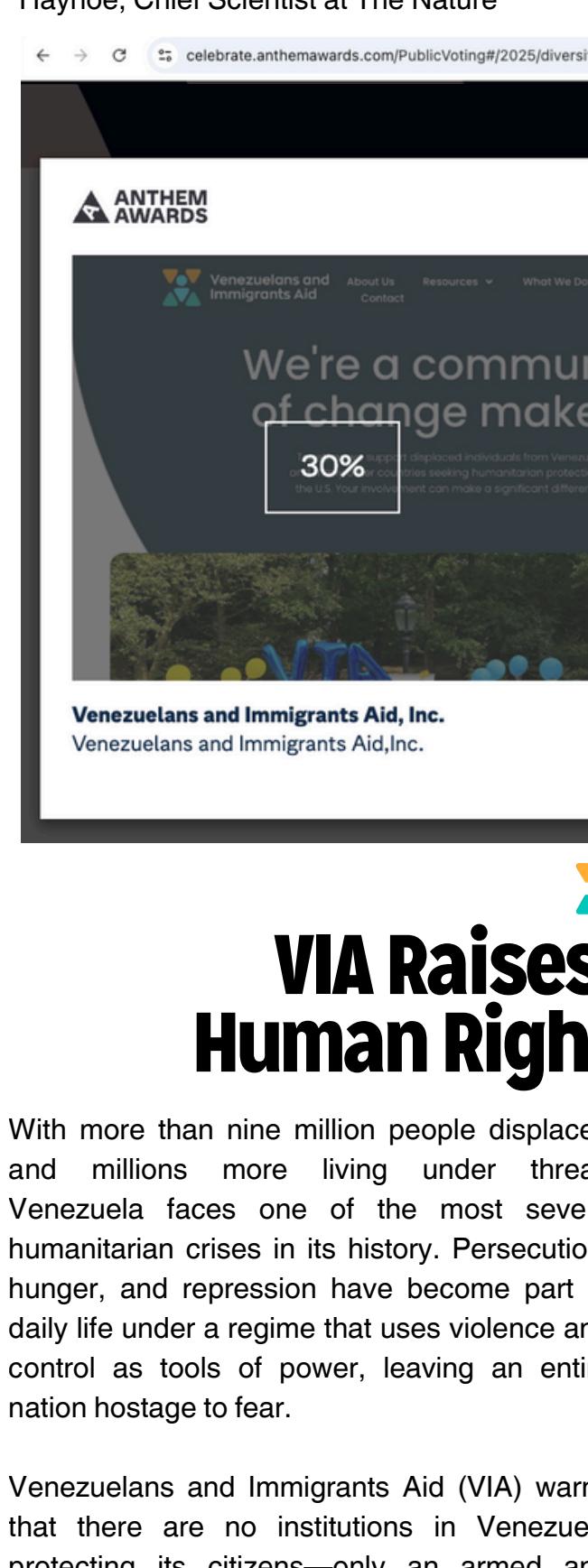


VIA launches its annual holiday campaign Donations that Warm Hearts

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) has launched one of its most anticipated annual campaigns: the winter coat drive, toy donation, and traditional holiday dinner for migrant families. Year after year, these gestures have become a symbol of unity, hope, and humanity.

Solidarity with a human touch

"At VIA, every act of solidarity carries a human touch," said Niurka Meléndez, VIA's co-founder and director. "These traditions were born from the desire to bring warmth and companionship to those facing winter far from home."



The campaign's launch video, available in English with Spanish subtitles, invites the community to join in and share the message across social media. "Every coat reaches the person who needs it most, every toy fulfills a child's wish, and every dinner is prepared with the love and flavor of our people," added Héctor Arguinzones, VIA's co-founder and director.

The initiative reminds us that giving is not just about material donations, but about offering warmth, joy, and hope. This December, VIA invites everyone to be part of the true spirit of giving.

[Donate today](#) and share the warmth of a community that leads with its heart.



VIA Named Finalist for the Anthem Awards for Its Humanitarian Impact

Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) has been selected as a finalist for the Anthem Awards, a distinction granted by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences that celebrates the world's most inspiring initiatives in social, community, and humanitarian impact.

Founded in New York by Niurka Meléndez and Héctor Arguinzones, VIA was recognized in the Emerging Organization, Product, Innovation or Service, and Humanitarian Action and Services categories, joining a list of more than 100 finalist organizations from around the world.

"This recognition comes at a very meaningful moment for VIA. We are about to celebrate ten years of continuous work supporting forced migrants and refugees, and being named a finalist for the Anthem Awards validates our collective effort, our team's commitment, and the love we've received from the community we serve," said VIA's co-directors Niurka Meléndez and Héctor Arguinzones.

Now in its fifth year, the Anthem Awards bring together leaders in human rights, education, health, culture, and sustainability. Members of this year's jury include Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association; Heather Malenshek, CMO of Land O'Lakes; Katharine Hayhoe, Chief Scientist at The Nature

Conservancy; Kim Getty, CEO of Deutsch; Zarna Surti, VP and Head of Creativity for Nike Women; and Philipa Cross, Sustainability Lead at BarkleyOKR.

Anthem Community Voice Award

In addition to its official nomination, VIA is also competing in the Anthem Community Voice Award category, a special honor that allows the public to vote for organizations making a difference through their work.

"This award belongs to the community that has believed in us since day one. We invite everyone to vote for VIA and help us raise awareness about the work we do alongside thousands of displaced people seeking protection in the United States," said Héctor Arguinzones.

The voting period runs from October 14 to October 30, and those wishing to support VIA can do so by visiting the [official link](#) available on the organization's digital platforms.

"For VIA, this nomination is an opportunity to keep inspiring hope. It motivates us to continue our mission, regardless of external challenges. Our purpose remains the same: to accompany, inform, and provide human and legal support to those who need it most," concluded Niurka Meléndez.

On October 4, Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid (VIA) marked its [9th anniversary](#) with a special celebration: a 6.8-mile cycling event along the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, guided by We Bike NY. The ride brought together 24 participants, including volunteers and team members, who visited iconic sites such as the Intrepid Museum, Little Island, and Wagner Park, ending the journey with a picnic at South Street Seaport.

More than a recreational outing, the event was a way to honor the commitment and dedication of those who keep VIA moving forward through volunteer work. "This ride was a reminder that VIA keeps progressing thanks to the well-being, mental health, and unity of its team," said Héctor Arguinzones, VIA's co-founder and co-director.

The recent decision of the Norwegian Nobel Committee to award María Corina Machado the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize was interpreted by VIA as a powerful gesture of international validation for the peaceful and civic resistance that thousands of Venezuelans continue to uphold despite persecution and censorship. The award, the organization affirms, honors the dignity of those who refuse to surrender to authoritarianism.

VIA also emphasized that the U.S. government's decision to double the reward for information on the head of the regime, along with the support of governments such as Ecuador, Argentina, and Paraguay, reinforces what many organizations have been warning for years: Venezuela is a failed state where violence and impunity have become instruments of governance.

In its most recent statements, VIA reiterates the urgent need to keep international attention focused on Venezuela, to document human rights violations, and to defend the principles that sustain every democracy. Full statements in English and Spanish are available at [vianyc.org/press-releases](#).

With this new cycle, VIA reaffirms its commitment to promoting the mental health and well-being of migrant and refugee communities through art. The Granny Square workshop stands as a model of how cultural institutions and civil society can work together to foster healing, inclusion, and resilience.

[www.vianyc.org/annualgiving](#)

VIA volunteers during the Bike Ride

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