



“ Amid the current global health emergency, many refugees and migrants from Venezuela are **at risk of being left out of health and social welfare programmes**, especially those in an irregular situation. The **commitments made to support humanitarian efforts** offer a ray of **hope to many families** who have lost everything they had.”

Eduardo Stein

Special UNHCR-IOM Joint Special Representative

Find more about the Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean [HERE](#).

Situational Highlights

Latin America has overtaken the United States and Europe in the past week to report the largest portion of new daily cases globally. Brazil alone has the third-largest number of COVID-19 cases in the world, behind the United States and Russia. And of the 106,000 new cases of the infection reported in one day (22/05) - the highest daily number since the outbreak began - a large proportion were concentrated in Latin America.

In the Americas, movements within and between countries continue, heightening risks of detention, refolement, and contagion for those on the move. Irregular border crossings and human smuggling are on the rise. Concerns over COVID-19 cases affecting refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced populations and the stateless, along

with others in mixed movements, are heightened. The alert is particularly focused on indigenous populations in Brazil and Colombia, and also among those sheltered in collective sites.

A few countries lifted some restrictions (Aruba, Belize, Curaçao and Paraguay), while in others quarantine measures were extended or tightened as the number of COVID-19 cases increased. Argentina's second-largest city, Córdoba, resumed its lockdown. Colombia extended quarantine and border closures until 31 August. Guatemala imposed a curfew and total lockdown during weekends. El Salvador and Honduras extended their respective quarantine measures and curfews. The U.S. reported its land borders would be restricted to essential travel until 21

June.

In this context, pre-existing social unrest is raising demands for an easing of restrictive measures or for economic support to those affected by the crisis. In Central America, some 1,000 trucks were blocked at the Nicaragua/Costa Rica border after 50 truckers tested positive for COVID-19. Roadblocks were reported in Bolivia, clashes between the police and protesters in Santiago, Chile or Guayaquil, Ecuador.

The International Donors Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean convened by the European Union (EU) and Spain, with the support of Canada, Norway, UNHCR and IOM, was held on 26 May, with commitments made by donors amounting to

US\$2.79 billion, including US\$653 million in grants. Donors at the conference confirmed funding to support refugees, migrants and host communities in countries across the region where Venezuelans have found safety, healthcare and jobs. The Canadian Government announced its commitment to host and organise the next meeting as a follow-up to this conference. More information on the Conference can be found [here](#).



Challenges



UNHCR has identified that several vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic including LGBTI persons, children and the elderly. The loss of livelihoods generates higher protection risks for LGBTI individuals with several reports indicating that they may be driven into sex work and survival sex, as they lack support networks to help them cope with confinement and address mental health issues. LGBTI individuals also face discrimination and greater barriers in access to health services, including antiretroviral treatments and hormone therapy, and they lack sufficient services in safe spaces for trans SGBV survivors.

Concerning the protection risks for the elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is limited access to medical treatment for persons with chronic diseases and support for caregivers of other members of the family including those with disabilities. The situation of children, especially those who might be unaccompanied or separated, is particularly challenging in a situation of mandatory isolation, during which sexual, physical and psychological violence or neglect might go undetected.

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.)


 **Brazil:** Two additional spontaneous land occupations in Roraima were deactivated with 74 refugees and migrants removed from the settlements, 26 of the most vulnerable of whom were moved to UNHCR shelters and the rest of the population was supported to identify private accommodation. UNHCR now has 1,095 RHUs supporting the sheltered population in Boa Vista. This includes the 252 units installed in the health centre set up to respond to the pandemic, five units provided to civil society for isolation and 70 units installed to support the populations being relocated from spontaneous settlements.


 **Bolivia:** As the quarantine has been extended, a mobile child-friendly space continues benefiting 72 Venezuelan refugee and migrant children hosted with their families in hotels in La Paz. In coordination with the Ombudsperson's office and partners, UNHCR launched a series of information sessions for refugees and migrants to update them on the current emergency situation in Bolivia, quarantine measures in place, the scope of humanitarian assistance and access to documentation, among other issues.


 **Chile:** In Arica and Antofagasta during the third week of May, in coordination with partners, UNHCR assisted 42 Venezuelans with food vouchers and another 137 with food boxes and non-food items. The new joint programme with IFRC is well underway with three medical personnel providing direct assistance to refugees and migrants in Arica and Santiago.


 **Colombia:** UNHCR is currently providing shelter to 98 persons in Bogotá and plans to increase its shelter capacity to 300 people with a new Scalabrini shelter opening in the first week of June, as well as six hotels which have been identified as temporary shelters. A hotel network in Riohacha and Maicao already provides shelter to 256 Venezuelans. UNHCR has also donated over 30 Refugee Housing Units in Soacha and in Puerto Carreño to enhance the capacity of local hospitals to manage COVID-19 cases.


 **El Salvador:** Remote interviews of people that might require protection responses continue despite mobility restrictions. UNHCR delivered aid packages to the government of El Salvador to support forcibly displaced persons and deportees with protection needs, including 2,000 food and 500 hygiene kits to the General Directorate of Migration; 600 hygiene kits to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security; 500 feminine hygiene kits to the Salvadoran Institute for Women; 200 hygiene kits to the Salvadoran Institute for Children and Adolescents.

 **Guatemala:** As part of the cash assistance programme, UNHCR had registered 161 people and conducted 52 vulnerability assessments by 19 May. Of 46 families in the departments of Petén, Quetzaltenango and San Marcos interviewed, 43 were determined to be eligible for cash assistance, to be accessed via cards. In the border area of Petén, UNHCR provided information to people in transit and asylum-seekers. Referrals were made for cases in need of further support, such as survivors of sexual and gender based violence and unaccompanied children.

 **Honduras:** UNHCR delivered personal protective equipment to 50 leaders within various LGTBI groups in San Pedro Sula to support efforts to monitor the human rights situation, and to six community health clinics to strengthen the delivery of medical and social services.

 **Mexico:** Since the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency, the UNHCR Help desk assisted in 4,250 consultations. The recurring issues included requests for support (41%), cash assistance (35%), access to employment (11%), problems related to the asylum procedures (8%) and regularization of migratory status (5%). The El Jaguar Facebook page has reached 2 million users, with some 19,000 engagements. The special coronavirus page of Help.UNHCR, updated daily, recorded about 5,293 unique visits, doubling the number of pre-COVID visits.

 **Peru:** Some 320 SGBV cases have been assisted by UNHCR and partners. In Tacna, UNHCR and the Regional Government supported the establishment of a group of refugee and migrant women community leaders to provide psychosocial support, legal orientation and case management to prevent SGBV. Also, in Tumbes UNHCR conducted remote Preventive Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) workshops to staff in shelters. Additionally, in Cuzco a virtual workshop was held by regional authorities and UNHCR, where refugee and migrant women could raise their concerns on SGBV matters and learn about available support services.

 **Venezuela:** UNHCR continued distributing relief items for improved shelter/water/hygiene for spontaneous returnees in Apure, La Guaira, and Zulia (410 hygiene kits, 500 bars of soap, 100 buckets). In addition, hygiene kits, food and transportation were provided in support of 30 people with special needs and 16 outreach volunteers. As part of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia (IDAHOT), UNHCR and local NGO Orgullo Guayana conducted a virtual training on international protection, protection risks, terminology and safe spaces for regional SSN members in Bolívar. UNHCR also organised two virtual trainings on the identification of specific needs for community leaders from Brisas del Sur and Los Pijiguaos, Bolívar.

Stories from the field

When leaving home, three young women put on their masks over the headscarfs with which they cover their hair in the Islamic custom, before spending the day defying the tropical Caribbean heat. Although they have not yet graduated as doctors, Suadu Zein Beljeir, Umajutha Jatri Sidahmed and Maglaha Jatri Aduh – all refugees from Western Sahara who have received scholarships to study medicine in Cuba - are participating in the campaign to limit the spread of the coronavirus in Cuba. Faced with the spread of the virus, the Cuban government has called on medical students, including refugees, to support response and prevention measures. Under the guidance of their professors, Suadu, Umajutha and Maglaha go house to house inquiring about the state of health of residents and giving advice on hygiene and social isolation - two of the fundamental measures to avoid contagion, according to the World Health Organization. "This is a very important job," said Suadu, 23, who studies in the city of Las Tunas, in the east of the island. "In our medical studies we have learned that prevention is better than cure, so hygiene and control measures are essential at this time."

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



Coordination and Response to date



At the **International Donors Conference**, multiple donors committed to an overall total of USD 2.79 billion, including USD 653 million in grants, for the **Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP)** and for host countries in the region. Ahead of this event, R4V partners and Sectors presented the

needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in different fora to donors and stakeholders.

MIRPS

The OAS Permanent Council approved the establishment of a voluntary fund for the MIRPS, which will allow for the mobilisation of resources to help implement action plans in each country. The fund will be able to capture contributions from OAS Member and Observer States, UN Member States, international organizations, the general public, and national and international private or public entities.



Don't miss out

UNHCR and IOM welcome the Government of Chile's presidency of the Quito Process

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and IOM, the International Organisation for Migration, celebrate the commitment of the Government of Chile to take up the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Quito Process, from which it will lead the regional technical forum comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru to develop coordinated responses to the flow of refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

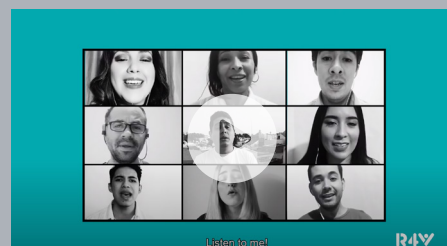
To read the press release, click [here](#).



Venezuelan musicians perform Algo está pasando (Something is happening) - R4V (English)

Even the longest distance can be shortened with music. More than 50 musicians from Venezuela in 11 countries perform Algo está pasando (Something is happening) calling for empathy across the Americas.

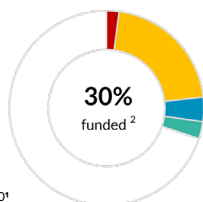
You can watch the video [here](#).



Funding the response

Financial Information

UNHCR AMERICAS - Funding Update



THE AMERICAS as of 21 May 2020

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

\$ 528.1 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2020¹

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 (30%) and total funding amount (\$158,856,125) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$369,198,466 representing 70% 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.

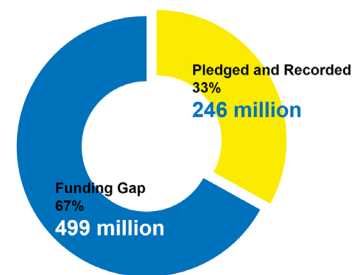
Total contributed or pledged to the COVID-19 appeal:

USD 246M

Including:

United States	\$64.0M
Germany	\$38.0M
European Union	\$32.8M
United Kingdom	\$24.8M
Japan	\$23.9M
Denmark	\$14.6M
United Nations Foundation	\$10.0M
CERF	\$6.9M
Canada	\$6.4M
Private donors	\$4.3M
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 29 MAY)
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:

Private donors Australia | Private donor Brazil | Private donors Mexico | Private donors Japan | Private donors Spain | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors USA