

Aruba & Curaçao

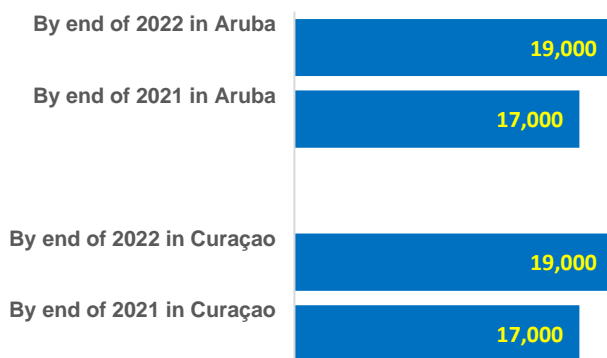
May - June 2022

As of December 2021, there are an estimated **34,000** Venezuelan refugees and migrants in **Aruba** and **Curaçao**.

Aruba and Curaçao continue to receive the outflow of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, who often undertake dangerous journeys to reach safety.

UNHCR provides **information and guidance** on the asylum process, regularization and documentation for refugees and asylum seekers, while exploring **local integration opportunities** and assisting vulnerable population.

Population of concern*



* Source: Estimates as per the RMRP 2022

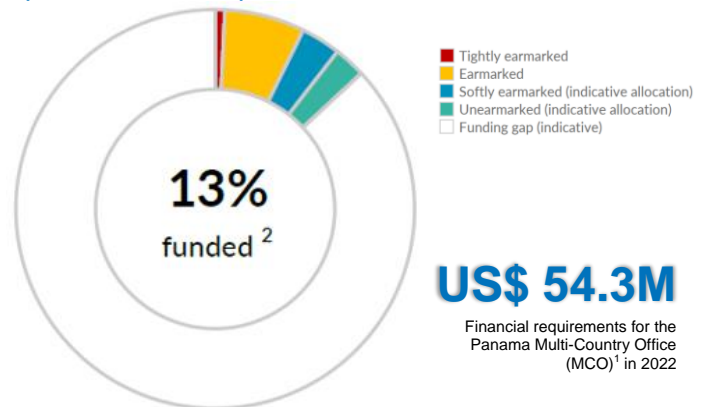
CONTEXT

Aruba and Curaçao host the largest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the world compared to its local population, ranking first and third, with 159 and 102 displaced people per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively.

While most arrived at the islands as tourists or with an initial permit, many overstayed and remain with irregular status, without access to public health and social services. The 1967 Protocol to the 1951 Refugee Convention applies to Aruba. However, Curaçao does not consider itself bound by this instrument, and this often exposes Venezuelans to abuse, exploitation, and detention. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these risks and vulnerabilities, as livelihoods became difficult to secure. Both Aruba and Curaçao have included refugees and migrants in COVID-19 vaccination campaigns to help curb the spread of the virus.

Considering the small size and limited absorption capacity of both islands, UNHCR continues to engage with partners, including under the **Response for Venezuelans (R4V) Caribbean platform**, to facilitate access to legal counseling and legal assistance, primary healthcare, assistance to more vulnerable refugees and migrants - including survivors of gender-based violence - integration, peaceful co-existence and self-reliance.

STATE OF PLAY: FUNDING RECEIVED VS. FUNDING NEEDS (AS OF 5 JULY 2022)



¹ The financial requirements for the Panama MCO include those for the Coronavirus Emergency and the Venezuela Situation. **Aruba and Curaçao** are part of the **Panama Multi-Country Office** since 2021 along with Panama, Belize, Nicaragua, Cuba and the Southern Caribbean.

² The percentage funded includes indicative allocations of softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions.

UNHCR Celebrates World Refugee Day and Provides Training to CBO's



World Refugee Day in Curaçao



Capacity Building for CBO's Aruba

On World Refugee Day, in Curaçao UNHCR and partners organized a fair for refugees and migrants where they could learn about the humanitarian organizations and taste the cuisine of the different nationalities living on the island.

UNHCR organized a training on international protection in Aruba, including topics such as access to asylum, rights in detention, and legal procedures to stop deportations. A total of six organizations attended this session.

UNHCR Response and Strategy

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. UNHCR works in coordination with four partners in the Aruba R4V platform and ten partners in the Curaçao R4V platform to provide responses on education, food security, health, integration, protection, shelter, WASH, and gender-based violence (GBV) among others. See the R4V Subregional portal for more information.

Main Activities

Alongside the government, partner organizations, civil society, development actors, and UN Agencies, UNHCR undertakes protection and solutions activities, including:



Protection | UNHCR and HIAS continue to monitor the situation of Venezuelans in Aruba and assist the vulnerable population. During May and June, 139 people in Aruba and Curaçao were counselled on legal status, humanitarian assistance, health, resettlement, and other inquiries through UNHCR's helpline and accountability email. On the other hand, UNHCR's partner HIAS conducted protection screenings for 125 individuals and as a result, 66 persons with specific needs were identified and referred for internal and external assistance. Through cash-based interventions HIAS assisted 15 Venezuelans, all of them first-time recipients.



Legal Assistance | Between May and June 2022, UNHCR identified 34 cases that required legal assistance in Aruba, of which 11 were referred to a lawyer for court procedures in relation to detention and deportation. In Curaçao, the Human Rights Defense Curaçao Foundation (HRDC) submitted seven procedures regarding the domestic protection mechanism (Article 3 procedure¹) and continued to provide legal assistance to individuals that were intercepted at sea while attempting an irregular entry to the country.



Health | UNHCR with Foundation *Salù pa Tur* (SPT) provided 2,142 basic healthcare, reproductive, prenatal, and maternity care consultations, psychosocial support, as well as HIV and diabetes care to undocumented refugees and migrants in Curaçao. HIAS aided 82 individuals, all of whom first-time recipients, with access to health care through medical cash-based interventions.



Gender-based Violence (GBV) | GBV remains a serious concern in Aruba and Curaçao. To strengthen the response to GBV and improve the quality of services for survivors, UNHCR offers capacity-building to local organizations and government representatives. UNHCR, in collaboration with HIAS, organized two workshops on GBV Case Management and GBV Safe Shelter in Curaçao, with a total of 24 participants, including GBV case workers from different CBOs and governmental organizations, as well as staff members of UNHCR's partner *Stichting Maatschappelijke Zorg en Herstel*, a company that offers emergency shelter for undocumented GBV survivors. In May and June, a total of seven women and children were hosted in the shelter. UNHCR initiated a GBV and Child Protection Working Group in Curaçao, which goal is the collaboration and coordination of activities within member organizations, as well as the discussion of challenges and gaps in GBV prevention and response.



Community-based Protection (CBP) | UNHCR together with partners celebrated World Refugee Day (WRD). The WRD activities in Aruba consisted of an interactive roleplay activity that addressed the daily challenges undocumented refugees and migrants face on the island. UNHCR and partners organized a family festival with activities for all ages and approximately 300 people from the refugee and migrant community participated. In Curaçao, UNHCR in collaboration with HRDC, organized an information fair where humanitarian organizations were invited to provide information to the refugees and migrant community about the available services. Approximately 200 people participated. With the assistance of humanitarian partners, other activities took place within that week, including a mental health gym, painting activities, and a movie screening. As part of the CBP activities, HIAS organized different events such as language courses, technology for teenagers, information sessions, and support groups. In total 58 people participated in these activities. Furthermore, HIAS organized activities to celebrate the Pride Month, including a screening of the movie *Flee*. The community mobilizers referred 18 persons to HIAS for assistance and support services.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: Canada, the European Union, France, United States of America, 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 | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom. Private donors in Australia | Canada | Germany | Italy | Japan | Republic of Korea | Spain | and the United States.

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¹ Article 3 ECtHR is the national procedure – only pathway – for individuals to seek international protection in Curaçao. It entails protection against torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.