

Colombia

1-15 November 2020



Venezuelan family participating in the UNHCR-financed shelter and humanitarian assistance project with the Colombian Red Cross in Medellín. ©UNHCR/Catalina Betancur.

Current Context

The Colombian Ministry of Health confirmed 1,308,376 cases of COVID-19 as of 29 November, with Bogotá concentrating the highest number (374,077 confirmed cases). A total of 36,584 individuals have died from COVID-19 and 1,204,452 cases have recovered.

According to Migración Colombia, 119,885 Venezuelans have returned to Venezuela from or through Colombia since the 14 March border closure (as of 16 November).

UNHCR and partners are monitoring the flux of *camionantes* (people transiting on foot) entering Colombia via informal crossing points and heading towards cities inside the country or third countries. According to this monitoring, an average of 80-100 Venezuelans enter daily in Arauca and 300 per day in Cúcuta.

On the Ecuadorian border, an average of 15 people per day are taking informal crossings to enter or leave Colombia. The capacity to provide assistance for and monitor this population in transit on the southern border is limited due to presence of illegal armed actors and limited access.

In addition, during the reporting period, 1,681 individuals returning to Venezuela were registered at the Transitory Health Attention Centre (CAST in Spanish), of which 1,360 received information and orientation from UNHCR.

The eviction of 30 family groups occupying an informal settlement near Cali's bus terminal scheduled for 30 October was suspended following the intervention of GIFMM Valle de Cauca with local authorities. The Secretary of Social Welfare in Cali is now designing a response route for the Venezuelan families.

According to external sources, between November 1 and 15, seven massacres have been registered in the municipalities of Nechí, Támesis and Betania (Antioquia), Argelia (Cauca, with two events), Tierralta (Córdoba) and Soledad (Atlántico). Persistent violence due to territorial disputes by illegal armed actors in the Bajo Cauca region, southern Córdoba, southwestern Antioquia and in the municipality of Argelia in Valle del Cauca are of great concern, and some have caused recent displacements.

Emergencies due to large-group displacements and confinements are also reported in the municipalities of Bajo Baudó, Litoral de San Juan (Chocó), López de Micay (Cauca) and Olaya Herrera (Nariño), mainly due to confrontations between illegal armed actors, homicides and threats to social leaders. In Bajo Baudó 72 families (322 people) were displaced from the communities of Buchadó, Villanueva and la Loma. The confinement of approximately 600 families (3,000 persons) from 14 communities in the Purricha River was also reported. In Docordó, capital of the Municipality of Litoral de San Juan, 99 families (276 persons) were displaced; 11 communities of approximately 590 families (2,200 persons) are confined. In López de Micay, 18 families (40 persons) of the El Playón Community Council were displaced, while 120 families (290 persons) are confined. Finally, in Olaya Herrera, 223 families (543 people) were displaced from the villages of Vuelta Larga and Boca de Prieta. Recurring emergencies in the latter municipality are a concern, since several villages have been displaced up to three times during 2020.

UNHCR has worked with the Victim's Unit (UARIV) to register and attend to displacements and confinements, as well as promoting an institutional response through the Subcommittee on Prevention, Protection and Guarantees of Non-Repetition jointly with the Ministry of the Interior, the Ombudsman's Office and the Inspector General. In addition, UNHCR takes part in meetings aimed at identifying and following up on emergencies resulting from large-group displacements and confinements and to highlight gaps in the registration of events.

An illegal armed group entered Sabaletas, Limones, Guaimia and San Marcos villages near Buenaventura by boat, killing one person, wounding one and leaving behind a threatening pamphlet.

There are reports in Putumayo of increased protests by illicit armed groups against actions of the Anti-Narcotics police such as fumigation and other methods of eradicating illicit crops, especially around the border region of San Miguel. There are also reports of youths (15-25 years old) being forcibly recruited in the coca production cycle.

From 15 October to 3 November, 10,139 applications for the new PEP VI have been registered, (this latest round of the Special Stay Permit PEP allows Venezuelans who have entered Colombia prior to 31 August 2020 to regularize their status and access basic rights). Additionally, as of 3 November, 127,884 out of 281,770 PEP RAMV have been renewed as of 30 October. 6,923 PEPFF permits (PEP

for labour purposes) have been issued since the introduction of the PEPFF in early 2020, including more than 5,000 which were processed virtually.

UNHCR has been assisting Venezuelan refugees and migrants via its 59 telephone lines in 26 departments orienting people through the process of accessing and renewing their PEP as well as identifying prioritized cases that would require legal assistance and referring those cases to partners.

UNHCR will also support the regional office of Migración Colombia in Putumayo in the establishment of a Facilitation Centre where Venezuelan refugees and migrants can renew their documentation in a safe environment and avoid travelling to the neighbouring department Nariño.

Response Highlights: Past 2 Weeks

Health and hygiene/prevention measures

UNHCR donated two diagnostic monitors and one mechanical ventilator to the San Vicente Hospital in Arauca and to the Sarare Hospital in Saravena.

In Buenaventura, UNHCR provided 25 electric beds to the public hospital which facilitated its first intensive care unit (ICU).

Thirty Refugee Housing Units (RHU) were installed at the Erasmo Meoz University Hospital in Cúcuta, expanding the second phase of the COVID-19 contingency space with an additional capacity of 24 observation beds and 24 critical care ICU beds. In Arauca, 29 cases and in Popayán (Cauca) 22 cases received sexual and reproductive health services through UNHCR's partner Profamilia.

In Chocó, in association with Profamilia and the Ismael Roldan Hospital, UNHCR provided health services for the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population, including sexual and reproductive health services to 12 women and the distribution of 22 baby carriers.

In Putumayo, during a Health Care Brigade organized by the municipality of Puerto Asís with the participation of other organizations (CISP, IOM, UNHCR partners), 341 Venezuelans were provided with preventive treatments and consultations in sexual and reproductive rights.

Protection

A total of 1,187 persons (881 Venezuelans, 305 Colombians, one Cuban; 747 of whom were women and 440 men) in Arauca were supported and oriented through the 12 Local Ombudsperson's (Personerías) and legal counsels. Another 2,375 persons received the same support in Cúcuta. UNHCR referred cases to the University Legal Clinics for legal assistance with the asylum-seeking process in Arauca (21) and Cúcuta (36). In Arauca, 70 legal actions were filed (39 regarding guardianships, 29 rights petitions and one motion citing contempt and one motion challenge).

UNHCR's partner Pastoral Social Apartadó assisted 26 Venezuelans to access basic rights during the Health Registration Day organized by the municipality, 21 of whom were enrolled in the health insurance system.

UNHCR's partner Alianza por la Solidaridad (APS), in coordination with the Mayor's Office, the Ombudsperson and Profamilia oriented 74 people in Popayán (Cauca) on how to access their rights, including health, education and the asylum system.

In Cúcuta, seven cases of SGBV and 68 women at risk were identified and referred for assistance. 11 cases (28 persons) were referred for support at the UNHCR safe houses. 129 individual cases received psychosocial assistance, legal advice, nutritional assessment and activation of complementary pathways by La Casa que Abraza, an LGBTI support space.

UNHCR participated as co-leader in the meeting of the Protection Thematic Working Group in Nariño held as a response to the increase in conflicts between illegal armed groups and targeted killings in the Pacific region (Tumaco) during the months of September and October. The session sought to address the risks and protection gaps affecting those forcibly displaced in the Tumaco municipality, especially those victims of violence in the Sabaleta Indigenous Reservation, the urban Tumaco area and kilometre 28 (highway area between Tumaco and Pasto). UNHCR will advocate with the Mayor's Office of Tumaco to call for a Transitional Justice Territorial Committee and with the Governor's Office of Nariño and the Public Prosecutor for Peace to take part in the response to this emergency.

In Buenaventura, UNHCR's partner Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) carried out a 2-day campaign for assistance and orientation on access to rights for refugees and migrants in Buenaventura. 73 cases received registration and orientation services, and 7 baby carriers were delivered to pregnant and lactating refugee women.

In Arauca, 12 separated youth (six girls and six boys) and 16 unaccompanied children (eight girls and eight boys) were identified and assisted by UNHCR's partner Apoyar, in close coordination with the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF).

In Cúcuta, 71 children at risk were identified, of which 53 correspond to children at risk of not attending school, six teenage pregnancies, one child with special education needs, one child associated with armed forces or groups; seven separated children and three unaccompanied children. Most of the separated (5) and unaccompanied (3) children were identified at the CAST during the registration process. At the CAST, 21 cases of unaccompanied or separated children were referred to World Vision psychosocial professionals for evaluation and activation of the protection response in coordination with the authorities.

Cash-Based Assistance

To date, 45,886 people (11,196 families) have received multipurpose cash, representing 86 percent of the total number of families planned. 1,361 surveys have been carried out as part of the post distribution monitoring process, representing 88 per cent of the target sample.

Livelihoods

UNHCR will participate in the campaign launched by the Ministry of Labour and UNODC to raise awareness of fraudulent job offers that may lead to the involvement of refugees and migrants in human trafficking networks. This initiative will redirect them to authorized portals for job searches in Colombia. Additionally, UNHCR will support the 2020 Integrated Action Strategies carried out by the Ministry of Labour to develop better public policies on labour migration. The #WorkingTogether content line of the

UNHCR-led Somos Panas Colombia anti-xenophobia campaign will be promoted in these spaces within the context of COVID-19 economic recovery.

Shelter, NFIs and WASH

UNHCR admitted another group of families at the Integrated Assistance Centre (CAI) in Maicao, La Guajira department. Around 90 people (17 families) entered Phase 4 after having received a negative COVID-19 test result and after having followed all biosecurity measures. This brings the total number of people currently being assisted at the Centre to over 282.

UNHCR provided shelter assistance to six people in Ipiales and 61 people in Pasto at the existing shelters during the reported period.

UNHCR donated 654 school kits to 4 schools in Cartagena participating in its Pedagogy and Protection program, and 70 school kits to Antonio Nariño Public School in Pasto to support the school's response to the arrival of children forcibly displaced from the Pacific region (Tumaco) two weeks ago.

In Maicao, UNHCR delivered 40 hygiene kits, 40 packs of sanitary towels and four boxes of soap to the community of the informal settlement Villa del Sol. UNHCR also finished the delivery of around 250 Baby Björn carriers to communities in Riohacha and Maicao, with the support of local partners such as Action Against Hunger, Save The Children, and the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare.

In Barranquilla, UNHCR donated to the Venezuelan organization FUVADIS a laptop and a mobile phone, a thermometer and 1,000 surgical masks to strengthen their prevention measures against COVID-19. UNHCR delivered 2,500 surgical masks to the health office in the Atlántico Department and 2,500 surgical masks to the municipal health office in Barranquilla.

In Ipiales, the Office donated 10 portable handwashing stations to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, Alfonso Lopez Public School, Pastoral Social Ipiales, Joint Advisory Committee La Victoria, Scalabrini Mission, and Assistance Point to Victims. Additionally, 60 blankets and 60 sleeping mats were provided to people in transit.

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 63%, with USD 471 million in contributions received. Overall, UNHCR Colombia is currently funded at 61%.

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

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