

# Aruba & Curaçao

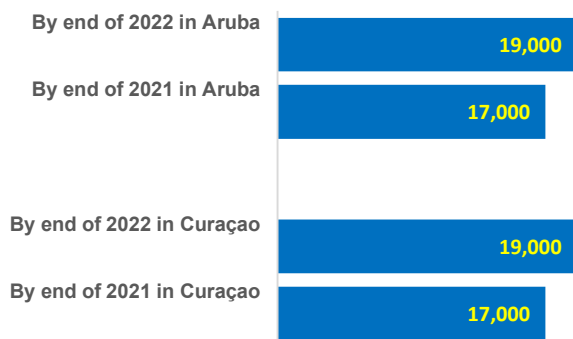
September - October 2022

Aruba and Curaçao host the largest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the world compared to their local population, ranking first and third, with 159 and 102

displaced people per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively. As of the end of 2021, an estimated 34,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants were living in Aruba and Curaçao.

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

## People UNHCR protects



\* Source: Estimates as per the RMRP 2022

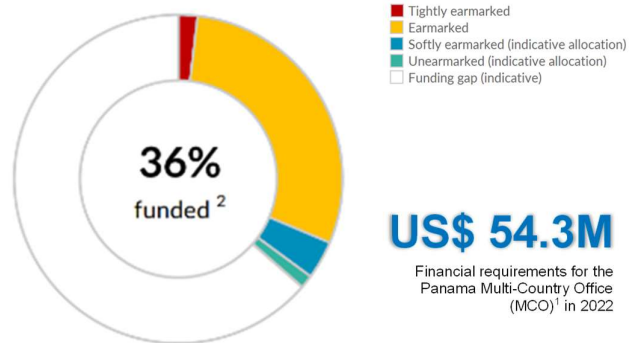
## CONTEXT

Aruba and Curaçao continue to receive a growing number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, who often undertake dangerous journeys to reach safety.

While most arrived on the islands as tourists or with an initial permit, many overstayed and remain irregularly, without access to public health care 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. COVID-19 and the ensuing economic crisis have 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 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.

## FUNDING (AS OF 25 OCTOBER 2022)



<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> The percentage funded includes indicative allocations of softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions.

## Community-Based Protection Workshop and Round Table Session



Round table for legal professionals in Aruba

Specific needs training for community volunteers in Curaçao

UNHCR organized a round table for lawyers to brainstorm about policies related to detention and deportation procedures. A total of eight lawyers attended the discussion and plan of action was established on how to strategically submit procedures against these policies.

More than 40 people attended the workshop for community volunteers organized by UNHCR in collaboration with *Unidat di Bario Korsow*. The aim of this workshop was to sensitize and raise awareness in identifying, preventing, and responding to persons in need of protection and assistance with a focus on the identification of specific needs by community volunteers.

## 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 continues to monitor the situation of Venezuelans in Aruba and assist the vulnerable population. During September and October, 64 people were counselled on legal status, humanitarian assistance, health, resettlement, and other inquiries through UNHCR's Helpline and accountability email. UNHCR's partner, HIAS, conducted protection screenings for 79 individuals identifying 31 people with specific needs and referring them for relevant assistance. Through cash-based interventions, HIAS assisted 89 Venezuelans, all of them first-time recipients, and 178 people in need through food vouchers.



**Legal Assistance** | UNHCR continues to provide legal assistance to vulnerable people lacking the means to access justice. The agency provided in-depth counseling and legal assistance to 20 individuals, of which, nine cases were submitted to court for procedures in relation to detention, deportation and asylum procedures. UNHCR organized a round table session for legal professionals and lawyers in Aruba to discuss recently developed policies and jurisprudence. As part of UNHCR's efforts a Committee specifically for refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants was established as a sub-group of the Aruban Bar Association. UNHCR partner Human Rights Defense Curaçao, made 25 calls to the Immigration Detention Facility. In addition, one court procedure was initiated against detention, 16 against deportation, and two procedures were submitted in relation to international protection under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.



**Health** | Through Foundation *Salù pa Tur* (SPT), UNHCR provided 1,123 consultations in primary healthcare, reproductive, prenatal, and maternity care, as well as HIV and diabetes and hypertension care for undocumented refugees and migrants in Curaçao. In total, nine individuals received basic psychological assistance, 19 persons received sexual and reproductive health counselling, 49 persons received continuous care (diabetes and hypertension), and 119 persons were treated for infectious diseases (non-sexual transmitted) and conducted 42 house visits. SPT is providing cash assistance to five people living with HIV. During the reporting period, SPT conducted a community outreach event where the clinic distributed hygiene kits, baby products, and condoms. During the event, a midwife and lactation consultant provided information about breastfeeding. Together with the Department of Health, STP provided vaccination against monkeypox to the members of the refugee and migrant communities. Through cash-based assistance, HIAS supported 92 individuals, all first-time recipients of healthcare assistance. In addition, HIAS has provided sexual and reproductive health services to 17 persons and three people were provided cash assistance to conduct HIV-related medical tests for the first time.



**Gender-based Violence (GBV)** | GBV remains a serious concern in Aruba and Curaçao. To strengthen the response to GBV and improve the quality of service provision for survivors, UNHCR builds the capacity of local organizations and government representatives. In collaboration with HIAS, UNHCR facilitated a GBV case management training to 11 staff members and volunteers from *Stichting Slachtofferhulp Curaçao* (Victim Support Unit). Furthermore, UNHCR and HIAS initiated a GBV Working Group in Aruba, which goal is to coordinate and collaborate on activities, projects, and advocacy efforts.



**Community-based Protection (CBP)** | To enhance community-based protection mechanisms, UNHCR organized a training on how to identify people with specific needs in both Aruba and Curaçao. In Curaçao, the training was organized for the local organisation *Unidat di Bario* community volunteers. In total, 40 participants took part in the training. In Aruba, this activity targeted HIAS community mobilizers, and 25 people participated. During the reporting period, HIAS community mobilizers referred 15 individuals in need of assistance and support services. Furthermore, for refugee and migrant children, HIAS organised the event "*Me encanta verte sonrei*" at *Centro di Bario Dakota*. Lastly, HIAS organised an English course as well as a coffee and art morning for adults, and two activities for children during school vacations.

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

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**UNHCR** Aruba and Curacao: Operational Presence

