



Regional concern over entry restrictions imposed in Peru on Venezuelan migrants and refugees

Lima, Santiago and Washington, D.C. June 11, 2019.- We, the undersigned organizations, members of the Working Group on Venezuelan Human Mobility, would like to express our concern over the recent decision adopted on June 6, 2019 by the Peruvian government, which requires Venezuelan citizens to present a humanitarian visa at the border to enter Peru. Said measure will enter into effect on midnight, June 15, 2019.

We would like to highlight that far from being a humanitarian measure, these new restrictions imposed on a migrant and refugee population forced to flee under extremely precarious conditions will become an insurmountable barrier for them to enter Peruvian territory. Moreover, Venezuela currently faces an internationally documented and recognized [humanitarian crisis that has only worsened](#) and has led over 4 million people to flee the country, according to the latest UNHCR statistics. As a result, many of these people require international protection.

This new requirement will have a direct impact on the right of persons forced to leave Venezuela to seek and be granted asylum. Of particular concern is the ability of this group to apply for this type of visa, and the specific requirements Venezuelans must obtain within their country of origin.

Unfortunately, this visa imposed by Peru on Venezuelan persons is not a new type of response in the region. The restrictive nature of this document compares to Chile's "Democratic Responsibility Visa," developed last year, which provided an insufficient response to the Venezuelan influx in the southernmost regions of the continent. While the Peruvian option allows for visa processing within consulates in Colombia and Ecuador, similar measures have shown that these types of initiatives are nearly impossible for the majority of people from Venezuela to access. In the case of Chile, one year after its emission, [less than 30 percent](#) of all applications have yielded any results. The majority have entered with tourist visas. However, Peru's requirement limits entry to the Peruvian territory to those who have a visa obtained in a Peruvian consulate abroad. We call for asylum applications at the border not to be affected.

It is worth noting that, with only one week left for the visa program to go into effect, there is no information available on the requirements, costs, and processing times on any Peruvian government portal. This is generating a high level of concern and insecurity among the Venezuelan community in Peru with family members in Venezuela that hope to be reunited with them.

As human rights organizations and as organizations that provide direct assistance to migrants and refugees, we are worried that there is a regional trend towards restricting Venezuelan human mobility, a group that clearly requires international protection. It is entirely contradictory to express solidarity and affirm that there are human rights violations inside Venezuela, while closing off borders for those fleeing this country. Furthermore, rather than generating a sense of welcome and a model of good practices, these actions will catalyze human trafficking networks, irregular access, an increase of death and other human rights violations, as well as additional costs to Peru regarding security.

When establishing their immigration policies and laws, States have an obligation to respect and guarantee human rights, in accordance with their international commitments. Any measure that they adopt must guarantee, among others, the right to seek and be granted asylum, as well as respect the right to equal protection and non-discrimination. In this regard, it is important that States, instead of addressing migration from a restrictive approach, respond to the call made by UNHCR requesting that receiving countries allow access to territory and guarantee access to asylum mechanisms, as well as the possibility for States to carry out the recognition of refugee status for Venezuelan people [by means of group-based protection arrangements](#).

We call on States to cease the use of actions that, in practice, prevent regular entry into their territories. Likewise, we demand that the Venezuelan people be fully guaranteed the right to seek and be granted asylum or other forms of international protection without discrimination, including the possibility to seek such protection at the border. Finally, we request that the States reaffirm the commitments that derive from the Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol, the expanded definition of refugees established in the Cartagena Declaration, the American Convention on Human Rights, and other applicable instruments.

Signing organizations members of the Working Group on Venezuelan Human Mobility (www.movhuve.org)

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Comisión Argentina para Refugiados y Migrantes (CAREF), Argentina
Comité de Familiares de Víctimas de los Sucesos de Febrero y Marzo de 1989
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