



BY THE NUMBERS

1.5 million

Venezuelans fled since early 2017

353,000

Venezuelan refugees currently in Peru

20,000

Asylum applications in Peru in 2017

1,000 +

Venezuelans entering Peru daily

Source: UNHCR, Venezuela Situation Appeal, 2018
USAID Venezuela Regional Crisis Fact Sheet #2

SITUATION REPORT

Venezuelan Refugee Crisis in Peru

July 18th, 2018 | No. 2

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Venezuela was once the most prosperous country in Latin America. Over the past decade, mismanagement of state funds and the collapse of a one-dimensional economy heavily dependent on oil exports have sent the country into a downward spiral. The humanitarian situation in Venezuela has been deteriorating since 2014, with alarming rates of extreme poverty, malnutrition and one of the highest homicide rates in Latin America. The Venezuelan currency, the Bolivar, has been rendered practically useless, with inflation reaching 2,600 percent in 2017, drying up pensions and making salaries of even relatively well-paid government employees and qualified professionals insufficient to cover the basic needs of their families.

With no end to the crisis in sight, Venezuelans are leaving their country in record numbers. According to the International Organization for Migration, more than 1.5 million Venezuelans have migrated over the past two years. This level of movement is on par with refugee levels of Syrians fleeing war to neighboring countries and Rohingya refugees fleeing to Bangladesh. The majority of Venezuelan refugees have settled in towns on the Colombia and Brazilian borders, such as Cúcuta and Boa Vista, frequently traveling back and forth to bring money home.

Although not a border country with Venezuela, Peru is also seeing a rapidly increasing number of refugees, with approximately 1,000 arriving each day. Border crossing points in Peru are not equipped to receive large influxes of refugees, who are often in poor health and are in need of immediate medical care, food, water and hygiene supplies. The risk of sexual and gender-based violence, human trafficking and exploitation are also a growing concern for local and national authorities.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE EFFORTS

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is expanding operations in Colombia over the next two months and is working with local organizations to set up additional reception centers for refugees. In northern Peru, UNHCR reception centers that were built to receive 200-300 refugees are trying to manage 1,000-1,200 arrivals per day.

Several large humanitarian organizations have launched responses to the crisis, including the International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps and Catholic Relief Services. However, so far the response has been focused on border areas where refugees are arriving, leaving the urban areas where most seek to settle neglected and lacking basic reception services to facilitate their integration into society.



SITUATION REPORT

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF – ACTIONS TAKEN AND NEXT STEPS

Lutheran World Relief has allocated \$85,000 to support a project with a local partner, Encuentros, which operates a reception center in Lima that provides temporary housing, food and legal assistance to 400-600 Venezuelan refugees per month. Our assessment has shown that the majority of Venezuelan refugees arriving in Peru seek to establish roots in Lima, where many have diaspora connections. We have found a major gap in the reception services available to new arrivals, as they navigate the process of trying to find temporary housing, apply for work and get settled in a new country.

Our project seeks to establish a crucial support network for Venezuelans arriving in Lima. We will work closely with Encuentros to support a reception center that addresses the increasing needs of Venezuelan refugees in Lima, providing welcome services, legal advice and cash assistance. The project will include the following activities:

- Support four reception centers capable of offering temporary housing and meals to Venezuelan refugees
- Create an online communications platform to provide legal counseling and guidance about residency and work permits, labor laws, etc.
- Provide psychosocial support services for children, women and youth
- Engage in advocacy activities for the rights of Venezuelans in Peru, promoting integration within host communities.

With strong relationships with the UNHCR, government entities and other relevant stakeholders, we are pursuing additional resources for this project. Lutheran World Relief’s Peru country program is a leader in cash transfer programming and has the capacity and an established mechanism for digital cash transfer, such as e-wallet and mobile money transfers.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF IN THE COUNTRY

With nearly 75 years of demonstrated expertise helping to transform some of the hardest-to-reach places in the developing world, Lutheran World Relief is an innovative, trusted international nongovernmental organization committed to those otherwise cut off from basic human services and opportunities.

We help communities living in extreme poverty adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being and we respond to emergencies with a long-term view. When a disaster hits – whether it’s a drought, tsunami or civil war – we work alongside communities over months and years to help them recover and adjust to new realities, ensuring that they are prepared to withstand the next unexpected challenge. Regardless of whether these challenges are chronic or acute, Lutheran World Relief invests in communities to enable those living in extreme poverty to build the resilience they need to thrive.

Lutheran World Relief has worked in Peru since 1979, specializing in interventions that increase small-scale farmers’ capacity to improve production quantity and quality, expand markets in rural production, assist communities to enhance their natural resource management, and increase the effectiveness of public and private investments in rural development initiatives. We work with local NGOs, governments and rural enterprises, as well as directly with farmers in an array of value chains to implement contextually adapted interventions, including sustainable climate-smart agriculture, income diversification, post-harvest processing, financial services, marketing and increased organizational capacity.

For additional information about Lutheran World Relief’s response to this situation and other emergencies around the world, please visit lwr.org. You can also join the conversation about how Lutheran World Relief is responding to emergencies with a long-term view at facebook.com/LuthWorldRelief or twitter.com/LuthWorldRelief.



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