

# VENEZUELANAS IN COLOMBIA:

understanding the implications of the  
migrants crisis in Maicao (La Guajira)

SAYARA  
INTERNATIONAL



# VENEZUELANAS IN COLOMBIA:

understanding the implications of the  
migrants crisis in Maicao (La Guajira)

By

Jair Eduardo Restrepo Pineda and  
Juliana Jaramillo Jaramillo

Under the direction of:

Manuela Torres  
Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean,  
Sayara International

2018

SAYARA  
INTERNATIONAL



Venezuelan migrant child takes refuge in the municipal  
Catholic Church facilities.

Maicao, La Guajira, Colombia, October, 2018.



## Acknowledgements

Sayara International thanks the academic, research and administrative team of Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios (UNIMINUTO) for its effort and collaboration to carry out the study. More specifically, the authors, Juliana Jaramillo and Jair Eduardo Restrepo for their rigorous work in the methodology design and information analysis, as well as Armando Rhenals Coronado, Danys Alberth Aguirre Ocampo, for participation in data collection in the field.

Sayara also thanks the migration expert Gisela P. Zapata for her role in ensuring data and analysis quality control of this final report.

Likewise, Sayara also would like to thank the Venezuelan migrants and refugees that agreed to share their stories for the aim of this research. We're also appreciative to Maicao's local community, representatives of the local government and non-governmental organization for facilitating access to key information which contributed to the development of a comprehensive analysis of the local community and how its coping with the influx of migrants and refugees.

Finally, Sayara thanks Exovera and its management and technical team, for its collaboration on the South American media monitoring, by providing access to their artificial intelligence platform as well as the 30 days of detailed media monitoring analysis.



Venezuelan artisans weave wallets with Bolivars bills.

Maicao, La Guajira, Colombia, October 2018.

## Abstract

The complex social, economic, and political situation currently faced by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has engendered an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, leading over three million people – roughly 10% of the entire population – to flee the country since 2014. About 80% of these Venezuelan migrants and refugees have headed to neighboring countries in Latin America, making this the largest human displacement in the region's recent history. More than one million of those fleeing have crossed the border into Colombia, a country without a significant history of immigration. Nonetheless, the Colombian government, along with various international organizations, have implemented a series of actions aimed at mitigating the humanitarian crisis and aiding the socioeconomic integration of migrants into society.

This report presents the results of a pilot study on the implications of the Venezuelan migration crisis in Maicao (La Guajira), the Colombian municipality that has been most affected by the migrant flow due to its geographical and sociocultural proximity to Venezuela. To this end, the report explores the response of governmental and non-governmental actors involved in the management of the humanitarian crisis, identifying migrants' needs, attitudes, and experiences. It also assesses the perceptions and attitudes of Colombians to the influx of Venezuelan migrants.

The research is based on a mixed methods approach, including an analysis of normative and quantitative-qualitative data and interviews with key actors and Venezuelan migrants living in the city of Maicao. Our findings suggest that although Colombia has been internationally recognized for its solidarity and diligent response to the Venezuelan influx, gaps still exist. These gaps exist particularly within the scope of adequate socio-economic inclusion and effective delivery of aid, as well as in the realm of social marginalization and social cohesion between host and migrant communities. Over time, this could be exacerbated, as has been seen in other fragile countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan, after having experienced similar shocks .

We highlight the importance of strengthening coordinated and collaborative work between the Colombian State and non-governmental organizations such that their humanitarian aid initiatives have greater scope and lasting impact, and such that they are aimed at developing well-articulated employability programs for migrants.

Given the socioeconomic anxiety of host communities that tends to accompany large migrant influxes, which was evidenced in this report at a local level more than at a national level, we also recommend that public policies, programs and actions implemented by governmental and non-governmental actors be focused on the most vulnerable populations within the host society, including not only migrants but also those local socioeconomic groups that face similar risks of social marginalization. The perception that migrants “take jobs” and public resources or increase crime rates often arises after a host-migrant “honeymoon” period comes to an end. An inclusive socio-economic development policy is crucial in addressing some of the preexisting development gaps in Colombia, as well as in helping to mitigate the tensions within local host communities because of the allocation of public and private resources to a foreign population.

**By Gisela P. Zapata, Migration Expert and Collaborator.**



# CONTENT

---

Introduction

13

---

1. Colombia:  
Migration profile

15

---

2. Bilateral crisis, mass  
migration, and  
response by the  
Colombian state

18

---

3. Migration of  
Venezuelans in a  
border municipality:  
Maicao as  
a case study

26

---

4. Profile of  
Venezuelan migrants in  
Maicao: Experiences,  
needs and expectations

31

Sex, age and sexual orientation.....31  
Nationality and ethnicity.....32  
Marital status and household structure  
in Colombia.....33  
Educational level of migrants.....33  
Migration to Colombia.....34  
Permanence in Colombia and  
immigration status.....38  
Housing and access to basic services.....40  
Health and access to medical services.....41  
Employment and income.....41  
Experiences of discrimination and  
violation of rights.....45  
Needs, humanitarian aid and social  
support.....46  
Expectations regarding the immigration  
process.....48

---

5. Humanitarian  
response to the  
Migration Crisis

51

International funding.....52

---

**6. Presence of humanitarian actors in Maicao** **56**

Governmental actors.....56  
Limitations in aiding the migrant population.....58  
Non-governmental actors.....59  
Strategic alliances.....61

---

**7. Attitudes and Perception of Local Actors and Local Community on the Migration Crisis in Maicao** **63**

Perceptions of the local institutional actors.....63  
Perceptions of the local community leaders.....64

---

**8. Conclusions** **75**

---

**9. Research Methodology** **78**

Ethical considerations.....78

---

**10. References** **104**

---

**11. Regional Media Analysis: South American Media Narratives About Venezuelan Migration** **110**

Regional Findings.....113  
County overview.....116  
    *Brazil*.....116  
    *Chile*.....118  
    *Colombia*.....119  
    *Ecuador*.....121  
    *Perú*.....122  
Results (Data Tables).....124  
Methodology.....126  
About Exovera.....127

# FIGURES

Figure 1. Venezuelan migration flow in the region.....	21
Figure 2. Map of the Colombian-Venezuelan peninsular region.....	26
Figure 3. Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia (October 2018).....	28
Figure 4. Gender and age of participants.....	32
Figure 5. Sexual identity of participants.....	32
Figure 6. Educational level of participants.....	33
Figure 7. Reasons for migrating reported by participants.....	34
Figure 8. Entry to Colombia from Venezuela.....	36
Figure 9. Length of stay of participants in Colombia.....	38
Figure 10. Migration status of participants.....	39
Figure 11. Reasons for not having regularized the immigration status in Colombia.....	39
Figure 12. Reasons for unemployment reported by participants.....	42
Figure 13. Employment of participants by sector.....	43
Figure 14. Sources of income for maintenance.....	43
Figure 15. Discrimination and rights violations experienced by participants.....	45
Figure 16. Main needs of participants.....	46
Figure 17. Aid received from public or private organizations.....	47
Figure 18. Humanitarian activities according to intervention areas.....	52

# TABLES

Table 1. Migration status of Venezuelans in Colombia (September 2018).....	22
Table 2. Chronology of the bilateral crisis and response from the Colombian government (2014-2018).....	24
Table 3. Organizations in La Guajira and number of activities (September 2018).....	51
Table 4. Profile of governmental organizations developing programs and services for Venezuelan migrants in Maicao.....	56
Table 5. Key partners of governmental organizations.....	58
Table 6. Profile of non-governmental organizations developing programs and services for Venezuelans migrants in Maicao.....	59
Table 7. Percent (%) of Articles by Immigration Narrative by Country & Total.....	124
Table 8. Number (#) of Articles by Immigration Narrative by Country & Total .....	125

# ANNEXES

Annex 1. Residency permits granted to Venezuelan migrants by Latin American countries.....	82
Annex 2. Incidence of poverty in Colombia departments.....	83
Annex 3. Unemployment and underemployment rates in Colombia departments.....	84
Annex 4. Presence of armed groups in the border area with Venezuela.....	85
Annex 5. Narratives of Venezuelan migrants.....	86
Annex 6. Humanitarian projects to attend the population affected by the Venezuelan crisis in Maicao and other municipalities (2017 - 2019).....	98
Annex 7. National and international organizations of the Inter-agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows.....	100
Annex 8. Venezuela Regional Crisis Complex Emergency USAID.....	101
Annex 9. Venezuela Regional Crisis Fact Sheet #6 -09-30-2018.....	102

## INTRODUCTION

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela faces a complex economic and political situation that has engendered a humanitarian crisis, leading over 3 million people to emigrate from the country in a short period of time. According to the International Organization for Migration, the number of Venezuelan migrants rose from over 697,000 in 2015 to the current estimate of 3 million (IOM, 2018). Around 366,000 have applied for refugee status in host countries (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018a). Globally, this crisis has been compared to the refugee crisis in Syria, where civil war has displaced over 6.3 million people (UNHCR, 2018b). Although the underlying reasons for migration differ between the two countries, the Venezuelan case is a salient one, accounting for the second largest number of citizens who have been forced to migrate.

Colombia, sharing 2,219 kilometers of border territory with Venezuela, has become the main destination for Venezuelan migrants. According to official estimates, there were 1,032,016 Venezuelans living in Colombian territory by September 2018. To this figure must be added the 250,000 Colombians who have returned from Venezuela. For any state, such mass migration would pose huge social, economic and political challenges that could not be adequately addressed without the support of the international community. Thus, both the Colombian government and various international organizations have implemented short-, medium- and long-term strategies aimed at mitigating the humanitarian crisis.

This report presents the main results of a study which sought to understand the implications of the Venezuelan migration crisis in Maicao (La Guajira), a Colombian municipality highly affected by the migrant flow, due to its geographical and sociocultural proximity to Venezuela. To this end, this report addresses the response of governmental and non-governmental humanitarian actors involved in the management of the migration crisis, identifying migrant needs, attitudes and experiences with humanitarian aid programs, and finally, assessing Colombian perceptions and attitudes with respect to Venezuelan migrants. The research applied a mixed methodology including a literature review, fieldwork, comprising 29 interviews with key sources and 174 migrant surveys, as well as three focus group discussions and five personal narratives from Venezuelan migrants. Data collection, systematization, and analysis was conducted between September and December 2018.

The main purpose of this report is to inform local, national, and international agents of the current and future consequences of the refugee crisis, thereby assisting in the implementation of effective programs and policies to address the needs of both migrants and host communities.



Migrants are setting up ad-hoc street shops to sell a variety of Venezuelan products throughout the downtown area of Maicao.

Maicao, La Guajira, Colombia, October 2018.

# 1 | COLOMBIA: MIGRATION PROFILE

Colombia is an emerging economy with an estimated population of 45.5 million and was the third Latin American country (after Mexico and Chile) to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Nonetheless, Colombia continues to face major challenges including poverty and social inequality, tackling drug trafficking by criminal groups, and consolidating the 2016 peace process with the ex-guerrilla FARC and the still active ELN guerrilla group.

Notably, Colombia is not a country accustomed to immigration. Historically, it has not been characterized as having an open or receptive immigration policy, and its net migration has often been negative. This is in contrast to other countries in the region such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Perú, which, after independence, received large numbers of immigrants from Europe and other continents. For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, the conservative ruling class claimed that migration control was required in order to prevent the ‘racial degeneration’ of the Colombian population (Aya, Carvajal & Téllez, 2010; Gómez, 2009; Tovar, 2001). Thus, the policies in place were motivated primarily by eugenic and economic concerns and favored the attraction of white North Americans and Europeans with the aim of ‘improving the physical and moral ethnic conditions’ of the country (Mejía, 2011, 2012).

Official statistics suggest that, as of 2005, there were 107,617 foreigners residing in Colombia (0.26% of the country’s population of 42 million), and between 2 - 2.3 million Colombians – around 5% of the country’s population – were living and working abroad (DANE, 2005; Mejía, 2012; World Bank, 2011). Although the reasons for leaving the Colombia cited by emigrant households are fundamentally of an economic nature (Mejía, 2012), it is clear that there is a tenuous line between forced and voluntary migration in Colombia, due to the enormous social, economic and political impact that the internal conflict has had at the micro, meso, and macro levels.

Venezuela has invariably been an important part of Colombia’s migration, accounting for 64% of the population of foreigners residing in the country in 2005 (a total of 68,874 individuals), as well as being the third largest host of Colombian emigrants (617,364, or 18.5% of the total) after the United States and Spain<sup>1</sup> (Mejía, 2012). During this period, the large migration of Colombians into Venezuela can be explained by three factors. The first was proximity, both geographical – due to their long-shared land border –, and cultural – due to their common origin as Spanish territories, shared language, and the prevalence of Catholicism. A second factor was the labor and economic opportunities created by the oil bonanza in Venezuela, which attracted a large

1. Similar figures were released by the 2011 census conducted by the National Statistics Institute of Venezuela (2014), which registered 721,791 Colombian residents in the country (70% of all foreigners in Venezuela).

number of Colombians from all socioeconomic strata, especially in the 1970s and 1980s (Álvarez de Flores, 2004)<sup>2</sup>. Finally, the third factor was the Colombian armed conflict involving the state, guerrilla and paramilitaries, which engendered a large-scale forced displacement of Colombians both internally and externally (Álvarez de Flores, 2009). In short, the close links between the two countries go beyond their geographical proximity and a shared economic and sociocultural past as part of Bolívar's Gran Colombia unity project in the XIX century.

In this context, the development of Colombia's migration policy has historically been rather meager; although, in recent years efforts have been made towards the attention and protection of the diaspora and their incorporation into the national polity (Zapata, 2011). Among these efforts, it is worth mentioning Law 1465 from 2011, which regulates the National Migration System, Law 1565 from 2012, which promotes the return of Colombians residing abroad, and Decree 1067 from 2015, which regulates the entry of foreign nationals into the Colombian territory. In addition, attempts at articulating a comprehensive migration policy were made in 2009 with the passing of the Integral Migration Policy (PIM) (CONPES document 3603), which sought to articulate the different government strategies to foster the development of the Colombian population residing abroad and the foreign population residing in the country (Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social [CONPES], 2009). However, a combination of lack of funds and political will has resulted in a lack of implementation of these laws, and therefore the current migration policy continues to be characterized by fragmentation, legal ambiguity and a lack of articulation with other relevant national policies (Castro and Milkes, 2018).

In this context, the recent arrival of large flows of migrants and refugees from Venezuelan caught the government by surprise, as they were without a comprehensive migration policy in place to deal with this unprecedented phenomenon. In this sense, the government's response has been reactive and, as will be illustrated in the following section, structured around a patchwork of emergency measures and decrees.

---

2. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2017), Colombia hosts the second largest number of victims of internal displacements caused by conflict and violence, a total of 6,509,000 against 6,784,000 from Syria.



Venezuelan Wayúu indigenous woman crossing into Colombia in the presence of Migration Colombia officials.

Paraguachón, Maicao, La Guajira, Colombia, October 2018.

## 2 | BILATERAL CRISIS, MASS MIGRATION, AND RESPONSE BY THE COLOMBIAN STATE

Although Bogotá and Caracas have historically maintained friendly bilateral relations, tensions between the two countries arose in the early 2000s during the presidencies of Hugo Chávez and Álvaro Uribe. Evidence (The New York Times, August 2nd 2009) that Venezuela was providing aid and support to Colombian rebel groups, such as FARC and the ELN, were couched in denial by the Venezuelan government, which countered with accusations that the Colombian government was collaborating with the United States in seeking to destabilize and ultimately overthrow the Chávez regime (Revista Semana, November 7th 2008).

In 2014, the Colombian government strengthened its presence at the Venezuelan border by increasing immigration control posts from three to seven. The posts are located in five of the seven departments along the border: La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Arauca, Vichada, and Guainía. This increased institutional presence was a result of two main factors. First, since 2011 the Colombian government has implemented various measures in its migration policy, including the creation of “Migration Colombia,” the country’s unit under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for migration management (Ciurlo, 2015). The second factor was the deteriorating diplomatic relations between the two nations, especially during 2014 and 2015 when Venezuela blamed Colombia for their economic crisis. Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela’s sitting president since 2013, accused the Colombian government of allowing Venezuelan goods to be smuggled into Colombia. These goods could then be sold at higher prices due to currency exchange rates, resulting in a shortage of goods in Venezuela. Maduro also condemned the Colombian government for neglecting the presence of paramilitary groups and drug traffickers settled along the border, which he alleged led to a rise in crime and insecurity (see Annex 4). Furthermore, Maduro frequently stated that Colombia was part of an international ultra-right conspiracy to destabilize the Venezuelan socialist government (Pacheco Ríos, 2016; Sánchez Urribarí, 2016; Smilde & Pantoulas, 2016).

In this context, the Maduro government ordered the night closure of border crossings with Colombia in August 2014. A year later, on August 19th, Maduro ordered the unilateral closure of the border for three days after an alleged assault of Colombian paramilitaries against members of the Venezuelan armed forces. These measures were followed by the full closure of the border and the subsequent expulsion and deportation of Colombian residents in Venezuela at the end of August 2015 (Migration Colombia, 2017). According to official figures, 1,950 Colombians had been deported or expelled as of October 2015, while another 22,342 voluntarily returned to Colombia (Migration Colombia, 2017; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], 2015).

In August 2016, the Venezuelan government reopened the border after Colombia agreed to take measures to better secure the migratory flow between the two countries. Colombia proposed the creation of a travel document, originally called the Migration Card for Border Transit (MCBT) and later called the Border Mobility Card (BMC), which is to be presented at immigration posts. This document allowed Venezuelans living near the border to enter Colombia for a short period of time with limitations on travel beyond border regions. The MCBT or BMC was valid from August 13th, 2016 until February 8th, 2018 when the government decided to suspend its issuance due to “problems with counterfeit documents [...] and the need to create safer and longer-term migration mechanisms” (CONPES, 2018). During that time 1,624,915 cards were issued. On the November 27, 2018, the government reintroduced the BMC. According to the Director of Migration Colombia, this was meant to “prevent Venezuelan citizens from making their way into Colombia through unregulated trails, risking their lives and exposing themselves to abuse and hazards” (Migration Colombia, 2018b).

The reopening of the border in August 2016 had a strong impact on both countries. The first weekend approximately 127,000 Venezuelan residents migrated into the country (Migration Colombia, 2016). The Colombian media widely covered the mass inflow of people crossing the border and later returning to Venezuela with food, medicine, toiletries, and other essentials. A survey by the Colombian government and IOM showed that 52% of those who crossed the border did so to purchase basic items, 17% to visit family, and 14% to work (Ministry of Foreign Relations and IOM, 2016).

The further deterioration of the political, social, and economic conditions in Venezuela deepened the humanitarian crisis and increased the number of people seeking to emigrate permanently.<sup>3</sup> Multiple sources pointed to Colombia as their main destination (World Bank, 2018; European Parliament, 2018; IOM, 2018). In 2017, IOM (2018) reported 1,642,442 Venezuelans residing abroad, 600,000 of whom were in Colombia. The United States hosted the second largest number of migrants, with a total of 290,224. By October 2018, the number of migrants globally rose to over three million, with 1,032,016 of these residing in Colombia (Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows [GIFMM], 2018; Migration Colombia, 2018a). In addition to this, over 250,000 Colombians had returned to their home country from Venezuela (World Bank, 2018; UNHCR, 2018c). Further, official sources estimated that over 700,000 Venezuelan citizens have crossed the Colombian border into neighboring countries in the region (CONPES, 2018).

Given the scale of the migration flow, the government of Colombia, like other governments of the region, created a myriad of legal non-asylum<sup>4</sup> mechanisms to grant either temporary or permanent residence permits, employment, and humanitarian visas to Venezuelan migrants (see Annex 1). In July 2017, the Colombian government created the Permiso Especial de Permanencia (PEP), or Special Stay Permit (SSP), which allows Venezuelans to remain in the country for up to two years, enroll in legal activities (e.g. to study or work), and to access the same institutional services

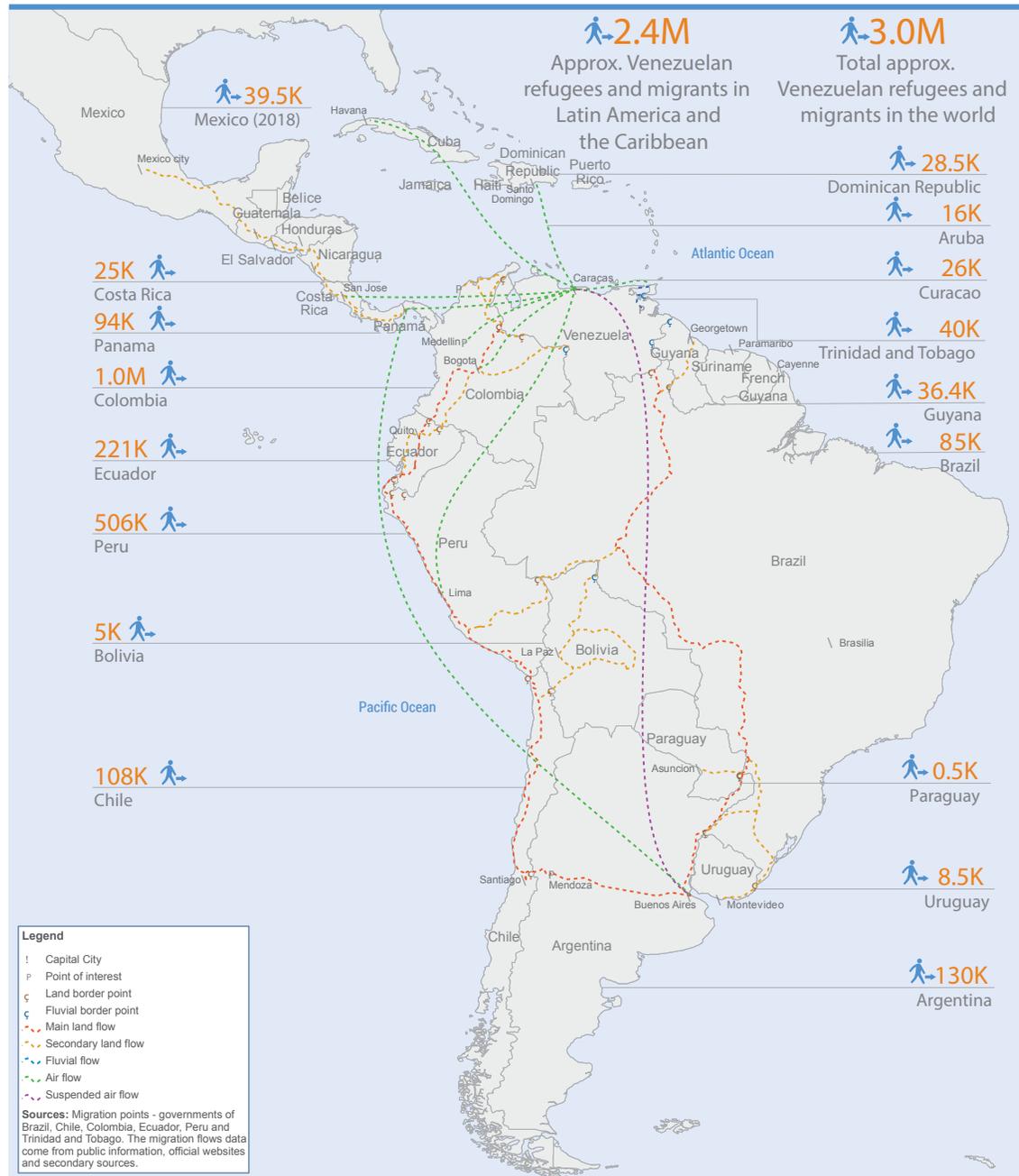
3. According to a statement of the European Parliament (2018), it is estimated that 87% of the Venezuelan population lives in poverty, and 61.2% in extreme poverty.

**Figure 1.**  
**Venezuelan migration flow in the region**

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**  
**Stocks of Venezuelan population in the region**

**REGIONAL INTERAGENCY  
COORDINATION PLATFORM**  
FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA

As 31 October 2018



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used in this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
Creation date: 31 October 2018 Created by: OCHA-ROLAC

Source: IOM and UNHCR, October 2018

(education and health) available to Colombian nationals<sup>5</sup> (see Table 2). To obtain a SSP (or PEP), the individual had to 1) be in Colombian territory as of July 28, 2017; 2) have entered the country with a passport via an official checkpoint; 3) have no criminal record, and; 4) have no expulsion or deportation order pending. The SSP was issued, free of charge, through the Internet, until October 31, 2017 (Resolution 5797, 2017).

The SSP (or PEP) has been deployed three times: July 2017 (regularizing 68,875 migrants); February 2018 (111,708 migrants); and August 2018 (442,462 until December 2018). As of September 2018, the total population of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, both regular and irregular, was as follows:

**Table 1.**  
**Migration status of Venezuelans in Colombia**  
**(September 2018)**

Status	Total
Regular	573.502
In the process of regularization	240.416
Irregular: exceed the time of stay granted	137.718
Irregular: entry by unauthorized place	80.380
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.032.016</b>

In addition to these important legal instruments, the Colombian government has taken other measures to address the large flow of migrants, including the provision of humanitarian aid and enforced security and control along the border area. It has also created a special high-level Border Management unit to coordinate action on the migration crisis on a national and international level and the Grupo Especial Migratorio (GEM) or Migration Special Group (Gobierno de Colombia, 2018). As a result of these efforts, the European Parliament noted in a 2018 joint motion resolution that “[Colombian] national and local authorities are working in a commendable way to grant the enjoyment of basic human rights, such as primary education and basic health services, to those fleeing Venezuela, regardless of their status” (p. 6).

4. Another option for Venezuelans fleeing their country would be applying for asylum/refugee protection. In Colombia, however, the vast majority of Venezuelans are not recognized as such because, according to the government, they do not meet the criteria established by the 1951 Refugee Convention, i.e. demonstrating threats to life, liberty and security. Rather, ‘they are considered economic migrants, as their main motivation is to seek better economic conditions for them and their families’ (World Bank, 2018, p. 52). According to UNHCR (2018a), by June 2018, an around 2,057 Venezuelans had applied for asylum in Colombia but only 281 had been recognized as such. However, UNHCR has systematically defended that Venezuelan migrants be recognized as people in need / seeking international protection.

5. Argentina and Uruguay have granted legal residence to Venezuelans based on the Mercosur Residency Agreement, while Ecuador has granted temporary residence through the UNASUR visa scheme. Similarly, Perú began issuing Temporary Stay Permits (PTP) to Venezuelans in January 2017 and Brazil did so in March 2017. For its part, Chile created the Visa of Democratic Responsibility for Venezuelan citizens while Mexico has opted for using established immigration channels to offer Venezuelans temporary legal relief (Freier & Parent, 2018).

Subsequently, in March 2018, the government announced the Creation of the Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos (RAMV) or Administrative Registry of Venezuelan Migrants, with the aim of assessing the migration landscape in order to subsidize the development of public policy. The RAMV sought to account for all Venezuelans living in the country in possession of a passport, visa, BMC, SSP (or PEP) or without any documentation. The Decree, created by the RAMV, explicitly states that registering does not grant “any type of immigration status, does not constitute authorization for permanence or regularization, does not replace existing travel documents, does not generate civil or political rights, or access to social plans or programs or other guarantees.” Nonetheless, a month after the registration period ended, the government issued a decree granting access to health and education services and employment rights to people registered in the RAMV (Decreto 1288, 2018<sup>6</sup>); and subsequently, the right to apply for a SSP (or PEP) (Resolución 6370, 2018).

Since August 7th, 2018, Colombia has been under the leadership of a new administration. The new president, Iván Duque, has signaled his commitment to maintaining the approach to migration adopted by the previous government. At the time of publishing this report, he has not replaced the heads of Migration Colombia nor the Border Management Unit. Additionally, the new government recently published (in November 2018) a migration policy directed towards Venezuela immigration. This new plan seeks “to establish and implement actions for access to health care, education, early childhood, childhood and adolescence, work, housing and security; articulate the existing institutional framework and define new instances for the attention of the migrant population from Venezuela in a horizon of three years’ (CONPES, 2018).” Nonetheless, the Colombian government has insisted on the need for support from the international community given the scale of the crisis in the region. Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes recently stated that “we are making all possible efforts, and we are going to do more, but the scale of the crisis is overwhelming. It drains us from a financial and institutional point of view” (November 2, 2018).

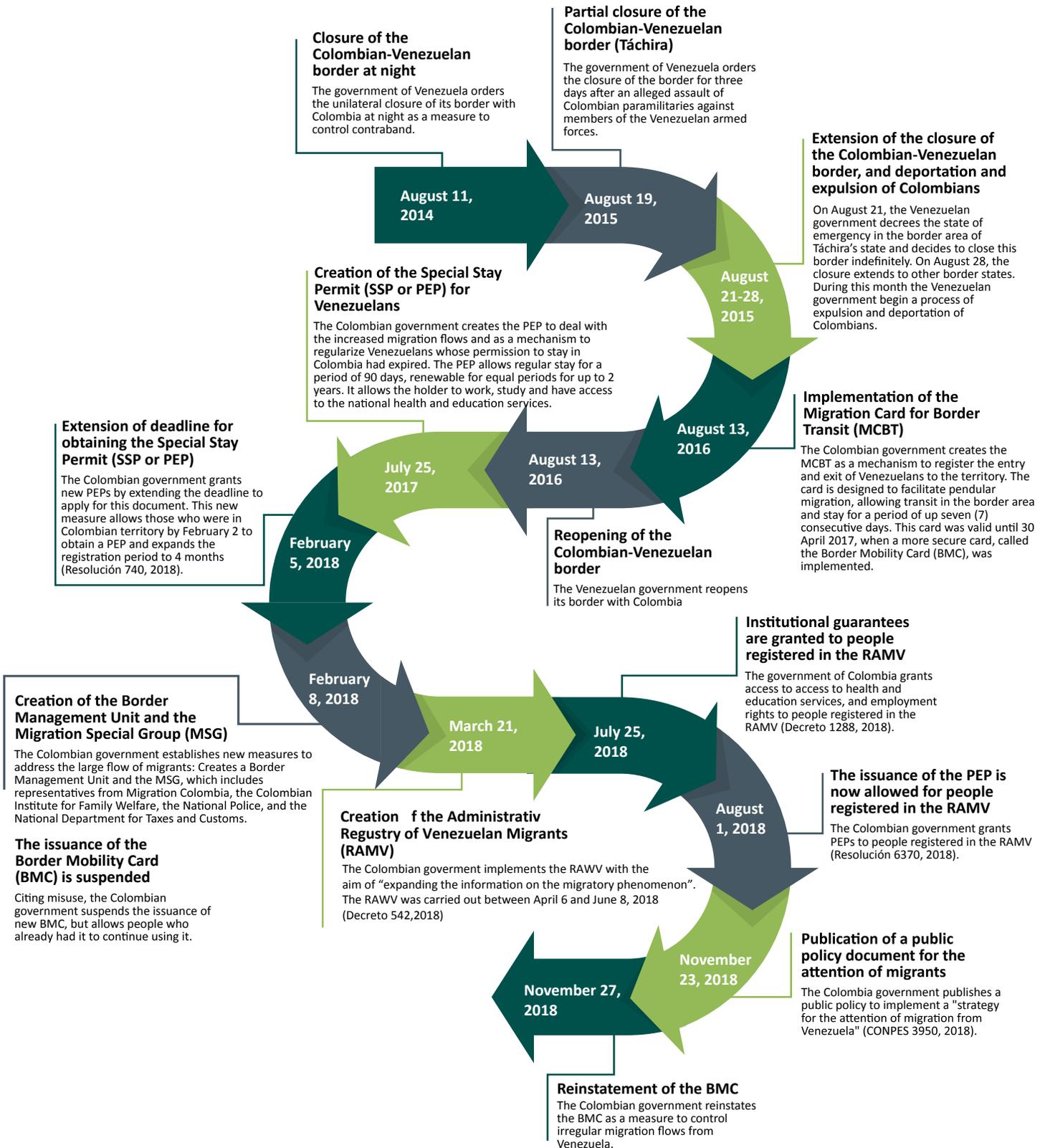
Given the fluid nature of the socio-political and economic situation in Venezuela and, consequently, of the migration flows towards Colombia, the state has continued to develop and adapt its programmatic response mechanisms, as well as its efforts to facilitate the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelans into the country. Finally, although Colombia has been internationally recognized for its solidarity and diligent response to the Venezuelan exodus, it is clear that its migration policies have been a patchwork of emergency measures and decrees, and that a broader articulation and long-term planning are lacking. These gaps in policy may threaten the effective integration of migrants into Colombian society and prevent the safe and adequate conditions adopted in the UN Global Compact for Migration.

Table 2 below presents a chronology of the bilateral crisis between Venezuela and Colombia and the administrative and legal measures taken to deal with recent migrant inflows.

---

6. This Decree also includes measures to promote the return of Colombians residing in Venezuela.

**Table 2.**  
**Chronology of the bilateral crisis and response from the Colombian government (2014-2018).**



Source: Own construction. December 2018.



Guajiro market / informal trade center.

Maicao, La Guajira, October 2018.

### 3 MIGRATION OF VENEZUELANOS IN A BORDER MUNICIPALITY: MAICAO AS A CASE STUDY

Maicao is a municipality in the department of La Guajira<sup>7</sup> located in northeast Colombia (see Figure 2). With an estimated population of 164,424 people, it is the third most populated municipality in this department. Maicao is a multicultural town, and is host to a significant indigenous population (mainly from the Wayúu ethnic group) (DANE, n.d.)<sup>8</sup> as well as Afro-Colombians and descendants of Middle Eastern immigrants (Culture Ministry, n.d.).

**Figure 2**  
Map of the Colombian-Venezuelan peninsular region



Source: Colombia Information Management and Analysis Unit (UMAIC). November 2018.

7. Colombia is a unitary republic made up of thirty-two departments.

8. La Guajira holds the third largest indigenous population among departments. This corresponds to 44.95%, or over 625,000 Wayúu (DANE, n.d.).

Maicao's proximity to the Caribbean Sea and the border of Venezuela makes the area a hub for high commercial flow. Commerce is the main economic activity of the municipality; however, much of this trade is illegal or informal and therefore does little to increase governmental revenue. In addition, local governments have been historically characterized by corruption and clientelism. This context, coupled with the fact that it is one of the border regions where the Colombian state has had little historical presence, has contributed to the socioeconomic problems of Maicao and its region. DANE statistics showed that among the departments, La Guajira exhibited the second highest monetary poverty rate in 2017 (52.6% against the national average of 26.9%) and extreme monetary poverty (26.5%, compared to the national average of 7.4%) (see Annexes 2 and 3). As for the labor market, although DANE (2018) reported that La Guajira had one of the lowest unemployment rates (6.5% versus the national average of 9.4%), underemployment and inadequate employment status rates were the highest in the country (see Annex 3). CONPES (2014) pointed out that in border departments "informality rates reached 80%, twenty percent above the national average" (p. 20), and a rate of unsatisfied basic needs of 47.75% was well above the national average of 27.78%.

Such factors have allowed criminal groups to flourish in the region and to take advantage of La Guajira's geostrategically located land and sea routes to develop illegal economies related to drug trafficking, smuggling, weapon trafficking, and human trafficking. According to the Ideas for Peace Foundation (Fundación Ideas para la Paz [FIP], 2018), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Gaitanist Self-Defence Forces of Colombia are based in the region where the Los Pachenca faction also operates (see Annex 4).

In the context of the current migration process, after the capital city Bogotá, La Guajira has become the department with the highest Venezuelan migrant population (120,745 persons, equivalent to 11.7% of the population – see Figure 3). However, Migration Colombia (2018a) reported that only 25,900 migrants held an SSP (or PEP). As for Maicao, it hosts 31,201 Venezuelans (as of reported in 2018), the fifth largest number among Colombian municipalities (CONPES, 2018)<sup>9</sup>. The high number of migrants in La Guajira resulted from the extensive land border shared with the state of Zulia in Venezuela (249 km), where the immigration post of Paraguachón (Maicao) is located, and where there are an estimated 130 informal trails (called trochas) that allow irregular transit (World Bank, 2018)<sup>9</sup>.

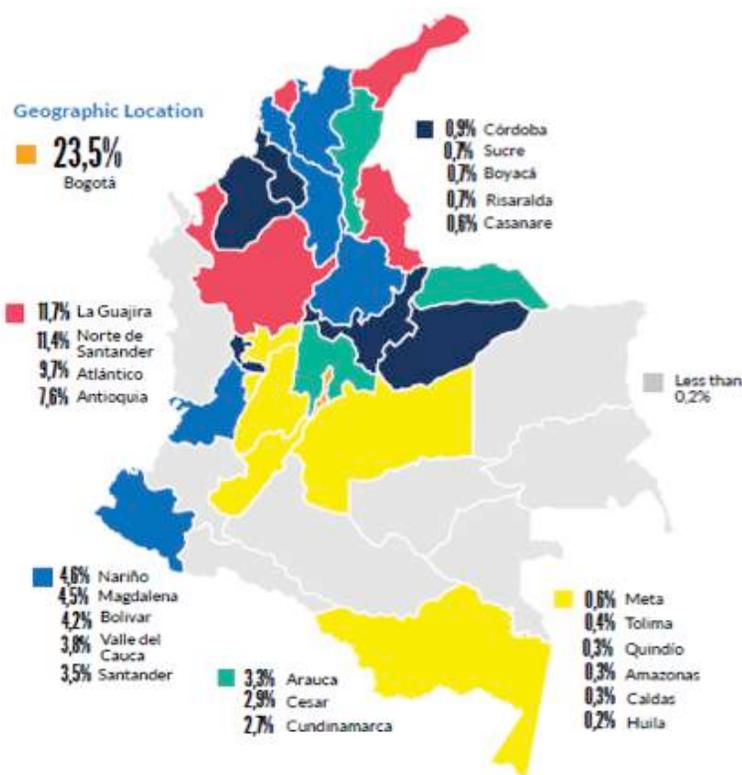
The accelerated mass migration of Venezuelans into La Guajira has presented challenges for the local authorities to meet an increasing demand for social services. A report by the General Director of Migration Colombia showed that cases of emergency health care in La Guajira rose from 257 in 2015 to 5,841 in 2017. The report also showed the burden faced by the education system. In 2015, the department's schools hosted only 4 migrant children, while in 2018 the number rose to 1,367 children (Migration Colombia, 2018c). These figures have alarmed authorities as well as the public, who argued that the region is on the verge of collapsing, urging the national government to provide more help to address the crisis. Some local leaders, including the Mayor of Maicao, have called on the national government to declare a "state of social and economic emergency"

9. The other four municipalities are, in order of number of migrants, Bogotá, D.C. Cúcuta, Barranquilla and Medellín (CONPES, 2018).

in order to expedite the transfer of resources to the region and to tackle the migration crisis<sup>10</sup>.

Considering the difficult socioeconomic conditions facing the region, a World Bank report on Venezuelan migration to Colombia classified Maicao as a “laggard border zone” (World Bank, 2018)<sup>11</sup>, presenting significant public policy challenges due to multidimensional poverty and limited economic opportunities in the municipality and in neighboring areas. According to the report, such zones “exhibit broad gaps in terms of economic opportunities and access to services and basic needs by the population. These are the most lagging regions of the country and the arrival of new migrants, especially those in conditions of poverty, makes the elimination of development deficits even more difficult” (p. 63). Thus, the region is one of high priority for policy interventions.

**Figure 3.**  
**Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia**  
**(October 2018)**



Source: Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (Grupo Interagencial de Flujos Migratorios Mixtos [GIFMM], 2018).

10. “State of emergency” is a mechanism of the Political Constitution of Colombia (1991), which enables the central government to take immediate action to address public calamities or events seriously threaten the social, economic and ecological order.

11. The two other categories used by the World Bank to classify the areas receiving Venezuelan migrants are: i) “border zones of mixed development and densely populated”, such as Cúcuta, considered a non-lagging municipality, but surrounded by municipalities exhibiting gaps in territorial development; and ii) “metropolitan areas of high incidence”, such as Barranquilla and Bogotá, characterized by advanced territorial development, implying low priority regarding interventions (World Bank, 2018, p. 63).



Venezuelan migrant sells sweets and snacks in downtown Maicao.

Maicao, La Guajira, October 2018.

## 4 | PROFILE OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS IN MAICAO: EXPERIENCES, NEEDS, AND EXPECTATIONS

This section presents an overview of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Maicao, based on surveys of 174 migrants<sup>12</sup>, three focus groups and five personal narratives. It is the result of two weeks of field research the month of October 2018. Sayara sought to have a heterogeneous sample considering gender, sexual orientation, age, schooling, socioeconomic status, time and type of migration, among other aspects, as part of the surveys, focus groups and personal narratives. Snowball sampling was used to conduct the surveys. The research team defined three places for the development of the ethnographic plan: 1) the Migrant and Refugee Care Center, 2) Paraguachón migratory control post, and 3) public spaces (Simón Bolívar Park, Public Market, and a transportation terminal).

This overview outlines the demographic characteristics of the migrants who participated in the research, including:

- Sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, family structure, and educational level
- Access to basic services (housing, health and education), economic and employment statuses (occupation and income)
- Migration experience (motivations, migratory status, access to humanitarian aid, residence expectations) and their relationships with Venezuela, their country of origin (family, remittances, intention to return)

This profile also includes five narratives (see Annex 5) from Venezuelan migrants and refugees regarding their experiences in Colombian territory.

### Sex, age and sexual orientation

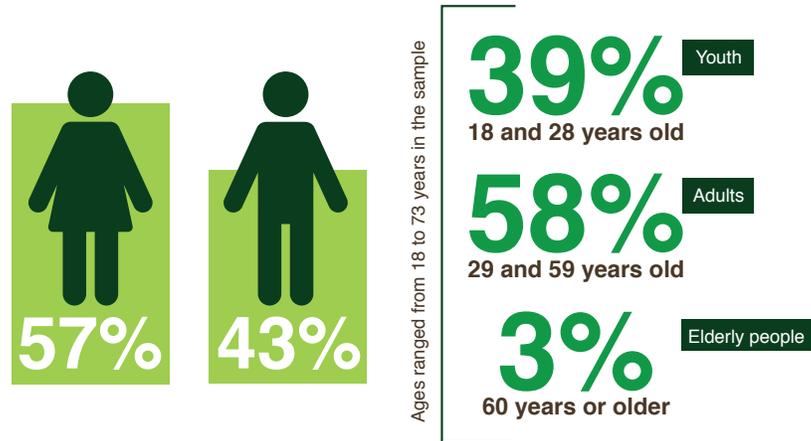
Of the total number of respondents, 100 (57%) were women and 74 (43%) were men. 67 (39%) of the respondents were youth (between 18 and 28 years of age), 101 (58%) were adults (between 29 and 59 years of age), and the remaining six (3%) were elderly (60 years or older)<sup>13</sup>. The total age range of those surveyed was between 18 to 73 years.

Regarding sexual identity, 154 (89%) of respondents said they were heterosexual, and the remaining 20 (11%) identified with one of the following identities represented in the below figure:

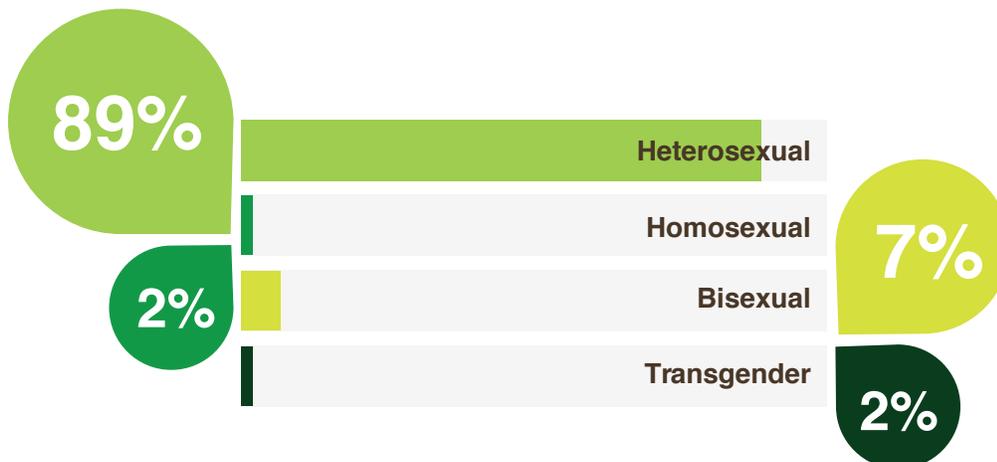
12. Out of the total 180 field surveys conducted, six of them were eliminated from the final data set as they did not comply with the inclusion criteria defined in the methodology. Focus group information has been imbued throughout the report to inform the analysis.

13. Age cohorts were determined by Colombian law.

**Figure 4.**  
**Gender and age of participants**



**Figure 5.**  
**Sexual identity of participants**



## Nationality and ethnicity

Of respondents, 168 (97%) had Venezuelan nationality, and six respondents (3%) had dual Venezuelan-Colombian nationality. In terms of ethnicity, most migrants (136, 78%) did not identify with one particular group. Among the remaining respondents, 15 (9%) self-declared as Afro-Descendants and 23 (13%) reported being from an indigenous ethnic group.

Among the remaining respondents, 15 (9%) self-declared as Afro-Descendants and 23 (13%) reported being from an indigenous ethnic group. Although the question was not included in the survey, it is likely that the vast majority of self-declared indigenous are from the Wayúu ethnic group, which has historically settled in the territory of the peninsula shared by Colombia and Venezuela (see Figure 2). The Wayúu are entitled to dual nationality and can freely move between the two countries (Holstein, 2010).

## Marital status and household structure in Colombia

Seventy-six (44%) of the respondents were in a permanent relationship, either married (7, 4%) were or in another kind of marital union (69, 40%). Seventy-five (43%) said they were single, 20 (11%) divorced, and two (1%) widowed. Only one person chose not to answer this question.

Among those in a permanent relationship, twenty-five (33%) said their partner was not residing in Colombia, reflecting a fracture in family structure. However, the proximity between the two countries favors the prospect of a future family reunification.

On the other hand, with respect to established households (defined by people who co-reside and often share food), 76 (44%) of respondents said they were residing with individuals under the age of 18 years old (classified as minors by the Colombian legislation). The number of minors residing with those who were surveyed totaled 176. In that regard, 24 (32%) of the 76 respondents with dependent minors said they did not reside with a partner or other relative or non-relative in Colombia. The lack of support from other family members or friends suggested a high number of vulnerable and precarious households. It is important to note that most of the respondents in this position were women (21 women versus only three men).

Finally, it is also important to add that nine women said they were pregnant, carrying the added risk of giving birth to potentially stateless babies, which is due to Colombian law, that only grants nationality to children born to foreign parents as long as one parent legally resides in the country, which can only be proved by a permanent or residence visa. None of the nine pregnant women were legally in Colombia at the time of the survey.

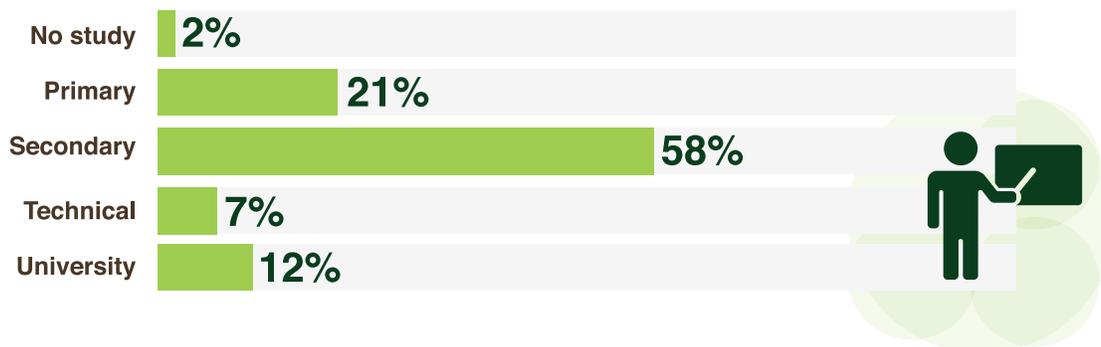
## Educational level of migrants

The educational background of the Venezuelan migrants included in this research report is classified into four levels: primary, secondary, technical and university<sup>14</sup>(see Figure 6). The last two are classified as higher education. The category “no study” was ascribed to others. The distribution is represented as follows:

Among participants at the university level (20 or 12%), only seven reported 10 semesters of study or more. Since this is the usual duration of university programs, it is more likely that only these seven individuals obtained a professional degree, and that migration had led to the discontinuation of their studies. In sum, the data shows that the surveyed migrants on average had lower levels of education.

Fifty-two (30%) respondents reported having children or adolescents between five and 17 years of age, most of which (38) said that they were not attending school. The main reasons for these children not attending school were: 1) not being offered a place at school, 2) irregular status of the child/adolescent and 3) not being able to afford to study.

**Figure 6.**  
**Educational level of participants**



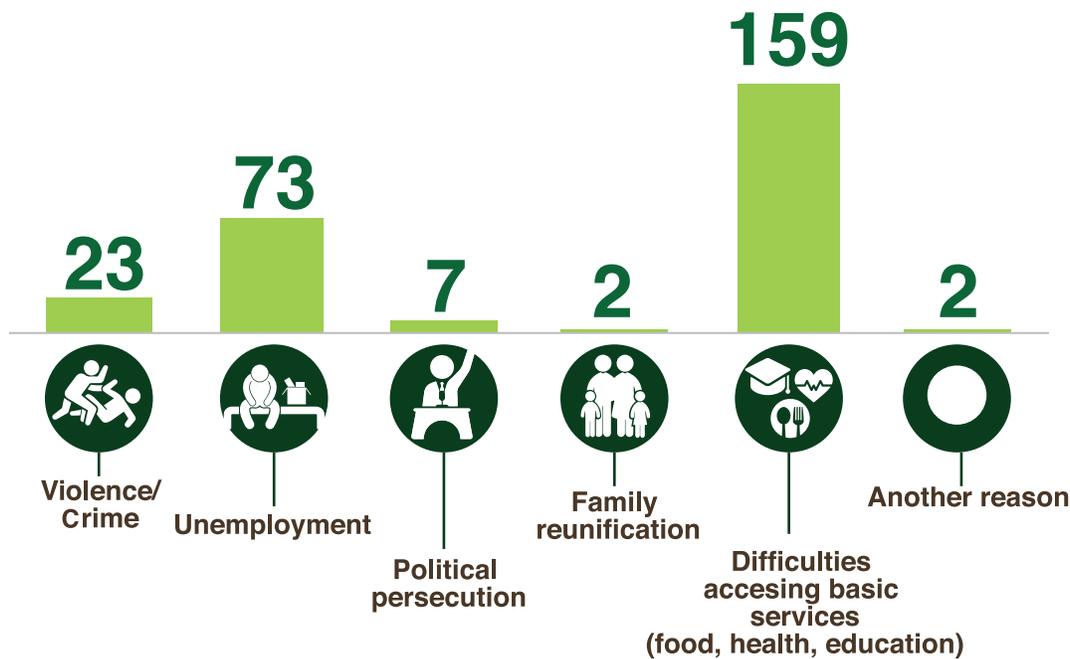
## Migration to Colombia

Although reasons for migrating differed, the vast majority of participants agreed on one point: the difficulty of accessing basic services (food, health, and education) in Venezuela. A large fraction also agreed on unemployment as a key reason for leaving Venezuela. The figure below displays the participants’ given explanations for migrating.

Survey results concurred with testimonies given by the migrants. In particular, the stories told by participants conveyed a narrative that despite the adversities of staying in Colombia, their stay there was necessary in order to acquire the basic necessities for life.

14. To be placed in a category, individuals must have completed at least one, and not necessarily all grades at that level.

**Figure 7.**  
Reasons for migrating reported by participants



\*Some migrants and refugees mentioned more than one reason to migrate out of Venezuela.

One Venezuelan woman said that in Colombia, “at least we eat.” Another woman, highlighting the dire situation in Venezuela, said “at least here, [in Colombia] we survive.”

*“We fled our country because we have to survive. If we stayed there in Venezuela, our children and my grandchildren would die. That is why we are here, in Colombia, migrating.”*

**– Juliana, Venezuelan woman**

*“Because of my family. Because there, we find work, but money isn’t enough. There the minimum wage is not enough, not even for a kilo of rice nor for flour. I have my mom, my dad, three brothers—a family that I have to support and send money to. Thank God, I am here in Maicao. It’s going, and it has gone well for me, and I can send money to my mother.”*

**– Roberto, Venezuelan man**

*“We are here in Colombia, with pain in my heart for leaving my country, abandoned, but I didn’t leave it because I wanted to, but because of the situation there. How is it possible that there are children who have stopped studying in Venezuela because they don’t even have the money to buy a pair of shoes? Today, for example, my daughter calls me saying: “Mommy, my daughter is going to start classes, but a pair of shoes costs me much more than two minimum wages. “My God, what can I do? Today I’m already gathering what I can, little by little, to buy shoes for my granddaughter. So, she can go to class.”*

**– Marina, Venezuelan woman**

*“I prefer to stay here in Maicao, here in Colombia, because at least here, we survive. With 500<sup>15</sup> Colombian Pesos (COP) you can drink, or you can eat something. Back in Venezuela, how can a flour cost you more than the minimum wage?! Where are we going to get that money to eat? If we buy rice with what are we going to eat it with? With water? It is not fair!”*

**– Monica, Venezuelan woman**

*“There we don’t have necessities. Once, I remember I spent a whole day without eating in Venezuela. A whole day without eating! What could I do? At least here we eat.”*

**– Natalia, Venezuelan woman**

*“It costs me a lot. My two oldest children have autism and I didn’t want to leave them alone. I have four children. They need treatment, but I can’t afford it. That is why I decided to come. I remember how painful it was. It hurt a lot when my 10-year-old son, told me that I didn’t love him because the classes at school started and he didn’t get to go to class. He said that I didn’t love him because I didn’t buy him a school uniform and all those things. That was the end of the line. I felt that I had to do something and that is why I decided to come here. To find healthcare, education, and food. Looking for the possibility that when returning I can solve this situation - health, school, and of course, feeding my children.”*

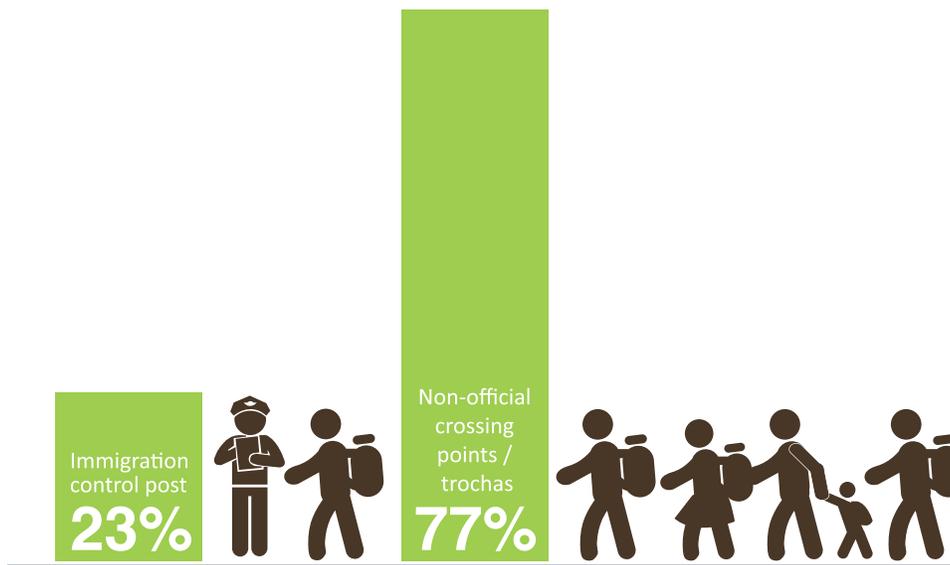
**– Ruth, Venezuelan woman**

---

15. Equivalent to \$0.16 USD

In seeking a way to provide for their families and to survive, most respondents entered Colombia irregularly, as shown in the below figure.

**Figure 8.**  
**Entry to Colombia from Venezuela**



These results were consistent with previous studies confirming there is widespread use of irregular roads (called trochas) between the two countries (OCHA 2015; World Bank, 2018). This irregular migration has been mostly attributed to the difficulty Venezuelans have in obtaining passports (a requirement for access into Colombia), due to their costs or long waiting times. Regarding this issue, two participants explained in the reasons why they entered irregularly:

*“I don’t have a passport and to be able to travel to another country they demand it from me. Here they didn’t ask for it... or yes they demand it, but I came by the trochas.”*

**– Edilma, Venezuelan woman**

*“You have to pay a lot to get your passport. So, if we tried to get a take out our passport, we wouldn’t be able to could not eat. At least I get one meal now, at home, ate at noon but not at night.”*

**– Lorna, Venezuelan woman**

Access to Colombia through trochas has been exceedingly risky due to the presence of criminal groups in those areas (World Bank, 2018; FIP, 2018; OCHA, 2015). Those groups illegally collect money from migrants in exchange for access across the border. Among the participants who traveled on such roads, one hundred and thirty-four (68%) said they had to pay someone to cross the border. The following testimonies describe the experience of one migrant's encounter with a criminal group:

*“When we came, we passed through the trocha. We had to pay and we paid the guards for the things we brought. We also had to pay at irregular checkpoints (mecates). That was the most surprising thing. All along the road, there were about 25 or 30 mecates where armed men charged money to in order to allow vehicles to go through. In order to pass the wagon, they charge a fee to the wagon's owner. If he does not pay, they send everyone down. They threaten, they inspect, and they steal. Everybody must pay something. If they were interested in someone, they'd kidnap him or her. If it was a woman, they'd violate her. We've heard from many that they've killed people for not paying what they demanded”.*

*“They speak in Wayuu. In this part of Maicao and Venezuela, people speak Guajiro<sup>16</sup>. I cannot say if they were Venezuelan or Colombian. Once you pass the trocha, no one bothers you, not even the DIAN. The DIAN will stop the truck, see all the faces and that is enough. But, instead, the Venezuelan Guard takes away everything you bring. They take away your things and your money. They extort you. It is complicated.”*

**– Amelia, Venezuelan woman**

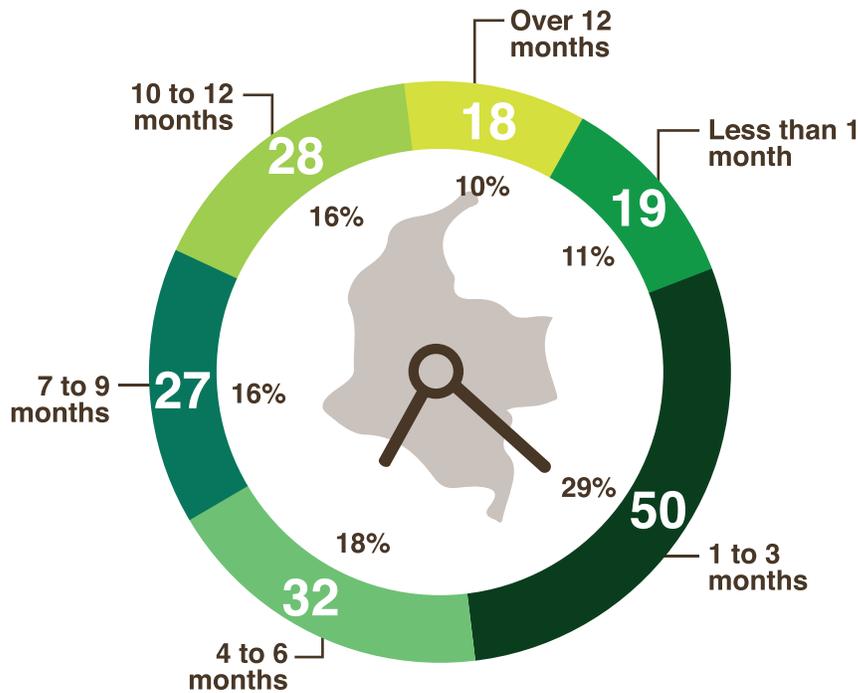
---

16. Referring to Wayúu's native language

## Permanence in Colombia and immigration status

Most respondents (50, 29%) had been in Colombia for one to three months at the time of the survey (October 2018).

**Figure 9.**  
**Length of stay in Colombia**



Respondents with up to three months of residence in Colombia (69, 40%) could not be included in the registration process (RAMV) by the government because it was carried out between April and June 2018, (i.e. prior to their arrival to Colombia). They have therefore been denied the Special Stay Permit (SSP or PEP) that grants Venezuelan migrants the right to work and access to social services in Colombia.

Some migrants, however, were in Colombia by the time the RAMV was carried out, or while SSPs (or PEP) were awarded. Survey results suggest that many were not included in either initiative. Figures 11 and 12 below show the migration status of respondents and the reasons they provided for not having yet registered their status in Colombia:

Figure 10.  
Migration status

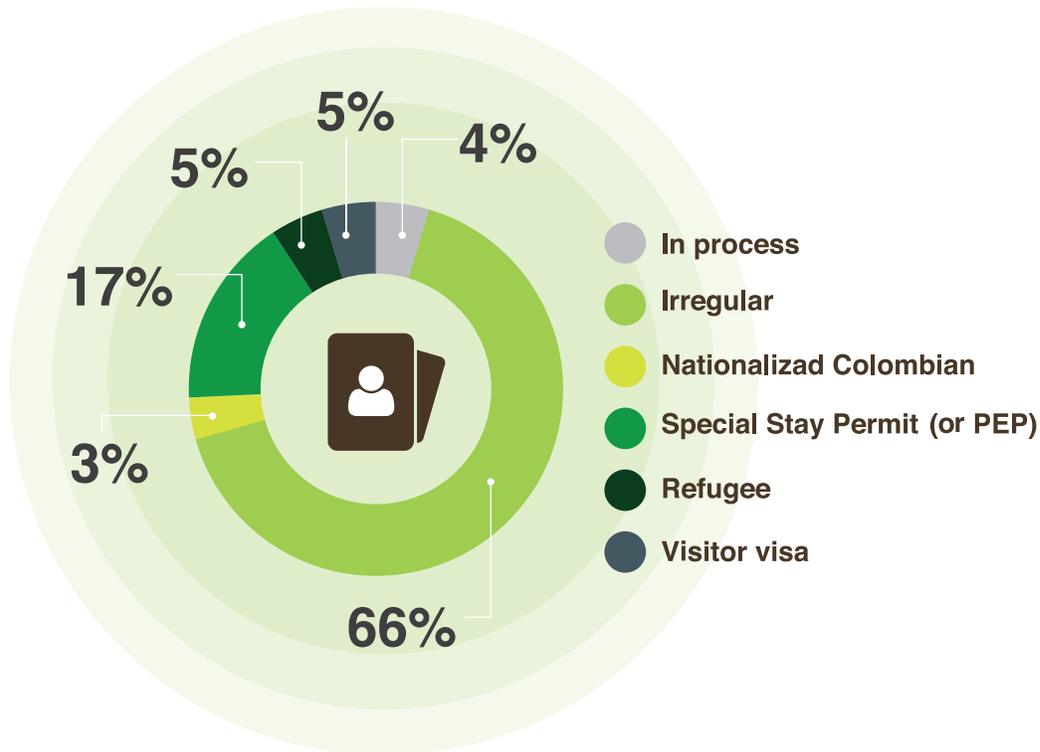
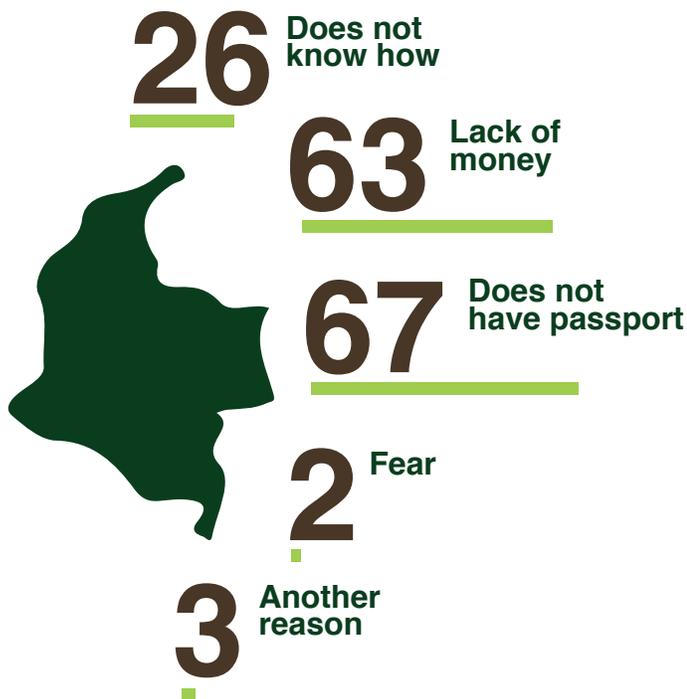


Figure 11.  
Reasons for not having regularized immigration status in Colombia



\* Some respondents gave more than one reason, and some did not answer the question since they had a Special Stay Permit (SSP or PEP)

Venezuelan migrants in Colombia did not need to have documentation to participate in the RAMV or to apply for the SSP. Therefore, there appears to be a lack of awareness in Maicao about these government initiatives to regularize their status.

## Housing and access to basic services

A high number of respondents (63, 36%), described themselves as homeless, and a further percentage (21, 12%) said they resided in a shelter— the Migrant and Refugee Care Center. Study sources declared that (at the moment this research was conducted) there was only one shelter in Maicao, which have been operating as a “step home” and allows only short stays (three days on average). With only one shelter, there is a risk that an increasing number of people will become homeless. Additionally, 22 (13%) of the participants reported that they resided in places such as garages or courtyards, which mostly fail to provide access to water and electricity. The remaining respondents, 68 (39%), resided in a house, apartment or room.

According to the ethnographic work completed in Maicao, homeless people tend to live in three main locations: 1) the area around the aforementioned shelter (Migrant and Refugee Care Center); 2) the area surrounding the parking lot of the Espresso Brasilia transport company, where there is a constant influx of people moving to and from Venezuela; and 3) the commercial zone in Maicao’s city Centre. Interviews with migrants indicate the emotional and physical impact of sleeping in the street without adequate living conditions. Some testimonies of this are outlined below<sup>17</sup>:

*“When I arrived here, in Colombia, I slept on the street. I slept for a week in the square by Movistar, behind the Tierra Santa. I slept on the floor with water falling on me. I went hungry many nights, while trying to look for work. Sometimes I bathed and sometimes I didn’t.”*

**– Andrea, Venezuelan woman**

*“One night spent on the street lowers your self-esteem. And so on, for every day. Can you imagine that?”*

**– Camilo, Venezuelan man**

*“I came here and risked my life, only to find this. I wouldn’t wish this on my family. I would have preferred for us to die on the way to Colombia, but not to die like this. I cry almost every night. I do not wish this for anyone. I see the children crying when it’s raining. Can you imagine, at 3 o’clock in the morning, a boy and his mother lying on the ground in the rain?”*

**– Julian, Venezuelan man**

17. The names in each testimony are pseudonyms given to preserve the migrant’s anonymity.

*“My baby developed scabies because we sleep on the floor, on the sidewalk. We don’t even have sheets. Here on our back are the only clothes we have. Sometimes I wear these same clothes for three days in a row, because I don’t have a place to wash them. I don’t have a sheet to sleep on. I would like to have a mattress for my girls, or at least a sheet. I want someone to help me. With anything. I have two girls, and we need basic necessities. Yesterday, it rained all night and we were all wet because we don’t have a place to sleep. I asked people for help, but nobody wanted to help me.”*

**– Cecilia, Venezuelan woman**

*“I don’t ask for money. I ask that someone rent something to me for my children. Somewhere where we won’t get rained on. Yesterday, we got wet. And it’s terrible because we have children, you know? They are getting wet. I really want a little house to live with my children, and a job.”*

**– Teresa, Venezuelan woman**

*“I sleep in a parking lot; I sleep on the ground. I’ve been here for five months now. Thank God they have taken good care of me and my baby, but I feel uncomfortable because there are more than twenty people in the parking lot. So, I would really like, I’m going around to see if I can get a little space or a house to rent with one more person. I have my clothes in a bag, and if it rains, everything gets wet. It is uncomfortable to live like this., Really, it is a crazy idea to come here. You don’t know how you are going to live and what challenges you will face. If we knew how much we would suffer, we would not have come, especially with a child.”*

**– Silvia, Venezuelan woman**

## Health and access to medical services

The vast majority of the respondents (171, 97%) were not enrolled in the Colombian health system. Eighty-three migrants (47%) said they had never used health services in the country. Some migrants avoided public health services for fear of deportation. For this reason, they often resorted to NGOs such as the Colombian Red Cross or Americares.

The survey also examined the extent to which migrants were affected by disease or chronic medical conditions requiring medical monitoring<sup>18</sup>. The survey showed that 44 (25%) of the migrants have a special health condition such as pregnancy, high blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, and epilepsy.

---

18. In the report “Response Plan from the Health Sector to the Migratory Phenomenon” the Colombian Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud de Colombia, 2018) presents an analysis of public health events related to Venezuelans between 2017 and 2018. According to this report, public health cases increased significantly from 581 in 2017 to 1526 in 2018. Among the main events are: cases of malaria (from 314 to 599 cases), gender violence (from 71 to 218 cases), HIV/AIDS/AIDS Mortality (from 20 to 82 cases), acute malnutrition in children under five years (from 13 to 87 cases), dengue (from 6 to 30 cases), tuberculosis (from 14 to 59 cases), and measles (from 0 to 11 cases). For the full report on public health cases, see Tables 4-5 of the cited report (pp. 43-46).

## Employment and income

Even though the vast majority of those surveyed were of working age, only nine respondents (5%) reported having a formal job. Further, none of them are affiliated with the Colombian social security system (which is mandatory for legal workers). Therefore, these migrants were not covered by current labor regulations or rights. In addition, all of the respondents declared a monthly income below the legal minimum wage, which suggests that they were either illegally employed or self-employed and unable to secure an income above the minimum wage in order to afford affiliation with the social security system.

Of the respondents, 120 (69%) were unemployed, followed by a large number of informal workers— 43 migrants (25%). However, it should be noted that many of the people who declared unemployment later claimed to obtain their income from informal work. The following figure shows the various reasons mentioned for unemployment:

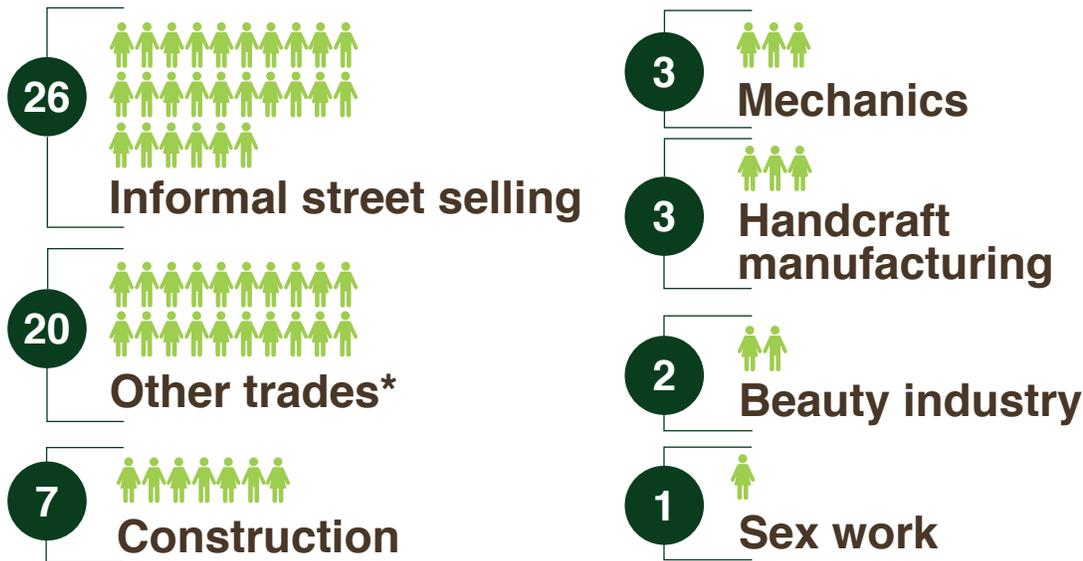
**Figure 12.**  
**Reasons for unemployment**



This question was answered by all those who claimed to be unemployed (with the exception of one), for a total of 119 respondents.

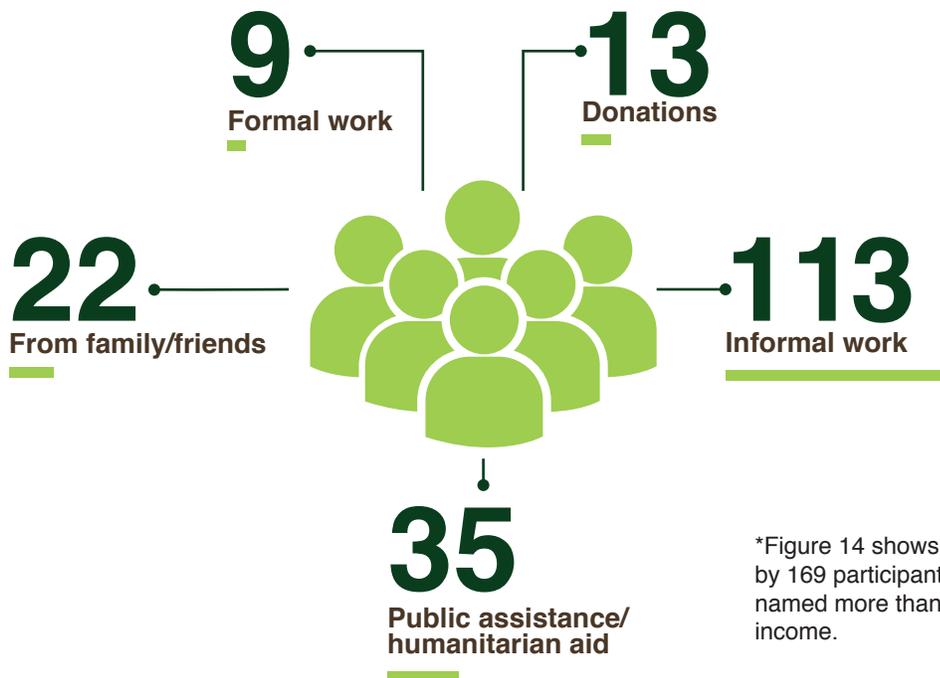
Amongst those formally or informally employed (52, 30%), the figure below represents the employment sectors where the migrants were employed by the date the surveys were conducted:

**Figure 13.**  
Employment by sector<sup>19</sup>\*



As mentioned, participants were also asked about the sources of income (Figure 14). Some indicated more than one source. For example, at least nine migrants said that their income derived either from informal work, public assistance or humanitarian aid. Among the latter, two individuals mentioned a third additional source: one mentioned family and/or friends, and the other mentioned donations.

**Figure 14.**  
Sources of income\*



\*Figure 14 shows answers given by 169 participants. Some of them named more than one source of income.

19. Other trades include, for example, jobs related to cleaning houses or hotels and work in the kitchen.

In the interviews, employment emerged as one of the most pressing issues, as many migrants had not yet found a stable job to meet the basic needs of themselves or their families in Colombia (or of family members still in Venezuela through remittances). As one Venezuelan woman pointed out, “if you don’t work, you don’t eat; if you don’t work, you sleep in the street.”

Several participants attributed their unemployment to stigmatization from the host community, while others ascribed it to the difficult economic conditions in the region. The lack of formal jobs has pushed many migrants into informal jobs (Figure 14), often as vendors of a diverse set of products in public spaces. In the following testimonies, participants describe their difficulties seeking employment, the effects on their well-being, and their coping strategies.

*“I have gone out with my aunt to the street. We look for something to sell, anything, because the truth is that there is no work here, there is nothing. So, we go out, we see what we get, and we sell it. We help each other. If we have work, we eat; if not, we don’t eat.”*

**– Lucía, Venezuelan woman**

*“I have gone out to look for work in family homes. People are rude because we’re Venezuelans. They say, ‘all Venezuelans are thieves, they steal from you.’”*

**– Estella, Venezuelan woman**

*“Yes, there are places to work, but what happens is that, if you’re a Venezuelan, they don’t give you work. But there are sources of work. What happens is that here, everyone pays the price. If one Venezuelan does a bad thing, we all face the consequences.”*

**– Clara, Venezuelan woman**

*“A lady asked me, ‘are you Venezuelan?’ he said, ‘give me my sandals and get out.’ She kicked me out and she didn’t pay me. I felt bad. I left, and when I got around the corner, I started crying. It is contempt.”*

**– Felipe, Venezuelan man**

*“I am old. I am 55 years old, and my boy is ten years old. He’s disabled. What do I do? I sell coffee and water. How did I start? Selling chewing gum, with two thousand pesos that someone gave me. I started selling gum, selling shorts, selling lamps. Thank God, in the parking lot, the owner gave me a place [...]. I pay 10 thousand pesos a day<sup>20</sup> and use what I have left to afford at least a piece of bread with water at night for my son and me.”*

**– Carolina, Venezuelan woman**

*“Since I’ve arrived here, I have worked. My husband and I have sold this and that. We go out to sell water... and with the baby [...] my son comes with me. I sell water, I sell vegetables. I go to work with him.”*

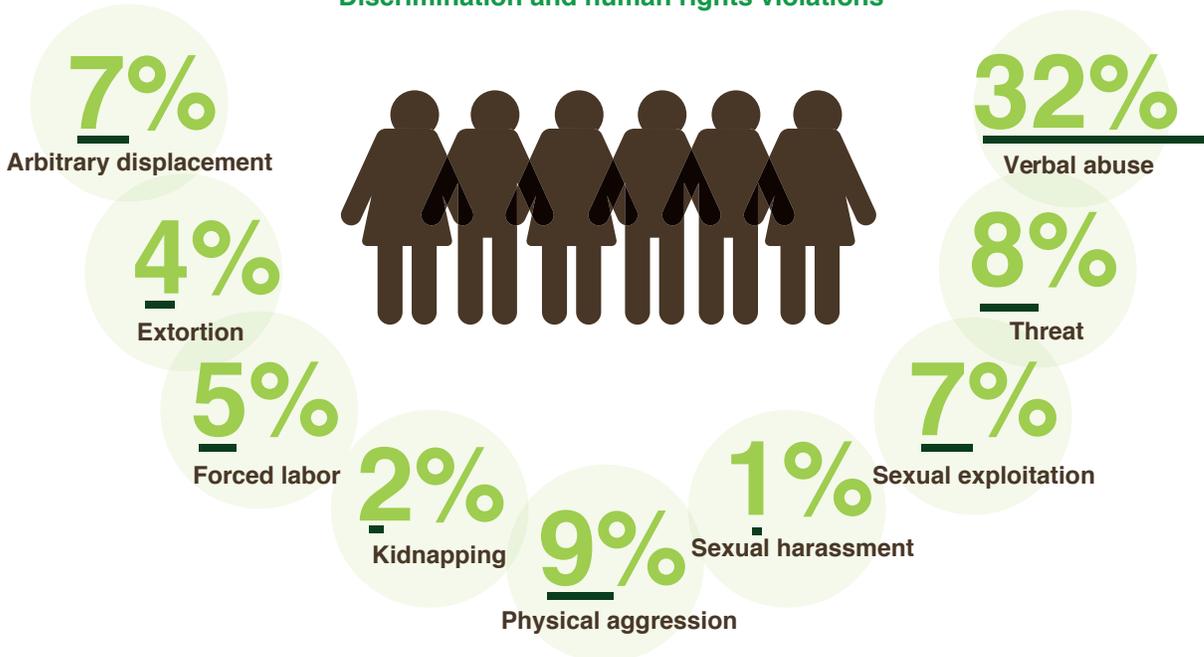
**– Isabel, Venezuelan woman**

## Experiences of discrimination and violation of human rights

Fifty-five (32%) of the migrants claimed that their human rights had been violated in some way; examples include episodes of verbal abuse, physical aggression, threat, arbitrary displacement, sexual harassment, and forced labor, amongst others. Figure 15 shows the forms of violations experienced by the 55 interviewees stated above. Some migrants named more than one type of violation.

**Figure 15.**

### Discrimination and human rights violations\*



\* 55 out of 174 surveyed, reported some violation of their human rights. Some migrants named more than one type of discrimination and/or rights violation.

20. 10,000 COP is equivalent to \$3.38 USD

Additionally, many respondents (83, 48%) said they have felt discriminated against for their migrant status. Most of them described a general sense of discrimination from the public (73, 88%), and a smaller fraction named authorities or public officials as the source of discrimination (nine, 11%). As the testimonies above exemplify, several participants believe that discrimination is a result of the bad behavior of a few Venezuelans that come to represent the group as a whole. Many concur, saying that “we all pay for what only a few did,” or “when a Venezuelan man or woman does something bad, we all pay.” Such statements underscore the challenges of integrating within a wave of tensions between local and migrant communities.

### Needs, humanitarian aid and social support

The vast majority of participants agreed that employment is their main or one of their main needs; followed by access to shelter and medical assistance. The following figure shows the main needs identified in the survey:

**Figure 16.**  
Main needs of participants\*

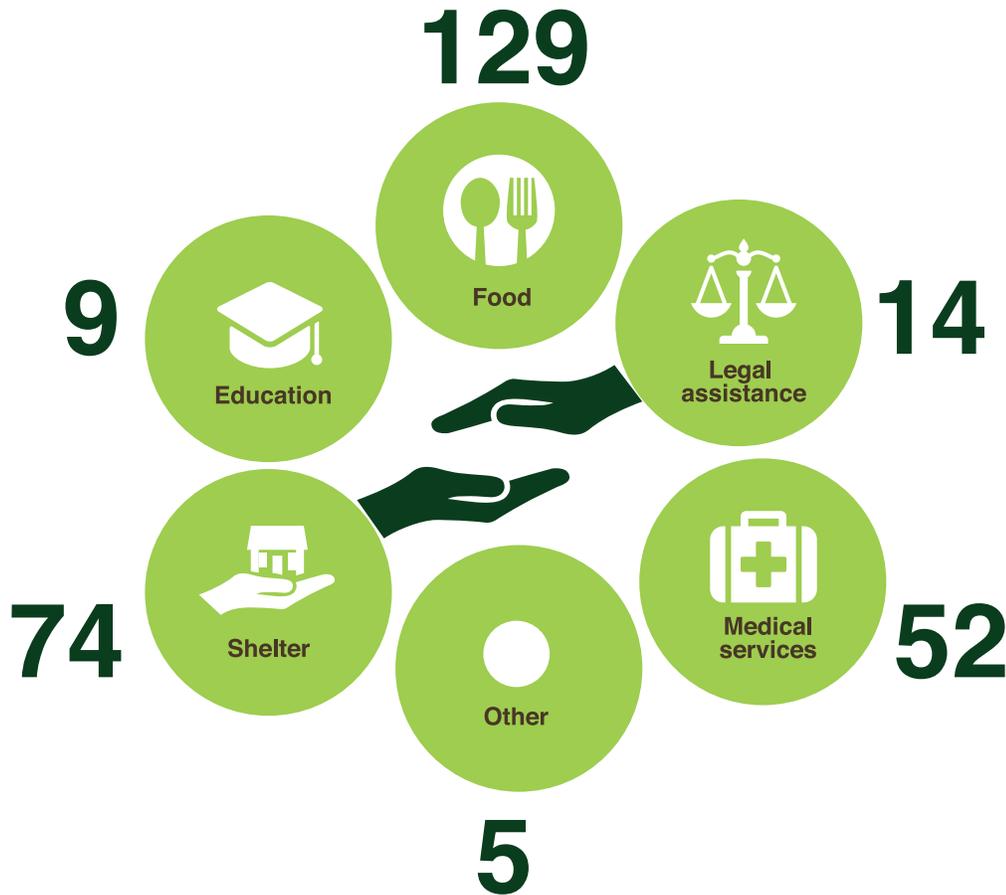


\* The total sample was 174. Some migrants reported having more than one type of need.

Regarding humanitarian aid, 138 (78%) of the migrants said they have received some form of institutional help from public or private organizations. The following figure reflects

the number of surveyed migrants that received aid in education, food, legal assistance, medical services, shelter or other domains:

**Figure 17.**  
**Aid received from public or private organizations\***



\*\*The total sample was 174. Some migrants reported having received more than one type of aid.

Figure 17 shows that humanitarian aid targeted three main needs: food, shelter and medical services. Though in a comparison of Figures 16 and 17, it emerges that institutional actors have not satisfied the needs specifically cited by migrants, particularly in terms of employment. Instead, lack of employment and income generates a cycle of dependence on humanitarian assistance. Unfortunately, for many migrants the reality of the aid available differs vastly from their expectations.

*“Here we go out to look for work, but there are no sources of work. That is what we need because we don’t want to spend our lives here begging and waiting for someone to give us breakfast and lunch. We want to make our own food and be able to pay rent. Cover the needs of our children, buy his clothes, and everything else.*

**– Carla, Venezuelan woman**

*“Those of us who come to work would like someone to consider this, to develop a way to help. We don’t want people to give us things all the time, we would like people to allow us the opportunity to practice our professions here. We haven’t come here for pity, we are eager to contribute, but we can’t do that in Venezuela. If they give me the opportunity to work, surely, I can contribute because I can bring many benefits to the community.”*

**– Guillermo, Venezuelan man**

*“I have listened to Colombians when they talk to each other: “Hey, but nobody told them to come.” Okay, nobody asked us to come here, nobody. However, we are not asking anything from them either; we don’t ask them anything. I came to earn my own things and, when I say earn, I mean that I came to work, and if I come to work it’s because I’m going to be productive to this country because in my country, no one can be productive anymore.”*

**– Eduardo, Venezuelan man**

The survey also investigated non-institutional sources of support. Sixty-nine (40%) participants said that they had relatives or friends in Colombia able to contribute towards accommodation, food and employment.

## Expectations regarding the immigration process

Most migrants say that they intend to remain in Colombia. The survey shows that 100 (57%) want to continue in the municipality of Maicao itself, while 61 (35%) would rather move to a different town in Colombia. The remaining 13 (8%) plan to migrate to another country.

The following participant responses offered explanations for their desires to stay in Maicao or to relocate:

*“We don’t get any job here. The little bit we get, we use to pay for rent. Sometimes we go to bed without eating so we can pay for a bed. That is one of the reasons why many people leave Colombia. There is no help. Here if you don’t have a Colombian identity card, they don’t help you.”*

**– Claudia, Venezuelan woman**

*“I plan to get to Bogotá. I have a cousin there and friends there, who offered me help to stay until I get a place or something I can afford. But I will be here meanwhile. Because of everything they have offered for me and my baby, I’m going to stay here in Maicao.”*

**– Sara, Venezuelan woman**

*"I came here because this is like a portal; it's closer to Venezuela. I think about being here and then continuing later, God willing, but first, I have to go back to get my children."*

**– Marta, Venezuelan woman**

*"I've decided to stay here because at least the baby will start studying and in fact, they told me to find a place to move because where I live is very uncomfortable. I'm doing all I can to get a little house to live. I don't want to go to another place. I was invited to go to Medellín, to Barranquilla, but I don't want to go."*

**– Lorena, Venezuelan woman**

*"I'm very close to my country. I'm here, just a few hours from my house, my home, and I would rather stay here."*

**– Carlos, Venezuelan man**

*"I like Maicao, I feel like I'm closer to Venezuela and you never know. If anything happens, we can easily go back to Venezuela."*

**– Álvaro, Venezuelan man**

Regarding the relationship with Venezuela, 98 (56%) of the participants said they do not want to return to their country of origin in the short term. Although many expressed sadness and nostalgia for Venezuela, they claimed to not want to return because of the ongoing economic crisis. On the contrary, 124 (71%) of participants stated that their remaining relatives in Venezuela are planning to migrate to Colombia as well.

*"There are things I need here in Maicao, but I don't plan to return to Venezuela until everything is settled. I want to return, but I'm afraid to leave because of the necessities."*

**– Julia, Venezuelan woman**

Among those who plan to return, many cited reasons such as visiting family, Christmas festivities, and assisting other prospective migrants and their families, but only a small number (4) said that they intended to leave due to poor living conditions in Colombia.

Finally, it should be added that 144 (83%) of respondents stated that there are some people in Venezuela who rely on income transfers, as 88 (61%) of them were sending remittances to cover the cost of food, education, and medicine.

Annex 5 contains the narratives of five Venezuelan migrants' experiences from departure to arrival in Colombia.



Venezuelan sister comforts her newborn brother in the streets of Maicao.

Maicao, La Guajira, October 2018.

## 5 THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE MIGRATION CRISIS

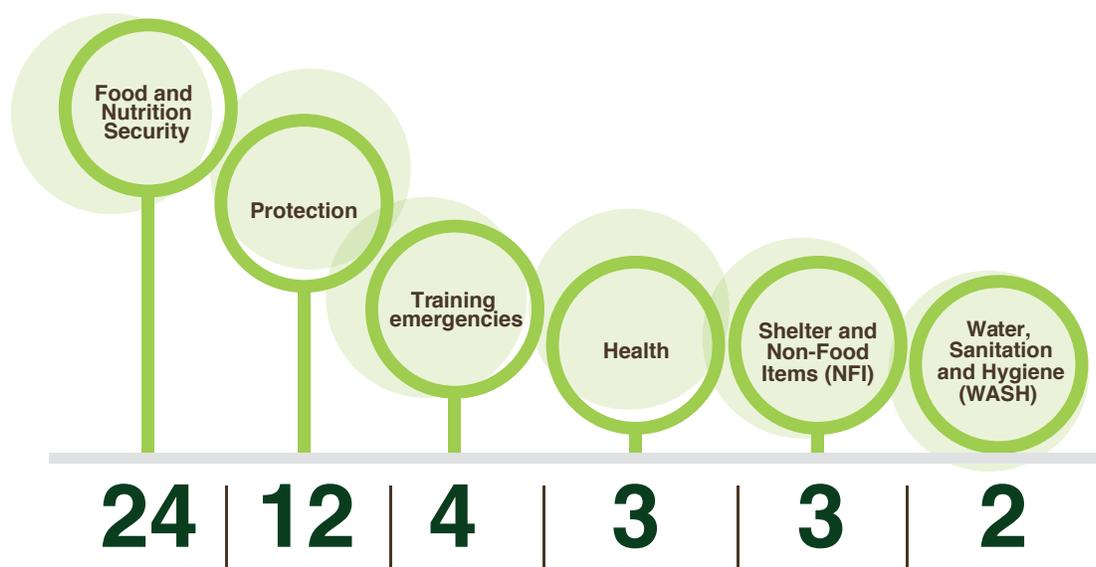
Important national and international actors have mobilized to launch humanitarian aid projects in Colombia as a result of Venezuelan mass emigration. According to the Regional Platform for Inter-agency Coordination of Refugees and Migrants in Venezuela,<sup>21</sup> 19 organizations have acted in Colombia and they have implemented 275 projects in different areas. La Guajira has the second largest number of executed projects amongst all of the departments (48), second only to Norte de Santander (74). Table 3 and Figure 18 show the organizations and the number of activities in the region by area of intervention.

**Table 3.**  
**Organizations with presence in La Guajira and number of activities**  
**(September 2018)**

Organization	Activities
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	10
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	6
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	5
International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC)	5
Action Against Hunger (AAH)	4
World Vision International (WVI)	4
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	2
World Food Program (WFP)	2
Save the Children (SC)	2
United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)	2
Aldeas Infantiles SOS (AISC)	1
Colombian Red Cross (CRC)	1
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	1
UN Women (UNW)	1
Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)	1
United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>

Source: Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, September 2018 (UNHCR, 2018a).

**Figure 18.**  
**Humanitarian activities according to intervention areas**



Source: Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, September 2018 (UNHCR, 2018a).

The Regional Platform offers data on organizations and projects at the department level, but not at the municipality level. A second platform called the Colombia Information Management and Analysis Unit (in Spanish, the “Unidad de Manejo y Análisis de Información Colombia” [UMAIC]), tracks information at the municipality level. The UMAIC lists in Maicao 16 organizations and 24 projects (see Annex 6).

### International funding

The Regional Platform for Interagency Coordination for Refugees and Migrants of Venezuela and its members have been supported through funding contributions by development agencies and international governments such as: Latter Day Saints Charities, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), CERF, Diocese of Riohacha, the Embassy of Japan, Caritas, the Canadian Cooperation, the US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Aktion Deutschland Hilft, the German Embassy, the Government of Brazil, COSUDE, the European Union, the Emergency Children’s Help Organization (ECHO), The Bureau of Population,

21 .The Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform is co-led by UNCHR and IOM and was established following the request by the UN Secretary-General, on April 12th, 2018, to develop a strategy to lead and coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela at the regional level. In some countries, the strategy is being replicated through the establishment and strengthening of local coordination mechanisms, in collaboration with host Governments. In Colombia, the local coordination group is called the Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM in Spanish). It is co-led by UNHCR and IOM and has 38 members. Its origins go back to the end of 2016 when it was initially formed as the Interagency Border Group (GIFMM, 2018).

Refugees, and Migration (PRM), Food For Peace (FFP), AIDS, the National Military Family Association, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Brazilian Cooperation.

It should be noted that among these major donors, USAID has allocated more than \$48 million USD in additional funds to support humanitarian assistance activities in response to this regional crisis. Through its implementation partners in Colombia, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF), the World Food Program (WFP) Colombia, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, Save the Children and Social Pastoral, this US agency has focused on providing funds to support food assistance, shelter and settlement activities, multisector assistance, humanitarian coordination and information management, psychosocial support, protection, health care, water, sanitation and hygiene, totaling FY 2018 \$ 15,846,508 USD (see Annex 8).

With the contribution of \$13 million USD in USAID / FFP funds in FY 2018, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) continues to provide food assistance to vulnerable people in Colombia in the departments of Arauca, La Guajira and Norte de Santander.

It has also allocated \$ 4.7 million USD in USAID / OFDA funds for activities in the healthcare sector, a program aimed at improving the capacities of healthcare institutions by providing technical assistance, supporting vaccination activities, and supporting mental health services. Likewise, it has allocated more than \$900,000 USD from USAID / OFDA, to improve livelihoods in the departments of Cundinamarca, Nariño and Norte de Santander, and in the capital city of Bogotá.

Through its UNHCR partner, USAID reported support for assistance in education, health, legal, and shelter to vulnerable Venezuelans and members of the host communities in La Guajira. In 2018, this agency supported the construction of three classrooms in the municipality of Maicao to strengthen the capacity of schools to receive a greater number of Venezuelan students (USAID, 2018 ) (see Annex 9).

In 2018-2019, the European Union (EU) allocated 39 million euros to provide emergency medical care, food assistance and protection to Venezuelans in need, both within Venezuela and in neighboring countries. For Colombia specifically, the EU has designated more than 12 million euros for humanitarian aid, healthcare, food and nutrition, water and protection, prevention of conflicts, reduction of social tensions and outbreaks of violence, protection to people displaced by the crisis, as well as programs aimed at boosting the socio-economic inclusion of migrants and support for host communities.

According to a study published by the World Bank “Migration from Venezuela to Colombia: impacts and response strategies in the short and medium term” in 2018, the European Union mobilized \$4.9 million USD and bilateral donors have contributed an additional \$20.7 million USD. It also ensures that coordination

among the agencies have been complex and that “despite having managed a total of \$84 million USD, to date, July 2018, only \$4 million USD would have been executed by the different agencies due to delays in disbursements and other logistical limitations.”

The report established that a large part of the resources are executed through non-governmental organizations, “which limits the government’s capacity to direct resources towards the sectors that experience the greatest impacts, such as health and education.” One result was the creation of the Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows, an effort aimed at improving the coordination of United Nations agencies, NGOs and local governments.

Furthermore, by 2019, the Platform has developed the Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants (R4V, Response for Venezuelans), in order to support and complement the efforts of the national authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean. Such a plan was intended to impact more than 640,000 refugees in Colombia, for which a financial requirement of \$315 million dollars has been calculated. From this total, 55% would be designated to cover needs in direct emergency assistance, 11% to the protection of migrants, 28% for socioeconomic and cultural integration, and 6% towards strengthening the governments of the receiving communities (Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan, IOM and UNHCR 2019).



Locals and Venezuelan migrants commemorate the International Day of Mental Health by praying at the Migrant and Refugee Attention Center.

Maicao, La Guajira, October 2018.

## 6 PRESENCE OF HUMANITARIAN ACTORS IN MAICAO

This section presents a mapping of the various humanitarian actors in the municipality at the time of this research, as well as their projects, strategies, and challenges. The following information was gathered during two months of desk research, a review of secondary sources, two weeks of field research (in which the team conducted semi-structured interviews in Maicao), and three weeks of data systematization and analysis. Priority was given to government entities, civil society organizations (even if they are not legally constituted) and international agencies.

In order to map the presence of NGOs and Government Entities, a selection was made according to their roles in the protection of vulnerable Venezuelan migrants in the municipality of Maicao, department of La Guajira. In total, 30 interviews were conducted to gather the data expressed below.

### Governmental actors

Table 4 lists the governmental organizations (GOs) offering aid in the domains of food, education, shelter, physical and mental health, employment, legal advice and protection of human rights to Venezuelan migrants. These have been serving approximately 5,285 migrants per month.

**Table 4.**  
**Profile of governmental organizations providing programs and services for Venezuelan migrants in Maicao**

Organization	Objective of the organization	Human resource*	Programs and services for migrants	Migrants assisted in the last month
Rural Indigenous Educational Center N° 6	Provide education at the preschool, primary and secondary levels	FT: 48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food</li> <li>- Education and training</li> <li>- Prevention of human trafficking</li> <li>- Prevention of forced recruitment by non-state armed groups</li> <li>- Prevention against discrimination and xenophobia</li> <li>- Protection of the rights of children and adolescents</li> </ul>	465
San José Hospital of Maicao	Improve the health of the population of La Guajira	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FT: 462</li> <li>- PT: 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to medical assistance</li> <li>- Education and training</li> <li>- Prevention of human trafficking</li> <li>- Prevention against discrimination and xenophobia</li> <li>- Protection of the rights of children and adolescents</li> </ul>	1840

Organization	Objective of the organization	Human resource*	Programs and services for migrants	Migrants assisted in the last month
Educational institution No. 1	Provide education at the preschool, primary, secondary and vocational levels	FT: 55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Psychosocial support</li> <li>- Food</li> <li>- Education and training</li> <li>- Access to employment</li> </ul>	50
Office of Integral Attention to the LGBTI Population	Provide attention with differential focus to members of the LGBTI population in the municipality of Maicao	FT: 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Psychosocial support</li> <li>- Legal assistance</li> <li>- Education and training</li> <li>- Prevention against discrimination and xenophobia</li> <li>- Promotion and prevention in health</li> <li>- Protection of the rights of children and adolescents</li> </ul>	60
Technical Office for Persons with Disabilities	Provide attention to the population with disabilities	FT: 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to medical assistance</li> <li>- Psychosocial support</li> <li>- Promotion and prevention in health</li> </ul>	20
Maicao's Secretariat of Government	Strengthen the security, coexistence, community development and productive inclusion in the municipality	FT: 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Psychosocial support</li> <li>- Food</li> <li>- Shelter</li> <li>- Education and training</li> <li>- Prevention of human trafficking</li> <li>- Promotion and prevention in health</li> <li>- Protection of the rights of children and adolescents</li> </ul>	600
Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF)	Guarantee the welfare of children, adolescents, and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FT: 25</li> <li>- Interns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to medical assistance</li> <li>- Psychosocial support</li> <li>- Food</li> <li>- Shelter</li> <li>- Legal assistance</li> <li>- Prevention of human trafficking</li> <li>- Prevention of forced recruitment by non-state armed groups</li> <li>- Protection of the rights of children and adolescents</li> </ul>	---
Local Office of Victims of the Armed Conflict	Provide orientation to victims of the internal armed conflict on legal and assistance issues	FT: 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Legal assistance</li> <li>- Education and training</li> <li>- Access to employment</li> <li>- Prevention against discrimination and xenophobia</li> <li>- Protection of the rights of children and adolescents</li> </ul>	200
Personeria of the municipality of Maicao	Defend the interests and rights of the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FT: 4</li> <li>- PT: 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to medical assistance</li> <li>- Legal assistance</li> <li>- Prevention against discrimination and xenophobia</li> <li>- Prevention of human trafficking</li> <li>- Prevention of forced recruitment by non-state armed groups</li> <li>- Protection of the rights of children and adolescents</li> </ul>	350
Municipal Unit for Disaster Risk Management	Manage the risks of disasters caused by phenomena of a natural, socionatural, technological and unintentional human nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FT: 6</li> <li>- Volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to medical assistance</li> <li>- Legal assistance</li> <li>- Education and training</li> <li>- Support groups</li> <li>- Promotion and prevention in health</li> <li>- Protection of the rights of children and adolescents</li> </ul>	1700

\* The abbreviations correspond to FT: full time, and PT: part time.

Source: Own construction. December 2018.

## Limitations in aiding the migrant population

Most GOs said they face difficulties financing their actions, training employees, and consolidating human and logistical resources to provide adequate assistance to Venezuelan migrants. All 10 GOs mapped agreed that they have faced difficulties accessing public resources. Eight expressed a lack of knowledge of national and international funding sources, and another eight reported that a shortage of qualified personnel to write funding proposals was a hurdle to obtaining resources. GOs mentioned the following shortages in training: management of international cooperation projects (10), international migration management (8), design of intervention plans, programs and projects (8), emergency humanitarian assistance (8), and human rights (1).

Some GOs cited further difficulties in providing services to migrants. For example, the Director of the Rural Indigenous Education Center No. 6 mentioned that the complexity of the administrative process resulted in difficulties obtaining identification documents for migrant children. She also mentioned the significance of security issues; the presence of criminal groups in zones where teachers or minors must travel to school, hindered or put at risk their school attendance. The representative of another GO (ICBF) also mentioned the problems that Venezuelan children face in accessing services (particularly medical) due to lack of documentation.

## Non-governmental actors

During the fieldwork conducted for this study, a large number of national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies, were identified in the municipality of Maicao. It was not always possible to directly obtain information about their activities and resources, so this study also relied on secondary sources, including reports created by organizations and agencies coordinating humanitarian assistance in the region and informative notes in the media. Table 6 outlines the main NGOs present in Maicao.

**Table 6.**  
**Profile of non-governmental organizations developing programs and services for Venezuelans migrants in Maicao**

Organization	Objective of the organization	Human resource*	Programs and services for migrants
Social Pastoral / Cáritas Colombiana – Riohacha Headquarters	National NGO belonging to the Catholic Church. It is part of the Caritas Internationalis network	- Partners - FT: 21 - Volunteers	- Psychosocial support - Food - Temporary shelter (administers the Migrant and Refugee Attention Center [CAMR]) - Prevention of human trafficking - Prevention against discrimination and xenophobia - Promotion and prevention in health - Protection of the rights of children and adolescents

Organization	Objective of the organization	Human resource*	Programs and services for migrants
Colombian Red Cross	National NGO. It is part of the International Committee of the Red Cross.	- FT: 50 - PT: 10 - Interns - Volunteers	- Access to medical assistance - Psychosocial support - Food - Education and training - Distribution of travel kits with food items - Prevention of human trafficking - Prevention against discrimination and xenophobia
Progresa Corporation	Local NGO originated in Maicao to work in the development of programs that promote social transformation	- Partners - Honorary members - Volunteers	- Psychosocial support - Legal assistance - Prevention against discrimination and xenophobia
Save the Children	International NGO focused on promoting and defending children's rights	---	- Training sessions on child protection** - Training in psychosocial support and Child Protection Risk Assessment with teachers of an indigenous school - Operation of a Child Friendly Space (CFS) - Supply of dental kits (100) for children in the CFS - Supply of hygiene kits for babies, children and mothers** - Supply of educational kits for students, teachers and counsellors**
Americares	International NGO focused on helping communities involved in disasters by providing access to clinical services	---	- Operation of a medical clinic which provide essential primary care services and access to medicine - Psychosocial support - Promotion and prevention in health
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	UN agency focused on providing assistance to refugees	---	- Financial support to provide shelter - Opening of a new office in La Guajira: Riohacha - Support to the government on the Registration of Venezuelans (RAMV) - Legal assistance - Funeral assistance - Development of an anti-xenophobia campaign - Provision of medical equipment for a hospital - Construction of new classrooms, school kitchen and WASH services in an educational institution - Supply of school kits
United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)	UN agency focused on the protection and welfare of children and young	---	- Managing of temporary classrooms within educational institutions - Support to CFS - WASH activities - Support to the anti-xenophobia campaign launched by UNHCR
Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)	UN agencies specialized in public health	---	- Installation of health care spaces** - Provision of supplies for health care - Training of professionals in public health emergencies care** - Vaccination campaigns** - Mental health care
United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)	UN agency focused on sexual and reproductive health	---	- Training on sexual violence, contraceptive care and voluntary interruption of pregnancy**
World Food Program (WFP)	UN agency focused on the fight against hunger	---	- Development of five community kitchens

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	UN agency focused on food security	---	- Work with ethnic and peasant communities in the recovery of autonomous food production and the protection of their key productive livestock assets
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	International NGO focused on the protection of refugees	---	- Training of teachers and administrators of educational institutions - Operation of CFS
Organization	Objective of the organization	Human resource*	Programs and services for migrants

\* Abbreviations correspond to FT: full time, and PT: part time.

\*\* Activities carried out in the Department of La Guajira, but without precise information on whether they are developed specifically in the municipality of Maicao.

Source: Own construction. December 2018.

## Strategic alliances

All organizations (except the Government Secretariat and Educational Institution No. 1) reported alliances with other actors to develop programs and services. The following table lists the organizations and the number of GOs in each alliance:

**Table 5.**  
**Key partners of governmental organizations**

Partner organization	Number of GOs in alliance
UNHCR	4
NRC	3
Americares	2
UNFPA	2
Pastoral Social	2
Save the Children	1
PAHO	1
IOM	1
Mahavir Kmina	1
Caribe Afirmativo	1
AAH	1

Source: own construction, December 2018.

Notably, five GOs indicated having a role in the Unified Command Posts (in Spanish, Puesto de Mando Unificado [PMU]) which actively monitor migration flows in the department of La Guajira<sup>22</sup>.

With one exception, all national and international NGOs in Table 6 are members of the Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (see Annex 7), which helped foster their delivery and partnerships. The Social Pastoral (SP)— one of the most visible organizations in La Guajira because of its connection to the Catholic Church— has established important alliances with international NGOs such as UNHCR, Save the Children, Caritas Internationalis, Caritas Spain, UNICEF, PAHO/WHO, WFP, and IOM.

SP's headquarters are located in Maicao, where they have a shelter (the Migrant and Refugee Attention Center, CAMR) that has been providing temporary accommodation (usually for 3 days) and food (breakfast and lunch) to migrants. With the financial support of UNHCR, shelter facilities and services were extended for the first time in November 2017. CAMR has become a space where NGOs converge to manage various humanitarian projects. For example, Save the Children has set up a Child Friendly Space in the shelter, and WFP also operates one of its five community kitchens here in Maicao. According to information provided by its coordinator, the CAMR could provide accommodation for about 120 people per day.

---

22. Since 2015 the Colombian government has ordered the establishment of PMUs in border departments with the highest flow of migrants.

# PINTANDO SUEÑOS



\* Ríe, canta, llora  
\* Sueña para que Nuestro  
\* Papá vuelva a ser el de  
Antes. te extrañamos mi Venezuela.

Venezuela



Venezuelan children illustrate their dreams with artwork at the Local Catholic Church Facilities.

Maicao, La Guajira, October 2018.

## 7 ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTION OF HUMANITARIAN ACTORS ON THE MIGRATION CRISIS IN MAICAO<sup>23</sup>

In order to understand the perceptions of the local community, 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted with local leaders (10) and with local government entities and NGOs (14), during two weeks of fieldwork in Maicao. Snowball and convenience sampling were used to select some of the participants, alleviating the need for sampling systems that may include more subtle biases. The main criteria in choosing the interviewees included: 1) connection to a governmental or non-governmental organization that works with Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the municipality of Maicao, and 2) holding a leading role in the social, educational, economic, political or cultural field, or recognition as a leader or social referent.

In total, representatives from five government entities, two education centers, one LGBTI advocacy group, officials from four non-governmental organizations, two religious leaders, three social influencers, two social and educational leaders, one stakeholder from the trade sector, one from the business community and one from the health sector, were interviewed. The perceptions of community leaders regarding the Venezuelan migrant influx are described below.

### Perceptions of local institutional actors

From the perspective of an already overburdened municipality, the governmental actors in this study have emphasized their concern about the constant influx of migrants in Maicao, especially since the municipality's response capabilities are so limited. In this sense, migration is perceived as overshadowing local problems and accentuating a pre-existing socioeconomic crisis caused by a decrease in commercial activity, limited state presence, and economic issues. Expressions such as "this is a terrible situation", "crisis and social disaster", "we were not prepared" and "we are nearly in the worst of the possible worlds" were expressed by government agents, reflecting their concern and doubt regarding the situation in Maicao.

*We see some substantial changes because everything has collapsed. For example, everything has collapsed the health system, employment, and security. We have crises in all sectors and we have no capacity to react. –*

**Local government representat ve**

To justify their perspectives, agents pointed to various problems they believed were caused by migrants. The first of these problems was the occupation of public spaces

23. Analyses in this section are based on interviews with 14 institutional agents (9 governmental and 5 non-governmental) involved in the management of migration in the municipality of Maicao.

by the homeless. This situation arose both because migrants could not afford accommodation and because there were not enough shelters in the municipality to provide permanent housing. As a result of poor living and sanitation conditions, homelessness often leads to further deterioration of the health of these migrants.

A second problem related to security and public health issues was attributed to the presence of migrants. Many government agents perceived that migration has caused an increase in delinquency and crime in the municipality, such as robberies, fights, homicides, and consumption of illegal substances. They also claimed that migrants caused an increase in the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (HIV/AIDS, syphilis) and of diseases previously considered under control, such as rubella and measles.

*“Here prostitution has increased, theft, homicides, and in most cases it’s because migration has reached the municipality of Maicao.”*

**– Local government representative**

*“Migration has been of great concern, because the vast majority of the inhabitants of Maicao see migrants as a problem. Because although some come to work, there are others who, because they do not have the means to solve their welfare situation, have caused many social problems, such as delinquency, lack of respect for others etc. And more worrying, a situation that Maicao has never faced before, is migrants lying on the streets, with no chance to support themselves. The vast majority are families with children.”*

**– Local government representative**

*“That the population found itself, so to say, invaded by so many people from another country, especially with so many needs that this migration entails. Look at all those people sleeping on the street, children having to go out to work and beg to get some food. It is a situation that has generated very negative expectations in the population and also fear, by conflicting situations that now exist.”*

**– NGO representative**

Finally, some agents also believed that migrants are responsible for job loss and unemployment among locals because migrants often accept lower pay or offer products and services at lower prices. One government representative explained that both migrant and local populations are in a vulnerable condition: “migrants are being economically exploited or even used as slaves, and locals are losing their jobs due to cheap labor.”

The concern expressed by humanitarian agents reflects their projections regarding the migration crisis. Many agreed that the number of migrants will continue to increase, as a solution to the situation in Venezuela is unlikely to happen in the near future. They also believed that it is likely that migrants will bring more relatives from Venezuela to the country.

## Institutional response to the crisis

Among government agents of Maicao, the generalized perception is that the migration crisis has reached a scale that exceeds the capacities of the municipality, justifying the demand for intervention by the central government and the international community. As stated by a government agent, “this is a crisis. This is not a town problem, this is not a problem for us. This is an international problem.” Although local agents highlighted the fact that the municipality has aided migrants, most agreed that both their actions and resources are insufficient.

The central government’s role in attenuating the crisis faced by the municipality has been criticized by some local agents as passive; they ascertain that the allocation of resources has never matched the scale of the problem. Many believed that the weak presence of the State in the municipality reflects a broader historical neglect of border communities by central governments. Two local agents stated:

*“The State has a very poor presence here. They have left all the responsibility to the mayors of these territorial entities [...]. They help in some things but not in the magnitude that is required to solve the problem.”*

**– Local government representative**

*“There is tremendous social pessimism because we are being left alone.”*

**– Local government representative**

On the other hand, most local government agents recognized that there has been a significant response by international organizations to address the crisis in the municipality. Nonetheless, there was dissent regarding their performance for two main reasons. First, they believed that international organizations have been inefficient in communicating both amongst themselves and with the local administration. As a result, their actions have had limited impact or have not met the expectations of the local government regarding aid provision.

*“Let me give an example, the WFP comes, the IOM comes, but each one is working alone, and the aid that is reaching Maicao is not impacting... each one is running out on their own, and they do not articulate so that we can see the impact of their help and support.”*

**– Local government representative**

A second reason was that some believe the organizations to be creating a “pull effect”; that is, increased assistance to migrants may motivate more Venezuelans to move into the community.

*“The national and international NGOs provide help, but we have a problem with that because it is producing the so-called “pull effect,” that is, people facing a challenging situation there, come to Maicao, with an aggravating factor, which is the Venezuelan immigrant who stays here has less academic, intellectual, and economic resources.”*

**– Local government representative**

The testimonies of local agents illustrated the historically close relationship between Colombia and Venezuela. Two elements characterize their relationship. First, Colombians and Venezuelans see themselves as heirs to a common past and as sharing many cultural features. For example, Colombians, particularly Maicaeros, frequently refer to Venezuelans as “brothers.” Second, in its prosperous past, Venezuela benefited the Maicao community through intense trade and through the migration of Colombians into Venezuela for employment. Given its special customs status, Maicao – the first urban center reached by land from Venezuela – has historically been a hotspot for commercial exchange between Colombia and Venezuela. This commercial exchange has been sustained by the strong performance of the Venezuelan currency, the Bolívar (VEF), especially since the oil boom of the 1970s/1980s.<sup>24</sup> The local community recognized its debt to its neighbor and feels that it needs to reciprocate based on the help received in the past.

These two sentiments, brotherhood and reciprocity, have fostered a feeling of solidarity towards migrants in the area and have also halted the growth of xenophobia, as expressed by two agents:

*“You imagine how, in the beginning, the people welcomed them with affection... because here in this area, we don’t forget all that what we received from Venezuela in the past. I, for example, didn’t learn the national anthem until I went to study in Maicao because the radio station, the television that we used to watch here [Paraguachón], was Venezuelan.”*

**– Local government representative**

*We have not fallen into xenophobia yet because the relationship with Venezuela was not only economic; we are made of the same clay, the same umbilical cord unites us, we are brothers, we are the same people.*

**– Local government representative**

While these two sentiments have contributed to the welcoming of migrants by the local community, some people also identified the opposite: factors triggering xenophobia. Four factors are constantly mentioned; first, acts of violence and crime committed by some Venezuelans have caused fear and concern towards migrants overall. Second, a negative stereotype of a lazy, low-income Venezuelan accustomed to living off state welfare has emerged. Third, some members of the community perceived Venezuelans

24. According to the Chamber of Commerce of La Guajira, around 90% of the population of Maicao makes a living from commercial activities. The Venezuelan crisis and precipitous fall of the Bolívar have provoked a 40% fall in the city’s trade (El Herald, 2018).

as harming the local population by reducing employment opportunities. And fourth, there was a sense of discomfort due to the fact that humanitarian aid is dedicated to Venezuelans but not to locals, who also face economic hardship. An agent commented on the last issue:

*“This is one of the main challenges in any response to a refugee crisis. Often, agents go to areas already affected by structural problems of poverty, development, and tensions between the local population and the refugee population can arise.”*

**– International NGO representative**

In the face of such events, some have reaffirmed the importance of measures to prevent tension between locals and migrants from escalating into an open conflict.

*“These elements are destroying the solidarity they gained at the beginning, and this is already being reversed by a derogatory attitude of the local population, resulting in increasing xenophobia.”*

**– Local government representative**

Discomfort and dissatisfaction due to the migration crisis were especially worrying to local authorities, who are under great pressure to meet the needs and expectations of the local community. To a large extent, such pressure explains why some government representatives have proposed radical measures –such as deportation or confinement of migrants in shelters located far away from the urban center— to deal with the situation.

*“With the pain of the soul, it is needed that those who are not organized, registered, or with a resident permit please be returned to their country, with all the pain of the soul, and leave us, because we don’t have the way to solve the situation of a neighboring country.”*

**– Local government representative.**

## Perceptions of the local community leaders

### Migration as an inherent social process in Maicao

In the interviews, it emerged that leaders and influencers of the local community recognized that migration flows have always taken place in Maicao. They noted the presence of Middle Eastern migrants (especially Lebanese) who have established businesses in the municipality, as well as Venezuelans, who have historically held commercial and cultural connections to Colombia. With this in mind, some argued that understanding the migration process between Colombia and Venezuela requires a retrospective approach.

The historical relationship between the countries has generated a sentiment of empathy towards Venezuelan migrants within local leaders and the Maicaera community in general. One of the interviewed Wayúu social and education leaders stated, “we are not unmindful of Venezuelans; we even consider them as family.” Another Wayúu social and educational leader argued that there is a feeling of gratitude and debt because “many years ago, we relied on the bonanza and good times in the Venezuelan State, and now we have to give back some of what we have received.” In this sense, it can be said that society in Maicao has never been foreign to migration processes, which suggests a social and cultural potential in the community to promote the inclusion of migrants in this municipality, as well as across the department of La Guajira.

### **Management of migration: insufficient, fragmented, and inefficient**

Among the interviewed leaders, there was disagreement on management of the migration problem. For many, allocated resources have not only been insufficient but have also been inefficiently deployed, as actions have mostly followed the priorities and interests of humanitarian agents instead of following common guidelines. One leader affirms that resources have so far been “insufficient and not used in the best way, because they are isolated, [and] there is no mechanism to optimize resources and expand programs.” In addition, many leaders maintained that there is no communication with the municipal administration, which further jeopardizes the management of migration.

On the other hand, some leaders agreed that aid provided by different organizations sometimes adopts the form of assistentialism and does not contribute to a solution. Additionally, this aid could generate dependence and a passive attitude among migrants. This is how some leaders expressed this belief:

*“We cannot limit help provided to Venezuelans to a bag of food, one sheet and one pillow to sleep and expect them to go ... we need to find a way to integrate them into the work system, understand how we accept them, how we absorb them, without them harming us, or the other way around. If we continue doing have been doing, we are not going provide any real solution”.*

**-Wayúu social and educational leader**

*“Teach to fish, do not give the fish. Giving him a bite of food does not solve the problem for the migrant.”*

**- Education and trade union leader**

*“More than helping, we can say that they are encouraging begging.”*

**- Community leader**

## Perceptions and attitudes towards migrants

Community leaders drew attention to two antagonistic perceptions of Venezuelan migrants coexisting in Maicaera society. On the one hand, they are seen as “Venezuelan brothers” due to the shared history between the countries. On the other hand, migrants are seen with distrust and prejudice; some people, including the following leader, referred to Venezuelans as “people generating violence, people who attack us, people who are bringing more infectious diseases.”<sup>25</sup> Many leaders recognized that such prejudice hinders the integration of migrants into the community.

*“The preventions are many; the prevention, the tension. So, you can easily hear someone on the street saying, ‘I need someone to cut my tree.’ – ‘Oh, I know a boy!’ – ‘If he is Venezuelan, I do not want him around.’ ”*

**- Religious leader**

*“The vast majority of them have caused damage to the natives - people-with robberies, assassinations, kidnappings. Then what happens? The population here is being very cautious about providing or facilitating a job for them.”*

**- Religious leader**

To analyze the testimonies of leaders, it is relevant to refer to the concept of aporophobia, coined by Adela Cortina (2017); this term implies that migrants may be disliked not because they are migrants, but instead because they are poor. In the interviews, many leaders, including the following one, referred to the condition of social vulnerability faced by Venezuelan migrants:

*“The Venezuelan is not a stranger for us, [...] we have always kept in contact with them. The problem now is that we have never interacted with them in the situation they are facing now. That is where the conflict has generated.”*

**- Social influencer**

Thus, for the local community, the fundamental problem seems to be the poverty of incoming Venezuelans rather than their migrant status. Some of the following testimonies illustrate this point:

25. In Riohacha, some entrepreneurs claim that the rise in crime in the trade and commercial sectors are explained by the increase in Venezuelan migrants (Chambers of Commerce, La Guajira, 2017). These perceptions do not consider the history of violence and crime reported in Colombian cities, which gives the false imaginary that more conflicts come with the migratory flow. A convincing fact is that by 2017, out of the total number of inmates in Colombia, only 0.30% are Venezuelans. In La Guajira, Venezuelan inmates make up 7% (FIP, 2019).

*“We have a special condition. We are receiving migrants of the poorest municipality of the state of Zulia, and their human development index is the lowest in the history of the continent.”*

**- Wayúu social and education leader**

*“Poor people, of extreme poverty, who do not know how to work [...]. They were living at the ribs of the Venezuelan government, who gave them everything. They only know how to beg.”*

**- Trade and commerce sector leader**

Finally, regarding this issue, some leaders agreed in defining Maicao as a “colander”: migrants with more structured life projects (as a result of their academic, labor, and social skills) continued on their way to other cities in Colombia or Latin American countries, while migrants lacking this social, economic, and cultural capital remain in the municipality.

### **The need for a comprehensive solution, both for migrants and the host society**

In the midst of the problems that migration has brought to the municipality, some leaders managed to identify a positive aspect: in contrast to its historical neglect, Maicao has now become visible both to the central government and the international community.

*“It awoke in the national government the need to review the frontier policies, whether they are working or not. We became visible because of this reality.”*

**- Education and social leader**

*“A positive aspect is that the State gives us a little attention and hopefully will give some help.”*

**- Education and social leader**

Several leaders hoped that this attention received by the municipality may not only solve the problems faced by migrants but also address other shortcomings experienced by the local society.

*“It is true that many migrants that came here are facing needs, but there are also Colombian families in La Guajira who are hungry, who live on the streets, who are suffering, who have epidemics, and who are not really receiving the relevant help.”*

**- Religious leader**

*“Here, there is also the family that goes to bed without eating. Here, there are also children who do not go to school because they do not have a uniform or because they do not have a good breakfast. Here in Maicao, there are also children who, instead of going to school, stay on the street helping their father get something to eat.”*

**– Community leader**

The ten testimonies above highlight how the migration crisis intensifies the pre-existing socio-economic problems of this historically-forgotten region. Overall, community leaders considered aid to the local community necessary to halt the growing tension between migrants and locals. Such tension is evident in the following testimony of a religious leader, recollecting a conversation with a person of Wayúu origin who complained about food assistance to Venezuelan migrants through community kitchens.

*“This is our land, and we are also hungry and also have needs, and why do not they give us food? If they are not going to feed us, then we will damage everything.”*

**– Wayúu community leader (told by a religious leader)**



Venezuelan products are sold in the streets of Maicao.

Maicao, La Guajira, octubre de 2018.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

The migrants who arrive in Maicao from Venezuela are diverse in terms of their sociocultural background; this diversity is reflected in their ages, ethnic backgrounds, educational attainment levels, sexual identities, family structures and other characteristics. The design of effective programs and policies to address the problems facing this municipality and the rest of Colombia, must take this diversity into consideration.

Historically, Maicao has had a close relationship with Venezuelan society, not only because of its geographical proximity, but also because of the common geopolitical past that Colombia and Venezuela share. This relationship is reflected in the rich commercial exchange that has taken place in this border area, as well as in the shared social and family networks that have been formed between the countries. These elements are an important strength that may enable Maicao to cope with the intense migration flow from Venezuela, creating an opportunity to improve the social inclusion of migrants within this host society.

This report shows three fundamental needs claimed by Venezuelan migrants living in Maicao: shelter, food, and employment. Regarding the first need, it should be noted that permanent shelters are required for migrants to prevent them from ending up in precarious housing situations or living on the streets. In addition, it is necessary to have enough temporary shelters to meet the demand generated by migrants who arrive in transit to Maicao and wish to continue their migratory journey. In regard to food, it is crucial to implement programs that cover three daily meals, with special attention given to children and adolescents, pregnant women, and older adults, who are more vulnerable to health risks. Finally, as the migrants themselves claim, employment is their primary need, since working would allow the migrants to meet the two previous needs independently and also to achieve greater inclusion into the host society. It is worth mentioning that some of the migrants are proficient in certain trades and would only require tools and resources to start their own businesses, benefiting themselves and contributing to the local community's economic development.

Moreover, during the fieldwork in Maicao, it was also noted that perceptions of both local authorities and their native inhabitants about the migratory process is permeated by a series of prejudices and negative stereotypes about the migrants; these tensions have started to create conflict between them and the local community. To mitigate outbreaks of xenophobia that have begun to emerge, it is necessary to implement awareness-raising strategies that facilitate solidarity and promote a different conception of immigration. Ideally, awareness can be raised so that migration is not seen as a problem, but as an opportunity for the development of both the local community and Colombia in general.

In Maicao, the extensive migration flow has led different institutions in Colombia, as well as national and international NGOs to mobilize strategies and resources to assist the migrant population. Migrants recognize and value the humanitarian aid they have received, mainly in the areas of medical care, food, and shelter. However, they, as well as the local community and the institutional actors themselves, recognize problems in the humanitarian aid. On the one hand, it is insufficient, as it does not cover all the migrants nor adequately satisfy all their basic needs. On the other hand, it is not sustainable, as it does not provide migrants with the resources that could allow them to attend to their needs autonomously. This fact should be considered an opportunity to improve migration management in two ways. First, collaboration between the Colombian state and NGOs should be strengthened in order to increase the scope and impact of their humanitarian aid initiatives. Second, programs that are aimed at solving the employment needs of migrants should be developed.

Finally, it is recommended that public policies, as well as programs, projects, and actions, be focused on the most vulnerable populations within the host society, including not only migrants but also local citizens who, due to their socioeconomic status, are also at risk of social marginalization. This is of great importance since it would contribute to addressing some of the preexisting needs or “development gaps” in the host society (World Bank, 2018). It would also help to mitigate the tensions arising as a result of the allocation of public and private resources towards the foreign migrant population.



Venezuela mechanic operating his workshop on the streets of Maicao.

Maicao, La Guajira, 2018.

## 9 | METHODOLOGY

For this study, a mixed methodology, combining both qualitative and quantitative tools, was used. The research techniques used during this exploratory study included eight-weeks of documentation review and analysis, key organization mapping and two-weeks of field research (in which the team conducted semi-structured interviews, surveys, focus groups, and obtained personal narratives). Finally, the researchers conducted data systematization and analysis over three weeks and wrote the final report during the last two weeks. The total length of the research was three months, from September to December 2018.

### Sampling methodology

Target Audience	Sample
Government entities and NGOs	19
Community influencers	10
Focus groups with migrants and refugees	3
Personal narratives with migrants	5
Surveys with migrants and refugees	174

### Sampling for interviews with influencers of the host community

Convenience sampling was used to select some of the participants. The snowball system was also used to avoid sampling systems that include more subtle biases, such as selecting only volunteers. Another advantage of snowball sampling is that it uses the social networks of the participating subjects to access certain informants who, for various reasons, could not otherwise be reached to be part of the research. This allows access to different perspectives and opinions regarding the social processes studied; in this case, to different perspective on the migration of Venezuelans to Colombia.

The following was the inclusion criteria for the influencers:

- Be a native of the region or have resided continuously for at least three years in the region.
- Reside in the municipality of Maicao.
- Be of legal age (18 years and older).

- Play a leading role in the social, educational, economic, political, or cultural field; or, be recognized by the community as a leader.

### **Sampling for focus groups and personal narratives with Venezuelan migrants and refugees**

Convenience sampling was used to select the participating subjects of the focus groups and personal narratives. Sayara sought to have a diverse sample in terms of gender, sexual orientation, age, schooling, socioeconomic status, and time and type of migration.

The following was the inclusion criteria for migrants participating in these techniques:

- Have Venezuelan nationality.
- Have migrated from Venezuela in the last five years.
- Reside in Maicao.
- Be of legal age (18 years and older).

### **Sampling for surveys with Venezuelan migrants and refugees**

Initially, Venezuelan migrants who were easy to locate or to contact through organizations providing services in the region were surveyed. Then, through the snowball technique, the research team depended on these migrants to help locate more individuals. This process continued until the researchers had all the surveys that they needed or until all their contacts had been exhausted.

The following was the inclusion criteria for the survey participants:

- Have Venezuelan nationality.
- Have migrated from Venezuela in the last five years.
- Reside in Maicao.
- Be of legal age (18 years and older)

### **Sampling for interviews with actors of governmental and non-governmental organization**

Convenience sampling was used for the selection of these interviewees. To be selected, participants had to be part of one of the governmental or non-governmental organizations that met the criteria to be included in the mapping.

The following was the inclusion criteria for governmental and non-governmental actors:

- Be of legal age (18 years and older).
- Linked to a governmental or non-governmental organization that works with the population of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in the municipality of Maicao.
- Have at least four continuous months of connection with the organization.
- Hold a position of responsibility within the organization.

A selection of NGOs and government entities was made in accordance with their role in the issues related to the protection of vulnerable Venezuelan migrants in the municipality of Maicao, department of La Guajira. Priority was given to government entities, civil society organizations (even if they were not legally constituted), and international agencies.

The organizations to be interviewed were selected according to the following criteria:

- How commitment to the issue of the protection of Venezuelan migrants in a vulnerable state.
- Develop activities and strategies related to the protection of Venezuelan migrants and work in defense of human rights.
- Have representation and decision-making power at the political level and participate in discussions of international migration.
- Have the power to make decisions on the execution of programs and activities related to the protection of migrants.
- Provide technical advice to governmental and non-governmental institutions about the management of migration.
- Work to legally solve cases in which the rights of migrants are violated.

## Ethnographic research plan

The research team visited areas in the municipality of Maicao with the objective of directly observing the context in which Venezuelan migrants and refugees are living.

The ethnographic process focused on the observation of particular aspects that were important to the investigation: 1) the physical context; that is, the places where migrants and refugees live in the company of their families or social networks; 2) the institutional framework; that is, the social services that are available to meet their needs; 3) formal interactions, which account for the relationships established between migrants and refugees and both governmental and non-governmental institutions; and 4) informal interactions, which reveal the processes of social integration within the host society.

The team used audiovisual recording to highlight any significant observations during the tours. Written notes were also taken to complement the recorded images.

The research team defined three places in its ethnographic plan to be observed:

### 1. Migrant and Refugee Care Center

This center is part of the Pastoral Social Cáritas Colombia organization. Its objective is to provide humanitarian aid to migrants and refugees. In October 2017, a bulletin said that the center had attended to approximately 1,800 Venezuelans in “conditions of extreme vulnerability” during that year.

### 2. Paraguachón migratory control post

The control post is located in the corregimiento of the same name, eight kilometers from the city of Maicao. This corregimiento is located on the border of Venezuela and this border post is characterized by the continuous flow of Venezuelan citizens to Colombia.

### **3. Public spaces (Simon Bolívar Park, Public Market, and Transportation Terminal)**

These public spaces are established meeting places between people from the region and those who come from Venezuela. It is precisely in these spaces where one can see how migrants are being integrated into the host society and the responses to integration.

## **Ethical considerations**

To guarantee the exercise of good investigative practice, the researchers made the following ethical considerations: 1) researchers thoroughly explained the informed consent document, which gave participants accurate information about the objectives, scope of the research, and potential benefits and risks of participating. The consent form gave participants the ability to accept free participation in the research or to withdraw, provided contact information of those in charge of the research, and ensured there was no conflict of interest; 2) the researchers ensured informed consent of participating subjects when recording devices or cameras were used; 3) the names and personal information of participants were kept confidential. A double system of coding ensured that technical staff could not know the identity of migrants, refugees, and community influencers; 4) voluntary and autonomous participation was guaranteed; 5) the researchers guaranteed that they would provide any answers or clarification if participants were unsure about the procedures, risks, benefits, or other matters related to the research or participant treatment; 6) participating subjects were selected based on the inclusion criteria mentioned in the methodology.



Venezuelan migrant sells gasoline, from Venezuela, in downtown Maicao.

Maicao, La Guajira, October 2018.

**ANNEX 1.**  
**RESIDENCY PERMITS GRANTED TO VENEZUELAN**  
**MIGRANTS BY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES**

Country	Date (as of)	Population	
Colombia	31-oct-18	41.4%	415,298
Chile	31-dec-2017	11.5%	115,661
Peru	15-oct-18	11.1%	111,278
Panama	30-sept-18	10.0%	100,320
Ecuador	15-oct-18	9.6%	96,471
Argentina	30-sept-18	9.3%	93,438
Mexico	30-jun-18	3.3%	32,632
Brazil	31-jul-18	2.0%	19,616
Uruguay	30-sept-18	0.9%	8,643
Costa Rica	24-nov-17	0.6%	5,600
Canada	28-feb-18	0.2%	1,817
Bolivia	30-sept-18	0.1%	1,196
Paraguay	22-apr-2018	0.1%	576
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>1,002,546</b>

Source: Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, September 2018 (UNHCR, 2018a).

**ANNEX 2.**  
**INCIDENCE OF POVERTY IN COLOMBIA DEPARTMENTS**  
**CAPITAL CITY (%) (2013-2017)**

Department	Year				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Antioquia	24.2	24.3	23.7	21.9	21.3
Atlántico	32.4	28.6	25.7	25.0	24.3
Bogotá D.C.	10.2	10.1	10.4	11.6	12.4
Bolívar	41.8	39.9	39.3	41.0	38.2
Boyacá	39.3	38.2	35.4	32.0	28.7
Caldas	32.2	29.2	27.9	27.6	26.7
Caquetá	42.4	39.0	41.3	35.8	35.1
Cauca	58.4	54.2	51.6	50.7	48.7
Cesar	44.8	40.9	42.3	41.9	40.7
Chocó	63.1	65.9	62.8	59.8	58.7
Córdoba	51.8	46.3	46.6	44.8	45.8
Cundinamarca	18.9	16.9	17.0	17.3	14.7
Huila	47.3	43.9	44.3	45.9	35.7
<b>La Guajira</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>53.3</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>52.6</b>
Magdalena	50.5	48.1	44.8	50.0	48.5
Meta	27.1	23.3	21.8	24.5	25.1
Nariño	47.6	42.9	40.0	45.7	40.2
Norte de Santander	39.4	39.9	40.0	40.4	40.0
Quindío	35.6	31.7	31.7	30.3	26.4
Risaralda	28.8	23.7	22.3	19.6	16.3
Santander	19.5	19.6	17.9	18.0	18.9
Sucre	47.3	43.9	44.7	46.7	41.6
Tolima	34.8	32.5	32.9	31.4	29.1
Valle del Cauca	27.2	22.7	21.5	22.6	21.1
<b>National Total</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>26.9</b>

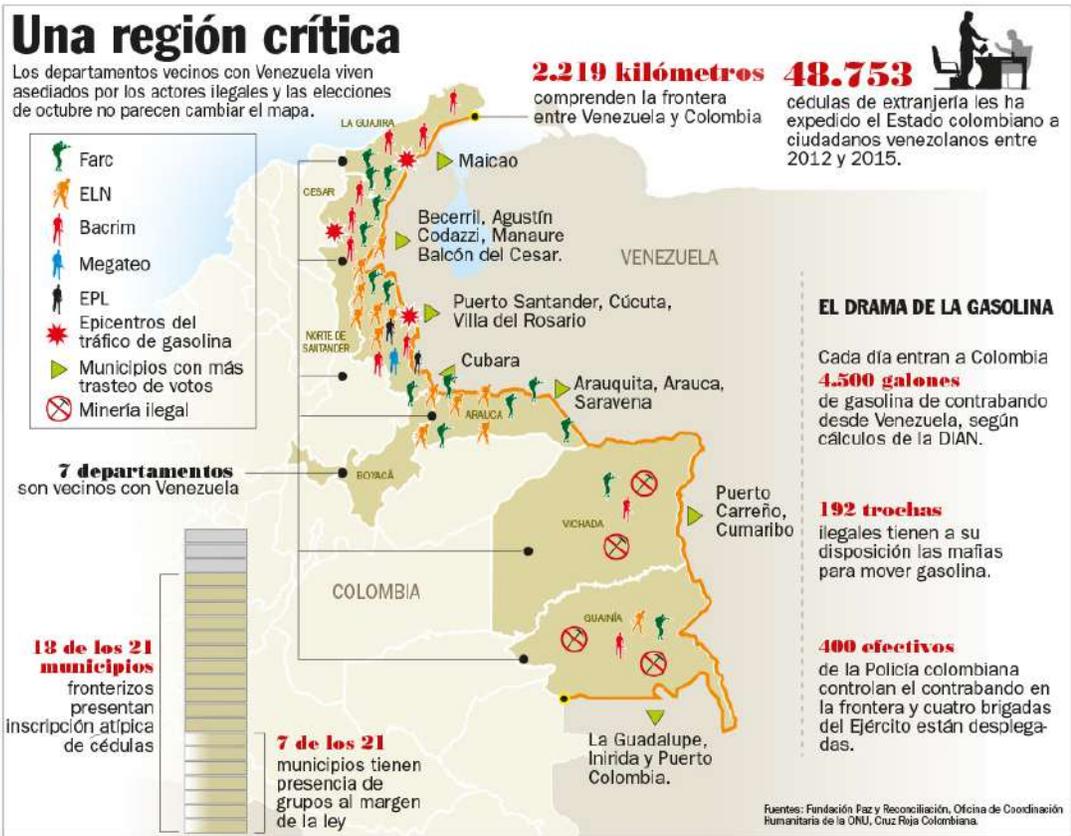
Source: DANE - Continuous Household Survey (2002-2005) and Large Integrated Household Survey (2008-2017).

**ANNEX 3.**  
**UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATES**  
**IN COLOMBIA BY DEPARTMENT AND CAPITAL CITY**  
**(2017)**

Department	Unemployment rate (%)	Underemployment rate (subjective) (%)	Underemployment rate (objective) (%)
Quindío	13.5	34.1	12.9
Norte de Santander	12.7	21.8	11.3
Meta	12.2	23.9	9.8
Valle del Cauca	11.5	33.9	11.6
Cesar	10.9	31.8	10.3
Bogotá D.C.	10.5	22.4	8.4
Antioquia	10.2	22.5	8.7
Tolima	10.1	34.3	10.9
Chocó	9.8	23.7	3.9
Bolívar	6.4	18.6	6.5
Caldas	9.2	21.1	5.0
Sucre	9.1	39.2	13.2
Córdoba	9.1	14.7	8.1
Huila	8.7	35.8	10.5
Cauca	8.3	33.8	12.3
Caquetá	8.2	28.3	8.3
Cundinamarca	8.0	27.7	12.5
Risaralda	7.8	17.2	7.3
Boyacá	7.5	29.2	8.1
Magdalena	7.4	31.2	11.3
Atlántico	7.4	30.4	11.6
Nariño	6.8	36.9	12.3
Santander	6.8	19.6	8.0
<b>La Guajira</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>13.7</b>
<b>National total</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>9.7</b>

Source: DANE - Large Integrated Household Survey 2017: Labor market by departments (2018).

**ANNEX 4.  
PRESENCE OF ARMED GROUPS IN THE BORDER  
AREA WITH VENEZUELA**



Source: As published in Semana Magazine, May 9th, 2015

## ANNEX 5. NARRATIVES OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS



### AMELIA'S NARRATIVE

I come from the Vargas state. Eight years ago, I went to Margarita Island to live since I needed to finish my degree--a degree in integral education. With the programs that the president had, at that time Chávez, I got a house. I had to work hard because they only gave me materials, and I had to build it. Then my husband, as a general contractor, built it for me, little by little, every time they gave me materials.

I finished the course, but I could not work there because there was no capacity for so many people. So, I said, "I am going to teach anywhere." The Institute of Attention to Minors opened their doors for me. Apart from that, I worked in the kitchen as a cook and worked in both places.

#### The departure

As time passed, the crisis became more acute. They changed my work site. I spent a lot to buy tickets, and I did not have the salary to support my three children. I did not have enough money, not even to buy diapers for the baby. It was not easy, and the change was so abrupt because everything happened very fast. In one year, the currency was devalued. Little by little, we could not obtain what we needed, even the medicine. I needed a daily dose of insulin, and I had to look for it in all the states of the country. Not being able to get the food, the fact that you could not drink a glass of juice every day as you were used to, that you went to sleep without dinner, that your son must go to school the next day, and you could not send him because you did not have money to pay for the ticket. My daughter practically lost a year of education that way, and I had to talk to the teachers. I insisted so much that the teachers told me, "We are going to give the girl a chance." I asked her friends, "Tell me what you saw." Then, I talked to her about the subject because I am a teacher and I could help her. My daughter was tested, and my daughter passed her grade. My daughter had the opportunity for me to help her, for me to explain, but how many other children missed the school year, how many other children went to bed without eating, two, three, four, and five days, with just a little piece of bread in the stomach?

There came a time when I got tired. I sat down with my husband, and I told him that something must be done. What do we do? We do not have a passport. If we leave, we can go to Brazil, we can go to Colombia. They are the only places we can go to. I decided to sell the house, and I went to live with my mom. That was quick, in ten days I said, "Let's go to Colombia, we will invest the money from the house in Maracaibo, and we will take things to sell there." So, we did. We bought 60 kg of meat, but the guard asked a fortune to allow us to pass.

## The path

When we came, we passed by the trocha. We had to pay, and we paid the guards for the things we brought. We also had to pay in the mecates . That was the most surprising thing. All along the road, there are about 25 or 30 mecates<sup>27</sup> where armed men are charging. They charge a fee in order to allow the wagon to pass. If he does not pay, they send everyone down. They threaten, they check things, they steal. Each person must pay something. If they were interested in someone, they lower, kidnap, and if that person is a woman, they violate her. We heard that many times. They have killed people for not paying what they ask.

They speak in Wayúu. As in this part of Maicao and Venezuela people speak Guajiro, so I cannot say if they were Venezuelan or Colombian. What I can attest to is that after you pass that trocha, no one bothers you, not even the DIAN. The DIAN stops the truck, they see the people, and that is enough. But, instead, the Venezuelan Guard takes away what you bring, takes away money, extorts you. It is complicated.

## The arrival

I came here with my meat. I managed to sell it here on the street. Then, with that money that I received, I waited for what the Venezuelans brought, I bought from them, and I went to Riohacha to sell everything. We were doing great. I even stayed in a hotel with my baby. I brought my one-year-old baby—she was the only one I brought—and we stayed at the hotel. One day I was robbed. They left me with nothing, everything I was going to invest. Everything. That day, I had to sleep on the street with the baby.

They told me about a shelter, so I went there with my husband. We asked for help, and they helped us; they gave us lodging. A man said to me, “Rest assured that God made you two good hands. You have told me that you cook well, I will lend a pot and cooktop, and you know all sellers. Ask them to buy on credit the vegetable, the meat and make soup to sell it. We will lend you the cups to sell.” In three days, I made 150 thousand pesos because it was a pretty big pot, and it sold fast because the soup was delicious. So, I sold soup for those three days and managed to gather everything I needed. I bought my anafe, my cups, all the things I needed.

When we already had some money collected, I went back to look for my children, and I brought them to me. We pay rent in a house. Sometimes things are tight. Venezuelans are not paid as they should be because they are illegal here. However, now we have permission to stay [PEP or SSP], and things changed a little bit. We have lived here for five months. It is not easy, waiting for someone to open the doors for me to get a job. I have two professions, but I can practically do nothing because my documents do not have an apostille.

We got a lot of help. I never thought that the Colombians would be so receptive. I see how at night people come out, they pray to any saint, and they go out to give food to 20 or 30 people. However, the Venezuelans—I am part of them, and it hurts me to say this—they are ungrateful. Venezuelans steal and take advantage of the people who help them. Not in all cases, but yes, this happens.

---

27. Unofficial check points

I want to stay. I think it is a good place to get ahead. I want my eldest daughter to complete high school. My daughter likes it. She wants to stay because she sees that her father can work and can move forward. First, I had to seek psychological help because she went through many changes, many mood changes. She became rebellious, blamed us for suffering, for selling the house. However, now she sees that she can eat every day. There, we went to bed many times without dinner because we could not buy food. Now, we cannot be in a house as comfortable as before, but we can eat every day.

I like Maicao. I feel like I am closer to Venezuela, and you never know, if anything happens, we can easily return to Venezuela. I want my country to be the same again.



## JAIRO'S NARRATIVE

My name is Jairo, born in Venezuela, in the State of Zulia, Municipality of San Francisco. I come from a middle-class family. I have been working since I was a child. When I was seven or eight years old, I started to work. I worked and studied. I managed to continue my studies and graduate. Since then, my family began to face economic difficulties. I had to work even more. My parents fell ill, they died, and I had to take control of the house. I managed to get married and start my family. I worked hard and managed to set up a microenterprise in Venezuela—in San Francisco, exactly in the Coromoto area—dedicated to refrigeration, industrial manufacturing, and electronics.

### The departure

The difficulties increased three years ago. The electric energy failed, the economy began to fail, I began to sell the tools from work. I faced many difficulties. In my workshop, I could not work because the electrical system did not function. Sometimes I stayed seven or eight hours without electricity, and as an electrical mechanic, I could not do anything. No spare parts were available. I could not commit to working on something I could not fulfill. Also, there is the problem of food in Zulia. All the central markets vanished. This situation makes everything even worse because there were ten places where you could find food, now it is just eight. There are two less, and the population continues to grow. There is an abandonment; there is no electricity, no system, nothing. There is no food, many malnourished children. We have a government that is deaf, does not listen, does not accept mistakes. To err is human, but when we do not accept our mistakes, we will never get anywhere, we will never be constructive. It is a country that is stuck. I decided to leave because I could not keep my family living in such poor conditions.

My wife, we got married 11 years ago. My wife is a teacher in Venezuela. She works with the Ministry of Education, but there are many difficulties. Before the situation happened, we were middle class. We managed to cover our expenses, help our families. Because of the circumstances now, we had to separate. Here I am alone, because she could not come.

There is a certain threat, that if you leave the office for three or four days, it will be taken away, from government pressure. What my wife earns, can barely afford her a pair of shoes a month. The house is sustained by what I send them. Thank God, with the money I earn here, I can sustain myself and them. We both love each other, but we have...that is, if I return there, we will economically fail, and if she comes, she will lose her job.

We are now in this balance that is quite complicated. We are very mature people, and we know how to face this situation. We understand each other and ask God for things to improve. We are trying to see if, at least, she manages to travel a weekend and go back the next day. It is quite tricky for us, even economically, because the travel is costly and there is also the danger on the road. A lot, a lot of danger, so sometimes I reject the idea. However, we are thinking about how to figure it out. Emotionally, as a family, we are well. It was our turn, as this situation has also touched many Venezuelans. I know that thousands are in this condition.

### The arrival

Here, I am in Colombia, in Maicao. When I arrived on a Monday, it was a holiday here. I went to find a friend, and when I came, he was not there. He already left for another part of the country. I could not communicate with him, so I slept that day on 10th Street, on a sidewalk. The next day they told me about the shelter. I arrived there, and they were very cordial. I went in the morning, and they told me to return later in the afternoon because there were too many people, and they were very busy. Pastoral, until now, has been my family here, and I am very grateful. The next day, I found a work opportunity, small, but enough. They are quite fond of me, and I think my attitude and behavior helped. I have been that family person, without vices, with no possessions, and until now, I would leave anything to help them in whatever they need. They are my family here.

I have been here for five months. I work in electro-mechanics, repairing air conditioning, washing machines, and things like that. Let's not say that I had a terrible time. Because it is not like that. I have met good people, and I managed to establish my family here. I am very grateful to Colombia and for the many friends that I have around me. Right now, I live in a school in the Comunero sector. They gave me the opportunity to stay in a school that was unfinished. I helped finish any work that needed to be done. I have been there since I moved here. I stay here, and I work in the street.

Going to another city in Colombia would mean starting all over again. I do not see any good from that point of view. I have already made many friends here. I have stumbled upon many good people. It would be pointless to go to another city. Moreover, I am very close to my country. I am only a few hours away from my house, my home. I would rather stay here. If the country changes in the future, I would return. However, for the moment, with the current situation, and I do not think I am a pessimist, but I see the daily news, and nothing seems to be improving. It does not seem to improve, and we see the situation of the people who are here on the street, arriving every day, in quite critical condition..

We had to migrate. Thank God we came to this country. I know that you are very affected by the entrance of so many Venezuelans here because there are Venezuelans who—well I do not include myself—their behavior is quite bad. But we do have professional people who come to work; we come to fight, to raise our family, and maybe help those people who sometimes do not appreciate it, but we try to help anyway. Here we are.



## DAVID'S NARRATIVE

I lived comfortably. My house, my home, with my family, my wife and my daughter. I was engaged in trade. I bought damaged motorcycles, repaired and sold them. I lived in the Aragua State, in Maracay, a busy city—similar to Maicao, but with a greater influx of people, until trade began to decline. It was complicated, the spare parts went to the clouds. I then dedicated myself to the sweets trade. I was comfortable, I forgot about the bikes. Then the shortage of food started, the shortage of raw materials. Wheat flour, sugar, oil; nothing was available. And if you got anything, it was *bachaqueado*, in other words, smuggled. You could not work with that anymore because you had to buy the sugar from the same guards, the soldiers themselves, or from the people who dedicated themselves to the *bachaqueo*, which is the smuggling of products.

### The departure

The situation was changing. That led to problems at home. I divorced from my wife. I did not provide necessities. If we ate, we could not buy a dress. If you bought a dress, you could not eat for a week. However, I was looking for the return. Well, I sewed a pair of shoes, fixed a phone. I sought employment in non-retail stores, shopping malls, clothing stores, fast food stores, bus collectors. I earned money with video games. Thank God I have that gift, and about four hours a day I sat on the computer and made money. They deposited me via PayPal.

Every day we ate chopped rice with sardines. Chopped rice is the food that is given to the chickens. We ate that because I did not have enough money. A day of work is not enough to buy a kilo of rice, and you cannot afford to have breakfast. If you want to eat a pie with a juice, you cannot. That does not give you a day's work. My daughter was running out of shoes, and I had to find a way, and do things that I did not want to do to, in order to get her a pair of shoes. Knowing that my daughter, who will be nine years old, tells me "daddy, I know it is difficult," —a girl of nine years told me this, and it broke my heart, "you can give me a birthday balloon." I say that, and it gives me this feeling. Do you know what it is like for a nine-year-old girl to understand how bad the country is, that all your happiness is in a balloon? That tears me apart.

There comes a point when I said, "I am going to Colombia." I had a partner, and he also said, "let's go to Colombia." I thought about it for like six or seven months, until I decided, I am ready. I started selling one or two things that I had, I had a pair of new shoes, I had some watches to make the passage, and I took a chance.

### The arrival

I do not have a passport. To get a passport there is difficult process, that lasts about four years. A Guajiro man did me a favor. Sure, they charge, but I spoke to him truthfully, "look, brother, we don't have anything, I came with my current girlfriend, and we crossed by

the trocha.” The Guajiro did not charge me, and he didn’t say anything to me. We went through a trocha, and by this way, we got here to Maicao. I arrived here without any pesos; I had nothing. Thank God they placed us near here and someone told us “there is a shelter where they help you for three days.” We stayed there for three days and now we are out. I’ve been sleeping on the street for a month and three days. A little cardboard, a sheet and to sleep with. And we watch out for our pockets, because if we do not, they steal from us. Because, as they say here, the chirrete –in my country we say the beggar– is also Venezuelan. Although it hurts to say it, I think that 100% of the beggars here are Venezuelan and they are waiting to steal, to take away your things because they want to buy something. I do not sleep comfortably because of the fear of being robbed.

Nowadays I work on sewing shoes. I earned the trust of several Colombians. They give me the shoes, I sew them, and they pay me. The shelter helps us a lot when it rains, they let us stay. They let us use the bathroom and they give us food. That is quite helpful because it is something that no one longer cares about. We wait quietly for work, knowing that what we do, we keep a little bit for dinner and the rest we save to move forward.

I have seen that Colombia is wonderful. My goal is to get to Soacha, because they are waiting for me, but I would like to know Medellín and Barranquilla because people told me that there are many beautiful things. The reason why I want to move somewhere else in the country is because I have a friend that already has residency and can help me with employment. I will not leave because I am afraid they will deport me because I do not have documents. I am waiting here to see if there is another census for me to register and travel legally. They told me, “go away, ask for a ride.” but I am also scared because I do not know the intentions of the person. I am not going to tell you that there are bad Colombians. Thank God I have the basis to say that from ten Colombians, nine are educated, good people, attentive. They say, “dear, how can I help?” or “Dear, this is what I can give, I do not give more because I cannot, or I do not have more.” They are super kind, super attentive. Some, well, they will have their reasons for being dry., But no, they are not bad. I do not have reason to complain here. The only thing is that because of my fellow countrymen, I cannot get a job. Last night, I talked to a man who sells things, and Venezuelans robbed him. He gave an opportunity to two Venezuelans, and they stole from him. A woman, whom I did a gardening job for, tells me that she had five Venezuelan people sleeping in her house and they robbed her. I am ashamed because I say, “what kind of Venezuelans are coming?!”.

I hope to move forward. However, when I got here to make some money, I came to Maicao. Why? Well, here there is trade. Money moves quickly here, because there are so many people. I wanted to sell some typical Venezuelan food, which is fast and tasty. So, I say, I work somewhere, I invest t, and I come to work. Although there is so much beauty here, one comes to work. I do not come for the beauty. I came here to help my family back in Venezuela.

I have listened to Colombians when they talk to each other, they say, “hey, but nobody told them to come here.” Okay, nobody asked us to come here, nobody. However, we are not asking anything from them either. We do not ask them for anything. I came to earn my own things and, when I say earn, I mean that I came to work, and if I came to work it is because I am going to be productive to this country because in my country, no one can

be productive anymore. Here in Maicao, everything they sell is from Venezuela. Gasoline I think is from Venezuela, all the food I see in the shop is from Venezuela. Sometimes it is false that they tell bad things about my country and discriminate when they still, even if it is just a little bit, they still benefit from my country.

Are we damaging the country? In a way, yes, because we are taking some jobs from Colombians, but it is not our intention. We came to help; we came to produce. I know that there is the good and the bad, because I said, “look, my dear, if you want, you pay me 10 thousand pesos, and I mud the whole day.” So, I am giving my work away, but understand it. I am doing it because I want to earn enough to move on and then produce something here.

## MARCELO’S NARRATIVE



My name is Marcelo, and I am a Venezuelan migrant. I was born in Maracaibo, and I am 43 years old. Maria’s only child, I do not know my father and my mother never raised me; my grandmother raised me. I was with her until the age of ten. In search of my mother—who I never found—I started wandering through Venezuela and venturing into Venezuela. They said she was in Maracaibo, in Cúcuta, and so I traveled and traveled until I realized I was not going to find her. I decided to come here to Colombia because I thought she was here in Colombia, and I came to the town of Maicao, department of La Guajira, where I spent several days in the streets and met the Caro family. They received me, supported me, and I spent every night in their house for around three years. They gave me the opportunity to study, they gave me shelter, kept me well fed, and they educated me.

But then I continued on with the dream of finding my mom, so I returned to Venezuela. When I was 18 years old, I joined the army. After that, I met a girl, and I decided to live with her. I had my children, my two girls. When I left the army, I began to work for companies, and I set up my own business. My daughters were growing up, and I set up my food sale as I like it and, well, I started my life.

### The departure

As a result of the situation happening in Venezuela, I left in search of a better future, to try to help our families that are still there. I have my house there, but it is not possible, with a minimum salary, to buy a good meal, maintain a good diet. We cannot buy shoes, clothes, and tools to work with. Everything is too expensive, and for everything, they put a lock--a lock. You must have a card, and if you do not have the card, you will not buy anything. We are practically like prisoners in our own country.

I decided to come back to Maicao, after 26 years. I came back because I could not stay in Colombia anymore because I had my business, my restaurant, my breakfast sale, I had my cars, my motorcycles. All that I had to sell one by one in order to afford the food for my family. I had big businesses, and unfortunately, due to our president, I lost everything. I feel very sad because I am far from them.

## The arrival

I arrived and decided to sell everything I had so my family could sustain themselves while I was in Maicao. I came here to Maicao to look for the family that gave me support 26 years ago. I began looking for them, and I found them. Today, they gave me the good news that they welcomed me again, they received me with open arms and will house me here. They give me a good education, and I like how I feel. I am staying in the house of one of the lady's children. It was hard for me because here, the Venezuelan migrants do bad things, and because of them, we pay. But here, I am just like that, with my head up, showing that there are more good Venezuelans than bad ones.

It took time for me to get a job. With the help of one son of the Caros, I went to sell water in the truck. It was not much that we earned because, here in Maicao, the water problem has been resolved for years. I paid a bit and kept my money. I bought deodorant and that stuff, but it was not enough to send my family, my daughters. Little by little, they helped me get a job. I started selling fried food with Mr. Manuel, and I started working with him. After the second month, I realized that he was exploiting me. He is Venezuelan, just like me, and he exploited me. He wanted me to work, work, work and earn less. I realized, because I had employees, and I know what that is like, what the employee system is like, and I know we should not be treated the way he treated us. As a result of that, I decided to buy my own equipment. With what little money I earned, I sent a little to my family and bought equipment. I bought a thermos, a showcase, a reverberant, a bottle, a tricycle, and told my fellow, also Venezuelan, that if he wanted to continue there, ok, but if not, he could come with me because he was exploiting us.

Now, we have our own business, and we made a partnership. He makes the empanadas, gives them to me, I put them in my showcase, and I go out on the street to sell them. I sell them at another price. When I arrive, we make accounts. I give him the money from his empanadas, and I keep my profit. At the beginning it was not easy, because as one is Venezuelan, then, for what has happened, that is seen in Brazil, in Colombia, in all the parts where Venezuelans have done a lot of bad things. However, I love people. I am very charismatic. I always like to say that today is a beautiful day, and never, never am I going to stop saying it. As bad as things are, I am going to say it will always be a beautiful day because we always have to keep in mind that God is the one who illuminates the way for us. I love people very much, and I have many clients, I started with an average of 50 empanadas, 50 fritos (deep fried food) as they say here. Later on, 60, then 80. Today, I am selling 150 empanadas daily.

Right now, the sales decreased due to the season, but as December approaches, they tell me that it is very good. People like the food that I serve, the juices, everything. And the service I give them is always friendly. I say, "good morning, friend, welcome" or "good afternoon, miss" or "friend, a napkin" and "here are all the sauces" and "take a caramel to enjoy the day" or "have a nice day friend." I want to expand my business and the reputation of my products. I have always said that it does not matter what business it is, to pick up trash, mechanics, or carpentry, as long as one provides good customer service. That client will speak well of you and will recommend you to other clients. That is my motto. The service makes the difference.

Some clients tell me to go to Barranquilla: “Hey, mate! I congratulate you. You should go to Barranquilla. There, you set up your business, and it will go very well.” But the fact is, that I do not want to go to Barranquilla, the fact is that I have to grow my roots already. I am 43 years old, and I am getting old, and I no longer have to think about going to venture there because I have my family, and the more I go into Colombia, I know it will be more difficult for me. But here, I feel good, here I feel comfortable and with people like you who are helping the immigrants.

From my profits, I have paid for my food and the equipment that I need to work. I have bought them one by one, and it is enough for me to send help to my family and my daughters, which is the most important thing for me. Right now, we are living here, but my goal is to rent a house later, and buy more equipment in order to bring them to me, to bring my daughters to study here, and bring my family who is suffering. I am not the only one; many of us are going through this.

I do not plan to return to Venezuela. Until that government gets out, I do not plan to return. On the contrary, I want to bring my whole family here and work as hard as I can to buy my land, make my home here. Why? Because I want a good education for my daughters, and I want to improve my quality of life. Thank God, I have received many comments, to keep going forward, work harder, and that is what I want to remember. People tell me that it does not matter what is happening in Venezuela. Courage! Cheer up! Cheer up! We must have a warrior heart, to get ahead, not to be faint, because if we are faint of heart, we will give the president pleasure. Trust God that our country is going to fix itself, and we will continue as before, but we must also be grateful, not only with Colombia, but with Perú, with Bolivia, with Chile, with Ecuador, with all those countries that have opened their hands. Because we are, not just immigrants. We are partners, we are all brothers, because we all have only one heart and one mind. It does not matter--the border, the nationalities--we are family, from the heart.

## LUCIA'S NARRATIVE

I come from a rural area. My house is not mine. I lived in my parents' house with my four children. My two eldest children were diagnosed with a spectrum of autism.

A few months ago, I was calm, and everything was fine despite the difficulties with food. Sometimes I would eat. I would get a single plate of food, and I would not eat for three days. I would give the food to my children. Sometimes we had breakfast, and we did not know if we would have lunch, or sometimes we had lunch, and we did not know if we would have dinner.

My mom got sick in March. It was very fast, very aggressive, because in those days, the situation was more complicated because I did not have a job. My dad, who lived with us, also did not have a job. I have a brother who works in a motorcycle taxi. The motorcycle did not work because of the difficulty in buying spare parts to fix it. It was very expensive.



Then my mom got sick. I took the risk to take her to the doctor because I heard that there were medical supplies and she had a very high fever for days. Once we arrived there, they did not take care of her. They said I should do it myself and find the supplies I needed. Some people were selling supplies outside the hospital. People were selling what we needed, but they were asking for millions at that time. These were materials that were solely for hospital use. Those who worked outside received the medical supplies, and I imagine they shared the profits. The truth is that I did not find anything. It was already midnight. They gave my mother many things but that did not work. They did not insert a catheter she needed, so I told the doctor, “Doctor, I am a paramedic, and we have to improvise because I do not have the money.” Then I got a glass bottle, and it was very uncomfortable because, it is something that has to be sterilized or something to remove the bacteria.

I knew that she had a problem in her lungs. Then I took her out in the morning to search because there was nothing in the hospital. When I returned, I had problems with other people because they took the bed, because “we no longer deserved the bed.” Consequently, I felt like my life was destroyed because my mother passed away. I took her on a Monday, and she died on Tuesday afternoon. It happened because they worsened the situation. She needed pulmonary drainage, which was not done. I felt terrible because I counted on her. She was unconditional in my life and in the lives of my children.

## The departure

I started to see all the difficulty that we faced. The food we got was little, and all the time we were eating an arepa<sup>26</sup> with a little milk. My daughter developed kidney pains from eating just that. Even though they have their father, I do not count on him. The father of my two older children, as well. I had another child who is now a year and a half old. I also cannot count on his father. I mean, I am practically alone.

It was difficult, very difficult to decide to come here. I spend about two months meditating, thinking, studying. Tough moments. I was hopeful that the situation would improve, that I could solve the economic and health situation of my children because they needed expensive medication.

All those things led me to decide to come. Everyone told me, “You are crazy. How are you going to leave your children so young? They are so small.” I spoke with my father, but unfortunately, I never had his support. It was a tough time because even my 10-year-old son understands the situation we are living in and that it was necessary for me to find a way to work, to acquire an income so that I can cover their needs. My dad told me, “But what are you going to do there? Are you going to work as—forgive me for the word—a prostitute or what? Because that is what happens there, that is what a Venezuelan can do there.” I said, “Daddy, you know that I can do many things, and I do not look back. I can do anything, sweep a yard, that is, anything, everything for the children.” My son listened when he told me that and started crying, and I scolded him. My 10-year-old son said, “But why can you not help her? Don’t you see what we need, don’t you see that we do not have

---

26. Corn pancake

to be suffering to eat like this?”. Then it hurt because I thought he was going to say “Yes, my daughter, go. I support you.” He knows that I was not going to work only for myself but also to support him. It was the hardest thing, not to have the family support. No one other than my son understood.

I did not sleep thinking that my children needed to go to school in September when classes began. I had saved some money, so I said, “I am going to buy some shoes for one of them.” But I was so distressed only to see the cost, that I started crying.

My son was upset. He woke up early to see if I had risked leaving, and then he got upset. Last week, before I traveled, he woke up angry and punching. He even attacked himself, because of his condition. I got up scared because I heard the blows on the bed and the crying. She said, “Mommy, but why didn’t you leave? Go, go, it does not matter; I will take care of my brothers.” That was like a stab in the heart, one of the last ones, because that same day in the afternoon, when I had managed to make a few arepas, my son said, “Mommy, you do not love me?”, and I said, “But why do you say that?”. He tells me, “Because you know that I want to study. The classes started, and the children are going, and I did not go. I do not have a notebook, a pencil, any underwear, socks. I do not have shoes or uniforms.” When he told me that, it helped. It was the final stab, and I said to myself, “I have to do it, risk it, I have to do it.” Then there comes that feeling of being useful to my children.

I had no money, nothing for the passport. In those days they were charging 150 million Venezuelan bolivars (VEF)<sup>27</sup> to get a passport. 150 million VEF that I had to pay in order to enter legally here. What I did was leave a letter to my dad. I left a letter saddened that he did not support me, knowing everything that we went through, telling him that I would be more pleased to leave with his blessing.

## The arrival

So far, I have not communicated with them. I have not found the way. Here, I have no money, I have nothing. I fell here because of God. I feel very uneasy because I have not achieved anything. I know that I am in a place that I do not know, and it is difficult for me. Yesterday, I was only thinking about my children. Today I was walking, and I saw the food, and it is complicated, you know?

I want to reach Bogotá because they offered me somewhere to stay there. They offered me lodging until I can get something. I tried to leave. I woke up early and thought about how to find the money because that is my obstacle. And of course, that I do not have legal documents to travel freely here. I only ask that God continues giving me strength.

I know that God is with them and that he is protecting them, my family. I have tried to get money first before calling them. So that I can call them and say, “Son, here, I have some money.” So that they see that I am doing something for them and that my dad is well and that he does not worry. I know that as a person, this will change me. As a religious person, I see life differently, that is what has helped me the most. I see life in another way when

---

27. Equivalent to 150 USD aproximaly

facing a problem. I see an opportunity, and I know that this situation, the one I am facing is an opportunity for me, to prove to myself that I can, that I can continue and achieve what I want.

I think my time is over here [in the shelter]. Tomorrow, I will go out on the street, and I am going to sleep on the street. It would be the first time in my life that I do this; I do not know what it is like. I do not know; I am new to this. I did not think that I would face a situation like this either, that I was going to get put out on the street. But now, I have to live it. I am waiting, that is, with the best expectations, trying to see what I can do, what I can make economically, to continue to where I want to go.

**ANNEX 6.**  
**HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS TO ATTEND THE POPULATION AFFECTED**  
**BY THE VENEZUELAN CRISIS IN MAICAO AND OTHER MUNICIPALITIES (2017 - 2019)**

Project	Description	NGO Executing*	NGO Implementing*	Intervention	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
Emergency response to the humanitarian crisis in Colombian-Venezuelan border: La Guajira	Provide timely and quality access to WASH and nutrition assistance to population in Riohacha, Maicao and Norte de Santander.	AAH	AAH	WASH, FNS	UNICEF
Humanitarian assistance to vulnerable population affected by the Venezuelan crisis in the Municipality of Maicao (La Guajira)	Promote healthy living habits and a balanced diet in Wayúu families returned from Venezuela and affected by climate variability and socioeconomic crisis.	AAH	AAH	FNS	WFP
Increase adaptability of the population affected by the Venezuelan crisis (Wayúu, host population, returnees, and Venezuelans) in Maicao and Riohacha	Improve the agricultural, livestock, and community practices of the Wayúu. Increase resilience and reduce vulnerability in livelihoods and food security of the host population. Cover the basic needs of the affected population while preparing for a restoration of livelihoods.	AAH	AAH	FNS, Early Recovery	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Emergency response to the humanitarian crisis on the Colombian-Venezuelan border (Maicao, La Guajira)	Construction of basic sanitation facilities for migrants and host population, in order to counteract the environmental contamination caused by feces and affecting the market area in Maicao. Training actions in the use and maintenance of hygiene systems. Promotion of hygiene.	AAH	AAH	Shelter and NFI, WASH	Government of Navarra
Migration Crisis	Provide protection to children and adolescents.	AISC	AISC	Protection	UNICEF
IFRC's Emergency Plan of Action: Colombia Population Movement	---	ICRC	ICRC	FNS, Health, Protection, Coordination, Shelter and NFI, WASH	SIDA

Supporting calls for contribution to the border area with Venezuela	---	CRC	CRC	WASH	AECID
Emergency assistance for food security of Wayúu communities of La Guajira	Prevent the deterioration of food security and nutrition of migrants in temporary shelters, informal settlements, and indigenous communities through the rapid production of food.	FAO	FAO	FNS	CERFR
Recovery of the agricultural productive capacity and food supply of the host families of Colombians returnee from Venezuela (La Guajira)	---	FAO	FAO	FNS	Brazilian Embassy in Colombia
Provision of humanitarian assistance to people affected by Venezuela crisis	Fill critical gaps in protection and humanitarian assistance by (I) improving access to food for children in order to prevent them from severe malnutrition and (II) improving access to temporary shelter and humanitarian assistance for people forced to cross to Colombia to save their lives.	NRC	NRC	FNS, EIE	SIDA
Protection, humanitarian assistance, and durable solutions for people affected by the conflict in Chocó and the conflict and crisis on the border	Reduce vulnerability of people affected by the conflict and humanitarian crisis.	NRC	NRC	Protection, Eie, Shelter and NFI	SDC
Emergency response to people affected by the Venezuelan crisis	Provide food, shelter, and education in emergencies assistance for people affected by the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis.	NRC	NRC	Protection, Eie, Shelter and NFI	SIDA
Response to the mixed migration flow between Colombia and Venezuela: protection of children and adolescents	Protection of children and adolescents against violence, abuse, and exploitation in the context of the mixed migration flow in the department of La Guajira.	UNICEF	AISC	Protection	UNICEF

Increase access of migrants to complementary health services that protect and save lives in La Guajira, Norte de Santander, and Arauca	Increase access to complementary health services and vital elements to save lives and prevent health problems in the migrants' families and communities.	PAHO/WHO	PAHO/WHO, UNHCR, UNW, FAO, IOM, UNFPA	FNS, Cross-cutting issues, Protection, WASH, Health, Mental health and psychosocial support	CERFR
Venezuelan migration crisis and its impact on children in Colombia	Develop a humanitarian action on protection and education in the departments of Arauca and La Guajira.	SC	SC	Protection, EIE	---
Sexual and Reproductive health rights for migrant population, with emphasis on women, adolescents, and young people.	Promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights among the migrant population of Venezuela.	UNFPA	UNFPA	Gender, Cross-cutting issues, Health	CERFR
Reintegration made more sustainable	Support for community-based rapid impact projects in areas receiving returned Colombian refugees, as well as for some priority case reintegration initiatives.	UNHCR	Corporación Opción Legal, UNHCR	Protection	CERFR, EIC, BPRC
Quality of registration and profiling improved or maintained	Extend the registration and profiling of the Venezuelan population to provide representative, reliable, and updated information to the Colombian authorities.	UNHCR	UNHCR	Protection	CERFR, EIC, BPRC
Access to legal assistance and legal remedies improved	Provide legal assistance through legal assistance clinics to people in need of international protection.	UNHCR	UNHCR	Protection	CERFR, EIC, BPRF
Emergency response to Colombian-Venezuelan border crisis	Support to victims of violence.	WFP	WFP	FNS	Advanced Fund
Children and adolescents affected by the Venezuelan migration crisis receive humanitarian assistance to improve their access and permanence in the educational system	Provide educational supplies and psychosocial support to children and adolescents to improve access and permanence in the educational system, in coordination with their families and teachers.	UNICEF	WV	EIE	CERFR

Assessing humanitarian and protection needs of the Venezuelan population across the Colombian border and neighbor countries	Undertake a multi-sectoral needs assessment of protection and humanitarian needs of the Venezuelan population with the aim of advocating among the international community and donors to increase awareness and response to the humanitarian and protection needs of this targeted population.	NRC	NRC	Protection	Ford Foundation (Andean Area)
Hope without borders. Response to the humanitarian crisis: Cúcuta and La Guajira	Contribute to the comprehensive protection of children, adolescents, and families affected by migration. Improve children and families' access to food and nutrition security. Promote friendly spaces for children and adolescents in schools and communities. Support the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the ICBF in the extramural displacement of equipment to municipalities of La Guajira to assist on children vaccination.	WV	WV	FNS	WV
Children and adolescents affected by the Venezuelan migration crisis receive humanitarian assistance to improve their access and permanence in the educational system	Provide educational supplies and psychosocial support to children and adolescents to improve access and permanence in the educational system, in coordination with their families and teachers. Provide protective school spaces.	WV	WV	EiE	UNICEF

\* Acronyms correspond to: AAH: Action Against Hunger; AISC: Aldeas Infantiles SOS; CRC: Colombian Red Cross; FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization; ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross; IOM: International Organization for Migration; NRC: Norwegian Refugee Council; PAHO/WHO: Pan American Health Organization / World Health Organization; SC: Save the Children; UNFPA: United Nations Fund for Population Activities; UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund; UNW: UN Women; WFP: World Food Program; WV: World Vision

\*\* Abbreviations correspond to: EiE: Education in Emergencies; FNS: Food and nutrition security; NFI: Non-food items; WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

\*\*\* Acronyms correspond to: AECID: Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development; SDC: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; SIDA: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; BPR: Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration; CERFR: Central Emergency Response Fund Regional; IEC: Italian Embassy in Colombia

**ANNEX 7.**  
**NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF  
THE INTER-AGENCY GROUP ON MIXED MIGRATION FLOWS**

Action Against Hunger (ACH)	Blumont	Caritas Germany	Caritas Switzerland	Colombian Red Cross (CRC)	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
Help in Action	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	International Labor Organization (ILO)	International Organization for Migration (IOM)	International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)	Lutheran World Federation (LWF)	Mercy Corps Norwegian Red Cross	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	Office of the Resident Coordinator (ORC)	Colombia Information Management and Analysis Unit (UMAIC)
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH)	Oxfam	Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization (PAHO / WHO)	Panamerican Foundation for Development	Pastoral Social	Plan International
Save the Children	Terre des Hommes Lausanne (TdH)	Adventist Agency for Development and Relief Resources (ADRA)	UN Habitat	UN Women	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	United Nations Food Organization and Agriculture (FAO)	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	World Food Program (WFP)
World Vision International					

Source: Inter-Agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows (Grupo Interagencial de Flujos Migratorios Mixtos [GIFMM], 2018).



### ANNEX 8. VENEZUELA REGIONAL CRISIS COMPLEX EMERGENCY USAID



## VENEZUELA REGIONAL CRISIS COMPLEX EMERGENCY

Last Updated 09.30.18



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the U.S. Government.

ANNEX 9.  
VENEZUELA REGIONAL CRISIS FACT SHEET #6



# VENEZUELA REGIONAL CRISIS

FACT SHEET #6, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2018

SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

## NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

**2.6 million**

Estimated Venezuelans Outside of Venezuela  
UN – September 2018

**1.1 million**

Estimated Venezuelans and Colombian Returnees in Colombia  
GoC – June 2018

**414,000**

Venezuelans Sheltering in Peru  
GoP – August 2018

**250,000**

Venezuelans Sheltering in Ecuador  
GoE – August 2018

**611,000**

Estimated Food-Insecure Venezuelans and Colombian Returnees in Colombia  
UN – April 2018

## HIGHLIGHTS

- U.S. Vice President Michael R. Pence announces more than \$48 million in additional U.S. Government (USG) funding to support Venezuela regional crisis humanitarian response activities
- Health actors confirm additional measles and diphtheria cases in Venezuela
- UN appoints a Joint Special Representative to support the Venezuela regional response

## HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

FOR THE VENEZUELA REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FY 2017–2018

USAID/OFDA <sup>1</sup>	\$24,705,084
USAID/FFP <sup>2</sup>	\$24,846,508
State/PRM <sup>3</sup>	\$47,042,414
<b>\$96,594,006</b>	

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- On September 25, U.S. Vice President Pence announced more than \$48 million in additional USG humanitarian assistance in response to the Venezuela regional crisis, including approximately \$21.6 million in State/PRM funds, \$18.8 million in USAID/FFP funds, and \$7.8 million in USAID/OFDA funds. The USAID funding includes approximately \$18.6 million for food, health, nutrition, and livelihoods assistance for more than 144,000 vulnerable individuals in Colombia affected by the Venezuelan regional crisis; \$6 million in food assistance for nearly 25,000 food-insecure people in Ecuador; and \$2 million in food assistance for approximately 6,600 vulnerable Venezuelans and host community members in Brazil. In addition, the State/PRM funding includes more than \$12 million in support for non-governmental organization (NGO) partners providing humanitarian assistance to Venezuelans across the region, including in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Peru; \$7 million in support to the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to provide education and child protection assistance in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago; and \$2.5 million to support the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide emergency assistance in Colombia and Ecuador. The announced funds bring the USG humanitarian assistance total to nearly \$97 million since FY 2017.
- Public health concerns persist throughout the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, including the spread of measles and diphtheria. As of early September, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) confirmed 5,300 measles cases in Venezuela from the commencement of the outbreak in July 2017 to early September 2018. In addition, PAHO recorded more than 1,200 confirmed cases of diphtheria, including more than 200 associated deaths, from July 2016 to early September 2018.

<sup>1</sup> USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)

<sup>2</sup> USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP)

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)



Interview with Georgina Deluquez Torregrosa - Deen of the Indigenous Educational Institution N° 6 - Paraguachón.

Maicao, La Guajira, October 2018.

# 10 | REFERENCES

- Álvarez de Flores, R. (2004). La dinámica migratoria colombo-venezolana. Evolución y perspectiva actual. *Geoenseñanza*, 9(2), 191-202. Available from <http://www.redalyc.org/html/360/36090205/>.
- Álvarez de Flores, R. (2009). Refugiados entre fronteras: La nueva realidad migratoria colombo-venezolana. *Observatorio Laboral Revista Venezolana*, 2(4), 49-65. Available from <http://servicio.bc.uc.edu.ve/faces/revista/lainet/lainetv2n4/art2.pdf>.
- Aya Smitmans, M., Carvajal Hernández, L. & Téllez Iregui, G. (2010). Indagación sobre las causas de la escasa inmigración en Colombia: ¿Ausencia de políticas públicas o políticas públicas restrictivas? *OPERA*, 10(10), 167-183. Available from <https://revistas.uexternado.edu.co/index.php/opera/article/view/3105/2745>.
- Banco Mundial [World Bank] (2018). Migración desde Venezuela a Colombia: impactos y estrategia de respuesta en el corto y mediano plazo. Available from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/131472SP.pdf>.
- Ciurlo, A. (2015). Nueva política migratoria colombiana: El actual enfoque de inmigración y emigración. *Revista Internacional de Cooperación y Desarrollo*, 2(2), 205-242. Available from <http://revistas.usbbog.edu.co/index.php/Cooperacion/article/view/2276/1992>.
- Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (CONPES) (2018). Prosperidad para las fronteras de Colombia. Documento CONPES 3805. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/3805.pdf>.
- Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social (CONPES) (2018). Estrategia para la atención de la migración desde Venezuela. Documento CONPES 3950. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/3950.pdf>.
- Cortina, A. (2017). *Aporofobia, el rechazo al pobre. Un desafío para la democracia*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- Decreto 542 de 2018: Por el cual se desarrolla parcialmente el artículo 140 de la Ley 1873 de 2017 y se adoptan medidas para la creación de un registro administrativo de migrantes venezolanos en Colombia que sirva como insumo para el diseño de una política integral de atención humanitaria (21 de marzo de 2018). Departamento Administrativo de la Presidencia de la República. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia.

Decreto 1288 de 2018: Por el cual se adoptan medidas para garantizar el acceso de las personas inscritas en el Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos a la oferta institucional y se dictan otras medidas sobre el retorno de colombianos (25 de julio de 2018). Departamento Administrativo de la Presidencia de la República. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia.

Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE) (2005). Censo General 2005. Nivel nacional. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <https://www.dane.gov.co/files/censos/libroCenso2005nacional.pdf>.

Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE) (n.d.). La visibilización estadística de los grupos étnicos colombianos. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from [https://www.dane.gov.co/files/censo2005/etnia/sys/visibilidad\\_estadistica\\_etnicos.pdf](https://www.dane.gov.co/files/censo2005/etnia/sys/visibilidad_estadistica_etnicos.pdf).

Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE). (2017). Encuesta Continua de Hogares (2002-2005) y Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (2008-2017). Bogotá, D.C., Colombia.

Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE). (2018). Boletín técnico Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares 2017: Mercado laboral por departamentos. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from [https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/ech/ml\\_depto/Boletin\\_dep\\_17.pdf](https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/ech/ml_depto/Boletin_dep_17.pdf).

El Heraldo (2018). 'Caída del bolívar tiene en crisis el comercio de Maicao'. Economía, 29th December, 2018. Accessed 10th January 2019. Available from <https://www.elheraldo.co/econom%C3%ADa/ca%C3%ADda-del-bol%C3%ADvar-tiene-en-crisis-el-comercio-de-maicao-42302?amp>

European Parliament (2018). European Parliament resolution on the migration crisis and humanitarian situation in Venezuela and at its terrestrial borders with Colombia and Brazil. Available from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+P8-RC-2018-0315+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.

Freier, L., & Parente, N. (2018). A South American Migration Crisis: Venezuelan Outflows Test Neighbors' Hospitality. Migration Policy Institute (MPI). Washington, D.C. Available from: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/south-american-migration-crisis-venezuelan-outflows-test-neighbors-hospitality>

Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2018). Inseguridad, violencia y economías ilegales en las fronteras. Los desafíos del nuevo gobierno. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from [http://ideaspaz.org/media/website/fip\\_seguridad\\_fronteras.pdf](http://ideaspaz.org/media/website/fip_seguridad_fronteras.pdf).

Fundación Ideas para la Paz (2019). Seguridad ciudadana y migración venezolana: Análisis exploratorio. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <http://ideaspaz.org/media/website/migracion-final.pdf>

- Gobierno de Colombia (2018). Avances gestión frontera con Venezuela. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/08-02-2018avancesgestionfronteravf.pdf>.
- Gómez, M. A. (2009). La política internacional migratoria colombiana a principios del siglo XX. *Memoria y Sociedad*, 13(26), 7-17. Available from <https://revistas.javeriana.edu.co/index.php/memoysoiedad/article/view/8221>.
- Grupo Interagencial de Flujos Migratorios Mixtos [Inter-agency Group on Mixed Migration Flows] (GIFMM). (2018). Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia, January – September 2018. Available from <https://data2.unhcr.org/es/documents/download/66716>.
- Holstein, N. (2010). El pueblo Wayuu de la Guajira colombo-venezolana: un panorama de su cultura. *Cuadernos de Antropología*, (20), 1-26. Available from <https://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/antropologia/article/view/2006>.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística, República Bolivariana de Venezuela (2014). XIV Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda. Caracas, Venezuela. Available from <http://www.ine.gov.ve/documentos/Demografia/CensodePoblacionyVivienda/pdf/nacional.pdf>.
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2017). Global Internal Displacement Database. Available from <http://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data>.
- International Organizations for Migration (IOM) (2018a). Tendencias migratorias en las Américas. República Bolivariana de Venezuela. Available from [https://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/default/files/Informes/Tendencias\\_Migratorias\\_Nacionales\\_en\\_America\\_\\_Venezuela.pdf](https://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/default/files/Informes/Tendencias_Migratorias_Nacionales_en_America__Venezuela.pdf).
- International Organizations for Migration (IOM) (2018b). World Migration Report 2018. Available from [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf).
- Mejía, W., 2011. “Gestión migratoria laboral en Colombia a través de la historia. Un vistazo a partir de la normatividad”, in IV Congreso de la Red Internacional de Migración y Desarrollo, 18-20 de mayo de 2011.
- Mejía, W., 2012. Colombia y las migraciones internacionales: evolución reciente y panorama actual a partir de las cifras. *Revista Interdisciplinaria da Mobilidade Humana (REMHU)*, XX, 185-210.
- Migración Colombia (2016). Comunicado de prensa No. 08. Apertura de frontera (15 de agosto del 2016). Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <http://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/index.php/es/prensa/comunicados/comunicados-2016/agosto-2016/apertura-de-frontera/3227-asi-se-movio-la-frontera-entre-colombia-y-venezuela-durante-el-primer-fin-de-semana-de-reapertura>.
- Migración Colombia (2017). Radiografía de venezolanos en Colombia. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from [http://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/venezuela/radiografia\\_web.pdf](http://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/venezuela/radiografia_web.pdf).

Migración Colombia (2018a). Todo lo que quiere saber sobre la migración venezolana y no se lo han contado. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <http://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/index.php/es/prensa/infografias/infografias-2018/8693-migracion-venezolana>.

Migración Colombia (2018b). Comunicado oficial (27 de noviembre de 2018). Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <http://www.migracioncolombia.gov.co/index.php/es/prensa/comunicados/comunicados-2018/noviembre-2018/8937-desde-hoy-los-ciudadanos-venezolanos-podran-tramitar-la-tarjeta-de-movilidad-fronteriza>.

Migración Colombia (2018c). Respuesta oficio S-DIDIF-18-009207 (2 de abril de 2018). Bogotá, D.C., Colombia.

Migración Colombia, International Organizations for Migration (IOM). (2017). Oportunidades de la migración internacional en un contexto de paz en Colombia. Ejercicio institucional prospectivo de las dinámicas migratorias en el posacuerdo. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <http://migracioncolombia.gov.co/phocadownload/Oportunidades%20de%20la%20migraci%C3%B3n%20en%20un%20contexto%20de%20paz%20en%20Colombia%20Marzo31.pdf>.

Ministerio de Cultura. (n.d.). Los árabes en Colombia. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <http://www.mincultura.gov.co/prensa/noticias/Documents/Poblaciones/LOS%20%C3%81RABES%20EN%20COLOMBIA.pdf>.

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, International Organizations for Migration (IOM). (2016). Matriz de monitoreo de desplazamiento en la frontera colombo venezolana. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <http://www.cancilleria.gov.co/sites/default/files/oim-matrizdemonitoreodedesplazamientoenlafronteracolombovenez.pdf>.

Ministerio de Salud de Colombia. (2018). Plan de Respuesta del Sector Salud al Fenómeno Migratorio. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia. Available from <https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/DE/COM/plan-respuesta-salud-migrantes.pdf>.

Pacheco Ríos, G. (2016). Idas y venidas: el flujo migratorio entre Colombia y Venezuela (Tesis Maestría). Universidad Militar Nueva Granada, Bogotá, D. C. Available from <https://repository.unimilitar.edu.co/bitstream/handle/10654/15018/PachecoRiosGladys2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Resolución 5797 de 2017: Por medio de la cual se crea un Permiso Especial de Permanencia (25 de Julio de 2017). Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia.

Resolución 740 de 2018: Por la cual se establece un nuevo término para acceder al Permiso Especial de Permanencia (PEP), creado mediante Resolución número 5797 del 25 de julio de 2017 del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, y se dictan otras disposiciones sobre el material (5 de febrero de 2018). Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia.

Resolución 6370 de 2018: Por la cual se reglamenta la expedición del Permiso Especial de Permanencia (PEP), creado mediante Resolución 5797 del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, para su otorgamiento a las personas inscritas en el Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos, de conformidad con lo dispuesto en el Decreto 1288 del 25 de julio de 2018 (1 de agosto de 2018). Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia.

Sánchez Urribarí, R. A. Venezuela (2015): Un régimen híbrido en crisis. *Revista de Ciencia Política*, 36(1), 365-381. Available from <https://scielo.conicyt.cl/pdf/revcipol/v36n1/art16.pdf>

Save the Children (Nov. 2018). *Venezuelan Migration Crisis 2017*. Latin America and Caribbean, Colombia.

Smilde, D., & Pantoulas, D. (2016). The Venezuelan crisis, regional dynamics and the Colombian peace process. The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre. Available from <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/noref-venezuela-and-colombian-peace-process.pdf>

Tovar Pinzón, H. (2001). Emigración y éxodo en la historia de Colombia. *Amérique Latine Histoire et Mémoire*, (3). Available from <http://journals.openedition.org/alhim/522>.

Unidad de Manejo y Análisis de Información Colombia (UMAIC). Available from <https://umaic.org>. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2018a). *Plataforma Regional de Coordinación Interagencial para Refugiados y Migrantes de Venezuela*. Available from <https://data2.unhcr.org/es/situations/platform>.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2018b). *Global trends – Forced displacement in 2017*. Available from <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2018c). *Fact Sheet: Colombia, septiembre 2018*. Available from [https://www.acnur.org/op/op\\_fs/5b9926924/hoja-informativa-colombia.html](https://www.acnur.org/op/op_fs/5b9926924/hoja-informativa-colombia.html).

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (2015). *Colombia: situación humanitaria en frontera colombovenezolana*. Informe de situación No. 12. Available from [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/151015\\_informe\\_de\\_situacion\\_no\\_12\\_situacion\\_de\\_frontera\\_final.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/151015_informe_de_situacion_no_12_situacion_de_frontera_final.pdf).

World Bank (2011). *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*. Washington, D.C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank.

Zapata, G. P. (2011). *Migration, Remittances and Development: Constructing Colombian Migrants as Transnational Financial Subjects*. PhD Thesis, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.



Colombo-Venezuelan Wayúu reads the “Wayuunaiki”, the local newspaper of the indigenous community.

Maicao, La Guajira, October 2018.

# 11 REGIONAL MEDIA ANALYSIS: SOUTH AMERICAN MEDIA NARRATIVES ABOUT VENEZUELAN MIGRATION

## Background

Aimed at understanding the wider regional public perceptions and political implications of the Venezuelan migration crisis, Sayara International initiated a partnership with Exovera LLC to collectively apply innovative digital research techniques using the Exovera Narratives artificial intelligence media analytics platform. The two companies measured how the media in five South American countries most impacted by Venezuelan migration were treating the phenomenon and the potential for international involvement.

Exovera, with its unique experience supporting commercial and government organizations around the globe (including US Department of Defense, NATO's Resolute Support mission, and US Department of State missions in Afghanistan, Brasilia, Baghdad, etc.), provided near real-time media collection and monitoring analytics of 634 regional, national, and local traditional media outlets in South America. Its analytic tools are designed to measure and provide key data about ongoing and recurrent narratives portrayed in the media, which ultimately influences the public opinion and perceptions on issues like Venezuelan migration.

Based on a preliminary review of media coverage and their political understanding of migration phenomenons in the region and around the world, Sayara's experts designed ten narratives which were used as the baseline for digital media listening in the top five countries that host most of the migrants in the region: Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru.

Exovera Narratives tracking provides a comparative regional view of national-level media narratives about the crisis as a complement to Sayara's detailed field work in Colombia. Exovera Narratives software was implemented for 30 days (December 26th, 2018- January 26th, 2019) against nearly a thousand Spanish and Portuguese media outlets in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru. It to measures quantitatively the relative prevalence/strength of ten key narratives over time, showing spikes and dips, and comparative data among the five countries.

Below, Sayara and Exovera, present key findings to better inform stakeholders on how regional media is influencing public opinions and perceptions about an unprecedented migration phenomenon.

## Narratives

Exovera and Sayara define a “narrative” as an often deep and enduring set of beliefs, perspectives, and learned biases reflected in the information environment. Narratives can be thought of as the way we interpret information around us—based on a combination of peoples’ own unique experiences and what they are taught. Narratives are how people make sense of the world, and often differ greatly from individual to individual and from group to group.

Sayara’s migration experts designed the following narratives as the base line for the media monitoring and listening:

1. “The Venezuela migration issue is a crisis”
2. “Venezuelans are destabilizing, bring violence, insecurity, delinquency”
3. “The Venezuelans take away/steal our jobs”
4. “We cannot afford to take care of Venezuelans, we need to take care of our own first”
5. “We need to better control our borders/send migrants home”
6. “We need international community support/aid to help Venezuelans”
7. “We should welcome the Venezuelans/help our brothers and sisters”
8. “Venezuelan migrants are just victims, they are not at fault”
9. “The international community should get involved”
10. “International intervention will violate sovereignty/make things worse”

Venezuela project as seen on the Exovera Narratives application portal

**PROJECT:** Venezuela

**NARRATIVES** COMPARE

**All Narratives:**

- Venezuela migration issue is a crisis
- Venezuelans are destabilizing, bring violence, insecurity, delinquency
- The Venezuelans take away/steal our jobs
- We can't afford to take care of Venezuelans, we need to take care of our own first
- We need to better control our borders/send migrants home
- We should welcome the Venezuelans/help our brothers and sisters
- Venezuelan migrants are just victims, they are not at fault!
- We need international community support to help Venezuelans
- The international community should get involved (intervention needed)
- International community intervention will only make things worse

**Venezuela migration issue is a crisis**

- Up +55% over the last 7 days
- 379 articles from Jan 20-Jan 26 vs. 238 articles from Jan 13-Jan 19

Relative volume from Dec 26, 2018 to Jan 26, 2019

High  
Low  
No Data

Content Filters

Location

RESET FILTER

12.24.18 12.31.18 1.7.19 1.14.19 1.21.19 1.25.19

Volume of the 10 narratives plotted over time, all countries (30 days)



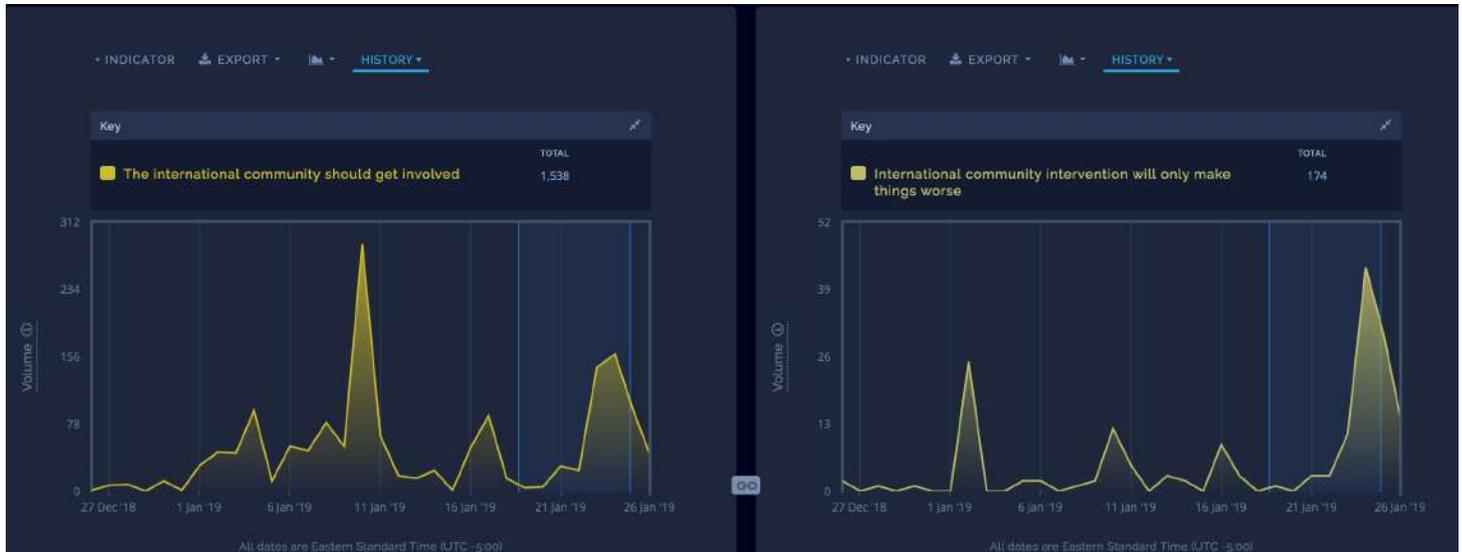
Regional Findings

Clear regional patterns across the five monitored countries were evident in the results. The overall relative strengths of the narratives were similar, with some notable exceptions:

“Migration is reported as crisis”: Region-wide Venezuelan migration is seen as a critical, worsening problem. The narrative that “immigration from Venezuela is a crisis” was the second strongest measured, found in more than a third (37.6%) of the articles in the set. This narrative was also up over 50% in the last seven days of the monitoring period as the political crisis in Venezuela deepened (492 articles that week).

“Support is expressed in coverage for international efforts (Lima Group, etc.)”: The political crisis in Venezuela and intensifying debate about potential international community involvement dominated the migration-related coverage during an eventful 30 days. That the international community should get involved was easily the strongest narrative, seen in 45% of articles containing a narrative.

## Narratives for (left) and against (right) international involvement, all countries (volume over 30 days)



- The involvement narrative spiked to 285 articles on January 10th alone, the date of Maduro’s second inauguration. Extremely little support for Maduro was observed.
- The narrative was also up 150% in the last week of the period (January 21st -26th 2019) due to coverage of increasing international pressure & protests in Venezuela.
- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez, and Organization American States (OAS), Secretary General Luis Almagro, were featured prominently in coverage containing this narrative.
- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro’s comments calling Maduro a threat to the region to be contained, was also widely reported throughout all 30 days.

In contrast, criticism or opposition of international community efforts was far more limited, with the narrative “International intervention will violate sovereignty/make things worse” appearing in only 5.1% of article, including some high-profile op-eds.

“Media is sympathetic to Venezuelans”: About the migrants themselves, the strongest narrative measured was that “we should welcome the Venezuelans/help our brothers and sisters,” seen in 17.8% of articles containing a narrative. Frequent appeals to Bolivarian solidarity were seen, and many articles described actions taken by governments to help immigrants and manage the situation. The narrative of Venezuelans being “victims” or exploited and not to blame for their circumstance was found in 6.3% of the article set.

“Welcome” narrative, all countries (volume over 30 days)



- The strong “welcoming” narrative saw a decline of 65 percent the last week of the monitoring period (January 21st -26th 2019), correlating with an increase in the “destabilizing” narrative happening at the same time.
- Most Venezuelans are portrayed in the media as good guests, although there were articles recently about a “third wave” coming made up of less educated/ more criminal Venezuelans.

Crime/insecurity is the main complaint”: The narrative that “Venezuelans are destabilizing, bring violence, insecurity, delinquency” was found in 7.5% of the article set. Nearly 60% of those, however (152 of 255), were published in the last week (January 21st -26th 2019). The same pattern (192 of 334 the last week) was seen with the narrative “we need to better control our borders/send migrants home” at 9.8%. These increases correlated with reporting on the high-profile killing of a pregnant Ecuadorian woman by a Venezuelan (January 19th, 2019), and Ecuadorian President Lenín Moreno’s subsequent announcement of the formation of “special brigades to control the situation of Venezuelan migrants in the streets”, as well as the design of “special permits to enter the country.” Otherwise, it is noteworthy that the border control narrative was primarily centered around the region on improving filtering/screening processes, not restricting immigration for Venezuelans overall.

“Destabilizing” narrative (left) and “control” narrative (right) volume, all countries (30 days)



Much rarer were articles expressing or supporting the narrative “We cannot afford to take care of Venezuelans, we need to take care of our own first” at just 1.7%. Recognizing the financial burden from the responsibility of taking care of them, however, the “We need international community support/aid to help Venezuelans” was detected in 5.9%. Pope Francis’ call for international support to help countries care for Venezuelan immigrant needs caused a region-wide spike in the narrative on 24 January.

### The international aid narrative and Pope Francis’ impact, all countries (volume over 30 days)



Seen in only 4% of the articles, the “jobs” narrative was easily the least important of the ten narratives during the study period. There were just 13 articles the entire month in five countries seen to contain this narrative. Nearly half of those (6) were from Perú alone.

### County overview

#### Brazil

Brazil media has been mostly supportive of immigrants, despite some problems experienced in remote areas, although there were hard line signs during the reporting month that the government would become more restrictive in weeding out criminals. It was also seen that coverage of immigration was partly crowded out by heavy news reporting on other major domestic news stories. A few representatives of the Brazilian PT party were in the minority in writing in support of Maduro.

The “cannot afford the cost” narrative in Brazil (volume over 30 days)



- President Jair Bolsonaro’s comments (January 15th 2019) regarding the high cost of taking care of Venezuelans during Brazil’s financial crisis, caused a major spike in this narrative in Brazil and was also the largest peak in that narrative in the region during the monitoring period

The international community should get involved in Brazil (volume over 30 days)



- The Forum at Davos, the UE requesting an emergency meeting to the UN and the OAE holding an extraordinary session to discuss Venezuela political crisis as well as the self-proclamation of Juan Guaidó as Venezuela interim president (January 23rd, 2019) lead to the highest peaks in the narrative.

## Chile

Chile was less likely to see the Venezuelan migration problem as a crisis as it may not be seen as impacting the country as directly as the others. As a result, narratives on debate over international involvement made up a higher proportion of immigration-related news. With 62.2%, a high in the region, the media was largely supportive of involvement. 11.4%, however, were against it, also the highest in the region. Editorials were against the violation of state sovereignty. Several leftist editorials, for example, argued the intervention was merely an excuse for the US and allies to take over the country's oil. Others worried about armed conflict that could result from a proxy war between the US and Russia.

### The international community should get involved in Chile (volume over 30 days)



- The highest peak was registered when Nicolás Maduro assumes his second term in Venezuela, and as the Head of UN Human Rights calls for independent investigation on the crisis in this country.

### “Venezuela migration issue is a crisis” in Chile (volume over 30 days)



- Once again, the media reported Venezuelan migration as a crisis in the context of Nicola Maduro’s swearing-in as president on January 10th 2019, with headlines such as “Illegitimate president” and “Chile rejects Maduro’s new presidential term.”

### Colombia

Despite Colombia being the country hosting the most Venezuelan migrants in South America, the media do not report the “crisis” narrative significantly higher than the four other countries. With a 37.9%, this narrative was 3.46 points higher than the average for all five countries (34.44%). The call for “international involvement” was the highest narrative published in the Colombian media with 43.8%, a little lower than Chile (62.2%) and Peru (55.4%).

Media content contained little negative sentiment with regard to the narrative “Venezuelans are stealing our jobs” (0.4%), something similar to “we can’t afford to take care of Venezuelans” (1.4%). Even though Colombia shares the largest border with Venezuela, the narrative “we need to better control our borders/ send migrants home” was seen in 9.3%, near the average of the five countries, meanwhile “we should welcome our brothers and sisters” was seen about twice as frequently (18.8%).

**Venezuela migration issue is a crisis” in Colombia (volume over 30 days)**



- Just like in all five countries, Maduro being sworn in as president of Venezuela triggered reactions within the political spheres which spiked the “crisis” narrative. The Colombian media reported Brazil withdrawing from the UN Global Compact for Migration, OAS holding an extraordinary session to discuss Venezuela political crisis, and other local news such as the eviction of 400 Venezuelans settled in the southwestern Colombia.

**“The international community should get involved” in Colombia (volume over 30 days)**



- Specific news stories stoked the involvement narratives such as the Colombian president Iván Duque asking the international community to “encircle diplomatically” the Venezuelan political crisis, the UN calling for “dialogue” to avoid a “disaster”, the OAS not recognizing the government of Nicolás Maduro and the potential U.S. military intervention where the biggest headlines identified.

### Ecuador

Of the monitored countries, Ecuador’s media was the most negative regarding Venezuelan migration. By percentage, it had the highest “crisis” narrative (38.3%), highest “border security” narrative (22.8%), it was easily the most negative about “destabilization” and security (19.8%), the second least welcoming (14.4%), and yet still showed the lowest support for international involvement (34.9%).

#### The “border control” narrative in Ecuador (volume over 30 days)



- The strong “border control” narrative in Ecuador, at 22.8% of the annotations in that country, was a major outlier in the region. It was clearly linked to the killing of the pregnant Ecuadorian and very strong political reaction to it and Venezuelan immigrants by the government.

### “Destabilizing” narrative in Ecuador (volume over 30 days)



- These increases correlate with reporting on the high-profile killing of a pregnant Ecuadorian woman by a Venezuelan (January 19th, 2019), which triggers the conversation about security and migration, with headlines like “Altercations as a result of a case of femicide carried out by a Venezuelan migrant”, “Ecuador will require judicial past apostille to Venezuelans” and “Venezuelans assaulted in various sectors of the country”.

### Perú

Peruvian media reported highest support for international involvement (55.4%) after Chile (62.2%). It was the most supportive of “Venezuelans are victims” (15.4%) and “welcome” (22.3%) narratives of all countries. There were just 13 articles the entire month in five countries seen to contain “JOBS” narrative and early half of those (6) were from Perú alone.

“Jobs” narrative in Perú (volume over 30 days)



- The reports picked up the narrative “jobs” did present xenophobic sentiments, but instead denying the idea that Venezuelan are stealing Peruvians’ jobs by presenting arguments backed up with facts and calls for solidarity.

“Welcome” narrative in Perú (volume over 30 days)



- Graphic shows how the narrative “welcome” was less regular by the end of the media monitoring. Media reports on late December 2018 and early January 2019 referred to the Temporary Transit Permit for Venezuelans, their uses and how migrants could issue it in Perú

## Results (Data Tables)

**Table 7.**  
**Percent (%) of Articles by Immigration Narrative by Country**  
**& Total (27 December 2018 - 26 January 2019)**

Narrative	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Ecuador	Peru	5-Country average
Venezuela migration issue is a crisis	37.6%	24.4%	37.9%	38.3%	34.0%	36.4%
Venezuelans are destabilizing, bring violence, insecurity, delinquency	3.3%	2.4%	11.1%	19.8%	12.3%	7.5%
The Venezuelans take away/steal our jobs	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	1.8%	0.4%
We can't afford to take care of Venezuelans, we need to take care of our own first	2.1%	0.0%	1.4%	0.7%	3.0%	1.7%
We need to better control our borders/send migrants home	8.2%	7.3%	9.3%	22.8%	9.3%	9.8%
We should welcome the Venezuelans/help our brothers and sisters	18.6%	6.9%	18.8%	14.4%	22.3%	17.8%
Venezuelan migrants are just victims, they are not at fault	2.8%	3.7%	8.5%	11.7%	15.4%	6.3%
We need international community support to help Venezuelans	2.8%	4.9%	10.6%	7.7%	9.3%	5.9%
The international community should get involved (intervention needed)	42.9%	62.2%	43.8%	34.9%	55.4%	45.0%
International community intervention will only make things worse	4.9%	11.4%	3.7%	4.7%	5.1%	5.1%
<b>Total (exceeds 100% because articles frequently contain multiple narratives)</b>	<b>123.3%</b>	<b>123.6%</b>	<b>145.3%</b>	<b>155.7%</b>	<b>168.1%</b>	<b>135.9%</b>

**Table 8.**  
**Number (#) of Articles by Immigration Narrative by Country**  
**& Total (27 December 2018 - 26 January 2019)**

<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Brazil</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Ecuador</b>	<b>Peru</b>	<b>5-Country Total</b>
Venezuela migration issue is a crisis	641	60	315	114	113	<b>1,244</b>
Venezuelans are destabilizing, bring violence, insecurity, delinquency	57	6	92	59	41	<b>255</b>
The Venezuelans take away/steal our jobs	1	1	3	2	6	<b>13</b>
We can't afford to take care of Venezuelans, we need to take care of our own first	35	0	12	2	10	<b>59</b>
We need to better control our borders/send migrants home	140	18	77	68	31	<b>334</b>
We should welcome the Venezuelans/help our brothers and sisters	318	17	156	43	74	<b>608</b>
Venezuelan migrants are just victims, they are not at fault	48	9	71	35	51	<b>215</b>
We need international community support to help Venezuelans	47	12	88	23	31	<b>202</b>
The international community should get involved (intervention needed)	733	153	364	104	184	<b>1,538</b>
International community intervention will only make things worse	84	28	31	14	17	<b>174</b>
<b>Total Annotations</b>	<b>2,104</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>4,642</b>
Total articles annotated w/narrative (containing one or more)	1,707	246	832	298	332	<b>3,415</b>
Initial collection set (articles containing immigration-related terms)	4102	780	2160	870	918	<b>8830</b>

## Methodology

**Countries:** Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Perú

**Number of unique monitored outlets:** 634 (Brazil 355, Colombia 94, Perú 77, Chile 70, Ecuador 38)

**Date Range:** 27 December 2018 -- 26 January 2019

**Number of articles on Venezuela migration collected/classified** 8,830/3,415  
Narratives: 10 commonly expressed views about the Venezuelan immigrant crisis & policy

**Languages:** Portuguese & Spanish

**Technology:** Content aggregation and classification via human SME and machine learning (Artificial Intelligence via word vectorization, attention neural networks, Natural Language Processing).

Media content was scraped and aggregated from 634 unique media outlets published in five monitored countries to which the most Venezuelans are moving: Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Perú. 8,830 articles published between 27 December 2018 and 26 January 2019 were collected for analysis based on an initial search for all articles with keywords related to Venezuelan migration. Of these, 3,415 were found to contain at least one of the ten Venezuela narratives defined by Sayara and Exovera. Articles frequently contain more than one narrative (4,642 classifications made in the 3,415 articles). The rest were discarded as they were either not related to Venezuelan migration or contained none of the identified narratives.

Exovera Narratives uses a combination of machine learning classification (Artificial Intelligence) and human training/tagging to detect and measure the strength of specific narratives in media content. In addition to identifying trends, it reveals which content specifically is “driving” each narrative. Because overall trends ebb and flow across media types, Exovera’s collection and measurement methodology combines a strong representative sample of print media with social media content and reaction. Exovera Narratives is based on providing a core set of proprietary text classification models trained on specialized artificial neural networks that pay “attention” to word, sentence, and paragraph-level features. Unlike keyword searches, mechanisms that identify these features automatically provide far better classification in documents that express complex positions or attitudes, and it automatically adapts as a narrative emerges in new contexts.

## About Exovera

Exovera LLC (Exovera), an SOS International LLC (SOSi) company, is a global provider of media monitoring and analytics services for large government and commercial organizations. Since 2006, Exovera has been trusted by thousands of end-users operating in countries and regions with significant security, political, and economic challenges to provide local situational awareness, narrative tracking and assessment and predictive analytics. Exovera has monitored and analyzed media and international developments in over sixty countries and forty languages across a wide range of complex political, economic, security, and humanitarian issues.

Exovera Narratives is a tool that provides a framework to automatically organize vast amounts of media information the way human brains might. The technology uses proprietary iterated neural network deep learning and machine-driven NLP (natural language processing) processes to detect and quantify narrative currents as they play out in the world's media.

For more information about this project, please contact

### **Andrew Katona**

Product Director

[andrew@exovera.com](mailto:andrew@exovera.com)

202.441.2518

Exovera LLC

11091 Sunset Hills Road

Suite 200

Reston, VA 20190 USA

[www.exovera.com](http://www.exovera.com)