

Belize

January - March 2025



Key Figures



2,300

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



105

Refugees and asylum-seekers received legal assistance and counselling through UNHCR and its partners.



94

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

Context

Belize has a history of protecting refugees, particularly those forced to flee violence and instability in neighboring countries. The country is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and has established a national framework under the 1991 Refugees Act. UNHCR supports the Government in strengthening the asylum system, establishing protection policies, and facilitating durable solutions to assist those forcibly displaced.

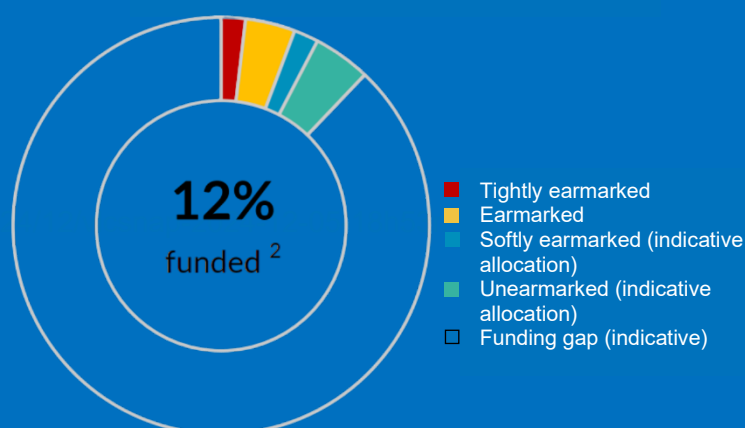
In February, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Government signed an agreement to launch the Refugee Department's Border Presence Project. This initiative aims to enhance the protection and assistance for individuals with international protection needs and facilitate their identification at Belize's borders.

On 12 March, Prime Minister [John Briceño](#) was re-elected during Belize's general elections and made [changes](#) to his cabinet. Francis Fonseca has been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, Culture, and Immigration. This Ministry, which oversees ministerial endorsement for refugee recommendations, now reintegrates the immigration sector, which had been constituted as a separate ministry in 2024.

UNHCR participated in the inauguration of the James Arthur Albert Foundation Cafeteria at Bella Vista Government Secondary School. This high school is known for its inclusive policies, welcoming forcibly displaced students, and has made significant efforts to reduce education costs for students from low-income families, including asylum-seekers and refugees.



Regional funding Overview as of 31 March 2025



\$53.4 million¹

UNHCR's financial requirements 2025

¹ Financial requirement for MCO Panama in 2025, including requirements for the operations and activities in its area of responsibility in Central America and the Caribbean.

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 HRCB trained 237 police officers on identifying and referring individuals seeking international protection, explaining refugee law, the rights of asylum seekers, and the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers.



Humanitarian Assistance | UNHCR, HfP, and Humana provided humanitarian assistance to 48 refugees and asylum-seekers. The Agency assisted 11 with temporary shelter, and 37 received direct and in-kind assistance to cover their basic needs, including health and education.



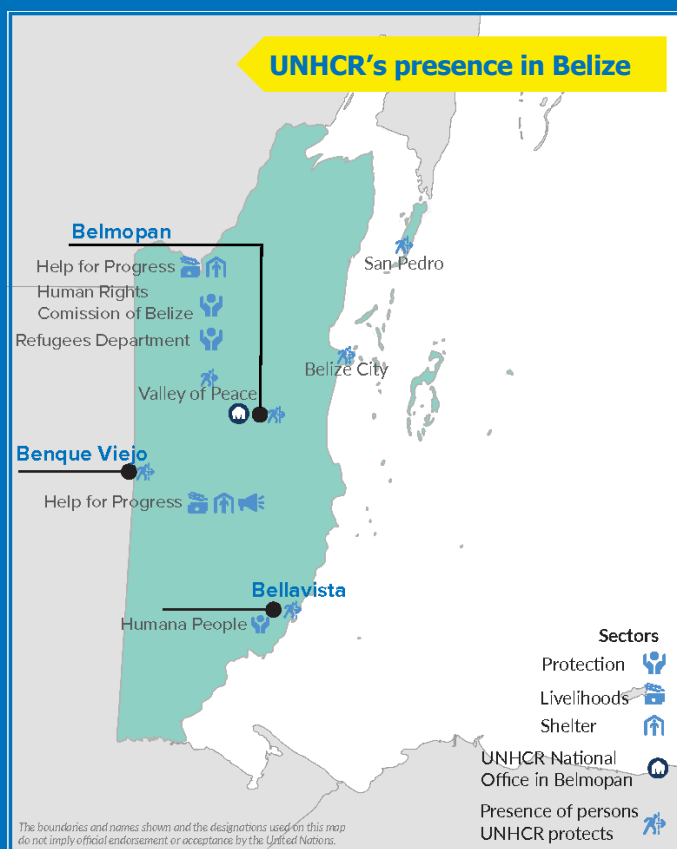
Protection | UNHCR's partners, HRCB, HfP, and Humana supported 57 asylum-seekers with their amnesty process, including covering the cost of their permanent residency ID. The Agency counselled 105 people on the asylum system and access to fundamental rights.



Advocacy | UNHCR and HfP visited Belmopan Methodist High School and briefed 50 students on international protection and the challenges refugees and asylum-seekers face in Belize.



Integration | UNHCR partner HfP inaugurated a child-friendly area in their Benque Viejo office, designed to promote child protection and foster a safe, welcoming environment for vulnerable children and their families, including refugees and asylum-seekers.



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

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