

Aruba & Curaçao

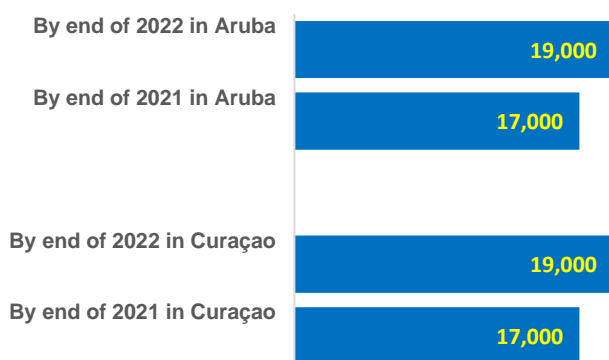
July - August 2022

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.

Population of concern*



* Source: Estimates as per the RMRP 2022

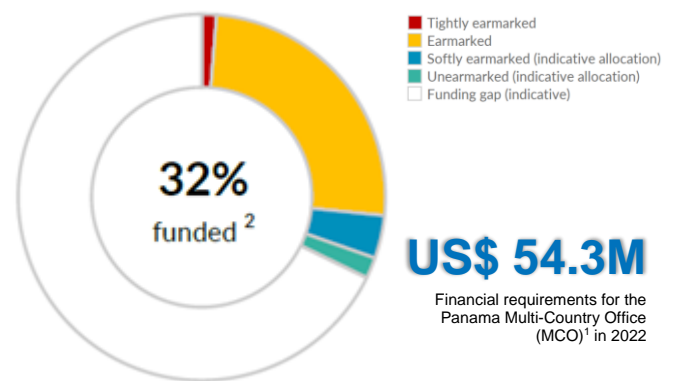
CONTEXT

Aruba and Curacao 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 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. COVID-19 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, 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 30 AUGUST 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.

Community-Based Protection (CBP) Workshops



PSEA training for Community Mobilizers

Information evening for HIAS SESP program

UNHCR trained 25 community mobilizers of HIAS on Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). This group often ensures the participation of refugees, asylum seekers, and other vulnerable groups in several projects, making their collaboration extremely valuable.

UNHCR, within the scope of partner HIAS' Social Economic Support Program (SESP), organized an information evening for refugees and asylum seekers aimed to inform them on their rights and obligations during the asylum process, as well as provide them with information on protection mechanisms and fundamental human rights.

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 July and August, 91 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 177 individuals identifying 32 persons with specific needs and referring them for relevant assistance. Through cash-based interventions, HIAS assisted 23 Venezuelans, all of them first-time recipients.



Legal Assistance | UNHCR provided legal assistance to 19 Venezuelans, and seven of them were referred to court for procedures in relation to asylum, detention, or deportation. UNHCR together with partner Human Rights Defense Curaçao Foundation (HRDC) organized a Media and Press Workshop about "Reporting on refugees and migrants in Curacao and Southern Caribbean". In Curacao, HRDC organized human rights training for the Civil Registry staff members. In addition, HRDC held a forum on economic inclusion at the Labor and Permit Department and initiated a dialogue with Parliament on an inclusive integration policy for the legalization of undocumented persons residing in Curaçao. HRDC made 29 calls to the Immigration Detention Facility and made 30 visits throughout the months of July and August. In total 10 persons were released from immigration detention.



Health | UNHCR with Foundation Salù pa Tur (SPT) provided 2,698 basic healthcare, reproductive, prenatal, and maternity care consultations, psychosocial support, as well as HIV and diabetes care to undocumented refugees and migrants in Curaçao. Five persons received STI and HIV screening tests, 25 persons received sexual and reproductive health counselling, 193 persons received continuous care (diabetes and hypertension), and 68 persons were treated for infectious diseases (non-sexual transmitted). SPT distributed hygiene kits in collaboration with the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) and conducted glucose and hypertension examinations. HIAS aided 93 individuals, all of whom first-time recipients, with access to health care through medical cash-based interventions. Through UNAIDS funds, 19 persons accessed sexual and reproductive health services, and two persons conducted medical tests.



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. UNHCR conducted a Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) training for 25 HIAS community mobilizers. UNHCR partner Stichting Maatschappelijke Zorg en Herstel, an organization that offers emergency shelter for undocumented GBV survivors hosted eleven women and two children in the shelter. UNHCR initiated a Child Protection Working Group in Aruba, to strengthen the collaboration and coordination of activities among relevant organizations, as well as the response to challenges and gaps in child protection mechanisms.



Community-based Protection (CBP) | In Aruba, UNHCR together with partners, conducted a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the Venezuelan refugee and migrant community, regarding basic needs, livelihoods, education, health, detention & deportation. These FGDs are aimed at understanding their issues, necessities, and protection gaps. UNHCR conducted, an information evening called "The protection mechanisms in Aruba". This training was conducted for the Socio-Economic Support Program (SESP) of HIAS. A total of 20 persons participated and topics such as access to the asylum process, objection, appeal timeframes, tenant rights, and labor rights, were among the topics covered.

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: Belgium | Denmark | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom. Private donors in Australia | Canada | Germany | Italy | Japan | the Republic of Korea | Spain | and the United States

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UNHCR Aruba and Curacao: Operational Presence

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