

Cuba

September - October 2023

Key Figures



180

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



54 per cent

lack legal status in the country, and **33 per cent** are women and children.



74

people in Cuba need resettlement. Most are from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, and Haiti.

Context

Cuba is not a state party to international refugee instruments. UNHCR ensures refugees and asylum-seekers are protected against refoulement and granted access to essential services.

The country's ongoing socio-economic crisis limits local integration opportunities for refugees and asylum-seekers. Resettlement is the only durable solution for most refugees. Prolonged electricity cuts and petrol shortages continue, affecting the living conditions of refugees and other vulnerable groups.

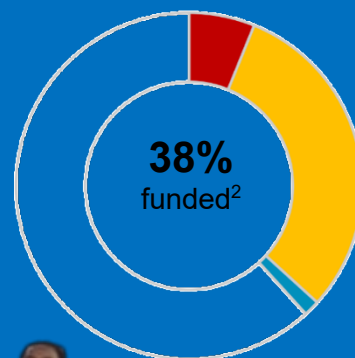
In September, UNCHR and other UN Agencies met with the [UN Secretary-General](#) (SG) during his visit to Cuba to participate in the G77+China Summit in Havana.

The SG urged the participants to fight for an equal world and act at the national level to ensure good governance and sustainable development. He emphasized the need for strong, effective multilateral institutions as the world transitions to a multipolar environment.

UNHCR liaised with the Ministry of Education to implement a Spanish course for 23 refugees and asylum-seekers starting in November. The course has two levels, basic and advanced.

Regional funding Overview

as of 31 October 2023



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

\$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

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the official counterpart of UNHCR 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 collaborate to 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.



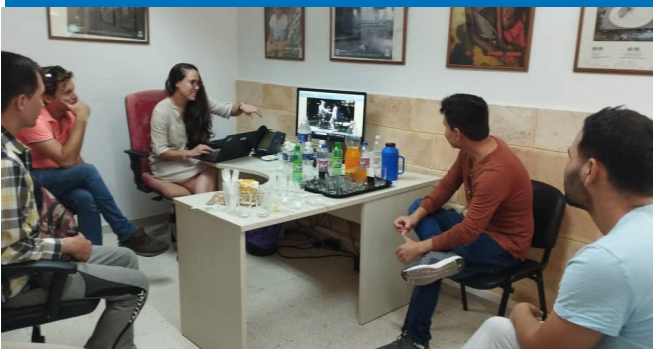
Protection | UNHCR provides international protection to persons of concern, including refugee status determination (RSD) under UNHCR mandate and the search for durable solutions. UNHCR has assisted over 150 refugees and asylum-seekers with counselling sessions on RSD procedures, national regulations pertinent to their status and protection, and durable solutions assessments and procedures, including resettlement.



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. Thus, UNHCR conducts activities to ensure their safety and access to basic needs. In September and October, UNHCR supported over 180 people with cash-based interventions to cover basic needs and shelter.



Education and Training Opportunities | Thanks to verbal agreements with the Cuban government, refugees and asylum-seekers have access to free primary and secondary education. Sixty-seven young refugees, most from Western Sahara, have access to different study levels, including university. UNHCR provides small complementary assistance to the government scholarships for Sahrawi refugee students to cover their basic needs.



Omar's journey across continents in search for protection*

After a nine-year wait, UNHCR helped a refugee resettle to reunite with his family. The Agency organized a farewell with his friends in Cuba.

Read Omar's full story [here](#).

* All names have been changed to protect the refugee's confidentiality.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the United States of America, the European Union, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Guyana, Spain 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 | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | private donors in Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

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UNHCR's presence in Cuba

