This report has been produced by the Protection Cluster in Venezuela, including contributions from the subnational Protection Clusters.

Cover photo: Red de Mujeres Villa Esperanza / Credits: UNHCR

The Protection Cluster is a broad-based participatory forum of protection partners which brings together United Nations agencies, human rights and development organisations and actors, as well as local and international non-governmental organisations. The Protection Cluster is led by UNHCR.

All our information products, including reports, maps and factsheets are available on the Venezuela Protection Cluster website: https://ven.protectioncluster.org

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Amid the economic situation and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, protection threats, such as instances of violence against vulnerable groups and the continued instances of international smuggling of persons. Persistent limited access to rights, such as health and education, to public services and to livelihood opportunities have driven many persons to leave their communities and move to other states within Venezuela or other countries in the region. Due to limited capacities among communities and individuals to address these threats, the population also continues to rely on negative coping strategies.

In 2021, confronted with this extraordinary situation, the Venezuela Protection Cluster’s 145 partners continued to deliver lifesaving protection services to persons at heightened risk within the framework of the three strategic objectives of the Humanitarian Response Plan. Around the country, from Amazonas to Táchira, from urban contexts to remote villages, its partners supported the physical, mental and psychosocial wellbeing of persons on the move; and worked to prevent, reduce and respond to all forms of violence. Throughout all these activities, the Protection Cluster and its subclusters steadfastly upheld the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and ensured that protection was mainstreamed in all activities in the humanitarian response.

In 2021, the Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility delivered these life-saving services to roughly 776,000 persons despite being only 16% financed.

FORWARD
A FEW WORDS FROM OUR REPRESENTATIVE

In 2022, the Protection Cluster and its subclusters will continue to position protection at the heart of every response by continuing to implement and adapt its protection and solutions strategies with its partners and the affected population. Indeed, this work started in 2021 when the Cluster supported the drafting of the 2022 Humanitarian Country Team’s Protection Strategy and contributed to the 2022-2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan.

Enrique Vallés-Ramos
Representative, a.i.
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Venezuela

In 2022, the Protection Cluster and its subclusters will continue to position protection at the heart of every response by continuing to implement and adapt its protection and solutions strategies with its partners and the affected population.
In 2021, the situation of gender-based violence, sexual abuse and forced labour. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, acute gas shortages and international sanctions against the public sector hampering its ability to deliver health and education services have compounded the effects of polarization, institutional challenges, and significant economic contraction, political and economic challenges for Venezuela has faced persistent socio-economic, demographic, and vulnerabilities.

Human trafficking and smuggling

There are serious and varied barriers in reaching and fulfilling the needs and rights of children to enjoy this right. Low teacher’s salary and the physical deterioration of and theft of educational infrastructure have led to the progressive collapse of the education system. Roughly seven million of children were deprived of care and education, such as electricity, water, sanitation and other services. The remote areas around Caracas, Maracaibo, Maracay, purchasing of food and medicines, the unauthorised use of irregular routes. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in personal protective equipment being normalised in multiple states, child labour or survival sex, which has become normalised in multiple states.

Persons on the move

The combination of violence, insecurity and negative coping mechanisms

The loss of domestic revenues as a result of the continuing economic contraction, international sanctions and other factors has limited investment in public utilities, such as electricity, water, sanitation and other services. The remote areas around Caracas, Maracaibo, Maracay, purchasing of food and medicines, the unauthorised use of irregular routes. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in personal protective equipment being normalised in multiple states, child labour or survival sex, which has become normalised in multiple states.

In Venezuela, there has been a notable increase in physical, emotional and sexual violence against children, there are documented cases of armed confrontations in various abuse and neglect, in March 2021, about 45 children from Apure were forcibly displaced internally and to other countries due to these.

Limited access to public services

In terms of health, according to ENCOVI 2021, less people sought treatment in public hospitals in 2021 than in 2020 due to fears of contracting the coronavirus. Limited access to health and education

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Due to high values of violence (GBV) and access to sexual and reproductive health services worsened. Additionally, the protection sector hampering its ability to deliver health and education services have compounded the effects of polarization, institutional challenges, and significant economic contraction, political and economic challenges for Venezuela has faced persistent socio-economic, demographic, and vulnerabilities.

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Activity with the community in Petare / Credits: UNHCR

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expenditures on average per household. Notably (11%), and, food represented 47% of total monthly days, followed by purchasing food on credit main source for accessing food in the past seven households reported that their own cash was the acceptable, but three quarters of assessed Households’ food consumption seems generally system distributed in different cities.

and fuel to all Iraqi citizens through a rations card which the government provides subsidised food Ministry of Trade, the PDS is a mechanism by members had equal access. Run by the Iraq (96%) did not prioritised access to food, but all of households scored “poor”. Most households of data collection. Overall, 96% of assessed

that consumer markets were largely functional Results from the qualitative assessment revealed results from the household interview period. Results from the household Iraq War, households in Telafar.

Related to food intake, 12% of households did other item in the most recent PDS distribution. Families receive PDS rations through one of its local branches tied to the Ministry of Trade distribution warehouses, and they are recently to Telafar, as they were not included in the distribution lists for the city. KIs noted that households who were unable to access the PDS at all were the ones who moved the highest in Venezuela. According to data gathered from the Protection Cluster Coordination Group in terms of organisations reporting activities. These organizations (local and international NGOs, and UN agencies) supported and improved the protection environment by providing specialised protection services, disseminating protection information and delivering trainings sessions to the communities, the civil society, and organisations reporting activities. These key Government-led institutions. According to data gathered from the Protection Cluster Coordination Group in terms of organisations reporting activities. These organizations (local and international NGOs, and UN agencies) supported and improved the protection environment by providing specialised protection services, disseminating protection information and delivering trainings sessions to the communities, the civil society, and

Figure 2. Summary of HPR 2021 results, by Specific Objective (1.4; 2.3; 1.1; 2.2; and 3.3)
In 2021, the Protection Cluster developed its own protection strategy to further reinforce the centrality of protection in its work. The objectives of the strategy are listed below with corresponding outputs in order to achieve them:

- Strengthen the protection information management capacity of partners, and monitor and evaluate the humanitarian response.
- Strengthen capacity of stakeholders to ensure access to rights and to respond to protection issues.
- Capacity of partners on Protection Information Management and SW reporting enhanced. During 2021, RH YUV WDH YUV VYF YVR JUR WNL RLV.

Cluster partners were trained in both in-person and virtual capacity building. The Protection Cluster continues to create and distribute the following monthly information management products found on the Protection Cluster’s website: interactive dashboard on the implementation of the 2021 humanitarian response Plan, a summary factsheet, and coverage maps. These products are updated on a monthly basis with the activity reports sent from partner organizations. To date, 79 organizations are contributing to the activity monitoring.

7. Strengthen capacity of the Protection Cluster to better support the HCT as needed in the implementation of the strategy in 2022.

During 2021, the Protection Cluster initiated bilateral GLYVF RYUV JWRK WYH RBH JSPQG QDRG DQURQ WNL RLV and all forms of violence, sustainable protection into all clusters to promote durable solutions.

Humanitarian assistance to people from indigenous communities, vulnerable children returning to school and persons affected displaced by armed confrontations strengthened. In 2021, US$12.9 million was allocated by the Venezuela Humanitarian Fund (OHIF) to 18 intersectoral projects with aspects of protection. These projects were designed to address, among others, the needs of indigenous communities in the states of Caracas, Bolivar, Delta Amacuro, and Vargas. Key informants included community members, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons and IDPs. The protection information management products can be used to inform the design of protection programmes in the humanitarian response.

Successful implementation of Protection Monitoring Tool: A Protection Monitoring Tool (PMT) was successfully designed and launched in 2021 by the Protection Cluster. The general objective of the PMT is to obtain information at a community-level of the dynamic protection situation in Venezuela. The questions were designed using a participatory approach with the involvement of the Cluster’s Strategic Advisory Group, inputs from members of the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICC) and feed from the Protection Information Management (PIM) counterparts.

A three-month pilot was held in Táchira, Miranda and Distrito Capital during April-June, and the Protection Cluster organized a workshop for 20 protection practitioners in Táchira to improve their mobile case management capacities and thereby ensure the population has improved access to DQURQ JWRK WYH RLV.

In partnership with representatives of the Ombudsman’s Cluster, the Cluster developed a tool based on its previous system to improve data analysis and representation capacities. Additionally, WDH YUV JVRK WNL RLV were updated on a monthly basis with the activity reports sent from partner organizations. To date, 79 organizations are contributing to the activity monitoring.

The protection information management products to monitor the humanitarian response. The Protection Cluster continued to create and distribute the following monthly information management products found on the Protection Cluster’s website: interactive dashboard on the implementation of the 2021 humanitarian response Plan, a summary factsheet, and coverage maps. These products are updated on a monthly basis with the activity reports sent from partner organizations. To date, 79 organizations are contributing to the activity monitoring.

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Protection integrated in the humanitarian response. Protection was successful placed at the centre of the HRP 2021. In coordination with the ICCG, protection was successfully integrated into the three strategic objectives of the HRP 2021. This ensures that all clusters in the system wide humanitarian response contribute to protection outcomes.

Partners trained on the centrality of protection. The Protection Cluster trained 131 staff from partner organisations on the centrality of protection, protection mainstreaming, reporting and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). The objective of the capacity building activities was to raise awareness of the imperative of all humanitarian workers and organisations to prioritise safety and dignity, meaning full access, accountability, participation and PSEA.


V. Strengthen accountability to affected populations through their involvement in all phases of decision-making processes

Partners trained accountability to affected populations (AAP). 131 partner staff and members from other clusters were trained on the commitments and mechanisms that humanitarian agencies must put in place to ensure that the affected populations are meaningfully and continuously involved in the decisions that directly impact their lives.

Credits: Tinta Violeta
A CHIEVEMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2021 STRATEGY (III)

VI. Prevent and response to serious forms of abuse and exploitation, including GBV and trafficking in persons through timely identification and referral mechanisms

Consultations with thematic working groups on the design of protection programmes. In 2021, the Protection Cluster convened ad hoc meetings with WHO, UNHCR, UN Women and UNHCR/Venezuela to ensure participation of representatives of vulnerable groups within the humanitarian response plan and protection analysis.

In 2021, the Protection Cluster convened ad hoc meetings with the WGPDOP and the WGLGBTI to ensure the participation of representatives of the affected populations in the design of programmes. The WGPDOP was consulted to identify priority activities to include in the United Nations system of Venezuela’s submission to the Central Emergency Response Fund to address the needs of persons with disabilities. The WGLGBTI supported the qualitative analysis of information related to LGBTI persons gathered during the data collection exercise for the HNO/HRP 2022-2023.

VII. Preven and response to serious forms of abuse and exploitation, including GBV and trafficking in persons through timely identification and referral mechanisms

Development and implementation of an anti-trafficking strategy. The Protection Cluster drafted and commenced implementation of a strategy to address trafficking in persons. Objectives of the strategy include increasing visibility of trafficking within the UN system in Venezuela and better integrating it into the humanitarian response, strengthening prevention and identification activities and improving referral pathways.

Expansion of service mapping. The service mapping tool provides contact information and the facility to pinpoint protection service providers by state and type of service was continuously updated throughout 2021. It ended the year with 124 organizations and institutions registered offering 1,188 protection services.

VI. Advocate for protection of vulnerable groups

Visibility of the Protection Cluster improved. In partnership with the AoRs, the Protection Cluster created and commenced the implementation of a concept note to increase the visibility of Cluster partners on social media. In furtherance of this document, in the last quarter of 2021, the Protection Cluster procured visibility items to share among the subclusters and AoR. The items will support the promotion of the Protection Cluster’s public image.

Coordination with stakeholders. Coordination and partnerships with donors. In 2021, the Protection Cluster briefing with donors such as ECHO, Spain, Norway, Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Canada, United States and the United Kingdom to give visibility to the humanitarian action in Venezuela.
The sub-national Protection Cluster in Táchira worked to secure a favourable environment for the states it covers through community engagement and securing the well-being and basic needs of the municipalities of Angostura del Orinoco and Gran Sabana de Bolívar; the indigenous communities residing in the municipalities of Angostura del Orinoco mining in the Orinoco mining arc. The sub-national cluster coordinated with the national Protection Cluster to facilitate the use of the Protection Monitoring Tool by the consultants to gather primary data.

San Cristóbal subnational Cluster

In 2021, new partners joined the sub-national Protection Cluster enhancing protection coordination in the areas of cross-cutting issues and on GBV and trafficking, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, breastfeeding, psychosocial support, and communications. The sub-national cluster advised the authorities on protection matters and conducted trainings for their members, both on cross-cutting issues and on GBV prevention and identification of GBV risk. Similarly, the sub-national cluster strengthened and expanded its reach to provide protection and solutions to persons at heightened risk. This was achieved after two coordination meetings with potential partners in Lara and Falcón states which inspired the exchange of good practices that helped members overcome obstacles and achieve their protection agendas in a more effective manner. Lastly, the sub-national cluster and two AoRs facilitated a series of trainings for their members, both on cross-cutting issues and on GBV and C/Eth Protection related topics.

The sub-national Protection Cluster in Bolívar worked to secure a favourable environment in the states it covers through community engagement and securing the well-being and basic needs of the municipalities of Angostura del Orinoco and Gran Sabana de Bolívar; the indigenous communities residing in the municipalities of Angostura del Orinoco mining in the Orinoco mining arc. The sub-national cluster coordinated with the national Protection Cluster to facilitate the use of the Protection Monitoring Tool by the consultants to gather primary data.

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UNICEF, UNHCR, FANREAVY and Red Cross of Táchira provided trainings on humanitarian principles, key protection messages, the right to seek protection, the location of persons at heightened risk. This was achieved after two coordination meetings with potential partners in Lara and Falcón states which inspired the exchange of good practices that helped members overcome obstacles and achieve their protection agendas in a more effective manner. Lastly, the sub-national cluster and two AoRs facilitated a series of trainings for their members, both on cross-cutting issues and on GBV and C/Eth Protection related topics.

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Endnotes


