) was noted. From Ipiales, it is reported that there are very few persons crossing the border, and police presence is noted. As of the afternoon of 28 August, approximately 800 persons, including families with children, were reported around the border at Rumichaca, unable to cross.



Photo 1: Volunteer from Ecuadorian Red Cross supporting in the Sucumbios Border Centre. Source: Ecuadorian Red Cross



Photo 2: The Rumichaca border crossing on the morning of 25 August 2019. Source: Colombian Red Cross.

Due to an increase in people crossing the international bridge in Rumichaca, people at the National Border Centre offices (CENAF by its acronym in Spanish), especially families traveling with young children and adolescents, have not been able to access the Refugee Housing Unit (RHU's) or other locally available shelter facilities because of limited capacity (approximately only 250 places for pregnant women, women with children, and elderly people) and are therefore spending the night in the open. The government of Ecuador is working with the Ministry of Economic and

Social Inclusion (MIES) and UNICEF to ensure protection measures and protocols are in place for unaccompanied minors or for those requiring special protection.

From May 2017 to July 2019, 1,673,980 Venezuelans have entered Ecuador, of whom 341,561 have remained in the country, more than 115,000 of them with visas. As of July 25, 2019, the number of Venezuelan people that entered the country increased. Between July 26 and August 2 of this year, 13,713 Venezuelans entered the country, with an average of 1,714 people daily. From August 3 to 25, the day prior to the visa requirement, an average of 3,704 people entered the country daily.¹



This chart shows the number of people entering Ecuador during the month of August through the two main border points between Colombia to Ecuador. Source: [Ministry of Government](#)

The consequences of such a change in the regulation to enter Ecuador might increase vulnerabilities of the migrant population, especially for those requiring special protection such as women, children, and people living with disabilities. As people might increasingly try to enter Ecuador through informal border points, locally referred to as '*trochas*', the concern is particularly high with regards to protection related issues, especially as people might find themselves at increased risk of becoming victims of crime, exploitation and human trafficking, without information on how to find support or report incidents to the competent authorities. In addition, migrants often reach Rumichaca unprepared for temperatures as low as five degrees and for the altitude and extreme weather conditions of the Tulcan area.

Since the application of the Ecuador's new migration policy, there was a slight increase in the entrance of Venezuelans through CEBAF Tumbes in Peru (less than 1000 people per day). Migrations agencies from Ecuador and Peru have taken coordination measures to avoid cases of immigration limbo in case of not admission to Peru.

The Consulate General of Peru in Machala continues to issue the humanitarian visa, which takes between one and two weeks. According to data from Peruvian Migration agency, on average 8% of the people who present themselves at the CEBAF are inadmissible to enter Peru.

Key information from other agencies:

Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela: Bilateral meetings have been held between governments and United Nations agencies led by the National Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Colombian Red Cross

- The Colombian Red Cross is monitoring from the national order the territories prioritized by order of potential affectation in the current scenario: La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Nariño, Putumayo, Boyacá, guaranteeing the follow up of the corridor of walkers and the evolution of migrant flows.
- In Boyacá and Cundinamarca, since last week, measures have been taken by the Colombian Red Cross and humanitarian partners (NRC, IOM, UNHCR and Fraternidad Internacional) for transport and food support to people in transit to Ecuador.
- In Cundinamarca, at the bus terminal in Bogota, the Colombian Red Cross has established a new Restoring Family Links point to support migrants in transit.
- In the period 20 to 25 August, the Colombian Red Cross has provided 2,469 services in restoring family links, through complementary services in Cundinamarca, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Putumayo.
- In Ipiales, the following measures are being taken since last Friday 23 of August:
 - The Health Care Unit in Ipiales is ready to receive cases referred from Rumichaca.
 - The point of attention to migrants in Rumichaca extended its schedule until 12:00pm over the past weekend and hired an additional doctor and nursing assistant.
 - An additional ambulance is available.
 - Bread and hot drinks are available from Rumichaca.
 - Blankets were sent from Bogotá for delivery to the migrant population.
- In Putumayo, the local coordinator of the Colombian Red Cross in La Hormiga is monitoring the situation at the San Miguel International bridge; migrants flows are considered normal as of the morning of 27 August, however there are unconfirmed rumours that persons are using irregular crossing points.
- A Colombian Red Cross WASH National Intervention Team member had been deployed to Ipiales on 24 August to strengthen technical WASH response capacity.
- In the evening of 26 August, whilst protests at the border were reported, Colombian Red Cross staff remained alert and humanitarian attentions were suspended in the evening in the event of disturbances.
- From the national level, the prioritized departments of La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Nariño, Putumayo and Boyacá, are being monitored in light of the potential for developments in the current scenario, with a focus on the “caminantes” (or walking migrants) routes and fluctuations in migratory flows.
- The Colombian Red Cross is developing a complementary plan of action for the municipality of Ipiales, in the event that there be any developments in terms of public order, and increased numbers of migrants settling at the border.
- Usual response activities are continuing in all Colombian Red Cross points of attention to migrants across the country, and the National Society continues to review the situation as the scenario evolves.

Ecuadorian Red Cross

- National Society placed on alert at Management and Operational levels, as well as security protocols and the contingency plan developed 3 weeks ago.
- The schedule for attendance has been extended until 00:00h.
- Number of volunteers and personal increased up to 3 paramedics, 2 risk reduction technicians, 4 volunteers and 2 technicians from headquarters.
- Restoring Family Links providing the services of; telephone calls, access to messages via social media, internet access and battery charging.
- Friendly/secure space is operational.
- Mobilization of ambulances in coordination with the Ministry of Health.

- Distribution of 30 blankets and earmuffs to women and children who are sleeping in the square and without access to shelter, plus 50 nutritional kits and 5000 proteinic cookies.
- Safe water supply in drinking troughs in the border centers.
- At the same time, priority is being given to the people who are walking on the route and therefore services have been extended to Imbabura, which is the following step in the route, where 30 hygiene kits were distributed and 8 volunteers plus 2 technicians are currently deployed.
- During the coordination meeting with the Working Group for Migrants and Refugees (GTRM), joint actions have been established with regards to the reference of cases to different types of assistance on the field.

IFRC Actions

- Close monitoring of the situation with the IFRC Office in Colombia and Ecuador, CCST Andean Countries.
- Coordination team supporting National Societies.
- Prepare key messages with National Societies if necessary.
- Sharing of two internal information messages.
- IFRC staff ready for deployment if required

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

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