

REGIONAL CONTEXT

In the second quarter of the year, countries under the [UNHCR Multi-Country Office \(MCO\)](#) in Panama observed several [policy changes](#) in favor of refugees, asylum-seekers, and others in need of international protection.

Belize endorsed the 2015 Inter-American Convention on Older Persons, the 1996 Convention on Child Protection, and the 2007 Convention on Child Support.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, 200 Venezuelan children whose parents were registered in the 2019 Migrant Registration Framework (MRF) will [enrol in school](#) in September. Authorities are coordinating the verification of students' permits and immunization cards. Last year, the lack of these requirements [halted enrollment](#). Eight district offices nationwide are available for eligible children to [register](#).

Given the widespread violence registered in Haiti, **Curacao** opted for a humanitarian approach to ensure Haitians' safety. The [Minister of Justice](#) announced a policy allowing Haitians residing in the country to stay even if their permits have expired.

In **Aruba**, the Minister of Labour, Energy, and Integration introduced a [parliamentary initiative](#) to temporarily regularize undocumented people. However, a voting exercise yielded mixed results, leaving no actionable solution.

In **Guyana**, the [Minister of Labour](#) announced an initiative to ensure Venezuelans receive training and certification to join the local labor force. The [Minister of Education](#) announced that more than 3,000 forcibly displaced Venezuelan children are enrolled in the local school system, benefiting from hot meals and assistance.

Cuba and the United States held bilateral talks to discuss displacement and review the implementation of their bilateral agreements intended to guarantee regular, safe, and orderly migration. The [National Assembly](#) published two legislative projects on [immigration](#) and [citizenship](#). One project introduced the category of humanitarian residents, directly impacting refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to fundamental rights.

The fifty-fourth [OAS General Assembly](#) approved a resolution calling **Nicaragua** to cease all human rights violations and take measures to restore democratic institutions, upholding the rule of law and human rights.



Over 270,000 Nicaraguans have sought asylum around the world, 3,000 civil society organizations were canceled, and over 250 journalists were forced into exile.

Suriname is classified as a Tier 1 country in the [US 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report](#), indicating that the country meets the international minimum requirements for tackling human trafficking.

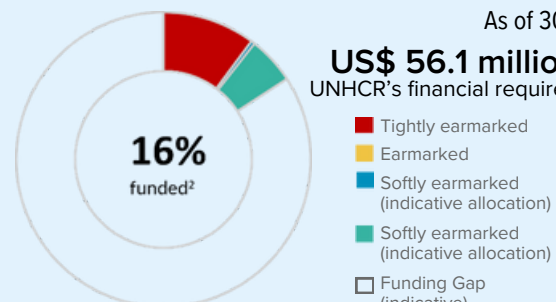
In **Panama**, the [government transition](#) culminated with José Raúl Mulino's [inauguration](#) as the 2024-2029 President. Mulino reaffirmed his plans to [repatriate](#) those entering irregularly through the Darien jungle and sought financial support from the US to conduct this operation. Panama secured a [non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council](#) for the 2025-2026 term, marking the sixth time the country has assumed this position. Panama aims to use this designation to raise awareness of the [humanitarian crisis](#) in the Darien region while strengthening regional and multilateral efforts to address it.

MCO Panama requires USD 56.1M to continue assisting and securing solutions in the subregion

REGIONAL FUNDING OVERVIEW

As of 30 June 2024

US\$ 56.1 million
UNHCR's financial requirements 2024¹



¹Financial 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.
²The percentage funded is indicative.

UNHCR'S RESPONSE



COORDINATION WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS



- In **Panama**, UNHCR participated in the new [Public Policy on Opportunities for Women \(2023-2033\)](#) draft, led by the Ministry of Women Affairs (MIDEM).
- In **Belize**, UNHCR supports Belize as the 2024 [Pro-Tempore Chair](#) of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). Belize represented MIRPS at the Regional Conference of Migration (RCM), Quito Process, and Cartagena+40 conferences. MIRPS National Technical Team confirmed its National Action Plan for 2024-2026.
- In **Aruba**, UNHCR met with the [Prime Minister](#) and briefed her on UNHCR's activities and protection monitoring exercises.

HEALTH



- In **Curacao**, UNHCR, through Salú Pa Tur, provided health services to refugees and migrants not covered by health insurance. The services included 665 primary health consultations.
- In **Guyana**, UNHCR and HIAS visited seven communities in Region 1, sensitizing over 500 forcibly displaced people on health matters and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. HIAS distributed over 500 items, including panic alarms and shower tents and explained the usage of each item to participants.

PROTECTION



- UNHCR in **Suriname** registered 182 people, enabling access to essential services and documentation.
- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, UNHCR trained 39 Government officials on international protection and UNHCR's mandate.
- In **Cuba**, UNHCR participated in "Sala A+", a television show, to discuss the movie "Cafarnaúm," which tackles issues such as child labour, statelessness, and poverty, affecting forcibly displaced groups.
- In **Panama**, UNHCR and partners trained 371 Government officials on international protection and statelessness prevention, and interviewed 359 refugees and migrants through protection monitoring exercises in Darien and Chiriquí.
- In **Curacao**, 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.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



- In **Cuba**, UNHCR provided cash-based assistance to 92 people (274 disbursements) to cover basic needs and shelter.
- In **Panama**, UNHCR donated 6,155 mosquito nets, 128 blankets, and 14 sleeping mats to government institutions, indigenous community leaders, and refugees and migrants at border points.






LOCAL INTEGRATION



- In **Belize**, UNHCR partners HfP and HUMANA launched livelihood courses to promote the economic and social integration of refugees, asylum-seekers, and host community members. Ninety refugees and asylum seekers are attending the courses. UNHCR met with eight Valley of Peace village community leaders to re-establish its community-based protection volunteer group (CBPN). Participants agreed to the initiative.

COMMEMORATING WORLD REFUGEE DAY IN MCO PANAMA



-  In **Aruba**, UNHCR and various organizations held a multicultural fair featuring dances and music from multiple countries. Over 160 people participated.
-  In **Curacao**, UNHCR organized sports tournaments, art therapy workshops, and health check services, reaching the participation of 240 people.
-  In **Belize**, UNHCR organized a sports day with 193 students and a football game with refugees, community members, and other UN Agencies to promote integration.
-  In **Panama**, UNHCR hosted "The Embraces Along the Way," a contemporary dance performance by refugees, asylum-seekers and locals all part of UNHCR's partner Espacio Creativo's 'Enlaces' Programme.
-  In **Trinidad and Tobago**, UNHCR organized football matches and integration games with 150 participants, including locals, refugees, and asylum-seekers. UNHCR and La Casita organized a four-day bilingual camp in solidarity with people forced to flee.

'WE RISK IT ALL FOR AN OPPORTUNITY, FOR A BETTER FUTURE. WE ARE THE REFUGEES, AND THIS IS OUR STORY' UNHCR GUYANA'S POETRY CONTEST WINNER

"We are the refugees, those who left their homes and families. The ones that left everything behind in search for a better future." - this is part of Pedro's poem, an eight-year-old forcibly displaced Venezuelan, one of the winners of UNHCR's 2024 Poetry contest in Guyana.

This year, 17 Guyanese and Venezuelan children participated in the activity, launched in commemoration of World Refugee Day, with the theme "A world where refugees are included."

"I feel excited to receive my prize and to express myself" – said Pedro. "The prize will change my life and help me in my studies. I am going to the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in the afternoons so I can learn and become at the top of my group. I am making progress already. I have friends at the school, and they help me too."

In his poem, Pedro expresses how difficult it was to leave everything behind: his home and family. He shares how he has found a new opportunity to start over in Guyana, feeling integrated into his local community and school.

This is the second consecutive year UNHCR has launched this competition, reaching young students nationwide who are part of host and forcibly displaced communities. UNHCR keeps advocating for a more inclusive society where no one is left behind.

UNHCR Multi-Country Office in Panama thanks the contributions from our donors in 2024



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