

# VENEZUELA'S REFUGEE CRISIS

## *Trinidad & Tobago*



January 2020

## COUNTRY REPORT

Trinidad & Tobago, a country bordering the epicenter of the Venezuela refugee crisis continues to struggle with its coordination efforts due to the absence of a domestic legislation for refugees and asylum seekers. A field team was deployed on January 2019 to assess and evaluate the ongoing response activities taken at country level.

## Executive Summary

As part of the William R. Rhodes Global Advisors (WRRGA) commitment in the response to the ongoing Venezuelan Refugee Crisis, a mission team was sent on January 19, 2020 to assess and support the current activities that are being implemented (by both local and international organizations) to address the existing Venezuelan refugee needs in Trinidad & Tobago.

In early 2015, the Americas region began to experience a surge in migration flows due in large part to the rise of people emigrating from Venezuela in response to the country's faltering economy.

Only seven nautical miles from the coast of Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago is currently one of the largest migrant receiving countries in the Caribbean. Although reported estimates of Venezuelan refugees residing in the nation vary between 15,000 and 40,000, the island has not had such numbers of inward migration in its modern history, therefore legal frameworks and institutional capacity to cope with the situation are lacking.

On 26 July, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago began issuing registration cards to Venezuelans who had registered in the two-week exercise that was conducted from 30 May to 14 June 2019 in which approximately 16,523 were registered. The registration cards will allow Venezuelans to work legally for six months, after which a renewal for another six months can be granted. Card-holders will have legal access to employment, education and healthcare services.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), operating under its mandate, continues to work in conducting refugee status determination (RSD) although the government does not recognize their registration mechanism as being official. Following a request by the UN Secretary-General to UNHCR and IOM in 2018, a Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V) was established to lead and coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The R4V has made tremendous strides in the last year in identifying areas of intervention that need immediate attention and getting organizations to respond to them.

Finally, the role of the private sector and local diaspora will be critical in leading diversification into sectors such as medical and other higher-education sectors, agriculture and food processing, renewable energy and ecotourism. Moreover, it is these companies that will and should help coordinate the employment and remuneration of Venezuelan refugees.



## Acknowledgment

We would like to thank the Living Waters Community (LWC) for the planning and coordination of our trip and for giving us a very insightful information of the situation in Trinidad & Tobago. LWC has been one of the pioneering organizations in the coordination and registration of Venezuelan Refugees and we will continue to support their work at local level.

We would also like to thank Ron Harford, former chairman of Republic Bank and Kyffin Simpson, chairman of the Simpson Group for their continuous support and interest in the ongoing Venezuela refugee crisis

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## List of Abbreviations

CARICOM	: Caribbean Community and Common Market
CCJ	: Caribbean Court of Justice
CDC	: Centers for disease control and prevention (USA)
CSME	: CARICOM Single Market and Economy
CSO	: Civil Society Organizations
DMAD	: Drama Making a Difference Company
ECHR	: European Convention of Human Rights
ESL	: English as a second language
FIA	: Families in Action
GBV	: Gender based violence
HCW	: Health care worker
ICRC	: International Committee of the Red Cross
IDC	: Immigration Detention Center
IDP	: Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
IR	: Incidence rate
ITNA	: Is there not a cause
LGBTI	: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals
LWC	: Living Water Community
MoE	: Ministry of Education
MoH	: Ministry of health
NIS	: National Insurance Scheme
NFIs	: Food and non-food items
POC	: Person of Concern
PSN	: Persons with Specific Needs
RCRC	: Red Cross Red Crescent
RI	: Refugees International
RSD	: Refugee Status Determination
RMRP	: Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan
R4V	: Response for Venezuelans
SITREP	: Situation report
TOR	: Terms of reference
TTRCS	: Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society
UASC	: Unaccompanied and separated children
UN	: United nations
UNHCR	: UN High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	: United States Agency for International Development
WASH	: Water, sanitation, hygiene
WFP	: World food program
WHO	: World health organization
WRRGA	: William R. Rhodes Global Advisors

## Recommendations

### High Priority (Targets for the next 90 days)

- **Ensure that the Ministry of National security re-opens their registration platform** as this will allow all of the undocumented migrants to have access to employment, healthcare and education, amongst others. This will also allow the government to collect accurate demographic, social and healthcare data in order to report the real burden of Venezuelan refugees in the country.
- **Develop of a financial policy** (stemming from case studies done on countries welcoming refugees) that demonstrates to the government the positive impact that registering refugees and offering them access to employment can have on the local economy.
- **Improve existing communication** lines amongst all organizations (governmental & non-governmental) working in the coordination of the response; the government should continue to be the main governing entity (according to the 2014 National policy) and should develop a clear policy outlining the roles and responsibilities of all coordinating agencies, this will also prevent duplication of effort currently taking place.
- **Enhance exchange of information** within the context of the response coordination. The government should organize bi-weekly meetings with all agencies at local level to be able to collect information and share some of the key findings and urgencies.
- **Harmonize** the existing response platforms into one centralized platform that is governed and managed by the Ministry of National Security and supported by the UNHCR, LWC, USAID and the RCRC. This will facilitate the reporting of registered refugees.
- **Reduce fear and social stigma around** the process of registration by educating the population of incoming Venezuelan refugees on the benefits of registration.
- **Engage private sector organizations and diaspora members** in the current response coordination framework as they can be a pivotal channel in alleviating the refugee burden on the government by supporting them, especially through hiring them, fostering entrepreneurship and integrating them into their supply chains refugee microentrepreneurs.
- **Implement a country wide survey focused on labor statistics.** This survey should be conducted by an international organization such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. The outcome of the survey will further inform the government of the economic impact that social inclusion of refugees can have.
- **Strengthen data collection process and training at points of entry** in order to be able to collect real time data of all of those entering the country via the borders. These points of entry can also serve as reception areas for registering Venezuelan refugees with the Ministry of National Security.

Medium Priority (Targets for the next 180 days)

- **Establish more healthcare projects** aimed at communities that have been established in rural and hard to reach areas; some of these can include education on common hygiene practices, education on diseases affecting the area; vaccination campaigns and access to primary health services amongst others.
- **Establish a surveillance system** that is centralized and managed by the Ministry of Health which actively captures data on diseases (communicable & non-communicable) of the Venezuelan refugee population
- **Strengthen the infrastructure of the regional health centers** in order for them to serve as points of screening and monitoring; engage private sector institutions for the provision of medications and resources to be housed at these facilities
- **Development of a mobile healthcare unit project** (in collaboration with the government and private sector) in order to access remote and rural communities and provide weekly healthcare visits and monitoring.
- **Standardize education curriculums** that are being developed by different local organizations. Collaboration to standardize education curriculums in all education centers launched for the education of Venezuelan refugee children around the country

## Background

### Trinidad & Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago is an archipelagic republic nestled in the southernmost islands of the Lesser Antilles, it consists of 23 islands in the southern Caribbean between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, northeast of Venezuela.

Covering an area of 1,979 square miles (5,128 square kilometers), the country consists of the two main islands, Trinidad and Tobago, and 21 smaller islands—including Chacachacare, Monos, Huevos, Gaspar Grande (or Gasparee), Little Tobago, and St. Giles Island. Trinidad is 7 mi (11 km) off the northeast coast of Venezuela and 81 miles (130 km) south of the Grenadines. The island measures 1,841 sq mi (4,768 km<sup>2</sup>) in area (comprising 93.0 percent of the country's total area) with an average length of 50 mi (80 km) and an average width of 37 mi (59 km). Tobago is 19 mi (30 km) northeast of Trinidad and measures about 115 sq mi (298 km<sup>2</sup>) in area, or 5.8 percent of the country's area, 32 mi (51.5 km) in length and 11 mi (17.7 km) at its greatest width.

The country is divided into 9 regions (Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo, Diego Marin, Mayaro-Rio Claro, Penal-Debe, Princes town, San Juan-Laventille. Sangre Grande, Siparia, Tunapuna-Piarco); 3 Boroughs (Arima, Chaguanas, Point Fortin) and 2 cities (Port of Spain, San Fernando). It is traversed by three distinct mountain ranges that are a continuation of the Venezuelan coastal cordillera. The Northern Range, an outlier of the Andes Mountains of Venezuela, consists of rugged hills that parallel the coast. This range rises into two peaks. The highest, El Cerro del Aripo, is 940 meters high; the other, El Tucuche, reaches 936 meters. The Central Range extends diagonally across the island and is a low-lying range with swampy areas rising to rolling hills; its maximum elevation is 325 meters. The Caroni Plain, composed of alluvial sediment, extends southward, separating the Northern Range and Central Range. The Southern Range consists of a broken line of hills with a maximum elevation of 305 meters.



Trinidad has 1,039,000<sup>1</sup> (2019) inhabitants, most of whom (96 percent) reside on the island of Trinidad with most of the remaining (4 percent) living in Tobago. The ethnic composition of Trinidad and Tobago reflects its history of conquest and immigration. Two major ethnic groups - Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians - account for almost 80 percent of the population, while people of Mixed-race, Euro-Trinidadian/European, Sino-Trinidadian/Chinese and Arab-Trinidadian/Syrian-Lebanese descent make up most of the rest of the population. All these groups have left an imprint on the national culture, and there is an increasingly high percentage of mixed-race people.

Emigration from Trinidad and Tobago, as with other Caribbean nations, has historically been high; most emigrants go to the United States, Canada and Britain. Trinidad and Tobago has the second lowest population growth rate in the world (-0.883 percent (2007 est.), behind Cook Islands.

Unlike most of the English-speaking Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago is a primarily industrialized country whose economy is strongly influenced by the petroleum industry. Tourism and manufacturing are also important to the local economy, although not proportionately as important as in many other Caribbean islands. The economy benefits from low inflation and a trade surplus.

Trinidad and Tobago is a liberal democracy with a two-party system and a bicameral parliamentary system based on the Westminster System. The Head of State is the President while the Head of Government is the Prime Minister. It is a leading member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). It is also the Seat of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), which was inaugurated in April 2005. Trinidad and Tobago will be undergoing a general election in 2020.

Embedded within the Ministry of National Security is the Immigration Division which is the only governmental body responsible for the control of persons entering and leaving Trinidad and Tobago and the issue of certificates of immigration status, approval of visas and visa waivers, and the detention/deportation of immigrants.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2019

## Key Definitions

Throughout the report, the following definitions will be used to characterize the different populations evaluated. These definitions are based on the 2014 National Policy for asylum seekers and migrants put forth by the government of Trinidad and Tobago.

*Person of Concern (POC)*: is any person whom the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Refugee Agency, considers a refugee, internally displaced person (IDP), asylum- seeker, or stateless person, with some additional persons not fitting these criteria.

*Asylum Seeker*: An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which the claim is submitted. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee was initially an asylum-seeker.

*Refugee*: An individual who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

*Migrant*: An individual who is outside a State of which they are a citizen or national, or, in the case of a stateless person, their State of birth or habitual residence

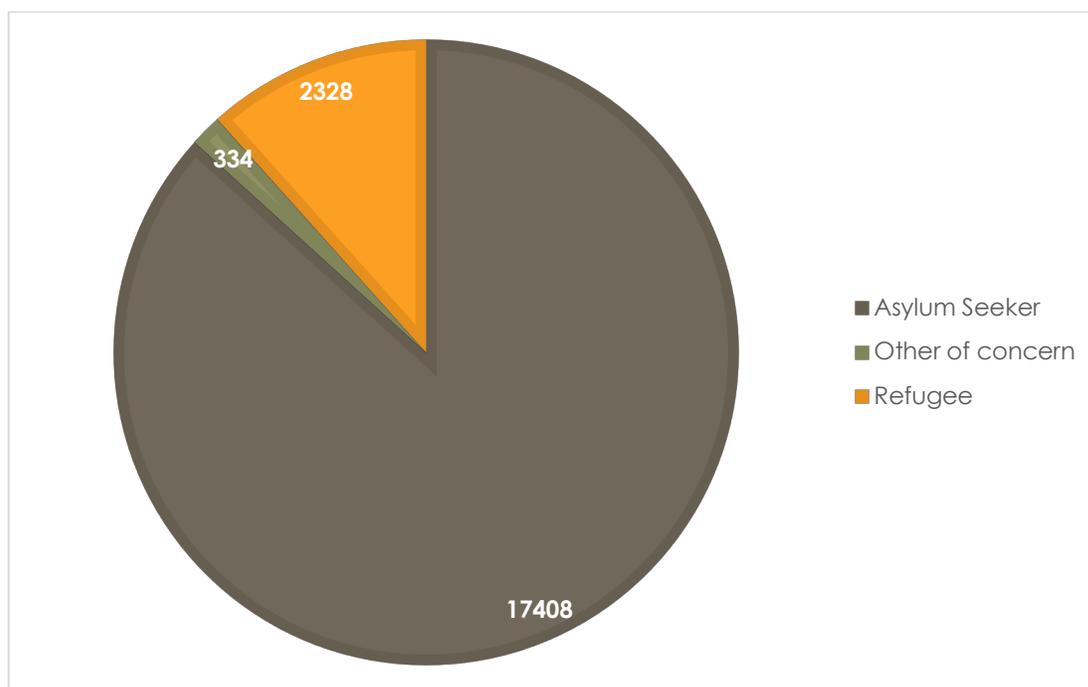
*Undocumented Migrants*: An individual who does not fulfil the requirements established by the country of destination to enter, stay or exercise an economic activity

## Introduction

### Situation at the start of the mission (January 19th, 2020)

As of December 2019, there are an estimated 21,000 POC's in Trinidad and Tobago that have been registered with the UNHCR.<sup>2</sup> This figure, however, remains to be confirmed and/or recognized by the national governmental authorities who acknowledge that only 16,523 Venezuelan POC's have been registered with the Ministry of National Security in the two week period (May 31<sup>st</sup> – June 14<sup>th</sup>).

Accurate estimates on the actual burden of Venezuelan refugee's remains unknown as reported rates vary from 21000 to 60000 (depending on the reporting agency). According to the December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 UNHCR report; the demographics of the 21,000 UNHCR registered Venezuelan POC's are as follows:

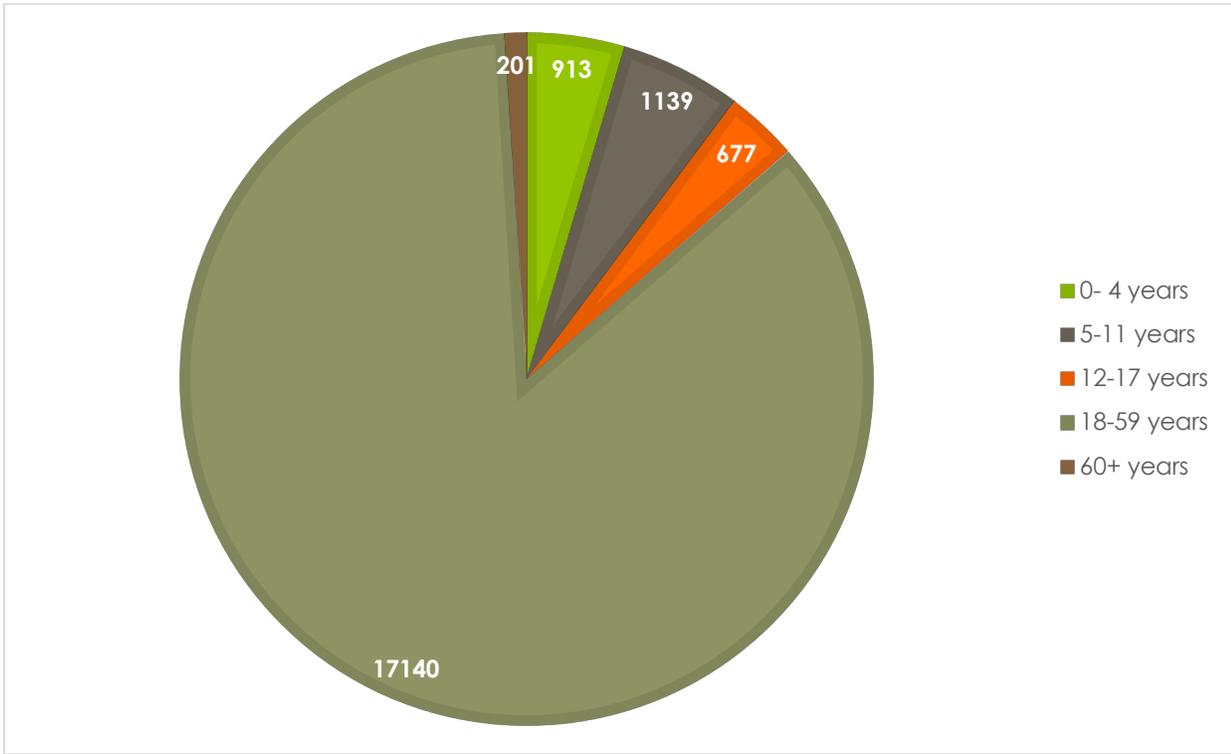


**Figure 1: Persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago by legal status, December 31 2019**

Out of the 21,000 UNHCR registered POC's, 17,408 are asylum seekers; 2,328 are refugee's and 334 are Others of concern.

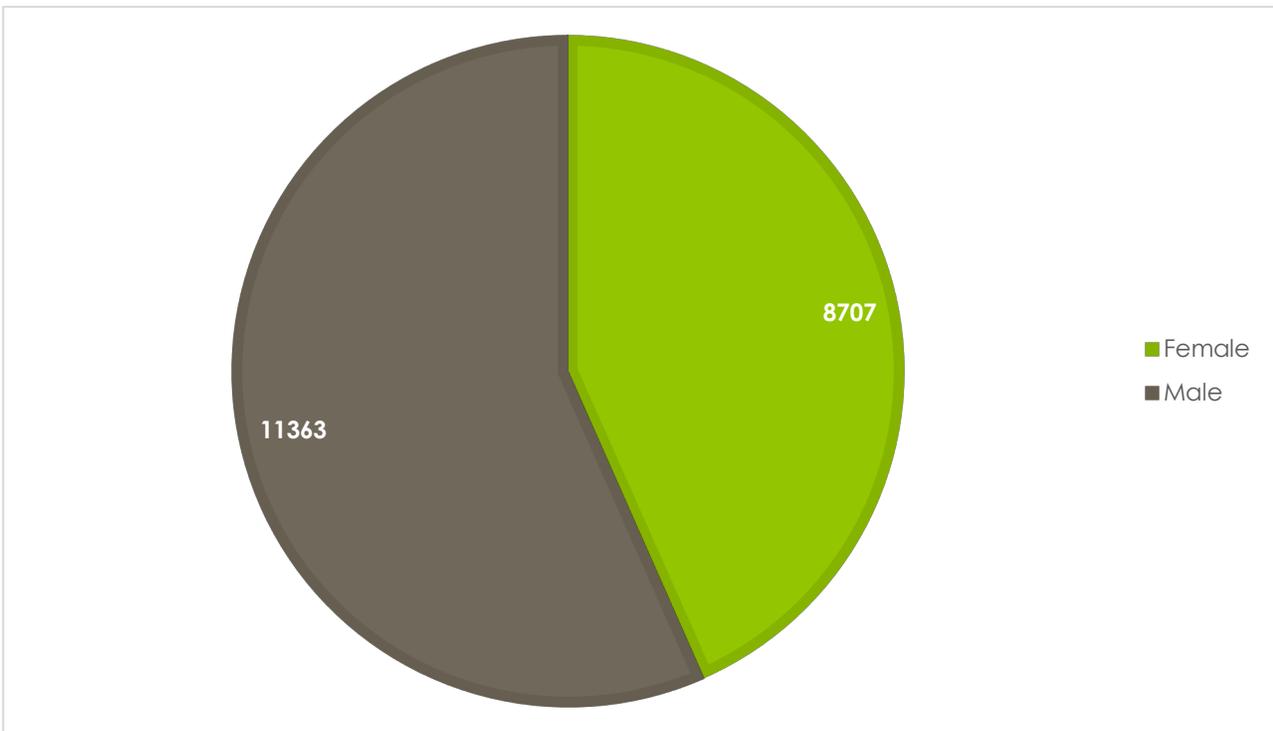
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<sup>2</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/71290>



**Figure 2: Persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago by age cohort, December 31 2019**

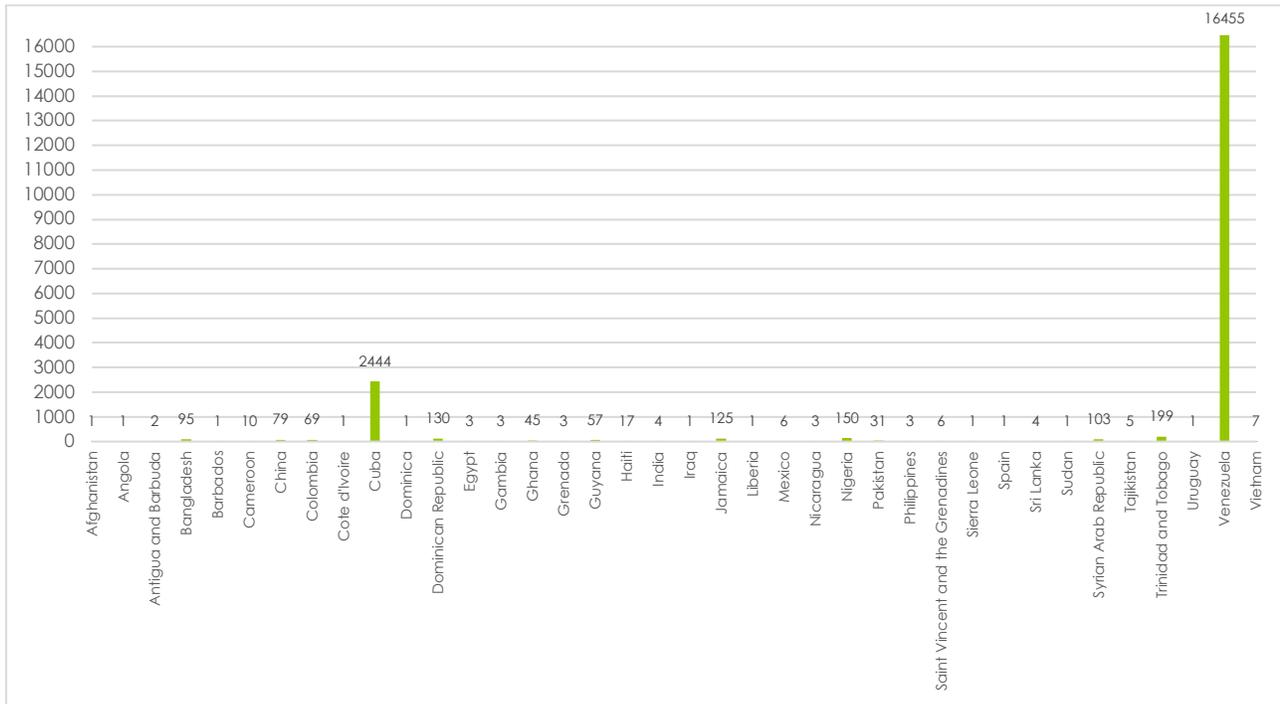
17140 are between the ages of 18-59, 1139 between the ages of 5-11, 913 between the ages of 0-4 years, 677 between the ages of 12-17 and 201 over the age of 60.



**Figure 3: Persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago by sex, December 31 2019**

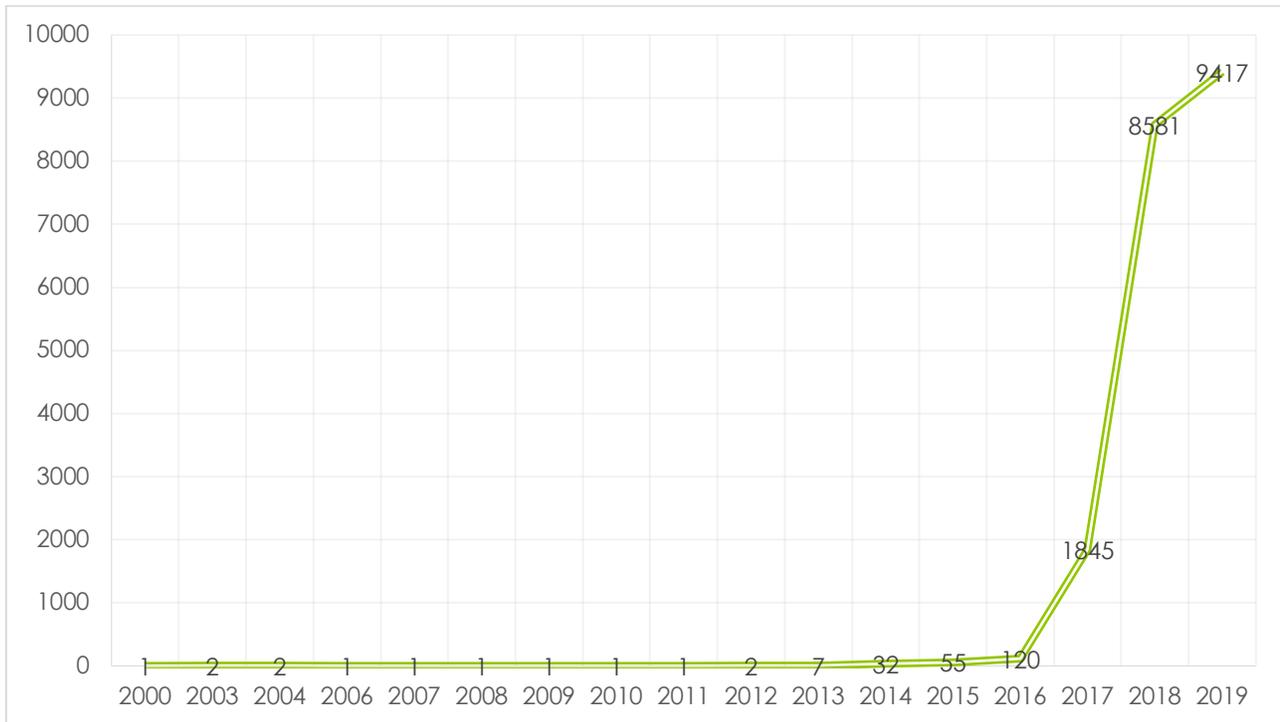


11363 are male and 8707 are female, around 1000 had no information regarding their gender



**Figure 4: Persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago by country of origin, December 31 2019**

16455 of the registered POC's are of Venezuelan origin, a number that correlates with what has been reported by the national governmental authorities. The second largest number of POC's come from Cuba (N=2444), followed by Trinidad and Tobago (N=199), Nigeria (N=150), Dominican Republic (N= 130) and Jamaica (N= 125). Although the country of origin from these POC's cover a large geographical location, it is clear that the majority of them come from countries close to the borders of Trinidad, with the exception of Nigeria.



**Figure 5: Cumulative number of persons of concern registered with UNHCR in Trinidad and until December 31 2019**

In 2016 there was an increase in the number of POC's that were registered with the UNHCR in Trinidad, this number increased from 120 in 2016 to 1845 in 2017. This correlates to the start of the Venezuela crisis in October 2016 in which mass migration started. In 2018, 8581 POC's were added to the UNHCR register, and 9417 more in 2019..

## Coordination of the Response

### The Ministry of National Security

Trinidad and Tobago acceded to the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in November 2000. By acceding to the two international instruments that govern the treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, Trinidad and Tobago acknowledged the vulnerability of refugees and the role that the international community plays in the protection of the rights of refugees. However, they do not have an established Refugee Status Determination (RSD) mechanism to process refugee claims.

In 2014, the cabinet approved a national policy to address refugee and asylum matters. This policy outlined a three phased strategy for RSD which hopefully would allow for the transfer of knowledge and expertise on RSD through training provided by the UNHCR (Refer to Annex B). The three phases

**Table 1: Three phase strategy for RSD outlined in the National policy to address refugee and asylum matters, Trinidad and Tobago, June 2014**

Phase 1	UNHCR leads the RSD procedure <b>in collaboration</b> with the Government
Phase 2	Government leads the RSD procedure, <b>with the involvement</b> of UNHCR
Phase 3	Government Conducts the RSD procedure <b>only</b>

The roll-out of each phase was approximately 12 months culminating with phase 3 in which the government has the exclusive and sole responsibility for the adjudication of all asylum claims and the status of the refugee. If the Government recognizes an individual as a refugee, a permit will be emitted which gives the individual the following rights:

**Table 2: Three phase strategy for RSD outlined in the National policy to address refugee and asylum matters, Trinidad and Tobago, June 2014**

Rights of Government recognized Refugees	Stay in the Country
	Work Authorization
	Identity Papers
	Travel Document
	Public Assistance
	Medical Care as needed
	Freedom of movement as any national
	Family Reunification
	Educational opportunity and recreational activities
	Counselling for trauma or other psychological issues
	The right not to be expelled from the country

In June 2019, the government offered Venezuelans a two-week window (May 31<sup>st</sup>- June 14<sup>th</sup> 2019) to report to authorities in return for a temporary work permit. Approximately 16,523 Venezuelans were registered by the Ministry of National Security. On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Trinidad and Tobago government published the official figure (N= 16,523) of Venezuelans that were registered, and on July 26<sup>th</sup>, the distribution of identification cards began distributing for Venezuelans registered through this process. This card is valid for 6 months and is renewable for another 6 months.

### The UNHCR and other Non-Governmental Organizations

The UNHCR, operating under its mandate has worked in conducting RSD procedures and assist those with a refugee status. Following a request by the UN Secretary-General to UNHCR and IOM in 2018, a Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V) was established to lead and coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. Its objective is to address the protection, assistance and integration needs of both refugees and migrants from Venezuela by providing country-specific support, information management, communication (messaging and reporting), and resource mobilization.

The R4V platform was established with the notion that it complements and strengthens national and regional responses of governments. Currently R4V has 41 participants, including 17 UN agencies, 15 NGOs, five donors, two international financial institutions and the Red Cross Movement.

In 2019, the R4V platform launched the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) which identifies the priority needs for refugees and migrants as well as host communities. These are:

**Table 3 :Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) priority needs for refugees and migrants as well as host communities in Caribbean Sub-Region, January 2020**

RMRP 2020 Priority Needs	Direct Emergency Response
	Protection Response
	Gender- Based Violence (GBV)
	Shelter
	Access to food
	Adequate Nutrition and Healthcare
	Provision of Livelihoods and self-reliance opportunities

In Trinidad & Tobago, the UNHCR has been quite active in not only honouring their role in the 2014 National Policy for refugees but also in liaising with local organizations in order to address the RMRP priority needs. They are continuously trying to work with the government to roll out and implement the policy and generate a common RSD mechanism which will allow for the accurate reporting of the burden of Venezuelan Refugee's in Trinidad.

Living Water Community (LWC), is currently the implementing partner of the UNHCR which counsels, guides, screens, interviews, provides material assistance (including shelter, food, medical care etc) to, and visits (at home and in detention) asylum-seekers and refugees and assists the latter with finding durable solutions to their problems.

In 2017, UNHCR, LWC, and the Refugee Unit of the Immigration Division agreed on standard operating procedures that would transfer responsibility for RSD procedures to the Trinidad and Tobago government. Until this takeover happens, the government has agreed to allow UNHCR and LCW to conduct RSD for asylum seekers. Once the asylum application from a POC is received by the UNHCR and a refugee status is determined, that individual receives these rights:

**Table 4 :Rights of Venezuelan Refugee's registered by UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago, January 2020**

1	Not to be deported
2	Free Movement
3	Family Re-unification
4	Access to primary healthcare (Emergency services)

## The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC works in Trinidad & Tobago directly with the Trinidad & Tobago Red Cross Society (TTRCS) to strengthen their capacity to respond to current challenges, particularly through training and programs to support migrants. The ICRC maintains dialogue with the authorities on issues related to migration, international law and the protection mechanisms applicable to vulnerable groups. These efforts include visits to persons deprived of freedom in detention centers to ensure that their conditions and treatment are proper and their rights respected.

In April 2019, the TTRCS shifted its focus to increase capacity building around the issue of migration—which involves several new services for TTRCS—and to find Spanish-speaking volunteers for the operation. TTRCS is planning implementation activities in a way that ensures that it is perceived as impartial and neutral by all community members, both belonging to host and migrant communities.

In April 2019, the migration officer attended a regional stakeholder meeting on operationalizing a Regional Framework for Migrant Health and Rights. In July, TTRCS's finance officer attended a cash training in Barbados in preparation for Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) implementation in Trinidad and Tobago. Currently, the TTRCS is in the process of finalizing the policy on migration for the national society and has planned a stakeholder meetings.

## Key Performance Indicators for Venezuelan Refugee Coordination

Measurements of the response efforts can be achieved through the following indicators. The key performance indicators outlined below are referent to the situation currently in Trinidad

**Table 5: Indicators for Venezuelan Refugee Coordination according to R4V, Trinidad & Tobago, January 19<sup>th</sup> 2020**

Priority Programs	
Program	Indicator
Direct Emergency Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Shelter</li> <li>✓ Food and Non-Food Items (NFIs)</li> <li>✓ Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)</li> <li>✓ Emergency medical assistance</li> <li>✓ Cash based interventions</li> </ul>
Protection Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Advocacy and support for registration</li> <li>✓ Regularization of refugee status</li> <li>✓ Refugee status determination</li> <li>✓ Protection of vulnerable populations</li> </ul>
Socio-Economic & Cultural integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Legal status and basic rights</li> <li>✓ Education</li> </ul>
Capacitation of Host Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Delivery of essential services; education, health social protection</li> <li>✓ International protection for those in need</li> <li>✓ Local capacity building</li> <li>✓ Legal pathways</li> </ul>

Source: Sub-Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform- Caribbean Situation report (August- September 2019)

**Table 6: Indicators for Venezuelan Refugee Coordination in Trinidad & Tobago not part of the Sub-regional Inter-Agency Coordination platform as of January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Other Programs	
Program	Indicator
Healthcare/Immunization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Population Demographics</li> <li>✓ Mortality</li> <li>✓ Morbidity</li> <li>✓ Disease Incidence/Prevalence</li> <li>✓ Vaccination coverage/uptake</li> </ul>
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Host populations</li> <li>✓ Accessibility to remote host populations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Number of reports of violent events such as rape, beatings, robbery, violent attacks, gunshots, etc.</li><li>✓ Proportion of consultations due to violent events</li><li>✓ Vulnerable sub-groups, according to age, sex, ethnic group, etc.</li></ul>
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## Objectives

As part of the WRRGA's commitment in the response to the ongoing Venezuelan Refugee Crisis, the primary objective of this mission was to assess the projects that are currently being implemented for Venezuelan refugees in Trinidad & Tobago, understand the role of the different organizations coordinating the response and supporting the work being done by the government, UNHCR and other organizations;

Furthermore, secondary objectives of the mission included:

- Establish channels of communication between local organizations and the private sector in order to seek funding for specific projects
- Understand specifically what the role of the private sector can be in the current frame of the response coordination.
- Establish direct communication channel with current UNHCR Chief of Mission
- Document all activities that are taking place related to the UNHCR RMRP priorities and generate a situation/country report
- Identify urgent needs primarily in the area of education, healthcare, shelter, training, cultural integration.
- Assist local organizations in developing a financial policy to estimate the real burden to the local economy of the Venezuelan refugees
- Assess the response activities related to Venezuelan refugee crisis in line with the sub national operational plan
- Identify and make contact with other local partners involved in the response and existing sub-national coordination mechanisms, including Sub-National health authorities, international organizations and civil societies not related to the UN
- Collect information from all sub-national partners on who's, when, since and until when doing what. Provide consolidated feedback to all partners
- Ensure that coordination response needs (human resources, logistics, financial, security etc.) are identified by planning and jointly coordinating the partners rapid assessments
- Promote adherence of standards and best practices by all response personnel taking into account the need for local adaptation.

## Field Team

The support team was composed of an epidemiologist from Health Pioneers LLC, a philanthropist from William R. Rhodes Global Advisors LLC, a banker from ScotiaBank two project coordinators and three officers from Living Water Community (LWC). The support team worked with stakeholders at local level, TTVSOLNET, ITNA, USAID, DI as well as with technical partners (UNHCR, Red Cross) and an independent consultant from DDS.

**William R. Rhodes**

CEO, William R, Rhodes Global Advisors (WRRGA)

**Cristina Valencia**

Epidemiologist, CDC, MSF, Health Pioneers

**Ron Harford**

Ex- Chairman, Republic Bank

**Rhonda Maingot**

Founder, Living Waters Community

**Rose Jackman**

Founder, Living Water Community

**Rochelle Nakhid**

Coordinator of the Ministry of Migrant and Refugees, Living Waters Community

**Benedict Bryan**

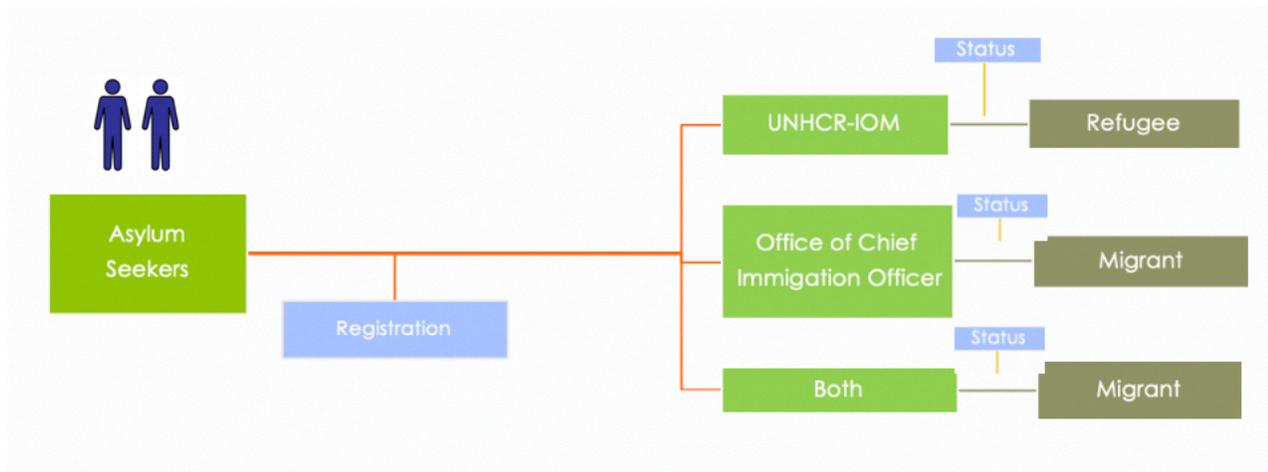
Community Based Protection Officer

## Activities and Findings

### Context

#### Reception, Registration and Status Determination of Asylum Seekers

The general process of reception, registration and RSD of asylum seekers in Trinidad is governed by the UNHCR-IOM platform and the Ministry of National Security (government officials)



Scenarios	Status Given	Rights
Registration with <b>UNHCR-IOM only</b>	Refugee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No deportation</li> <li>✓ Free movement</li> <li>✓ Family reunification</li> <li>✓ Emergency services and anti-natal care only</li> </ul>
Registration with <b>National Immigration Office only</b>	Migrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Eligible for Employment</li> <li>✓ Access to healthcare</li> </ul>
Registration with <b>Both</b>	Migrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Eligible for Employment</li> <li>✓ Access to healthcare</li> </ul>

Figure 6: Reception, Registration and Status Determination of Asylum Seekers in Trinidad, January 19<sup>th</sup>,2020

## Framework of Response Coordination

Despite the 2014 National Policy that was agreed upon by the government and UNHCR, we found that there are currently three existing platforms which form the framework of the response, for a specific description (and role) of the activities of each organization actively working in the field please refer to Annex C :

**Table 7: Framework of Response Coordination based on coordinating agency, purpose, collaborating partners and database used, Trinidad & Tobago January 19, 2020**

	Coordinating Agency	Purpose	Collaborating partners	Database used
Platform 1	UNHCR-IOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee RSD and implementation of RMRP at country level.</li> <li>Capacity training and governmental support</li> <li>Funding for refugee related projects</li> </ul>	LWC is the implementing partner for all activities at field level	ProGres V4
Platform 2	USAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of a Community Resilience Initiative (CRI) to strengthen and coordinate social services delivery to Venezuelan migrants and refugees as well as host communities</li> </ul>	Democracy International (DI), LWC, Ryu Dan Dojo Youth Empowerment Center, Families in Action (FIA), and Drama Making a Difference (DMAD)	Foreign Aid Explorer
Platform 3	ICRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building at local level. Access to remote areas and local liason</li> </ul>	TTRCS at local level. Part of R4V platform	Unknown

### UNHCR-IOM Platform

Currently, the UNHCR-IOM ProGres database gathers information of individuals that submit asylum seeking applications such as name, date of birth, education, dependence and area of origin. This information however cannot be verified or compared to that that the government has, if any. Data that is collected in this database is considered an output indicator and not an outcome indicator which makes it challenging to track progress and/or change.

The process of reception and registration under the UNHCR-IOM platform is conducted mainly by community workers from LWC that have been trained by the UNHCR at community outreach centers located near points of entry. When an POC arrives at the LWC reception point they present whatever identity document they have with them (usually the “cedula de

identidad") and this information is then entered via a biometric system to the UNHCR ProGres database. They are then given an appointment to go to the UNHCR office in Port of Spain to get an asylum card. A list is kept of all those that register with LWC and sent to the UNHCR once a week. UNHCR and LWC report that approximately 1200 Venezuelan POC's per month are approaching them for registration.

Numerous challenges have been reported with regards to the coordination and functioning of the platform;

- ✓ The complexity of the coordination role of the local government and the possible duplication of efforts being done by both agencies.
- ✓ A high number of those POC's that submit their asylum applications to LWC at the community centers fail to attend their appointment at the UNHCR to retrieve their asylum card due to the distances they have to travel, no accessibility to transport or funds to get to Port of Spain, and fear of possible deportation.
- ✓ There has been an increase in the amount of indigenous populations registering with UNHCR that need to be considered.

### USAID Platform

The role of the USAID platform in Trinidad and Tobago is to focus on the social aspect of integrating Venezuelan refugees into the local society. Through their local partner organization, Democracy International (DI), they have implemented a community resilience initiative (CSI) which aims to collaborate with local civil society to strengthen and coordinate social service delivery to Venezuelan migrants and refugees as well as host communities, this is achieved primarily through a network of resource centers that provide local communities access to information, language classes, psychosocial support and other critical services.

A baseline anthropological study was conducted in August 2019 by DI to look at perceptions of Venezuelan refugees in Trinidad, the main outcomes were focused on supporting cultural exchange activities and capitalizing on sources of strength in communities.

Despite the important work that is being done through the CRI, the USAID's priorities are not set by the R4V (although the USAID gives funding to the UNHCR and IOM) and there is no obligation of data sharing and communication with any other local and international agencies. They manage their own data and databases and focus primarily on social interaction and community sensitization.

### ICRC Platform

The Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) coordinates with the IOM, UNHCR, and other UN system agencies and NGOs that participate in the Regional Platform of Interagency Coordination. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) oversees the activities at regional level and sees the need to increase and highlight more actions related to Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), access to information, social inclusion, access to the labour market and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) within the context of Migration for all sectors. The upcoming revised appeal will bring together the revisions National Societies are making to their national plans of actions and budgets and will have a direct implication in their role as part of the Trinidad response.

The TTRCS primary operational objective is in the urgent and immediate assistance of Venezuelan refugees and protection will be provided in a coordinated manner to people traveling along migratory routes, at migration points and at their destination.

The ICRC recognizes that In Trinidad and Tobago, migration is a highly sensitive issue politically and the TTRCS is ensuring a well-planned response to the situation as a result. At country level, a livelihood needs assessment was conducted which will pave the way to the development of policies at country level.

The role of the Red Cross within the current Trinidad response framework still needs to be further examined/understood. Nevertheless, the importance of the Red Cross in accessing remote locations where Venezuelan refugees might be congregating is crucial as they can serve as community sensitization agents and help in the reception and registration of Venezuelan refugees crossing the borders.

### ***The Role of the Ministry of National Security***

Since the 2014 approval of the national policy to address refugee and asylum matters the Ministry of National Security has tried to adhere to the framework of the policy. Previously, ad hoc procedures had been in place to deal with asylum seekers which saw UNHCR and LWC conducting RSDs with little involvement by government agencies.

Trinidad and Tobago is currently in the first phase of policy implementation. Capacity building has been taking place with UNHCR facilitating training in international refugee law. Through a collaboration between UNHCR and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), relevant officers participated in the USCIS Refugee, Asylum and International Operations (RAIO) Combined Training and the Asylum Division Officer Training Course (ADOTC) in 2014.

The government of T&T has facilitated a Refugee Transfer Mechanism enabling refugees from neighbouring islands to come to Trinidad and Tobago to finalise their resettlement to an accepting country. However, there is no collaboration between the UNHCR and the government; they are operating as two separate and disjointed entities (which breaches the

2014 policy) without a clear path/mechanism as to how RSD will be done and how the data will be reported. The government does not recognize the refugee status that is given by the UNHCR and they have their own database and internal process to register POC's.

Following the June 2019 registration of 16,523 Venezuelan refugees the government has not agreed to re-opened registration and allow all of the undocumented refugees to register with the national authorities. The government need to get a better understanding of the value and importance of registering these POC's as it will have an impact on other areas of interest such as security and the economy.

International organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can be critical in helping the government understand the importance of registering Venezuelan refugees through their national registration platform. Through a labor market survey and analysis, areas where refugee and migrant population could make the greatest contribution to the local economy can be identified.

Moreover, there is an urgent need for a country specific financial policy which explicitly outlines the benefits of having a visionary leadership which embraces the registration of refugees and the impact indicators to monitor and measure. The increase in refugee demand raises incomes and spending which, in turn, generate additional rounds of spending impacts in the local economy. The familiar identity of economics, ensures that changes in expenditures match changes in incomes for all agents in the local economy.

The government could be fearful of the impact that registering these refugees could have on the economy as welcoming refugee's is expensive. However, Germany and Singapore can serve as leading examples for the government to re-evaluate opening their registration platform. Both countries have received a high influx of refugees and have worked diligently in finding ways in which these refugee's can enhance their economies. New workers will stimulate corporate production, and also increase demand for all kind of services, thus benefiting local businesses

At a macro level, refugees and migrants can be productive economic actors that can boost the economy of the recipient country, another example is seen in Colombia due to the Venezuelan diaspora, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Colombia has received about 1.5 million migrants from Venezuela in the last few years, and thousands more arrive every day. The IMF forecasts that Colombia will grow 3.4% in 2019, faster than Peru, Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina

Finally, it is important to emphasize that 2020 will be an election year in Trinidad & Tobago, making the efforts to re open registration and re establish communication channels between the government and other organization acting locally more challenging. Nevertheless, a new government could also lead to new and more closely monitored execution of policies.

## The Role of the Private Sector

The relationship between the public and private sector in Trinidad and Tobago can be considered collaborative, with both working together in the context of a mixed market economy.

Little to no information is available regarding the involvement of the private sector in the current coordination framework of Venezuelan refugees. Talking to several Venezuelan that own local businesses or other non-governmental organizations in Trinidad we found out the important role the private sector can have, primarily in financing some of the project and activities being conducted by the government and the UNHCR.

From the government's point of view, the private sector is viewed as having a key role to play in the search for economic recovery, renewal and diversification. The government has pushed ahead with investment projects and to enhance and improve its collaboration with the private sector in order to stimulate economic recovery and transformation.

The private sector has argued that they can achieve more if the government improves its own efficiency, reduces the tax burden and bureaucracy, and helps create a better operating environment. The country as a whole struggles with constraints on public sector finances, limited access to financing, inefficient labour markets, emigration of skilled labour, and an innovation and entrepreneurship shortfall. The private sector could play a key role in helping solve many of these issues. PPPs can help fund necessary infrastructure projects that would not otherwise be affordable for the government.

Trinidad, has a highly skilled diaspora population, primarily working in the private sector. These private companies are more likely to lead diversification into sectors such as medical and other higher-education sectors, agriculture and food processing, renewable energy and ecotourism. Moreover, it is these companies that will and should help coordinate the employment and remuneration of Venezuelan refugees.

If the private sector has some doubts about the government's ability to lead a drive to transform the economy, the reverse is also true. Due to the long oil boom, the private sector development has been held back. The majority of small and medium sized, old, locally owned, privately held sole proprietorships and less open to international trade. Since the global crisis of 2008 labor productivity has decreased leaving a wide gap in the employment market for migrants.

Reinforcing that the private sector, as the largest generator of wealth and employment, has the duty of alleviating the refugee crisis by supporting them, especially through hiring them, fostering entrepreneurship and integrating them into their supply chains refugee microentrepreneurs, providing financial inclusion is a key to unleashing their potential and success.

## Priority Programmes

### Direct Emergency Response

#### Shelter

The UNHCR-IOM platform alongside the R4V partners continue to be the leading source of direct emergency assistance. As such, there has been great advancements in the areas of shelter, food and non-food items, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), emergency medical assistance and cash-based interventions.

Through initiatives like the Shelter of Hope project and the Saint Raphael shelter project, LWC has strived to continue their efforts to increase POC's autonomy and improve their living conditions. They have been able to reach more rural areas and have found congregations of refugees that have established themselves in coastal communities and have been living in undignified conditions, these settlements have continued to grow and pose a burden to sanitation policies.



Figure 7: Images from the LWC Saint Raphael Shelter project in Trinidad and Tobago, January 19<sup>th</sup> 2020

The IOM displacement-tracking matrix has shown a growth of Venezuelan refugee communities in the southern part of the country, this is partly due to the fact that the cost of

living and rent in major cities have become unaffordable for these refugees and they have been forced to flee to more inexpensive communities. Data has shown that migrants and refugees pay more rent than locals and the living conditions are below national standards

Major efforts have been made by the UNHCR to relocate refugees that are settled in rural areas to more urban centers. Many of these refugees have shown resistance and reluctance to relocate due to fear, uncertainty and possibly deportation.

According to local organizations, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) approached the Trinidad & Tobago government to provide them with the necessary loans to build shelter for refugees. Given the current status of the government's response, they could not accept the terms and conditions that accompanied these loans.

### Food and Non-Food Items (NFI's)

Although addressing food and non-food items (NFI's) is considered an area of intervention for the R4V, little has been done at local level in the provision of NFI's. 44 children under five were screened for their nutritional status and counselling was provided to 158 Venezuelan caregivers with children between 0-23 months on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF). Although this baseline nutritional survey was conducted early in 2019 in a part of the infant refugee population much work still remains to be done by all agencies in the provisions of NFI's and the understanding of the nutritional status of the whole of the refugee population.

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), like NFI's remains to be fully understood within the Venezuelan refugee population in Trinidad & Tobago. The Water and Sewage Authority has a community outreach programme for WASH consultation. Members of the public review and give comments at live consultations at urban centres and regional corporations, and documents are posted on websites and in newspapers for comment. However, limited strategies have been implemented to provide water access, sanitation and overall hygiene to refugee communities, primarily those living under substandard conditions.

### Emergency Medical Assistance

Although Venezuelan refugees registered with the UNHCR receive only limited access to healthcare (emergency services only). Local partners organized medical clinics in Port of Spain and rural areas of Trinidad and Tobago to allow refugees and migrants to access primary medical care, this coordination is not done in collaboration with the government or Ministry of Health operated healthcenters. Challenges to access health care in the sub-region include language barriers, lack of knowledge of the services available, strains on existing

public health systems, and inability of refugees and migrants to afford the cost of medical interventions, especially of specialized care. More details are given in the Healthcare section below.



**Figure 8: Images from a healthcare facility in Trinidad and Tobago, January 19<sup>th</sup> 2020**

### Cash based interventions

Lack of job opportunities continue to impact Venezuelans' ability to be self-reliant and sustain themselves and their families. As part of the response, partners provided cash-based assistance grants to enable some of the most vulnerable refugees and migrants to fulfill their needs in a dignified manner. Since the beginning of the year, 2,398 vulnerable Venezuelans in Trinidad and Tobago have received cash-based assistance to meet a variety of their needs, including access to food, water, healthcare and shelter. Caution has been exercised with cash based interventions as international authorities do not want these refugees to become reliant on such interventions and not have the impetus to work or generate income

### **Protection Response**

#### Advocacy and support for registration

Activities for the reception and registration of Venezuelan refugees continue through the UNHCR-IOM platform despite setbacks in the communication with governmental authorities. There are four (4) official points of entry (San Fernando, Chaguaramas, Cedros and Tobago). At each of these points of entry the government has place an immigration officer, customs office and coast guard. Moreover, a governmental children's authority has been establish

that is responsible for the care of refugee minor. However, limited resources and lack of personnel has made it difficult to manage the care and placement of minors. LWC has started to work in establishing houses and developments in which children can be placed.

### Protection of Vulnerable Populations

1,123 children were provided with psycho-social support, including access to child friendly spaces. Along with GBV, human trafficking is among the most prevalent protection risk faced by persons arriving from Venezuela. Access to safe shelter and housing for victims of trafficking continue to be a challenge due to limited availability of emergency shelters, the high cost of renting, and security risks. This situation coupled with lack of capacity of officials at entry points to identify victims of trafficking and of service providers to assist them with minimum standards of care often prevent victims of trafficking and other PSN to access appropriate services. On September 2019, partners supported the government in the provision of accommodation and food assistance to 38 women and two girls to meet their urgent needs.

Some of the current challenges could be better addressed if there were proper data on refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants which is verified and managed by a centralized coordination system. Accurate data on the magnitude and needs of Venezuelan refugees and other migrant populations could help UNHCR, NGOs, and the government allocate resources more effectively, and create more tailored programming. There needs to be an investment in information systems and IT support in order to collect, analyze and report the status of the current Venezuelan refugees in Trinidad and Tobago.

## **Socio-Economic & Cultural Integration**

### Education

Local cultural integration has been heavily impacted by language barriers and the lack of regular migratory status of the majority of the refugee and migrant population from Venezuela. This hinders their access to the formal labor market, financial systems and, in some cases, higher education, thus exposing refugees and migrants from Venezuela to exploitation and abuses.

Classes for Equal Place (Espacio de Equidad), the joint education initiative to provide access to accredited education to refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants began in September 2019. Over 700 children between the ages of 5-17 attended the program across the country. Partners are working to secure new learning spaces with the aim of accommodating at least 1,000 students by the end of 2020. Still, integration activities involved community dialogues and workshops on prevention of xenophobia for 409 host community members and 70 Venezuelans during the reporting period. Activities included an event hosted by the

Economics Association held on the topic of opportunities for economic development, as well as screenings of *Lifted*, a film aimed at showcasing the need for diversity and exchange.

Other local organizations like *Is There Not a Cause* (ITNA) that was founded in 2000 have worked alongside the Venezuelan diaspora and private donors to build the St. James learning Space and as of July 2019 have registered 115 Venezuelan refugee children. ITNA has made efforts to collaborate with LWC and UNICEF in the development of similar curriculums in order to create a standard and uniform medium that can be applied throughout all of the education facilities targeting Venezuelan refugee children

### Capacitation of Host government

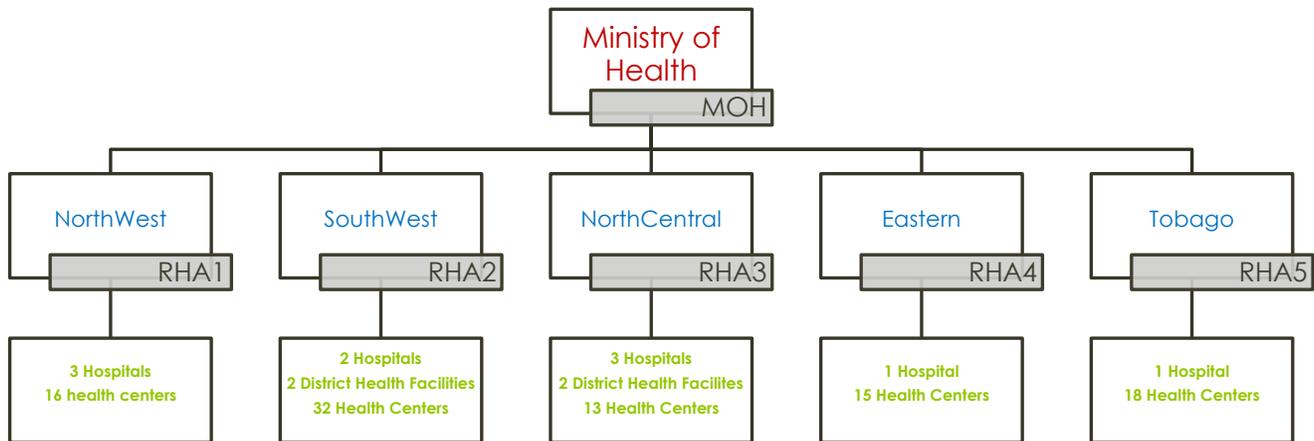
It has been very difficult for the UNHCR-IOM partner to establish an active communication channel with the Trinidad & Tobago government to support access to and the delivery of essential services such as education, health, and social protection, while strengthening the governments capacity to ensure international protection for those in need.

Monthly police training on international refugee protection have taken place and targeted 23 police officers in August and 24 police officers and two immigration officers in September. The Protection Coordination Working Group continues to bring together UN agencies and civil society actors to promote the implementation of a common framework and approach to case management standards and operating procedures. The Working Group is currently defining the referral pathways, identifying solutions to challenges in the protection response, and finalizing the national mapping of services available by verifying the services operating in the territory.

### Healthcare

Despite all of the efforts made to address several areas of intervention, both the R4V and the government have struggled to establish projects related to healthcare, management of communicable and non-communicable diseases, collection of healthcare indicators from the population and mutual collaboration in establishing a proactive surveillance system at points of entry and health care centers. The government registration process does collect healthcare information from those registering, however the UNHCR-IOM registration process collects basic healthcare variables that are not informative of the overall health of this population

It is important to understand the structure of the public health system and its operational units.



**Figure 9: Structure of the Public Health care system in Trinidad and Tobago, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The public health system in Trinidad & Tobago is governed by the Ministry of Health. It is divided into 5 Regional Health Authorities (RHA) each providing services to hospitals and health centers in each Region. Numerous health centers exist at points of entry, however these government operated health centers are very limited in the healthcare services they can provide to Venezuelan refugees that are not registered with the Ministry of National Security. Banners have been placed at these healthcare centers that say " if you don't have a national ID or any form of ID you wont be treated even for emergency services". In 2019 the MoH released a statement in which they acknowledged they will provide the following services to unregistered Venezuelan refugees:

- Emergency healthcare services
- Anti natal and post natal
- Non communicable disease management/monitoring

The Ministry of Health, does provide access to primary health care services for asylum seekers and refugees. However, these same populations are often extremely reluctant to access those services out of fear of arrest, detention, or deportation. This is because they fear that hospital staff, as a matter of practice, often notify the police or immigration officials of their presence.

Language barriers have proven to be an additional hurdle for those who seek care. Spanish speakers have great difficulty accessing medical care unless they are accompanied by an English speaker.

IOM's study showed that of those Venezuelans who had tried to access health services, 35 percent could not do so, and one-third of children under age five were not following their vaccination schedule properly.

Moreover, the remote location of the Venezuelan refugee communities settling in Trinidad poses a problem as distances to nearby health centers are long and accessibility to them becomes difficult. The government should work closely with the UNHCR in establishing mobile clinics that can access these remote locations and provide weekly health monitoring and data collection of these refugee populations. This will also help in the establishment of a surveillance system that can be primarily managed by the government that captures current health demographics of the population as well as the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

There has been 1 report of an outbreak of Varicella (Chickenpox) amongst a small population of Venezuelan refugee children and two outbreaks of scabies and tuberculosis in a prison and detention center.

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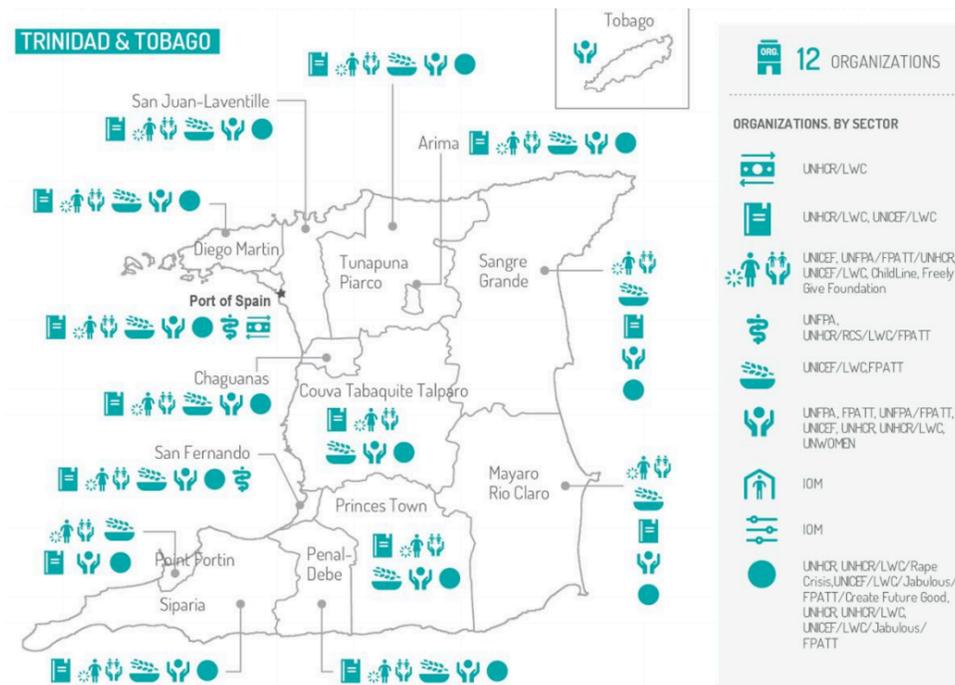
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## Annexes

### A. Main Actors/Collaborators/NGO's

Name of the actor	Role
<b>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)</b>	Case management, reception, registration and RSD
<b>International Organization for Migration (IOM)</b>	Case management, reception, registration and RSD
<b>Living Waters Community (LWC)</b>	Case management, reception, registration and RSD
<b>Ministry of National Security</b>	Policy implementation, Case management, reception, registration and RSD
<b>United States Agency for International Development (USAID)</b>	Social aspect of integrating Venezuelan refugees into the local society
<b>Democracy International (DI)</b>	Implementation of Community resistance initiative (CSI) with USAID
<b>Families in Action (FIA)</b>	Provides psychosocial support to USAID platform
<b>Maraval Child Friendly Space</b>	Organization in charge of education of Venezuelan refugee children
<b>San Raphael Shelter</b>	LCW initiative to provide shelter for Venezuelan Refugees
<b>Archdiocesan</b>	Liason between organizations, government and civil societies
<b>La Romaine Child Friendly Space</b>	Organization in charge of education of Venezuelan refugee children
<b>Refugees International (RI)</b>	Coordination of regional activities
<b>International Organization for Migration (IOM)</b>	Implementing platform of RMRP for R4V
<b>Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela</b>	Organization of response efforts at regional level

### B. Framework of Coordination



## C. Mission Schedule

Day and Time	Item	Venue
Monday 20th January, 2020		
8am - 9am	Meeting with LWC Community Directors and Tour of Premises	Fred St
9am - 10.15am	Meeting with LWC Ministry for Migrants and Refugee Staff	Gordon St.
10.15am-11am	Meeting with Families in Action and Democracy International Staff	Gordon St.
11am-12pm	Visit to Maraval Child Friendly Space (Depends on time)	St. Therese
12pm -12.40pm	Lunch	LWC Cafe
12.40 pm -4.45pm	San Raphael Shelter/Livelihood Project Visit	San Raphael
5pm-6.15pm	Meeting with Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees and Carenage Parish priest	Chancery
7.30pm	Dinner LWC and UNHCR Chief of Mission	tbc

Tuesday 21st January 2020		
7am - 12pm	Icacos/Cedros visit	PoC community in Icacos
12pm	Lunch Cedros	
1.30pm - 2.00pm	La Romaine Child Friendly Space	La Romaine
2.30pm - 3.30pm	Penal Parish Ministry and Child Friendly Space	Penal
3.30-6.30pm	Rest	
7pm	Dinner Open	

## D. Government Phase Approach Policy (2014)

Phase 1: UNHCR leads the RSD procedure <b>in collaboration</b> with the Government	
Duration	12 Months from agreed commencement
Conditions	<p>(i) Immigration Officers and law enforcement officials to be made aware of the need to be sensitive to any expression of fear of being returned or of harm on return on the part of a foreign national, this may signal an asylum claim;</p> <p>(ii) Immigration Officers and law enforcement official to be trained (by UNHCR) to recognize such signals, and to gather further information, such as, country of origin language spoken etc; and</p> <p>(iii) An interview of the asylum-seeker to be conducted as soon as reasonably possible</p>
Exceptions	<p><i>Scenario 1:</i> When asylum seeker due to various reasons present themselves first to the Honorary Liason who will then;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Register the asylum seeker and conduct an initial screening with three (3) days of receiving the asylum seeker;</li> <li>Present the asylum seeker to the Immigration division within one (1) day of the initial screening</li> <li>Immigration division will register the asylum-seeker and issue an Order of supervision</li> <li>Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be informed by the immigration division accordingly</li> <li>Assess the needs of the individual and assist when necessary</li> <li>Refer the asylum claim to the relevant section of the UNHCR regional office</li> <li>UNHCR will make arrangements to interview the asylum seekers, and present its findings to the Immigration division within sixty (60) working days from the date of the transmission of the asylum claim by the Honorary liason</li> </ol> <p><i>Scenario 2:</i> Should the asylum seeker be brought to the attention of the Immigration Division, in the first instance, the Division would arrange for immediate accommodation and within (3) days arrange for initial screening. Thereafter,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigration division will register the asylum-seeker, determine whether detention is necessary or issue an Order of Supervision;</li> <li>Immigration division will inform the Honorary liason of the application for asylum;</li> <li>Honorary Liaison will register the asylum seeker and begin process of determination;</li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be informed by the Immigration division accordingly</li> <li>e. Honorary liaison will assess the needs of the individual and provide accommodation</li> <li>f. Honorary liaison will refer the asylum claim to the relevant section of the UNHCR regional office</li> <li>g. UNHCR will make arrangements to interview the asylum seekers, and present its findings to the Immigration division within sixty (60) working days from the date of the transmission of the asylum claim by the Honorary liaison</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2: Government leads the RSD procedure, with involvement of UNHCR</b>	
Duration	12 months
Conditions	<p>The government formally establishes an Eligibility Committee, who will be responsible for processing asylum applications. This committee will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operate under the responsibility of the Immigration Division</li> <li>2. Responsible for processing asylum application, liaising with UNHCR and the honorary Liaison</li> <li>3. Communicate its recommendation to the Minister in charge of refugee matters and forward the RSD decision to the asylum seeker.</li> </ul> <p><i>The two non-governmental organizations (UNHCR and Liaison) will be granted observer status</i></p>
Exceptions	All phase 1 procedures will be followed during this phase, with the exception that <b>asylum claim will be submitted to eligibility committee.</b>
<b>Phase 3: The Government Conducts the RSD procedure only</b>	
Duration	Indefinite
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Government (through the Eligibility Committee) has exclusive and sole responsibility for the adjudication of all asylum claims</li> <li>2. UNHCR will participate in the deliberations of the Eligibility committee, as observers</li> <li>3. UNHCR will continue to collaborate with the Government by providing technical advice and support, as well as training and capacity building</li> </ul>









