## Information Bulletin N° 1

### Colombia: Population Movement

**Date of issue:** 09 April 2021

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**National Society Presence:** Click [here](#) to view the overall numbers of volunteers, staff and branches of the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS), based on Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System (FDRS) data.

**Number of people affected:** 5,538 people (1,505 families)

**Number of people to be assisted:** 3,500 people

**First phase (FP)**

**Other partner organizations involved in the operation:**

- Americares
- CISP-Intersos
- NRC
- OIM
- OPS/OMS
- Premiere Urgence Internacionnal
- UNFPA
- UNHCR
- UNICEF
- MIRE consortium

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available as of 7 April of 2021.

### The Situation

Starting on the morning of 21 March 2021, various sources, including the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Interagency Group for Mix Migrations (GIFMM)\(^1\) reported massive movement of people to the municipality of Araquita (Arauca, Colombia) in reaction to armed actions in the border state of Apure (Venezuela).

On 21 March, Colombian authorities activated a Unified Command Post (PMU) for coordination and monitoring of the situation. These have been used to identify approximately 57 points of concentration of people, most of which are self-organized or supported by the host community in the form of improvised shelters. One of these, organized by local institutions, is located in the urban centre of Araquita.

The continuity of armed actions could cause new movements of people in the coming days. This situation challenges the national and international organizations' capability to meet intersectoral needs\(^2\).

On 26 March, between 1,000 and 1,200 people arrived en masse to Araquita\(^3\). On 27 March, local reports indicated the arrival of 53 families to the Charo Bajo 2 village, a rural area of the Saravena municipality\(^3\). On 28 March, the Araquita

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government reports approximately 4,741 displaced people, including Venezuelans and Colombians from Venezuela, were located in 19 temporary shelters⁴.

According to the Colombian Red Cross Society’s (CRCS) Situation Report no. 5⁵, the census conducted on 2 April reported approximately 5,538 people affected (1,505 families) located in 3 temporary shelters. Some families are returning to their homes in Venezuela to collect essential goods, which creates a pendular flow during daytime hours. According to the CRCS Situation Report no. 6⁶, the number of displaced people has increased to 5,737 people, 1,820 families in 57 points of concentration. Pendular movement is also occurring between Arauquita and Saravena (Arauca, Colombia). There have been reports of displacements between Apure (Venezuela) to Toledo 8Norte de Santander, Colombia).

The river transport at the “Las Canoas” border crossing between Arauquita and La Victoria has been suspended. For this reason, the vast majority of the population movement into Colombia is taking place through multiple informal passing locations. On 28 March, the Colombian Ministry of the Interior declared a public calamity in the Arauca department. While there is no decree for the state of public calamity, this announcement facilitates national and international humanitarian aid response to the area.

According to the last report by the Intersectoral Mechanism of Emergency Response (MIRE)⁷, people continue to arrive at the shelters, community halls, and family homes in Arauquita. In this context, it is deemed necessary to increase humanitarian organizations’ presence in the territory to support the basic needs of the people in Arauquita.

**Situation**

As of 7 April 2021, according to CRCS Situation Report no. 6, the Arauquita municipal government reports approximately 5,737 persons (1,820 families) in several local shelters. 71% of the people are Venezuelan, 22% are Colombian, and 7% of families of mixed nationalities. According to PMU authorities, there is an underreporting in the figures, which is a challenge for planning humanitarian response operations.

Of the 5,737 people identified, the National Society has identified the following demographic structure:

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⁵ CRCS, Situation Report N°5, 30 March 2021.  
The CRCS Situation Report no. 6 states that 100% of people have indicated food security and nutrition needs. A total of 71% of people reported needs for Non-Food Items such as differential protection kits for children, kitchen kits, shelter kits, and 60% of people reported needing access to hygiene items such as differentiated hygiene kits for women, men, and children.

Furthermore, health services, mainly related to primary basic health care and the distribution of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, is required. Local authorities and the humanitarian actors in the area are concerned due to the difficulties in maintaining the transmission mitigation measures related to the overcrowding on the temporary shelters and the lack of PPEs.

**Shelter**

By 2 April, the local government has established three official temporary shelters with a total capacity of 1,110 people. The temporary shelters set in Arauquita are not enough to provide refuge to all of the families displaced. The National Society reports a need to ensure the physical separation in shelters as a mitigation measure against COVID-19. A deeper analysis of the needs and the people not staying in the official shelters is required.

**Health**

According to the 2 April situation report of the GIFMM, the National Health Institute reports 22 active cases of COVID-19 among the displaced population. This situation is of concern because there are no adequate isolation spaces for people who have a positive test for the virus; given the crowded conditions in the
temporary housing spaces, more positive people could be in these locations. In this sense, the CRCS reports the need for the COVID-19 test, enabling early action to prevent its spread.

There is an increase in fever and outbreaks among children in rural areas of the municipality. There is a need for first aid supplies and personnel to provide first aid and emergency care and the need for an ambulance service at all times of the day. Similarly, vehicles are needed for transporting health personnel. Key messages need to be reinforced to promote breastfeeding in temporary shelters for women with infants. There is a need to support mental health actions (caregiver care).

Food Security and Nutrition

The main humanitarian needs remain in the sector of Food Security and Nutrition. According to the 2 April GIFMM situation report, there is still a need to guarantee access to three meals per day to all people in the different places of refuge (shelters, streets, and family/friends’ homes). A large number of the population under ten years of age represents a nutritional challenge. Although some GIFMM partners are providing two meals in different community kitchens, the food available will not cover the population's needs in the next few days. The Colombian Red Cross Society has also identified the need to provide cash and food vouchers to guarantee access to food and access to prepared and hot foods.

Protection

Regarding protection, the people displaced face risks associated with forced recruitment, especially for children and adolescents. Moreover, the informal passing places have been identified as potential places where anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance (MAP/MSE) can be found. Due to the forced displacement, many families do not have identification documents, which increases their vulnerability to access to the restoration of their rights. Due to the lack of food, families are crossing the river between Colombia and Venezuela at night to restock needed essential items and food, exposing themselves to protection and life-threatening risks.

The CRCS has identified the following protection actions: rights counselling and case management; carrying out local mapping; prevention and promotion activities; psychosocial support under differential approaches of gender, ethnicity and age; restoration of Family Links (RFL); identification, care and activation of unaccompanied and/or separated children routes; possible search and management of corpses; activities to prevent domestic violence, GBV, sexual violence, human trafficking and human trafficking.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

The supply capacity of the municipal aqueduct system is limited. A water storage system is required at points such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Coliseo CIC Ribera to support water use. Water tankers are required for water storage and distribution, both in housing and rural areas. Differentiated hygiene kits and hygiene promotion strategies will also be needed. The CRCS suggests the following WASH products: hygiene kits; hydration points; hand washing facilities; toilet and shower facilities; provision of personal protective equipment; provision of water purification filters; provision of water filters; and waste disposal bins.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

The Colombian Red Cross Society, through its national-level authorities and national headquarters staff, as well as Arauca branch volunteers, staff, and leadership, are conducting coordination actions with other humanitarian actors, including the local government. As of 2 April 2021, the National Society has provided 3,194 services, assisting 481 people in the sectors of health, protection, WASH, shelters, and NFIs. The response is provided by the Arauca projects, financed by the American Red Cross, German Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and IFRC.

Response:

Health:

- Deployment of two emergency medical teams (EMTs) and three mobile units, and three vehicles with supplies for health care and protection for four days in Vigia, Bayoneros, Cájaros, Carroteros, and Peralonso, Cájaros, Carroteros, and Peralonso.
- Provision of 1,076 services: medical consultations, growth and development, family planning, prenatal care, mental health, deworming, PCR COVID-19 testing, and promotion and prevention health talks.
- Distribution of 3,330 COVID-19 prevention kits with the support of IFRC.

**Humanitarian assistance:**
- Delivery of 949 kits for pregnant women, kits for lactating children, tents, blankets, Hypercaloric Kits, and dengue kits.
- Delivery of food and non-food assistance to families
- Conditional cash transfer.

**WASH:**
- Provision of two portable handwashing stations.
- Hygiene promotion with a COVID-19 approach and self-care messages.
- Delivery of 601 family cleaning kits.

**Protection, Gender, and Inclusion:**
- Deployment of protection team for 5 days of support with different specialties for response (Child-Friendly Spaces, Restoring Family Links and Mine Action).
- Child-Friendly space for two months with support from UNICEF. The interdisciplinary team provides support to the communities, attention in urban and nearby areas, emotional support activities for children and adolescents, and promotion of protection actions.
- Provision of 565 services of Individual attention, Group Attention, Rights Orientation, Guidance on referral pathways, restoring of family contacts.
- The CRCS, including the Arauca branch, have prepositioned educational material and various kits (psychosocial kits, pregnancy kits, gender-focused hygiene kits).

**Articulation with other Red Cross Movement Partners:**
- Articulation between projects funded by American Red Cross, German Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross and IFRC.
- Coordination and articulation with ICRC through the Saravena and Bucaramanga offices in context and action analysis.
- Articulation with ICRC on sending resources to support RFL actions.

**Actions implemented by the government and the GIFMM partners, as of 2 April 2021:**

**Local Government**
- The Local Risk Management Unit has called support to international organizations that operate in the country to address the emergency.
- Concentration points are activated to reception the affected population, and locations have been established to provide temporary lodging and attention to migrants.
- The Colombian National Police and the Colombian National Army increased their presence by 1,600 people to provide security and monitor the border.
- 13,000 units of food kits have been distributed in the temporary shelters by the ICBF.

**GIFMM partners**
- Distribution of 3,400 foods kits and 4,800 breakfast and lunch rations.
- Delivering 8,897 ready-to-eat dry food kits have been delivered, 111 family feeding kits with food requiring preparation, as well as 150 energy kits and more than 1,061 family markets.
- Different protection actions have been implemented, such as psychosocial care, case management, information and guidance on protection, information campaigns, and restoring family contacts (RFL). Also, 443 dignity kits have been delivered.
- Implementation of child protection spaces in temporary shelters is progressing.
• 2,000 blankets, 1,000 kitchen kits, and 200 mattresses were delivered to Colombian victims of the conflict.
• 169 tents have been set up to safeguard families in the temporary shelters.
• Approximately 1,040 weather kits have been delivered, consisting of shelter items, sheets, pillows, and other items, complemented by the delivery of 390 blankets or thermal blankets, 1,688 mattresses, 1,533 waterproof linings, 521 habitat kits, and solar lamps.
• Support has been provided with 51 kits for pregnant women and ecological nappies, clothes, sheets, towels, and cleaning and disinfection items.
• 1,255 kitchenware kits have been delivered to provide support at hot meal or food ration delivery points.
• 35 toilets and 8 portable showers have been delivered.
• 6,500-litre drinking water tanks have been delivered to the lodgings.
• In terms of biosecurity items, 230 units of antibacterial gel and 420 units of liquid hand soap have been delivered. Also, 519 hand-washing kits have been delivered.
• 160 units of powder detergent (3.5L) and 30 bottles of chlorine have been delivered.
• At the municipal level, there are 4 water tanks for water distribution.
• In terms of hydration, 342 litres of water in 1 and 1.5 litres bottles have been delivered during the crisis.
• 647 hygiene kits have been delivered to children and adolescents.
• A total of 2,350 hygiene kits/toiletry kits, 20 family hygiene kits, 543 hygiene kits for men, and 745 hygiene kits for women have been delivered.
• 50 kits for pregnant women in the indigenous reservations and 17 kits for infants have been delivered.
• A total of 2,852 nappies and 199 baby wipes have been delivered during the course of the crisis. Likewise, in terms of feminine hygiene, a total of 363 sanitary towels and 48 hygiene kits for women have been delivered.
• At least 22 workshops have been held on mental health, sexual and reproductive health, psychosocial support, clinical management of sexual violence, and health information and communication campaigns, mainly in the following locations: CIC Ribera, Canciones, Troncal, Bocas del Jujú.
• The distribution of 4,000 masks in settlements has been recorded.
• The COVID-19 monitoring team of the health authorities continues with the active search for cases and with the application of tests (389 as of 2 April).
Contact information

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC’s vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate, and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.