

Venezuela

December 2019

- Operational and security conditions in Field Offices continue to be affected by power blackouts, telecommunications problems, intermittent access to water, worsening gasoline shortages and irregular armed group activity in the southern state of Apure and the western state of Táchira. Increased militarisation across the Orinoco Mining Arc has been affecting indigenous communities in the eastern state of Bolívar, members of which have been victims of torture, extrajudicial killings (primarily indigenous Pemón) and sexual exploitation. There have also been reports of forced displacement of indigenous groups in the western state of Zulia, the southern state of Amazonas and the eastern state of Bolívar. Worsening subway conditions in Greater Caracas have provoked derailments and left wounded passengers.
- On 22 December, an irregular armed group of indigenous Pemón and military deserters in the state of Bolívar attacked an army command in the village of Luepa and a police station in the community of Kumarakapay, both in the municipality of Gran Sabana. A military officer was killed, a rebel was wounded and arrested, and the commander of the army base was kidnapped by the irregular armed group. The rebels are said to have fled with a cache of stolen weapons with the help of Pemón civilians.

HIGHLIGHTS

ESTIMATED HOST COMMUNITY BENEFICIARIES

+ 270,000

PERSONS OF CONCERN (GOVERNMENT FIGURES)

Refugees 8,712

Asylum seekers 142

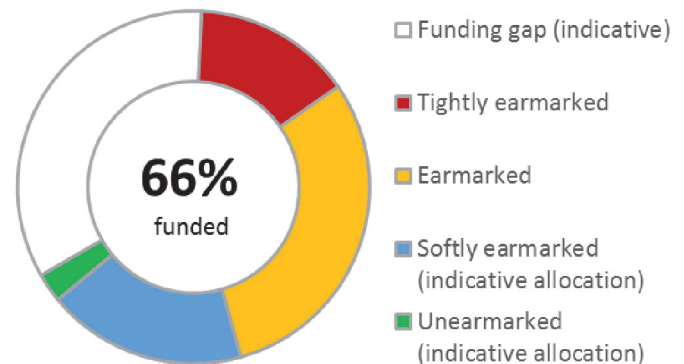
Source: National Refugee Commission Venezuela

Persons in refugee-like situation: 58,826

FUNDING (AS OF DECEMBER 2019)

USD 29.5 million

requested for Venezuela



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

99 Personnel:

83 national staff

2 affiliate workforce/employees

2 national interns

18 international staff

Offices:

1 Representation in Caracas

4 Field Offices in:

San Cristóbal (Táchira), Guasdalito

(Apure), Maracaibo (Zulia) and

Ciudad Guayana (Bolívar)

1 Field Unit in Caracas



Working with Partners

- UNHCR is implementing community-based activities in 54 prioritised communities in eight 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 15 implementing partners (Aliadas en Cadena, AZUL Positivo, Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Refugee Education Trust (RET), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Red Cross Zulia, Luz y Vida, Fe y Alegría, Sociedad Wills Wilde, Fogones y Banderas, Fundación Innocens, Fundación Casa Bonita and Fundación Soy un Guardian), as well as other local actors, including government institutions and NGOs.
- UNHCR holds regular coordination meetings with humanitarian and development actors to discuss the design, coordination and implementation of the protection response for persons of concern and host communities, including identification, provision of humanitarian assistance, monitoring of refugee rights and promotion of durable solutions.
- UNHCR liaises within the United Nations Country Team and with specific United Nations agencies to mainstream protection issues within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and other shared mechanisms.
- UNHCR leads the Protection Sector, an inter-agency space for joint analysis of protection gaps and coordination of protection response and advocacy.
- UNHCR's main Government partners are the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE), the Ombudsperson's Office and Child Protection Councils, as well as community councils.

Main Activities

Community-based Protection

- UNHCR promotes an innovative community-based approach to assess and respond to the protection needs and risks of persons of concern in Venezuela.
- UNHCR is strengthening communication with communities and organizing trainings for outreach volunteers and youth networks to enhance the identification and referrals of persons with specific needs.
- UNHCR is working with community structures such as community groups, women and youth networks to engage the community in the implementation of projects identified by the communities themselves, seeking to improve community response and ensuring the sustainability of projects and community processes. Since 2018, UNHCR and its partners have been implementing community projects on nutrition, health, water and sanitation and education.
- UNHCR is supporting a national protection network that provides assistance and counselling to persons in transit, and safe spaces for the attention of sexual and gender-based survivors and children at risk. The safe spaces provide confidential case management, counselling, psychosocial support, medical aid and legal services.
- UNHCR supports a community centre in Caracas delivering multi-sectorial services from different actors to provide legal counselling, group information sessions on different topics such as rights and referral pathways, hygiene promotion, HIC prevention, as well as catch-up classes for children out of school and material assistance for persons with specific needs, among others.

Asylum and Durable Solutions

- 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 247 persons of concern.

Activities implemented in December 2019

Community-based Protection

- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered 100 solar lamps, 100 jerry cans and 500 water purification tablets to local Civil Protection officials. UNHCR also inaugurated the UNHCR-supported renovated bus terminals in San Cristóbal and San Antonio, newly equipped with seats for waiting rooms, cell phone charging stations and children's playground areas.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas delivered 35 solar lamps and jerry cans to officers from the Office of the Ombudsperson in Caracas.
- UNHCR Maracaibo delivered solar lamps, jerry cans and 2,000 kg of charcoal to families in Guana (294 beneficiaries) and the local Santa Maria de Guana mission school. UNHCR also delivered 100 solar lamps in the indigenous community of El Tukuko with the support of local Yukpa leaders.
- UNHCR Maracaibo delivered solar lamps to 556 persons with specific needs in El Caracolí, where it also assisted families with persons with disabilities and pregnant and lactating women. In addition, UNHCR delivered solar lamps and jerry cans to 53 persons with specific needs, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, older persons and persons with disabilities in Simón Bolívar I, in coordination with outreach volunteers.
- UNHCR Guasualito organised two information sessions in Sabaneta de Guayabal and Palomeco on menstrual hygiene with 34 and 79 indigenous women respectively, most of whom voiced their interest in receiving menstrual cups.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal, together with UNFPA, HIAS and the women leadership program EmpoderaME, organised an information session on feminine hygiene, empowering students ages 15 to 18 exposed to risks related to SGBV and sexual exploitation and providing menstrual cups. UNHCR and UNFPA also held information sessions on female hygiene in Palotal and Colinas de Maisanta and delivered 75 menstrual cups to participants.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal organised the painting of a commemorative wall outside partner NRC's community centre in San Antonio, together with the artistic group Just Art, members of the local youth network, SGBV committee and the community orchard of Mi Pequeña Barinas. SGBV committee members and partner Sociedad Wills Wilde carried out information sessions addressed to women in mobility and internally displaced women, and delivered menstrual cups (#16Days).
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas, together with NGO partner AVESSOC and outreach volunteers in El Cafetal (El Junquito), Greater Caracas, delivered results to women who had participated in a previous gynaecological and cytological medical brigade: 77 women were also provided with the treatments prescribed accordingly for their diagnosed conditions (#16Days).
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas provided information sessions on sexual and gender-based violence and child exploitation, relaying key messages to some 300 children and other persons through interactive theatre in the community of El Cafetal in El Junquito, Greater Caracas (#16Days).
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas organised an urban intervention in Antonio José de Sucre in Petare, Greater Caracas. Some 500 children, men and women of the community received orange wristbands and campaign shirts and came together to paint the stairs and community walls with key messages from the "Orange the World" campaign (#16Days).
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas and the Civil Association for Family Planification (PLAFAM) carried out a promotional campaign on HIV and other sexual diseases in the framework of World AIDS Day. Some 1,800 persons received informative pamphlets in public spaces in Caracas (#16Days).
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas and HIAS organised a promotional campaign at Altamira Square in Caracas on services provided by the Safe Spaces Network for SGBV survivors. Around 1,000 persons received pamphlets and/or orange wristbands, joining the "Generation Equality" campaign (#16Days).
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana organised a cinema forum in Santa Elena de Uairén to raise awareness on gender-based violence among various institutional and government representatives, in addition to the youth and women's networks of Caño Amarillo (#16Days).
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana and the regional Office of the Ombudsperson in Ciudad Guayana inaugurated a new graffiti mural on the Office of the Ombudsperson. The artwork includes an adaptation of the UNHCR logo: two hands protecting different types of women (#16Days).
- UNHCR Guasualito, together with the local Office of the Ombudsperson and FUNDHAMUJER, visited the three prison enclosures in the municipality of Páez, delivered hygiene kits to women

detainees and informed them about assistance and referral routes and mechanisms for reporting gender-based violence (#16Days).

- UNHCR Maracaibo, alongside UNFPA and the local women's network, organised an activity for girls (ages 12-14) from Río Negro and Machiques called "Brave Girls", presenting the stories of powerful Venezuelan and foreign women who promoted social norms changes and fought for gender equality (#16Days).
- UNHCR Maracaibo conducted a health brigade (HIV/syphilis testing) in the settlement of El Cruce with the participation of local sex workers, many originally from other parts of Venezuela.
- UNHCR Maracaibo partner Azul Positivo carried out three family planning workshops for staff at the local health centres in Machiques, Jesus Enrique Losada and San Francisco Municipalities, where it also delivered 3,000 condoms and information on sexual and reproductive health.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana organised a medical brigade centred on sexual and reproductive health for 200 persons in the community of Caño Amarillo, together with UNFPA, HIAS, NGO partner IRFA, the Institute of Public Health (ISP) and the local women's network. The brigade included medical consultations; delivery of medication; administration of medroxyprogesterone and preventive vaccines for yellow fever, polio, diphtheria and hepatitis; provision of HIV and syphilis rapid tests; delivery of 2,000 water purification tablets; and informative sessions on hygiene for children.
- UNHCR Maracaibo, UNHCR's PI Unit and OCHA visited the indigenous community of El Tukuko, where partner Zulia Red Cross delivered equipment to the local health centre, carried out a first aid training session and distributed hygiene kits to 132 vulnerable families in the community.
- UNHCR Maracaibo visited the Santa María de Guana mission in the Guajira border region with Colombia to monitor the implementation of a WASH project developed to ensure access to safe drinking water to persons in transit and IDPs. The project is fully operational and will also allow all the families in the community to access safe water, benefiting nearly 1,500 persons, including community members to whom UNHCR has provided jerry cans.
- UNHCR Maracaibo and partner Aliadas en Cadena held the first women's networks' meeting in Zulia, attended by more than 110 women from the communities of Gran Sabana, Simón Bolívar I, Jesús Enrique Losada y Río Negro. Participants shared good practices from activities organised last year by each network and discussed possible solidarity initiatives to be implemented in 2020. UNHCR Maracaibo, UNFPA, Aliadas en Cadena and Zulia Red Cross also delivered menstrual cups to 38 women in Simón Bolívar I.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana carried out a mission to the communities of Morichalito, Túriba and Los Pijiguaos in the municipality of Cedeño, together with the regional Ombudsman office and NGO partner IRFA. Sexual and reproductive health workshops were organised for the outreach volunteers, women's networks and youth networks in each community. In addition, condoms were delivered to the volunteers and networks, as well as visibility shirts and caps. The Office of the Ombudsperson received and registered complaints during the mission in each of the communities.
- UNHCR Guasdalito, together with partner Fogones y Bandera, held a discussion with indigenous women from prioritised communities in Amazonas to gather information on the causes of malnutrition in children and adequate treatments according to their traditional medicine.
- UNHCR Guasdalito, partners HIAS and Fogones y Bandera organised outreach volunteers in Amazonas from Platanillal, Coromoto, Sabaneta de Guayabal and Los Caobos met in the Tobogan de la Selva, where UNHCR Guasdalito and partners HIAS and Fogones y Bandera delivered 110 certifications of their completion of the "minimal training package".
- UNHCR Guasdalito, together with NGO partner Fogones y Banderas, delivered farming tools in prioritised communities in Amazonas—the first delivery to community members not participating in food safety committees who harvest nonetheless, and the second to strengthen the work of the committees, benefitting over 1,500 persons.
- UNHCR Guasdalito delivered furniture, laptops, office equipment to the Guasdalito Red Cross team, in addition to a fully equipped ambulance, to strengthen their response capacity. UNHCR also delivered office supplies and furniture to NGO partner FUNDHAMUJER.
- UNHCR Guasdalito delivered solar lamps and jerry cans to the Emergency Medical System of Amazonas (SIUMA), the only medical institution in the state that owns functional ambulances, as well as to protection councillors in the municipality of Atures.
- UNHCR Guasdalito delivered 15 school desks to the Refugio de Amor y Paz shelter in Puerto Ayacucho, as well as 18 desks to Virgen de Coromoto High School.

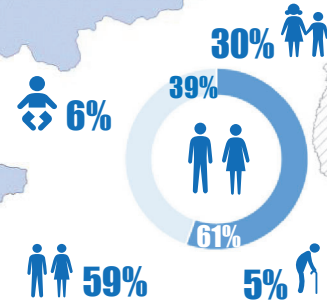
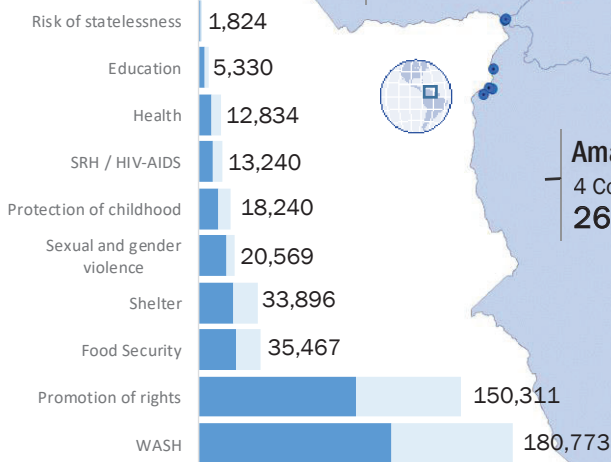
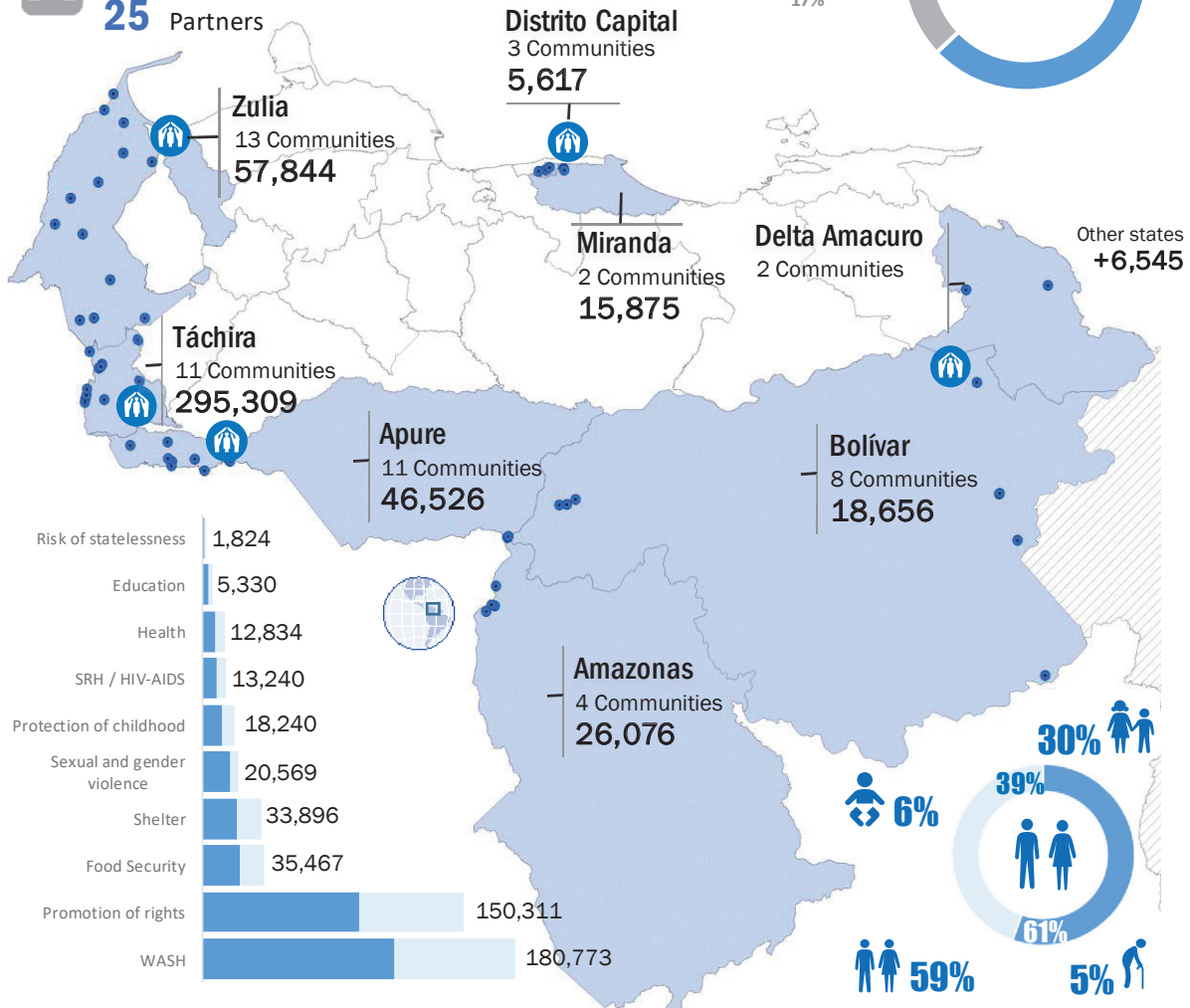
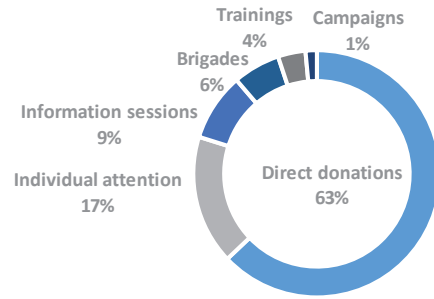
- UNHCR Maracaibo delivered 300 desks and 100 plastic chairs to the local school of Shirapta, as well as 260 school kits, painting and sports kits for children of Shirapta and other indigenous communities nearby.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana delivered stationery, paintings, an industrial kitchen, a refrigerator and a freezer to the bilingual (Spanish and Jivi/Piaroa) indigenous school in Morichalito of partner Fe y Almería for the restoration of the school dining room, as well as cement for the reparation of desks.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana delivered 81 soccer uniforms and shoes to the members (ages 4 to 14) of Los Pijiguaos Football School and organised a “mundialito” football competition for the school.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana supported the inauguration of the new Office of the Prosecutor 16 (with gender responsibilities), following deliveries of office supplies, furniture and electronic equipment. UNHCR also delivered office supplies, furniture and ICT equipment to the Civil Registry Office and the Children Protection Council in the municipality of Padre Pedro Chien.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana delivered stationery, furniture and electronic equipment to the Civil Registry and the Children Protection Council of the municipality of Cedeño.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana and UNHCR Shelter Unit carried out a monitoring mission to the state of Sucre, delivering office supplies, furniture and electronic equipment to the offices of the Ombudsperson in Cumaná and Carúpano.
- UNHCR in San Cristóbal delivered work shirts and caps to the community orchard labourers in Mi Pequeña Barinas and inaugurated the rehabilitated sports field and changing rooms there.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered 20 uniform vests to the Children’s Protection System in San Cristóbal, and an air conditioning unit to the Office of the Ombudsperson in San Antonio.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered one electric generator each to partners JRS, NRC and HIAS in Táchira, as well as four desktop computers and flags to the regional Office of the Ombudsperson.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal carried out a monitoring mission in San Antonio, confirming the completion of the WASH intervention at the local ambulatory and the restructuring of the Communal House in Palotal by partner HIAS. UNHCR also delivered two garbage compactor trucks restored to full operational capacity to the municipality of Bolívar in San Antonio.
- UNHCR Maracaibo carried out a mission to assess the viability of future shelter projects for the construction of safe houses for persons in transit and community centres in the Guajira and Sur del Lago regions. Seven prospective spaces were visited, most of them linked to Roman Catholic Church networks.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana carried out a civil registration brigade in Guanamo, together with the CPNNA and the municipal Civil Registry. 11 birth certificates for children were issued, an information session on the importance of civil registration was organised and the CPNNA issued eight late document submissions. Some 30 children without a confirmed nationality were assisted.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana provided a training session on the centrality of protection in humanitarian action addressed to the humanitarian organizations in Bolívar.

Borders, Asylum and Durable Solutions

- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas and CONARE carried out two workshops on international protection, UNHCR’s mandate and the asylum system in Venezuela for 104 migration police officers in La Guaira, Vargas, as well as a workshop on international protection and protection risks related to gender-based violence and persecution for 20 officials from the Ministry for Women and Gender Equality.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana held a training session on International Refugee Law addressed to law students of the Andrés Bello Catholic University (UCAB).


+472,000 Persons assisted


54 Communities


12 Project Partnership Agreements
25 Partners

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2019

Donors

UNHCR Venezuela wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors—United States of America, European Union, Switzerland, Italy, France, Luxemburg, the Central Emergency Relief Fund and the UN Program on HIV/AIDS—and the following donors of non-earmarked funds: Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland, Japan, Italy, Ireland and private donors in Spain, Sweden, Republic of Korea, Japan, Italy and the USA.

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