

## **Regional Update on the Americas NGO Collective Statement – Written Statement**

This statement has been drafted in consultation with a wide range of NGOs.

### **Overview**

The region continues to face a deteriorating protection environment for millions of displaced people, driven by increasingly restrictive policies that contradict international human rights standards and international law. Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, Haiti, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras remain at the epicenter of overlapping crises. These perpetuate cycles of distress for both internally displaced persons and those forced to flee their countries.

The conditions in transit and host countries have further undermined the ability to respond effectively to the needs of displaced populations. Meanwhile, looming changes in US border and migration and asylum policies<sup>1</sup> are challenging regional governments' willingness and capacity to uphold protection frameworks. While mixed movements saw significant decreases in 2024,<sup>2</sup> protection risks have surged,<sup>3</sup> driven primarily by increased barriers to regularization in first countries of arrival, more border control measures, and the growing influence of organized crime along migration routes.

Internal displacement in Colombia, Haiti, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, and Ecuador persists as conflict and violence worsen, with civilians increasingly targeted. Recent research<sup>4</sup> reveals that by October 2024, over 80,000 people in Ecuador were internally displaced due to violence, while Haiti's internal displacement crisis has escalated, affecting more than one million people.<sup>5</sup>

Particularly alarming for NGOs are the barriers to accessing legal protection in destination countries, the protection risks experienced by forcibly displaced persons—including sexual violence and the rising incidence of gender-based violence—as well as extortion, theft, disappearances, and deaths<sup>6</sup> in transit countries.

### **Regularization in destination countries has become more challenging**

In destination countries, forcibly displaced persons face increasing barriers to regularization, while asylum systems remain deficient, often due to a lack of political will. Although some countries have implemented regularization processes, they impose requirements that are impossible for many to meet. These include the obligation to have entered the country regularly, by a specific date, or to possess valid passports or identification documents, among other restrictions. In addition, some countries are overwhelmed by the number of asylum claims received and/or do not facilitate the right to seek asylum,

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<sup>1</sup> IACHR, *United States: IACHR expresses concern over new measures restricting the right to asylum*, June 13, 2024. Available at [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2024/137.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2024/137.asp)

<sup>2</sup> IOM, *Migration Trends in the Americas*, October – December 2024. Available at: [https://lac.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd12601/files/documents/2025-03/q4-2024-migration-trends-in-the-americas\\_0.pdf](https://lac.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd12601/files/documents/2025-03/q4-2024-migration-trends-in-the-americas_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> MMC, *Security risks in the Darien Gap and assistance needed among migrants – January – December 2024*. Available at: <https://mixedmigration.org/resource/security-risks-in-the-darien-gap-and-assistance-needed-among-migrants/>

<sup>4</sup> 3iSolution, *Desplazamiento Interno en Ecuador*, October 2024. Available at <https://latam.3is.org/project/desplazamiento-interno-en-ecuador/>

<sup>5</sup> IOM, *Haiti Displacement Triples Surpassing One Million as Humanitarian Crisis Worsens*, January 15, 2025. Available at <https://www.iom.int/news/haiti-displacement-triples-surpassing-one-million-humanitarian-crisis-worsens>

<sup>6</sup> According to IOM's Missing Migrants Project, more than 10,000 people have died or gone missing along migration routes in the region since 2014. In 2024 alone, 1,188 cases were documented.

for instance through lengthy and heavily bureaucratic processes, impeding applicants from working while their claim is being reviewed (pushing them to opt for applying for a regularization process), and/or rejecting most applications (for instance, Panama's approval rate is below 2%). NGOs consider that temporary protection granted to refugees and migrants in certain countries should not replace more stable or long-term forms of international protection.

### **Refugees and migrants are facing multiple protection risks along routes**

During transit, reports suggest an increase in kidnaps, robbery, extortion, abuse (on occasions committed by authorities), and violence, including sexual violence.<sup>7</sup> Such risks have been widely reported in the Darién Gap and Mexico but are not limited to these locations. Many who are forced to rely on smugglers or criminal groups to facilitate their journey have been abandoned, left to die, or trafficked. According to recent data,<sup>8</sup> a high percentage of people interviewed reported having been victims of some type of violence during transit: Peru 78%, Ecuador 73%, Mexico 60%, Colombia 32% and Panama 31%. Physical violence is documented in all countries but is particularly notable in Ecuador (37%). Widespread violence in the country has a direct impact on the refugee and migrant population. Theft or property damage is highly prevalent in Mexico (36%) and Peru (34%). In Mexico, 25% of the people who experienced violence during their entry were victims of kidnapping. In general, routes are often isolated or militarized, increasing refugees' and migrants' vulnerability to human trafficking, sexual violence, and disappearances. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to these protection risks. In the Darién Gap, NGOs have reported widespread sexual violence, with armed groups detaining up to 200 people at a time and subjecting them to abuses ranging from groping to rape.<sup>9</sup>

### **Exposure to gender-based violence has worsened**

Unfortunately, gender-based violence and inequality have sharply increased, driving forced displacement and posing significant risks to women and girls both during their journey and upon arrival in destination countries. In this region, the lack of gender-sensitive data means that the specific needs of displaced women remain largely unseen.<sup>10</sup>

Women often flee their countries of origin to escape gender-based violence. NGOs have reported that violence perpetrated by family members, gangs, and drug traffickers forces many women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ individuals to leave El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Sexual violence is frequently used as a tool to assert control over territories and populations, with gang members punishing women, girls, and their families for not complying with their demands.<sup>11</sup> In Central America, fewer than 10% of gender-based violence cases lead to convictions.<sup>12</sup> Unable to find protection in their communities, many women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ individuals are compelled to cross borders in search of safer environments. However, only six countries in the region currently recognize gender-based violence as grounds for refugee status, underscoring the urgent need for broader legal reform.<sup>13</sup>

Many women in mixed movement flows are forced to take dangerous routes due to barriers in accessing regular pathways and asylum processes, compounded by a lack of documentation and resources. These routes, often isolated or militarized, significantly increase their vulnerability to human trafficking, sexual violence, and disappearance. Since 2014, IOM has registered 1,372 deaths of women along migration routes.<sup>14</sup> NGOs have documented numerous cases of Venezuelan women and girls who,

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<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Watch, *El Tapón del Darién, La selva donde confluyen las deficientes políticas migratorias de América Latina*. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/es/feature/2024/09/11/darien-gap/the-jungle-where-poor-migration-policies-meet>

<sup>8</sup> ProLAC is a protection information management initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean, led by NRC and DRC and now implemented in a harmonized manner in nine countries. Protection monitoring aims at harmonizing and analyzing information to better identify needs and gaps in the humanitarian response. For more information: <https://drc.ngo/media/ggbfynrm/prolac-monitoreo-de-proteccion-C3%B3n-regional-2024-esp.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> MSF, *Lack of action sees sharp rise in sexual violence on people transiting Darien Gap*, February 29, 2024. Available at <https://www.msf.org/lack-action-sees-sharp-rise-sexual-violence-people-transiting-darien-gap-panama>

<sup>10</sup> UN Women, *Perfil Regional de Igualdad de Género para América Latina y el Caribe*, 2024. Available at [https://lac.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/es-perfilregionaligualdadgenero-alc\\_26marzo24.pdf](https://lac.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/es-perfilregionaligualdadgenero-alc_26marzo24.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> KIND, *SGBV Fact Sheet*, December 2018. Available at <https://supportkind.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SGBV-Fact-Sheet-December-2018-new-1.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Wilson Center, *Explore GBV data*. Available at <https://gbv.wilsoncenter.org/explore-gbv-data>

<sup>13</sup> ACNUR, *Buenas prácticas para la protección y asistencia a víctimas de violencia de género en situaciones de desplazamiento forzado*, 2024. Available at [https://acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/Proteccion/Buenas\\_Practicas/11264.pdf](https://acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/Proteccion/Buenas_Practicas/11264.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> IOM, *Missing Migrants Project*, February 19, 2025. Available at from <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/es/region/las-americas>

through deception and false promises of work, are trafficked to other countries—particularly Colombia and Trinidad and Tobago—for exploitation, primarily sexual.<sup>15</sup> In the U.S.-Mexico border, NGOs have reported a rise in consultations for sexual violence, with most victims being women.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, services for women and girls during their journey remain minimal, with only 39% of gender-based violence service providers in Central America located within a 1-kilometer radius of transit routes.<sup>17</sup>

The risk of gender-based violence and inequality also persists in destination countries. A study found that 35% of displaced women felt insecure due to the threat of violence, with key risk factors including xenophobia (31%), lack of economic opportunities (19%), and lack of information (16%). Public spaces (54%), the home (21%), and the workplace (10%) were identified as the most dangerous locations.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, displaced women face precarious conditions due to unpaid care work and gender-based barriers in employment. According to UN Women, 74% of women on the move work in the care sector, with 40% being overqualified.<sup>19</sup>

Women-led organizations have raised concerns about the lack of a gender-sensitive approach in refugee status determinations (RSD), noting that women are disproportionately disadvantaged when applying for asylum. Gender stereotypes and revictimization permeate state practices during asylum proceedings, resulting in women not receiving a fair hearing.<sup>20</sup> NGOs are concerned that decision-makers fail to adopt a gender-sensitive approach when considering specific information about a country or region of origin in determining women's asylum claims. They are also worried about the U.S. administration's executive order, "Defending Women from the Extremism of Gender Ideology and Restoring Biological Truth in the Federal Government," particularly its impact on trans and non-binary refugees and asylum-seekers. The order defines sex as an immutable biological classification of male or female, dismissing "gender identity" as a subjective concept.

As states and the UN reaffirm their commitment to gender equality through the Beijing +30 process, women-led organizations urge the incorporation of forced displacement into this framework. NGOs call for the adoption of an intersectional and differentiated human-rights-based approach to forced displacement across all stages—origin, transit, destination, and return.

### **Haiti at a crossroads with more than one million displaced**

Haiti is facing escalating violence, insecurity, and political instability, with armed groups controlling 90% of the capital and creating war-like conditions. These groups have attacked hospitals,<sup>21</sup> schools, churches, transportation hubs,<sup>22</sup> and key roads, restricting movement and supply chains.<sup>23</sup> Children are among the most affected, facing forced recruitment into armed groups and making up a quarter of the

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<sup>15</sup> UNHCR, *Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela 2021-2022*. Available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/82935>

<sup>16</sup> MSF, *Mexico: The rise of kidnappings and sexual violence near the US border seriously impacts the health of people on the move, says MSF*. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/mexico/mexico-rise-kidnappings-and-sexual-violence-near-us-border-seriously-impacts-health-people-move-says-msf>

<sup>17</sup> World Bank, *SAFE: Accesibilidad a servicios contra la violencia de género para las mujeres en movilidad humana en Centroamérica*, September 26, 2024. Available at <https://documentos.bancomundial.org/es/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099092324142539769/p17913216752f20b91be3f162ea959d1a00>

<sup>18</sup> UNHCR and HIAS, *Nuestro Derecho a la Seguridad*, 2022. Available at <https://segurasenmovilidad.org/>

<sup>19</sup> UN Women, *De la Evidencia a la Acción: Enfrentar la Violencia de Género contra Mujeres y Niñas Migrantes*. Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/Policy-brief-From-evidence-to-action-Tackling-GBV-against-migrant-women-and-girls-es.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Desinformémonos, *Cartagena 40: Un proceso que necesita los lentes de género*, September 2024. Available at <https://desinformemonos.org/cartagena-40-un-proceso-que-necesita-los-lentes-de-genero/>

<sup>21</sup> 'The Guardian, *It's indescribable: the hospital on the frontline of Haiti's devastating gang war*, November 9, 2024. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/09/haiti-gang-kenyan-police-force-bloodshed>

<sup>22</sup> Marine Insight, *Armed Gangs Attack Haiti's Main Port, Blocking City's Access To Vital Supplies*, September 27, 2024. Available at <https://www.marineinsight.com/shipping-news/armed-gangs-attack-haitis-main-port-blocking-citys-access-to-vital-supplies/>

<sup>23</sup> UN News, *Haiti: Gangs have 'more firepower than the police,'* April 4, 2024. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148231>

more than one million people forced to flee their homes.<sup>24</sup> The violence worsens human rights violations, hunger, and access to essential services like water, sanitation, and healthcare.<sup>25</sup>

Beginning with the earthquake in 2010, that killed an estimated 300,000 people, Haitian displacement has transformed to span the entire hemisphere. Although Haitians now make up a significant proportion of migrants and asylum-seekers in numerous countries in the Americas, they face limited protections and restrictive policies that prevent status regularization,<sup>26</sup> linguistic barriers, and anti-Black racism.<sup>27</sup> Despite UNHCR issuing updated international protection considerations for Haitians<sup>28</sup> in 2024 and recognizing their significant protection needs, few countries in the Americas have expanded protections for Haitians accordingly. Given the current situation in Haiti, countries that have adopted the Cartagena Declaration, which broadens the definition of refugee, can and should extend refugee protection to Haitians—yet only Mexico has done so.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, the protection paradigm in the Americas remains centered around Spanish-speaking displaced people; comparable resources must be provided to populations speaking other languages, including Haitian Creole. The lack of interpretation limits access to protections and to policy-making spaces, including those that purport to value the participation of those directly affected.

Even while conditions in Haiti worsen, Haitians seeking safety are being met with diminishing protections and pathways to relief, and increased hostility in destination countries. In recent years, the Haitian population has been subjected to a significant increase in ethno-racial violence and vitriol, exacerbated by restrictive immigration policies in the United States and the Dominican Republic. These measures have not only reduced the possibilities of regularization and access to international protection but have also generated conditions that expose Haitians to discrimination, abuse, and mass deportations. Countries like the U.S. and the Dominican Republic are suspending<sup>30</sup> and terminating<sup>31</sup> protections for Haitians. The mass deportations occurring at this moment in the Dominican Republic illustrate some of the worst rights violations Haitians are experiencing<sup>32</sup> and are the tip of the spear of a region-wide failure to protect them.

Dominican authorities deported more than 276,000 people to Haiti in 2024, with close to 100,000 deportations occurring since October 2nd when the government announced plans to deport up to 10,000 people per week.<sup>33</sup> As a result of this targeted increase in deportations, Haitian immigrants and those of Haitian descent are increasingly living in a state of terror. Dominican authorities have routinely dragged

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<sup>24</sup> UNICEF, *Number of children in Haiti recruited by armed groups soars by 70 per cent in one year* – UNICEF, November 24, 2024. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/number-children-haiti-recruited-armed-groups-soars-70-cent-one-year-unicef>; <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr36/8875/2025/en/>

<sup>25</sup> See Institute for Justice and Democracy, *Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Haiti: Key Recent Developments*, June–November 2024. Available at <https://www.ijdh.org/wp-content/uploads/December-2024-Human-Rights-and-the-Rule-of-Law-in-Haiti-Key-Recent-Developments.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> El País, *The silent exodus of Latin America’s Haitian population*, August 11, 2021. Available at <https://english.elpais.com/usa/2021-08-11/the-silent-exodus-of-latin-americas-haitian-population.html>

<sup>27</sup> Houston Public Media, *Thousands Of Haitians Are Migrating To The U.S. After Facing Racism, Poverty In Latin America*, June 11, 2021. Available at <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/in-depth/2021/06/11/400406/many-haitians-are-migrating-to-the-u-s-after-facing-racism-poverty-in-latin-america/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/press-releases/unhcr-issues-new-guidance-international-refugee-protection-haitians>

<sup>29</sup> UNHCR, *Haiti: A multi-dimensional crisis leading to continued displacement*, October 3, 2024. Available at <https://dataviz.unhcr.org/product-gallery/2024/10/haiti-a-multi-dimensional-crisis-leading-to-continued-displacement/>

<sup>30</sup> Fragomen, *Dominican Republic: Suspension of Visas and Border Closures for Haitians*, April 30, 2024. Available at <https://www.fragomen.com/insights/dominican-republic-suspension-of-visas-for-haitians-and-border-closures.html>

<sup>31</sup> The Trump administration has terminated CHNV and announced termination for Temporary Protected Status. See, i.e., U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, *The Administration Stops Temporary Humanitarian Protection Pathway for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans*, January 25, 2025. Available at <https://refugees.org/the-administration-stops-temporary-humanitarian-protection-pathway-for-cubans-haitians-nicaraguans-and-venezuelans/>; New York Times, *Trump Cuts Protections for Haitians, Putting Them on Track for Deportation*, February 21, 2025. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/20/us/politics/haitians-temporary-protected-status.html>.

<sup>32</sup> In the past six months, the Dominican Republic has significantly escalated the forced expulsion of people of Haitian descent. On October 2, 2024, the Abinader administration announced that it would deport up to 10,000 people per week as a means of “addressing the situation of illegal migration from Haiti.” The Dominican government has arbitrarily detained and deported people, unlawfully raided homes, and separated families, resulting in significant human rights violations against Black people perceived to be Haitian. The influx of deportations contributes to greater insecurity in Haiti.

<sup>33</sup> Migración, *DGM repatria más de 276,215 extranjeros en condición migratoria irregular en el país*, January 02, 2025. Available at <https://migracion.gob.do/dgm-repatria-mas-de-276215-extranjeros-en-condicion-migratoria-irregular-en-el-pais/>



people out of their homes and dropped them off at the border with nowhere to go<sup>34</sup>. Children have been separated from their families, detained in inhumane conditions, and deported to Haiti<sup>35</sup>, where they are particularly vulnerable to violence and forced recruitment by armed groups. NGOs have reported that pregnant, lactating, and postpartum women have been targeted for detention and deportation at maternity wards and hospitals<sup>36</sup>. We urge states and the international community to call on the Dominican government to end deportations and ensure that policies comply with international law and respect human rights and are in line with states' non-refoulement obligations.<sup>37</sup>

### **New mass displacement in El Catatumbo, Colombia**

Thousands of lives have been shattered by renewed conflict in Colombia, with displacement surging across the southwest, northwest, and northeast of the country. The border region of Catatumbo is a stark example of this crisis. Since January 16, about 52,000 people have been forced to flee their homes and over 50 have died, as fighting between armed groups escalates. An additional 27,000 remain confined, meaning their freedom of movement is restricted as part of armed groups' war strategy.<sup>38</sup> These individuals face grave threats, and their urgent need for life-saving humanitarian aid remains unmet due to their circumstances. The current levels of violence and displacement are unprecedented in Colombia in recent decades. This alarming situation coincides with the termination of U.S. funding and uncertainty about its future continuation.

### **Impact of recent U.S. policy changes for refugees and asylum seekers**

Recently, the U.S. administration has enacted sweeping policy changes that severely restrict asylum protection. These measures expand Department of Homeland Security (DHS) authority, undermining the right to seek asylum under U.S. and international law.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the military has been deployed to increase detention capacity, guard the border, and expedite deportations. These policies will harm millions of vulnerable people fleeing persecution and violence.

At the U.S.-Mexico border, a reinstalled policy allows DHS to apprehend and expel asylum-seekers back to Mexico (known as MPP), where they face organized crime and lack access to essential services. Once expelled, they cannot apply for asylum in the U.S. Additionally, the cancellation of CBP One appointments has closed ports of entry, blocking legal pathways for hundreds of thousands of asylum-seekers. The U.S. has also terminated humanitarian parole for people from crisis-affected countries, including Venezuela, Haiti, and Nicaragua, jeopardizing the legal status of over one million people already in the country who were previously allowed to live, work, and seek asylum. Additionally, the most recent agreements related to deportation between the U.S. and Central American countries pose a serious threat to the human rights of thousands of people in need of international protection.

Given this scenario, NGOs anticipate that thousands will face heightened risks and a lack of essential services once these policies are fully enforced at the U.S.-Mexico border, with broader impacts across the region.

### **U.S. funding aid termination jeopardizes humanitarian efforts**

Furthermore, the executive order "Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid"<sup>40</sup> imposed an immediate 90-day pause on humanitarian and development assistance, abruptly halting the disbursement of U.S. funds to foreign countries, NGOs, UN agencies, and contractors. U.S. financial support has been crucial for humanitarian aid, reception and integration services, and the strengthening

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<sup>34</sup> NPR, *Haitian migrants share stories of abuse as Dominican Republic ramps up deportations*. February 2025. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/11/nx-s1-5292955/haiti-dominican-republic-migrants-deportations>

<sup>35</sup> Nacla, *In a climate of slander and hate, Haitian immigrants organize across borders*. October 2024. Available at: <https://nacla.org/slander-hate-haitian-immigrants-organize-across-borders>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/press-releases/unhcr-issues-new-guidance-international-refugee-protection-haitians>

<sup>38</sup> OCHA, *Latin America & The Caribbean weekly situation update as of 28 February 2025*. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/latin-america-caribbean-weekly-situation-update-28-february-2025>

<sup>39</sup> On January 20, U.S. President Donald Trump signed several executive orders on immigration policy, including "Securing Our Borders,"<sup>39</sup> which ordered the cancellation of previously scheduled appointments through the CBP-1 application for approximately 30,000 asylum seekers

<sup>40</sup> Whitehouse.gov, *Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid*. January 20, 2025. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/securing-our-borders/>

of asylum systems in the region. Despite several court rulings, the recent termination of programs will hinder civil society organizations' ability to provide humanitarian assistance, further exacerbating ongoing humanitarian crises. As the largest institutional donor in the region, the U.S. accounted for 75.1% of the funding channeled through the seven coordinated plans in 2024,<sup>41</sup> nearly twice the global average U.S. contribution.

NGOs across the region are deeply alarmed by the immediate impact on life-saving programs and the long-term consequences of this termination. This situation has already forced humanitarian actors to drastically scale back or suspend critical assistance, including food assistance, healthcare, WASH, shelter, and protection services, leaving millions of vulnerable people without support.<sup>42</sup>

## Recommendations

NGOs would like to focus the attention of UNHCR and Member States on the following recommendations:

- Governments must ensure that irregular entry and stay of people in transit are not criminalized or subject to administrative or civil penalties. They must cease detention practices and ensure access to information and protection mechanisms, including documentation, international protection, and regularization.
- UNHCR should urge governments to enhance protections for internally displaced people and uphold their rights, particularly in countries with policy gaps in recognition, prevention, protection, and assistance.
- UNHCR and governments should continue to strengthen the meaningful participation of civil society and refugee-led organizations in cooperation mechanisms. With the expected changes in the R4V Platform (a platform for regional coordination on refugees and migrants from Venezuela), ensuring their involvement at all decision-making levels is essential. Additionally, UNHCR should support the effective participation of civil society in the implementation and monitoring of the Chile Plan of Action.
- As should be done for all people seeking asylum who meet the definition under the 1984 Cartagena Declaration, governments must extend meaningful and accessible refugee protection to Haitians and others. Expanding the definition of refugee to ensure the protection of those fleeing generalized violence and human rights violations is an important first step.
- UNHCR must redouble its efforts to engage with Dominican authorities—and any other country currently deporting people to Haiti—for a moratorium on deportations to Haiti, emphasizing the country's worsening humanitarian crisis. UNHCR must work with the Dominican government to establish clearer asylum procedures and ensure fair assessments for people needing protection.
- Governments must incorporate gender-based persecution into their refugee laws and asylum procedures and ensure effective programs to address gender-based violence affecting women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ individuals.
- The U.S. administration must ensure that its migration and asylum policies comply with the principle of non-refoulement, in accordance with international law and domestic legislation. Additionally, it is essential to resume foreign aid funding, particularly for life-saving interventions that support forcibly displaced people.

To conclude, we believe it is crucial to continue promoting the principles of solidarity, international cooperation, shared responsibility, and intersectionality. We also emphasize the importance of

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<sup>41</sup> The Venezuela RMRP is the most at risk, with 90% of its funding reliant on U.S. contributions. El Salvador and Honduras HRP would also face severe impacts, as the U.S. provides 82-85% of their funding. Meanwhile, the Colombia HRP faces a moderate-to-high impact, with 68% of its funding coming from the U.S. Information tracked by OCHA's FTS (as of January 29, 2025). Available at <https://fts.unocha.org/>

<sup>42</sup> For example, access to safe sexual and reproductive health services is vital, especially for displaced women and girls who face increased risks of sexual violence, pregnancy complications, and maternal death. In 2023, the U.S. invested \$607.5 million in international family planning, preventing 14,000 maternal deaths and 2.6 million unsafe abortions. For more details, go to Women's Refugee Commission, *The Global Gag Rule Endangers Refugee Women's Lives*, January 27, 2025. Available at <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/press-releases/the-global-gag-rule-endangers-refugee-womens-lives/>

recognizing the positive contributions of forcibly displaced people through a discourse centered on human dignity and the protection of human rights.