

# Uruguay

## June 2021

Hosting some **25,406 refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, most of them from Venezuela**, UNHCR works with the Uruguayan government and partners to **provide information on access to territory, asylum and regularization**, while providing with its partners support for **basic goods and services** such as psycho-social

support, health, education, both in cash and in-kind. UNHCR with its partners also facilitate the **socio-economic integration of refugees and migrants in the local market**. Moreover, UNHCR supports the Uruguayan government to implement a **Rural Resettlement Program** that has already permitted the arrival of 35 refugees from the North of Central America.

Despite the closure of borders, Uruguay has granted the access to its territory and to the refugee status determination procedure for people in need of international protection. The impact of COVID-19 has required the strengthening of the humanitarian response in terms of access to shelters, food, clothing and hygiene kits for an increasing number of people in need.

### POPULATION OF CONCERN

25,406

Refugees	681
Asylum-seekers	10,660
Others of concern*	2
<b>Venezuelans displaced abroad</b>	<b>14,063</b>

Source: Official information provided by the Government, as of December 2020

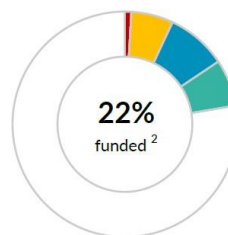
\* Stateless status applicants

### FUNDING

**USD 38.9 MILLION**

requested for the **Regional Office including Uruguay**

FUNDING UPDATE | 2021



■ Tightly earmarked  
■ Earmarked  
■ Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)  
■ Unearmarked (indicative allocation)  
□ Funding gap (indicative)

**ARGENTINA MCO**

as of 8 June 2021

### UNHCR PRESENCE

The UNHCR Regional Office for Southern Latin America based in Buenos Aires covers operations in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

#### Staff in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile:

- 42 National staff
- 11 International staff



Photo: UNHCR/ Luis Enrique Durante. During the COVID19 pandemic, UNHCR together with partner agency "Idas y Vuelitas" distributed hygiene kits for refugees.

## Results in 2021

- From January to April 2021, UNHCR through its partner provided support to **184** persons in vulnerable situations through **multi-purpose cash assistance** to cover their basic needs; **41** vulnerable individuals were provided with **temporary accommodation**; **415** individuals were provided with **free legal assistance, orientation, information** and referral to various service providers; **13 people received psychological support by UNHCR** and/or implementing partners; while some **175** people received **livelihoods training or support**.

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR works in close coordination with Government counterparts, namely with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, the Ministry of Interior, and the **Refugee Commission (CORE)**, as well as with other UN agencies to provide protection and seek durable solutions for refugees. UNHCR is a member of the CORE.
- UNHCR works in close cooperation with the **local Government of the City of Montevideo and the Department of Canelones**, where most of the refugee and migrant reside. A cooperation agreement under the framework of cities of solidarity has been signed with the **City of Rivera**.
- **SEDHU (Servicio Ecueménico para la Dignidad Humana)** is UNHCR's partner for providing counselling, basic humanitarian assistance, and support for self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods to refugees and asylum-seekers. Further, within SEDHU's participation in the Permanent Secretariat of the CORE, the organization registers asylum application and carries out eligibility activities.
- UNHCR also works with **Idas y Vueltas**, both in **Montevideo** and in **Chuy**. Through the presence in Chuy (PAO for its acronym in Spanish – Punto de Atención y Orientación), the partner provides legal assistance to persons of concern (PoCs), guarantees border monitoring; trains migratory officials in direct border service posts; coordinates with SEDHU to ensure humanitarian assistance to respond to urgent needs from persons of concern and supports refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in their socio-economic integration. A second PAO will be opened in the city Rivera during the second half of 2021.
- UNHCR is promoting a new strategy with the **private sector** in order to generate awareness and facilitate the labour insertion of refugees and migrants in the local market. A memorandum of understanding was signed with **DERES**, a network of more than 100 private enterprises, with the mission of contributing to a sustainable human development and social growth with equality. DERES will promote UNHCR's program Talent without Borders in Uruguay.
- UNHCR co-leads jointly with IOM the **National Response Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela where 31 partners –UN, CSOs, Refugee's and Migrants' organizations** implement the Response Plan 2021 complementing Governmental capacities in main urban and border areas of the country.
- UNHCR co-leads jointly with IOM the **National Response Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela where 14 partners –UN, CSOs, Refugee's and Migrants' organizations** implement the Response Plan 2021 for the **Southern Cone** complementing Governmental capacities in main urban and border areas of the region.

## Main Activities

### Protection & Durable Solutions

- Provide technical support and advice to national authorities involved in the implementation of fair and efficient **Refugee Status Determination (RSD)** procedure. Capacity building activities are implemented to strengthen the CORE, and its Permanent Secretariat to ensure access to territory, due process in admission, registration, eligibility interviews, RSD assessments and right to appeal. UNHCR also provides **capacity building and training** to other relevant counterparts.
- Provide **technical support for the implementation of Stateless Status Determination (SSD) procedure** since the establishment of the legal framework for the recognition and protection of stateless persons through Law N° 19,682.

- Advocate for the facilitation of the **naturalization procedure for refugees and stateless persons** and provide the necessary information to ensure they can make an informed decision on this option.
- **Support national authorities to respond to COVID-19 health emergency**, guaranteeing humanitarian assistance both in border areas and in territory, promoting access to territory of persons in need of international protection, and providing technical assistance to maintain RSD procedure through remote registration and virtual eligibility interviews.
- Support the Uruguayan government to buttress its capacities to better **respond to continuous arrival of Venezuelans** and to **promote durable solutions for them**, while providing **emergency humanitarian assistance** and ensuring protection support for vulnerable cases.
- **Produce information** and identify coping mechanisms of **Venezuelan nationals** no matter their migratory or refugee status through the implementation of the protection monitoring tool (High Frequency Survey).
- Provide technical and financial support to the government and civil society to consolidate **sustainable resettlement programs and complementary pathways for admission** under the leadership of the CORE. This involves close collaboration with SEDHU and international partners in order to promote a stronger community and private sector participation in the co-sponsorship of refugees. The resettlement program is currently focused on receiving some refugees from the North of Central America and Venezuela.
- Support the government which is progressively assuming the leadership of **local integration strategies**, inter alia, through the promotion of policies and the allocation of public funding for refugees.
- As part of its initiative **“Cities of Solidarity”**, UNHCR works with two local governments in Montevideo and Canelones to facilitate access to information, orientation and improve reception conditions as well as to better integrate refugees and migrants in their local communities, strengthening access to rights, employment, as well as social protection and employment promotion schemes. Under the framework of the agreement signed with the City of Rivera, support has been provided to strengthening the admission capacity for persons in need of international protection.
- Promote actions addressed to prevent, identify and respond to situations of **Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** and Child Protection (CP) affecting refugee women and children through regular protection dialogues, CwC strategies, empowerment activities with refugee women and girls and proper referral to national protection mechanisms.
- Support family reunifications to guarantee persons of concern’s family unity, coordinating the strategy both with national authorities and partner agencies.
- Enhance two-way communication through **communicating with communities’** strategy, producing informative material about access to RSD and SSD procedures, migratory regularization, documentation and rights available on Help website.
- Strengthen accountability to affected population, through the establishment of feedback and response mechanisms, adopted by UNHCR and both partner agencies in Uruguay. PoCs are able to deliver their complaints and suggestions, including a special procedure for protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

### **Humanitarian Assistance, Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance**

- UNHCR through its partners provides **humanitarian assistance** to vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees with special needs. The assistance consists of financial support as well as counselling. Its partners also assist on legal issues and access to documentation. A winterization campaign is about to start along with refugee and migrant organizations for the delivery of blankets and warm clothing for new arrivals.
- UNHCR also works for the improvement of **self-reliance and livelihoods** of refugees and migrants, include vocational training activities organized through the **National Institute for Employment and Labour Training (INEFOP)**, and **Human Resources institutions**, and the inclusion of CVs in a database after the training sessions for a possible job matching.
- UNHCR’s **Durable Solutions Strategy** aims to **boost opportunities for self-reliance, integration and empowerment of PoCs** and to facilitate the development of a state-owned comprehensive solutions policy. Structured in five macro areas the strategy in Uruguay aims to: 1) advocate for the inclusion of strategic needs in public policies and social protection schemes; 2) create enabling conditions for decent work and wage earning; 3) enhance routes for access to financial services; 4) promote a conducive

environment for business creation; and 5) support the execution of admission programs and complementary pathways.

### Coordination

- UNHCR provides coordination, information management and reporting capacities to the R4V National Platform to assure a close coordination of the humanitarian response for Venezuelans and their host communities all along the program cycle and to increase the regional visibility of the situation in the Southern Cone.
- A Joint Needs Assessment co lead by UNHCR and updated regularly provides key information about main challenges and gaps and thus orients the development of the Plan 2021 including the definition of persons in need, key activities and budget requirements.
- UNHCR co-leads regular meetings of the National Platform and implements periodic capacity building activities for partners and sectorial co-leads.
- Due to the impact of COVID-19, UNHCR main operational priorities for 2021 in Uruguay are: ensuring access to the territory and to the RSD procedure, the strengthening of the humanitarian response (access to shelter, food, water, clothing and hygiene kits) in border and urban areas as well as the implementation of socio-economic recovery projects.

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## External Relations

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### LINKS

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