

URGENT ACTION

EVICCTIONS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE

On 22 May 2020, Peruvian President Martín Vizcarra extended strict measures to tackle COVID-19, including lockdowns and curfews until 30 June. Impacted by these measures, many vulnerable people, such as Venezuelan refugees, were left unprotected, are not able to pay their rent and are being evicted from their homes. A lack of protection of people's right to housing in the government's COVID-19 response puts Peruvians and Venezuelans at heightened risk of violations of their rights to housing and health. We call for an end on evictions and urgent protection measures for refugees and people living in poverty.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President Mr Martín Vizcarra
Despacho Presidencial
Jr. de la Unión s/n 1era cuadra
Cercado de Lima, Lima
Perú

Email: coordinacion3@pcm.gob.pe

Dear President Vizcarra,

I am appalled by the reports that refugees and people in very vulnerable situations have been evicted from their homes in Perú during the COVID-19 pandemic. For people to comply with the measures being implemented by your government, including lockdowns and curfews, people must have a home to stay in.

Any government response plan to COVID-19 must ensure everyone's right to housing and health are protected, including that of over 861,000 Venezuelans in Peru seeking international protection and the over 1.2 million people who lost their jobs in Lima between February and April.

I ask you to put an end to the evictions of those most in need. I also demand you include adequate protection of the right to housing for all in your government's response plan during and after the pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 14 March 2020 the Peruvian government led by President Martín Vizcarra declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A strict lockdown and curfew are among the measures taken to prevent the spread of the virus, as well as other restrictions to the right to transit. In Perú, where most people work in the informal economy, these measures have severely affected people's capacity to access basic goods and keep up with rent payments. Over 1.2 million people [lost their jobs between February and April in Lima](#) alone due to the economic impact of COVID-19 measures.

According to the UNHCR, in recent years 5.1 million people have fled Venezuela seeking international protection. Of those, more than 861,000 Venezuelans are in Perú [with limited access to asylum and diverse obstacles to regularize their migration status -and work permits- in Peru](#).

Even though Perú has included some vulnerable groups in its response plan to COVID-19, in the form of special subsidies and social plans, regrettably it has not included any provision regarding the right to housing, nor the special situation of refugees and migrants in the country. Old regulations such as the Civil Code and outdated case law are the only valid legal framework that apply to the housing situation in this context and they do not match the current reality and are inadequately enforced or even ignored (for instance, they are carried out without a court order).

According to Venezuelan National Assembly representative in Perú, Carlos Scull, [around 55,000 Venezuelan families are currently at risk of being evicted](#). Amnesty International has noted with concern numerous media reports of evictions of Venezuelans and other vulnerable groups due to lack of payment of rent as a result of the economic impact of COVID-19 related measures.

Although President Martín Vizcarra did mention the need to incorporate Venezuelans in the government's aid plans, the efforts taken to do so have been insufficient and do not cover in any extent the situation of forced and arbitrary evictions, nor the situation of informal rental agreements that are common in the country, leaving the population at risk of being evicted and forced to violate quarantine measures as many of them do not have anywhere to go.

The office of the Ombudsperson in Perú stated the [urgent need to protect Venezuelan population and to include them in a more inclusive response to address the health emergency caused by the pandemic](#).

The lack of protection of Venezuelans seeking refuge in Perú is also pushing many of them to decide whether to stay under these adverse circumstances or return to Venezuela (through northern Perú, Ecuador and Colombia), many of them by foot, even though borders are closed and the lockdown measures limit the freedom to transit. Different sources report between 20,000 and 33,000 Venezuelans have returned to their home country by different means.

The alarming lack of protection of Venezuelans in the Americas during COVID-19 has prompted an emergency Donors Conference convened by the European Union and Spain on 26 May, in an effort to "mobilise resources to support the displaced population and the main host communities, tackle the aggravated situation created by COVID-19, and facilitate greater commitment and coordination of the key actors", [according to the EU](#).

Amnesty International has already expressed [its concern](#) over the situation of Venezuelan nationals returning to the country, due to forced quarantine mechanisms in place, the stigma under which authorities in Venezuela have been treating returnees, and the risk of having their basic human rights violated in these excruciating circumstances.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 7 July 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Refugees and people at risk of eviction (they/them/their)

And copies to:

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