

NRC's operations in Venezuela

Humanitarian overview

In Venezuela, the protracted socio-economic crisis has led to a severe humanitarian situation, with millions unable to access basic healthcare, adequate food, and safe water. OCHA's 2022 humanitarian partners are seeking to assist 5.2 million vulnerable people in need in the next two years. The informal dollarisation of the economy has led to increased prices, leaving vulnerable families unable to cover their basic needs.

Venezuelan families prioritise basic needs such as food, health and accommodation, de-prioritising the education of their children. Venezuela's situation has also worsened the protection risks of the most vulnerable. The lack of civil documents and/or the inability to comply with legal requirements hinders their access to basic rights and services, especially for people leaving or re-entering Venezuela through illegal routes. In 2022, an increase in the number of Venezuelans crossing the Colombia–Panama border, known as the Darien Gap, exposed people to protection risks, including violence and extortion. According to the IOM, more than 50% of Venezuelans crossing the Darien Gap start their journey in Venezuela.

According to OCHA, the Venezuelan humanitarian crisis was funded only 41%, and is still one of the most underfunded crises around the world. There is an imperative need to call on donors to support the work of NRC in Venezuela.

NRC's operation

NRC has been active in Venezuela since 2005 and in 2019 became an independent country office in light of the deteriorating humanitarian crisis. NRC is one of the largest NGOs in Venezuela with an annual budget of USD 6.5 million. Our work includes water, sanitation, and hygiene, education, livelihoods and food security and information, counselling and legal assistance. In addition to direct implementation and capacity building of local communities, NRC also plays a critical role in coordination at multiple levels.

NRC Venezuela

Established	2005
International staff	14
National staff	99



NRC Venezuela

Country office

Caracas

Areas of operation

Táchira, Zulia, Barinas, Mérida, Bolívar, Apure, Portuguesa



NRC Venezuela

Country director: David Martínez Sánchez

Email: co.nrc@nrc.no

Phone: +58 (424) 200 9531

www.nrc.no/venezuela

Address: Av. San Juan Bosco, Centro Altamira, Piso 6.
Urb. Altamira. 1060. Municipio Chacao. Caracas, Venezuela

Education

NRC supports vulnerable families to keep their children in school despite the challenges of displacement and poverty, and works with teachers, parents, education authorities and community leaders to identify long-term solutions to educational challenges. Displacement and financial desperation often result in children dropping out of school to support their families through informal employment, or because they are not enrolled in schools in areas of displacement. For this reason, the NRC education team works closely with our ICLA team to enable access to education. Additionally, the social-economic crisis has led to a lack of school supplies and deteriorated infrastructure, and caused many teachers to abandon their posts. The Covid-19 outbreak has required the upgrade of WASH infrastructure in schools. Our WASH and education teams have worked together to provide proper hygiene and sanitation facilities to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission when schools reopen.

NRC education team:

- work with the Ministry of Education to identify children at risk of dropout, and teachers most likely to benefit from training and support
- provide technical support to educational authorities in designing remote education models during school closures, and general curricula development
- distribute education materials to students, teachers and institutions in order to facilitate learning
- upgrade school infrastructure to improve hygiene, accessibility and reduce overcrowding
- build the capacity of teachers in how best to support students with a focus on those returning to education after a long period of absence, and also on psycho-social support in recognition of the trauma caused by the humanitarian crisis

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

NRC established an office in Venezuela in 2005 with

the primary focus on providing support to Colombian refugees seeking safety and services on the other side of the border. However, these dynamics have changed significantly, and the ICLA team has shifted their focus to prioritise Venezuelans facing protection risks mainly due to lack of documentation.

Our team provides information, counselling and direct accompaniment/referrals for people seeking legal services usually focused on civil documentation essential for employment, entitlement to government benefits, school enrolment and property ownership. Since general protection information is limited in Venezuela, the NRC ICLA team has tailored the awareness-raising activities to include information on essential service availability and referrals to external service providers.

Our ICLA services assist:

- internally displaced persons who move between different geographic areas within Venezuela due to concerns related to security and social factors
- economic migrants seeking income opportunities in areas that include major cities as well as border locations
- returnees from neighboring countries who hope to reintegrate within Venezuela on a temporary or permanent basis
- vulnerable populations with humanitarian needs

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH)

The humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has resulted in the collapse of water and waste management systems, creating profound gaps in essential WASH services at household, community and institutional levels. Homes, schools and hospitals lack running water, sewage and disposal systems. Additionally, hyperinflation and the loss of income opportunities have left populations unable to purchase basic hygiene goods such as soap or menstrual products. The Covid-19 pandemic has heightened the health

risks associated with these service gaps. Our team provides services including:

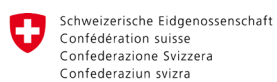
- construction of potable water points, handwashing stations, toilets and showers for people in transit, host communities, health centres, schools, markets, transport hubs and quarantine centres
- provision of safe water at household level through water trucking and water treatment supplies
- capacity building and awareness-raising on construction, maintenance and water quality testing to communities and schools
- construction and rehabilitation of culturally appropriate gender-disaggregated toilets and showers
- provision of collective/community waste management supplies and capacity building on maintenance, cleaning, desludging
- provision of dignity kits to women and girls, along with training on appropriate use and disposal of menstrual products
- provision of hygiene kits to people in transit and vulnerable host community members
- provision of targeted awareness-raising campaigns (prevention of disease transmission, menstrual hygiene and protection messaging)

Livelihoods and food security

The loss of income opportunities, hyperinflation, lack of imports, stalled agricultural production, and subsequent market volatility have left millions of Venezuelans food insecure. Our LFS activities are designed to address the immediate needs of people affected by the social-economic crisis while looking for sustainable solutions to increase food security and resilience. Our team provides:

- immediate assistance through food distributions, using vulnerability assessments to ensure that services reach those most in need

We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:



Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA-USAID)
NRC Sweden