

UN refugee agency ramps up support for Venezuelans, praises 'extraordinary solidarity' of Colombia

With the help of the UN refugee agency ([UNHCR](#)), Colombia is showing "extraordinary solidarity" towards Venezuelans displaced amid the country's on-going economic and political crisis, said agency chief, Filippo Grandi on Tuesday.

With over 4,000 Venezuelans entering Colombia each day, intending to either stay there or push further south, neighboring countries are struggling to meet the needs of refugees and migrants.

On a visit to Colombia and other Latin American countries, the High Commissioner for Refugees called the situation "shocking," and praised Colombia for sheltering and caring for Venezuelans during critical times.

"I am impressed by Colombia's efforts to document, feed, shelter, and care for thousands of Venezuelans arriving every day," Grandi said. "This extraordinary solidarity needs more international support."

UNHCR reports that nearly two million Venezuelans have fled their country since 2015, largely compelled to leave in search of more security, income, and access to food and medicine.

A family of Venezuelan children and their older Colombian-born relatives stand outside their wooden house in Barrio Camilo Daza in the city of Cúcuta, Colombia.

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With around one million Venezuelans now in Colombia, local governments are working to ensure they can legally access essential services, resources, and obtain legal work permits.

A common stop for Venezuelan migrants is the Divina Providencia community kitchen; a centre located in the North of Santander region, the busiest border crossing in Colombia. Some 80 to 100 Colombian and Venezuelans volunteer serving 3,000 free breakfasts and 3,000 free lunches every day.

Support from UNHCR has facilitated the availability of medical and legal consultations at the centre, but the influx of Venezuelans has strained the region's health services. To boost capacity, the agency has supported the creation of a new health centre aimed at providing first aid and family planning care.

Mr. Grandi will follow the flow of Venezuelans in the coming days, from

Argentina to Peru and Ecuador, to assess migrant and refugee needs, regional implications, and discuss best approaches to be taken by host countries.