

# Belize



November - December 2023

## Key Figures



**4,130**

Refugees and asylum-seekers are mainly from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.



**68**

Asylum-seekers received humanitarian assistance to access food, shelter, health, and other basic needs.



**35**

Refugees and asylum-seekers received livelihoods support to improve their access to basic needs and self-reliance.

## Context

The **Cabinet** has approved removing all fees charged in public hospitals, eliminating financial barriers to access healthcare for all Belizean citizens, especially those from low-income families.

Authorities announced that Amnesty's **vetting period** will continue until 31 March 2024. Applicants can use their Amnesty receipts as legal proof to stay and work in Belize until a decision is made. A total of 12,765 people from 32 different countries applied.

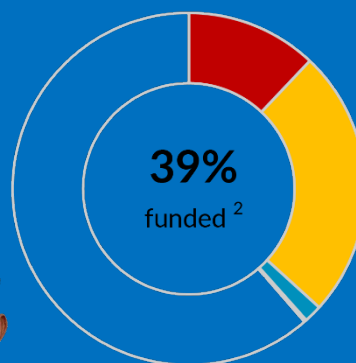
Belize participated in the **Global Refugee Forum**, and pledged to lead the regional protection response for forcibly displaced people. The country committed to take over the Pro-Tempore presidency of the **MIRPS** in 2024.

The Vital Statistics Unit (**VSU**) registered 7,791 births and 1,588 deaths in 2023 through mobile registration clinics. UNHCR, UNICEF, and partners collaborated with the VSU to provide registration services to people at risk of statelessness.

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Immigration stepped down. The Immigration Department is now under the supervision of the Office of the Prime Minister.

UNHCR and partners Humana and HRCB joined the Bella Vista High School to commemorate Human Rights Day. A total of 125 students participated, starting with a torch run and including educational presentations. Students participated in an art display depicting the 30 articles of the Human Rights Declaration.

## Regional funding Overview as of 15 December 2023



- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

**\$55.4 million<sup>1</sup>**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2023

<sup>1</sup> Financial requirement for the Panama MCO in 2023 including requirements for the operations and activities in Aruba, Belize, Cuba, Curaçao, Guyana, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>2</sup> The percentage funded is indicative.



## UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR collaborates with the Government, civil society, UN agencies, refugees, and asylum-seekers in Belize. A partnership with the Refugees Department helps channel support and continues strengthening the asylum system in the country. Additionally, UNHCR works in partnership with Help for Progress (HfP), HUMANA People to People Belize (HUMANA), and the Human Rights Commission of Belize (HRCB).



**Protection** | UNHCR, HRCB, and HfP provided information to 44 asylum-seekers on asylum processes and basic rights. UNHCR trained 22 Eligibility Committee (REC) members and the Refugee Department's staff on Refugee Status Determination (RSD) related to cases of Nicaraguan and Haitian nationals. UNHCR and partners completed two border monitoring missions to the Western and Southern borders, sensitizing key community members on international protection and UNHCR's mandate.



**Humanitarian Assistance** | UNHCR and partners provided humanitarian assistance to 68 refugees and asylum-seekers. Forty asylum-seekers received vouchers to enhance access to food; 18 were supported with temporary shelter, 38 with cash assistance to cover their basic needs, 4 were supported with health, and 6 were assisted in accessing documentation.



**Livelihoods** | UNHCR, HUMANA, and HfP delivered vocational and entrepreneurship training and English as a second language (ESL) classes for 26 asylum-seekers to enhance their access to livelihood opportunities. UNHCR provided nine asylum-seekers with tools and materials to support the start-up of their small businesses. The Agency assisted four asylum-seekers with access to education.



**Psychosocial Services** | UNHCR assisted 12 asylum-seekers with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).



### COMMEMORATING THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

With Belize Family Life Association, UNHCR hosted two sessions on Gender-Based Violence prevention in the Cayo and Toledo districts. Eighteen asylum-seeking women and girls participated. The Agency also provided health screening services, including pap smears, and blood sugar, blood pressure and STI testing.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the United States of America, the European Union, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Guyana, Spain and the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS. We also thank the fundamental support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds: Australia for UNHCR | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | España con ACNUR | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Japan for UNHCR | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Sweden for UNHCR | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United Kingdom for UNHCR | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | USA for UNHCR | Private donors in China, Italy, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

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# UNHCR's presence in Belize

