

Brazil

Multi-year Strategy 2023 – 2025



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1.1 Executive Summary

UNHCR's overarching goal in Brazil is to support authorities in further expanding and implementing the progressive refugee public policies in place at the federal, state and municipal levels and in responding to future humanitarian emergencies or refugee influxes. UNHCR's interventions aim to ensure refugees' and other forcibly displaced enjoy effective access to rights and services, as well as self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion and integration opportunities through their insertion into national programmes. The operation's protection and solutions interventions will focus on building and complementing the authorities' capacity to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, including women, girls, indigenous peoples, LGBTIQ+ individuals, unaccompanied and separated children, adolescents, and the youth. Building on the leadership of national authorities, the operation will engage with various stakeholders, including the broader UN system, the private sector, civil society, academia, and development agencies, looking to better support refugees and host communities.

The Office will prioritize life-saving support and ensure fundamental rights, including access to the territory and asylum, provision of information and counselling services, access to documentation, protection from violence and exploitation, and shelter. Aiming for sustainability, the Office will maintain its strategy of progressively move the provision of direct assistance from in-kind to cash. UNHCR will also aim for a multi-stakeholder approach to its work with local authorities, protection networks and refugee-led organizations to identify and address key protection risks, while advocating for refugees' enjoyment of rights with meaningful participation in the decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities. UNHCR will prioritize the needs of indigenous refugee peoples as national services and partners will be encouraged to further support programmes that protect and assist these and other particularly vulnerable populations. In addition, UNHCR's interventions will focus on durable solutions, giving priority to local integration and the internal relocation strategy, fostering the access to work and employability. The Office will advocate for the resumption of a resettlement program and will continue supporting complementary admission pathways, including the implementation of a community sponsorship initiative for Afghan refugees, led by the Brazilian government. UNHCR will engage in preparedness, resilience, and adaptation activities, with the aim to include displacement considerations in the national legislation and plans and support displaced populations affected by climate-related disasters.

UNHCR will sustain strategic coordination with spaces such as the Sérgio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair, the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and

Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), co-led by UNHCR and IOM, and the Forum of Companies with Refugees.

Moreover, UNHCR will consolidate efforts to enhance quality data on the protection and socio-economic situation of refugees and other forcibly displaced people and place them at the center of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the operational response and programmatic interventions.

1.2 Situation Analysis

In Brazil, refugees and asylum-seekers enjoy full protection of the State and have access to rights and services, including health, education and work, on the same level as nationals. The country maintains an open-border policy ensuring admission, registration, and documentation for all people in need of international protection. By June 2024, Brazil hosted over 790,000 forcibly displaced people under UNHCR's mandate, predominantly from Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba, Colombia, Syria, and Afghanistan. Out of those, over 144,000 are recognized refugees. While the majority are from Venezuela there are also nationals from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Burkina Faso and Mali, among others.

By June 2024, Brazil hosted some 622,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela. The post-electoral context in Venezuela has further led to steady inflows to Brazil of people with diverse needs of international protection. Since 2018, the Brazilian government supports them through a comprehensive humanitarian response – Operation Welcome. The interventions carried out are complemented by the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), a regional structure that in Brazil gathers 14 UN agencies, 41 civil society organizations and five refugee and migrant led organizations. Most refugees arrive through the northern states of Roraima and Amazonas, where they receive documentation, shelter and other humanitarian assistance services. From Roraima, the Government continues to operate its voluntary internal relocation strategy: by August 2024, more than 138,000 Venezuelans have been relocated to some 1,000 Brazilian cities with better opportunities for integration.

The government, with the support of UNHCR and other partners, is progressively incorporating Operation Welcome into the national social protection system, within the context of the National Policy on Migration, Asylum, and Statelessness, currently being drafted by the government.

Some 96 per cent of Venezuelan refugees and migrants plan to remain and integrate in Brazil, regardless of when they arrived. Many continue to encounter difficulties in accessing public services and fulfilling basic needs. While Brazil ensures open access to social services, gaps remain in areas such as water, sanitation and hygiene,

employment, and housing due to heightened demand and limited resources. The profile of those departing Venezuela is evolving, with an increasing number of individuals facing vulnerabilities related to violence, persecution, and discrimination based on perceived political beliefs. Indigenous populations experience heightened challenges, including food insecurity, restricted access to education, and higher rates of discrimination compared to other Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

The Brazilian government established a humanitarian visa policy aimed at receiving refugees from countries hosting substantial refugee populations as a responsibility-sharing mechanism. This currently applies to Haitians, Syrians, and Ukrainians and will also be resumed for Afghans as soon as a community sponsorship program is launched for refugees of this nationality. This initiative will support Afghan refugees overcoming the barriers they are facing for their integration, especially due to strong linguistic, cultural, and religious differences with the host community, and the absence of an Afghan diaspora to rely on. It is expected that this initiative will help the stabilization of Afghan refugees in Brazil. UNHCR will technically assist both the government and the NGOs that will host and support these refugees to integrate.

UNHCR will also double its efforts to assist Haitian and Cuban refugees. The 90,000 Haitian community in Brazil has faced socio-economic struggles for over a decade due to language barriers, lack of integration policies, racism, and xenophobia. On the other hand, the inflow of Cubans has remained steady in recent years, with 1,000 new asylum applications submitted monthly. Asylum remains the only documentation pathway available for them. There are over 27,000 Cubans in Brazil, making it the second biggest asylum-seeking community in Brazil, after Venezuelans. Although a significant number of Cubans is transiting to reach Uruguay, many Cubans also choose to settle in southern and south-eastern Brazil where they can find favourable local integration conditions.

In April 2024, the state of Rio Grande do Sul was affected by a large climate disaster caused by floods that affected over 2 million people and forced thousands to leave their homes. Since, UNHCR took to help all those in need, and is working to ensure that the approximately 43,000 refugees and other people in need of international protection in the state are prioritized in humanitarian response and reconstruction plans.

UNHCR will continue to advocate for access to the territory through all points of entry to Brazil and will strengthen information provision and access to asylum for all people in need of international protection. Continuous technical support will be provided to the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) to ensure fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures. In parallel, UNHCR's community-based protection approach will include a strong emphasis on the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence and child protection risks and a focus on social cohesion through the involvement of host communities. UNHCR will raise awareness of rights and services available in Brazil via communication with communities, while also working to strengthen partners' capacities and coordination with local protection networks to ensure accountability to affected populations.

UNHCR will support the operationalization of the National Policy on Migration, Asylum, and Statelessness, under the leadership of the Ministry of Justice, so that local integration as well as emergency preparedness strategies – at the national and sub-national levels – will be open to all refugees, migrants, and stateless people, regardless of their nationality. At the same time, the operation will refine refugee self-reliance strategies, bringing age, gender and diversity and community empowerment perspectives at the center of its interventions, including through increased support to refugee-led organizations.

UNHCR will continue to disseminate information on documentation, rights, and access to services, including financial services. The operation will also facilitate access to employment and professional training opportunities through robust engagement with the private sector, and skill certification.

Various civil society networks will play a key role towards solutions and inclusion in public policies. Furthermore, UNHCR will continue to build on the close partnership with development actors to work towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

1.3 Vision and Strategic Orientation

UNHCR foresees an environment where refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people fully enjoy their rights in safe, inclusive, and empowered communities. Individuals in need of international protection will continue to access asylum and benefit from registration and documentation services, as well as adequate reception conditions. A network of support spaces, coupled with mechanisms to communicate with communities (both digital and in-person), will ensure that accurate and timely information is available for individuals to make decisions on their future. Through a community-based protection approach, refugee community structures will grow and engage more actively in all matters affecting their lives. UNHCR will foster the economic inclusion and livelihoods opportunities as well as access to national and local social programmes to enable refugees to attain self-sufficiency. This will enable the implementation of sustainable exit strategies for people sheltered in the north of Brazil mainly through the job placement for the beneficiaries of the voluntary internal relocation strategy in the destination cities.

UNHCR and partners will continue to advocate for effective access to territory, with fair and efficient asylum procedures and timely access to documentation. Synergies with authorities, cities, academia, private sector, host and refugee communities will be explored to promote community participation and the development of public policies for refugee assistance. Considering the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Brazil, UNHCR will advocate for

effective access to essential health, education, social assistance and economic inclusion services, as well as national or local poverty-reduction and development plans. Special attention will be paid to the intersection of humanitarian and development initiatives that can enhance refugee' and host community' s self-reliance.

UNHCR will direct capacity support efforts to the expansion of specialized protection services that timely respond to individuals with specific needs, including gender-based violence survivors, unaccompanied children and adolescents, LGBTIQ+ and indigenous populations. Support language and technical and vocational training initiatives to raise the skills and income-generating capacity of vulnerable refugees will be enhanced via partnerships with universities, civil society, and the private sector.

UNHCR will continue to co-lead the national chapter of the R4V Response, and to technically support the participation of Brazil in global and regional forums such as the Quito Process and the Global Refugee Forum, ensuring the country receives adequate support to fulfil its broad 2023 pledges on: family reunification, refugee participation in decision-making processes, resettlement and complementary pathways, local integration, asylum system strengthening, refugee healthcare, and adherence to the Cartagena+40 process.

Lastly, ahead of the COP30 that will be held in Belém do Pará in November 2025, UNHCR Brazil will double its efforts in climate action, promoting risk-reduction and disaster-response mechanisms that effectively include refugees and other displaced populations. This will entail fostering the inclusion of these populations, especially the indigenous, in the green economy, including the circular one. UNHCR will also strive to reduce the environmental footprint of its humanitarian interventions, seeking more sustainable solutions, such as the reduction of disposable packaging in shelters.

1.4 Fair Access and Representation

UNHCR will promote the centrality of protection through an age, gender and diversity approach and by supporting the regular capacity building of governmental and non-governmental actors.

Age, gender and diversity considerations will be further highlighted in key protection, livelihoods and integration initiatives. For instance, women, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ and elderly people will continue to be prioritized by UNHCR in the voluntary internal relocation strategy. Dedicated initiatives will foster access to the labor market for women and youth, such as “Mujeres Fuertes” and “Jovenes en Accion”. The “Empowering Refugee Women” initiative will continue to seek greater representation of women in companies, including those with disability or chronic illnesses and caregivers of family members with such physical or mental conditions.

The operation's response to indigenous refugees and migrants will continue to be adapted as needed and will aim to strengthen the government's capacities to articulate public policies that reflect intercultural approaches in terms of protection, livelihoods, and solutions, to facilitate local integration for this population.

Data from proGres v4, UNHCR's registration and case management system that is being rolled out countrywide, will better reflect disaggregated information by age, gender, legal status, ethnicity, specific needs (which includes disability), among other parameters.

In addition, close partnerships with the justice system, academia and the private sector will be sought to ensure women, children, persons with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, people with disabilities and elderly people have access to services and rights.

UNHCR will also strengthen its participation in national coordination mechanisms, such as the national chapter of R4V, the UNSDCF's result group on the humanitarian-development nexus, the UN Working Group on Race, Gender and Ethnicity, led by UN Women, and the Youth Working Group, led by UNFPA. In addition, the Office will ensure implementation of diversity scorecards and encourage that partners conduct improved age, gender and diversity analysis enabling positive results across all operational areas.

2. Impact Statements

Impact statement

Forcibly displaced people access protection in Brazil and fully exercise their rights.

Impact area: Attaining favourable protection environments

Outcome statements

Forcibly displaced and stateless people have access to territory, registration, documentation and timely referral to protection and humanitarian assistance, and refoulement is prevented.

Outcome area: Access to territory, registration and documentation

Forcibly displaced and stateless people have access to status determination through a strengthened asylum system in compliance with national legislation and international instruments.

Outcome area: Refugee status determination

Impact statement***Forcibly displaced people meet their basic needs and reduce their vulnerability.***

Impact area: Realizing rights in safe environments

Outcome statements

Forcibly displaced and stateless people have access to adequate and timely shelter assistance.

Outcome area: Sustainable housing and settlements

Forcibly displaced and stateless people have access to cash assistance, in-kind assistance and/or public services.

Outcome area: Well-being and basic needs

Impact statement***Forcibly displaced people participate in decision-making processes, as well as in the setting and implementation of UNHCR programs.***

Impact area: Empowering communities and achieving gender equality

Outcome statements

Forcibly displaced and stateless people, including the LGBTIQ+ community, have access to services, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, and receive timely and appropriate support to acts of gender-based violence; while authorities, UNHCR and civil society actors contribute to the prevention and risk mitigation of gender-based violence.

Outcome area: Gender-based violence

Indigenous forcibly displaced and stateless people have access to culturally appropriate protection, assistance and solutions and participate in the development of differentiated policies.

Outcome area: Community engagement and women's empowerment

Forcibly displaced and stateless people and host community groups are actively engaged in developing community protection, assistance and solutions, including in favour of peaceful coexistence.

Outcome area: Community engagement and women's empowerment

Forcibly displaced and stateless people at heightened risk or with specific needs, including children, LGBTIQ+ people, persons with disabilities, elderly people, and others, have access to timely protection, assistance, and solutions.

Outcome area: Community engagement and women's empowerment

Impact statement

Forcibly displaced people attain durable solutions through voluntary internal relocation, resettlement and complementary pathways and socio-economic inclusion.

Impact area: Securing solutions

Outcome statements

Voluntary internal relocation is available to a higher and more diverse number of forcibly displaced and stateless people in coordination with authorities and civil society organizations.

Outcome area: Local integration and other local solutions

National and local policies and programmes facilitate socio-economic integration of forcibly displaced and stateless people.

Outcome area: Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods

Resettlement and complementary pathways programmes are promoted and developed in Brazil as a receiving country.

Outcome area: Resettlement and complementary pathways

3. Brazil 2025 Indicators and Targets

Country	Results Level	Result Area	Indicator	Population Type	Baseline	Target 2025
Brazil	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	Not applicable
Brazil	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	Not applicable
Brazil	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Stateless Persons	100%	Not applicable
Brazil	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access	Refugees and Asylum-	27%	Not applicable

			to basic facilities	seekers		
Brazil	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	94%	Not applicable
Brazil	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	Not applicable
Brazil	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work	Stateless Persons	100%	Not applicable
Brazil	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	54%	Not applicable
Brazil	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	Not applicable
Brazil	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	208,132	Not applicable
Brazil	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Brazil	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Brazil	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Brazil	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Brazil	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective	Refugees and Asylum-	100%	100%

			appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim	seekers		
Brazil	Outcome	OA3: Policy/Law	3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol	None	Broadly aligned: ≥90 points	To be confirmed
Brazil	Outcome	OA3: Policy/Law	3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	None	Broadly aligned: ≥90 points	To be confirmed
Brazil	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	27%	90%
Brazil	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	To be confirmed	98%
Brazil	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	To be confirmed	72%
Brazil	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Moderate: 40-69 points	Extensive: ≥70 points
Brazil	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	To be confirmed	100%
Brazil	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	35%	35%
Brazil	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10%	30%
Brazil	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	To be confirmed	99%

Brazil	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	To be confirmed	26%
Brazil	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	To be confirmed	71%
Brazil	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	87%	87%
Brazil	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	18%	21%
Brazil	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	To be confirmed	17%
Brazil	Outcome	OA15: Resettle	15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	To be confirmed
Brazil	Outcome	OA16: Integrate	16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	15%	27%
Brazil	Outcome	OA16: Integrate	16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	52%	67%