



99,268

people in an irregular situation were deported.



1,500

people affected by heavy rains received core relief items and food from UNHCR and WFP.



1,226

individuals contacted UNHCR's protection communication channels.



Situation

During the initial quarter of 2026, authorities continued to conduct interdiction and deportation operations nationwide, including in urban and border centers.

The Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) raised concerns over detention conditions, deportations, and the impact of migration policies on people in human mobility. In turn, the government reaffirmed its commitment to human rights while emphasizing state sovereignty and the regional nature of the Haitian crisis.

The country endured more than 45 consecutive days of rainfall between February and March, resulting in flash floods that affected vulnerable communities, including those hosting people under UNHCR's mandate. By late February, the National Emergency Operation Centre (COE) placed the provinces of Espaillat, María Trinidad Sánchez, and Puerto Plata on red alert. Estimates indicated over 3,000 displaced people and more than 3,000 homes affected, while 18 communities became inaccessible and 14 rivers overflowed.

At the regional level, developments in Haiti remained a central influence on the national context. Authorities highlighted security considerations linked to ongoing instability and its potential cross-border implications. Concurrently, the country assumed the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Central American Integration System (SICA), reinforcing its role in regional coordination on shared challenges, including migration and security.

Highlights

- In response to the flooding, UNHCR partnered with WFP and Civil Defense to deliver a joint intervention across eight communities in María Trinidad Sánchez and Samaná provinces, distributing 2,872 relief items to 359 households.
- In February and March, the Assistant High Commissioner, UNHCR Regional Director and MCO Representative visited Elías Piña, Santiago, and Dajabón, engaging with local authorities, partners, and community actors, strengthening coordination and advancing collaboration on protection interventions and capacity-building with frontline institutions.
- In Santiago de los Caballeros, UNHCR met with the General Directorate of Migration (DGM), the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI), and UNICEF, identifying opportunities to strengthen documentation verification with the Central Electoral Board (JCE) and expand joint referrals of individuals seeking a nationality solution.
- Along the southern border and in Elías Piña, UNHCR worked with DGM, UNICEF, and the Centre for Migration Observation and Social Development in the Caribbean (OBMICA) on targeted protection interventions, including documentation verification, family tracing, and case advocacy.
- In the first quarter, 1,226 individuals contacted UNHCR through its protection channels and the Agency provided humanitarian, legal, and follow-up support to 1,043 people.

Operational overview

UNHCR in the Dominican Republic prioritizes protection delivery, institutional support, and community-based approaches to address the needs of refugees, asylum-seekers, and individuals seeking a nationality solution. Established in 2010 following the earthquake in Haiti, the office operates in close partnership with the Government, UN agencies, civil society, and local partners.

Current priorities include protection monitoring, legal counselling, and guidance on asylum procedures and access to civil documentation, alongside capacity strengthening through training for authorities and civil society. UNHCR also conducts advocacy and provides legal assistance to beneficiaries of Law 169-14, as well as community resilience and inclusion initiatives jointly with FAO. Since September 2025, following a strategic restructuring, UNHCR's operations in the Dominican Republic have been coordinated by UNHCR's Multi-Country Office in Panama.



UNHCR supported emergency response efforts to communities affected by heavy rainfall in María Trinidad Sánchez and Samaná.



More than 300 families received core relief items through a coordinated response by UNHCR, Civil Defense, and WFP.

A Path to Recognition: María's Journey Under Law 169-14



For years, due to changes in the country's legal framework, thousands of people born in the Dominican Republic to foreign parents faced challenges in obtaining documents confirming their nationality. María, now 21, knows this uncertainty firsthand. Born and raised in Santo Domingo, she grew up with a clear dream: to become a lawyer. Like many others, she pursued it, facing obstacles to her studies, work, and aspirations.

With support from UNHCR and in coordination with national institutions, María moved step by step through a long process, including residency, naturalization, and the acquisition of documentation, under Law 169-14, which established pathways to legal status for those impacted by a 2013 court ruling. In 2025, she became a fully documented Dominican citizen as a Group B beneficiary of the Law, individuals born before 2007 who had not been registered and required a special regularization.

For María, it was more than a legal milestone. It marked the opening of a path that had long seemed distant. Her story reflects the life-changing impact of documentation: the chance to be recognized and to look ahead with hope.

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