

Cuba

July - September 2024

Key Figures



184
 refugees and asylum-seekers
 from **19 countries** are
 under UNHCR's mandate.



50 per cent
 lack legal status in the country,
 and **39 per cent** are
 women and children.



65
 refugees need resettlement.
 Most are from Syria, Iran,
 Afghanistan, Haiti, Sudan, and
 Yemen.

Context

Cuba is not a state party to international refugee instruments. UNHCR ensures refugees are protected against refoulement and granted access to essential services.

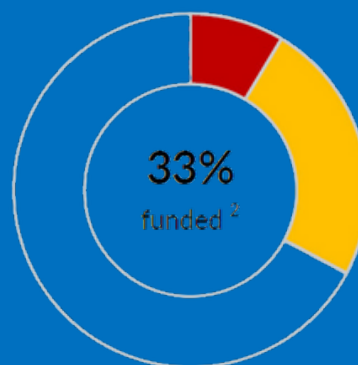
In July 2024, the **National Assembly** approved new laws on **immigration** and **citizenship**, introducing the category of humanitarian residents. These laws directly impact the access of asylum-seekers, refugees, and stateless persons to fundamental rights. The laws will be enacted six months after their publication in the Official Gazette. UNHCR has offered assistance in its implementation.

Cuba is experiencing significant economic challenges, including high inflation and shortages of essential goods such as food, medicine, and fuel. This has adversely affected vital sectors, particularly public health. Electrical service is frequently disrupted, with outages exceeding 1,000 MW and lasting 10 to 14 hours daily, especially in certain provinces. In September, **Hurricane Helene** impacted thousands, further damaging infrastructure and worsening power and water shortages.

UNHCR, with UNICEF, delivered backpacks and illustrative materials related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to 22 refugees and asylum-seekers enrolled in the national education system.

Regional funding Overview

as of 30 September 2024



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

\$56.1 million

UNHCR's financial requirements 2024

¹ 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.

² The percentage funded is indicative.

UNHCR RESPONSE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is UNHCR's official counterpart in Cuba. UNHCR collaborates with the Ministry of Education, Public Health, Foreign Trade and International Collaboration, and the Cuban Red Cross. Several academic institutions, such as the University of Havana and the Group of International Humanitarian Law Studies, disseminate information related to International Refugee Law.



Advocacy | UNHCR promotes Cuba's accession to international refugee protection and statelessness instruments and the adoption of measures to improve access to rights and services. UNHCR raises awareness of refugee issues by disseminating International Refugee Law and its principles among government institutions, NGOs, and academia, seeking to promote a refugee-sensitive culture.



Protection | UNHCR provides international protection to persons in need, including refugee status determination (RSD) under UNHCR mandate and the search for durable solutions. UNHCR has assisted over 200 refugees and asylum-seekers with counselling sessions on RSD procedures, national regulations pertinent to their status and protection, and durable solutions assessments and procedures, including resettlement, health services, education, and cash-based assistance (CBI).



Cash-based Interventions and Assistance | Due to a lack of defined status, many refugees and asylum-seekers cannot access employment and secure livelihoods and have limited income-generating alternatives. UNHCR conducts activities to ensure their safety and access to basic needs. From July to September, UNHCR provided cash-based assistance to 94 people (157 disbursements) to cover basic needs and shelter. Of these, two were new beneficiaries.



Education and Training Opportunities | Thanks to verbal agreements with the Government, refugees and asylum-seekers can access to free primary and secondary education. Sixty-seven young refugees, most from Western Sahara, have access to different study levels, including university. UNHCR provides complementary assistance to the government scholarships for Sahrawi refugee students to cover their basic needs.



UNHCR VISITS THE SPANISH EDUCATIONAL CENTER OF HAVANA

UNHCR, with the participation of the UN Resident Coordinator, held a sensitization activity with students of the Spanish Educational Center in Havana. The event raised awareness refugees and asylum-seekers' challenges and familiarized students with the Agency's efforts to support and protect specific groups.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: Australia | Belgium | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Guyana | Ireland | Republic of Korea | The Kingdom of 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 Italy, the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands, Australia for UNHCR, España con ACNUR, Japan for UNHCR, Sweden for UNHCR, the Dutch Postcode Lottery, and UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe.

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UNHCR's presence in Cuba

