



“We are facing a **global health crisis** that is spreading **human suffering** and **upending lives**. The **COVID-19 pandemic** has already **overwhelmed** the **health care systems, economies and societies** of some of the strongest countries in the world. **We must be vigilant** in our **support** for the world’s **most vulnerable people**, including forcibly displaced and stateless people who now **find themselves at even greater risk** as the **pandemic spreads** across the rest of the world.”

Gillian Triggs

UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

Find more [HERE](#).



Situational Highlights

Latin America has become the **epicenter of the pandemic**, with **Brazil** recording the second highest number of confirmed cases worldwide.

Despite strict quarantine measures, **movements continue within and between countries, increasing the risk** of detention, refoulement, contagion and exploitation. Spontaneous returns to Venezuela continue, mostly from Colombia, while returns to the North of Central America are ongoing. Irregular crossings and human smuggling continue to rise. **Reported cases of people of concern with COVID-19 across the region are also on the**

rise. **The situation of indigenous communities, LGBTI communities and children is particularly concerning.** Violence continues unabated and, in some instances, has increased in communities at risk in the North of Central America. **Tensions in the region are on the rise**, with demonstrations in Argentina, Honduras and Ecuador. Most of the countries in the region **tightened border restrictions** and social distancing as case numbers spiked (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Guyana, Peru, Venezuela). A few countries announced a progressive resumption of activities (Mexico,

Panama, Uruguay and Brazil’s Amazonas and Para states). With the gradual easing of measures within several countries, **some offices are preparing a phased return to the office** and to the field (Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago).

Despite the fact that coronavirus-related restrictions have affected access to asylum procedures in several countries, 270 individuals applied for asylum in **Mexico**, four in **Uruguay** – which also recognized nine asylum-seekers as refugees – and Bolivia which recognized 45 Venezuelans as refugees.



Challenges



UNHCR is worried that the plight of Venezuelans refugees and migrants could now worsen with the onset of the Southern Hemisphere winter, which will see frigid temperatures in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Many Venezuelan refugees and migrants have lost their livelihoods amid the pandemic and are now facing poverty, destitution, eviction, widespread hunger and food insecurity, as well as increased protection risks.

With temperatures dropping, UNHCR expects an increase in the numbers of people who will now require emergency shelter and winter items such as blankets, warm clothing and medicine, as well as fuel to heat their homes. Shelter, food, hygiene kits and cash assistance are already critically needed for many vulnerable Venezuelan refugees and migrants living in precarious conditions, who are at risk of becoming homeless or living on the streets.

UNHCR is stepping up its response to meet this challenge. Together with partners, UNHCR is continuing to provide emergency shelters, rental subsidies and other material assistance. UNHCR is also strengthening humanitarian partnerships to be able to provide essential healthcare for refugees in vulnerable situations. You can read more [HERE](#).

In Central America and Cuba, the lack of access to livelihoods continues to pose serious challenges for IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers. Without sources of income, people of concern have become heavily reliant on critically limited humanitarian assistance and face the real threat of eviction and worsening living conditions. Some PoC have reported to UNHCR having to spend days without food, eating once a day or resorting to rummaging through dumpsters for food scraps.

Tropical Storm Amanda, which recently hit the North of Central America, has exacerbated the needs of thousands of families, including IDPs in El Salvador. At least seven communities already affected by forced displacement and coronavirus-related restrictions on movement have been impacted by heavy rains and severe flooding. Read more [HERE](#).













UNHCR’s response in the Americas

Despite the pandemic-related restrictions, UNHCR continues to work to provide emergency assistance, including secure shelter spaces and cash-based assistance, as well as to advocate for the inclusion of refugees in national public health responses, social safety nets and emergency assistance plans. Urgent action is required to help the most vulnerable refugees and IDPs, particularly those in countries where they are unable to access state-run social protection schemes. With the coronavirus crisis exacerbating already dire humanitarian needs globally, timely and flexible support from governments, the private sector and individuals remains critical.

UPDATES FROM COUNTRIES

(Please note the list is not exhaustive and mostly reflects the reporting period.)

-  **Argentina:** Since remote assistance was set up, UNHCR has advised some 1,240 refugees and migrants. 97 percent are Venezuelans, most of them living in the greater Buenos Aires area. Many face difficulties in meeting their basic needs. They struggle to make rent on the accommodations in which they reside, often informally; they also lack legal documentation and often do not have enough to eat. Additionally, UNHCR continues to provide shelter to some 102 vulnerable people of concern, while partners provide cash assistance to some 93 people of concern.
-  **Brazil:** As part of the strategy to expand space in shelters to be able to provide a safe place to stay to vulnerable families currently living in precarious conditions, an additional 49 Refugee Housing Units, or RHUs, were installed in shelters in Boa Vista, bringing the total number of RHUs in use in Brazil's northern Roraima state to 1,183. UNHCR has delivered additional handwashing stations to eight spontaneous settlements in the border town of Pacaraima, benefiting the 464 refugees and migrants living there. Interiorization flights continue, with more than 40 cities throughout the country ready to welcome refugees in the following days. UNHCR supported the so-called "fitness for travel" process that preceded the flights for 159 Venezuelans in the Jardim Floresta shelter in Boa Vista, as well as for an additional 41 individuals from shelters in Manaus.
-  **Belize:** As of 21 May, UNHCR has provided humanitarian assistance to 142 refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR supported the Refugees Department with an infrastructure that allows them to carry out their duties while complying with social distancing measures. UNHCR and the Department agreed on monthly virtual capacity-building meetings to strengthen and improve the quality of the RSD process of complex cases, addressing appropriate utilization of up-to-date country of origin information and RSD interviewing techniques.
-  **Caribbean:** The Regional Protection Sector prepared a guidance note on eviction (including the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing's international standards and considerations during the coronavirus pandemic, as well as good practices in the region and recommendations). The 2019 RMRP Caribbean End of Year Report was published on the R4V website and can be found at this [link](#).
-  **Colombia:** UNHCR's National Programme for Humanitarian Assistance, implemented through Secretariado Nacional de Pastoral Social and including all UNHCR Field Offices across the country, has distributed multipurpose cash to 685 families since the beginning of the health emergency. 189 families have also received humanitarian assistance to cover medical expenses, and an additional 16 families have received humanitarian assistance to cover funeral expenses. Multi-purpose cash programs are also continuing in Antioquia and Bogota.
-  **Costa Rica:** As part of multi-purpose or emergency grants to meet essential needs, UNHCR in Costa Rica has transferred a total of USD\$ 977,161 to 1,632 households. Under a UNHCR-Fundación Mujer joint program, 17 small businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic received grants and technical assistance to help them adapt their operations to the current context. Additionally, virtual training sessions aimed at increasing the skills and employability of the population of concern continue.
-  **Ecuador:** Launched in March, UNHCR's instant messaging information line, HELP ACNUR, has provided assistance to more than 8,200 people and sent around 300,000 messages as of the end of May. Most of the queries received were about access to food and food cards. Information on enrollment in the public education system was shared with some 5,000 users. Puerto Violeta, a safe space for SGBV survivors on the northern border with Colombia that's run by the Federación de Mujeres de Sucumbios, resumed providing psycho-social support and legal advice. UNHCR provided hygiene and self protection equipment to the space. UNHCR also distributed hygiene kits to around 4,000 people of concern across the country and donated 1,422 food kits to the provincial government of Pichincha, the Patronato Municipal San José and to associations assisting Venezuelans.
-  **El Salvador:** Twenty prioritized schools will be refurbished and equipped to guarantee the right to education to forcibly displaced persons as part of the so-called "Quick Impact Projects". Under the Protection Cluster, UN Agencies and NGOs coordinate the delivery of cellphones and tablets to support the national child protection institutions in conducting protection interviews with children. UNHCR referred to WFP a request for humanitarian assistance for more than 220 rural women and their families, who had previously been identified by IRC.
-  **Panama:** Through its partner organization HIAS, UNHCR donated food, cleaning supplies and personal hygiene goods, as well as blankets, clothing and educational games to the Migrant Reception Center in Los Planes, in the southern Chiriquí province. This center is currently providing shelter to 540 people.
-  **Venezuela:** A limited number of UNHCR missions have been taking place, in coordination with government counterparts. UNHCR, together with NGO partner Vivienda Popular, delivered 50 kits including solar lamps, soap, jerrycans and water purification tablets to people in need in several communities in the greater Caracas area. UNHCR, in collaboration with community groups in the western state of Táchira, distributed 50 habitat kits to families grappling with overcrowding in the community of Mi Pequeña Barinas. The kits benefited a total of 298 people, including 166 children and adolescents.

Stories from the field

Several difficult months after the Díaz family arrived in Chile, following a gruelling, 7,000-kilometre-long overland journey from their home in Venezuela, they finally achieved a degree of stability. Eileen, the mother, had given birth to a healthy baby boy, and the father, José Domingo, had just secured a job in the Chilean capital, Santiago. Then came the coronavirus pandemic, knocking the family back to square one. "We're really worried about the winter ... because it's going to be the first time we've experienced cold weather," said Eileen, adding that back home in Caracas, midwinter temperatures rarely dip below 17 degrees Celsius. In Santiago, by contrast, low temperatures in the single digits are the norm in winter. "We're not prepared. We didn't have heavy coats or heating, or even blankets." Coming on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, the approaching winter is yet another source of anxiety for many of the more than five million Venezuelans living outside their country amid the ongoing crisis back home. The Southern Hemisphere winter, therefore, could not come at a worse time for the over 1.5 million Venezuelans living in the five Southern Cone nations at the tip of South America and in the Andean nation of Peru, where winter weather is similarly frigid.

You can read the rest of the story [HERE](#).



Coordination and Response to date

RMRP

The revised **Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP)** was released on 12 May and presented at the eleventh meeting of the regional platform meeting, on 14 May. Now with 151 partners, revised financial requirements amount to USD 1.41B. Some 31% of activities

(USD 439M) have been introduced/re-prioritized to respond to life-saving and emergency needs within the context of the coronavirus pandemic. The RMRP is 15% funded to date.

MIRPS

After evaluating 2019 results, MIRPS countries move forward with the second phase of the quantification process, inviting a wider group of stakeholders, such as their respective Ministries of Planning and Finance, to better align the process within existing national structures. National technical teams will

carry out consultations and planning sessions to identify key areas to quantify the resources needed to deliver services and implement activities included in their national action plans and pledges at the Global Refugee Forum.



Don't miss it

UNHCR and OAS welcome approval of a voluntary fund for the response to forced displacement in Central America

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and the OAS General Secretariat welcome the approval of the voluntary fund for the Comprehensive Regional Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS) to forced displacement in Central America. The fund, approved during the virtual session of the OAS Permanent Council on May 27, will collect contributions coordinated and channeled by the MIRPS' Support Platform in support of implementation of the MIRPS in the region. To read the press release, click [here](#).



International artists, professors and friends from 30 countries join Maestro Shlomo Mintz, teaming up for a globe-spanning performance in support of the UN Refugee Agency's COVID-19 appeal



Rapid Joint Needs Assessment on the situation of refugees in Ecuador

The national inter-agency coordinating platform in Ecuador finalized a Rapid Joint Needs Assessment on the situation of refugees, migrants and host communities during COVID-19. Results indicate that 81% have not worked in the past weeks and that access to food was respondents' main need, followed by employment and housing.

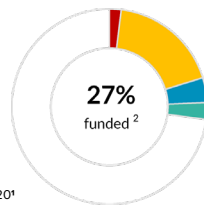
For more information, [click here](#)



Funding the response

Financial Information

UNHCR AMERICAS - Funding Update



THE AMERICAS as of 04 June 2020

\$ 611.8 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2020¹

Notes:

- The financial requirements for The Americas are for the operations in Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America and Venezuela.
- The percentage funded (27%) and total funding amount (\$165,683,703) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$446,154,670 representing 73% of the financial requirements.

While seeking funds to carry out COVID-19 preventative measures and response activities, UNHCR stresses the need for support to be in addition to the existing critical funding requirements laid out in UNHCR's regular Global Appeal for 2020. It is vital that the

international community keep supporting the millions of refugees and internally displaced people already living a precarious existence, for whom already limited self-reliance opportunities are likely to shrink further as a result of the economic impact of the crisis.

Total contributed or pledged to the COVID-19 appeal:

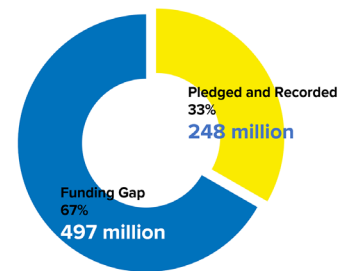
USD 248M

Including:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| United States | \$64.0M |
| Germany | \$38.6M |
| European Union | \$33.5M |
| United Kingdom | \$24.8M |
| Japan | \$23.9M |
| Denmark | \$14.6M |
| United Nations Foundation | \$10.0M |
| CERF | \$6.9M |
| Canada | \$6.4M |
| Private donors | \$4.7M |
| Ireland | \$3.3M |
| Sweden | \$3.0M |
| Sony Corporation | \$2.9M |
| Finland | \$2.4M |
| Education Cannot Wait | \$1.8M |
| Qatar Charity | \$1.5M |
| Norway | \$1.4M |
| USA for UNHCR | \$1.0M |

FUNDING (AS OF 05 JUNE)

USD 745 million requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally until the end of the year



UNHCR is grateful for the critical and generous support provided by donors to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation globally, and to the Americas, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked funding.

Thanks to donors in 2020:



And to our private donors:

España con ACNUR | Private donors Australia | Private donor Brazil | Private donors Mexico | Private donors Japan | Private donors Spain | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors USA | USA for UNHCR

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