

Aruba & Curaçao

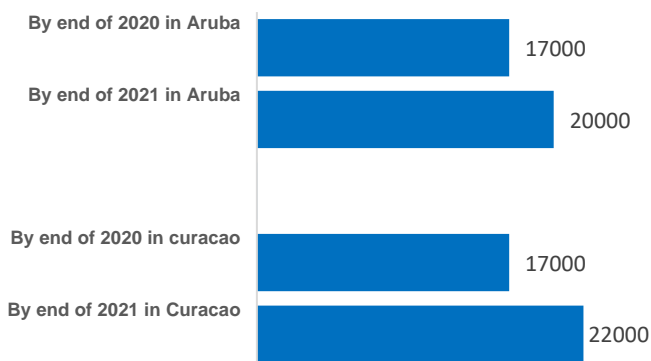
November - December 2021

There are an estimated of **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 **integration** opportunities and assisting the most in need.

Population of concern*

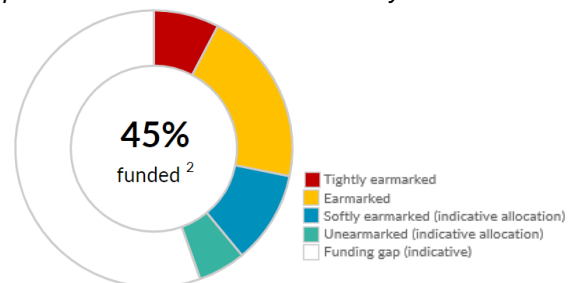


* Source: Estimates as per the RMRP 2021

STATE OF PLAY: FUNDING RECEIVED VS. FUNDING NEEDS (AS OF 29 DECEMBER 2021)

US\$ 48.7 M

requested for the Panama Multi-Country Office¹ for 2021



¹ The financial requirements for the Panama MCO include requirements for the Coronavirus Emergency and the Venezuela Situation. Belize is part of the Panama Multi-Country Office in 2021 along with Panama, Nicaragua, Cuba and the Southern Caribbean

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

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, 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 a legal 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 both 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.

WORKSHOPS AND DYI



UNHCR and partners hosted a follow-up workshop on GBV prevention and response in Curaçao. The workshop, delivered both online and in-person, brought together over 30 stakeholders from the government, (I)NGOs, and civil society organisations. The session addressed a wide range of topics, and participants worked on drafting a GBV risk mitigation and prevention plan.

To commemorate the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence", UNHCR organized several activities in Aruba in collaboration with HIAS. To kick-off, two movie screenings were organized together with IOM, CEDEHM, and FCVR. Furthermore, UNHCR and HIAS distributed 1,500 dignity kits for women and girls in neighborhood centers on the island. Finally, to raise awareness on GBV, approximately 1,500 flyers were distributed in the center of Oranjestad.

UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works with one partner in Aruba and two in Curaçao and supports both States in the delivery of assistance and protection to vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR also 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

Between November and December, **112 people** in Aruba and Curaçao were **counselled** on legal status, humanitarian assistance, health, asylum, and other inquiries. Moreover, UNHCR through HIAS conducted **protection screening for 94 individuals**; as a result, **54 persons with specific needs** were identified and **referred** to internal and external services for **assistance**.



Legal Assistance

Between November and December, UNHCR Aruba conducted **25 in-depth protection screenings** to establish assistance needs and identify appropriate interventions and referred **8 cases** to lawyers for **legal assistance**. During the reporting period, lawyers participating in the legal assistance project received **three court decisions** related to procedural rights and relief from deportation. In Curaçao, UNHCR through HRDC conducted **interviews with 100 Venezuelans** and called and/or visited the detention center 70 times. HRDC also referred **30 cases** for **psychosocial support** and **medical aid** and provided **legal assistance for 61 cases** for the Art. 3 Procedure. Moreover, HRDC received a **ground-breaking decision** at appeal regarding the detention of a Venezuelan individual seeking protection in Curaçao.



Gender-based Violence

UNHCR continued remote **case management** services for **10 GBV survivors** in Curaçao, to ensure access to different medical, psychosocial, and legal support services, as well as material assistance and physical safety. Moreover, UNHCR in collaboration with CBO Aliansa organized a **GBV prevention workshop**, which brought together more than **30 stakeholders** from the government, (I)NGOs, and civil society organisations.



Cash-based Interventions and Assistance

UNHCR through HIAS assisted **71 Venezuelans** with **multipurpose cash** for basic needs, 60 of whom were first-time recipients, and **142 Venezuelans** (114 new recipients) with **cash for healthcare**; **11 persons living with HIV** were provided with **cash for medical assistance** and **54 women** at-risk were supported with **gynecological services**.



Health

Between November and December, UNHCR through *Foundation Salù pa Tur* provided basic healthcare, reproductive, prenatal, and maternity care, and psychosocial support, as well as HIV and diabetes care via **4,735 consultations** for people in an irregular status in Curaçao. Moreover, the clinic conducted **163 COVID-19 tests**, 6 persons received STI and HIV screening tests and 27 STI panel test, and 37 persons received sexual and reproductive health (SRH) counselling. Additionally, *Salù pa Tur* provided general check-up, and hypertension and diabetes screening to 58 persons through the **health outreach programme**. In celebration of World HIV/AIDS Day, UNHCR supported Aruba Positive Foundation to organize a **workshop to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS** among local NGOs, civil organizations, medical professionals, and general community and to celebrate the LGBTIQ community through artistic performances. Moreover, UNHCR distributed condoms among partners and local organizations involved in community outreach on SRH focusing mainly on persons who engage in sex work, LGBTIQ community members, and men and women at-risk.



Community-based Protection

UNHCR Curaçao supported various community-based organizations, including ASOCOLCUR – to provide an **agricultural training** courses to **25 refugees and migrants**; VENEX – to implement a **bakery and pastry course** for **35 refugees and migrants**, facilitating income-generating alternatives; and Sociedad Bolivariana – to enhance integration through Papiamento courses for **60 displaced persons**. In Aruba, UNHCR and Stichting Rancho organized several activities to raise awareness on the SDGs in the Rancho neighborhood. Additionally, UNHCR made a **donation** to CEDE Aruba for **sports, crafts, and cooking items** for their community centres.

The UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: United States of America, Spain, European Union, France, United Kingdom, 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, Sweden, and United States of America.

For more information:

In Aruba and Curaçao, Kelly Bendelow, Protection Officer, bendelow@unhcr.org

In MCO Panama, Ana C. Triculescu, Reporting Associate, triculescu@unhcr.org