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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Humanitarian Situation in Venezuela - presentation by NRC

Following the meeting of the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) of 8-9 November 2023, delegations will find in Annex the presentation made by NRC⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾.

¹ Norwegian Refugee Council Europe, identification number in the EU Transparency Register: 750447615329-96.

² This document contains a presentation by an external stakeholder and the views expressed therein are solely those of the third party it originates from. This document cannot be regarded as stating an official position of the Council. It does not reflect the views of the Council or of its members.



NRC Venezuela

November 2023

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A few numbers...

- Between 7.7M (HRP) to 20 M (local estimates) of people in need of humanitarian assistance
- 78% of the population is food insecure (ENCOVI)
- 90% of the population without regular access to water
- 1.5M children out of school; 22% skipping school to find work and help their families (ENCOVI)
- 80% of schools with limited or no access at all to water and sanitation facilities
- 50% of people interviewed by the Protection Cluster have challenges in accessing civil documentation



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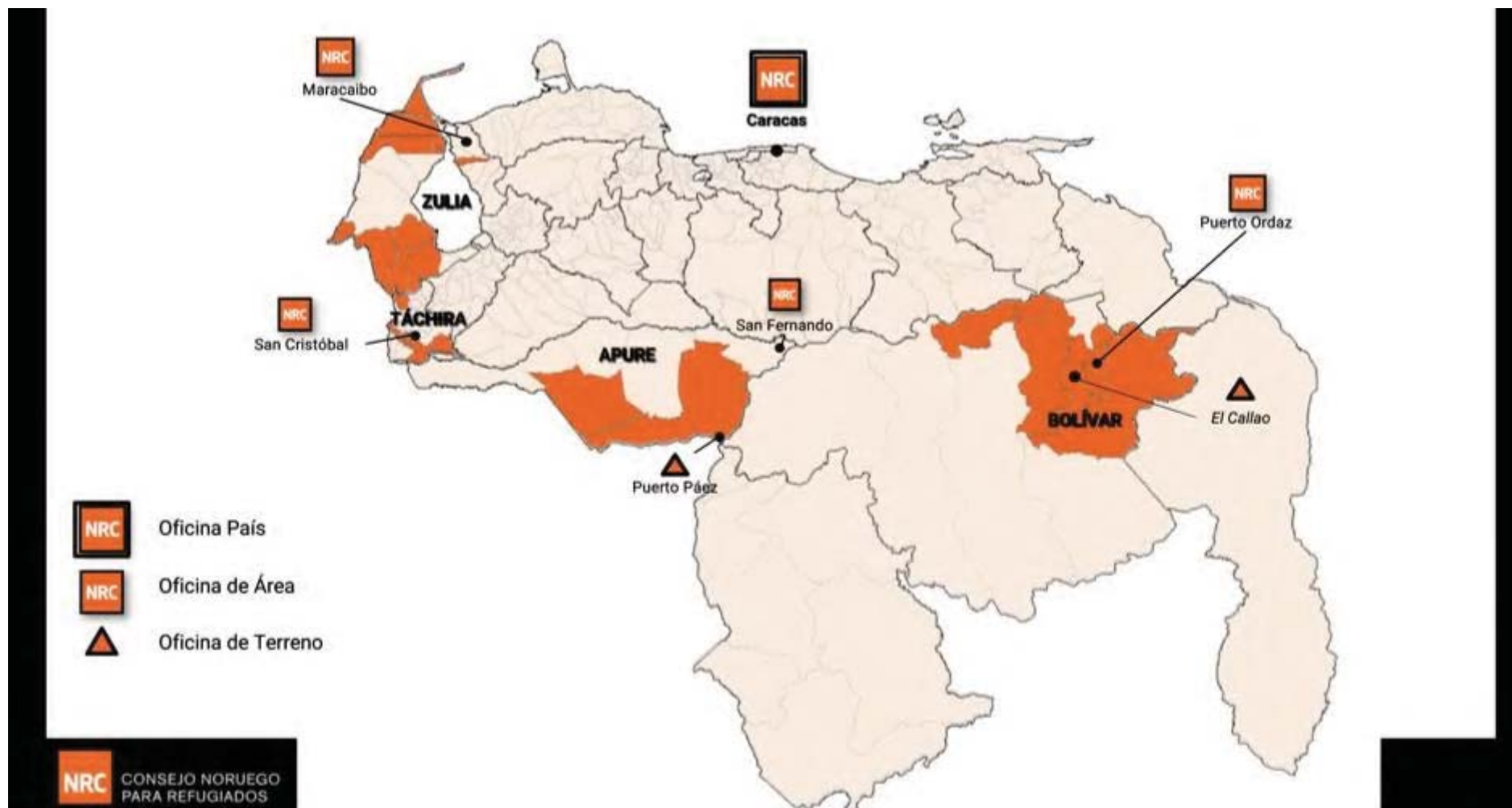
Regional displacement and high risk journeys

- Over 7M Venezuelans have left the country, mostly to Colombia and Peru and also to the USA, Ecuador, Chile, Spain and Brazil.
- 400K people arriving to Panama via the Darien Gap so far in 2023, 50% of them are Venezuelans
- Attempts to reach the USA via the Darien Gap and Mexico continue. *For the first time ever, during September, more Venezuelans than Mexicans were apprehended by US Government authorities for crossing between border points from Mexico into the US.*



NRC Venezuela operations

- Originally established to support Colombian refugees, NRC has been active in Venezuela since 2005, and was an extension of the Colombia Country Office.(CO)
- In 2019, considering the humanitarian crisis, Venezuela became an independent CO.
- Currently working in the states of Bolívar, Táchira, Zulia, and Apure.
- NRC is one of the largest NGOs in Venezuela with an annual budget of USD 10 million (2023).
- In 2022, NRC reached nearly 51,000 project participants
- In 2023, NRC works in Education, WASH, Livelihoods and Food Security, Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance. And the newest competency is Protection from Violence
- NRC hosts the INGO Forum since its inception and sits on its steering committee.



Contextual developments

- Temporary lifting of oil, gas and gold-related sanctions by the USA Government
- Agreement between the USA and Venezuela to repatriate Venezuelan migrants
- Agreement between the Venezuelan government and the opposition to establish a "Social Fund" to be managed by the UN, and agreement by the USA to unfreeze Venezuelan assets
- 2024 elections in Venezuela
- Development of the Colombian "Total Peace" process and impact in Venezuela



Protection analysis elements

Key points

- Migration and internal displacement
- Limited data and analysis
- Hosting population and pressure on limited services
- Non-state armed groups

Dynamics of the Colombo-Venezuelan border:

- Pendular movements and in search of service provision and livelihood opportunities
- Venezuelans arriving to border areas (for economic opportunities and for outward movements) and protection concerns due to irregular/illicit exchanges in the areas

Returns and lack of intentions to remain: 300K Venezuelan returnees according to government estimates but lack of intention to remain in Venezuela



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Colombo-Venezuelan border dynamics

- Soft recruitment
- Gender-based violence and trafficking
- Irregular movement of people and goods
- Widespread violence



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Remaining challenges and recommendations

- **Expectation management:** Humanitarian and protection needs will continue even if economy starts to recover and/or the Social Fund is implemented.
- **Lacking humanitarian funding:** The Social Fund will not be a panacea and cannot be used to justify the lack of funding for the Venezuelan Humanitarian Response Plan (30% funded, one of the lowest in the world)
- **Humanitarian character of funding:** Development needs and funding cannot substitute the need for a humanitarian focus but rather should go hand in hand.
- **Unaddressed root causes of displacement:** The conversation around development initiatives is key for recovery and there must continue to be a strong focus on nexus approaches that recognise and address root causes of the Venezuelan crisis.
- **Premature returns of Venezuelan refugees and migrants:** Premature and unplanned returns will create further humanitarian needs for which the humanitarian response community is ill-equipped to deal with or respond to currently. NRC calls for protection assessments to guide return and reintegration programmes, as well as continuous post-returns monitoring.



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