

Aruba & Curaçao

March-April 2023

Key Figures



Approximately

31,000

Venezuelan refugees and migrants are living in Aruba and Curacao.



1 in 6

Displaced people in Aruba need international protection.



1 in 11

Displaced people in Curacao need international protection.

Aruba and Curaçao are the first and third countries in the world with the largest number of refugees and migrants compared to their local populations.

Context

The 1967 Protocol and the 1951 Refugee Convention apply to Aruba. Curaçao does not consider itself bound by this instrument, often exposing refugees and asylum-seekers to abuse, exploitation, and detention.

After four years of border closures, authorities in Aruba and Curaçao announced reopening borders with Venezuela to reactivate the trade between the two countries. Curacao opened maritime and air borders, while Aruba only opened its maritime border.

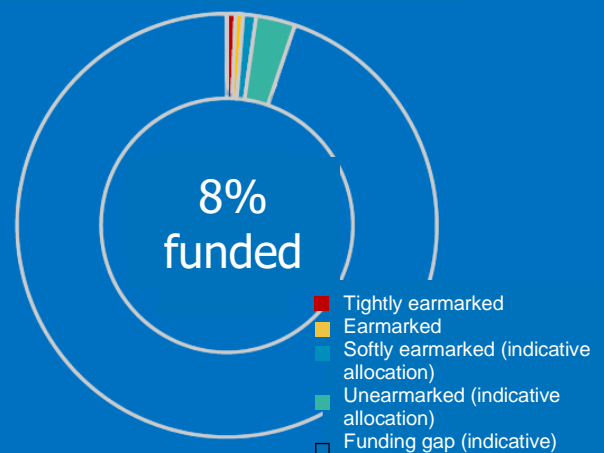
In March, During the launch of the Refugee and Migrants Response Plan (RMRP), the Aruban Prime Minister highlighted the difficulties Aruba faces in addressing the mixed movements and stated the country's limited capacity to host these many refugees and migrants. The Government is working on its migration policy to enhance labour opportunities for these groups.

Considering both islands' limited absorption capacity, UNHCR continues to engage with partners in both countries to facilitate access to legal counselling, primary healthcare, and assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers, including promoting integration, peaceful co-existence, and self-reliance.

Nearly 60 officials from the judiciary, Government, policymakers, and key national practitioners, participated in UNHCR's legal Symposium in Aruba on legal procedures related to the application of Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Regional funding Overview

as of 27 April 2023



\$55.4 million
UNHCR's financial requirements 2023

¹ Financial requirement for the Panama MCO in 2023 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 works with one partner in Aruba and two in Curaçao and supports both States in delivering assistance and protection to refugees and asylum seekers. In the framework of the Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants (R4V), UNHCR works in coordination with partners to respond to education needs, food security, health, integration, protection, shelter, WASH, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).



Protection | UNHCR identified and pre-screened 42 individuals for resettlement and interviewed 91 others. UNHCR, through HIAS, conducted a protection screening for 144 individuals and referred 13 for assistance. The Agency provided counselling and legal assistance to seven individuals in Aruba, and, with partner Human Rights Defense Curacao (HRDC), made 67 calls to the immigration detention facility, interviewing 117 people. Furthermore, UNHCR conducted a legal symposium to strengthen judicial engagement and improve protection mechanisms on the island. Nearly 60 officials from the judiciary, as well as Government officials, participated.



Health | UNHCR through *Salù pa Tur* (SPT) assisted 769 people in Curaçao with 2,565 primary health consultations. The Agency provided 21 individuals with psychological assistance and treated 128 people for diabetes and hypertension. Moreover, SPT covers the specialized HIV treatment of six refugees and asylum-seekers.



Local Integration | UNHCR, through HIAS, supports a group of 25 Community Mobilizers who conduct integration activities, providing information on the asylum system and referring vulnerable individuals to protection services. A total of 41 people participated in the Community Mobilizers' events.



Cash-based Assistance | In Aruba, UNHCR, through HIAS, provided 53 individuals with medical cash-based interventions to enhance access to healthcare.



Child protection | As part of its ongoing child protection assessment, jointly implemented with IOM, PADF, and the GBV and Child Protection Working Group in Curacao, UNHCR conducted five interviews with key service providers, community-based organizations, and childcare institutions in the island, to identify the needs, gaps, and challenges for undocumented refugee and migrant children.



International Women's Day

UNHCR and HIAS organized a series of workshops to commemorate International Women's Day. Through "Mujeres Innovadoras", Venezuelan refugee and migrant women facilitated the activities and trained participants to use social media and other technological tools for business branding. UNHCR also organized two workshops ("Mujeres Creadoras") on jewellery accessories and organic skincare products. A total of 60 people participated.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the European Union, the United States of America, and the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS. We also thank the fundamental support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds: Belgium | Canada | Denmark | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Spain | Switzerland | private donors in Australia

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UNHCR's presence in Aruba & Curaçao

