

# Venezuela

September 2019

- Operational and security conditions in Field Offices continue to be affected by power blackouts, telecommunications problems, intermittent access to water, gasoline shortages and irregular armed group activity in the states of Apure, Bolívar, Zulia and Táchira. Heavy rains in the western state of Apure have been affecting prioritised and indigenous communities. Communal indigenous clashes have been raising the risk of displacement in the state of Zulia, and there have also been reports of trafficking of indigenous children from the eastern state of Delta Amacuro to Brazil. The border between Venezuela and Colombia has become militarized in the wake of the “orange alert” issued by President Nicolás Maduro. Violent FAES special police forces operations have been conducted in El Junquito, Greater Caracas. UNHCR in Táchira have observed cases of discrimination against internally displaced persons by community leaders in Mi Pequeña Barinas.
- President Nicolás Maduro declared a state of "orange alert" for the National Bolivarian Armed Forces (FANB) due to tensions on the Venezuelan-Colombian border. The border between Venezuela and Colombia became highly militarised, with the resurgence of migratory controls at military posts close to prioritized communities in Apure, and the presence of senior commanders at the border supervising military deployments and exercises in Táchira, as well as a high number of helicopters. In southern Zulia, local authorities imposed a curfew from 6:00pm to 5:00am.
- According to local media of the state of Delta Amacuro, the SAIME migration service suspended the issuance of identification cards formatted for indigenous people, affecting the entire Warao population. School children are the most vulnerable, as they require their personal document for enrolment in educational institutions.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### ESTIMATED HOST COMMUNITY BENEFICIARIES

+ 270,000

### PERSONS OF CONCERN (GOVERNMENT FIGURES)

Refugees 8,712

Asylum seekers 142

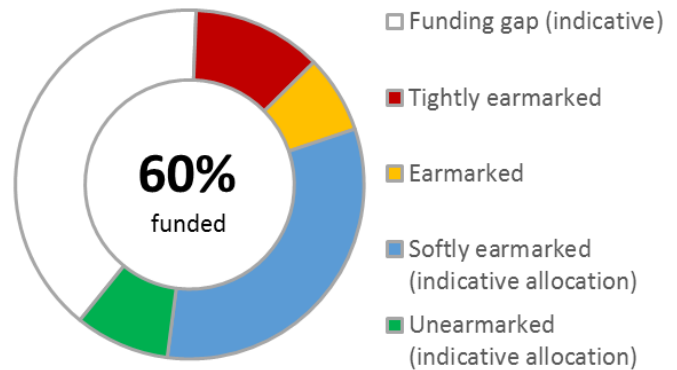
Source: National Refugee Commission Venezuela

Persons in refugee-like situation: 58,826

## FUNDING (AS OF SEPTEMBER 2019)

USD 29.5 million

requested for Venezuela



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

#### 95 Personnel:

76 national staff

3 affiliate workforce/employees

2 national interns

16 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 September 2019

## Community-based Protection

- UNHCR Maracaibo and the Red Cross in Zulia delivered a total of 111 nutritional supplements to persons identified as suffering from severe and moderate malnutrition. Within the Yukpa indigenous community of Shirapta, 90% of those who received supplements have already shown signs of improvement in their health.
- UNHCR Maracaibo held a workshop for the priests of seven parishes in the Guajira, Zulia, on international protection, protection routes and key messages for persons in transit. During the activity, the Field Office delivered NFIs to the churches to alleviate the effects of power outages.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered solar lamps to the Office of the Mayor of Uribante and the community priest, to strengthen their capacities and enable them to provide improved services.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal visited a care centre for the elderly in Ureña to assess the centre's needs and deliver 15 nutritional recovery kits. The number of elders in the home has increased lately as older persons are being left behind in increasing numbers when families decide to migrate.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal met with outreach volunteers from Mi Pequeña Barinas and provided gardening tools and equipment for the community garden during a visit by UNHCR's Deputy Representative. The number of persons working in the garden has increased to 40, including refugees, displaced persons and local inhabitants. UNHCR also delivered 14 solar lamps, 28 jerry cans and 82 water purification tablets to the community's water committee and persons with specific needs.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas continued delivering solar lamps, jerry cans and water purification tablets to families with specific needs identified by outreach volunteers and community structures supported by UNHCR in the community of El Cafetal in El Junquito, Greater Caracas. UNHCR also delivered 15 solar lamps to community structures, including the community council and community health centres.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas coordinated a hygiene campaign with the El Colibrí community centre in Petare for 75 children with specific needs. Forty outreach volunteers participated in the activity, which benefited unaccompanied children, children with disabilities, young survivors of violence and children in extreme poverty. The campaign included haircuts for the children, instruction on methods for washing hands and the delivery of water purification tablets.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered 12 solar lamps, 24 jerry cans and 96 water purification tablets to the Office of the Municipal Mayor of García de Hevia to strengthen its capacities and improve its services.
- UNHCR Guasualito delivered solar lamps, water purification tablets and jerry cans to 103 families in the indigenous community of Palomeco, with the support of staff from the Guaicaipuro indigenous school, a facility that has received support from UNHCR.
- UNHCR Guasualito delivered solar lamps and jerry cans to 91 families in Platanillal, giving priority to older persons without families, families with older persons, pregnant women, women who recently gave birth and large families. This activity was carried out with the support of the Human Rights Committee of Platanillal, staff from the local health centre and the indigenous authorities of the community.
- UNHCR Guasualito delivered solar lamps, jerry cans and water purification tablets to 40 families in the community of Banco Largo. UNHCR also delivered solar lamps to the state-sponsored shelter Refugio de Amor y Paz, benefitting both the children under protection at the institute and the caretakers who work there.
- UNHCR Guasualito delivered office supplies and cleaning products to the health centre in La Victoria, which provides services to approximately 1,000 patients, and the Council for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (CPNNA), the donation to the latter including a computer and a printer. UNHCR also delivered kits with cleaning supplies to the local health centres of El Amparo and Guafita, which receive 500 and 250 patients per month, respectively.
- UNHCR Guasualito delivered menstrual cups to the women ages 18 to 50 of the community of La Osa who had previously been trained on menstrual hygiene and the advantages of using the cups. UNHCR also distributed menstrual cups to indigenous women in Platanillal and will be

meeting with these women in subsequent missions to determine if the cups have been used appropriately and are perceived as a suitable alternative to menstrual pads.

- UNHCR Guasdualito delivered basic drugs to the local health centre of El Amparo and the infirmary in Guamalito. Gastrointestinal treatments, alcohol, antihistamine medicine for children and oral rehydration salts were provided for the more than 600 patients that seek medical attention in both facilities.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana, jointly with the Red Cross, organised awareness raising activities for persons in transit at the main bus terminal of Ciudad Guayana, setting up an information point, delivering condoms, providing guidance on its mandate and conducting profile questionnaires.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana, in coordination with the Movement for Peace and Life, held a training of community animators, organized a community day camp for children in the municipality of Cedeño and provided paints, brushes, watercolours and educational games. Some 280 children from Pijiguaos and Morichalito participated in the day camp.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas organised a recreational program for 100 children in Guatire, in coordination with the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Children Protection Council, community structures and outreach volunteers. Among the protection risks present, UNHCR identified cases of unaccompanied children, survivors of sexual violence, malnutrition and discrimination against LGBTI persons. Two cases were referred to the Children Protection Council.
- UNHCR Maracaibo delivered supplies to participating youth networks that organised information sessions on child protection and the prevention of SGBV to 67 children and 17 women in three prioritised communities in Zulia.
- UNHCR Guasdualito distributed 191 kits with school supplies to children and adolescents of Sabaneta de Guayabal, at the community's request. The kits benefited children registered to begin classes the following week in one of the community's two schools, preventing school dropouts. UNHCR delivered cleaning kits to schools in Las Monas and Guafita, directly benefiting around 110 children. UNHCR also participated in the inauguration of a school canteen in Palomeco renovated by partner HIAS, which benefits 310 children and adolescents. Some 120 children attended the inauguration and participated in games and activities to promote the adequate use of the new facility.
- UNHCR Guasdualito, along with HIAS, delivered mobility kits to persons in transit identified by UNHCR staff, coming from San Fernando de Apure and looking to cross the border to Arauca and continue to Bogotá.
- UNHCR Maracaibo and Casa Bonita met with the Director of Civil Registration in Zulia and agreed to carry out civil registration task forces in Yukpa indigenous communities. The activity will support 200 indigenous children who do not have birth certificates.
- UNHCR Maracaibo carried out its first participatory assessment outside the state of Zulia, in the community of Perón in the state of Falcón. IOM, UNHCR and the Falcón Red Cross consulted teachers, mothers and young persons, observing better conditions in Perón than in most prioritized communities in Zulia. The team identified risks of protection such as lack of water or lack of wastewater treatment.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana carried out participatory assessments in two new communities located in Ciudad Guayana: Cambalache (Puerto Ordaz) and "Frente al Terminal" (San Félix). The protection risks identified in these communities include malnutrition, the lack of birth registration, lack of access to drinking water and lack of access to health services, forced displacement and the presence of irregular armed groups.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana, UNHCR's WASH expert and the coordinator of the Shelter, NFIs and Energy cluster carried out a field mission to the prioritised communities of Los Mangos and 5 de Mayo (Sifontes), Caño Amarillo and Turiba (Gran Sabana) and Morichalito and Los Pijiguaos (Cedeño), to evaluate current and planned projects and interventions by partners in the region.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas carried out a workshop on risk identification tools for the officials of the municipality of Zamora, Miranda. The workshop was aimed at improving the skills and capacities of public institutions in the community of Guatire as part of a process to include it as a prioritised community in 2019.

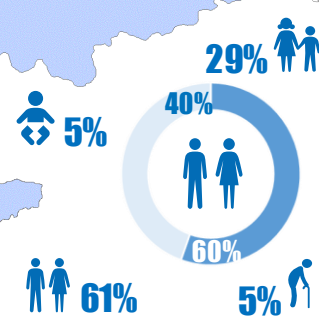
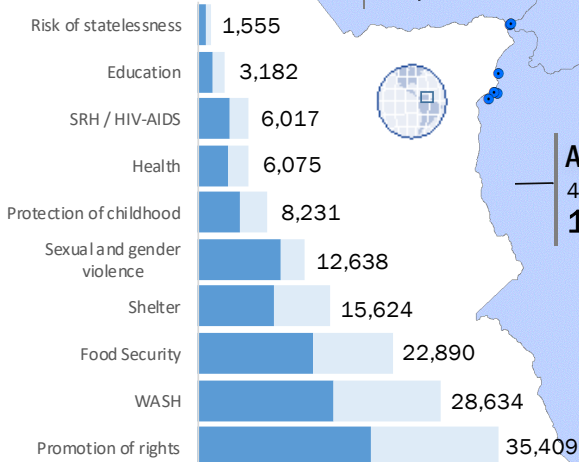
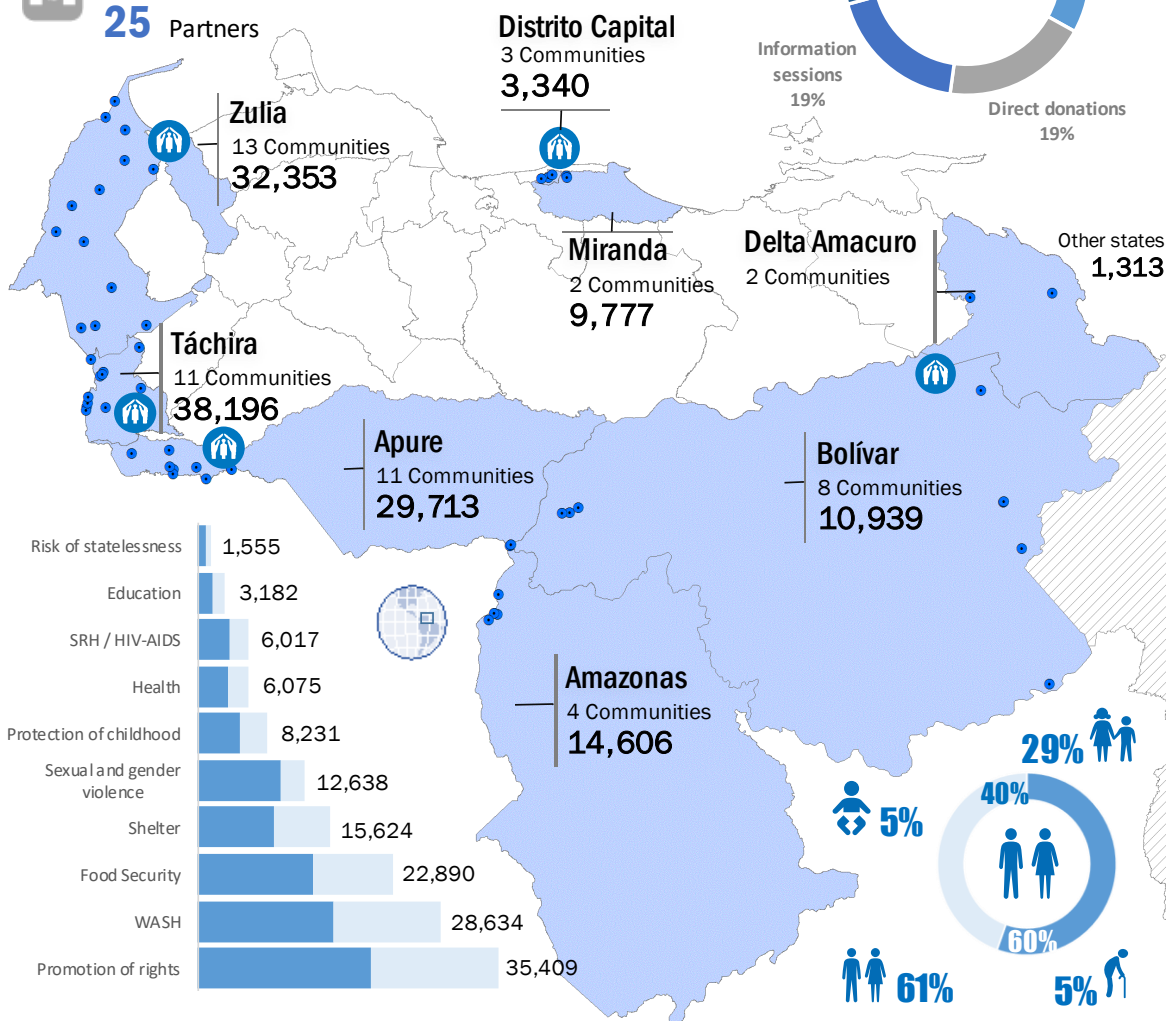
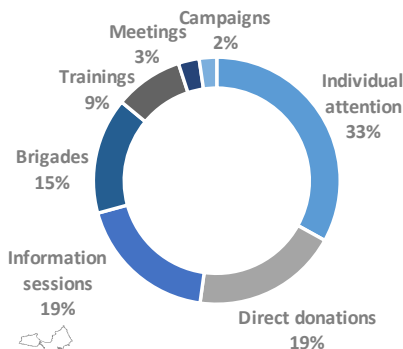
## Borders, Asylum and Durable Solutions

- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana conducted a training for officers of the Regional Police of El Dorado on International Refugee Law and sexual and gender-based violence.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas, together with the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE) and the Office of the Ombudsperson, organised a workshop for 43 National Bolivarian Police (PNB) officers on the link between asylum and human trafficking, during which officers were informed of the new documentation system for asylum-seekers. UNHCR also carried out a training for 58 PNB officers on human rights, preventing human trafficking and promoting safe access to territory for persons in need of international protection.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas and CONARE carried out a three-day mission to the state of Carabobo, in order to promote access to the asylum system to persons in need of international protection identified in the community of La Banera. Twenty persons accessed the asylum system and renewed their provisional documents.
- UNHCR Maracaibo, CONARE and the Office of the Ombudsperson held a training session on human rights, International Refugee Law and trafficking for 35 officers of the criminal investigation corps CICIP and the Migration Police. UNHCR also held a workshop for CONARE staff on the identification of specific protection needs, SGBV and community protection.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal organised a training with IOM on the prevention of human trafficking and the handling of cases within the national protection network. The training was provided to 21 persons from different organizations, including CONARE and the SPINNA national children's protection system.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal carried out a two-day training on International Refugee Law, Refugee Status Determination, human trafficking and the Ombudsperson's guidelines on the assistance of persons in need of international protection for regional delegates from the states of Táchira, Mérida, Trujillo, Barinas and Apure. The training was provided together with CONARE and the national Office of the Ombudsperson.


**+140,000** Persons assisted


**54** Communities


**12** Project Partnership Agreements

**25** Partners

**JANUARY - SEPTEMBER 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](mailto:nicosi@unhcr.org)

John Jeffcoat Mészáros, Senior Communications & Public Information Assistant, [jeffcoat@unhcr.org](mailto:jeffcoat@unhcr.org)