

Understanding regional policy reactions to the Venezuelan displacement crisis

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Abstract

With over six million people having left their home country, the Venezuelan displacement crisis is one of the three largest international displacement scenarios in the world and the largest in Latin American recent history. In dealing with the Venezuelan exodus, executives had at least six distinct policy options: 1. The expedite naturalization of Venezuelans as Latin American citizens; 2. Protecting Venezuelans as refugees under the 1984 Cartagena definition of refugee, 3. Granting Venezuelans legal residence under regional free movement agreements; 4. Protecting Venezuelans as vulnerable migrants 5. Treating Venezuelans as any other immigrants, and 6. Maintaining Venezuelans largely in irregular status. This paper first offers a judicial description of these six categories and then critically discusses the determinants of policy choices across countries. The paper thus contributes to our understanding of how the Latin America's free movement agreements interact with national legislative instruments and global legal frameworks on migration management and refugee protection.

Biography

Feline Freier is Associate Professor of Political Science at the Universidad del Pacífico (Lima, Peru) and Research Chair on Forced Displacement in Latin America and the Caribbean for the International Development Research Centre. Her research focuses on migration and refugee policies and laws in Latin America, south-south migration and the Venezuelan displacement crisis. Freier has published widely in both academic and media outlets, and has been interviewed on the Venezuelan displacement crisis in international media, including BBC, El País, La Presse, and The Economist. Freier has advised various international institutions and organizations, such as Amnesty International, International Committee of the Red Cross, Inter-American Development Bank, International Organization for Migration, and the World Bank. She is Migration Research and Publishing High-Level Adviser of the IOM.