FACT SHEET

Belize

October -December 2024

Key Figures

1,774
Refugees and asylum-seekers live in Belize, mainly from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

180
refugees and asylum-seekers received legal assistance and counselling through UNHCR and partners.

42
Asylum-seekers received cash-based assistance from UNHCR to access documentation and other basic needs.

Context

In December, Belize hosted the seventh Annual Meeting of the Comprehensive Regional Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS), focusing on durable solutions for asylum-seekers, refugees, and forcibly displaced persons. UNHCR's High Commissioner attended the event and praised Belize's efforts to enhance protection policies during its pro-tempore presidency. The country handed over the presidency to Costa Rica to lead the regional MIRPS response in 2025.

Belize's Amnesty Programme provides asylum-seekers with a tangible path to citizenship. By the end of 2024, Belize had granted Amnesty to 492 asylum-seekers, and UNHCR has assisted 168 applicants in covering the costs of their permanent residency IDs.

Belize ended child marriage by amending the Marriage Bill, raising the legal age from 16 to 18. The Minister of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People stated that this change will promote gender equality and reduce health risks for teenagers.

In the MIRPS framework, UNHCR and the Government held a ceremony for 17 asylum-seekers benefiting from the Amnesty Programme. Prime Minister John Briceño stated, "Together, we are turning challenges into opportunities and delivering tangible results for the most vulnerable."

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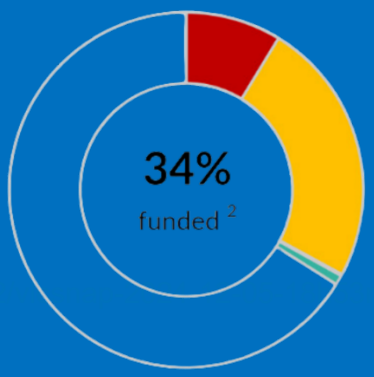
Regional funding Overview

as of 30 December 2024



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

$56.1 million[1]

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

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

Coordination with local authorities | UNHCR and partners held a Documentation Clinic, assisting 352 people to access information from the Guatemalan embassy and the Amnesty Programme and obtaining support with birth registration applications. UNHCR and partners HfP and HUMANA supported the Government's Good Practice Implementation Project (GPIP), a MIRPS initiative to enhance economic integration. Through the GPIP, the Agency supported 78 people with their small businesses. UNHCR trained the RD staff on Refugee Status Determination (RSD) to enhance eligibility assessments and strengthen the identification of individuals with international protection needs. The Agency trained Eligibility Clerks and Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) members on assessing Gender Based Violence (GBV) claims. UNHCR and partners trained 24 police officials from San Ignacio and Benque Viejo on identifying and referring people seeking international protection.

Protection | In Belmopan, UNHCR, partners, and the refugee-led organization, 'I Hope,' held a focus group discussion on GBV prevention with 13 refugee and asylum-seeking men. As part of 16 Days of Activism, UNHCR and partners appeared on national TV to discuss GBV prevention and the inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugee survivors in national support systems.

Education | UNHCR visited Eden SDA High School and QSI International School and briefed 385 students on its mandate and international protection.

Local Integration | In the framework of the GPIP, UNHCR partners HfP and HUMANA supported 15 refugees and asylum-seekers with livelihood courses to promote the economic and social integration of refugees, asylum-seekers, and host community members.

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UNHCR High Commissioner Meets Refugee Entrepreneurs and Asylum-Seekers that benefited from the Amnesty

During his visit to Belize, UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi met with six refugee entrepreneurs and asylum-seeking Amnesty beneficiary families (18 people) at the Help for Progress Resource Center in Belmopan. Families shared their experiences of establishing roots in Belize, achieving peaceful coexistence, and integrating economically with the support of UNHCR and its partners.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: Australia | Belgium | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Guyana | Ireland | Japan | the Republic of Korea | The Kingdom of the Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 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, UK for UNHCR, and UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe.

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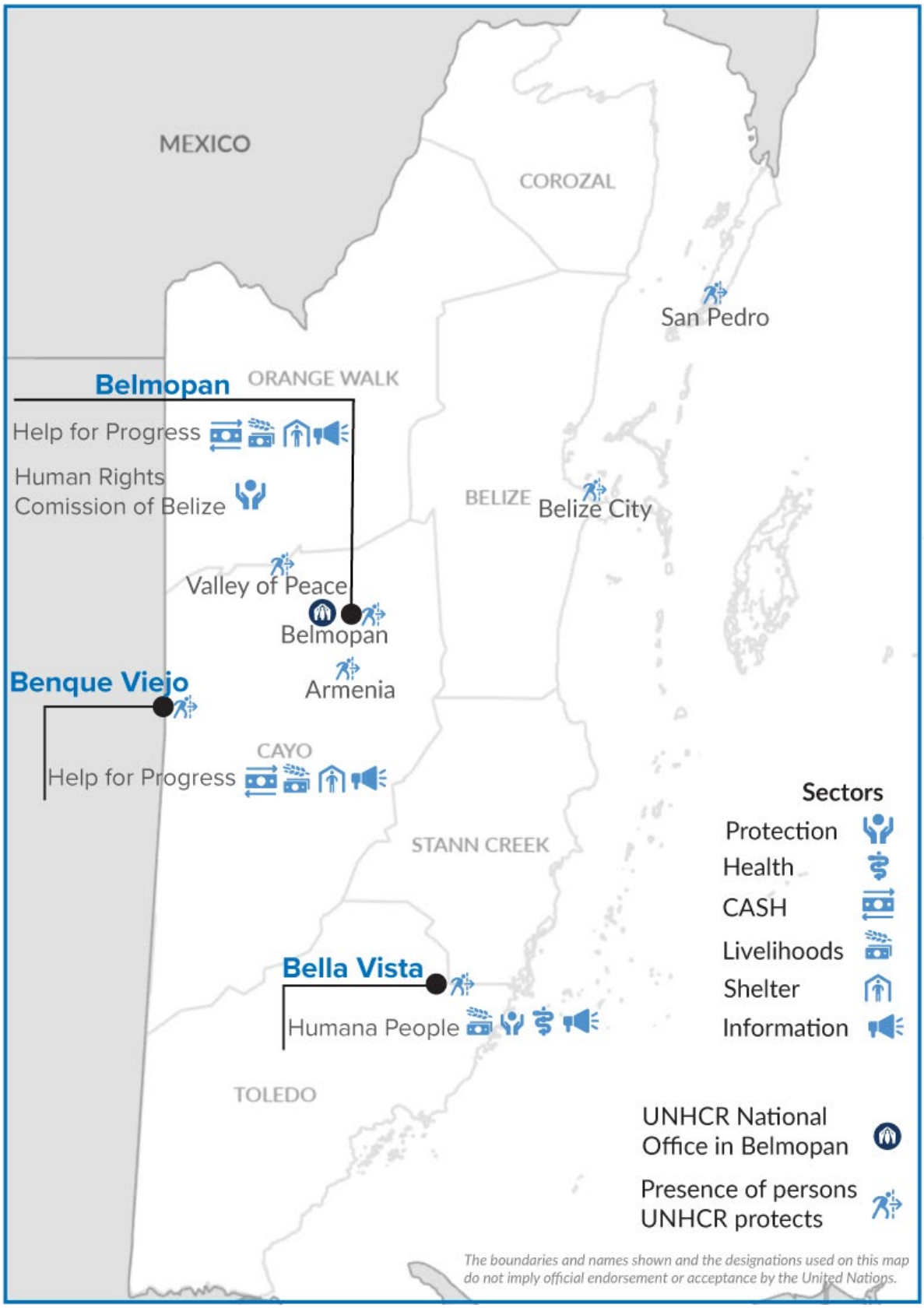
UNHCR's presence in Belize