Venezuelan Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Peru: Present but Invisible

Diana Lucia Manrique Kukurelo¹, Marcela Patricia Huaita Alegre², Julissa Chávez Granda³

Pontifical Catholic University of Peru

Abstract

Due to the prevailing economic and political crisis in their home country, a substantial number of Venezuelans have sought refuge in neighboring nations, including Peru, which has emerged as the second-largest recipient of Venezuelan migrants globally. Within this migratory population in Peru, a particularly vulnerable subgroup consists of unaccompanied and separated children and adolescents (UASC). Despite their significant presence, this demographic remains largely unnoticed by the State, owing to the absence of official statistics on their exact numbers and the lack of a tailored political and normative framework to address their distinctive circumstances as children and migrants. Consequently, this manuscript analyzes the political and legal response of the Peruvian government towards the phenomenon of UASC migration and examines if it aligns with the principles set forth in international human rights standards regarding the protection of children and adolescents in the context of migration. This analysis forms part of a comprehensive fieldwork undertaking, involving interviews with adolescents who migrated unaccompanied to Peru, as well as with government officials. The primary objective is to comprehend the real-life challenges encountered by these young individuals upon their arrival and the corresponding response provided by the authorities. By leveraging innovative and up-to-date research from the region, this study aims to contribute to the global understanding of unaccompanied children and adolescents, while advocating for their rights within the framework of International Human Rights Law.

Keywords: Children's rights, International Human Rights Law, International Migration, State's Response, Vulnerable population