

# UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for  
Refugees

**Topic: Economic and Social Well-Being of Venezuelan Refugees**

**Moderator: Mariam Salgado**

**Director: Anyela Silva**



# UNHCR

The UN Refugee Agency



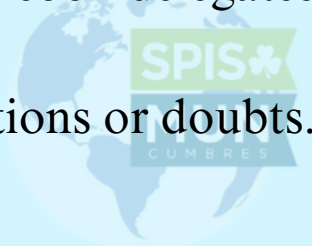
# Letter to Delegates:

Dear delegates, it's a pleasure to welcome you to SPISMUN 2025 and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees committee. My name is Mariam Salgado and I'm honored to introduce myself as your moderator for this conference. Let me introduce you to your director Anyela Silva. Together, we'll serve as your chair for SPISMUN 2025 in the UNHCR committee.

As a delegate, you'll be proposing ideas and finding solutions for the UNHCR. You will face several challenges throughout the sessions, but remember you will have memorable experiences. Believe it or not, all opportunities and experiences will be worth it. So remember to accomplish your goals because no one can set you any limits.

I will clarify that delegates will have total control of the debate, and as your chair, we will serve to organize the debate (always with the mod's permission). It doesn't matter your experience about the topic, or expertise in the Model of the United Nations, but we highly encourage all delegates to participate and share their point of view about the situation. We expect innovative solutions from all of you. I will be more than happy to help and make sure this SPISMUN 25 experience will be as enjoyable as possible for you. I hope you have a really good experience in SPISMUN 2025 and gain experience as challenges are presented to you. See you soon delegates!

Please reach out if you have any questions or doubts.



# History of the committee:

The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in 1950. Initially, it was established in the aftermath of the Second World War to help millions of European people who had lost their homes.

The League of Nations, the precursor to the United Nations (UN), appointed a Norwegian scientist and explorer, Dr. Fridtjof Nansen as the first High Commissioner for Refugees, denoting the start of the modern international system for protecting refugees.

Nowadays, the UNHCR is a global organization committed to protecting those who are forced to leave and have no country to be part of. UNHCR leads international actions to protect refugees, provide life-saving assistance, protect fundamental human rights, and promote solutions that warrant people having a safe place to call home and a better quality of life and future. As a committee, our mandate was prolonged multiple times throughout the 20th century until the General Assembly resolution of 2003 declared the mandate permanent.

Over time, UNHCR's outlook has expanded to also include supporting refugees returning home, people who have been forcibly displaced within their own country, and those who lack a nationality and remain stateless.

Today, UNHCR has over 20,000 working personnel in 136 countries. More than 59 million refugees have been helped to successfully restart their lives, and continue to protect and supply aid for the 117.3 million people who are currently displaced.



# History of Topic:

Most people are attempting to escape due to violence and poverty. Since the crisis began, nearly 8 million Venezuelans have been forced to flee from their homes to search for safety.

Venezuela has become the largest displacement crisis in the world with 7.7 million migrants and refugees. The lack of essential human rights, persecution, and a breakdown in democracy have caused this unknown invasion of migrants and refugees. In addition, there is a severe economic crisis due to destructive policies, and the political situation over the past 20 years has been marked by corruption. Venezuelans have also faced difficulties, including restricted access to essential services, legal paperwork, and financial stability, as well as an increase in discrimination.

The result of economic mismanagement and institutional corruption has caused a drop in oil prices between 2013 and 2016, Venezuela's humanitarian crisis is characterized by general poverty and ongoing shortages of food, medicine, and other essentials.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that the economy shrank by 45% between 2013 and 2017 and that GDP will drop by an additional 25%. The food and healthcare industries have been most affected by the crisis. This led to widespread famine and a breakdown in medical care. Food production has collapsed over 60% since 2014, compounded by a 70% drop in imports, leaving 80% of households food insecure by 2017, with many susceptible to deficient government-issued CLAP boxes that often fail to meet nutritional needs.

Malnutrition rates have increased, and 6.8 million Venezuelans are now lightweight. The healthcare system is equally critical, with medicine lacking as high as 85%, failing hospitals, and rising mortality rates. Preventable diseases like measles, diphtheria, and malaria have reemerged, while HIV (AIDS) patients face incomplete treatment, increasing mortality risks. These conditions have left Venezuelans facing critical shortages, constant hunger, and deteriorating health.



# Introduction of the Topic:

Since 2015 more than 7.7 million refugees and migrants of Venezuela have left the country, as a result of the political turmoil, socio-economic instability, and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Because of this Venezuela is the second country of origin for people displaced across international borders. It has been a civil war since 2011.

Cross-border rearrangement and mixed movements from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (Venezuela) continued in 2023. Regardless of a small increase in voluntary - some forced- return movements. When the 2023 finals arrived, there were over 7.5 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants displaced all over the world. 6.5 million of them were in Latin America and the Caribbean. This included a year-to-year net increase of 661,800 Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the American continent. 504,200 remained in the Latin American and Caribbean sub-region, Over 125,800 Venezuelans have been recognized as refugees worldwide, 66% in the Americas.

In the lapse of 2023, over 328,00 Venezuelan refugees and migrants crossed Panama's Darien jungle in their attempt to go northwards, more than the 150,300 who made the dangerous crossing in 2022.

68% of all Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean (4.4 million) faced difficulties like accessing food, shelter, health care, education, and formal employment in their host countries. Regardless of the efforts to regularize or recognize their asylum claims and integrate them. 19% of refugees and immigrant children were not attending school but supporting their families with informal and underpaid jobs. More than 60% of refugees and migrants does Venezuela hold a regular migratory or refugee/ asylum status. This was not enough to ensure a formal life and appropriate access to basic rights and services.

This crisis has only obtained a fraction of the international attention and it's still a regional problem. Thousands of people cross many South American country borders by foot, and many without knowing their final destination. Many leave without their loved ones, their communities, and their families never knowing where they will come back. Lots of regions have opened their borders providing healthcare, education, and employment.

# Key Players:

**Venezuela:** For people seeking refuge, Venezuela is important for the economy and safety. Thousands of Venezuelans are escaping and leaving the country pursuing safety, and freedom from death threats as well as new opportunities around protracted political, economic, and humanitarian difficulties. While not directly working on refugees, UNHCR provides support to host countries with forced displacement situations in terms of protection and solutions. At the heart of these efforts is addressing root causes for displacement, supporting crisis mitigation, and maximizing opportunities to ensure Venezuelans are included in local integration processes.

**Ecuador:** Ecuador is crucial to support Venezuelan refugees newly arrived from their huge crisis. It allows them to work, go to school and they can access healthcare as is the case with Ecuador. It deals with its own economic crisis and resource constraints and the government has oriented itself to join hands with UNHCR and other organizations in assisting refugee integration into society. Ecuador is an example of compassion and a demonstration of how in difficult times, kindness can go such a long way. Those refugees from Venezuela who are in Ecuador, are getting a high education level reaching the tertiary level. 62% of the Venezuelans state they want to remain in Ecuador but either way, Ecuador has the lowest proportion of immigrants who expressed their intentions to stay.

**Chile:** The estimate is that over 444,000, regarding 30% of its foreign population and 2.3% of the overall population, Venezuelans reside in Chile. Most Venezuelan refugees can access health and education services that are universally provided, in Chile even to the ones with irregular status. Housing and social benefits depend on immigration status. Since 2016, Chile has had large numbers of Venezuelan migrants and asylum seekers. The country is estimated to host approximately 450,000 Venezuelans and it is the fourth largest population of Venezuelan refugees after Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. With migration policies since 2019 making it extremely difficult for Venezuelans to get visas or obtain asylum, many have entered Chile via irregular border crossings.

**Colombia:** According to the IOM (International Organization for Migration) Colombia hosts the highest population of Venezuelan migrants, with over 2.8 million people in the arrivals of 2024. This is an important force for Colombia's economic and cultural development and wealth. Today, Colombia is experiencing an important arrival of refugees and migrants from Venezuela. This situation is known as one of the largest displacement crises in the world. It is also considered the largest displacement crisis ever in Latin America. Colombia is now home to the third-largest number of refugees in the world and has become an important aid for Venezuelans seeking asylum or refuge from insecurity, instability, and violence. Colombia has the second-highest population of internally displaced people, with an estimated 6.8 million Colombians displaced in its borders,

# Key Players:

**Peru:** More than 1.5 million Venezuelans are currently living in Peru to stay in the country for a better future and opportunities. Nevertheless, some obstacles prevent their socioeconomic integration and access to protection systems. This caused the USAID (The United States Agency for International Development) to support activities that ease the integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, and local populations too. The non-governmental organization CEDRO (The Spanish Reproduction Rights Centre) implemented an activity where the main goal is to integrate and relocate Venezuelan people in the cities of Lima, Ica, and Chiclayo, where the largest fraction of Venezuelan refugees and migrants reside, this activity has a national outlook for Venezuelans. Despite the effort to reintegrate Venezuelans, barriers to educational healthcare persist, which affects future generations. Although Peru has advanced towards universal education, Venezuelan migrants and refugees struggle to join children in schools. It is estimated that 77% of migrant minors are irregular. This is because the lack of documentation, associated expenses, and limited consular hinder Venezuelan children's access to education in Peru.

**Brazil:** As of September 2021, AVSI (The Association of Volunteers in International Service) started the integration of Venezuelans in Brazil. This is to facilitate the hiring of Venezuelan refugees staying at the gathering centers in Roraima State -near the Venezuelan border-. While refugees await a job offer AVSI helps them prepare with Portuguese and other lessons and teachings. Soon after they and their family relocate to a new city. AVSI helps them with rent aid and social services. The global goal is to help them achieve autonomy integration with the host country and community. In August of 2023, Brazil hosted around 501,000 Venezuelan refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. Individuals and families have been moved from Roraima to more than 930 cities throughout the enormous country of Brazil. Where they can find better opportunities to improve their quality of life and social well-being.



# UN Action:

UNHCR works in the American continent above to support the inclusion of Venezuelans into their communities that have voluntarily welcomed them and to find solutions that create safety and foster growth and development for their communities. In close collaboration with host governments, partner organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, and UN Agencies, particularly the IOM, UNHCR is implementing various activities to protect Venezuelan refugees and migrants, while responding to their humanitarian needs and socio-economic inclusion.

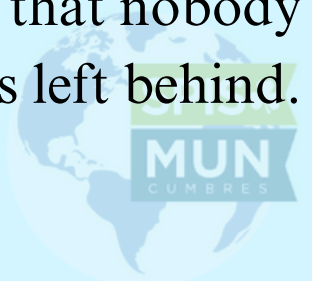
UNHCR has reinforced its presence in border areas all over the region, providing lifesaving assistance, such as drinking water and hygiene kits to women and children, while responding to the most basic needs of refugees and migrants, availing access to territory and asylum, and providing legal assistance and counseling-all to uphold refugee law and practice for safe and dignified reception conditions.

UNHCR has been increasing its presence in border areas, conducting lifesaving assistance access to drinking water and hygiene kits for women and children responding to the very basic needs of refugees and migrants while guaranteeing access to territory and asylum, legal aid, counseling, and refugee law and practice to guarantee dignified and safe reception conditions.



# Current Status:

While the host communities and countries of the region are concerned to help Venezuelans and have been generously welcoming, they are increasingly stretched. Big-scale regularization processes are underway in several countries to ensure refugees and migrants get documented, hence their rights and access to services. It has also been actively involved in coordinating efforts through the United Nations and its agencies to support the economic and social well-being of both refugees and migrants in the host countries and communities. The UN acts in providing critical financial assistance, improved healthcare access, access to education, and employment opportunities, along with social services that help in fostering integration through various initiatives such as the RMRP. But the scale of the crisis is such that these measures will require sustained funding and international support if they are to succeed. Without sufficient resources, it is difficult to guarantee the resilience and stability of already strained host communities and to safeguard the rights and well-being of displaced Venezuelans. The UN thus always calls for global solidarity and increased financial contributions to protect and empower such populations so that nobody gets left behind.



# Guiding Questions:

## Guiding questions

1. *What* are the main challenges faced by host countries in supporting Venezuelan refugees and migrants?
2. *How* does the UN support the economic and social well-being of Venezuelan refugees and their host communities?
3. *What* is the purpose of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP), and how does it help Venezuelan migrants?
4. In *what* ways do regularization processes benefit Venezuelan refugees and the countries hosting them?
5. *How* can -your country- encourage international support for host countries facing increased healthcare demands?
6. *What* role can -your country- play in ensuring the availability of essential medications and vaccinations for Venezuelan refugees?
7. *What* funding mechanisms could -your country- propose to sustain healthcare services for refugees over time?
8. *How* can -your country- help reduce barriers to medical care for Venezuelan refugees, such as language or legal status issues?



# Quorum:

1. Colombia
2. Peru
3. Ecuador
4. Brazil
5. United States
6. Spain
7. Germany
8. Canada
9. Venezuela
10. China
11. Russia
12. Argentina
13. Chile
14. Panama
15. Mexico
16. Costa Rica
17. Uruguay
18. Paraguay
19. Dominican Republic
20. France



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