

Aruba & Curaçao

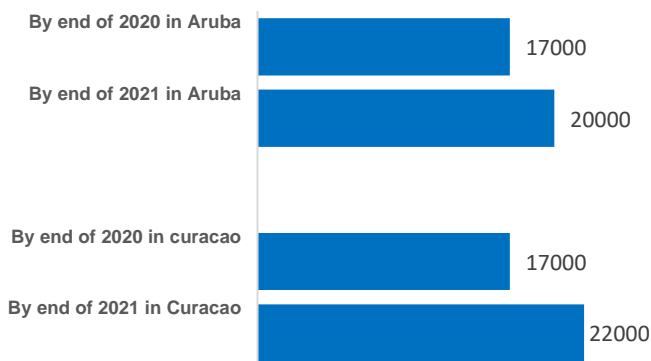
July – August 2021

Estimated **17,000** Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Aruba and **17,000** in 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** to refugees and asylum-seekers, while exploring **local integration** opportunities and assisting those most in need.

Population of concern*



*Source: Estimates as per the RMRP 2021.

CONTEXT

The islands host the largest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants compared to the local population in the world, ranking 1st and 3rd on the list, with 159 and 102 displaced people per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively.

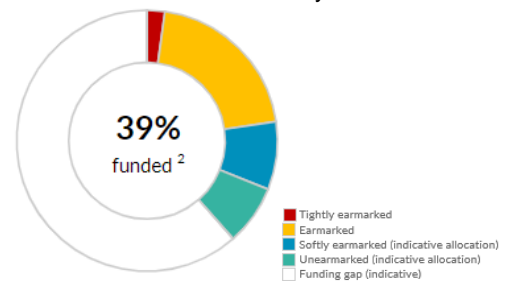
While most arrived at the islands as tourists or with an initial permit, many overstayed, and have struggled to regularize their stay and remain in an irregular status in both countries, without access to public health and social services. The 1951 Convention applies to Aruba, but Curaçao does not consider itself bound by this instrument and there are no easily accessible avenues to obtain regular status. This lack of status exposes Venezuelans to abuse, exploitation, and detention. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these risks, where livelihoods have become difficult to secure. Both Islands confirmed all refugees and migrants would have access to vaccines to help curb the spread of the virus, with thousands already having received first or second doses.

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

FUNDING (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2021)

US\$ 48.7 M

requested for the Panama Multi-Country Office for 2021



1 The financial requirements for the Panama MCO include requirements for the Coronavirus Emergency and the Venezuela Situation. Aruba and Curaçao are part of the Panama Multi-Country Office in 2021 along with Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, Panama, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Belize.

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

Livelihoods Training



UNHCR, Venex and Sociedad Bolivariana delivered a series of workshops for the refugee and migrant community in Curaçao. The first workshop, provided with support from a Nicaraguan in Panama, was a successful two-day event where 20 students learned how to create cold porcelain from scratch to decorate utensils. Venex also delivered a workshop on decoupage on wood, where 20 students learned about handicrafts as an income-generating activity.

Moreover, Sociedad Bolivariana hosted a "healthy garden" course for 20 students on home-growing fruits and vegetables as an alternative to purchasing fresh produce from the supermarket. The home gardens could also provide income alternatives, as participants could sell their crops.

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 vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR also works in coordination with four R4V platform partners in Aruba and ten R4V partners in Curaçao to provide education, food security, health, 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, and faith-based organizations, UNHCR undertakes protection and solutions activities, including:

Protection

UNHCR through partner HIAS continues to monitor the situation of Venezuelans arriving in Aruba to ensure assistance is provided to vulnerable individuals and families. Between July and August, **111 people** in Aruba and Curaçao were counselled on legal status, humanitarian assistance, health, asylum, and other inquiries. HIAS conducted **157 protection assessments**.

Legal Assistance

Between July and August, UNHCR referred **10 cases to lawyers for legal assistance and legal interventions** in Aruba. Legal assistance is delivered in partnership with 10 law firms, four of which have recently joined the project. Additionally, UNHCR organized an **RSD training** for lawyers and legal professionals. The session, which convened law firms and legal professionals not yet part of the legal assistance project, was very well received. UNHCR used the opportunity to discuss possibilities to establish a committee focused on persons in an irregular status and asylum-seekers.

In Curaçao, partner Human Rights Defense Curaçao (HRDC) conducted **42 screenings** to identify needs of individuals requesting legal assistance and conducted **6 visits** to the detention facility. Moreover, HRDC in coordination with the Immigration Office delivered **two information sessions on the [Responsible Integration project](#)** to legal representatives and potential applicants.

Gender-Based Violence

UNHCR continues **remote case management services** for GBV survivors in Curaçao to ensure access to medical, psychological, and legal support services as well as material assistance and physical safety through a survivor-centered approach. UNHCR is coordinating the response with different service providers and ensuring follow-up on referrals to MHPSS, legal assistance, or material assistance for a total of **16 GBV cases** in Curaçao. Moreover, UNHCR delivered a session on 'Women in displacement: Refugee and migrant women's challenges and resilience, GBV and Human Trafficking', for an audience of 20 persons during an event organized by Stichting Rancho in Aruba.

Advocacy

UNHCR and partners work closely with Governments in Aruba and Curaçao to offer support and advocate for protection of people with international protection needs. In August, UNHCR launched a video on the inclusion of refugees and migrant in Aruba's COVID-19 vaccination plans – a crucial step in curbing the spread of the virus. The video is available in [Spanish](#), [Papiamentu](#), and [English](#).

Cash-based interventions and assistance

UNHCR through partners provides cash assistance to vulnerable individuals and families to meet their basic needs, particularly those gravely affected by the pandemic. Between July and August, in Curaçao, UNHCR provided CBI to 16 households and identified **14 new Venezuelan households** needing cash assistance to respond to urgent protection needs, and an additional two families receiving longer-term support. In Aruba, UNHCR through partner HIAS provided **165 Venezuelans** with cash-based assistance, 68 of whom were first-time recipients.

Access to medical services

UNHCR through partner Foundation Salù pa Tur provided basic health, reproductive, prenatal, and maternity care, psycho-social support, as well as HIV and diabetes care via **1,604 consultations** for refugees and migrants in an irregular status in Curaçao between July and August 2021. These included 28 home visits, 26 telephone consultations, 7 consultations for HIV cases, and 128 COVID-19 tests. UNHCR and partners on both islands continue to support national vaccination campaigns for refugees and migrants to register and get vaccinated.

Community-based protection

UNHCR, through partner HIAS, community mobilizers identified 31 vulnerable people and referred them for assistance. Moreover, 157 protection screenings were conducted, and 37 were referred to different specialized services. In July UNHCR, IOM, HIAS, VenAruba, and Stichting Rancho hosted a **festival** to celebrate World Refugee Day 2021, with live music, dance groups, painting competition, and activities for children.

Thanks to donors: The UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, the European Union, and the UN Programme On HIV/AIDS as well as to the following donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked funds: Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Austria | Belgium | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Denmark | Estonia | Finland | France | Germany | Holy See | Iceland | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Latvia | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | Slovakia | South Africa | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | Thailand | Turkey | United Kingdom | United States of America | Uruguay | Private donors, including Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Spain, and Sweden

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