

Cuba

November - December 2023

Key Figures



168

refugees and asylum-seekers from **19 countries** are under UNHCR's mandate.



50 per cent

lack legal status in the country, and **35 per cent** are women and children.



70

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 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.

The Government organized the IV National Conference on Immigration in Havana. Over 370 Cubans from 56 different countries attended, with one-third of the participants coming from the United States. They discussed their perspectives on Cuban identity, migratory issues, and economic development.

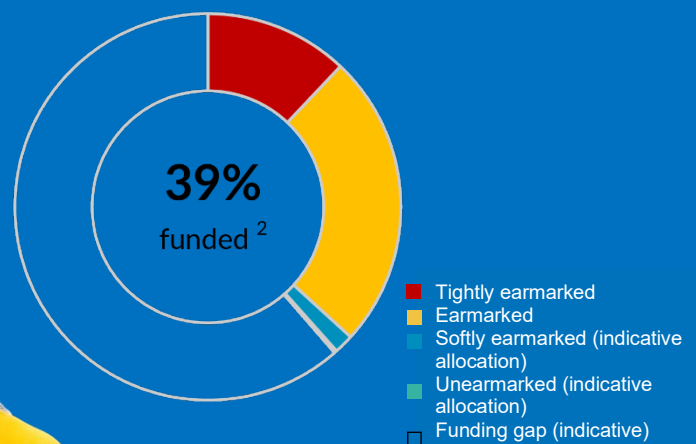
UNHCR assisted the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Latin American and Caribbean Resettlement Support Centre (RSC), in interviewing 44 adult applicants of 37 cases as part of screening exercises for a resettlement initiative.

UNHCR and the Cuban Red Cross donated 1,000 cans of food, benefiting 500 people in 13 nationwide nursing homes. Eight refugees from four countries participated in the distribution as part of the UNHCR's integration activities with the host communities.



Regional funding Overview

as of 15 December 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

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, as well as 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 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. UNHCR conducts activities to ensure their safety and access to basic needs. In November and December, UNHCR supported over 200 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 of them 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.



SPANISH COURSE FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

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

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: Australia for UNHCR| Belgium | Canada | Denmark | España con ACNUR| France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Japan for UNHCR | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Sweden for UNHCR | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United Kingdom for UNHCR | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | USA for UNHCR | Private donors in China, Italy, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

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UNHCR's presence in Cuba

