

1 MAY 2020



FUNDING SITUATION*

FUNDED: 50.6 M
 REQUIREMENTS: 1.3 BN

Situation

The spread of COVID-19 in the region continues, with cases also detected among refugees and migrants from Venezuela. To date, at least 58 cases were reported, including 22 in Ecuador, 21 in Brazil, seven in Chile, two in Peru, two in Aruba, two in Colombia and two in the Dominican Republic. The situation of refugees and migrants is worsened by rising levels of xenophobia and discrimination against Venezuelans, especially those living on the streets during the pandemic, as they are accused of spreading COVID-19.

The situation of refugees and migrants who are returning to Venezuela is of grave concern to R4V partners. An increasing number of refugees and migrants are now returning to Venezuela from Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru as quarantine measures in host countries leave them without assistance nor means to provide for themselves. With borders in the region closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many now consider returning through irregular channels. The risks associated with such return movements include further exposure to the virus, enhancement of the virus' spread, as well as risks arising from irregular movements such as human trafficking and abuse at smugglers' hands. Partners have also received reports of refugees and migrants being threatened by armed groups that prohibit transits in border areas between Colombia and Ecuador.

The Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) continues to be underfunded, limiting activities of over 137 organizations for refugees and migrants from Venezuela and host communities. As of 1 May, appealing organizations have received USD 50.6 million, representing 4% of the total financial requirements of the RMRP (USD 1.35 billion). As the RMRP is under revision to include COVID-19-related activities, there is an urgent need to support appealing organizations in their response.

Platforms' Response**

The Regional Platform is finalizing the review of the RMRP 2020, with country and regional sector chapters being developed this week. In alignment with the Global Humanitarian Response Plan – COVID-19, the RMRP review is expected to be launched next week. The document will outline new priorities and operational planning adjustments of appealing organizations in response to the continued spread of COVID-19 and its impact on refugees, migrants and affected host communities in the region.

In Colombia, the Inter-Agency Group for Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM) worked with partners on a COVID-19 focused Rapid Needs Assessment in preparation for the review of the RMRP 2020. In addition, local coordination efforts continued in support of local authorities in delivering humanitarian assistance, such as food, hygiene kits and NFI. The GIFMM is also working to expand multipurpose cash assistance, as well as temporary shelters for vulnerable refugees, migrants and host communities. GIFMM partners are supporting local authorities in the COVID-19 response with medical teams, delivering personal protective equipment and enhancing WASH facilities.

In Brazil, the Platform and partners supported the relocation of 220 refugees and migrants in Boa Vista to shelters of the national *Operação Acolhida*. In addition, over 600 individuals located at the bus terminal in Boa Vista were registered to receive hygiene kits distributed by R4V partners and *Operação Acolhida*. In Manaus, partners are informing Venezuelans of the potential risk of inter-state movements during periods of lockdown enforced by the authorities, as well as about risks of irregular border crossings.

In Ecuador, the *Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes (GTRM)* finalized the review of its country chapter of the RMRP. This week, R4V partners have observed increasing xenophobia and calls for Venezuelans to leave northern and southern border towns (Tulcán and Huaquillas). Under the revised RMRP, R4V partners will in this respect prioritize information-sharing on health considerations as well as anti-xenophobic campaigns.

In Peru, the GTRM is supporting the identification of refugee and migrant health professionals to support the emergency response following the validation of their diplomas. In addition, partners are supporting the Ministry of Health with temporary shelters to strengthen and extend health structures. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, partners have organized cash-based interventions for over 13,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela throughout the country.

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* Source: <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/944/summary>

**These are examples of activities carried out by National/Sub-Regional Platforms and/or Regional Sectors. For further details, please see R4V.info.

In Chile, the Platform and partners are providing shelter, food and NFI during the pandemic. This week, the Platform met with the Ministry of Health to strengthen ties and ensure access by refugees and migrants to medical services and disease prevention. Partners have launched awareness and prevention campaigns with a focus on intercultural communication.

The Sub-Regional Platform in the Caribbean is prioritizing responses concerning Food Security, Health and Shelter. The Platform continues working towards the standardization of food support across the region. National platforms in the Caribbean are exploring new modalities for contact-free delivery of CBI and remote modalities for case management and psychosocial support for refugees and migrants. Partners are experiencing funding shortages, which affect their capacity to deliver assistance to refugees, migrants and affected host communities.

In Central America and Mexico, the Sub-Regional Platform is supporting referrals of vulnerable refugees and migrants from Venezuela among R4V partners. The response to the COVID-19 situation is ongoing with partners assisting refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the sub-region with food, cash, psychosocial support, hotlines and remote legal aid among other services.

The Southern Cone Sub-Regional Platform and R4V partners are prioritizing shelter solutions, NFIs, food assistance and cash to refugees and migrants in border areas and in main urban centres. Partners in Argentina and Uruguay are standardizing criteria for humanitarian assistance as well as setting up protocols for the assistance and referrals of gender-based violence (GBV) cases.

Regional Sectors**

The Regional Health Sector is concerned about unregulated movements of refugees and migrants from Colombia and other countries to Venezuela as it could increase the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, movement restrictions across the continent continue to limit the delivery of public health programs. The Sector aims to ensure access to health services particularly for the most vulnerable people and is working to reinforce measures to protect health staff with protective equipment.

The Regional Integration Sector is reviewing its strategy on cash-based interventions and economic recovery with the support of the GBV Sub-Sector and Cash WG. The Sector is also working with the Support Spaces WG on strengthening the livelihood opportunities of Venezuelans hosted in the region. Coordination is ongoing with the Protection Sector concerning a review of good practices adopted by countries for Venezuelans (including those in irregular status) during COVID-19.

The Regional Shelter, NFI and Humanitarian Transportation Sectors are developing methodologies for post-distribution monitoring of multipurpose cash transfers to quantify the amount being spent on shelter, NFI and transportation. The number of current shelters is inadequate especially considering the new measures adopted to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For this reason, new shelters are being set up in a number of countries.

The Regional Protection Sector is monitoring the situation of return movements to Venezuela. The Sector is analyzing existing risks and producing communication materials that will inform refugees and migrants in a coherent manner. Efforts have been made to exchange information with national counterparts on current trends, profiles of those returning and their needs. The **Human trafficking & smuggling** Sub-sector is mapping the capacity of national institutions and civil society organizations in helping victims of trafficking while reaching out to partners and supporting the provision of remote training concerning trafficking in persons. This week, the Support Spaces WG issued a [response update on COVID-19](#) regarding services available for refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Support Spaces throughout the region.

The Regional Food Security Sector and partners are working with governments offering technical support to strengthen shock-responsive social protection programmes with the aim to include vulnerable refugees and migrants. As the pandemic continues to impact on people's livelihoods, partners have reviewed their programmes to ensure vulnerable refugees and migrants continue receiving assistance without risking exposure to COVID-19.

The Regional Education Sector is collecting information on education needs of refugees and migrants during COVID-19 through different partners. The collection of information is also considering refugees and migrants considering returning to Venezuela. The Sector is also identifying recommendations on remote learning modalities for vulnerable communities.

This week, the Regional WASH Sector hosted the Executive Director of the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) who spoke about preparedness and continuity of services in a context of COVID-19 in the Caribbean. In addition, during the meeting, the integration of market-based interventions in WASH was discussed. Countries in the region are responding and developing specific COVID-19 plans including risk mapping.