



VENEZUELA FROM 2020 TO 2021:

HUMANITARIAN WORK TO HELP THOSE HARDEST
HIT BY VIOLENCE AND THE PANDEMIC



ICRC

As 2021 gets under way, humanity is still grappling with one of the greatest challenges it has ever faced: the COVID-19 pandemic. Venezuela is no exception. It has been a time rife with challenges, concerns, changes and uncertainty, but it has also brought huge opportunities to venture into new approaches and find creative ways to continue helping those most in need.

While around the world 2020 will be remembered, above all else, as the year when the novel coronavirus struck, it will also be remembered for the sheer number of changes brought about in such a short space of time. Everyone has had to adapt, according to their own individual circumstances, not only to survive, but also to face a new and enduring reality with a positive attitude.

The humanitarian assistance provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) during the pandemic has been critical in mitigating the consequences of a virus that is indiscriminate in who it infects but hits hardest among the most vulnerable, those already in need of help. The purpose of this report is to describe the support provided by the ICRC through its different programmes and the response plan aimed at bolstering national measures to tackle the pandemic.

For the ICRC, this period, marked by COVID-19, meant stepping up efforts and accelerating the response. In spite of the uncertainty the crisis is creating, we must always be able to reach those most in need. We have ramped up the pace of operations to support communities, deliver medical supplies, provide training to health and forensic personnel, carry out infrastructure improvements and assist migrants and people in places of detention. To put it simply, we have not let up in our efforts, nor will we. In all our activities, we have also taken special care to comply with biosafety standards.

Our main challenge in 2020 was to ensure that the activities already being implemented in the country did not fall by the wayside. We therefore redoubled efforts so that we could meet our commitment to reaching those most in need.

We strove to mitigate the problems facing people living in areas affected by high levels of violence. Our offices cover the central (Caracas, Miranda and Aragua) and western areas of the country (Táchira, Zulia and Apure) and the state of Bolívar. The ICRC teams worked day by day to bring our response directly to communities around the country, seeking to further extend our activities and programmes.

Throughout 2020, the ICRC delegation in Venezuela maintained a dialogue with all the country's political forces, central and state authorities, the members of communities affected by violence and weapon bearers to explain how we work and the principles of neutrality and impartiality that guide the organization in all it does.

The ICRC coordinated its response with the Venezuelan Red Cross (VRC) through its volunteers who showed great courage by continuing their activities to help people, adequately protected but putting themselves at risk all the same. Our sincere thanks go to them all, and we remember, in particular, those valued volunteers who have died as a result of this deadly pandemic.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) also contributed to strengthening the VRC and assisting those most in need, implementing independent and joint activities as a complementary part of the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in Venezuela.

In 2021, the COVID-19 emergency will continue to be a major factor. We aim to take a step forward in our operations in Venezuela, consolidating what we are doing well and reaching more people in spite of the difficulties. We will be there on the ground, forging ahead and resolved to pursue dreams and dispel utopian illusions.

A de Baecque -

Arnaud de Baecque
Head of delegation



We install hand washing points in community kitchens like this one, in the state of Táchira, to help prevent Covid-19

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

There are no signs that 2021 will be any different to the year that has just ended: COVID-19 will remain on the scene, and the “new normal” is already part of day-to-day life and our activities in Venezuela. We have taken all these factors into account when planning our activities, and the key word will be “adaptation”; we must adapt to the changing situation, based on an analysis of developments in the crisis caused by the pandemic as they happen. The novel coronavirus will undoubtedly continue to impact all areas of political, economic and social life.

A combination of factors has led to the country suffering one of the sharpest economic contractions in recent history, and in 2020 the resulting economic and social crisis directly affected the most vulnerable people in Venezuela.

As in 2020, the ICRC will not stop any of the operations it carries out to make a difference to the lives of the people it assists, in spite of the considerable challenges. We will continue to join forces to fight the pandemic, without interrupting work on existing programmes.

The ICRC will continue to provide support to health-care facilities that have been put under strain by the pandemic in Venezuela, as in the rest of the world. Venezuela’s structural weaknesses mean that close collaboration with the authorities is crucial to ensure rapid and effective interactions so that appropriate responses can be developed.

The ICRC did not, and will not, neglect its work in places of detention in Venezuela, which it had access to in this period. We will continue to carry out activities aimed at ensuring that people deprived of their liberty are treated with dignity.

We will also carry on with our work to address situations that affect the Venezuelan population. In 2021, the ICRC will seek to consolidate its operational footprint, working closely with affected communities. The organization will maintain its emergency response capacity to address situations arising from violence, contextual developments or epidemics and strengthen its multidisciplinary response, tailoring it to the specific needs of affected people.

In short, the context is likely to become more complex over the coming year, and the challenge will be to change, adapt and rethink activities and programmes as the situation evolves, with an unwavering commitment to always being there on the ground to help the most vulnerable.

Donation of household goods to an indigenous community in Santa Elena de Uairén, Bolívar state.



PRIORITIZING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE IN THE MIDST OF SERIOUS CHALLENGES

The economic crisis in Venezuela has led to a decline in quality of life, and this has taken its toll on public health. People in Venezuela who are ill or have suffered injuries are sometimes unable to afford the treatment they need, and some health-care facilities are operating with limited supplies and staff. People in densely populated areas and those in remote places often have problems accessing health services and are therefore left in a particularly vulnerable situation when public health emergencies occur.

In 2020, in collaboration with the authorities, the ICRC supported the work of health-care personnel in public hospitals and distributed medical supplies and equipment. It also provided support to strengthen pre-hospital services, facilitating the work of the VRC's emergency response teams, civil protection services, the fire service and other national associations. All these activities will be maintained and strengthened in its planning for 2021.

Medical supplies and patients: 1,471 tonnes of medical supplies were imported, and support was provided to 33 health-care facilities, specifically 12 hospitals, 10 primary health-care centres, 5 malaria diagnostic and treatment centres in El Callao and 6 prison health-care units. Support was also given to 24 pre-hospital service providers (emergency response and traffic accident response).

Professional training: 428 health-care professionals received training in advanced trauma life support in accident and emergency departments.

Medical equipment: the ICRC donated 344 items of diagnostic equipment and had 256 items of biomedical equipment repaired to improve diagnostic services and the quality of emergency and critical care. It also delivered maintenance tools to hospitals and health centres it supports in Capital District and the states of Miranda, Aragua, Carabobo, Táchira, Bolívar and Apure.

Malaria: 4,720 people were treated for malaria in Bolívar.



“ It’s hard to reassure people who have tested positive for coronavirus because they are extremely frightened and don’t know what to do. In spite of the long shifts and difficult conditions, I know my work is important because when a patient is cured, they tell me that my care helped them to get better. Their elation and gratitude make it all worthwhile. ”

Stefani is part of the health-care team at Domingo Luciani hospital in Caracas.



Scan the code to learn more about support for healthcare personnel.

**5****HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURES**

received support to guarantee adequate patient care and minimum water supply, sanitation and hygiene standards

**48,896****HYGIENE ITEMS**

and 13,961 mosquito nets were distributed to health centres, malaria centres and hospitals.

**27,000****ITEMS FOR DISINFECTION,**

protection and sanitation were distributed to hospitals, and over 14,600 to health centres.

SAFE WATER AND SANITATION MANAGEMENT FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Access to clean water is not a given for some sectors of the population in Venezuela. Poor water, sanitation and hygiene services have serious consequences for people's health. The current economic crisis has led to a deterioration in these vital services and further reduced access to them, particularly for vulnerable people.

The priority aim of the ICRC's water and habitat activities is to help preserve water supply systems and sanitation services for people affected by violence and the consequences it brings. In 2020, water and habitat projects including viable proposals and solutions, based on a comprehensive and sustainable approach, were implemented in collaboration with the relevant authorities and technical institutions to mitigate the consequences of violence by ensuring that those affected have access to essential services and decent living conditions.

In 2021, the ICRC intends to reach more people and continue its activities in health-care facilities and places of detention aimed at guaranteeing access to these vital services.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND MAINTENANCE

- Support was provided to six hospitals and ten health centres to guarantee the delivery of basic and emergency services.
- Facilities at three hospitals were renovated and refurbished.
- Four air conditioning systems, three medical gas systems and three sanitation systems were rehabilitated to recover an operational capacity of over 2,200 hospital beds.

- Wells were built and equipped at two hospitals in Bolívar and Caracas to enable them to obtain and purify water.
- Four back-up power systems and four water supply systems were rehabilitated.
- Over 1,500 items of materials and tools were provided to two public facilities to ensure service continuity.
- Over 5,000 people benefited from water distribution network improvements and maintenance in San Cristóbal and Boca de Grita (Táchira).
- Over 13,000 people benefited from water and sanitation system improvements and maintenance.

PRISONS

- Support was provided to nine prisons to ensure minimum water supply, sanitation and hygiene standards.
- Over 25,500 items of materials and tools were provided to ensure compliance with basic hygiene protocols in all the facilities receiving support.
- Ten cold store facilities were repaired to ensure maintenance of the cold chain and to meet basic nutritional standards.
- Over 8,200 inmates benefited from improvements to essential services and maintenance work at prisons receiving support.

A TIME FOR SOLIDARITY AND FOOD SECURITY FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

The economic and social crisis in Venezuela is taking a toll on the population's health and nutritional status. Many people are facing hardship because they do not have enough food and their access to basic services is limited. A significant proportion of people in Venezuela have lost their livelihoods, having had to give up their economic assets, resources and activities. This means they are unable to make ends meet and leaves them in a situation of social and economic disadvantage. In 2020, measures imposed to curb the spread of COVID-19 led to increased vulnerability in many communities. Humanitarian assistance was critical in mitigating the hardships faced by some sectors of the population. For example, although the distribution of food aid could not completely resolve the problem of food insecurity, it did help, to some extent, to lessen the impact of the current crisis on families.

This situation is unlikely to change significantly in 2021, and the ICRC will continue to implement these food security activities.

IN 2020, THE ICRC WORKED CLOSELY WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS TO IMPLEMENT FOOD SECURITY AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES:

- 20 vulnerable people living in communities affected by violence received vocational training in baking.
- 41 people received support in the form of cash transfers to enable them to cover their basic necessities.
- 16 community and school-based canteens received cooking utensils.



3,539

PEOPLE (MOSTLY CHILDREN, OLDER PEOPLE, PREGNANT WOMEN AND NURSING MOTHERS)

received meals from 12 community and school-based canteens supported by the ICRC



18

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL-BASED
canteens received assistance to buy cleaning and hygiene products.



“ I love cooking for my children because I enjoy seeing how happy they are when they are eating, but I wish that every household had enough to eat, that every parent had a decent job and could afford to buy food. Then, we wouldn't need soup kitchens like the one where I work. ”

Cedrid has given over part of his own house for use as a community soup kitchen in El Cementerio, Caracas.



Scan the code to learn more about supporting community kitchens.

STAYING IN CONTACT WITH RELATIVES

There are situations in which the members of a family can be unexpectedly separated or lose contact, such as migration, displacement, natural disasters, detention or violence. They can cause family ties to be broken and sometimes lead to uncertainty and anguish when the whereabouts of a loved one are unknown. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme seeks to prevent families from being separated, to assist people who have lost contact with their families so that they can get back in touch with them and to provide families with information about the fate and whereabouts of their missing loved ones. This programme, coordinated by the ICRC, is implemented in close coordination with the VRC, the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society and the Netherlands Red Cross overseas branches Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao and with the active involvement of their volunteers.

In Venezuela, between January and December 2020, services to prevent family separation and restore family links were provided through fixed connectivity points (at bus terminals, in public squares, etc.) and numerous mobile points set up temporarily in different communities. Tracing services also provided answers to people who had been separated from their families or had a missing loved one.

 **103,116**

CONNECTIVITY SERVICES:

were provided, including phone calls (11,896), use of a Wi-Fi connection (11,014), battery charging (7,388) and advice (72,818).

- Forty tracing requests for missing loved ones in Venezuela were collected in the country and 36 from other countries in the region, some via the direct national phone line or email address familiares.vzla@icrc.org, and follow-up was conducted on 145 tracing requests collected in previous years.

- Over the year, 88 Red Cross messages were collected, 54 family messages were delivered and 577 oral messages with family news were relayed.

- Seven personal documents were sent to Venezuelans in other countries in response to their request for assistance.

- Training was provided for 151 volunteers from 15 VRC branches and sub-committees to continue strengthening and improving RFL services.

- In Trinidad and Tobago, 3,472 Wi-Fi connection services were provided to help people in isolation in hospital to keep in touch with their families, and 26 Red Cross messages were exchanged between people from Trinidad and Tobago in Syria and Iraq and their relatives on the islands.



“ Each call is a big hug that I send to my son through my voice. I miss him every day but when I hear him, it is as if we were together for a few minutes and I know that he is all right, searching for a better future elsewhere so that he can help me. I hope that I will soon be able to give him a real hug. ”

María does not have access to a mobile phone and uses the connectivity services provided by VRC volunteers in Puerto Cabello to talk to her son who is in another country.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

In the course of 2020, the ICRC adapted its humanitarian operations to address the most pressing needs arising from the pandemic and protect the most vulnerable, in collaboration with the VRC and the International Federation and in strict compliance with the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. The public health emergency caused by the pandemic is expected to persist in 2021, and the ICRC will continue, through its programmes, to assist people in Venezuela in the face of this global crisis.

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

50 families received food vouchers and hygiene kits in Trinidad and Tobago.

SEPARATED FAMILIES

22 connectivity points were set up at comprehensive social care points, care homes and VRC offices to address the specific needs of separated families.

82,568 connectivity services were provided.

Trinidad and Tobago: **4,372 Wi-Fi connection services** were provided to help people keep in touch with family members in isolation in hospital.



PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY

30 deliveries of medicines, medical supplies, PPE and basic medical diagnostic equipment were made to detention facilities.

220 people were trained in PPE use and COVID-19 patient care.

36 handwashing stations were installed.

25,500 items of cleaning materials were donated to nine prisons.

2,582 messages were collected from detainees to be passed on to their families.

A project to **produce face masks** with supplies donated by the ICRC was started in two prisons.

450 bars of soap and material on COVID-19 prevention were donated to an immigration detention centre.

COOPERATION WITH THE VRC

66,347 surgical face masks were distributed to 29 VRC branches.

COOPERATION WITH THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO RED CROSS SOCIETY AND THE NETHERLANDS RED CROSS OVERSEAS BRANCHES ARUBA, BONAIRE AND CURAÇAO

Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao: **three training events** were held on connectivity services in the context of COVID-19.

Trinidad and Tobago: **one training event** was held on connectivity services in the context of COVID-19.

The Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society received **financial support** to buy PPE.



PRE-HOSPITAL CARE AND FIRST AID

Supplies and **support** were provided to 13 VRC branches, VEN 911 emergency services, the Capital District fire service, 6 civil protection branches, the comprehensive medical emergency care service (SIAMU) and the Ángeles de las Vías NGO paramedic group.

Training was provided for 396 health-care workers on PPE use, ambulance disinfection and COVID-19 patient management.

FORENSIC PERSONNEL AND FACILITIES

The ICRC shared **recommendations** setting out contingency plans and advised the authorities on the management of bodies in COVID-19 positive and suspected cases.

23 health, prison and forensic institutions received advice, and 172 staff members received training on the management of bodies in COVID-19 positive and suspected cases.

21 forensic, hospital and prison facilities received supplies, including PPE and over **4,840 body bags**.



APURE AND TÁCHIRA:

6,750 families received hygiene kits, buckets and soap.

26 emergency medical kits and 2,000 mosquito nets were donated, benefiting 54,805 people.

110 health-care workers received training in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Over **20,600 items** for disinfection and sanitation were distributed.

1,000 sleeping mats and blankets were handed out at the San Antonio bus terminal (Táchira).

BOLÍVAR:

1,700 families received hygiene kits, buckets and soap.

370 families displaced by violence received hygiene kits, buckets and shelter kits.

Cooking utensils were donated to assist over **700 returning migrants** in Santa Elena de Uairén.

Over **21,500 items** for disinfection and more than 700 Aquatab chlorine tablets were distributed.

11 emergency medical kits and **3,000 mosquito** nets were donated, benefiting 10,000 people.

RETURNEES, MIGRANTS AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

Technical support and medical supplies were provided for the comprehensive social care points set up in areas on the borders between Venezuela and Colombia (Apure and Táchira) and between Venezuela and Brazil (Bolívar).

1,329 families received hygiene kits, buckets and soap at comprehensive social care points in Caracas.

More than 8,600 people approximately as a daily fluctuating population benefited from the supply of drinking water.



HOSPITALS AND PRIMARY HEALTH-CARE CENTRES

57,800 items for disinfection, protection and sanitation were distributed.

827 hygiene kits were distributed to COVID-19 patients in five hospitals.

988,131 items of medical supplies were distributed.

1,987,087 items of protective equipment were distributed.

34,184 hygiene items were distributed to health centres, malaria centres and hospitals.

A total of **32,992 patients** were evaluated in respiratory triage.

3,669 health-care workers received training in general preventive measures, PPE use and the COVID-19 protocol.

77 handwashing stations were installed or rehabilitated.



PLACES OF DETENTION AND DIGNIFIED TREATMENT FOR DETAINEES

People deprived of their liberty, for whatever reason, are by definition vulnerable. They have been removed from their normal environment and are no longer permitted to make decisions about their own lives. The extent of their vulnerability depends on a number of factors, such as their character, their circumstances, the reason they are being held, the stage of legal or administrative proceedings their case is at and who the detaining authorities are. The ICRC has access to detainees in Venezuela and detained migrants in Curaçao. It ensures that detainees are treated humanely and held in dignified conditions. To this end, in 2021, it will continue to support the efforts of the authorities to improve conditions of detention in line with international standards.

IN 2020, THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WERE CARRIED OUT:

- Ten cold stores at three prisons were restored to good working order.
- As part of a nutrition programme, 990 litres of vegetable oil were distributed to two prisons and a three-month supply of micronutrient supplements were provided for all the inmates at four prisons.
- A total of 335 Red Cross messages containing family news were collected at detention facilities, and 122 replies from the families of detainees were distributed. When the pandemic started, preference was given to the brief messages relayed over the phone, 2,582 of which were collected. In addition, 35 smartphones were distributed to six prisons to facilitate the making of calls. These smartphones have WhatsApp installed on them so that detainees can communicate with their relatives outside Venezuela.
- Supplies were donated for the Prison Records and Sentence Management Offices of the nine detention facilities visited.
- In 2 prisons, a project was started to produce masks for the entire prison population of the country with supplies donated by the ICRC.
- In Curaçao, 25 phone cards were given to detained migrants.



74

VISITS WERE MADE

to nine prisons and a military hospital with a total of 8,342 inmates.



24,217

DELIVERIES INCLUDING

hygiene kits and 46,737 multi-purpose soap bars were made to nine prisons, and cleaning products and cooking utensils were donated to nine detention facilities.



2

PRISONS

received water purification tablets to treat 24.4 million litres of water.

FORENSIC SERVICES AND DIGNIFIED MANAGEMENT OF THE DEAD

People who die as a result of violence, disasters or other situations deserve to be protected and treated in a dignified and professional manner. They must also be identified and returned to their families. As part of its humanitarian forensic work, the ICRC provides advice, support and training to experts and helps the families of people who have gone missing in such situations to find out what has happened to them.

In Venezuela, the ICRC supports the authorities in mitigating the effects of violence and helps address gaps in maintenance, materials, training and staff in forensic services. In this way, it helps to ensure proper and dignified management of the dead, effective measures to search for and identify the missing and communication with the families.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a greater need for protection for dead bodies, the staff who handle them and the families. In 2020, the ICRC provided the following support:

- Supplies, including biosafety equipment and other materials, were distributed to 16 forensic laboratories.

- The alternative morgue facilities at the municipal cemetery in San Cristóbal (Táchira) were completely renovated.

- Support was provided to remodel premises and make repairs to electrical, cooling and water systems at the facilities of the National Forensic Medicine and Science Service (SENAMECF) in La Guaira (La Guaira), Los Teques (Miranda), Ciudad Bolívar (Bolívar) and San Cristóbal (Táchira)

- The ICRC assisted the authorities in transporting DNA samples to identify people who were missing after a shipwreck.

- The ICRC provided support to give 112 unidentified or unclaimed bodies a proper and dignified burial and donated body bags in the state of Aragua.

- 24 experts in genetics took part in a practical training course on forensic DNA identification.

- Eight families with missing loved ones were informed about forensic identification procedures.



C. Martín / ICRC 2020

“ I always remember the most difficult moments in my career with great sadness. It’s never easy to receive the body of someone who has lost their life, especially when it’s a child, but the chance to give their family some peace of mind is the real reason why I am still here. Although forensic work is very difficult and testing, my greatest desire is to be able to work in a place with dignified facilities so that I can provide a better service and help ease the grief of families who have to come to the morgue. ”

Gustavo Omaña is municipal head of SENAMECF in San Cristóbal (Táchira).



Scan the code to learn more about personal coroner support.

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON THE USE OF FORCE AMONG WEAPON BEARERS

The ICRC engages in dialogue with weapon bearers to increase their knowledge of the rules of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international standards on the use of force and firearms and to encourage them to apply them in their operations and facilitate the organization's emergency humanitarian operations. The ICRC also works with training institutes to promote knowledge of standards on the use of force among new generations of police officers and members of the armed forces involved in law enforcement operations, with a view to promoting a culture of respect for human dignity and human rights. In this regard, the National Experimental University of Security (UNES) will be a focus of interest in 2021 for the development of programmes and projects aimed at spreading knowledge in this field.

ARMED FORCES AND NATIONAL AND STATE POLICE

- Twelve working sessions were held with high-ranking military officers to analyse the performance of the armed forces and police during the COVID-19 pandemic. Standard operating procedures for prevention were shared with law enforcement officials, and new methodologies were agreed for promoting international standards on the use of force and firearms.
- A total of 305 tactical and operational officers from the national police force took part in seminars on international standards on the use of force.

NATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL UNIVERSITY OF SECURITY (UNES)

- Work was carried out with the university authorities over four months to develop a training plan on the progressive use of force for the different institutes affiliated with the university.

Training on ICRC activities in Venezuela for military personnel in San Cristóbal, Táchira state.



COOPERATION WITH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT: THE VRC AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

The ICRC works in close collaboration with the VRC and the International Federation to increase the impact of the response to growing humanitarian needs in Venezuela. The aim is to leverage the complementarity of their actions and optimize the use of available capacities and resources. The ICRC supports the VRC at headquarters and local branch/ sub-committee level by providing capacity building in different areas, developing appropriate safety and protection procedures, strengthening operational capacity and supplying volunteers with the equipment they need.

 **29**

VRC OFFICES

received financial support and/or essential items were provided for their operation.

 **395**

VOLUNTEERS

from 13 VRC branches received training in operational risk management, safe driving and safety issues

- 15,000 meals were provided for around 650 volunteers.
- Eighteen motorbikes were donated to the VRC to improve its capacity to respond to emergencies and deliver RFL services. As part of maintenance work for the VRC's fleet, repairs were made to 20 vehicles and 8 motorbikes.
- Twelve radio sets were donated.
- Visibility material was distributed to volunteers at 20 offices (1,162 T-shirts, 440 vests and 1,185 caps).



“

My heart is warmed when someone who hasn't seen their loved one for a long time manages to get through to them and see them on the phone. Tears sometimes spring to their eyes. Although outwardly they seem fine, on the inside they are suffering the anguish of having no news of their loved one. I think that the goal that we have and that we all share in the Red Cross family is to find the humanity in each person, to be able to say 'I am doing this because I want to.' ”

María is a VRC volunteer in Puerto Cabello (Carabobo).



Scan the code to learn more about the work of the VRC volunteers.

COOPERATION WITH THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO RED CROSS SOCIETY AND THE NETHERLANDS RED CROSS OVERSEAS BRANCHES ARUBA, BONAIRE AND CURAÇAO

The ICRC's work in the region is largely focused on immigration detention and RFL. It maintains a bilateral dialogue with the authorities on issues relating to migration, international law and protection mechanisms applicable to vulnerable groups. It also cooperates with the National Societies and the branches on the islands to strengthen their capacities, particularly in relation to RFL services and assistance for migrants.

- Trinidad and Tobago: five training events were held for volunteers and staff on the RFL network in the Americas and the Caribbean and on health

- Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao: 11 training events were held for volunteers and staff of the three Red Cross branches on Safer Access and the RFL network in the Americas and the Caribbean.

RETURNING TO VENEZUELA IN THE MIDST OF THE PANDEMIC

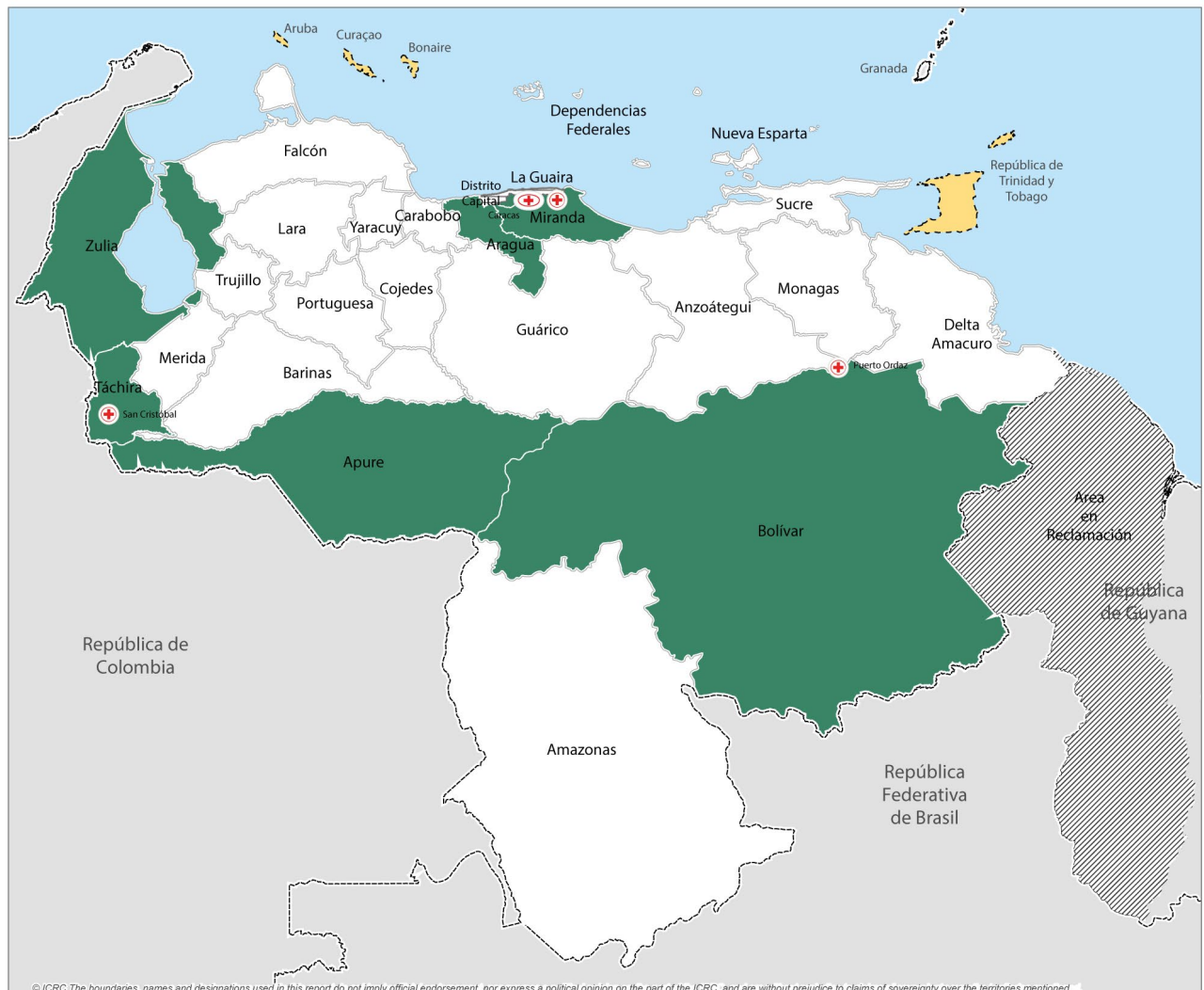
In recent years, many Venezuelans have taken the difficult decision to leave Venezuela in search of a better life elsewhere. Returning in the midst of a pandemic was not an easy choice either. Tens of thousands of people have returned to the country after lockdown measures imposed by countries in the region to combat COVID-19 meant that they found themselves unable to work and facing financial difficulties. Many of them have had to travel through dangerous border areas, putting themselves at risk of exploitation and abuse.

As part of the humanitarian response to assist returnees in border areas in the states of Táchira, Apure and Bolívar, the ICRC, together with the VRC, helped thousands of Venezuelans by providing health services, water and hygiene kits, among other things. Migrants arriving in Caribbean islands and other destinations face similar challenges. Many of those who get to Aruba, Curaçao or Trinidad and Tobago are either detained or deported. Their families in Venezuela (young mothers, children and older people) often do not have the means to maintain themselves.

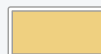
Volunteers from the CRV support those who return to the country across the border in Guasdualito, Apure state.



THE ICRC IN VENEZUELA: PRIORITY STATES



Regional delegation



**Presence in the Caribbean:
Aruba, Curaçao, Bonaire and
Trinidad and Tobago**



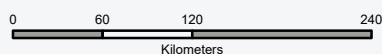
Sub-delegation



Area in claim



Priority state



We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, doing what we can to protect their lives and dignity and alleviate their suffering, often alongside our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. Furthermore, we seek to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening universal humanitarian law and principles.

Note: the data provided were being verified at the time of writing (11/01/2021).



ICRC

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