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## Information Bulletin No. 1

### Ecuador & Peru: Human Mobility Border Closure (COVID-19 Context)

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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| Information Bulletin N° 1   | Date of issue: 9 February 2021   |
| Start of situation: 26 January 2021   | <b>Focal point for Ecuador:</b> Roger Zambrano-Ecuadorian Red Cross<br><b>Focal point for Peru:</b> Juan Carlos Melgar – Peruvian Red Cross<br><b>Focal point at Regional Office:</b> José Felix Rodriguez, Migration, Social Inclusion and Non-Violence Coordinator |
| <b>National Societies currently involved:</b> Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) and Peruvian Red Cross (PRC).  |  |
| <b>N° of other partner organizations involved:</b> The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), National coordination platforms for migrants and refugees (R4V) NGOs and local governments. |  |

*ARO is publishing this information bulletin on population movement updates due to the impact, flows and pre-existing dynamics in the region and the importance to reflect the coordination between National Societies and IFRC to meet the needs of populations affected by COVID-19 and migration.*

## The Situation

The COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated the emigration of people from Venezuela, as well as the continual movement of migrants to and between neighbouring countries. Some of the push factors for migration from Venezuela include the lack of access to services, protection, livelihood and health among others. The Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (R4V) forecasts that the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants could rise to 8.13 million in 2021<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://r4v.info/en/situations/platform>

Based on the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)<sup>2</sup>, the profile of the Venezuelan population in human mobility has evolved over time shifting from the initial profile of individual men to the current characteristics of migrants that include families with several members, including children and adolescents, pregnant and nursing women, people with chronic conditions, people with physical and mental disabilities and other vulnerable groups.



Stranded migrants, Huaquillas, Ecuador, 28 January 2021. Source: Ecuadorian Red Cross



Concentration of Venezuela migrants, Huaquillas, Ecuador 28 January 2021. Source: The Refugee and Migrant Working

A January 2021 Refugee and Migrant Working Group (GTRM) [report](#) highlighted that 72 per cent of migrants and refugees currently in the northern Peruvian department of Tumbes plan to stay in the country.<sup>3</sup> This report also points out that 82 per cent of these migrants were part of families, while 82 percent indicated that they had a support network in Peru.

With the increase of positive cases of COVID-19 in Latin America in recent months, a second wave of the pandemic, some governments have issued new measures to restrict mobility to contain the spread of the virus. This situation affects people in a situation of human mobility, principally Venezuelan migrants.

On 26 January 2021, the Peruvian president announced new [measures](#) that would be implemented as of 31 January. That same day, the Peruvian government [reported](#) that it had deployed 1,200 troops of the armed forces, as well as national police, to control the more than 30 irregular crossing points between Ecuador and Peru.

On 27 January 2021, the Ecuadorian government deployed its armed forces along the Ecuadorian side of the Peruvian- Ecuadorian border in the area between Puerto Hualtaco to La Represa parishes in Chacras canton (El Oro department) with the aim to intensify surveillance of irregular crossing points used by migrants.

According to news [reports](#), the Peruvian and Ecuadorian Armed Forces met in mid-January to plan the

<sup>2</sup> The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is used to maintain periodic monitoring of migrants, as it relates to their profiles, characteristics, and socio-economic status. Data gathered through this process informs the locations, evolving needs and vulnerabilities of migrant populations.

<sup>3</sup> On 12 April 2018, during a meeting of the UN Executive Committee, the UN Secretary-General tasked UNHCR and IOM to co-lead and coordinate the operational response to the Venezuela situation. Following this, an inclusive, overarching Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform was established. On a national level in Ecuador, the Platform operates as the GTRM, providing a platform for the coordination of the activities of various organizations, in support of the Government of Ecuador's response to the Venezuelan situation.

sealing off of the land border between the two countries to prevent irregular passing of migrants within the context of measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The GTRM in Huaquillas issued a [flash update](#) on 2 February that indicated an increase of people in the city, averaging approximately 400 people daily, since 25 January.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

### Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC)

| Context*   | Ecuadorian Red Cross interventions  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 26 January, the government of Peru militarized its Northern land border. On 27 January, the Ecuadorian government did the same.</li> <li>Ecuadorian National Police data indicates that in previous days at least 500 migrants were detained entering Peru via unauthorized crossings and without the required protection measures to stop COVID-19 were detained.</li> <li>The Binational Border Attention Center (CEBAF) Huaquillas has been closed for relief assistance since March 2020 due to the pandemic; however, customs and migration services continue to be provided with the support of the Ministry of Public Health to ensure biosecurity and distancing protocols. As a result, the work of humanitarian actors was relocated to other points, either in the urban area of Huaquillas, teleworking or in specific points for face-to-face attention.</li> <li>On the night of 26 January, an estimated 200 people spent the night in the canton of Huaquillas because they were unable to cross the border. They set up makeshift shelters in different public locations or were housed in IOM- managed spaces for the most vulnerable population, such as women and children.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ERC, particularly the El Oro provincial board is currently working with the support of an additional 4 staff in the canton of Huaquillas to deliver nutritional snacks and printed information (2 brochures indicating ERC actions, as well as biosecurity and other COVID-19 information, money exchange and contacts of other agencies/organizations working with the ERC). This action is conducted from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.</li> <li>One volunteer is working with IOM and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) at a point of care at the entrance of Huaquillas and two volunteers are working with the ERC canton board. These volunteers provide clean water, information and awareness on COVID-19 and phone calls as part of restoring family links (RFL).</li> <li>The ERC has provincial staff person responsible for human mobility issues; this person rotates and supplies material for the Huaquillas and the canton board</li> <li>As part of the GTRM Huaquillas group, the ERC, maintains permanent communication and coordination with UNHCR, IOM, ADRA, Jesuit Service, CARE, Plan International, among others.</li> <li>The ERC maintains permanent monitoring and communication between its headquarters and the technical team of the provincial board.</li> <li>The ERC's disaster and emergency risk (GRED) team and the provincial human mobility have 8 people active and on alert; they are carrying out joint activities to reduce the risk of exposure to</li> </ul> |

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|  | <p>COVID-19 of institutional personnel and the community in general.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ERC continues to disseminate at local level and through social media, self-protection messages on COVID-19.</li> <li>• The ERC headquarters maintains communication and coordination with the IFRC office in Ecuador, with information exchanging facilitating an Andean regional perspective.</li> </ul> |
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\*The items in the right column do not have a direct correspondence to the items in the left column.

### Peruvian Red Cross (PRC)

| Context*  | Peruvian Red Cross interventions  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 1 February, the joint Armed Forces – Peruvian National Police contingent continued on Zarumilla road, which is the area alongside the border checkpoint.</li> <li>• UNHCR in Tumbes reported the situation to the Ombudsman's Office and the Special Protection Unit (UPE), who are vigilant regarding this situation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PRC branch and IFRC team in Tumbes, in coordination with UNHCR, delivered COVID-19 kits (masks, face shields and gel) and First Aid Kits to migrants on foot on the border roads.</li> <li>• The PRC, with support the IFRC Team in the field, is providing medical attention to the Venezuelan population located in host communities in the southern outskirts of the city of Tumbes.</li> <li>• As part of the COVID-19 strategy, health promotion information is delivered through flyers in key point both in Tumbes and Lima.</li> <li>• The PRC maintains communication and coordination with the Ecuadorian Red Cross, as well as the IFRC in Peru.</li> </ul> |

\*The items in the right column do not have a direct correspondence to the items in the left column.

### IFRC

| Actions  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical support was provided to the Human Mobility team of the ERC provincial board in El Oro board has been provided since the start of the situation.</li> <li>• Direct communication with UNHCR, IOM, and other groups and organizations.</li> <li>• Coordination between IFRC teams in Ecuador, Peru and Americas Regional Office (ARO).</li> <li>• Coordination with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).</li> </ul> |

## Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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 (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian 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.