

# Trinidad & Tobago

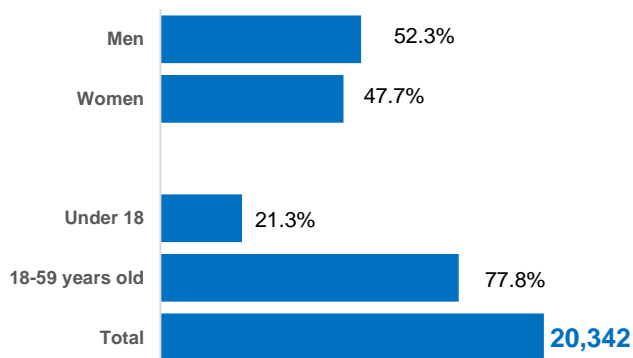
May 2021

Over **20,300** refugees and asylum-seekers are currently registered with UNHCR, the vast majority of whom are of productive age.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to receive an outflow of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. **86%** of UNHCR's persons of concern are Venezuelan.

Over **2,500** refugees and asylum-seekers received humanitarian assistance for 2021 thus far through multipurpose cash or emergency food relief programmes.

## Population of concern\*



\* Figures are as at May 31 2021. Registration at UNCHR premises had been temporarily suspended from 13 March to 26 May 2020, due to COVID 19. 3,402 individual records were inactivated in April 2020 due to registration documentation being expired for more than six months. A further 1,534 individual records were inactivated in December 2020.

## CONTEXT

Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) was adversely affected by COVID-19 in May, with more new cases and COVID-related deaths being recorded in this month than all previous months combined. Authorities responded by declaring a State of Emergency, intensifying restrictions introduced in April and introducing curfews.

Food insecurity among refugees and asylum-seekers intensified due to economic shutdowns, with one UNHCR partner receiving a 648% increase in applications for food assistance this month. Increased **evictions** due to inability to make rent payments were also noted.

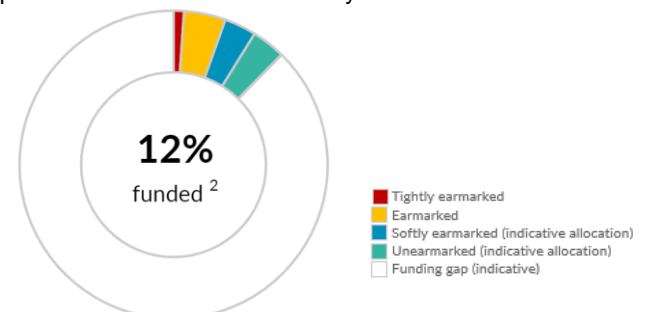
UNHCR continued to work with the government and in coordination with other agencies to provide needed assistance and protection to vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in T&T. Emergency food relief efforts were scaled up to respond to the escalating demand.

Also, twenty-eight (28) refugees were able to restart their lives through UNHCR's resettlement programme in May, departing T&T on 28 May and arriving in Adelaide, Australia on 30 May.

## FUNDING (AS OF 1 JUNE 2021)

**US\$ 48.7 M**

requested for Panama Multi-Country Office<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The financial requirements for Panama MCO include requirements for the operation's regular programme, Coronavirus Emergency, North of Central America Situation and the Venezuela Situation. Trinidad and Tobago is part of the Panama Multi-Country Office along with Aruba, Belize, Cuba, Curaçao, Guyana, Nicaragua and Panama

<sup>2</sup> The percentage funded (12%) and total funding amount (\$6,012,317) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$42,666,200 representing 88% of the financial requirements.

## UNHCR DELIVERS 400 TABLETS IN CONTINUED SUPPORT OF EDUCATION INITIATIVES



UNHCR delivered 400 tablets to two (2) local NGO partners, Living Water Community (LWC) and the Catholic Education Board of Management (CEBM). The tablets were donated as part of UNHCR's continuing efforts to improve access to education in Trinidad and Tobago.



292 units were delivered to LWC for distribution to vulnerable **Equal Place** students. The other 108 units were delivered to the CEBM, 103 of which will go to T&T students in need from CEBM schools, and the remaining 5 will be used as prizes for an awareness contest to be held later in 2021.

## UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works with three partners in Trinidad and Tobago and supports the State in the delivery of assistance and protection to vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers.

### Main Activities

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



#### Emergency food assistance

Through partner **Living Water Community (LWC)**, UNHCR provided **1,220 individuals** with emergency food assistance in May, via **QR code vouchers** that are redeemable at participating supermarkets nationwide. Continued economic shutdowns in response to the rising number of COVID-19 cases and ensuing loss of jobs among the population, led requests for food assistance in May to increase by 648% when compared with April. UNHCR is working with LWC to scale up the capacity of this programme to respond to overwhelming demand. LWC introduced the use of an automated pre-screening tool to assist in the prioritization of the most critical cases for assistance. For 2021 thus far, **2,414 individuals** have received this emergency support.



#### Cash-based interventions (CBI)

In May 2021, multipurpose cash grants were approved for **24 individuals** facing protection risks and with very limited or no ability to achieve self-reliance. Of the applications received for cash assistance this month 81% were unemployed while 50% were living with chronic/critical illnesses. For 2021 thus far, **91 individuals** were assisted with multipurpose cash grants.



#### Access to medical services

Health services continued to be delivered by UNHCR partner **Family Planning Association (FPATT)** mainly via telehealth in May. Through a hotline dedicated to refugees and asylum-seekers, FPATT prioritizes medical emergencies for in-person consultations. In May, FPATT conducted **153 consultations** on sexual and reproductive health for refugees and asylum-seekers. In addition, **seven pediatric consultations** were provided for refugee and asylum-seeker children. For 2021 thus far, FPATT has facilitated **36 pediatric consultations** and **756 consultations** on sexual and reproductive health for refugees and asylum-seekers.



#### Mental health and psychosocial services

Psychosocial support was provided through partner **Rape Crisis Society (RCS)**, who facilitated **87 counselling sessions**, for 60 refugees and asylum seekers in May, including sessions for three victims of human trafficking. RCS launched a toll-free bilingual hotline operated by trained Venezuelans, to provide support to refugees and asylum-seekers experiencing instances of gender-based violence. RCS has delivered **273 counselling sessions** for vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in 2021 thus far.



#### Access to education and training opportunities

In May, around 1,050 refugees and asylum-seekers were able to access remote education services through **Equal Place**. Online workshops were held for parents of students, assisting them in managing psychological distress and safety on social networks.



#### Strengthening community-based protection mechanisms

UNHCR conducted two days of virtual presentations on international protection and contemporary forced migration issues as part of the **Youth Speak Up** programme coordinated by the University of the West Indies. The programme builds capacity of participating youth in leadership and advocacy.

**Thanks to donors in 2021:** The UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the United States of America and the European Union, as well as to the following donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked funds: Algeria | Armenia | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | Estonia | Finland | France | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | Sweden | Switzerland | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | United Kingdom | Private donors

**For more information:**

**In Trinidad and Tobago, Shemuel London, Senior Reporting Assistant, [london@unhcr.org](mailto:london@unhcr.org)**

**In MCO Panama, Diana Diaz Rodriguez, Communications Officer, [diazdi@unhcr.org](mailto:diazdi@unhcr.org)**

Find more information about UNHCR [here](#) and click [here](#) for more on the work of the UNHCR T&T Operation.