New Highlights

- The Colombian National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), charged with handling the returnee crisis, officially stopped registering new arrivals at the border on 22-23 September, however OCHA indicates that long-term Colombian residents in Venezuela have continued to move across the border.

- In Norte de Santander, UNGRD has gradually shifted returnees from hotels to shelters and has reduced the number of shelters kept open. This week the authorities opened one mega-shelter (“Inter-ferias”) with facilities for 10,000 persons, where all remaining returnees will be accommodated.

- In Cucuta, UNICEF conducted hygiene promotion in shelters, organized psychosocial support for children and ramped up education-in-emergency activities in the schools where returnee children have been accommodated.

- In La Guajira, UNICEF visited the main border crossing at Paraguachón, to identify needs among the returnee population, being accommodated in the closest town of Maicao. Part of the returnee population is being absorbed with difficulty into the impoverished and sparsely populated desert communities of the department, while others are temporarily housed at two shelters in Maicao.

**30 September 2015**

In Norte de Santander:

- **7,458** (estimated)
  # of children affected out of

- **19,745**
  # of people affected

(OCHA September 2015)

In Other Departments:

- **1,597** (estimated)
  # of children affected out of

- **3,993**
  # of registered returnees

**UNICEF Requirement:**

US$ 740,000 to serve 3,000 children

---

**Figure 1: Colombians expelled or returning from Venezuela (25.09.2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Deported</th>
<th>Registered Returnees</th>
<th>Continued to site of origin</th>
<th>Living in Shelters</th>
<th>Population under 18 years (approx.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norte de Santander</td>
<td>1,099</td>
<td>18,646</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1,743</td>
<td>7,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Guajira, Arauca and Vichada</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1,714</td>
<td>22,024</td>
<td>3,351</td>
<td>9,055</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OCHA Situation Report 9

NOTE: Actual numbers are likely to be considerably higher, as the Colombian authorities ended all registration of returnees the week of 22-23 September 2015.
In Norte de Santander the situation of deported and returned Colombians remains fluctuating. Authorities shut down shelters in Villa del Rosario and transferred the returnee population to “Inter-Ferias,” the mega-shelter opened in Cucuta on 27 September 2015. The new site has considerably more space, and a designated child-friendly space is being built by the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare. There remain difficulties known to any large scale shelter especially in terms of hygiene, cleanliness, privacy and security.

In La Guajira, conditions have deteriorated significantly since the onset of the crisis, due to the dispersed population, inhospitable environment, fragile household economies and the severe impact that nearly 2,500 returnees have had on the hosting and absorption capacity of the department. While both countries recognize the right of the Wayuu indigenous population of La Guajira to travel across the region freely, Venezuela has blocked them from carrying supplies across the border. The authorities have established a mechanism for receiving and accommodating returnees at the migration centre and two temporary shelters established in Maicao, situated 40 minutes away from the border.

In Arauca, authorities discussed how best to accommodate the influx of returnees and provide conditions for their eventual resettlement in areas of origin. Over the past month and a half, the United Nations agencies have carried out joint assessments to five of the six Colombian departments affected by the crisis: La Guajira, Cesar, Norte de Santander, Arauca and Vichada.

Key Challenges and Issues
- The mega-shelter in Cúcuta (Norte de Santander department) has already established the required basic living conditions, including tents, bathrooms, eating area, as well as a dedicated site for children, but the orderly transfer of returnees poses logistical problems including transportation of families, accommodation, and regular supply. It is difficult for the returnees to seek longer-term lodging outside of the shelter due to the distance involved.

- The temporary shelters in Maicao (La Guajira department) require basic supplies and equipment, but also rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities. There is a lack of educational and recreational materials to support the large number of children who have crossed the border into the largely rural, desert-like environment.

- Although Colombia and Venezuela restored ambassadors and agreed to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis, official border crossings remain closed with no clear timeframe for reopening.
EDUCATION:
- UNICEF, is working closely with Ministry officials in Norte de Santander, to carry out active search and identification for returnee children and adolescents who are out-of-school in order to ensure that their right to education.
- The “Return to Happiness” programme of psychosocial support has been rolled out in the schools around Cucuta, through the efforts of the 50+ UNICEF-trained volunteer youths.

WASH:
- In shelters, UNICEF technicians continued to promote hand-washing, basic hygiene and disposal of solid waste.
- With UNGRD and shelter management, UNICEF verified whether water supply systems are functioning.

PROTECTION:
- The UNICEF protection team, embedded within the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, has continued to train volunteer managers in implementing basic psychosocial support activities in the shelters which remain open. Key techniques help children to develop self-awareness, express emotions, show affection and communicate positively with their peers.
- The team has organized “Golombiao” (The Game of Peace) tournaments for children and adolescents, incorporating elements of tolerance, peace-building, non-sexism and active participation.
- Screening of individual cases for referral continues, along with identification of problems of social tension, violence, substance abuse, etc.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination
- The National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNDRG) directs the overall response through its Unified Command Post, with support from Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF), Colombian Red Cross and the Victims Unit (UARIV).
- The Local Humanitarian Team based in Cúcuta, (UN, NGOs and the Colombian Red Cross) continues to organize and coordinate the efforts of humanitarian organisations in Norte de Santander.

Humanitarian Strategy
With the transfer of the large returnee population in Norte de Santander to the mega-shelter in Cucuta, the focus of UNICEF’s efforts will gradually shift to the department of La Guajira, where the crisis has compounded ecological, demographic and socio-economic conditions making the returnee population even more vulnerable. UNICEF has identified specific interventions to address the humanitarian situation of some 2,000 returnees who have returned to three geographic areas of the department: Maicao, Uribia and Nazareth, through WASH, education and protection activities.

Image of new mega-shelter “Inter-Ferias” in Cucuta
Summary Analysis of Programme Response to Date

The UNICEF intervention continues in three sectors, WASH, education and protection. New activities in Cúcuta included:

- **WASH**: hygiene promotion; design and installation of toilets and showers in the shelters; outreach to self-settled areas to ensure adequate supply of water, sanitation and hygiene services.
- **Education**: teacher training in institutions where displaced children have arrived; provision of materials and technical support in implementing “Return to Happiness” programme of psychosocial support in the schools.
- **Protection**: evaluation and referral of serious cases of trauma in children; prevention of violence, exploitation and abuse in families; psychosocial support to children in shelters through “Return to Happiness”; implementation of “Golombiao” (The Game of Peace) and other recreational activities in shelters and self-settled areas.

**Media and Communications for Development (C4D)**

- All UNICEF media contact is channeled through the Representative, Roberto De Bernardi, and the Communications Specialist, Carolina Plata. [See contact data below.]
- Hygiene promotion materials have been distributed in the shelters.
- The Seres de Cuidado (“Care-Givers”) strategy for early child health and nutritional care is actively being promoted.

**Supply and Logistics**

- WASH supplies, including toilets and hygiene materials, were distributed in shelters and hotels.
- Small-scale nutritional care materials are being distributed.
- UNICEF printed materials were provided to ICBF for use in the “Return to Happiness” psychosocial programme in schools.
- Shelters in Villa del Rosario and Cucuta are gradually being closed; authorities plan to open on large shelter in Cucuta to house over 1,000 persons. Shelters, hotels and the self-settled areas in Cúcuta can be reached via local transportation.
- In La Guajira department, local authorities have established a reception center at the main border crossing, Paraguachón.

**Security**

No change in conditions on the ground. All UNICEF staff and consultants are safe and accounted for.

**Funding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal Sector</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Funds received*</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>215,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>215,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>205,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>205,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>740,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>740,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*‘Funds received’ does not include pledges.

**Note:** UNICEF Headquarters pledged an initial USD 200,000 in support. Country Office is using Regular Resources and local donations to cover the initial costs of its response.

No next SitRep is scheduled unless the situation deteriorates rapidly.

**UNICEF Colombia Website:** [www.unicef.org.co](http://www.unicef.org.co)
**UNICEF Colombia Facebook:** [https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=89446066466&fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=89446066466&fref=ts)

**Who to contact for further information:**

- Roberto De Bernardi  
  UNICEF Representative  
  Colombia  
  Tel: +57 1 312 0090  
  Fax: +57 1 312 0620  
  Email: rdebernardi@unicef.org

- Carolina Plata  
  Communications Officer  
  Colombia  
  Tel: +57 1 312 0090  
  Fax: +57 1 312 0620  
  Email: cplata@unicef.org

- Frederick Spielberg  
  Child Protection/Humanitarian Action  
  Colombia  
  Tel: +57 1 312 0090  
  Fax: +57 1 312 0620  
  Email: fspielberg@unicef.org