FACT SHEET

Cuba

October - December 2024

Key Figures

197
refugees and asylum-seekers from **16 countries** are under UNHCR's mandate.

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

66
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 immigration and citizenship legislation, introducing the category of humanitarian residents for refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons. However, these laws have not yet been published in the Official Gazette, leaving these groups entirely reliant on UNHCR assistance.

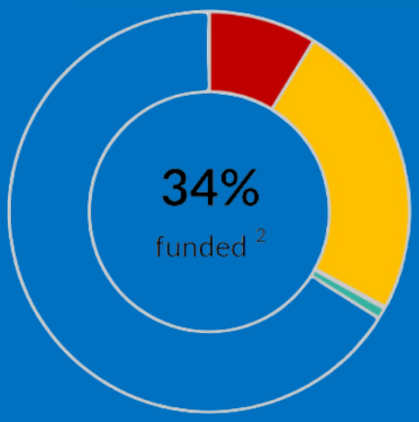
In late 2024, Hurricanes Oscar and Rafael severely impacted Cuba within three weeks of each other. Hurricane Oscar affected eastern Cuba, damaging 14,300 homes and disrupting essential services for 1.4 million people. Cuba had experienced a prolonged nationwide blackout just days before the hurricane's landfall. Shortly after, Hurricane Rafael, a Category 3 storm, struck western Cuba, including Havana, affecting 3.5 million people and worsening power outages. The country was also struck by two earthquakes of 6.0 and 6.7 magnitude on the Richter scale. Essential supplies and core-relief items, including kitchen sets, tarpaulins, mosquito nets, solar lamps, and sleeping mats were provided to the host community and refugee population affected.

UNHCR and local development projects 'Pequespacio' and 'Estudio Cimarrón', celebrated World Children's Day with fun games and creative activities for refugee and asylum-seeking children. The young participants enjoyed painting and crafting clay sculptures, turning their ideas into playful creations.

© UNHCR/ Daniela Avila Cabreja

Regional funding Overview

as of 30 December 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's 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 October to December, UNHCR provided cash-based assistance to 148 people (254 disbursements) to cover basic needs and shelter.

Education and Training Opportunities | Thanks to verbal agreements with the Government, refugees, and asylum-seekers can access free primary and secondary education. A hundred and six young refugees can access different study levels, including university, through government scholarships or self-financed scholarships.

© UNHCR/ Daniela Avila Cabreja

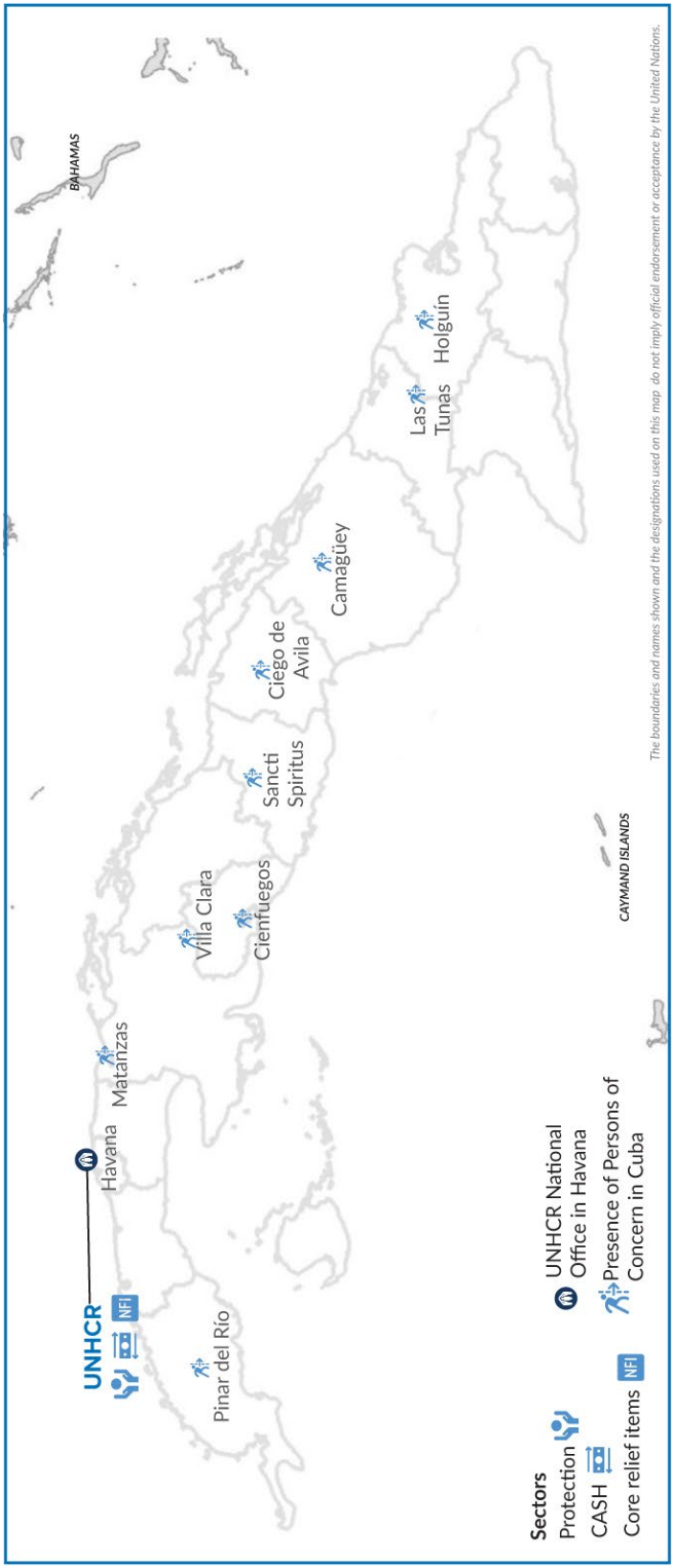
UNHCR empowers refugee and asylum-seeking women to combat violence against women and girls.

During the 16 Days of Activism, refugee and asylum-seeking women, alongside host community members, commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Participants took part in a self-defense class and engaged in discussions to raise awareness of response and prevention to violence against women and girls.

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, UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe and USA for UNHCR.

For more information:

Margarida Loureiro, Deputy Representative, loureirm@unhcr.org
Benedetta Pignatti, External Relations Officer, pignattb@unhcr.org

Links: Twitter | Facebook

UNHCR's presence in Cuba