

# Aruba & Curaçao

April-June 2024

## Key Figures



Approximately

**31,000**

Venezuelan refugees and migrants live in Aruba and Curacao.



**665**

Individual primary health care consultations provided by UNHCR and partners in Curacao.



**Aruba and Curaçao** rank as the **first** and **fourth** countries in the world with the largest number of refugees compared to their local populations.

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## Context

Aruba and Curacao, two **self-governing constituent countries** of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, are autonomous but not part of the European Union. Neither Dutch asylum law nor European law and directives apply to these countries. The **1967 Protocol** and the **1951 Refugee Convention** do apply to Aruba. Curaçao does not consider itself bound by these instruments.

In Aruba, the Minister of Labour, Energy, and Integration introduced a **parliamentary initiative** to regularize undocumented people temporarily. A voting exercise yielded mixed results, with some actors supporting the proposal and others rejecting it, leaving no actionable solution.

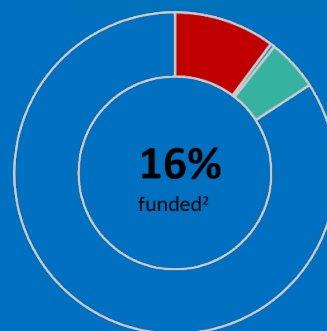
In Curacao, the **Minister of Justice** announced a policy allowing Haitians residing in the country to stay even if their permits have expired. Undocumented Haitians who report to immigration authorities will not be deported. Given the widespread violence registered in Haiti, Curacao opted for a humanitarian approach to ensure Haitians' safety.

The State Secretary for Kingdom Relations discussed the challenges of protecting refugees and migrants in Curaçao and the Netherlands' supportive role. She noted that while protection policies are under the jurisdiction of Caribbean countries, the Netherlands collaborates to improve the situation.

In Aruba, UNHCR organized the 'Pridefully Creative' workshop to commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). This event provided a safe space for 18 LGBTQI+ community members to share experiences and express themselves through art. It also promoted solidarity between refugees, asylum-seekers, and host communities.

## Regional funding Overview

as of 30 June 2024



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

**\$56.1 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2024

<sup>1</sup> Financial requirement for the Panama MCO in 2024 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 works with partners in Aruba and Curaçao, supporting both States in delivering assistance and protection to refugees and asylum-seekers. In the framework of the Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants (R4V), UNHCR coordinates with partners to respond to education needs, food security, health, integration, protection, shelter, WASH, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).



**Protection** | UNHCR and partners provided counselling and legal assistance to some 100 individuals in Aruba. UNHCR and Human Rights Defence Curaçao (HRDC) organized a two-day workshop for boarding school students to provide training on children's rights. Over 50 people participated. UNHCR and CEDE Aruba trained ten community leaders and NGO staff on international protection and alternative legal pathways for asylum-seekers.



**Health** | UNHCR donated seven automated external defibrillators (AEDs) to the Crisis Management Office (CMO), benefiting refugees and the local community. During the pandemic, UNHCR donated 58 Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) to the CMO, which are still used in several activities.



**Community-based Protection** | UNHCR with HIAS, organized two information nights on community-based protection strategies (Enfoque Comunitario) attended by 39 people. This initiative aims to enhance outreach to the forcibly displaced community.



**Coordination with Local Authorities** | UNHCR met with the Prime Minister and briefed her on UNHCR's activities, the Cartagena +40, and protection monitoring exercises. UNHCR met with the Minister of Labour, Energy, and Integration to discuss alternative legal pathways for forcibly displaced groups. UNHCR trained 10 Ministry of Justice and Social Affairs officials and the Ministry of Immigration and Labour on international protection and durable solutions.



### World Refugee Day (WRD) 2024

In Aruba, UNHCR, in collaboration with various organizations, held a multicultural fair commemorating the WRD. The event featured dances and music from multiple countries, recreational games for children, a "travel around the world" activity, and interactive booths. Over 160 people participated. In Curaçao, UNHCR held an event that included sports tournaments, art therapy work, and health check services. A total of 240 people attended.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: Australia | Belgium | Denmark | European Union | France | Ireland | Republic of Korea | The Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS | Private donors from the Republic of Korea, Australia for UNHCR, España con ACNUR, and the Dutch Postcode Lottery.

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# UNHCR's presence in Aruba & Curaçao

