



## NEWS RELEASE

### ABOUT MERCY CORPS

- Leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible
- Empowering people to survive through crisis, build better lives and transform their communities for good
- Meeting the urgent needs of today through emergency response and disaster preparedness
- Building a stronger tomorrow by connecting people to the resources they need to strengthen their community from within
- About 5,000 team members reaching nearly 22 million people
- \$436.6 million total operating revenue in FY2017; 87% channeled directly into programs in more than 40 countries

### MEDIA CONTACT

Lynn Hector  
Senior Communications  
Officer  
[lhector@mercy Corps.org](mailto:lhector@mercy Corps.org)  
Tel. 503.896.5700

[mercy Corps.org](http://mercy Corps.org)

# MERCY CORPS EXPANDS COLOMBIA BORDER RESPONSE TO VENEZUELA CRISIS

## Global organization will provide emergency cash to Venezuelans and Colombians in La Guajira and Cesar

OCTOBER 22, 2018

RIOHACHA, Colombia — The global organization [Mercy Corps](http://mercy Corps.org) is expanding its operations near Colombia's border with Venezuela to meet the urgent needs of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, returning Colombians and Colombians affected by Venezuelan migration. According to Colombian authorities, more than 1 million people have fled Venezuela for Colombia since 2016, including 250,000 returning Colombians and more than 800,000 Venezuelans.

Mercy Corps will provide emergency cash via prepaid debit cards to help approximately 7,000 people meet their shelter, water, sanitation and health needs in 10 municipalities in Cesar and La Guajira departments, including the cities of Riohacha, Maicao and Valledupar.

“Many Venezuelans arriving in Colombia are going from eating bread with coffee once every two days when they arrive to eating a plate of beans and rice once a day,” says Provash Budden, Americas Regional Director for Mercy Corps. “That’s still not enough. And they also have to buy water to drink, which is critical in a hot and humid climate like in Cesar and La Guajira. So even though they are hungry they are using what little money they do have on water and shelter, not food.”

Many have seen no improvement in diet at all. In a May assessment, one out of every three Venezuelans told Mercy Corps their diet hadn't changed in the two weeks after arriving in Colombia, and 12 percent reported that their diet had worsened. Medical professionals also reported that while some people are gaining back weight they had lost in Venezuela, they're eating low-nutrition diets, leading to continued malnutrition. According to the [UN](http://un.org), of the 2.3 million people who left Venezuela, lack of food was cited as the primary reason for leaving.

Mercy Corps has already assisted more than 4,700 Venezuelans in Colombia with emergency cash and medicine. Beyond the border, the organization is assisting Venezuelans in Putumayo, Cauca and Antioquia, Colombia, where Mercy Corps already works to help vulnerable Colombians displaced by conflict meet their urgent needs.

Join us and [support Mercy Corps' work](http://mercy Corps.org) in Colombia and elsewhere in the world.