

# Belize

March-April 2023

## Key Figures



**4,130**

Refugees and asylum-seekers live in Belize, mainly from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.



**98**

Asylum-seekers received humanitarian assistance to enhance access to food, shelter, health, and other basic needs.



**55**

Refugees and asylum-seekers were assisted with livelihood training and support to enhance local integration and self-reliance.

## Context

UNHCR supports the Government of Belize in strengthening the asylum system, establishing protection policies, and facilitating durable solutions to assist asylum-seekers and refugees. During the reporting period, the Refugees Department notified 68 asylum-seekers on the decision of their asylum claims, and 19 received recommendations from the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) to be recognized as refugees.

UNHCR works with national partners to offer asylum-seekers and refugees humanitarian aid, including medical assistance, cash-based assistance, livelihoods training, legal counsel, and psychosocial support.

In 2021, the Government announced the launch of an Amnesty program for asylum-seekers and migrants as an alternative protection pathway to regularize their legal status and obtain permanent residency.

The registration phase of Amnesty ended on 31 March 2023, and according to official figures, 12,765 people applied. Authorities are revising the submitted applications before the screening process.

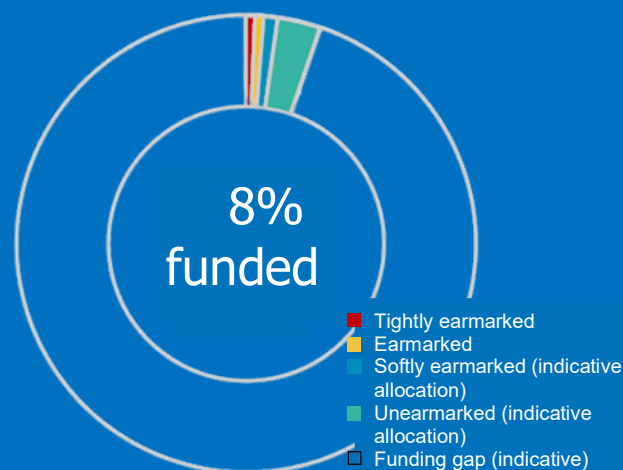
UNHCR plans to support some of the most vulnerable asylum-seekers to cover the cost of their permanent residency documentation and will promote integration initiatives within their host communities.

British High Commissioner and Deputy British High Commissioner joined UNHCR on a visit to Bella Vista village, to discuss with asylum-seekers and refugees their social integration experience. Together with Bella Vista's community volunteers, the visitors also participated in a painting activity of bleachers donated by UNHCR.



## Regional funding Overview

as of 27 April, 2023



**\$55.4 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2023

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> The percentage funded is indicative.

## UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR collaborates closely with the Government, civil society, UN agencies, refugees, and asylum-seekers in Belize. A partnership with the Refugees Department helps channel support and continues strengthening the asylum system in the country. Additionally, UNHCR works in partnership with Help for Progress (HfP), HUMANA People to People Belize (HUMANA), and the Human Rights Commission of Belize (HRCB).



**Protection** | UNHCR and HRCB assisted 16 asylum-seekers with legal aid and representation, including those in detention. UNHCR's partners, HRCB, HfP, and HUMANA People to People supported 15 asylum-seekers with their application for the Government's Amnesty programme and counselled 59 people on access to basic rights, asylum in Belize and other protection matters.



**Humanitarian Assistance** | UNHCR with HfP provided humanitarian assistance to 98 refugees and asylum-seekers. A total of 43 asylum-seekers received vouchers to enhance access to food; 26 were supported with temporary shelter, 16 with cash and in-kind assistance to cover their basic needs, and five with access to education. Additionally, UNHCR provided mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to 19 asylum-seekers.



**Livelihoods** | UNHCR, HUMANA and HfP delivered livelihood and skills training courses to 49 refugees and asylum-seekers to enhance local integration. Training included English classes, jewellery making and sewing courses. UNHCR provided six asylum-seekers with tools and materials to support the start-up of their small businesses.



**Information and support** | UNHCR and partners led two workshops on sexual and reproductive health, including the participation of 21 asylum-seekers, who also received health packages (pap smear, blood pressure, glucose, breast exam).



### Belize's National Agriculture and Trade Show

UNHCR participated in Belize's National Agriculture and Trade Show, hosting an information booth that reached 469 people with information on the asylum system in Belize and UNHCR's mandate and work.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the European Union, 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: Belgium | Canada | Denmark | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Spain | Switzerland | private donors in Australia

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## UNHCR's presence in Belize

