

Panama Multi-Country Office

Monthly Operational Update

Regional Context

In June, countries under the **UNHCR Multi-Country Office in Panama** received considerable attention at the political and international levels.

Aruba, Curaçao, and St. Maarten do not allow same-sex marriage in their territories and the State Secretary for Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands clarified that due to the island's autonomy, the Netherlands has no authority to intercede on this point. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that parties to the European Convention on Human Rights that do not allow same-sex marriage must offer an alternative.

Trinidad and Tobago's Permanent Representative to the UN was elected president of the seventy-eighth Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). This marks the first time a nominee from this country has been elected for this position. Following World Refugee Day (WRD), the [Minister of National Security](#) stated that the 2014 national refugee policy needs review. It is difficult to give a specific timeframe for when it will be implemented though.

At a WRD press conference, authorities stated that **Belize** has 220 recognized refugees, 18 are waiting on the decision of their claim, and most of the asylum-seekers in the country applied to the amnesty exercise. Recently, the Senate approved BZ\$69 million for a supplementary budget, including BZ\$500,000 for the amnesty's verification phase.

During the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, the **Cuban** President highlighted that the country has been facing an economic blockade for over 60 years and he advocated for an inclusive international cooperation mechanism with market access for the Caribbean and South American countries.

The Organization of American States (OAS) approved a resolution urging **Nicaragua** to cease human rights violations and respect the rule of law and freedom of expression. The OAS's Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) requested to extend protection for political prisoners and granted precautionary measures in favour of some indigenous groups.

Suriname's Permanent Representative to the UN was elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the Seventy-

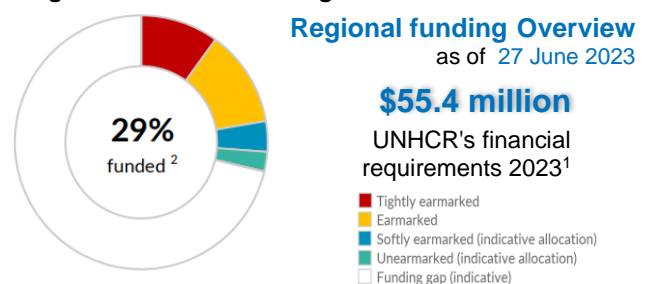


Eighth Session of the UNGA. After thirteen years of applying, a Suriname representative has been elected to this position for the first time. Suriname was also elected as a member of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for 2024-2026.

Guyana was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2024-2025 with 191 votes. The World Bank predicts that Guyana's Gross Domestic Product will increase by 25.2 per cent in 2023, making it the only country in the region that might register a double-digit growth. During WRD, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance stated that Guyana is committed to providing security and safeguarding the rights of displaced populations.

Panama's Permanent Representative to the UN met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Regional Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC). Panama, as the Pro-Tempore chair of the Regional Integrated Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS), held this meeting to discuss the dynamics of human mobility in the region. The High Commissioner thanked Panama for its good work in assisting people with international protection needs.

MCO Panama requires USD 55.4M to continue assisting and securing solutions in the subregion.





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UNHCR's Response Updates on Country Activities

On World Refugee Day, UNHCR and partner FEC in Panama presented a dance at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, showcasing the risks and threats asylum-seekers and refugees face in their search for safety by sea.



Coordination and Strengthening of Local and National Governments

- UNHCR and HIAS conducted a two-day GBV case management training in **Aruba** for the Department of Social Affairs (DAS). A total of 19 officials participated.
- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, UNHCR facilitated two workshops on international protection for 40 National Police officers.
- In **Belize**, UNHCR, through partner Humana, collaborated with the Vital Statistics Unit at a registration mobile clinic in the Toledo District. Approximately 500 people were assisted to apply for late birth registration procedures and obtain other civil registry services.



Health

- UNHCR, through *Foundation Salù pa Tur*, provided primary health services to 585 people in **Curacao**, including mental, sexual, and reproductive health services, for 1,144 consultations.
- In **Guyana**, UNHCR and GSWC hosted support group sessions with the participation of some 200 people. Topics discussed included HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning, human rights, and gender equality.
- In **Panama**, UNHCR, through Panamanian Red Cross (CRP), provided primary health care to 2,334 refugees and migrants in Darien and Chiriquí.



Protection

- In **Aruba**, UNHCR organized a two-day RSD training for the Objection Advisory Committee members of the National Ordinance on Administrative Justice (LAR). The LAR committee oversees objections submitted against a negative asylum decision and advises the immigration authority on asylum cases.
- UNHCR in **Suriname** registered 51 people, enabling them to access essential services and documentation.
- In **Trinidad and Tobago**, UNHCR registered 760 people, recognized 23 people as refugees, and provided UNHCR cards to 398 individuals.



Humanitarian Assistance

- UNHCR donated 2,250 mosquito nets to the Government for its distribution in Darien, **Panama**.
- In **Cuba**, UNHCR provided cash-based assistance to 74 people to cover rent and basic needs.



Livelihoods and Local Integration

- In **Belize**, UNHCR and Humana helped 18 asylum-seekers get their food handlers licenses, allowing them to work independently or find jobs.
- In **Panama**, UNHCR briefed 33 students on the Agency's mandate for the second edition of UNHCR's Youth Mentoring, and Leadership Program focused on promoting the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers.



Stories from the Field

Guyana - © UNHCR/ Dena James

World Refugee Day in MCO Panama

In **Aruba**, UNHCR, with IOM, HIAS, PADF, VeneAruba Solidaria, Centro Famia Piedra Plat, and Xavier University, organized a **health fair** that over 200 people attended. Participants had access to blood pressure, sugar, BMI, cholesterol checks, nutrition lectures, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) lectures, children's face painting, sports activities, and dance performances.

In **Belize**, UNHCR organized a **market exhibition** featuring handcrafted products and food items by 22 asylum-seekers. Approximately 400 people visited the booths. UNHCR and partners provided information on international protection during the exhibition.

In **Curacao**, UNHCR, with PADF, IOM, Venex, Caritas, Skuchami, HRDC, Sociedad Bolivariana, and Salu pa Tur conducted a **family fair**, where some 200 people participated. The organizations offered services and hosted activities such as a mental health gym, blood sugar checks, face painting, football, and live music.

In **Cuba**, UNHCR showcased the film "**The Swimmers**" and organized an art exhibition called "**Refugiarte**" attended by representatives of other UN agencies, national counterparts, refugees, and asylum-seekers.

In **Guyana**, UNHCR organized a poetry contest for children aged 5-17 and participated in a **radio show** in the observance of WRD. Furthermore, the Agency hosted a **community fair** with the participation of 80 people. Participants participated in cultural performances, traditional games, sports competitions, and face painting for children.

In **Panama**, UNHCR and the Ministry of Government organized a **Regional Forum** focused on the integration of refugees in the country. A total of 100 people attended the event, including 40 refugee entrepreneurs who showcased their products. UNHCR participated in the partner's CRP **Family Fair** and provided information on the asylum system in Panama, UNHCR's mandate, and GBV prevention to some 100 people. The Agency played the film "**The Railway Children Return**" to over 200 children of the Santa Ana Municipality and hosted anti-xenophobia and local integration workshops. Together with partner FEC, UNHCR presented a dance at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to sensitize attendees on the risks and threats asylum-seekers and refugees face in their search for safety by sea.

In **Trinidad and Tobago**, UNHCR organized a **cultural event** with the participation of approximately 200 people, where refugees and asylum-seekers had the opportunity to showcase their products and culinary skills.

UNHCR's Multi-Country Office in Panama thanks the contributions from our direct and unearmarked donors in 2023



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