

Venezuela

July 2019

- Operational and security conditions in Field Offices continue to be affected by power blackouts, telecommunications problems, intermittent access to water, gasoline shortages -albeit the latter have shown some improvements in major cities- and irregular armed group activity in the states of Bolívar and Táchira. Heavy rains in the western states of Apure and Amazonas, the eastern state of Delta Amacuro and the southern state of Bolívar have been affecting prioritised and indigenous communities. The lack of food and fuel in the eastern state of Delta Amacuro has been forcing the displacement of entire indigenous Warao families to the nearby state of Monagas, while flooding of the Orinoco River has put at risk some 5,000 members of the Antonio Díaz and Tucupita indigenous communities.
- The negotiation process in Barbados between the government and the opposition has contributed to a temporary easing of political tensions in the country which has been conducive to a more benign operational environment, although authorities in Caracas have reacted strongly to the OHCHR report on Venezuela.
- The rate of hyperinflation accelerated slightly in July from 25 percent to almost 34 percent, in line with a surge of the bolivar exchange rate to the dollar, with a cumulated rate of 265 percent over 2019 and a yearly rate of 1,580 percent. Prices have risen accordingly. The relative decline in hyperinflation rates compared to the early months of the year is a result of the credit restrictions imposed on the banking system and a drastic contraction in average personal consumption, which according to some economists is 40 percent down compared to last year. Meanwhile, the government has kept the minimum monthly salary at 40,000 bolivares, the equivalent of 3 black-market US dollars at the close of the month.

HIGHLIGHTS

ESTIMATED HOST COMMUNITY BENEFICIARIES

+ 270,000

PERSONS OF CONCERN (GOVERNMENT FIGURES)

Refugees 8,712

Asylum seekers 142

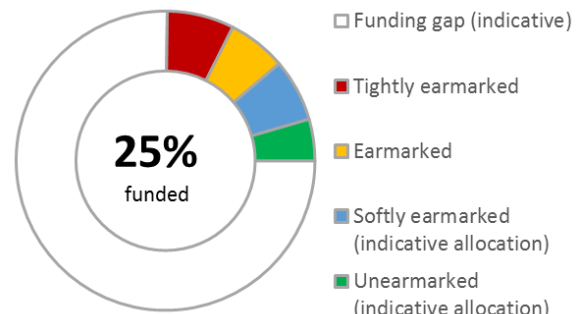
Source: National Refugee Commission Venezuela

Persons in refugee-like situation: 58,826

FUNDING (AS OF JULY 2019)

USD 29.5 million

requested for Venezuela



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

98 Personnel:

80 national staff

1 affiliate workforce/employee

2 national interns

15 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 providing 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 194 persons of concern.

Activities implemented in July 2019

Working with Partners and Authorities

- The Representative of UNHCR in Venezuela met with key strategic authorities in the state of Bolívar, including the Regional Ombudsperson and the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE), UN agencies and key partners during a visit undertaken for the official inauguration of the new UNHCR office in Ciudad Guayana.

Community-based Protection

- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana delivered 700 solar lamps, 700 jerry-cans, 700 water purification tablets, 400 mosquito nets and 400 hammocks in the Los Mangos and 5 de Mayo communities, both located in the Sifontes municipality in the state of Bolívar. UNHCR partner Red Cross Caroni completed the distribution of the 295 CERF-funded nutritional kits allotted for the eight prioritised communities in the state of Bolívar.
- UNHCR in Táchira, jointly with partner HIAS, held workshops on the safe use of water in the San Antonio and La Fria communities and inspected three community institutions—La Fria's Central Diagnostic Centre and Boca del Grita's high school and public kitchen—to evaluate the technical requirements for their rehabilitation through the joint WASH project. The Field Office also distributed 340 lamps, 505 jerry-cans and 1,560 water purification tablets. UNHCR in Táchira also delivered solar-powered lamps, jerry-cans, water treatment tablets, food kits and children's vitamins to the communities of Laguna de García and La Tendida, where a workshop on the safe use of water was organised with partner HIAS, and donated solar lamps, jerry-cans and water treatment tablets to the San Cristóbal municipal police.
- UNHCR delivered 52 solar lamps and 104 jerry cans to women's networks and health centres in the state of Zulia, including some in Yukpa indigenous communities. UNHCR also delivered solar lamps and jerry-cans to the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Red Cross in Lara State and met with the Municipality of Machiques to organize the delivery of more than 700 NFIs to prioritized communities.
- In the framework of the CERF, UNHCR and the Red Cross in Zulia provided information sessions on water management to 89 indigenous Yukpas in the prioritized community of El Tokuko, distributed 267 water purification tablets, conducted 320 nutritional evaluations, distributed 97 food kits to persons affected by malnourishment (including 76 indigenous Yukpa) and delivered 1,100 packages of water tablets to 396 persons of concern. To date, of the 2,311 individual nutritional evaluations conducted in the state, 44% have evidenced nutritional deficit. Still in Zulia, UNHCR delivered 31 solar lamps and 62 jerry-cans to the women's network in Rio Negro and provided mobile phones, cameras and wireless internet devices to the youth networks of the Gran Sabana and Simon Bolívar I communities.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas carried out 599 nutrition assessments with allies AVESOC and DigiSalud in the Barrio Bolívar community, Petare, in the Francisco Espejo School and El Colibrí community centre. More than 30 percent of the assessed persons evidenced risks associated with malnutrition. The activity led to the identification of a numbers of cases of persons with specific needs, especially unaccompanied children, out of school adolescents and children at risk of abuse and sexual exploitation. UNHCR Caracas also provided an information session on child protection procedures and child protection system institutions, family institutions and identity rights to 20 participants in the El Cafetal community in El Junquito in coordination with the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Civil Registry.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana held a meeting in Santa Elena de Uairén to introduce the Safe Spaces Network to the Council for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, the state Police of Bolívar, representatives of the Indigenous Captainty and partner HIAS case management staff. The network will start providing training on SGBV and deliver immediate attention to cases at risk that have been identified in the prioritised community of Cano Amarillo. UNHCR also joined HIAS and UNFPA in the delivery of 160 Dignity Kits to the Customs Office of Santa Elena de Uairén at the border between Brazil and Venezuela, where women in transit were provided with information on the Safe Spaces Network and its services.

- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana conducted a field mission to the prioritized community of Guanamo, jointly with Public Prosecutors with gender competencies, organising a cinema forum on human trafficking and the links between asylum and human trafficking and information sessions on SGBV, International Refugee law, national refugee legislation and LGBTI rights. Also in the state of Bolívar, UNHCR partner Caroni Red Cross initiated a CERF-funded distribution of 120 nutritional kits in the prioritised communities of Morichalito, Turiba, and Los Pijiguaos.
- UNHCR in Zulia and UNFPA held a round table with 15 participants, including authorities and members of the Safe Spaces Network, to discuss prevention and response of SGBV in the Machiques Municipality. The Safe Spaces Network in Zulia also delivered 119 dignity kits to women in mobility in the prioritized community of Rio Negro, where partner Fundación Soy Un Guardián carried out an information and recreational session on the prevention of sexual abuse that was attended by 156 local children.
- The UNHCR-supported Safe Spaces Network in Zulia delivered 98 dignity kits to women in mobility in the prioritised community Simón Bolívar I (Zulia). The Safe Spaces Network also conducted a two-day workshop on the prevention of and response to SGBV, gender, protection of LGTBI persons, international protection and human trafficking with 20 representatives of the Municipal Institute for Women in Maracaibo. On Children's Day (21 July), members of the Network (Aliadas en Cadena, HIAS and Fundacion Soy Un Guardian) organized a prevention activity on sexual abuse of children, providing information sessions and sports and recreational activities to 150 children and parents.
- In Táchira, UNHCR, IOM and the National Nutrition Institute (INN) carried out field missions to the La Tendida and Palotal communities in Ureña, conducting nutritional assessments on 284 persons (30 of them diagnosed as undernourished) and providing medical assistance to 80 persons. Fifteen nutritional recuperation kits, 65 solar-powered lamps, 110 jerry-cans and water treatment tablets were provided to the most vulnerable cases and community structures. UNHCR and the INN also carried out a CERF mission to Boca de Grita, in the García de Hevia border Municipality, conducting nutritional assessments on 53 persons, 17 of whom were diagnosed as suffering from nutritional deficit. Solar-powered lamps, jerry-cans and water treatment pills were distributed to vulnerable persons and the local SGBV community prevention committee. Twelve cases of SGBV were identified and referred to the case manager.
- In the framework of coordination commitments between operations in Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago, UNHCR Ciudad Guayana carried out a context verification mission to the state of Sucre jointly with the Office of the Ombudsperson. Meetings were held with civil society organizations, civilian and military authorities in the capital city of Cumana and in the Guiria, a coastal region at the maritime border with Trinidad and Tobago affected by trafficking network activity.
- UNHCR Field Office Maracaibo, in coordination with partner NGOs Fe y Alegría and Aliadas en Cadena, held a workshop on the Code of Conduct and the prevention of fraud and corruption in the Gran Sabana community that was attended by some 40 members of the local youth and women's networks and other key local actors.
- In the state of Apure, UNHCR and CONARE delivered solar lamps and jerry-cans in the community of Guafita, benefiting over 100 local families. UNHCR Field Office Guasqualito, in coordination with partner HIAS, also delivered 158 nutritional kits to persons identified with serious and moderate nutritional deficits in the Platanillal, Sabaneta and Coromoto indigenous communities in the state of Amazonas. Anti-parasitic treatments were distributed to children and family members involved in the preparation of food.
- UNHCR in Apure provided 7,000 polypropylene sacks to the local regional Civil Protection branch (PC) as part of the risk reduction strategy against flooding in prioritised communities of El Amparo and La Victoria caused by the dramatic rise in the water levels of the Arauca and Sarare rivers. PC has deployed 2,000 such sacks in the Matapalo and Cabotaje communities in the El Amparo de Apure parish, for the protection of 450 families, accounting for some 2,500 local residents. UNHCR also distributed solar lamps in the rural community of San José del Amparo and supported the local health centre in administering rapid tests for HIV and Syphilis.
- The UNHCR-supported Youth Protection Network in the Gran Sabana and Simón Bolívar communities in the state of Zulia organised community recreational activities to support the prevention of child abuse that were attended by 363 local children. The activity was held in the framework of the Youth Initiative Fund and on the occasion of Children's Day.
- UNHCR and the safe space network (SSN) in Caracas carried out a community activity to promote the services of the Network within the framework of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons. At least 70 children and adolescents participated in informative sessions on the prevention of

sexual violence and human trafficking delivered by partner HIAS, ally MSF and the national office for the prevention of trafficking.

- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas held a focus group evaluation with 50 women, men and children for the implementation of feedback and complaints mechanism and for the El Colibrí community centre in Petare. UNHCR Caracas also engaged with eight community groups and structures in El Cafetal, El Junquito, to identify local persons with specific needs that will be supported with solar lamps, jerry-cans and others NFIs: 180 such cases have been proposed for evaluation.

Borders, Asylum and Durable Solutions

- UNHCR San Cristóbal conducted a monitoring mission to the newly-established Community Centre run by partner NRC in San Antonio del Táchira. The Centre is fully operational and assists an average of 100 persons per day.
- UNHCR in Maracaibo held workshops on international protection and regional protection mechanisms for Venezuelans in transit with 18 partner staff in Zulia (HIAS, JRS, Caritas, Fe y Alegría, Zulia Red Cross and IOM), 15 members of the Lara Red Cross and staff at the Office of the Ombudsperson in Lara.
- UNHCR in the state of Bolívar held jointly with the regional Office of the Ombudsperson three workshops on the link between asylum and human trafficking that were attended by 68 officers of the National Bolivarian Police and officials from the Caroní and Heres municipalities in Ciudad Bolívar. UNHCR and the Office of the Ombudsperson also held a 10th training session on International Refugee Law in Ciudad Bolívar.
- UNHCR in Táchira held a workshop in San Antonio to train protection network staff at the border on the use of the persons in transit assistance guide and its tools, including the Kobo questionnaire and protection and legal orientation documents, with the participation of 14 representatives from NRC, IOM, HIAS and the Catholic Church Diocese. UNHCR, in partnership with IOM, also held a training session on the nexus between asylum and human trafficking that was attended by 14 members of the local INTAMUJER women's protection institution.
- UNHCR in the state of Zulia and the Office of the Ombudsperson held a workshop on asylum and refugee status determination procedures that was attended by 26 Police officers of the Municipality of Maracaibo.
- UNHCR in San Cristóbal provided 29 members of VEN 911 Civil Protection team training on human rights, international refugee law and national refugee status determination procedures jointly with the regional Office of the Ombudsperson and CONARE.
- UNHCR Field Office Maracaibo, in coordination with partner NGOs Fe y Alegría and Aliadas en Cadena, organized a workshop on key safe migration messages for the Simón Bolívar I community structures that were attended by 52 members of the youth and women's networks and other key local actors.
- UNHCR organised a training workshop on asylum-seeker interview techniques for the Maracaibo staff of institutional partner CONARE.

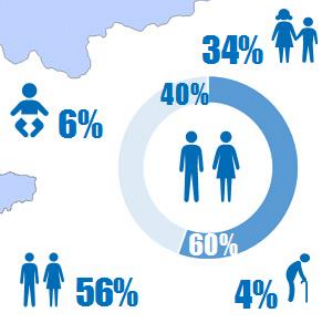
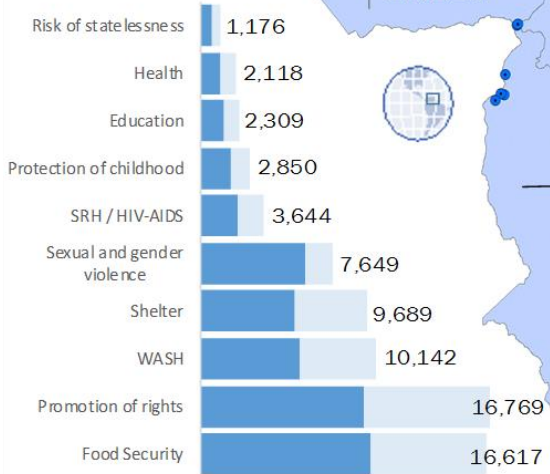
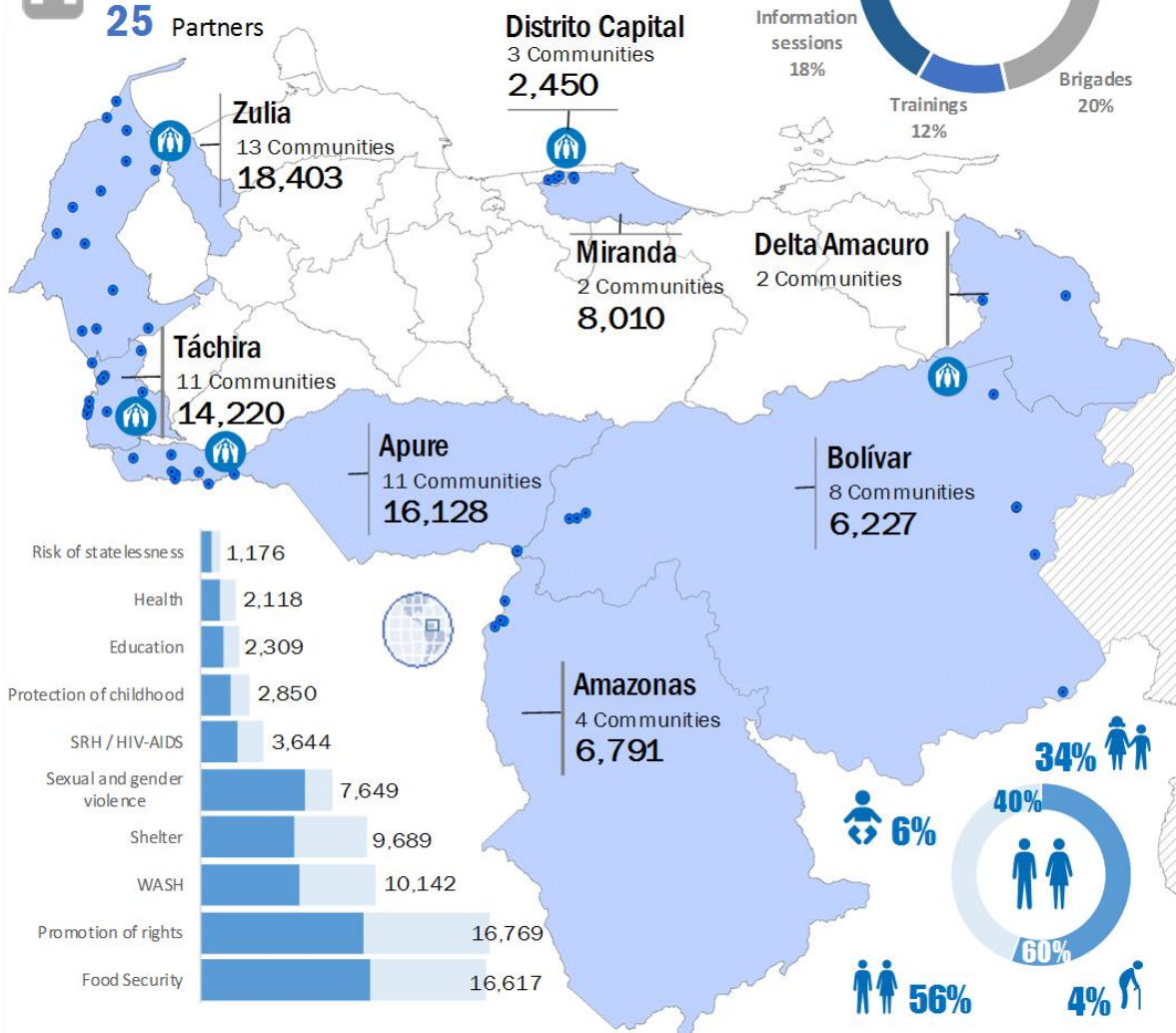
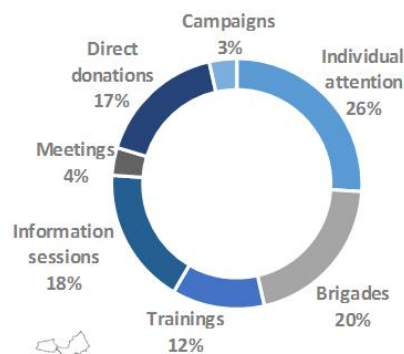

UNHCR
 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

PERSONS ASSISTED BY UNHCR

+72,000 Persons assisted


54 Communities


12 Project Partnership Agreements

25 Partners

JANUARY - JULY 2019
Donors

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

Contacts

Luca Nicosia, Reporting Officer & Head of Public Information, nicosi@unhcr.org

John Jeffcoat Mészáros, Senior Communications & Public Information Assistant, jeffcoat@unhcr.org