



VENEZUELA SITUATION

RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE DISPLACED FROM VENEZUELA

Supplementary Appeal

January - December 2018

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Map of the area covered by this appeal



Overview



Over 1.5 million

**Estimated Venezuelans
displaced in the region**



2,000%

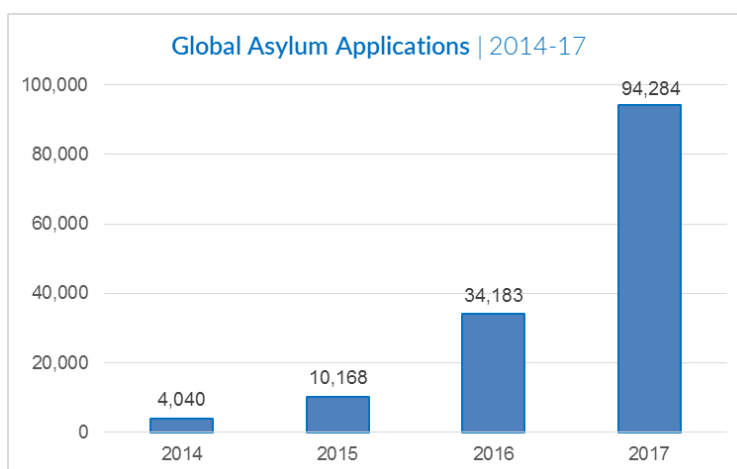
**Increase in asylum
claims since 2014**



Nine

**UNHCR operations
covered by this appeal**

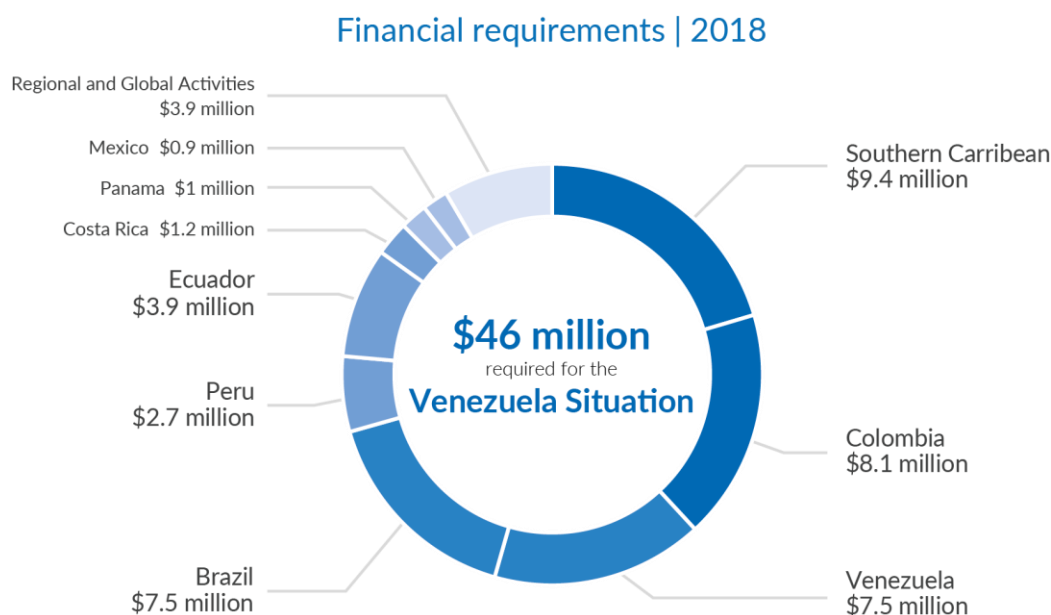
The **situation evolving in Venezuela**, a country that has traditionally been a generous host to thousands of refugees and third country nationals from the region and other parts of the world, **has led to large outflows of its citizens and other residents into the region and beyond**. Whilst it is evident not all the Venezuelans leaving their country are prompted to do so for refugee-related reasons, it is becoming increasingly clear that **a significant number are indeed in need of international protection**.



In many of the destination countries of the region, Venezuelans are only able to regularize their status or legalize their stay either under the pertinent national immigration and other legal frameworks, or under relevant regional mechanisms. In light of the extraordinary situation, some of these countries have established special mechanisms to facilitate various forms of regularization and even protection, what is otherwise referred to as **"other forms of protection or alternative legal status"**. At the same time, both within and outside the region, an increasing number of Venezuelans, now some **146,500, have applied for asylum and formal recognition and protection as refugees**.

To varying degrees, they can access relevant national services, including health care, education and even social security. However, across the region, many Venezuelans remain unable to secure their status and/or stay under any of these frameworks or mechanisms. They thus find themselves in an irregular situation, without any documentation, access to legal and other rights or basic services, and are exposed to exploitation, abuse, manipulation and a wide range of other protection risks including racism, discrimination and xenophobia. Those whose departure was prompted by the need for protection are particularly vulnerable.

In May 2017, as the arrival of Venezuelans in neighbouring countries spiralled and the embedded protection and other humanitarian needs became more visible, **UNHCR stepped up its preparedness and operational activities to respond to the needs**. It is working with the concerned Governments in further elaborating, developing and enhancing asylum and refugee management systems, combatting protection risks, meeting basic needs and fostering opportunities for solutions. Obviously, this has to be done in ways which, at the same time, maximize in a pragmatic manner the benefits that can be drawn from the alternative frameworks or special mechanisms while also addressing appropriately other needs which are inextricably "mixed" with those of the refugees. Notably, thousands of nationals of some of the destination countries who have been resident in Venezuela have also returned to their countries along with the departing Venezuelans. Moreover, even those Venezuelans whose departure may not have been prompted by refugee-related reasons can still face acute legal or humanitarian risks.



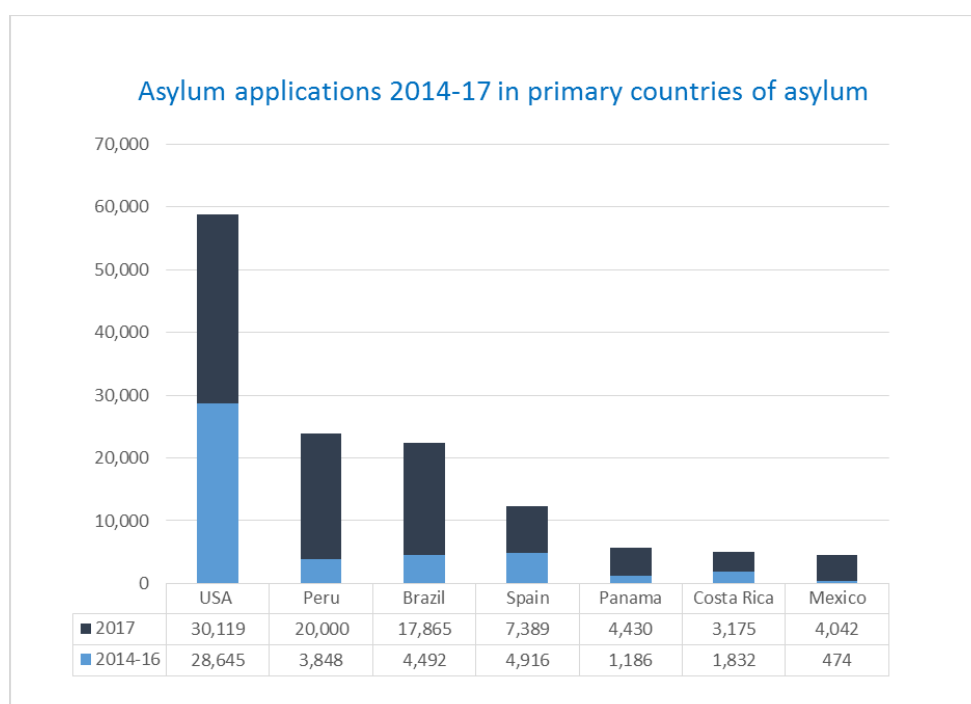
This Supplementary Appeal contains UNHCR's initial requirements for its response to what is referred to as the "Venezuela Situation" in the eight countries and the sub-region most affected by this situation. While it is launched at this stage as a UNHCR Supplementary Appeal, the UNHCR response reflected herein will be fostered in close coordination and collaboration with other actors, most notably the International Organization for Migration (IOM). UNHCR is also interfacing its plans and responses appropriately with broader humanitarian, social and development initiatives at country and regional levels to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and the search for solutions.

Background

The on-going political and socio-economic developments in Venezuela have led to the outflow of an estimated 1.5 million Venezuelans into neighbouring countries and beyond. In addition, nationals of other countries residing in the country, in particular Colombians and “mixed” Colombian-Venezuelan families have also left the country. **The number of arrivals in neighbouring States has steadily increased to 5,000 a day as of early 2018.** In Colombia, the country most impacted by the outflow, there are an estimated 600,000 Venezuelans, thousands having entered since 2014 across the bridge over the Pamplonita River.

Not all Venezuelans leaving their country are doing so for refugee-related reasons. The movements are taking place for a variety of reasons, including threats by armed groups, fear of being targeted on account of political opinion real or perceived, insecurity and violence, lack of food, medicine or access to essential social services as well as loss of income. Notwithstanding the variety in the factors causing the outflow, international protection considerations according to the refugee criteria contained in the 1951 Convention/1967 Protocol or the 1984 Cartagena Declaration have become apparent for a very significant proportion of the Venezuelans.

Some 146,500 have actually filed asylum claims globally to date while an estimated 444,000 have accessed other forms of protection or alternative legal stay - temporary or more long-term – in their host countries under the respective national or regional frameworks or arrangements. The table below illustrates the evolution of asylum applications by Venezuelans globally since 2014, followed by another which focuses on the top countries, by number, in which those applications have been lodged.



	Other forms of protection / alternative legal stay (2014-17)	Asylum applications					
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Jan-Feb)	Total cumulative 2014-18
ARGENTINA	40,884	3	2	57	135	-	197
ARUBA	-	-	-	3	14	5	22
BRAZIL	10,963	290	829	3,373	17,865	2,461	24,818
CANADA	-	164	255	566	1,245	-	2,230
CHILE	84,479	2	14	246	1,345	-	1,607
COLOMBIA	155,000	47	119	316	575	-	1,057
COSTA RICA	5,600	129	280	1,423	3,175	251	5,258
CURACAO	-	-	3	13	663	-	679
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	-	-	1	19	32	12	64
ECUADOR	50,502	-	148	554	1,530	-	2,232
GERMANY	-	17	38	104	123	-	282
GUATEMALA	-	1	1	6	4	-	12
HONDURAS	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
FRANCE	-	12	36	141	189	-	378
ITALY	-	14	29	-	216	-	259
MEXICO	16,220	56	57	361	4,042	-	4,516
PANAMA	48,900	88	261	837	4,430	544	6,160
PARAGUAY	-	-	-	6	12	-	18
PERU	30,200	65	181	3,602	20,000	-	23,848
PORTUGAL	-	2	2	16	16	-	36
SPAIN	-	124	596	4,196	7,389	-	12,305
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO	-	-	4	31	1125	625	1,785
USA	-	3,026	7,307	18,312	30,119	-	58,764
URUGUAY	2,072	-	5	1	38	-	44
TOTAL	444,820	4,040	10,168	34,183	94,284	3,898	146,573

A significant number of Venezuelans remain, however, in an irregular situation, without documentation or permission to remain including those not able to apply for asylum because of bureaucratic obstacles, long waiting periods, or high application fees. This makes them particularly vulnerable to exploitation, extortion, exactions, violence, trafficking, sexual abuse, recruitment, and discrimination and xenophobia, especially in insecure border areas where criminal and armed groups operate. The need for predictable legal status, documentation, shelter, access to health care and other basic services is acute. Receiving communities are themselves coming under increasing strain, which can undermine peaceful coexistence and feed manifestations of discrimination and xenophobia.

Response

Across the region, **UNHCR is working with and supporting the receiving/host governments and other actors to build, systematize, step up and strengthen mechanisms, processes, procedures and capacities** to address the protection and basic human needs in the outflow in the most predictable, sustained and effective manner. The situation as a whole continues to be more studiously analysed; reception, registration and information management capacities established or enhanced; access to basic humanitarian assistance by asylum-seekers and other people in need of international protection, especially those with specific needs, facilitated; and safeguards against abuse, exploitation, discrimination or xenophobia instituted, with particular attention paid in this regard to the plight of indigenous groups caught up in one way or the other in the situation. The plight of Colombians returning to their country of origin from Venezuela, many of whom were in a “refugee-like” situation, is also addressed as part of the response UNHCR is building up for the Venezuela Situation. UNHCR is also working inside Venezuela itself with communities that have traditionally hosted and indeed even now still support Colombian refugees.

Strategic objectives

Pursuant to the Supplementary Appeal herewith, UNHCR seeks to strengthen national asylum and other international protection processes and step up its activities to foster a comprehensive, predictable and harmonized response to the plight of Venezuelans compelled to leave their country. UNHCR will work towards these objectives in concert with all levels of government, other stakeholders (including international organizations, civil society and the private sector) and facilitate the participation of the people of concern themselves and host communities.

Through its **Regional Refugee Response Strategy (RRRS)**, UNHCR will seek to ensure that: (i)

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https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_18047

