

# MIGRANT AND REFUGEE VENEZUELAN CRISIS: IOM REGIONAL RESPONSE OVERVIEW

REPORTING PERIOD:  
APRIL 2018 – FEBRUARY 2019

This report series aims to provide a summary account of IOM response in the region during the specified period, thanks to the contributions and engagement of donors and partners. This issue offers an aggregated overview of the main achievements since the response was launched in April 2018.

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

The driving factors of the continuous outflow of Venezuelan women, men, girls and boys to other countries in the region have gained strength, complexity and volatility since IOM officially launched its regional response in April 2018. This is reflected not only in an increase in the number of Venezuelans abroad as new official data is available, but also in overwhelming peaks in the number of entries and the worsening vulnerability conditions of migrants and refugees.

As of February 2019, it is estimated that around 3.4 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela live abroad, 2.7 million (79%) of them in Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Colombia, Peru, Chile and Ecuador report the highest numbers of Venezuelans in their territories with 1.1 million, 710,000, 288,233 and 250,000 persons respectively. Complementarily, the intensity and scale of the flows is illustrated by entry records through critical border points: 45,000 Venezuelan passport holders entered Colombia through Simon Bolivar International Bridge in January 2019; from 1 January to 12 February 2019, 46,500 Venezuelans entered Ecuador through Rumichaca International Bridge and 26,600 to Peru through Huaquillas/Tumbes Border Post.

Flows' dynamics have been often correlated with migration policy decisions taken at national level. Announcements in Ecuador and Peru in August 2018 to set valid passport presentation as entry condition resulted in an increase in numbers of Venezuelans trying to reach those countries in the days prior to the date when the measures would enter into force. In January 2019, after Ecuadorian authorities introduced changes to entry requirement for Venezuelans by instituting provision of certificates of criminal records, daily arrivals of Venezuelans fell from 3,169 to 771 three days after the measure was introduced (a 75% reduction).

The escalating outflow reached a critical tipping point in the first quarter of 2018, when several additional factors converged: a) large concentration of Venezuelans in border points and other receiving areas with poor reception conditions generating increased public health risks; b) public structures and resources available at local level in recipient countries became clearly insufficient to cope with the immediate protection, shelter, food and non-food item (NFI) needs; c) capacities of the migration and asylum authorities to manage the high demand for documentation and legal status were overstretched; d) individuals and families were arriving in extremely vulnerable conditions and with significantly reduced resilience and self-sufficiency as a result of a prolonged limited access to basic services and goods; d) intensified use of unsafe land routes to arrive to their temporary or final destination country, posing increasing threats to the life and dignity of Venezuelans on the move.

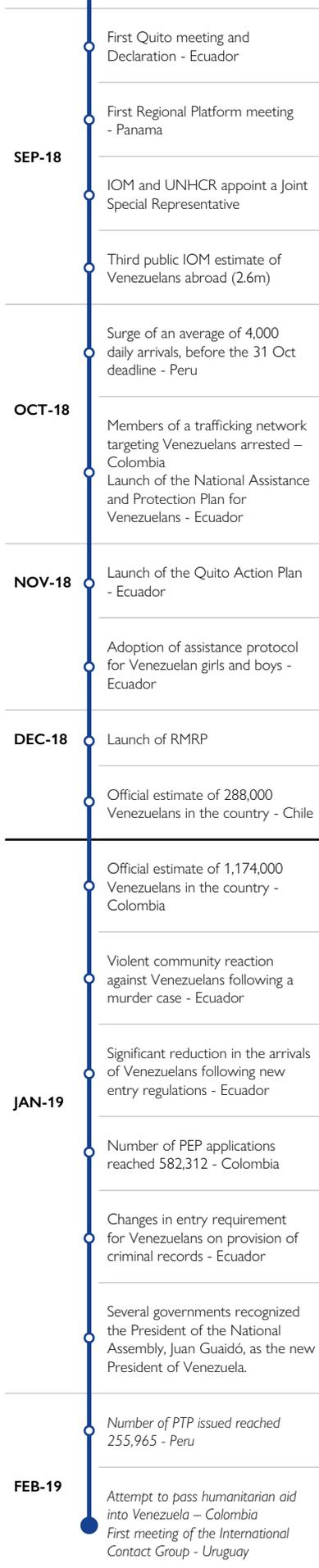
As of early 2019, the previously identified conditions continue to be present, and additional and complex humanitarian consequences have become apparent. The most recent official data, **Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)** reports and field monitoring activities shed light on persistent and emergent humanitarian situations and risks:

- Many travel long distances by foot, or undertake multiple journeys during their displacement, with scarce access to goods and services to meet basic needs while also facing developing or worsening health conditions. Pregnant women, women with children, and unaccompanied and separated children are part of this groups of Venezuelans that often must use unsafe routes where they are exposed to violence, traffickers and smugglers, abuse and exploitation, and GVB. In the case of children, there is also a risk of recruitment and utilization by illegal armed groups and organised criminal organizations.
- During peaks in the number of arrivals at the main regular entry points, waiting times expand considerably as processing capacity is greatly exceeded. At that point in their migration route, those individuals and families arriving at the border points have most often already depleted their limited resources and have no means of self-subsistence, including access to food, shelter, basic NFI and secure WASH and emergency health care for themselves and their families. This scenario further increases their vulnerability to exploitation by traffickers and smugglers.
- Once in the country of destination, Venezuelans face significant challenges to access basic social and protection services, with those in an irregular situation or belonging to indigenous communities being among the most vulnerable. Individuals with high-cost chronic diseases, pregnant women, the elderly and accompanied children or separated children often have accumulated care needs and exhibit deteriorating health conditions. Unmet needs are also evident in the areas of accommodation, nutrition, WASH, and child education. As unmet needs pile up, so does the risk of exploitation and abuse and engagement in survival sex and other high-risk activities.

DTM data have also shown that beyond the immediate humanitarian and protections needs, Venezuelan migrant and refugees give priority to finding sustainable income generation opportunities and gaining access to health care and education systems. In contrast, negative perceptions on migration and Venezuelan amongst host communities in some receiving countries are frequently fuelled by unsubstantiated fears of displacement in the job market and by information on budgetary efforts made by governments to fulfil the health and education rights of the incoming population, while receiving communities often find themselves still facing difficulties of full access. Risks of discriminatory and xenophobic attitudes and actions have been accentuated by the effect on the public opinion

## MILESTONES TIMELINE





of highly publicized isolated cases of violence or crimes involving Venezuelan nationals as alleged perpetrators.

Host countries in the region have, thus far, maintained a commendable open-door policy and demonstrated considerable solidarity towards Venezuelans. Most governments in the impacted countries have been developing and adapting their institutional arrangements and programmatic response mechanisms to provide emergency assistance and protection and pave the way toward socio-economic integration in highly complex local conditions and with overstretched institutional capacity. Alongside registration (e.g. *Registro Administrativo de Migrante Venezolanos-RAMV*- in Colombia), provision of humanitarian assistance and access to social services -sometimes in the framework of emergency declarations (e.g. Brazil and Ecuador)-, governments have also put in place ordinary and extraordinary mechanisms such as the *Permiso Temporal de Permanencia (PTP)* in Peru, the *Residência Temporária* in Brazil, the *Permiso Especial de Permanencia (PEP)* in Colombia and the *Visa de Responsabilidad Democrática* in Chile. As of December 2018, 1.3 million residence permits and other forms of regular migratory status had been granted by 13 states in the region, with Colombia, Chile, Peru and Argentina at top of the list.

Governments of the main receiving countries have also been addressing the need for interstate coordination and policy harmonization. While discussions on the situation in Venezuela have been held in the Organization for American States, the Lima Group, and the International Contact Group promoted by the European Union, most signatory countries of the Quito Declaration have endorsed a comprehensive Action Plan presented in November 2018 during the II International Quito Meeting; a third meeting has been scheduled for early April 2019.

IOM RESPONSE

FLOWS AND IOM'S PROGRAMMATIC PRESENCE

REGIONAL

TOTAL

R: 3,179,242.21  
N: 19,067,162.00

R: 34,014,963.71  
N: 154,039,588.00



MEXICO

Mexico

MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

R: 1.117.015,11  
N: 6.537.899,00

Havana

BAHAMAS, THE

CUBA

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

JAMAICA

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

CARIBBEAN

R: 938,496.49  
N: 6,419,945.00

GUATEMALA

HONDURAS

EL SALVADOR

NICARAGUA

COSTA RICA

PANAMA

COLOMBIA

R: 17,415,299.59  
N: 51,315,600.00

ECUADOR

R: 3,129,149.27  
N: 21,895,896.00

PERU

R: 2,941,302.85  
N: 17,229,472.00

QUITO

Lima

CURACAO

Caracas

VENEZUELA, BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF

DOMINICA

BARBADOS

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Paramaribo

GUAYANA

Boa Vista

BRAZIL

R: 3,465,043.89  
N: 14,400,117.00

BRAZIL

Brasilia

La Paz

BOLIVIA

SOUTHERN CONE

R: 1,829,414.27  
N: 17,173,497.00

PARAGUAY

Asuncion

ARGENTINA

Santiago

CHILE

Buenos Aires

URUGUAY

Montevideo

REFERENCES

RMRP - IOM Funds requested for 2019 by country/sub-region and Aol

- Direct emergency assistance
- Protection
- Socio economic and cultural integration
- Strengthening the capacity of host governments

FUNDS RECEIVED (R)  
FUNDS NEEDED (N)

## IOM'S RESPONSE

The assistance and protection of those who are in vulnerable conditions is at the centre of the emergency response, with institutional and community-based protection and support to regularization initiatives as the preferred strategies. At the same time, a forward-looking lens is applied to ensure socio-economic and cultural integration, as well as longer-term initiatives to build the resilience of migrants and refugees from Venezuela, bringing development oriented and private sector, faith-based organizations, and international financial institutions into the fold.

### DIRECT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

IOM has planned and rolled out rounds of the **Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)** -its flagship system to capture, process and disseminate information on movements and evolving needs related to population mobility- in 15 countries across the region: Argentina, Aruba, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Curacao, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. From April 2018 to February 2019, 25 DTM rounds have been carried out with almost 50,000 interviews conducted in more than 80 sites. DTM results have been shared with more than 190 government agencies and other partners to inform policy discussions and jointly identify priority interventions and emerging needs and risks. In the coming months 9 DTM reports will be released and disseminated. DTM data, field monitoring activities and consultations with national and local authorities have guided field operation in the different areas of intervention:

**Temporary accommodation** in transit and receiving areas has been provided to 17,699 Venezuelans in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago (9 countries). This figure includes 5,037 children (28%) and 47 self-reported intersex persons; most beneficiaries were assisted in Colombia, Brazil, Peru and Ecuador. Delivery modalities included agreements with local NGOs and allocation of subsidies through private accommodation providers. In Argentina, IOM is working with partners to improve two existing facilities and expand accommodation capacity meeting humanitarian standards.

**Non-food items (NFI)** kits have been distributed to 13,822 Venezuelans (6,532 women and girls) in 8 countries. In Brazil, the 6,678 beneficiaries were dispersed across 10 municipalities in the State of Roraima. In Ecuador, the distribution took place in 2 border areas and Quito with 3,358 beneficiaries. In Colombia, most kits were handed out to Venezuelans along the so-called *Ruta de los Caminantes*. The other countries where Venezuelans were reached with NFI kits include Trinidad and Tobago (1,038), Panama (853) Curacao (426), Costa Rica (194) and Argentina (104). As for the content of the kits it was determined according to sex and age considerations and special needs, and ranged from basic sanitary elements to shelter items.

To support Venezuelans to stay in touch with their families and support networks and to access critical information on availability of assistance services, **Wi-Fi spots** were installed in Rumichaca, Ecuador, providing access to more than 43,000 users so far.

In special circumstances, accommodation and NFIs have been complemented with **food items**. 23,256 persons in 7 countries received some form of food assistance, either through direct distribution or using vouchers or debit cards. In Peru, a dining area was set up at the *Centro Binacional de Atención en Frontera (CEBAF)* in Tumbes to served mainly arriving women and children, reaching 17,609 beneficiaries. Basic food items were distributed to Venezuelans in Guyana (1,134) Panama (594), Curacao (426) and Costa Rica (231). In Mexico, 354 persons in 3 states and Mexico City received food vouchers. IOM Brazil provided 2,908 Venezuelans in 12 municipalities in Roraima with debit cards to purchase food, in partnership with Caritas Brazil.

For migrants needing **emergency health care assistance**, IOM has implemented around 20 health days in Colombia. Services were provided in general medicine, dentistry, prenatal control, growth control and development, oral hygiene, vaccination and psychosocial support, reaching 15,483 persons. Other countries where health activities have been implemented, including medical check-ups and provision of medicines, are Panama (893), Argentina (104), Chile (370), Costa Rica (82) and Mexico (12). In total, basic health services were provided by IOM to 16,944 persons in 6 countries, 63% (10,674) of those assisted were women.

Finally, to ensure safe journeys toward destination areas and between transit points IOM has conducted transportation assistance operations for 14,016 Venezuelans, 64% of them in Ecuador, 28% in Colombia and 8% in Peru. Protocols for this assistance include pre-departure orientation, fitness for travel checks, support in logistics, coordination with security authorities and follow up upon arrival.

#### MAIN CONTRIBUTORS TO IOM'S DIRECT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

**At regional level:** *Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), the Government of the Netherlands and the United Nations Central Emergency and Response Fund (CERF).*

**At national level:** *CERF in Brazil, Colombia, Peru | European Union in Brazil and Colombia | Fondo Nacional de Gestión de Riesgo de Desastres in Colombia | Management Systems International (MSI) in Colombia | Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in Colombia | Secretaría Distrital de Integración Social in Colombia | UNHCR in Peru | UNICEF in Brazil.*

#### PROTECTION

A key activity towards effective protection of Venezuelans who arrive to any of the host countries, is facilitating access to the **documentation and regularization** processes that the respective migration authorities have established. IOM teams in 7 countries have worked in coordination with national government agencies to provide information on documentation and regularization to 73,190 Venezuelans: 42,801 in Ecuador, 24,527 in Brazil, 2,573 in Guyana, 2,077 in Trinidad and Tobago, and 1,212 in Costa Rica. In terms of delivery modalities, most information distribution points have been integrated into the government migrant assistance centres. In Costa Rica, a toll-free '800-Venezuela' information line was launched in partnership with the General Directorate of Migration and the National Migration Council. Additionally, in Chile, IOM supported the *Departamento de Extranjería y Migración* in the distribution of information on the Extraordinary Regularization Process amongst Venezuelans living in the country, to promote timely application to the mechanism between April and July 2018.

Venezuelans also need orientation on available **social services and access pathways**. IOM has reached 93,125 persons in 7 countries with updated information according to specific vulnerabilities and the map of government and NGO services providers present in each area to trigger referral mechanisms as required: Ecuador (33,232), Mexico (25,314), Peru (16,293), Brazil (14,026), Trinidad and Tobago (1,899), Colombia (1,522) and Guyana (839). 51% of beneficiaries were women and that has informed the design of the information materials and the choice of the most suitable and effective dissemination channels.

Migrants and refugees can be particularly vulnerable to **trafficking, smuggling and other forms of exploitation**. IOM has put emphasis in creating awareness on the risks and the assistance mechanism in place in each specific setting. 65,998 persons, including 31,898 women (48%) have

been targeted with prevention messages, disseminated through multiple channels in the main crossing points and destination areas in Brazil (31,401), Ecuador (30,302) and Guyana (4,289). So far, 6 victims of trafficking (including 5 men) have been identified and assisted in Colombia (1) and Costa Rica (5)

Finally, some Venezuelans have **special protection needs** due to health, age, gender and other characteristics that have an impact on their vulnerability conditions. In such cases, IOM has activated specific assistance protocols and total of 2,448 individuals received tailored support which may include NFIs, health care (including psychosocial support) and accommodation. This figure includes 1,178 women (48%) and 2,352 children (96%), reflecting IOM's targeting priorities.

### MAIN CONTRIBUTORS TO IOM'S PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

**At regional level:** CERF, PRM and the **Government of the Netherlands**.

**At national level:** CERF in Peru | **US Agency for International Development (USAID)** in Colombia.

### SOCIOECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

IOM has been working with governments and CSO organizations and approaching the private sector to promote social cohesion and conditions conducive to realizing the positive economic and social impacts of migration at local level. Intervention

1,676 Venezuelans (including 921 women presenting 55% of the beneficiaries) have received assistance for **livelihood improvement and income generation** in 7 countries: Chile (538), Dominican Republic (500), Argentina (400), Mexico (139), Brazil (69) Costa Rica (25) and Uruguay (5). While the activities have been tailored to the particular conditions of the job market and the local labour policy, programmes and institutions in each country, most interventions have consisted in facilitating registration in job market platforms and access to vocational training and skills development courses, job fairs and support to entrepreneurs. In Argentina, IOM has partnered with the *Dirección Nacional de Migraciones* to link qualified Venezuelans with Argentinian professional associations in the engineering and health sectors interested in providing information on job opportunities. In Chile, IOM has piloted information sessions with private companies to promote hiring practices sensitive to the inflow of qualified Venezuelans.

**Recognition of the trade skills and degrees** previously earned by Venezuelans constitutes a sine qua non condition for successful and timely incorporation in the labour markets. As such processes can be complex, guidance is an important component of the assistance scheme. In Brazil, IOM has counselled 28 women and 27 men in preparing their applications.

Also in Brazil, IOM with UNHCR and UNFPA have been supporting the Federal Government in a **voluntary internal relocation programme** which have allow 4,355 Venezuelans to move from municipalities of state of Roraima (particularly Pacaraima) to 68 municipalities across the country., IOM provides pre-departure orientation, fitness for travel checks, and assistance in logistics and documentation to all those who decide to enrol in the programme. This type of programmes should contribute to reduce social tensions and prevent conflicts arising from the concentration of large number of migrants in border areas with limited coping capacities and host communities also in need of social protection and related services.

Anecdotal evidence of increasing expressions and events of discrimination against Venezuelan migrant and refugee and worrisome outbreaks of xenophobia calls for decisive and early actions to change perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. IOM has engaged in the implementation of

communication campaigns with other UN agencies, governments and CSOs. It is estimated that more than 930,000 persons have been targeted with **anti-xenophobia and anti-discrimination messages** in 5 countries. In Ecuador, a UN wide anti-discrimination campaign has been running on social media and a new campaign called “*Abrazos que Unen*” will start in March 2019 with messages of solidarity and hospitality. In Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Panama (#SomosLoMismo) anti-xenophobia campaigns have been designed and carried out in collaboration with UNHCR and government counterparts. In Peru, IOM is part of the campaign “*Tu causa es mi causa*”, which was launched in November 2018 to promote solidarity and empathy towards Venezuelans in the country (<https://tucausaesmicausa.pe>). Recognizing the critical role of the media in shaping perceptions, IOM in Uruguay started organizing awareness sessions with journalists to promote a well-informed, balanced and socially responsible reporting on migration related news. IOM and UNHCR are conducting a survey amongst immigrants on experiences with racism and xenophobia in Chile and a study on public perception on migrants and refugees in Argentina; the results will help design tailored social cohesion interventions.

#### MAIN CONTRIBUTORS TO IOM'S INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES

**At regional level:** *Government of the Netherlands* and *PRM*.

**At national level:** *Embassy of the UK* in Argentina | *OFDA* in Colombia | *USAID* in Colombia.

#### GOVERNMENT CAPACITY

The willingness of the governments in the region to show solidarity and protect the rights of Venezuelan migrants and refugees has been constrained by the limited resources available when compared to the sheer numbers of entries and the scale of their assistance needs. Therefore, the sustainability of comprehensiveness of the response depends to a significant extent on reducing the pressure on already overstretched capacities by cooperating towards their expansion and further adaptation.

With this perspective, IOM has emphasised the provision of **technical support** to government agencies in charge of processing documentation and regularization applications. In Colombia, support was provided to the *Unidad Nacional para la Gestión del Riesgo de Desastres* in the roll out of *Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos* (RAMV) in 22 registration points. The RAMV was completed in June 2018 with 442,462 Venezuelans registered as a step towards regularization. Also in Colombia, IOM's collaboration with the migration authority has resulted in PEPs granted to 353 Venezuelans. In Uruguay, IOM has reinforced the teams of the migration agency to manage 4,842 residency application of Venezuelan nationals. In Costa Rica, the support provided by IOM to the *Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería* has facilitated the processing of regularization applications of 748 Venezuelans. In Peru, it is expected that information technology equipment donated by IOM to border control points of the *Superintendencia Nacional de Migraciones* will result in more efficient services to Venezuelans seeking regular entry.

In the Dominican Republic and Peru **advisory services** has been made available to government agencies leading the response (4 and 11 respectively), which has resulted in identification of best practices and development of migration management tools. In Peru and Argentina, IOM is completing labour market studies that will be presented shortly to government authorities and other partners working on alternatives for sustainable economic integration.

**Training** has been a key capacity strengthening activity. As of February 2019, 1,091 government officials and 44 staff members of partner NGO have participated in workshops on operational aspects of the response in 7 countries: Ecuador (741), Panama (125), Trinidad and Tobago (98),

Brazil (91), Argentina (35) Guyana (26), and Costa Rica (19). Some of the topics covered are: i. anti-trafficking and human smuggling, ii. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), iii. Gender sensitive emergency response to victims of Trafficking, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and other forms of exploitation and abuse and iv. Emergency response in Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and protection incident management. Example of the training tools developed are the online 'Orientation Guide on Human Rights to Venezuelans', elaborated by IOM in partnership with the Ministry for Human Rights in Brazil, and the module on “Temporary shelter management” that was integrated into the curricula of the Servicio Nacional de Migración of Panama.

Finally, IOM with UNHCR have supported the participation of 137 government officials in the International Meetings of Quito in September and November 2018. Furthermore, technical assistance is continuously provided through presenting best practices, development of technical documents that serve as basis for agenda advancement. Support will continue during 2019 in the coming meetings of this intergovernmental state-led initiative and its Action Plan.

### MAIN CONTRIBUTORS TO IOM'S CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

**At regional level:** *PRM, the Government of the Netherlands.*

**At national level:** *USAID in Colombia.*

## MAIN ACHIEVEMENT AND CHALLENGES

Since the official launch of the response in April 2018, IOM has expanded its operations across the region, building on the existing country and regional teams and working closely with government at national and local level and other UN agencies. While the significant number of Venezuelan migrants reached so far is still modest compared to the population in need of assistance, donor contributions are making possible to consolidate delivery systems and scale up operations both in terms of more ambitious beneficiary targets and geographical scope at national and subnational level. IOM has completed 11 response projects and is implementing 8 additional initiatives in 16 countries, supported by 14 national offices. During 2018, new field teams were set up at border areas in Brazil, Ecuador and Peru.

### NUMBER OF VENEZUELANAS BENEFITED BY SERVICE AREA

DIRECT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE	
Connectivity	43,256
Data, monitoring and assessments	49,777
Food	23,256
Emergency health care	16,944
NFIs	13,822
Shelter/temporary accommodation	17,699
Transportation	14,016

PROTECTION	
Information on services pathways	93,125
Assistance on documentation/regularization	73,190
Assistance to special needs individuals	2,448
TIP, smuggling and exploitation	65,998
INTEGRATION	
Anti-xenophobia/discrimination (Venezuelans and members of host communities)	930,348
Livelihoods/income generation support	1,676
Skills recognition support	55
Social cohesion	4,355
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY	
Processing capacity	5,943

From a strategic perspective, some of the highlights of IOM's response are:

- At critical moments of sudden and sharp increases in the number of Venezuelans reaching the main destination and transit countries, such as Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru, IOM has been able to flexibly adjust the field capacity and the modalities of assistance and protection according to emerging risks and vulnerabilities. This has been done in close coordination with national and local authorities and relying in multiple cases on well-established networks of implementing partners.
- Consistent application of DTM across the region have fostered data and evidence-based discussions on needs, vulnerabilities and priority areas of intervention within IOM and with other UN agencies, migration authorities and related government counterparts.
- IOM is fully engaged in supporting regularization processes in the main host countries across the region. Helping migration authorities to address bottlenecks and increase processing capacity, not only strengthens collaboration with governments, but also and more impactfully, facilitates access to regular migratory status for protection and integration purposes.
- As the risks of trafficking, smuggling and other forms of exploitation and abuse have become more apparent, protection activities have increasingly integrated large-scale dissemination of awareness information as prevention mechanism, while protocols for victim identification and assistance have been activated.
- Recognizing the crucial role of the private sector and professional associations in enhancing the economic integration prospect of Venezuelans, IOM is facilitating outreach activities as a critical step towards a better understanding of the job opportunities and the human capital accumulated by Venezuelan migrants and refugees, while supporting governments in designing or revamping programmes for economic inclusion.
- IOM has actively promoted joint initiatives with other UN agencies, authorities and CSOs to address recurrent manifestations of xenophobia and discrimination against Venezuelan migrants and refugees that jeopardize the prospects of integration and peaceful coexistence. Hence, IOM supports multi-channel information campaigns in the main host countries with participation of multiple stakeholders.
- The response coordination role assigned to IOM and UNHCR by the UN Secretary General has materialized in concrete strategic and institutional arrangements. First, a **Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform** with 40 participants including UN agencies, NGOs, IFRC, ICRC, faith-based organizations, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and donors. Similar coordination platforms have been established at national level, and even at subnational level as in the case of the departmental chapters of the *Grupo Interagencial sobre Flujos Migratorios Mixtos (GIFMM)* in Colombia. Secondly, a **Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP)** was launched in December 2018 as an appeal instrument that articulated the funding needs to provide holistic

and comprehensive assistance to Venezuelans in 16 countries in 2019, complementing governments efforts and programming. Finally, a Joint Special Representative was appointed by IOM and UNHCR, Mr. Eduardo Stein, to promote a coherent and harmonized regional approach in coordination with national governments, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

- IOM has been recognized as a valuable partner by governments taking part in the international meeting that kick started in September 2018 in Quito (Ecuador) and that resulted in the **Quito Action Plan**, a key instrument of intergovernmental coordination and collaboration. IOM with UNHCR have been granted a technical cooperation role in the implementation of key commitments therein stated.

Alongside the abovementioned achievements, during the reporting period there have been also significant challenges with strategic and operational impact, that IOM has been addressing to the extent possible. Some of the more salient challenges have been:

- Significant levels of volatility and uncertainty around the situation inside Venezuela and its translation into new, reinforced and increased outflows, affect the reliability of the planning and programming exercises at national and regional level. Additionally, as governments in the host countries react to internal political debates on immigration and security events linked to migrants, there are strong incentives to change entry requirement and conditions, which have shown to have a chain effect in terms of flows across countries. IOM has put in place permanent context monitoring mechanisms coordinated at regional level and its national teams have defined minimum operational capacity levels that have to remain activated based on contingency plans for multiple scenarios.
- Host countries have well established and active institutional frameworks tasked with managing immigration. This favourable regional feature makes consultations, coordination and harmonized programming with governments particularly important to warrant response sustainability in line with IOM's mandate, which has repercussions in terms of extended timeframes to advance from planning to field implementation. To balance this trade-off, leaders of IOM's national teams have received guidelines to strengthen or create direct communication channel with government officials with coordination and executive functions related to the response. Additionally, operations are increasing embedded in government programmes to reduce the need to frequently revisit previous coordination agreements.
- It is also important to recognize that the capacities of IOM's national teams across the region for managing large-scale emergency operations was quite uneven, especially in the early stages of IOM's response implementation in 2018. Therefore, some country missions with very limited experience in crisis situations have followed a steep learning curve and have had to adapt their operational approach with support from the regional level and Headquarters, and according to the level of available funding considering the projected nature of the Organization.



## VENEZUELA

IOM is currently scaling up its response in Venezuela by reinforcing the team in Caracas and in the State of Miranda. Furthermore, and dependent on funding, IOM's scale up plan includes opening of sub-offices in the states of Apure, Barinas, Bolivar, Monagas, Sucre, Táchira and Zulia. Since the beginning of the coordinated regional response, 879 people have been reached with food items, 2,006 with non-food items and 467 have benefitted from improved educational infrastructure in Rubio, State of Táchira.

## STORIES



### *"It will be hard, but possible"*

Angely Infante left the State of Miranda in Venezuela with her husband and two daughters. In a long trip, they cross Colombia in their way to Ecuador, but their final destination was the city of Tumbes, in Peru. "The plan is to get a good job and settle here. We do not know anyone in Peru. It will be hard, but possible", Angely told IOM. During the trip, IOM jointly with other humanitarian partners and the financial support of its donors provided this family with shelter and information for their regularization.

[FULL STORY \(IN SPANISH\) ►](#)



### *"It was very nice to see so many people supporting us since we arrived"*

Jesús Nacache, a 25-year-old agronomist, left Venezuela and arrived in Colombia. His dream is to settle in Ecuador, where his uncle and aunt wait for him. He wants to improve his economic situation and then go back to his country for his wife and family. "It was very nice to see so many people supporting us since we arrived. Although we cross the border with fear, our goal is to continue to where our relatives are staying", he told IOM. Jesús and other Venezuelans who travelled through Colombian were assisted with transportation by IOM, jointly with other humanitarian partners. "They helped us a lot. I am 200% grateful for the support", said Jesús.

[FULL STORY \(IN SPANISH\) ►](#)



### *"We want to get to Quito and start working there"*

Wilmore Silva, a Venezuelan electrician, his wife Omir Castro, a kindergarten director, and their two children -a teenager and a one-year-old baby- left their country in 2018. Wilmore was the first to leave Venezuela. Later, the family reunited in Cali. Thanks to the assistance of IOM jointly with other humanitarian partners and the financial support of its donors, they arrived at the International Bridge of Rumichaca to continue their journey to other countries further south. "We want to get to Quito. We have a friend in the city and we are making the arrangements to settle there", Wilmore told IOM.

[FULL STORY \(IN SPANISH\) ►](#)



### *"These supplies have been very helpful"*

Barbara Moffi, 30, mechanical engineer, left her home in the State of Bolívar (Venezuela) to Guyana, with her two children Jesús and Andrea, looking for opportunities and a better quality of life. Barbara and her family are part of the 3,477 persons who received kits with non-food items and information on access to basic services in the framework of the efforts made by IOM and the Government of Guyana, jointly with other humanitarian partners and the financial support of their donors. "These supplies have been very helpful for the children; especially the mosquito nets and the repellents because my daughter suffers from mosquito allergies", she told IOM.