

# Venezuela

November 2019

- Operational and security conditions in Field Offices continue to be affected by power blackouts, telecommunications problems, intermittent access to water, worsening gasoline shortages and irregular armed group activity in the states of Amazonas, Apure, Bolívar, and Zulia.
- UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock visited Venezuela between 4 and 6 November, holding meetings with both the Government and the opposition-led National Assembly. At the end of the visit, Lowcock issued a statement in which he underlined the “need to recognize that international resources are unlikely to be sufficient to stabilize the humanitarian situation” in Venezuela and that there is a “need to find a way to unlock Venezuelan resources to contribute more to humanitarian action. While recognizing the ongoing political differences, this will require stakeholders to place a greater priority on reducing the immediate suffering of the people of this country”.
- The Venezuelan economy continued on its path towards an undeclared dollarization, with an estimated 50-60 percent of all commercial transactions characterised by the use of the US currency. President Nicolas Maduro acknowledged the trend and gave it his informal blessing, pointing out that dollarization was providing a welcome “escape valve” in a country constrained by sanctions, hyperinflation, credit crunches and economic contraction. Nonetheless, analysts warn that dollarization is also increasing economic inequality in the country, between the “haves” who through economic activity or remittances from abroad may access the US currency and the “have nots” -mainly public sector employees and pensioners- who have to rely on an increasingly worthless Bolivar to make ends meet and acquire basic goods that are ever more out of the reach of their pockets.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### ESTIMATED HOST COMMUNITY BENEFICIARIES

+ 270,000

### PERSONS OF CONCERN (GOVERNMENT FIGURES)

Refugees 8,712

Asylum seekers 142

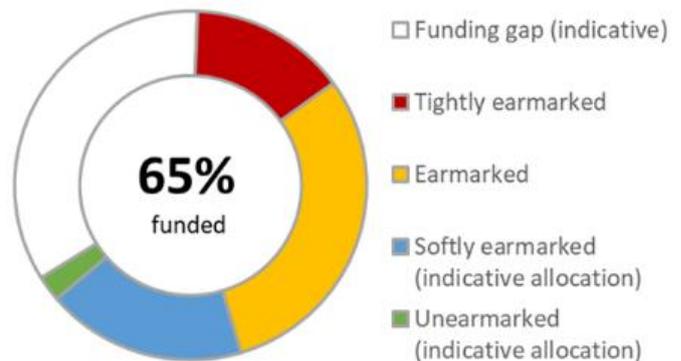
Source: National Refugee Commission Venezuela

Persons in refugee-like situation: 58,826

## FUNDING (AS OF NOVEMBER 2019)

# USD 29.5 million

requested for Venezuela



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

#### 97 Personnel:

77 national staff

3 affiliate workforce/employees

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

[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)



## 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 that provides 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 244 persons of concern in their voluntary repatriation to Colombia.

# Activities implemented in November 2019

## Community-based Protection

- During the visit of UNHCR's Deputy Representative, UNHCR Guasualito delivered 180 solar lamps, 540 jerry cans, and 3,200 water purification tablets to vulnerable families in Coromoto. UNHCR also delivered 12 solar lamps, 12 jerry cans, 240 water purification tablets and 60 sanitary pads to SGBV survivors under the Regional Safe Spaces Network in Guasualito.
- UNHCR Guasualito delivered 24 solar lamps, 48 jerry cans and 1,350 water purification tablets to the Mundo sin Frontera foundation and the Páez municipal fire department. UNHCR delivered office supplies, furniture, and electronic equipment to Civil Protection and the fire department, providing them with tires for their ambulances and vehicles as well.
- UNHCR Guasualito delivered jerry cans, water purification tablets and personal hygiene items to 120 persons in San José del Amparo and provided instruction on proper handwashing methods and use of the tablets. UNHCR also delivered 7,500 water purification tablets to 38 families in the community of La Esperanza who are originally from the states of Táchira, Barinas and Lara.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas delivered 16,250 water purification tablets to 325 families of the community of San Isidro in Petare, Greater Caracas, distributed 140 food boxes to families with specific needs and signs of malnutrition in Antonio José de Sucre and Barrio Bolívar, Petare, and organised a health campaign with 105 children in the local El Colibri community centre.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered 10 nutritional recovery kits to the home for older persons "Medarda Piñero" in San Cristóbal.
- UNHCR Maracaibo and partner Red Cross Zulia organised a workshop on safe water and handwashing techniques for 171 residents of El Caracolí, where it delivered water filters to 150 local families, and distributed 89 Ecofilters and 81 hygiene kits to vulnerable families in the Campo Lata community, Sur del Lago.
- UNHCR Maracaibo delivered a training session on the Code of Conduct, fraud, corruption, PSEA and reporting mechanisms to 30 members of the women's network in Villa Bolivariana I, where it also distributed menstrual cups to 39 women and carried out a training session on healthy masculinity with partner Azul Positivo. UNHCR held similar training sessions on healthy masculinity and sexual and reproductive health in the prioritised communities of Shirapta and Tokuko and administered HIV and syphilis tests to participants.
- UNHCR Maracaibo and partner HIAS completed and inaugurated a WASH project at the local school of Río Negro, following the rehabilitation of the sanitary facilities and water tank. The office also provided a training session on SGBV to the women's network and local community members, while Safe Spaces Network partners carried out a sexual and reproductive health brigade which provided gynaecological, obstetric and mastological consultations and HIV and syphilis testing.
- UNHCR Maracaibo, in coordination with NGO partner Soy un Guardián, provided a training for 40 officials from the Mara municipal child protection system on the prevention of sexual violence and abuse of children.
- UNHCR Field Unit carried out SGBV awareness activities for the launch of the 16 Days of Activism (#16Days) campaign in Antonio José de Sucre in Petare and El Cafetal in El Junquito, which included awareness-raising campaigns, information sessions on the prevention of SGBV, distribution of menstrual cups and interactive children's theatre—changing the story of Little Red Riding Hood to convey key messages on the prevention of gender-based violence.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas, together with the National Office against Organised Crime and the Funding of Terrorism (ONCDOFT), organised an information session for children and adolescents at the Hipolito Cisneros school in El Junquito, Greater Caracas, on the prevention of sexual abuse and violence (#16Days).
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana carried out a field mission to Los Mangos and 5 de Mayo to organise awareness-raising training on the prevention of gender-based violence and introduce the Safe Spaces network to 249 residents. Together with Médecins Sans Frontières, UNHCR provided informative sessions on sexual and reproductive health, sexual violence, female hygiene and malaria prevention, and administered 51 HIV and Syphilis rapid tests and 86 contraceptive subcutaneous injections. Also, with partner Instituto Radiofónico Fe y Alegría (IRFA), UNHCR delivered a micro-entrepreneurship workshop and information session on bullying and gender-based violence against adolescents to 221 participants (#16Days).
- UNHCR San Cristobal launched its #16Days campaign with informative activities on the prevention of SGBV in two public squares in the city, a workshop for armed forces and civil

servants on SGBV in the context of human trafficking (47 participants), informative sessions on SGBV, female empowerment, prevention of child sex abuse and the use of menstrual cups with young community members in Colinas de Maisanta (40 women with special needs received menstrual cups). UNHCR also supported an information session on the promotion and protection of human rights and non-discrimination towards people with HIV and the LGBTI community in human mobility contexts, delivered by UNAIDS, and a training on self-defence techniques for women.

- UNHCR Guasdualito, together with the HIV/AIDS program in Amazonas, carried out HIV/AIDS and syphilis rapid tests for 55 persons in Coromoto. Three patients tested positive for HIV/AIDS, but UNHCR could not provide them guidance, as they left the activity before receiving their results.
- UNHCR Guasdualito delivered 33 menstrual cups to refugees, asylum-seekers and women with specific needs in Los Caobos identified together with outreach volunteers. These women had indicated their interest during a previous workshop in receiving instruction on the proper use of the menstrual cups.
- UNHCR Guasdualito inaugurated a peace mural in Aramendi Primary School, in the presence of the national Ombudsman Alfredo Ruiz, members and allies of the local Safe Spaces Network and local authorities (#16Days).
- UNHCR Guasdualito delivered 120 school desks to the Benedicto Cuy school in La Osa and accompanied partner HIAS in the reopening of the rural clinic in El Platanillo, Amazonas, following the rehabilitation of its water and electric facilities and the expansion of safe spaces for patients. The clinic serves 500 people, mainly indigenous Jivis and Piaroas. UNHCR and HIAS also delivered an elevated water tank to nearby Sabaneta del Guayabal, home to 500 Jivis who had been without regular water services for the past 12 years.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered backpacks and stationery items to children from the community of Laguna de García who attend the local school. The students at the school include refugees, IDPs and other PoCs. Due to the school's remote location, the students do not receive any support from other organisations or the government.
- UNHCR Maracaibo helped coordinate the first regional meeting of the Zulia youth protection network, during which 40 boys and girls from the communities of Gran Sabana, Simón Bolívar I and Paraguaipoa gained tools on leadership, sustainable project implementation, motivation, teamwork and the AGD approach. The networks exchanged experiences and good practices and developed coordination mechanisms for 2020.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas delivered 140 educational kits to children with specific needs in the community of San Isidro in Petare, Greater Caracas, to reduce the risk of school dropouts.
- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas, together with NGO partners the Venezuelan Christian-Oriented Health Services Association (AVESSOC) and DigiSalud, organised a medical brigade in the community of San Isidro in Petare, Greater Caracas, with the support of outreach volunteers: 457 persons with specific needs received medical care, including paediatric services and medication, 17 of whom were treated in their homes due to mobility restrictions related to physical or mental disabilities.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana joined the Caroní Red Cross at the bus terminal in Ciudad Guayana, delivering condoms and energy bars and providing information to some 100 persons in mobility.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered 30 wheelchairs for children and 10 wheelchairs for adults to the Governor of Táchira to be distributed to vulnerable cases identified in local communities by regional authorities applying an age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach.
- UNHCR Maracaibo delivered 1,800 kg of charcoal in the prioritised community of Río Negro for the local school and a child-friendly space managed by members of the women's network. The donation will support the feeding program of both spaces, benefiting around 730 children and adolescents. The office also delivered 3,200 kg of charcoal to the community of El Caracolí in Sur del Lago for the local school and 626 members of vulnerable families.
- UNHCR Guasdualito, UNHCR's Deputy Representative and UNHCR PI Unit attended the inauguration of the local Ombudsperson's new office in Carmen de Ratón in the municipality of Autana. UNHCR provided material and technical support with the refurbishing and renovation of the new premises. Autana is an important point from which many persons transit to illegal mines or outside of Venezuela.
- UNHCR San Cristóbal delivered wall paint, a refrigerator, reagents and air conditioning units to the community clinic in La Fría, which serves some 500 patients per week.
- UNHCR Maracaibo and UNHCR PI unit attended the inauguration of the local Ombudsperson's new office in Guajira, on the border with Colombia. UNHCR provided support with the refurbishing and renovation of the premises. Following the inauguration, UNHCR met with the mayor of Guajira

to explain its mandate and work in the area. The mayor welcomed UNHCR's support and presence in the region, a sign that the office should not experience issues of access in the region.

- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana delivered a power plant, air conditioners and office supplies to the Commission on Human Rights and Citizenship (CODEHCIU) in Bolívar.
- During the visit of UNHCR's Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR Ciudad Guayana organised a training on Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), fraud, corruption and the Code of Conduct for officials from the regional Office of the Ombudsperson and CONARE.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana carried out a training on project design, leadership and communication with the women and youth networks of Guanamo, as well as a bakery workshop with IRFA for 30 men and women in the community with IRFA.
- UNHCR Guasdalito, together with NGO partner HIAS, provided a training on statelessness and child protection to 62 outreach volunteers from the communities of Guamalito and Las Monas.

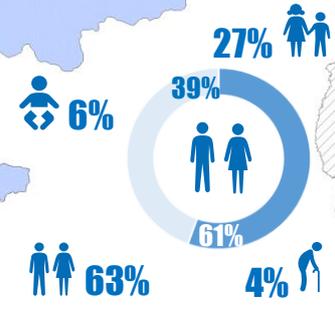
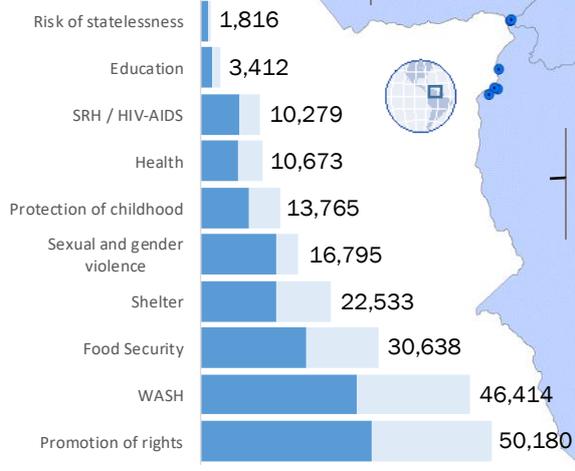
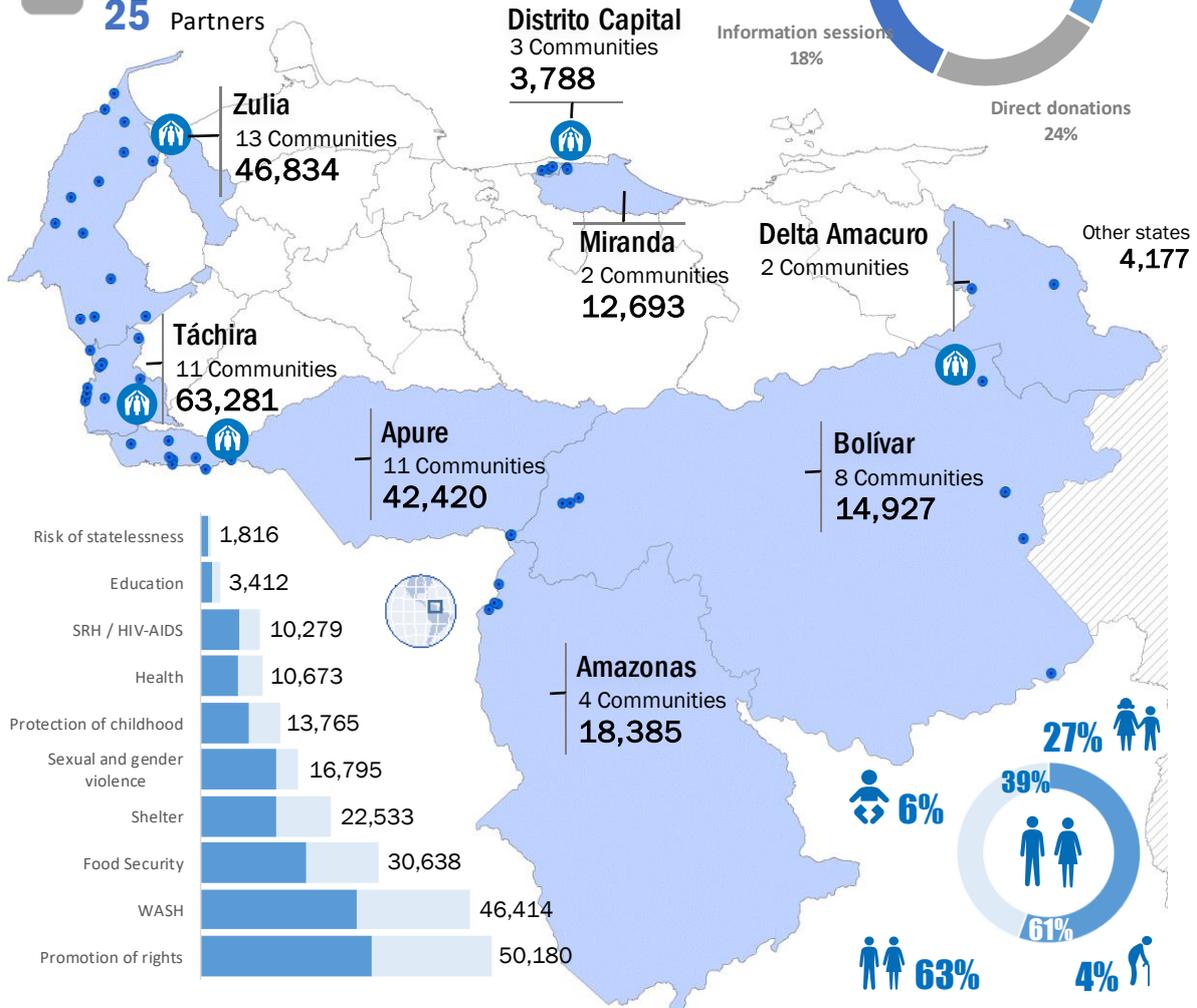
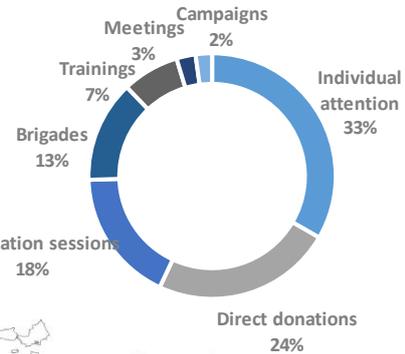
### **Borders, Asylum and Durable Solutions**

- UNHCR Field Unit Caracas carried out a workshop for National Commission for Refugees (CONARE) staff on identification and information about institutional referral pathways for SGBV survivors and the services provided by the Regional Safe Spaces Network.
- UNHCR Guasdalito held a diploma course on International Refugee Law that was attended by 60 students from universities, public administrations, government institutions and the security services.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana and CONARE Bolívar organised two trainings on International Refugee Law and the Organic Law on Refugees and Asylees (LORRAA in Spanish) for the Chief Prosecutor's Office in Bolívar and for law students and professors at Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho University.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana and Orgullo Guyana organised a workshop on protection for forcefully displaced LGBTI persons for members of the Safe Spaces network of the state of Bolívar.
- During the visit of the national Ombudsperson, UNHCR Ciudad Guayana and CONARE organised a training on international protection, International Refugee Law and national refugee legislation for regional delegates from the Office of the Ombudsperson in the states of Amazonas, Anzoátegui, Delta Amacuro, Monagas and Sucre. UNHCR and the Ombudsperson also delivered diplomas to 106 state officials who participated in trainings on human rights and International Refugee Law which took place in 2018 and 2019.
- UNHCR Ciudad Guayana carried out a mission to Guanamo, together with CONARE, provided legal assistance to five refugees and conducted a workshop that was attended by 42 residents.
- UNHCR Maracaibo held a training on International Refugee Law and services available for asylum-seekers and refugees in Venezuela to 15 public defenders from the Ombudsperson's Office.
- UNHCR Maracaibo and allies CONARE and the Office of the Ombudsman conducted a training on International Refugee Law and the links between asylum and trafficking to 74 members of the security forces.


**+200,000** Persons assisted


**54** Communities


**12** Project Partnership Agreements

**25** Partners

**JANUARY - NOVEMBER 2019**
**Donors**

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

**Contacts**

Luca Nicosia, Reporting Officer & Head of Public Information, [nicosi@unhcr.org](mailto:nicosi@unhcr.org)  
 John Jeffcoat Mészáros, Communications & Public Information Associate, [jeffcoat@unhcr.org](mailto:jeffcoat@unhcr.org)  
 Claudia Uribe, Senior Communications & Public Information Assistant, [uribeesp@unhcr.org](mailto:uribeesp@unhcr.org)