



Humanitarian service point, Maicao, La Guajira. February 2026

Appeal: MDRCO034	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 90,800	Hazard: Population Movement	Country: Colombia
People at Risk: 27,000 people	People Targeted: 1,000 people	People Assisted: 2,016 people	Event Onset: Sudden
Operation Start Date: 09-01-2026	Operational End Date: 28-02-2026	Total Operating Timeframe: 45 days	Publication Date: -

Targeted Regions: **Arauca, La Guajira, Norte de Santander**

Event development

Update regarding the event's development

According to information provided by the United States government and various open sources, a military incursion reportedly took place in Caracas, Venezuela, in the early hours of Saturday, January 3, 2026, during which Nicolás Maduro and his wife were captured on the territory of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. As a result of these events, on Monday, January 5, the Venezuelan government declared a state of internal emergency in response to a situation that has had a significant impact on the international community due to its implications for regional stability. This measure includes, among other aspects: i) the mobilization of the National Armed Forces throughout the territory; ii) the militarization of public service infrastructure, the oil industry, and other strategic industries; iii) the strengthening of controls and patrols at land, air, and sea borders; iv) restrictions on entry into the national territory; v) restrictions on the movement of people and vehicles; and vi) the suspension of public gatherings and demonstrations.

In this context, and given the potential repercussions for Colombia—a country that is home to approximately 2.8 million Venezuelan citizens and whose border areas are characterized by complex dynamics linked to the presence of non-state armed groups, as well as security and humanitarian risks—the Colombian government adopted measures aimed at strengthening territorial control, including the militarization of the main border crossings with Venezuela.

In response to these events, specific restrictions, and public order situations, a pattern of commuting emerged in border areas, as well as movements toward these areas to access basic goods and services. At the time of this operation, border crossings remained open, and according to organizations representing the Venezuelan migrant population, Colombia continues to be the primary destination country. This is partly because a significant number of people have expressed their intention to leave Venezuela in the wake of recent political and social events.

According to data from Migración Colombia, between January 1 and 4, 2026, there were 6,117 entries into the country from Venezuela and 5,390 departures to the neighboring country, indicating that active migration flows continue. It was seen that this trend could intensify in the coming weeks, in line with trends observed in previous years, which show a spike in mixed migration flows between the second and third weeks of January, particularly in the departments of Norte de Santander, La Guajira, and Arauca. Additionally, restrictions on air travel have cemented land travel as the primary means of transit between the two countries. At the same time, recent political changes could encourage return flows to Venezuela, driven by expectations of domestic transformation, as expressed by Venezuelan citizens in various media outlets.

The military intervention, combined with social unrest and the highly volatile situation, created an environment of instability during the planning of the operation that increases the likelihood of an intensification of mixed migration flows and, consequently, of humanitarian needs in border areas. This mobility, often characterized by the use of irregular crossing points, also faces restrictions on the Venezuelan side related to limitations on institutional mobility and access to media, which has reduced the availability of services and concentrated the response primarily on guidance for the local population.

Based on the above, two main scenarios were projected: on the one hand, the possible massive arrival of Venezuelan migrants to Colombian border cities, which would place greater pressure on basic services and institutional and humanitarian response capacity; and, on the other, an increase in return flows to Venezuela, associated with changes in the political and security context. Added to these scenarios is the likelihood of increased cross-border commuting between the two countries, creating a highly dynamic environment that will require constant monitoring and flexible, coordinated responses.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Official press release of the Bolivarian Government of Venezuela	https://www.lanacion.com.ar/el-mundo/que-dice-el-comunicado-que-emitio-el-regimen-de-maduro-en-medio-de-las-explusiones-en-caracas-nid03012026/
2. Testimonies from Venezuelans crossing the border in Cúcuta, amid the tension following Nicolás Maduro's capture by the United States: "There is unease."	https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/otras-ciudades/asi-transcurre-el-paso-fronterizo-en-cucuta-en-medio-de-la-tension-politica-en-venezuela-tras-la-captura-de-nicolas-maduro-por-ee-uu-hay-zozobra-3521578



3. Is the border between Colombia and Venezuela closed today?	https://www.elspectador.com/tags/crisis-en-venezuela/
4. Political instability may generate significant humanitarian needs and tensions at the border.	https://www.clarin.com/mundo/donald-trump-anuncio-nicolas-maduro-capturado-llevado-venezuela_0_XIY7pNGYNc.html
5. Official press release of Colombian Government	https://www.presidencia.gov.co/prensa/Paginas/Comunicado-del-Gobierno-de-Colombia-sobre-situacion-en-Venezuela-260103.aspx

Implementation

	Sector	Activities	Budget (CHF)	Expenditure
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Early Actions

Migration	• Conditional CASH Vouchers for humanitarian transportation for 100 people: A total of 164 conditional vouchers to humanitarian transportation were delivered, each valued at COP 150,000 (approximately USD 40). The number of vouchers delivered exceeded the initial target due to favourable exchange rate fluctuations and operational efficiencies that enabled the Colombian Red Cross to expand assistance while remaining within the approved budget.	CHF 70,000	CHF 69,577
WASH	• Hygiene items for 1,000 people through the Humanitarian Service Point methodology: A total of 1,829 people received hygiene supplies, exceeding the initial target of 1,000 people. This increased reach was made possible through favourable exchange rate fluctuations and implementation efficiencies, which allowed the operation to extend assistance to additional people in transit without exceeding the approved budget. • Maintenance and operation of hydration points (Norte de Santander and Arauca): Maintenance and repairs were carried out on three drinking water distribution points in the prioritized branches. • Installation of 500L water storage tanks (1 per branch) • Deployment of WASH National Intervention Team (ENI volunteer): Since the branches have local volunteers specializing in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), there was no need for a nationwide deployment to address these issues. • Key WASH messages were delivered for the people reached with the hygiene items in the humanitarian points established by the Red Cross, focused on promoting hydration, given the high risk that migrants in transit face of becoming dehydrated along the migration route. Additionally, as part of the distribution of hygiene supplies, guidance was provided on self-care and adopting healthy habits.		
Health (public)	• Provision of first aid kits for the prioritized branches (2 per branch): A total of 6 first-aid type B kits were distributed, 2 per branch.		
PGI	• RFL services: A total of 188 RFL services were delivered to migrant population. • Cellular data plan top-ups for branches • Dissemination of self-protection messages and information as support for people with specific protection needs		
Livelihoods and basic needs	• Food for 1,000 people through the humanitarian service point methodology: A total of 1,118 people received food at the humanitarian service points. A total of 1,118 people received food at the humanitarian service points, surpassing the initial target of 1,000 people. Savings generated through favourable exchange rate fluctuations and efficient implementation were reinvested to increase the coverage of humanitarian assistance. • Assistance was provided through the "Tienda de la Colombianidad" strategy, which offers access to culturally appropriate ready-to-eat meals and food options. Under this approach, people in transit are able to choose from the available food items according to their preferences and needs, promoting dignity and choice during their migration journey.		



	NS Strengthening	• DREF National Coordinator and administrator focal points of the National Society • NS Monitoring visits: -Arauca: 20-21 January -Norte de Santander: 20-21 January -Guajira: 27-28 January -Guajira 23-25 February -Arauca 26-27 February • Volunteer support • Distribution of uniforms for volunteers in the branches: a total of 15 uniforms were delivered, 5 per branch. Additionally, the National Society acquired 6 long sleeves and 3 shot sleeves for the national staff • Lessons learned workshop: Developed in the Norte de Santander branch in February 16,2026		
 Early Response	NS Strengthening	• Deployment of National Intervention Teams (ENI General volunteer): considering this operation did not reach the threshold for Early Response, this activity was not implemented	CHF 5,000	CHF 0
Sub-total			CHF 75,000	CHF 69,577
Surge Deployment (if applicable)			CHF 10,000	CHF 10,000
Indirect Cost			CHF 5,800	CHF 5,800
Total			CHF 90,800	CHF 77,464

Total Assisted Population

Assisted Women	640	Rural	-
Assisted Girls (under 18)	371	Urban	-
Assisted Men	598	People with disabilities (estimated)	-
Assisted Boys (under 18)	407		
Total Population Assisted	2,016		
Total Targeted Population	1,000		

Contact Information

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