

# UNHCR Ecuador

## Monthly Update

Edition's special focus: Vaccination (p. 3)



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

September 2021

*Estela (65), from Venezuela, received her vaccine against Covid-19 in Quito. She was one of thousands of refugees and migrants who were immunized thanks to UNHCR's support to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Health. Read her story at page 4.*

### Figures at a glance

**70,527**

People have been recognized as refugees, 97% are Colombian.

**451,093**

Venezuelans are currently living in Ecuador.

**35%**

of financial requirements have been funded as of 28 September

### Our response in 2021 in figures

1 January to date



**36,338**

people received cash-based assistance for protection or emergent needs



**25,750**

people received hygiene and walkers kits



**7,144**

people were supported with emergency shelter



**1,368**

pacific coexistence projects implemented nationwide.

### Operational context

**COVID-19:** Confirmed cases have surpassed 510,000 nationwide. Due to the compliance of the national vaccination plan, occupancy has decreased at hospitals. 11.1 million people have received at least 1 dose (68.8% of Ecuador's total population), while 9.9 million have been completely vaccinated (61.8%). UNHCR is still working together with the Ministry of Health to encourage more people in human mobility to access vaccination.

**POPULATION MOVEMENTS:** UNHCR and partners identified 2,000 Venezuelans on average entering daily through visible paths during working hours, of which 200 were caminantes. Most of them board direct buses to the South of the country. Additionally, an average of 100 Venezuelans return to Colombia every day due to lack of livelihoods and discrimination.

**PROTECTION CONCERNS:** In some communities at the north of the country, tensions between Venezuelans and locals continue. In Tulcan, local residents conducted rounds to remove Venezuelans from public areas. UNHCR and its partners continue to monitor these actions and carry out activities to promote peaceful coexistence.

In Esmeraldas, UNHCR identified 41 Colombian women at risk, pregnant and others with children under 2 years old, who arrived fleeing Tumaco, where 12 people were killed on September 26. UNHCR coordinated emergency shelter and continued its border protection monitoring activities.

In addition, localities near the northern border have reported the presence of armed groups that threaten civilians and put their security at risk. UNHCR are providing protection and assistance to those in need.

## UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF signed an agreement to improve the assistance for refugees and migrants in Ecuador



[Click to watch the video](#)

On September 21, UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF signed the United Nations Common Cash Statement (UNCCS) in Quito. The main objectives of this agreement are: 1) improve the experience of the people who participate in this kind of assistance; 2) avoid the duplication

of efforts between UN agencies; 3) facilitate the implementation and follow-up of assistance; and 4) promote a collaborative approach for the harmonization of cash transfer programs, achieving greater program efficiency.

This is an important milestone for Ecuador, as it is one of the first countries where this pilot program is implemented. Thanks to the UNCCS, people of concern will only have one interview, in which UNHCR, WFP and Unicef will make a single registry for the evaluation of complementary assistance. This will prevent people from repeating the difficult circumstances that forced them to leave their countries and the situation of vulnerability in which they find themselves.

“Thousands of families will benefit from this agreement, which will facilitate people’s access to assistance that is often vital for their survival,” said Giovanni Bassu, UNHCR Representative in Ecuador.

The process aims to be more effective in satisfying the food, shelter, health, nutrition, protection, education and inclusion needs of refugees and migrants in Ecuador. The added value of the UNCCS is based on a single process, a single entry system and interoperability.



## UNHCR Protection Monitoring showed that Caminantes increased during the second quarter of 2021

[Click to read the report](#)

UNHCR presented its second Protection Monitoring of 2021, corresponding to the second quarter of the year (April-June). For this study, 817 surveys were conducted with Colombian and Venezuelan families located in the three Ecuadorian regions (Pacific Coast, Andes and Amazon).

One of the most relevant figures in the report is that the percentage of people in human mobility who entered Ecuador on

foot increased from 17% to 22%. On the other hand, the use of buses as a means of transportation to access the territory decreased from 63% to 47%.

Regarding the protection needs of the population, it was highlighted that 21% were survivors of violence or abuse, while 15% had chronic medical conditions without treatment. It was evidenced that 50% of the families claimed to have

suffered discrimination. In contrast, the study reflected that 77% of the surveyed people felt safe in the neighborhood where they lived.

The Protection Monitoring is a periodical UNHCR publication that collects information about displacement, documentation, access to services, basic needs, coping mechanisms, and the well-being of refugees and migrants in Ecuador.



## People in human mobility are more integrated in Ecuador's Coast region, according to UNHCR research



UNHCR presented the Protection Monitoring - Coast Report, which determined that between 35% and 45% of people in human mobility in Ecuador live in this region. The research, which sampled 460 Colombian and Venezuelan families in the provinces of Guayas, Manabí and El Oro, concluded that 67% of those surveyed had a positive and very positive relationship with their community, while at the national level

this percentage drops to 59%. In the same line, 40% said having been discriminated against, while at the national level this indicator reaches 51%.

In addition to better inclusion rates, the coast offers more opportunities, due to its economic dynamism. The seaports of Guayaquil, Bolívar and Manta generate employment and offer opportunities for

refugees and migrants. Even so, a gender gap is evident, as these jobs are mostly occupied by men.

Finally, the survey also revealed that 72% of the families are concerned about satisfying their most basic needs: food, housing and clothing. Likewise, 19% mentioned that their priority is to have access to basic services such as education, health, among others.

## Monthly focus: Vaccination

### UNHCR supported massive vaccination campaigns all over the country



Free access to vaccine in Ecuador has been a highlight reached by the Government to overcome the crisis generated by Covid-19. UNHCR supported massive vaccination sessions carried out by the Ministry of Health in cities like Quito, Guayaquil and Santo Domingo. Coordinated work with authorities and GTRM partners was essential to ensure the access of people in human mobility to the jab.

UNHCR staff supported 'Vacunatonnes', facilitating the vaccination of thousands of refugees and migrants in Ecuador and contributing to slow the spread of the virus and helping the economic reactivation.



### Rural brigades were carried out to take vaccines to every corner of the country

To guarantee access for all refugees and migrants to a vaccine against the Covid-19, the Ministry of Health, with the support of UNHCR, organized several vaccination brigades in rural areas. The objective: to ensure that the greatest number of people, both from host communities and people in human mobility, had access to a vaccine. No matter how far a community were, UNHCR managed to bring vaccination to remote parishes like San Rafael, Chical (Carchi), San Lorenzo (Esmeraldas) or Huaquillas (El Oro).

Communication campaigns to disprove myths about vaccines were held in order to convince the population to be immunized against the virus.

## Stories from the field

### Medical care and vaccines are saving refugees and migrants lives in Ecuador

Estela Bermúdez (65) and Roger Rangel (68) are a married couple who had to leave Venezuela almost 3 years ago. Roger suffered from heart disease and could no longer get his medicines back in his country. He and Estela left Venezuela, looking for a place where he could get his much-needed medicine and save his life. They found a new home in Ecuador.

However, the path was not easy. As soon as the couple arrived to Quito, Roger was hospitalized for a week to control his disease. Luckily, his health improved. This medical condition made him a high-risk person after the onset of the pandemic. As a result, the couple tried to leave their home as little as possible over the past year and a half. The couple lived with their son and his family, but to be more comfortable they decided to go to live in a separate room. Nonetheless, when the opportunity came to get vaccinated, Roger and Estela rushed to the vaccination center, accompanied by the UNHCR protection team.

Estela and Roger say they have done well in Ecuador. They have been able to integrate with the community and,

so far, have not experienced any cases of xenophobia. "Ecuadorian people have treated us quite well, we have not felt discriminated against. In fact, when we arrived and doctors admitted my husband to the hospital, they told us not to worry about anything, because medical attention is guaranteed and free," Estela says.

But their integration process has not been easy. Although Estela has a degree in Bioanalysis, in Ecuador she does domestic work and takes care of children. Her son has not been able to practice his profession either, so he does odd jobs while waiting to find a better job.

Estela and Roger hope that, with the progress of vaccination campaign, they will be able to find a better job and thus provide a better future for their family.

When Estela is asked about her dreams, she answers that the biggest one is to have her family back together again. "I have a daughter living in Colombia who I hope to see soon. For my children and their families, I would like they have better economic stability. We are grateful for how Ecuador has welcomed me and my family and taken care of us through medical attention to my husband, and through vaccination," she concludes.

### We thank the contributions of our donors

Updated to 28 September. 2021

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