



PROTECTION MONITORING **VENEZUELA SITUATION**

UPDATE #1
JANUARY- JUNE 2019

This report provides a narrative explanation for the findings of UNHCR and its partners' protection monitoring activities, carried out from January to June 2019. The structure of this report mirrors the sequence of the questions asked of participating individuals. This reports is not intended to be a protection assessment, nor does it replace any UNHCR policy or legal guidance. As this is a continuous activity, this report will be followed by six monthly updates.

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1. OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

The size of the outflows from Venezuela sharply increased from some 700,000 in 2015 to over 4 million by June 2019¹, largely driven by a substantial deterioration of the situation in the country in the last 18 months.

Given the disruption of the functioning of democratic institutions and rule of law, and its impact on the preservation of security, economic stability, health, public peace and the general welfare system², the crisis continues to worsen, and serious human rights violations are widely reported³.

The displacement outside Venezuela has mostly affected countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and the southern Caribbean islands. Most governments in the region have made efforts to facilitate access to territory, documentation and access to services, but host countries' capacity to address increasing protection and integration has become overstretched resulting in tighter border controls.

The Quito Process and the Quito Plan of Action are excellent opportunities to promote responsibility-sharing in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, with a substantial focus on admission, reception as well as meeting needs, supporting communities and socio-economic inclusion⁴.

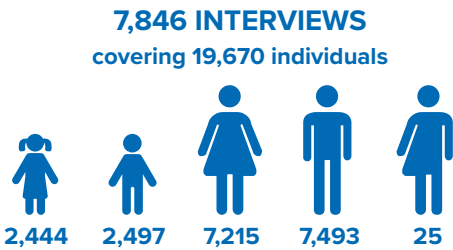


Colombia. Venezuelans risk life and limb to seek help

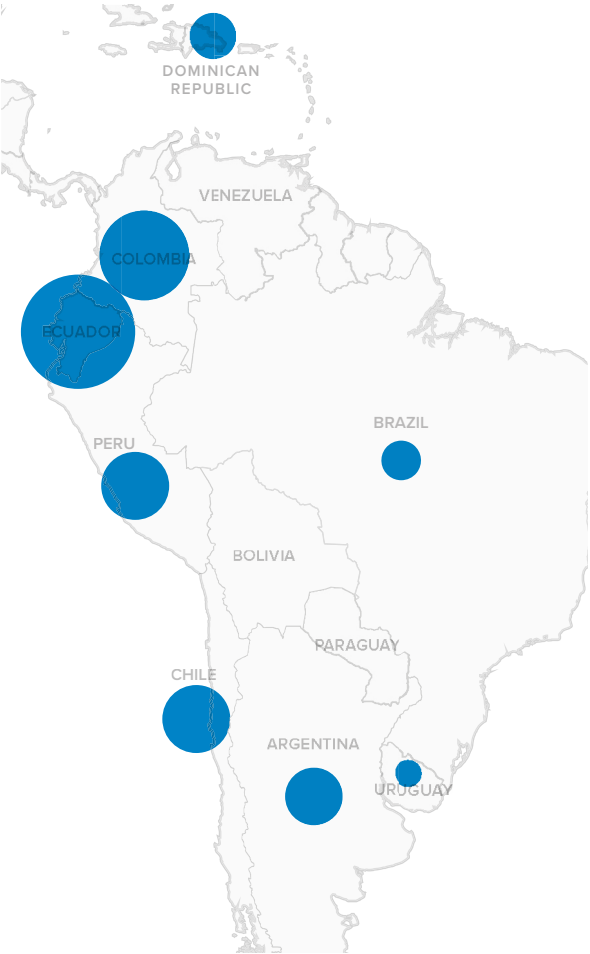
2. METHODOLOGY

Protection monitoring is a core UNHCR activity which aims at ensuring an adequate and timely understanding of the protection situation of persons affected by forced displacement. The action-oriented nature of protection monitoring allows UNHCR to adapt to the needs and protection risks faced by persons displaced outside Venezuela and informs a broad range of responses.

Protection monitoring is conducted through different methods, including individual interviews, focus groups discussions, and observations of UNHCR and partners in countries of origin, transit and destination. The analysis contained in this report is mostly based on individual/household interviews. The primary data is complemented with information available to UNHCR through other means, including thematic assessments, and reports from partners and other stakeholders.



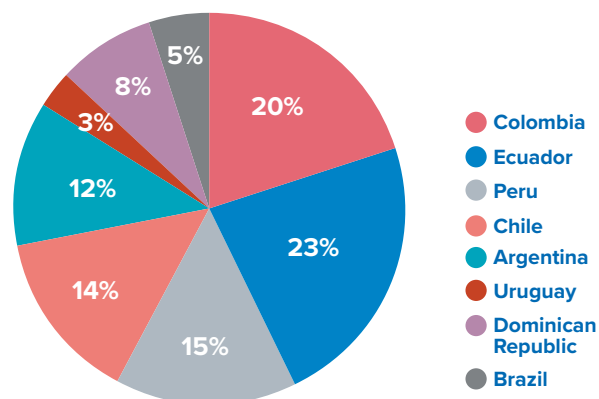
COUNTRY OF MONITORING



UNHCR and its partners have conducted **7,846 protection monitoring interviews** with Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay from January to June 2019. The questionnaire addressed individuals and their family members (hence totaling over **19,600 individuals**). The interviews were conducted at border points and in urban areas where there was a concentration of persons of concern, including in migration and asylum offices, reception centers and NGO premises.⁵

The distribution of the population surveyed is shown in the map represented by a circle and in the graph:

INTERVIEWS PER COUNTRY



Protection Monitoring Dashboard



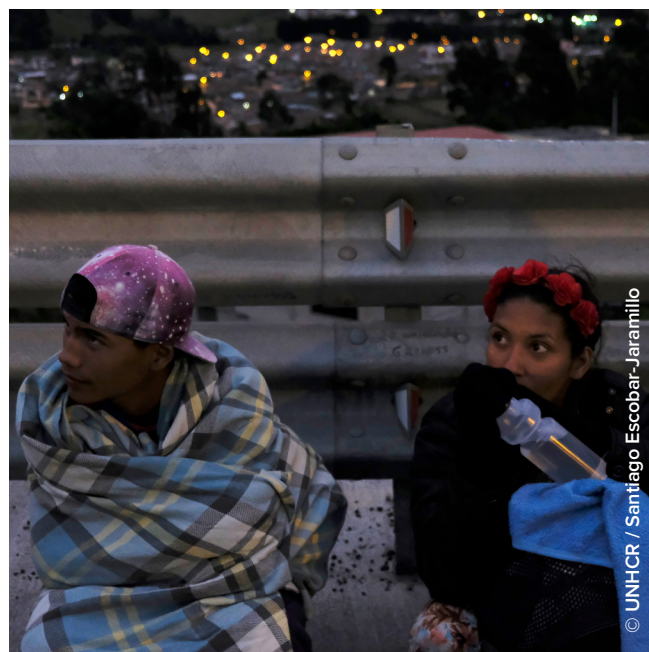
3. HIGHLIGHTS

Persons at risks and protection incidents

- **50.2%** of the families interviewed had at least one member **who were or are at risk due to their specific demographic profile** or because they had to **resort to serious negative coping mechanisms**, including survival sex, begging or sending children under 15 to work.
- **21% of the individuals are persons with specific needs**, including persons with critical or chronic medical conditions (1,838 persons), pregnant or lactating women (1,104), persons with disability (581), unaccompanied or separated children (113), and older people at risk (103).
- **28%** of the respondents reported **one or more protection incident** suffered or witnessed by themselves, and/or his/her family members, of which the most prevalent was robbery (49%), followed by physical assault (19%) and intimidation and threat (17%). In total, **2,432** protection incidents in countries of origin, transit and asylum have been recorded.
- Overall, **46% of the incidents reported took place in Venezuela**, 15% in Colombia, 14% in Ecuador, 10% in Peru and 5% in Argentina.
- Serious protection-related risks were mostly reported in the country of origin, with 95% of incidents related to **abduction and kidnapping** being reported

in Venezuela, 78% of the incidents of **arbitrary detention**, **77% of killings** (witnessed or suffered by family members) and 74% of **extortion**.

- **68 incidents of sexual harassment were reported**, 24 of sexual assault, 18 of rape and 9 of sexual exploitation.



Ecuador. Venezuelan families begin new lives in exile

Access to territory and asylum

- **34% of the population surveyed did not have any type of entry or stay permit**, either because they entered irregularly or their temporary permits had expired, 29% said they had a tourist permit or visa, 20% referred to a temporary permit, and only 4% were holding permanent residence permits.
- **15% of those interviewed had applied for asylum.** Among those who had not applied, **26% expressed their intention to apply** either in the country of monitoring (22%), or in another country (4%). Of those who did not apply, the majority were not aware of the existing procedures or entitlements.
- **Asylum systems in the region have been overwhelmed** by the magnitude of the influx and have not been able to cope with the increasing number of applications. **Group-based approaches and prioritization of those with specific needs are encouraged⁶ in these circumstances.**
- Recently, there have been increased restrictions on border crossing in Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru as compared with 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. This may have serious negative consequences on access to international protection for those who are, or may be, in need.



Peru. Venezuelans arrive at Ecuador-Peru frontier

Priority needs

- People interviewed expressed these three priority needs: **access to labor, access to housing and regularization of stay.**

1. Access to labor

- **66% of those interviewed said they were either unemployed or working informally.** 20% of them were street sellers. In addition, responses pointed to some **100 incidents when people were obliged to work** against their will or in such conditions that their situation is considered of labor exploitation.

2. Access to housing

- **43% of those interviewed said they had faced problems when looking for accommodation,** mostly due to lack of resources, lack of guarantors, discrimination based on nationality, lack of the required documentation.

3. Legal status

- In 2018 and 2019, Governments in the Americas put in place a variety of residence permits and legal stay arrangements to ensure safe and regular movement



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