

# Aruba & Curaçao



January - March 2024

## Key Figures



Approximately  
**31,000**

Venezuelan refugees and migrants live in Aruba and Curacao.



**473**

Individual primary health care consultations provided by UNHCR and partners from January to March in Curacao.



**Aruba and Curaçao** are the **first** and **third** countries in the world with the **largest number of refugees** and other people in need of international protection compared to their local populations.

## Context

Aruba and Curacao are two **self-governing constituent countries** of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. They are autonomous but are not part of the European Union. Neither Dutch asylum law nor European law and directives apply to these two countries. The **1967 Protocol** and the **1951 Refugee Convention** do apply to Aruba. Curaçao does not consider itself bound by these instruments.

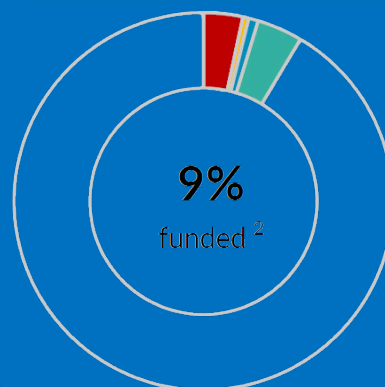
In Aruba, the former Minister of Tourism stated that over **20,000 undocumented** people are estimated to be living in the country. The “**Nos Pais**” platform, an initiative he leads, suggests implementing a regularization exercise that allows undocumented people to contribute to taxes. The Minister of Integration suggests changes in Aruba’s policies due to labor shortage, including speeding up permit application processes and creating new opportunities for foreign nationals.

In Curacao, the Ministry of Justice won a legal case regarding the **Responsible Integration Policy**. This was introduced in March 2021 to provide a pathway for those who entered irregularly to legalize their stay. In previous years, the First Instance Court had ruled in favor of over 200 people who contested their negative decisions. However, the Ministry now won the appeal procedure, questioning the evidence presented by the group.

For International Women’s Day, UNHCR facilitated a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Response training in Curacao. Over 30 people, including government officials, participated. The training equipped participants with tools to identify GBV root causes and apply different approaches to its prevention.

## Regional funding Overview

as of 31 March 2024



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

**\$56.1 million**

UNHCR’s financial requirements 2024

<sup>1</sup> Financial requirement for the Panama MCO in 2024 including requirements for the operations and activities in **Aruba, Belize, Cuba, Curaçao, Guyana, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.**

<sup>2</sup> 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 coordinates to respond to education needs, food security, health, integration, protection, shelter, WASH, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).



**Protection** | UNHCR and partners provided counselling and legal assistance to 110 individuals in Aruba and 67 in Curaçao. The Agency referred two cases to a lawyer and identified nine for resettlement in both countries. In Curaçao, UNHCR inaugurated a help desk to strengthen community engagement and identify resettlement cases. During February and March, UNHCR counselled 26 people through this initiative. UNHCR met with the Netherlands State Secretary of Safety and Justice and advocated for adequate access to asylum and international protection systems.



**Community Engagement** | UNHCR liaised with the National Center for Social Development (CEDE Aruba) to implement a capacity-building program for community leaders, NGOs, and the government. The Agency met with the University of Aruba to review collaborations, including guest hearings, training, and support for the law clinic.



**Health** | UNHCR, through Salú Pa Tur (SPT), provided health services to refugees and migrants not covered by health insurance. The services included 473 primary health consultations and 91 house visits.



**International Women's Day** | In Aruba, UNHCR and HIAS facilitated workshops on women's empowerment, to celebrate International Women's Day. Community members led the workshops, which had 29 participants.



### UNHCR PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

UNHCR continues to engage with partners and Government officials 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 facilitating training sessions. From January to March, the Agency provided protection services to 250 people in Aruba and 103 people in Curacao, including community-based activities and counselling services.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: Australia | Belgium | CERF | Denmark | European Union | Ireland | the Republic of Korea | The Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |

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# UNHCR's presence in Aruba & Curaçao

