

BRAZIL OPERATION

COVID-19 RESPONSE

NOVEMBER 2021



The Assistant High Commissioner for Operations (AHC-O), Raouf Mazou met with young refugees in Boa Vista

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

As of 30 November 2021, Brazil registered a total of 22,094,459 confirmed cases and 614,681 deaths from COVID-19. November has been the month with the fewest deaths from COVID-19 in Brazil since April 2020.

In his first visit to Brazil, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations (AHC-O), Raouf Mazou, got a closer look at the country's humanitarian response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela, seeing the progress of the internal relocation strategy and emphasizing the need to maintain these people's access to territory and basic rights and services. Throughout a week-long visit, accompanied by UNHCR Brazil Representative, José Egas, and the Deputy Representative, Federico Martinez, the AHC-O held meetings with Federal Government officials and members of the Federal Emergency Assistance Committee that coordinates the humanitarian response to the Venezuelan influx, as well as with the command of Operation Welcome Taskforce both in Boa Vista and Pacaraima. He also visited emergency shelters and other reception facilities, as well as community-based protection initiatives, in Roraima and interacted with refugees about their journey from Venezuela and what local integration opportunities available to them in Brazil. In São Paulo, the AHC-O visited the municipality's specialized reference centre to refugees and migrants (CRAI) accompanied by the Mayor of São Paulo, the Secretary for Human Rights and Citizenship, and the Secretary of Social Assistance. Finally, he met with private sector stakeholders as well as with partner organizations and visited the Advanced Post for Humanized Service to Migrants and Refugees of the Guarulhos International Airport (GRU), seeing the joint efforts made towards protection and assistance for unadmitted persons that may need international protection arriving by flight in Brazil.

From 10 to 12 November, UNHCR Brazil Representative, José Egas, attended the Americas Representatives Meeting in Panama. The meeting was an opportunity to review operational needs and planning strategies, in a regional perspective, while also discussing about UNHCR role in mixed movements and in situations of internal displacement, models of regional coordination, climate crisis-related challenges and the need to continue promoting inclusion, diversity, and leadership within UNHCR teams.

From 20 to 26 November, UNHCR accompanied ECHO Thematic Expert, Corita Tassi, in her first visit to Brazil. The visit started in Boa Vista and Pacaraima where she visited Operation Welcome shelters as well as reception and documentation facilities, including the recently opened BV8 Annex. ECHO Thematic Expert also met with local authorities and discussed protection gaps and opportunities with local network stakeholders. She concluded the visit in Manaus where she met with UNHCR and partners to better understand how protection interventions are carried out in the local setting, including how cash-based interventions have an impact on mitigating protection risks among the most vulnerable.

From 29 November to 1 December, UNHCR accompanied the visit of the Delegation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in Brazil, H.E. Ambassador Carlo Krieger and the Counselor Nadia Mellina, to Boa Vista to formally launch the Joint Programme on Economic Empowerment of Refugee and Migrant Women, implemented by UN Women, UNHCR and UNFPA, and funded by the Government of Luxembourg. Among different activities, the Delegation attended a meeting with the Operational Coordinator of the Humanitarian-Logistics Task Force of Operation Welcome, General Schwingel; visited different sites of Operation Welcome; discussed collaboration opportunities with the Coordinator of Public Polices for Women in Roraima and Coordinator of Casa da Mulher Brasileira, Graça Policarpo; and participated in a group discussion with some indigenous women who are cultural facilitators in the shelters where they live.

During his visit to Brazil, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission for a Stronger Europe in the World, Josep Borrell, held a meeting with the Brazilian government to discuss EU cooperation initiatives, including those linked to Operation Welcome and the reception of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. On this occasion, UNHCR Deputy Representative articulated how EU contributions, through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), have played a catalytic role in the operationalization of each pillar of Operation Welcome and continue to support UNHCR humanitarian emergency and longer-term interventions in Brazil.

On 27 November, the Ministry of the Presidency issued Ordinance 660, which establishes temporary entry restrictions for foreign travelers arriving in Brazil via international flights from or passing through South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, and Zimbabwe over the previous fourteen days.

KEY RISKS AND GAPS

Access to territory and asylum: As the Venezuelan side of the border with Brazil remains closed, many people are left with no other option than crossing irregularly in very vulnerable conditions. Efforts put in place by the Brazilian authorities to increase the capacity to issue documentation continue to be outpaced by the growing number of new arrivals resulting in thousands of individuals waiting for their documentation, with a very significant number of them living in the streets in Pacaraima.

Xenophobia and security: In the last weeks of November, the security situation in Pacaraima has deteriorated significantly, including public demonstrations against Operation Welcome and the refugee and migrant population. Security measures were promptly taken, in coordination with the Brazilian Army, to guarantee the protection of refugees and migrants, including those in a street-like situation by accommodating them in the facilities of Operation Welcome.

UNHCR RESPONSE

Strengthening shelter support and ensuring access to basic items

Shelter: In November, 811 refugees and migrants were allocated to Operation Welcome's shelters in Roraima. In the context of UNHCR's protection mapping to identify refugees and migrants in a vulnerable situation at the Manaus Bus Station Support Space (PRA), 26 people were accommodated in the municipal shelters of Manaus in the month of November.

UNHCR continues the dialogue with indigenous populations sheltered in Boa Vista for members of the community to have more information about their options vis-a-vis the currently ongoing shelter re-structuring process. As part of such process, UNHCR also held a meeting with MPF, UNICEF, FUPAD, Pastoral Indígena and the Ministry of Citizenship to define following steps and had a meeting with the Sub-Working Group for Indigenous Protection, counting with the representation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Also, in the effort to continue promoting an inclusive environment with indigenous communities, UNHCR is supporting the creation of a "mesa consultiva indígena" to build step-by-step and in a participatory manner the establishment and relocation to a reformed and improved indigenous shelter (Rondon 3).

Food and non-food items (NFIs) distribution: In November, UNHCR delivered 2,595 family cleaning kits, 3,313 family hygiene kits, 5,774 masks, 507 mattresses, 1,012 waterproof mattress covers, 1,659 packs of

diapers, 495 jerrycans, 615 buckets, and 154 solar lamps to support refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations and improve their reception conditions.

Ensuring protection and supporting integration processes

Integration: In November, 1,798 refugees and migrants were voluntarily relocated from Amazonas and Roraima states to other parts of Brazil by bus or flight. UNHCR supported 1,210 individuals with the Fit for Travel (FFT) process.

On 3 November, UNHCR signed a cooperation agreement with SEBRAE Nacional - Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service - with the objective to develop joint actions that benefit refugee entrepreneurs in Brazil. With the agreement, SEBRAE committed to identify themes of interest to refugee entrepreneurs, map solutions and services that meet their specific needs and disseminate trainings relevant for their businesses. In addition, the institution joined the [Refugee Entrepreneurs Platform](#) as a partner.

In Manaus, four classes of basic computer skills and one of stock and warehouse management started as an initiative of UNHCR in partnership with ADRA and the Amazonas Technological Education Centre (CETAM). In total, 39 refugees and migrants participated. Furthermore, a professional cashier training course was organized by Hermanitos in partnership with UNHCR, with the participation of 16 Venezuelans.

On 11 November, within the framework of the National Week of Financial Education, UNHCR carried out together with the Central Bank of Brazil, the Ministry of Justice and IOM a seminar that included the launch of the [fourth edition of the booklet on financial inclusion for refugees and migrants](#), including regulatory changes and a detailed section on the use of the PIX, an instant payment platform created and managed by the Central Bank of Brazil, which enables the quick execution of payments and transfers. The event can be watched on the [Central Bank of Brazil YouTube](#).

In November, UNHCR provided financial assistance through multi-purpose cash grants to 711 families (2,257 individuals), 97% of them being of Venezuelan nationality.

Protection: In November, 2,067 refugees and migrants contacted UNHCR protection telephone line in Manaus for queries related to access to documentation, urgent material support, financial assistance, and other protection issues.

On 12 November, in São Paulo, UNHCR and Rede Interação, together with the outreach volunteers from the surroundings of Aldeias Infantis, organized a community event focusing on documentation, employability, social assistance, and health. In total, 156 people were assisted with the services offered by the Reference and Assistance Centre for Immigrants (CRAI), Archdiocesan Caritas from São Paulo, Brazilian Red Cross, Visão Mundial, Refugee Relocation Support Program (PARR) and Estou Refugiado.

From 16 to 19 November, at the request of the municipality, UNHCR conducted a mission to Rio de Janeiro that included capacity-building sessions and meetings with local strategic actors. On the first day, a training for public healthcare workers of the city of Rio de Janeiro was followed by a meeting with the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (MPF) to discuss access to territory for individuals in need of international protection arriving at the Galeão International Airport. After a meeting with Aldeias Infantis to assess local integration prospects of interiorized Venezuelans in the city, UNHCR facilitated a training session for social assistance workers of the municipality of Niterói (RJ) and participated in the inauguration event of the city's new Assistance Centre for Refugees and Migrants.

On 25 November, the "16 days of activism to End Violence against Women and Girls" campaign kicked off. In Boa Vista, UNHCR is supporting partners in organizing a total of 180 Community-Based Protection and Communication with Communities (CwC) activities in the shelters. Among them, UNHCR co-led with UNFPA and Pirilampos the art workshop "Orange the World", involving about 25 young people, including Brazilians and Venezuelans. In Manaus, UNHCR, Instituto Mana and UNFPA held activities on GBV prevention in two municipal and a cinema session in the Manaus Bus Station Support Space (PRA), in partnership with Coletivo Difusão.

On 8 November, UNHCR took part in the IV State Seminar on Migration and Refuge held by the Centre for Studies, Research and Extension on Migration (NEPEMIGRA) of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). UNHCR contributed to one of the sessions, reinforcing the importance of research for the procedures of refugee status determination.

On 9 November, UNHCR contributed to the II Jean Monnet Network Seminar – BRIDGE: Migration and Citizenship in the European Union and Latin America that took place virtually at the Federal University of Santa Catarina. On the occasion, UNHCR Brazil Deputy Representative, Federico Martinez, provided a brief lecture on International Protection of Refugees and Stateless persons, reflecting on the concepts of citizenship, access to rights and services, and human rights. The full lecture can be watched [here](#).

Indigenous: On 4 November, UNHCR, Pará Prosecutor's Office (MPPA) and the International Institute of Education of Brazil (IEB) promoted the Business Forum on Employability for Refugees and Migrants. The event brought together representatives of refugees and migrants of the Warao indigenous community living in Belém and Ananindeua, business representatives and local authorities. The aim of the event was to present the private sector and other stakeholders an analysis of the work profile of Warao people and the possibilities to promote their socio-economic integration.

On 9 November, the Warao Indigenous Leadership School started in Belém, an initiative between UNHCR, the International Education Institute of Brazil (IEB), and the Federal Public Defender's Office (DPU) with the participation of 25 indigenous people. The first module addressed the normative instruments for the protection of indigenous refugees and migrants. The purpose of the course is to provide participants access to knowledge related to the history and rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil and internationally. Furthermore, it is a space for dialogue and peaceful coexistence between indigenous people from Brazil and Venezuela.

On 30 November, the High-Level Forum on Indigenous People organized by the Regional Protection Sector of the R4V platform occurred. Before the event, UNHCR conducted preparatory meetings with indigenous refugees and migrants from Pacaraima and Boa Vista where two indigenous community leaders, one from the Warao and another from the Pemon-Taurepang ethnic groups, were elected to represent the state of Roraima in the Forum.

Documentation and Registration: In November, in Boa Vista and Pacaraima, UNHCR and partners registered in proGres v4 9,312 persons and generated 2,093 shelter IDs. Additionally, UNHCR in partnership with AVSI, supported the documentation of 7,243 individuals at the Reception and Documentation Centres (PITrig) in both cities.

In Manaus, UNHCR referred 881 asylum-seekers and 123 refugees for documentation procedures during the month of November.

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