



“ Thanks to the **commitment** and **creativity** of governments, civil society and other entities across the region, the **MIRPS** has emerged as an **innovative and valuable tool** in helping shape and strengthen the response to population flows. As the impact of COVID-19 is felt, the **MIRPS** provides an important means to ensure that forcibly displaced people are **not left behind in the response** to the pandemic. ”

Filippo Grandi

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

You can read more [HERE](#).

## Situational Highlights

As cases of COVID-19 in the Americas remain high, WHO's Regional Director for the Americas reiterated the risk of re-emergence unless the curve is flattened regionally and globally. Particularly concerning rates are reported in **Brazil, Peru, Chile** and **Mexico**. Care capacities are also exhausted in areas of **Ecuador** and **Bolivia**. **Haiti**, with 5,000 cases reported, remains the primary concern in the **Caribbean**.

**Central America** recorded last week the highest daily number of COVID-19 cases in almost all countries of the sub region since the start of the pandemic (15,000 new cases in a week out of a total since the start of the pandemic of 60,000).

**A 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck southern Mexico's Pacific coast on 23 June**. No impact on UNHCR personnel or premises was reported.

Quarantine and border restrictions have been extended in **Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama**, and **Honduras**, while **Caribbean** countries are relaxing COVID-19 related restrictions, with flights resuming and bars and beaches opening again. Even though borders remain closed, mixed movements of people continue to cross the continent. Official numbers from **Venezuela** report around 61,000 people spontaneously returned to the country from Colombia and Brazil as of 21 June and nearly

16,000 returnees are currently in quarantine in 113 centres in the border states of Amazonas, Apure, Bolívar, Táchira and Zulia.

**Access to asylum remains possible in some countries of the Americas, such as Argentina**, which recently recognized 36 asylum-seekers as refugees (out of 1,046 asylum applications in 2020) and **Mexico**. Asylum claims were also presented in **Bolivia** (60 cases), **Paraguay** (200 since May), **Peru** (4,700), **Uruguay** (19) and **Guatemala** (13 claims between April and May). In **Ecuador**, the regularization process for Venezuelans resumed, and already 35,563 visas have been issued since August 2019. In parallel, **Brazil** announced a regulation to facilitate

enrolment in public schools of child refugees, migrants, stateless people and asylum seekers. **Curaçao** announced access to medical assistance for undocumented individuals.

Learn more about the impact of the pandemic on protection and temporary measures to mitigate them on the **new COVID-19 Platform**:



## Challenges

In a context of border restrictions, economic contraction and obstacles to earning a living, **children are exposed to heightened risk in the region**. As such, there are reports on difficulties for registering new-borns of refugee and migrant parents in **Bolivia**; in **Colombia**, fewer Venezuelan children are now enrolled in online school (from 206,225 in 2019 to 128,133 in the first four months of 2020); and protection needs are sensitive for unaccompanied or separated children returned to northern **Central America**.

**Violence related to gender** disproportionately affects women on the move amid the pandemic, as revealed by [official statistics](#) in **Colombia** alerting to a 12 percent increase in the number of murders of Venezuelan women. In **Guyana**, Venezuelan women engaged in sex work are more exposed to contagion. [Official figures](#) in **El Salvador** record a 70 percent increase in domestic violence during the pandemic; in **Honduras** [UNFPA has estimated](#) that, since the start of the pandemic, one woman is subjected to physical violence every hour.

The risk of COVID-19 cases within shelters is also of concern. In **El Salvador**, the UNHCR-led Protection cluster has identified 42 spontaneous and unregistered collective sites serving the population that was affected by the recent Tropical Storm Amanda. Cooperation with States to facilitate adequate preventive health measures and access to water and protective equipment remains critical.










## UNHCR's response in the Americas



Despite pandemic-related restrictions, UNHCR is working to provide emergency assistance, including safe shelter spaces and cash-based assistance, as well as to advocate for the inclusion of refugees in national public health responses, social security programmes 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 social welfare programmes. With the coronavirus crisis exacerbating already dire humanitarian needs globally, timely and flexible support from governments, the private sector and individuals remains critical.

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

## UPDATES FROM COUNTRIES

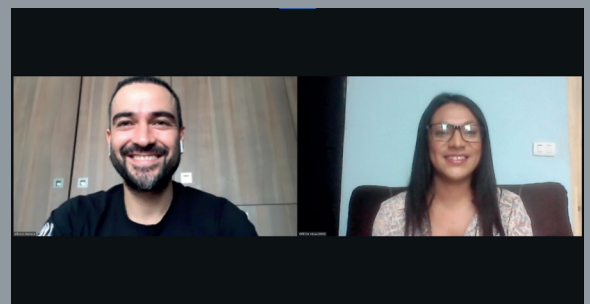
-  **Argentina:** With the Southern Hemisphere winter starting in June, a [campaign](#) got underway to support refugees and migrants. Aimed at distributing 1,500 coat kits and 3,800 blankets to people spending their first winter season in Buenos Aires, the campaign is a joint effort with four Venezuelan community organizations that managed to open 30 delivery points in greater Buenos Aires to reduce the distance people must travel to receive assistance. UNHCR has also designed a virtual tool that allows people to select the closest delivery point to their homes. With some 450 kits already handed out, the process will continue through the first week of July.
-  **Aruba and Curaçao:** As part of UNHCR's support of the Aruban Government's health response, UNHCR delivered 10 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) and is procuring medical supplies. In Curaçao following the Government's announcement that undocumented individuals will be allowed to access COVID-19 medical assistance, UNHCR and partner Salu Pa Tu are coordinating to bring attention to those with symptoms. Though no cases have been identified among the Venezuelan population, last week Salu Pa Tu conducted 221 medical consultations, bringing the total consultations in June to around 560.
-  **Brazil:** A project to provide free legal services to Venezuelan refugees and migrants has been launched, in a joint effort by UNHCR, pro-bono lawyers, Roraima Justice Tribunal and UNHCR's partners. This activity is being conducted at 12 shelters and focuses on matters related to civil unions, custody and emancipation.
-  **Colombia:** In order to help refugees and migrants comply with quarantine restrictions, 450 beneficiaries have been assisted through the hotel network in Riohacha and Maicao since the beginning of the health emergency. More than 400 refugees continue to be quarantined in the UNHCR shelter network in La Guajira, where a series of events for World Refugee Day were organized. In addition, as part of UNHCR support to the national health response, three RHUs were set up at the Ismael Roldán Hospital in Quibdó, Chocó. UNHCR provided bio-medical equipment to health authorities in Necoclí, on the border with Panama, and in Medellín, where medical equipment strengthens the response for pregnant women among the internally displaced, local and Venezuelan populations.
-  **Costa Rica:** During the first weeks of June, around 1,000 requests for support were registered by UNHCR's Information Centre through calls, emails and Facebook posts. Most of the queries come from Nicaraguan refugees and asylum seekers (58%) and relate to socioeconomic assistance, migratory processes and access to the national social security programmes. There are also increasing numbers of reports that people are expressing fears about being returned to their countries of origin as a result of stricter migratory controls as part of COVID-19 related measures.
-  **Ecuador:** Thanks to the RHUs provided by UNHCR, the local hospital in Baños, Tungurahua Province, now has adequate space for eight COVID-19 patients at a time. Additional RHUs were provided in medical centres in Quito and Guayaquil. UNHCR and partners have supported 8,487 households with cash and vouchers programmes between 18 March and 20 June. Distribution of 850 food kits reached people in extreme need who were unable to leave their homes in Esmeraldas province.
-  **Mexico:** At the end of June, around 4,080 people remained in 90 shelters that were still operational in the country. A few shelters in northern Mexico started to receive new arrivals mainly through referrals from local institutions and with a health certificate in order to avoid any COVID-19 outbreak. UNHCR supports this network with personal protection equipment, such as masks, gloves and gowns, totaling around 50,000 items delivered to date. To support shelters to implement better and safer accommodation spaces during this emergency, 22 refugee RHUs are in the process of being installed in shelters.
-  **North of Central America:** In **Guatemala**, UNHCR is supporting families in dire conditions through cash transfers, and has reached 82 households since early May. As part of efforts to enhance cooperation with the national health response, UNHCR has provided institutions and the Civil Protection agency (CONRED), the Migration Institute, the Ministry of Health and First Lady's Social Assistance Secretariat with equipment such as 96 RHUs, 200 foldable beds with mattresses, and diapers. In **El Salvador**, prevention and response in cases of sexual and gender-based violence has been strengthened thanks to a survey of 158 women, aimed at understanding the challenges they face. UNHCR also conducted a session to facilitate harmonized case management with 20 NGOs that are part of the [Regional Safe Spaces Network](#). In **Honduras**, UNHCR provided biosecurity equipment and hygiene items to support the State response for returnees and people in transit at temporary isolation centres in Miraflores, Tegucigalpa and Choluteca. The office has also provided 300 families with food in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.
-  **Venezuela:** UNHCR supports efforts to provide the population in temporary isolation centres with hygiene items and better access to safe water. During June, the support reached 1,123 spontaneous returnees at 11 such isolation centres and one hospital in Guasdalito, Apure, and people sheltered in three centres in Guajira and Mara, Zulia.

## Stories from the field

### For Salvadoran LGBTI people, "At the moment, it's riskier than ever"

In Central America, the violent gangs that control many marginalised communities often single out lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people – extorting, threatening and sometimes even killing them. LGBTI people in the region often have no choice but to flee their homes in search of safety. Many stay within their own country, becoming part of the internally displaced population.

Grecia Villalobos is a Salvadoran trans woman who works for COMCAVIS TRANS, a UNHCR partner that helps protect the rights of LGBTI people in El Salvador. She met Mexican actor and UNHCR High Profile Supporter Alfonso Herrera last spring when the actor toured UNHCR's operations in the small Central American country. Herrera portrayed Hernando on Netflix's hit series Sense8 – a show praised by critics and LGBTI groups for its exploration of sexual and gender identity. He asked Grecia to chat with him by video last month about her work, the risks LGBTI people face in El Salvador and the effects COVID-19 has had on the people she serves.



Click [HERE](#) to read the transcript of a chat about how the LGBTI community in El Salvador is dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

# Coordination and Response to date

## R4V

The Regional Platform updated its narrative contribution for the third iteration of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) COVID-19 that is expected to be issued on 16 July. In the upcoming days the Regional Platform will also launch a dynamic dashboard on the R4V.info website to present regularly updated data on assistance

provided to refugees and migrants from Venezuela under the RMRP.

## MIRPS

Through a high-level virtual event, the government of Spain officially assumed on 29 July the leadership of the Support Platform for the MIRPS - the Comprehensive Regional Framework for Protection and Solutions to forced displacement in Central America and

Mexico. The Platform, made up of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and the European Union, will seek to give greater visibility among the international community and the private sector to the complex situation that has forced hundreds of thousands of people from Central America to flee their homes. Through the coordination of technical, financial and material support,

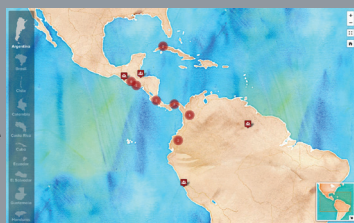
the Support Platform will mobilize new alliances to seek durable solutions for displaced people and increase protection activities in the countries that are part of the MIRPS.

## Don't miss...

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "STAY AT HOME" WHEN YOU HAD TO FLEE FROM YOURS?

Testimonies of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons in Latin America and the Caribbean. Learn about first-hand accounts of refugees and migrants in Latin America who are struggling every day to cope with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Browse the [interactive map](#) of the region and discover their stories.



### Displaced and disconnected: South America

Understanding legal and regulatory barriers to forcibly displaced persons' access to connectivity and financial services in South America.

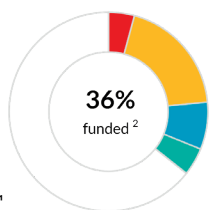
To read the report, click [HERE](#).



# Funding the response

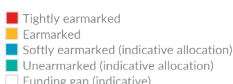
## Financial Information

### UNHCR AMERICAS - Funding Update



### THE AMERICAS

as of 1 July 2020



**\$611.8 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2020<sup>1</sup>

Notes:

1. 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.  
2. The percentage funded (28%) and total funding amount (\$168,266,461) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$443,571,912 representing 72% 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.

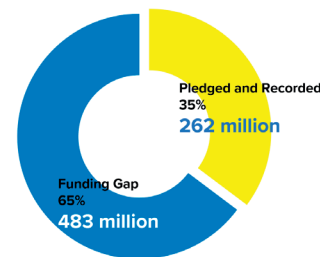
### Total contributed or pledged to the COVID-19 appeal:

**USD 262M**

Including:

United States	\$64.0M
European Union	\$43.0M
Germany	\$39.8M
United Kingdom	\$24.8M
Japan	\$23.9M
Denmark	\$14.6M
United Nations Foundation	\$10.0M
CERF	\$6.9M
Private donors	\$6.6M
Canada	\$6.4M
Ireland	\$3.3M
Sweden	\$3.0M
Sony Corporation	\$2.9M
Finland	\$2.4M
Austria	\$1.8M
Education Cannot Wait	\$1.8M
Qatar Charity	\$1.5M
Norway	\$1.4M
USA for UNHCR	\$1.0M

FUNDING (AS OF 19 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:

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