



*Raul Aponte (77), from Venezuela, receives his first dose of COVID-19 vaccine in Guayaquil, Ecuador.*

### Key figures

**518,529**

people of concern to UNHCR in Ecuador

**430,000**

Venezuelans living in Ecuador by end of May 2021

**102,000**

are Colombians (refugee and refugee-like population)

**70,527**

recognized refugees (historically), 97% Colombians

### Context

Ecuador hosts the largest recognized refugee population in Latin America.

Despite border closures to contain the spread of the virus, Venezuelans and Colombians continue to enter Ecuador mainly through “trochas”—unofficial border crossings. The irregular nature of these population movements increases protection risks for refugees and migrants, particularly sexual abuse, discrimination, exploitation, and trafficking. Consequently, around half of the Venezuelans in Ecuador lack regular status, and numbers increase as some 1,500 people continue entering on average daily since the start of 2021.

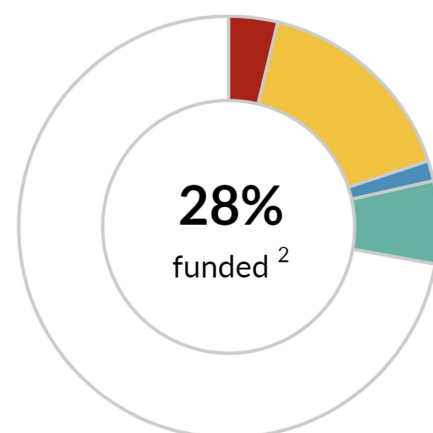
The socio-economic impacts of the pandemic have been severe among Ecuadorians as well as the population of concern to UNHCR. According to data gathered by UNHCR through its protection and outreach services, 64% of assisted people primarily need material assistance such as cash transfers to cover the most urgent basic needs, mainly food and shelter. Another 36% need guidance on access to refugee status determination (RSD) processes, documentation and migratory pathways, access to rights and protection services.

### Funding update

As of 27 July 2021

UNHCR's financial requirements 2021:

**\$84.5 million**



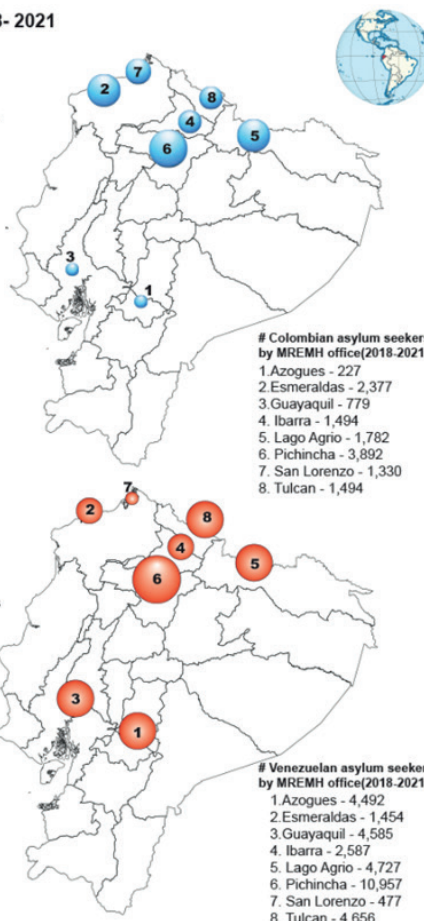
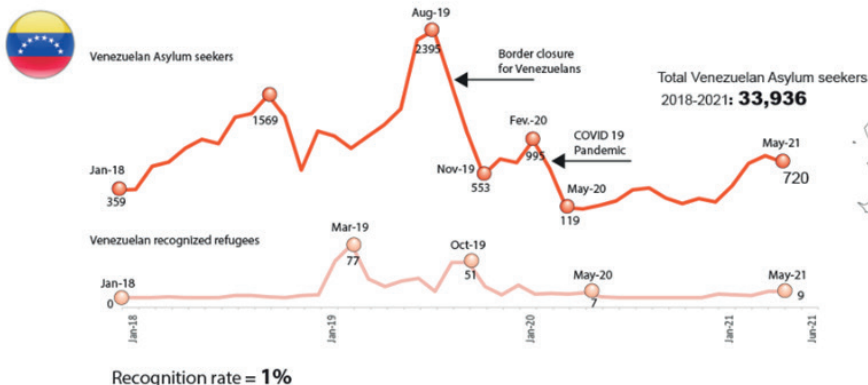
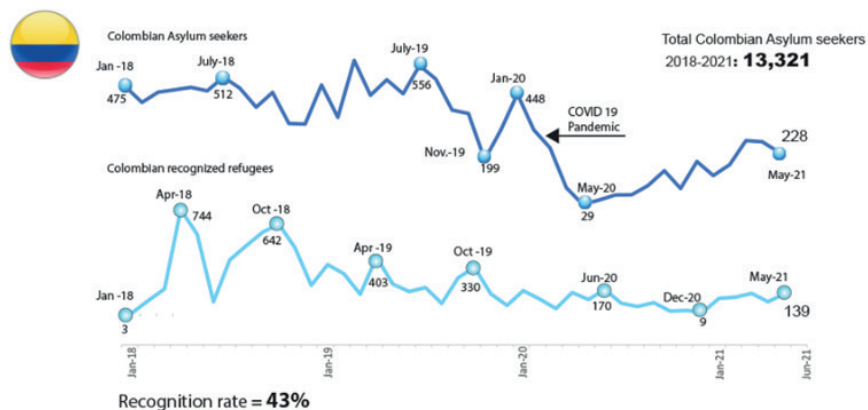
- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

# Strategy and main activities in 2021

UNHCR in Ecuador implements a two-fold strategy in 2021 to provide immediate assistance for basic and protection needs; as well as to promote solutions to achieve socio-economic integration. In the context of a prolonged pandemic, UNHCR jointly works with the Government, civil society, cooperation actors, the private sector and the communities themselves to bridge humanitarian action and development towards resilience and inclusion. The success and range of such initiatives depend on the amount of funding the region receives, both in terms of humanitarian support and financial loans to the State.



Analysis Venezuelan and Colombian Asylum seekers 2018- 2021



## Protection

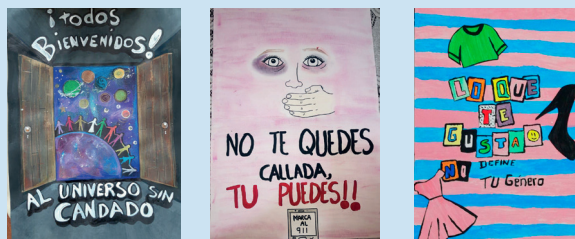
UNHCR supports Ecuador’s asylum system to enhance registration, case management and protection standards. To ensure the population of concern also access information and guidance on the asylum process, UNHCR and its partners cooperate with the Public Defender’s Office and the Ombudsman’s Office **to allow some 95,000 people receive free legal orientation and assistance**, including women and children.

In response to gender-based violence, UNHCR works with communities to facilitate assistance to survivors and access comprehensive responses. Also, UNHCR supports national efforts for the identification, management and specialized response for unaccompanied, separated and at-risk children. The office also coordinates with communities actions boosting education, public health, and connectivity.

To mitigate the impact of increasing xenophobia, UNHCR actively engages with audiences through social media and foster peaceful coexistence through activities in communities.

### Good practice: ‘Mi voz Hecha Imagen’

‘Mi Voz Hecha Imagen’ is a project designed to promote sexual health rights and Gender Based Violence prevention among youth population, either refugee and from host community. This project is implemented through a specific methodology, facilitating peaceful coexistence and resilience in vulnerable communities that open their arms to refugees. Review the photobook [here](#).





## Cash Assistance

UNHCR cash assistance supports vulnerable refugees and migrants, who have recently arrived in Ecuador, to ensure their basic needs are covered. The use of this unrestricted assistance allows them access to food, shelter, hygiene items, or medicines, and empowers them to determine their own needs and the best way of meeting them. As vulnerabilities increased severely with the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR has expanded the criteria to also support additional households struggling to find a job and often exposed to exploitation or evictions. UNHCR delivers flexible grants to beneficiaries for three consecutive months. The use of this unrestricted assistance allows them access to food, shelter, hygiene items, among other basic need. **If funds are sufficient, UNHCR 's target is to assist some 40,000 people.**

## Shelter and adequate housing

Refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Ecuador consider shelter as one of their three main needs. UNHCR supports the national network of emergency shelters with equipment, and technical advice to provide safe spaces for refugees and migrants during their journey or upon their arrival to the country. UNHCR also promotes medium and long-term solutions for equitable access to housing at community level, to improve refugees and migrants' living conditions and to ensure a comprehensive social integration. When the pandemic began, UNHCR adapted its strategy by raising awareness and distributing materials about safe construction and shelters management in compliance to health containment measures. **During 2021, UNHCR expects to support around 10,000 refugees and migrants with emergency shelter.**

## Livelihoods

UNHCR develops actions towards a better access to livelihood opportunities for refugees and migrants, as part of their socioeconomic integration in Ecuador. UNHCR helps them to create small businesses, with the provision of technical training and delivery of seed capital, which allows them to gradually generate income and consolidate an autonomous and dignified livelihood. These initiatives involve alliances with the private sector, local authorities, academia, and financial institutions. Also, UNHCR advocates for the inclusion of refugees and displaced population in national recovery plans. **With sufficient funds UNHCR will be able to help 3,000 families with orientation towards employment, entrepreneurs-hip training, seed money and financial literacy.**

## Health

Building on the experience in 2020 with a community-based epidemiological surveillance system, upon availability of funds, UNHCR in 2021 is planning to work with a network of community health workers who spread information among the refugee population and their hosts on: public health, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health and HIV, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, hygiene, and preventative measures including early identification of suspected cases, contact tracing and dissemination of key messages for the control and prevention of COVID19. In addition, considering the exceptional situation caused by the pandemic, UNHCR prioritized the support to the Ministry of Health. The installation of Refugee Housing Units, or RHU, in health centers and hospitals, allowed the expansion of resting, triage and isolation areas according to COVID-19 protocols.

## Coordination

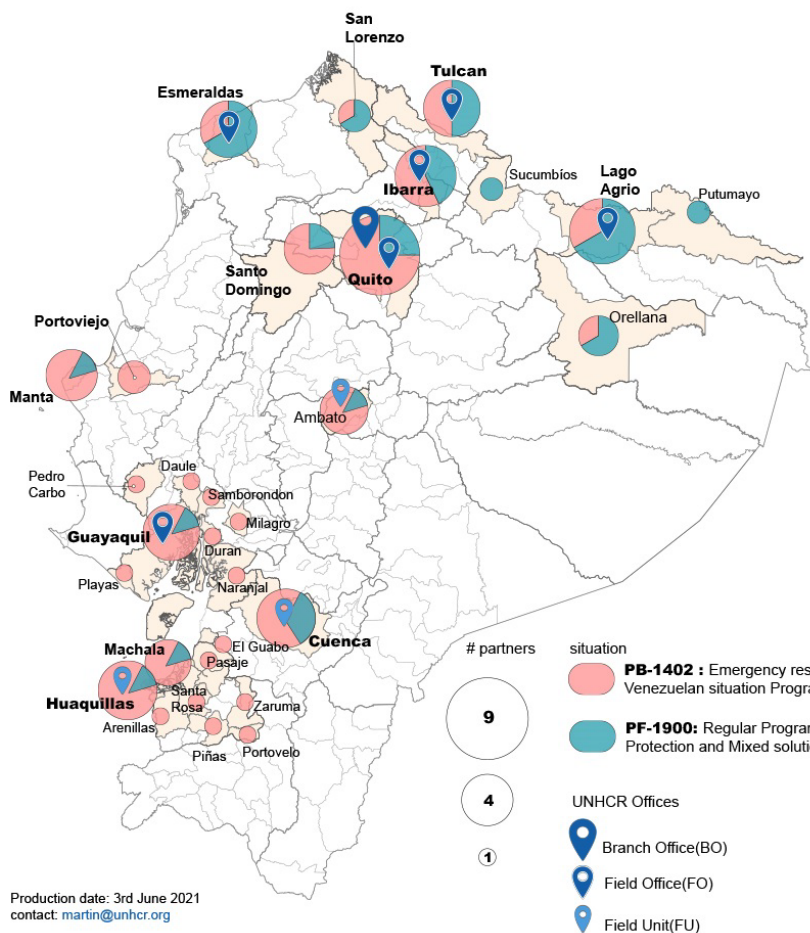
UNHCR and IOM to co-lead the coordination of the Venezuelan response, bringing together UN agencies and NGOs in the Working Group on Refugees and Migrants (GTRM), comprised of 43 members. UNHCR actively participates in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework People, Peace and Prosperity working groups, ensuring persons of concern are duly reflected in its priorities and objectives, and pursuing synergies with relevant Sustainable Development Goals. In 2021, UNHCR is expanding partnerships with UN agencies on data-gathering, provision of information and counsel to new arrivals, anti-xenophobia and discrimination campaigns, capacity-building and support local governments, and promote policy dialogues and advoca-cy vis-à-vis national authorities, on issues such as recognition rates, and legal stay options. To this end, UNHCR has developed important partnerships with relevant human mobility-related actors, including national migration authorities, Vice Ministry for Human Mobility of MFA, International Protection Directorate (DPIN), the Ombudsman, IOM, NGOs, and the Catholic Church.

### Good practice: Virtual Donors Mission

With the support of the GTRM and Canada, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility organized a Virtual Donors Mission on June 2021. This mission was developed with the aim of receiving financial support to the Ecuador Chapter of the RMRP 2021, within the framework of the International Donors Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants. During the event, donors were taken through virtual visits to [Quito](#) and [Tulcan](#), and were able to ask questions to refugees and migrants through two interactive sessions.



# Ecuador Operation: UNHCR and partners



30 cantons  
 20 partners

Canton	PB-1402	PF-1900
1 AMBATO	ALDHEA, HIAS, WV, NRC	HIAS
2 ARENILLAS	MMO	
3 CUENCA	AVSI, ALDHEA, HIAS, NRC	HIAS, Dialogo diverso
4 DAULE	CDH	
5 DURAN	CDH	
6 EL GUABO	MMO	
7 ESMERALDAS	S.O.S., NRC	FEPP, FUDELA, HIAS, NRC
8 GUAYAQUIL	S.O.S., CDH, HIAS, NRC, SJR	HIAS
9 HUAQUILLAS	ADRA, CARE, CDH, HIAS, MMO, NRC	HIAS
10 IBARRA	S.O.S., FUDELA, HIAS, NRC	HIAS, NRC, Misión Scalabriniana
11 LAGO AGRIO	ALDHEA, HIAS, NRC	FMS, FUDELA, FT, HIAS, NRC
12 MACHALA	CARE, COOPI, HIAS, MMO	HIAS
13 MANTA	CARE, AVSI, WV, HIAS, NRC	HIAS
14 MILAGRO	CDH	
15 NARANJAL	CDH	
16 ORELLANA	NRC	FUDELA, NRC
17 PASAJE	MMO	
18 PEDRO CARBO	CDH	
19 PIÑAS	MMO	
20 PLAYAS	CDH	
21 PORTOVELO	MMO	
22 PORTOVIEJO	S.O.S., AVSI	
23 PUTUMAYO		FUDELA
24 QUITO	S.O.S., ASA, ALDHEA, FUDELA, EQUIDAD, WV, HIAS, NRC, SJR	ASA, FUDELA, HIAS, NRC, SJR
25 SAMBORONDON	CDH	
26 SAN LORENZO	HIAS	FEPP, HIAS
27 SANTO DOMINGO	ADRA, FUDELA, HIAS, NRC	FUDELA, HIAS
28 SUCUMBOS		FUDELA
29 TULCAN	S.O.S., HIAS, NRC	FUDELA, HIAS, NRC
30 ZARUMA	MMO	

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## Funding needs

UNHCR requires **USD 84.5 million** to respond to the needs of thousands of refugees and others seeking safety and dignified lives. Timely funding is urgent to ensure the continuity of lifesaving activities and long-term solutions. Funding shortfall will mainly result in a lack of emergency and early recovery programmes for vulnerable displaced populations who have lost income due to COVID-19. If funds are insufficient, UNHCR will only be able to assist a minimal part of all those needing life-saving cash assistance and core relief items in key border and reception areas.

**We thank the contributions of our donors**



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