

Venezuela Regional Crisis – Complex Emergency

MARCH 6, 2024

SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- The 2024-2025 Venezuela HRP requests \$617 million to reach 5.1 million people in need, more than 50 percent of whom are women and girls. Priority sectors include food security and livelihoods, health, nutrition, protection, and WASH.
- The number of people facing Crisis or higher levels of food insecurity in Venezuela is forecasted to increase from 2 million in January to 3.5 million in July, FEWS NET reports.
- Nearly 496,000 people, including more than 317,000 Venezuelan migrants, crossed Panama’s Darién Gap between January and November 2023, facing significant protection risks, according to UNHCR.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Venezuela Regional Crisis in FYs 2017–2023	USAID/BHA ¹	\$1,561,656,236
		State/PRM ²
	Total	\$2,903,336,578

¹ USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

² U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

UN Launches 2024–2025 Venezuela HRP, Relief Actors Reach 2.1 Million People in Venezuela with Assistance from January to October 2023

The UN published the 2024–2025 Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) on February 2, requesting \$617 million in funding to reach 5.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, more than 50 percent of whom are women and girls. The HRP's priority sectors include food security and livelihoods, health, nutrition, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). The HRP requests more than \$162 million to reach 2 million people with food and livelihoods assistance, followed by more than \$137 million to reach 3.5 million people with health care. While the HRP targets people in need throughout Venezuela, it prioritizes activities in the remote and hard-to-reach Amazonas, Apure, Bolívar, Delta Amacuro, and Sucre states due to high levels of need.

Relief actors reached more than 2.7 million people in Venezuela—nearly 52 percent of people targeted by the 2022–2023 HRP—with humanitarian assistance between January and November 2023, according to the UN. This includes approximately 2.1 million people receiving health support, 900,000 individuals receiving food security and livelihoods assistance, and more than 770,000 people receiving WASH support, representing approximately 60 percent, approximately 45 percent, and nearly 17 percent of the respective sectoral targets.

Food Insecurity Likely to Increase Amid Changes to Social Programs, Decreased Public Revenue

The cost of a basic food basket—an indicator which tracks staple food prices over time to measure inflation—increased by nearly 350 percent between October 2022 and October 2023. Increased inflation drives food insecurity and protection risks, causing vulnerable individuals to resort to harmful coping strategies, including child labor and survival sex, according to the UN. An estimated 2 million people in Venezuela faced Crisis—IPC 3—or higher levels of food insecurity in January 2024, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).³ FEWS NET forecasts that the number of people facing Crisis levels of food insecurity will increase between March and May due to seasonal changes in the coverage of social programs and increasing inflation. In total, more than 3.5 million people are projected to face Crisis or higher levels of food insecurity at the start of the July–November lean season, FEWS NET reports, representing a 75 percent increase compared with January.

Authorities in Venezuela Suspend OHCHR Operations, Continue to Restrict Humanitarian Operating Space

Authorities in Venezuela continue to restrict humanitarian operating space in the country. On February 15, authorities suspended the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) operations in Venezuela after the UN agency criticized the February 9 detention of Rocio San Miguel, a human rights advocate and critic of Nicolás Maduro. Additionally, the Maduro-led National Assembly is considering the Law on Control, Regularization, Operations, and Financing of Nongovernmental and Related Organizations, which would impose additional requirements and restrictions on the creation and ongoing operation of NGOs, including mandatory registration with and disclosure of foreign funding to Venezuelan authorities. The law would subject organizations operating without the required registration to sanctions or dissolution,

³ The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity. IPC Phase 5 is referred to as “Catastrophe” when classifying a household and “Famine” when classifying an area. Famine conditions occur when at least 20 percent of the population in a given area face an extreme lack of food; the Global Acute Malnutrition prevalence, measured by weight-for-height z-score, exceeds 30 percent; and the mortality rate exceeds two people per 10,000 individuals per day.

according to Human Rights Watch and the UN. The draft law is part of a broader effort by Maduro and his authorities to restrict the independent operation of civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the media, the UN reports.

Migrants Crossing Panama's Darién Gap Face Significant Protection Risks

Nearly 496,000 people, including more than 317,000 Venezuelan migrants, crossed Panama's Darién Gap—a dangerous corridor connecting South and Central America between Colombia's Chocó Department and Panama's Darién Province—between January and November 2023, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The average transit time through the gap was 4 days, during which migrants experienced significant protection risks, UNHCR reports. An estimated 82 percent of those who crossed the Darién Gap between January and November 2023 experienced physical insecurity, including attacks, falls, and risk of drowning. Additionally, 35 percent of migrants who crossed the Darién Gap during the reporting period saw dead bodies while crossing. Furthermore, one in three migrants reported experiencing mistreatment or abuse during their journey, the UN agency reports. Of the nearly 496,000 migrants who crossed the gap between January and November, 92 percent indicated to UNHCR that the United States was their final destination.

KEY FIGURES



**\$169.5
Million**

In FY 2023 USAID/BHA food assistance in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY

USAID/BHA assistance aims to address acute food insecurity among vulnerable Venezuelans inside Venezuela, as well as migrants, refugees, and host community members in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. In Venezuela, USAID/BHA is funding NGO and UN partners to provide cooked meals, in-kind food assistance, and school meals. In countries hosting migrants and refugees, USAID/BHA-funded emergency food assistance includes cash transfers, food kits, food vouchers, hot cooked meals, and complementary nutrition support. In total, these programs aimed to reach approximately 1.5 million people in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru and more than 750,000 people in Venezuela during FY 2023. USAID/BHA also contributes to capacity-building and coordination activities for food security actors to improve humanitarian programming for the Venezuela regional crisis.

HEALTH

State/PRM provided approximately \$10 million to UN partners to support essential health interventions for Venezuelan migrants and refugees throughout the region in FY 2023. State/PRM partners are supporting access to essential health care services and supplies for vulnerable populations, including providing vaccines to children, and working with host governments to include Venezuelan migrants and refugees in national health systems. USAID/BHA is also supporting UN partners and NGOs to provide life-saving health care services in Venezuela. With USAID/BHA support, partners are providing essential primary and mental health care, training community health workers to address urgent health needs, and building the capacity of primary-level health systems in Venezuela.



\$30 Million

In dedicated FY 2023 USG support for life-saving health care programming



\$30.7 Million

In FY 2023 USG WASH support in Venezuela and neighboring countries

WASH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM continue to support WASH programming to address the needs of Venezuelans and prevent the spread of communicable diseases. With support from State/PRM, Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) partners aim to reach more than 507,000 people with WASH assistance across the region in 2024. In FY 2023, USAID/BHA provided nearly \$26.6 million and State/PRM provided more than \$4.1 million in funding to support critical WASH activities. Supported activities include ensuring sufficient access to safe drinking water for consumption and household hygiene needs, distributing personal protective equipment and training local health care workers to prevent the spread of disease, conducting hygiene awareness sessions, distributing hygiene kits, rehabilitating WASH infrastructure in schools and health facilities, providing sustainable flood-resilient WASH systems, and installing handwashing stations at community kitchens.



\$8.8 Million

USAID/BHA funding to support ERMS in Colombia in FY 2023

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND MARKET SYSTEMS

USAID/BHA humanitarian partners in Colombia are providing household financial instruction and training for Venezuelan migrants and refugees, with an emphasis on improving food security outcomes. Partners are also assisting with financial services, market analysis and small-scale business management training, job search support, saving groups, and skill-building activities. USAID/BHA provided \$8.8 million in FY 2023 funding to the VenEsperanza Emergency Response Consortium and the Cash for Urban Assistance Consortium dedicated to economy recovery and market systems (ERMS) assistance. With USAID/BHA funding, the VenEsperanza consortium reached more than 22,100 people with financial skills building and nearly 4,900 people with livelihoods development activities in Colombia's Antioquia, Arauca, Bolívar, Cundinamarca, La Guajira, Norte de Santander departments and Bogotá Capital District in 2023.

In addition, State/PRM partners support ERMS by strengthening livelihood opportunities and socioeconomic integration among vulnerable Venezuelans in the region, providing training and resources to enable the adoption of sustainable entrepreneurship and employment strategies. State/PRM partners provide Venezuelans across the region with business development training; employment and vocational training; language training; registration and technical assistance for work permits; technical skills certifications; and the provision of seed capital and cash assistance via bank transfers, prepaid cards, and mobile money platforms.



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USG partners actively implementing protection activities

PROTECTION

State/PRM and USAID/BHA support 24 partners providing protection services to Venezuelans in need of assistance in Venezuela, and across the region, particularly along the border areas and in the Caribbean, where protection services are especially limited. USAID/BHA and State/PRM-

supported protection activities aim to increase access to protection services child-friendly spaces, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, gender-based violence prevention and case management, and legal assistance. State/PRM partners also worked with the broader humanitarian community across the region to support advocacy efforts with local and national authorities and promote the delivery of protection services in areas with significant humanitarian access constraints.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Deteriorating economic and political conditions in Venezuela have decreased households’ access to food, health care, and livelihoods; contributed to increasing humanitarian needs; and triggered an outflow of Venezuelans into countries across LAC, primarily to Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. As of November 2023, more than 7.7 million Venezuelans were living outside of Venezuela, according to R4V.
- The influx of Venezuelans continues to strain social services, especially in border areas of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Assessments indicate that food, education, health, protection, shelter, and WASH support continue to be among the most urgent humanitarian needs for at-risk populations, including Venezuelans, Colombian returnees from Venezuela, and host communities.
- In addition to providing support for ongoing response activities, USAID/BHA and State/PRM staff throughout the region and in Washington, D.C., continue to monitor the humanitarian situation in close coordination with relevant donor governments, host governments, NGOs, and UN counterparts.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE VENEZUELA REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE FYs IN 2017–2023¹

TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR VENEZUELA REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FYs 2017–2023	\$1,561,656,236
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR VENEZUELA REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FYs 2017–2023	\$1,341,680,342
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE VENEZUELA RESPONSE FYs 2017–2023	\$2,903,336,578

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 30, 2023.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).