

The LAC RMD Coalition issues a call to action in the framework of the 2023 International Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants and their Host Countries and Communities

The LAC RMD Coalition¹ salutes and thanks the Government of Canada, the European Union and the R4V Platform for convening the 2023 International Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants and their Host Countries and Communities. Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants today account for a total of 7.1 million people, 6 million of whom are in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to the Venezuelan migratory crisis, the region is currently facing multiple and varied crises due to armed conflict and generalized violence, disasters and climate change, different socio-political crises and the continuous and growing arrival of refugees and migrants of other nationalities in addition to the transit of the Venezuelan population in the region, which constitute important secondary movements. Other factors such as high inflation, increasing poverty in the region and weak social protection systems make it difficult to cover the basic needs of the most vulnerable population.

Hundreds of thousands of people from Venezuela and other nationalities have left their countries of origin. Despite the risks, many have taken irregular routes and informal border crossings in the region, exposing themselves to death, as shown by a recent study on missing migrants in 2021 (IOM, 2022) which shows that Venezuelans were amongst the top three nationalities of deceased migrants in 2021. The Americas is the second most dangerous place for displacement, following the Mediterranean crossing.²

Venezuelan refugee and migrant population as well as host communities in the most vulnerable conditions include pregnant and breastfeeding women and adolescents who are by themselves, with some of their children or with other family members; children and adolescents traveling with their parents; unaccompanied minors or those who have been separated; the LGBTQI+ population; indigenous populations, and people with disabilities. There is a differentiated impact for these population groups.

While countries in the region have demonstrated significant progress in responding to the crisis, challenges persist related to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and political and social crises in some countries. More than half of the people that participated in the Refugee and Migrant Needs Analysis-RMNA (R4V, 2022)³, reported **not being able to afford three meals a day and not having access to decent and safe housing**.

This analysis also shows that more than 70% of the people interviewed reported cases of intimate partner violence, child marriage or forced early unions, and physical and sexual violence. Furthermore, cases of Venezuelan **victims of human trafficking were identified in almost all the countries of the study, mainly among women and girls**.

In transit and host countries, there are still needs related to the access to asylum and regularization channels, access to quality primary health services, psychosocial support, sexual and reproductive

¹ The Coalition for the Defense of the Rights of Refugees, Migrants and Displaced Populations in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC RMD Coalition) is a strategic alliance of civil society organizations that work with refugee, migrant and displaced populations within the framework of the principles of International Humanitarian Law and human rights. Its main objective is to advocate with States for effective humanitarian preparedness and response in the short, medium and long term. It is currently composed of: SOS Children's Villages, Action Against Hunger, Bethany, CARE, COOPI, ChildFund, CISP, DRC/DDG, FLM, HIAS, IRC, Fos Feminista, NRC, OXFAM, Plan International, RET Americas, RIADIS, Save the Children, World Vision, MdM, Mercy Corps, Premiere Urgence Internationale and IFRC (as observers). <https://coalicionlacrmd.org/>

² OIM, Proyecto Migrantes Desaparecidos: <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/americas>

³ RMNA 2022 Análisis de Necesidades de Refugiados y Migrantes: <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/rmna-2022-analisis-de-necesidades-de-refugiados-y-migrantes>



health, among others, which are increased in the indigenous population due to language barriers and discrimination. The possibilities of accessing livelihoods or access to decent, dignified and fairly paid work, as migrants and refugees often earn less than the legal minimum wage⁴, continue to be major barriers for the integration of migrants and refugees in host countries. In Ecuador, 34% of Venezuelans that participated in the RMNA reported being unemployed; this is also the case in Guyana (64%), Panama (35%), and Southern Cone countries (40% in Uruguay, 29% in Bolivia, 27% in Paraguay and 25% in Argentina).

It is important to consider that in 2022 there was a significant change in human mobility patterns in the region, when the **Central American sub-region experienced a considerable increase in refugees and migrants from Venezuela in transit to the United States, as evidenced by the number of encounters reported by U.S. immigration authorities in 2022 that reached more than 151,000, compared to the 1,311 reported in 2020 and 106,750 in 2021.**⁵ In parallel, other important movement patterns include the transit of people towards the Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay). Both migratory dynamics imply serious risks for the protection of refugees and migrants from Venezuela and other nationalities.

The slight improvement in macroeconomic conditions in Venezuela, such as the decrease in inflation, **has not improved the conditions of the most vulnerable people.** Some Venezuelans continue to live from their daily income, lacking access to basic education and health services. There is also no formal employment with salaries to cover the minimum needs of families, nor the capacity for families to have some savings. As of December 2022, **43 minimum monthly wages were required to pay for one basic food basket.**⁶ Displacement continues to be a form of survival.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Venezuela, and in transit and host countries, including refugee and migrant organizations, have responded to the needs of the affected population inside and outside the country. The role of CSOs is essential as they are on the **front line of response, have experience in humanitarian response in the region, are present in most countries and have mechanisms that adapt to changes in the context.** The LAC RMD Coalition was created to promote a coordinated response to migration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This year we welcome the participation in this dialogue of Venezuelan organizations responding to the humanitarian crisis within the country. **Without a doubt, the humanitarian response in Venezuela would not be possible without their work.** As a humanitarian community we have made progress in designing frameworks for partnership and collaboration with national and local CSOs, following the recommendations of the **Grand Bargain.** It is now essential to include them in the response to this crisis.

Funding for the response remains insufficient. The 2022 Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants has been 38% funded.⁷ Refugees and migrants, as well as host communities, require short, medium, and long-term interventions that include **emergency and nexus actions to reduce risks, threats and vulnerabilities in a sustainable manner, while strengthening integration.** Regularization measures are important achievements, but complementary actions such as **support for income generation, access to the labor market and essential services such as education and health are required to achieve full and sustainable integration.** In this sense, more **multi-annual and multi-country direct funds** for CSOs are required, to promote development actions, as short-term funds limit their impact.

The contexts of migration crises in recent years have highlighted the **imperative need to strengthen regional coordination between humanitarian platforms, coordination with governments and international cooperation, to ensure a coordinated and inclusive response for refugees and migrants of different nationalities, but with the same humanitarian needs,** especially in situations where there is an increase in the number of refugees and migrants.

⁴ Integración socioeconómica de los migrantes y refugiados venezolanos. OIM, MPI, 2021:

https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/press_release/file/mpi-oim_integracion-socioeconomica-venezolanos_2021_final.pdf

⁵ Tendencias Migratorias en las Américas, OIM 2022:

https://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1626/files/documents/Informe_de_Tendencias_Noviembre_2022.pdf

⁶ CENDA - Centro De Documentación y Análisis Para Los Trabajadores

⁷ RMRP Funding 2022: [Microsoft Power BI](#)



To this end, it is necessary to implement a **resource allocation monitoring system to improve accountability** that includes detailed information such as: origin (country, multilateral organization, etc.), type of fund (grant or loan), status of the fund (committed or disbursed), organization (local/national NGO, international NGO, United Nations agency), among others.

In this context, the LAC RMD Coalition issues a CALL TO ACTION to the international donor community, multilateral organizations and the United Nations, aimed at:

- Increase the visibility of the crises in the region and in Venezuela on the international agenda.
- Articulate humanitarian responses inside and outside Venezuela that address **humanitarian needs and Nexus-type actions that strengthen the integration of the population in mobility and the resilience of communities.**
- Ensure localisation commitments defined under the Grand Bargain. That is, **improve the form of participation and local leadership of civil society organizations and increase direct funding, particularly to national and local organizations.**
- Establish a collective and participatory process between UN agencies and humanitarian organizations with a clear work plan to **identify solutions to the challenges of existing coordination structures and propose new coordination actions that respond in a timely manner to the new border dynamics.**
- **Improve humanitarian coordination mechanisms** to design rapid responses to sudden-onset crises due to disasters of natural origin and high volumes of people, to respond to the needs of all people regardless of nationality. **Secure more direct funds to civil society organizations** to respond to needs inside and outside Venezuela, through multi-country and multi-year projects, including actions in Venezuela.
- Design and implement an accountability mechanisms for funds that includes information on the type of fund, origin, status of the fund, type of organization receiving, etc.

Finally, the LAC RMD Coalition welcomes and appreciates this relevant space for reflection, reaffirming its commitment to continue working with States, the United Nations and the international donor community. We are fully committed and offer our support, experience and knowledge to work in a coordinated manner for the welfare and integrity of refugees and migrants, promoting their participation in order to contribute to the implementation of durable solutions and to guarantee the human rights of refugees and migrants.

