



SITUATION REPORT

VENEZUELAN REFUGEE CRISIS



FEBRUARY 20, 2019



VENEZUELA AND SURROUNDING COUNTRIES

SITUATION

Growing numbers of people continue to leave Venezuela for reasons, including insecurity and violence, lack of food, medicine or access to essential social services, and loss of income. The United Nation reports that 2.3 million Venezuelans live outside the country of which about 1.6 million having left the since 2015. While not all may be refugees, it is evident that a significant number are in need of international protection.

The passage and arrival of thousands of people from Venezuela in search of better opportunities has particularly impacted the border areas in Colombia, causing some social and economic conflict. In addition a number of Venezuelan refugees are fleeing to Peru. The country has become the largest refugee hosting country in Latin America, with 126,997 asylum applications since 2014. Other countries across South America are also receiving Venezuelan migrants.

The Venezuelan migration crisis is a Latin American crisis which requires a regional response. Through our network of companion churches and ecumenical partners, our church is in a unique position to influence events -- not only within countries of migrant transit or destination -- but at the regional level.



RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response, in partnership with companion churches and other Lutheran partners, is accompanying Venezuelan families affected by this humanitarian crisis, throughout the Latin America region. Support, so far includes:

- Supporting for Union Evangelica Pentecostal Venezolana (UEPV) and Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Valencia (IELV) in providing basic necessities to low-income and vulnerable children and families and coordinating training opportunities for UEPV, IELV and other local organizations in Venezuela to help improve service delivery in their communities.
- Supporting LWF-Colombia in providing relief assistance and livelihood opportunities to Venezuelan refugees and the host communities.
- Assisting Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Colombia (IELCO) in welcoming and providing hospitality to Venezuelan refugees through congregations.
- Partnering with the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) and IELCO to address the the communication and information deficits affecting migrants, and the host communities.
- Supporting Iglesia Luterana del Peru, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and local partner, Encuentros-Peru, in assisting Venezuelans with basic needs and legal assistance in Peru.



Davids Ramón Aguado, a 30-year-old Venezuelan man, who migrated to Colombia with his father.

Photo: LWF-Colombia



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