



HIGHLIGHTS

Statelessness

UNHCR is currently finalizing a population survey to determine the estimated number and profiles of persons of Haitian descent born in The Bahamas who are unable to acquire either Bahamian or Haitian nationality due to administrative barriers.

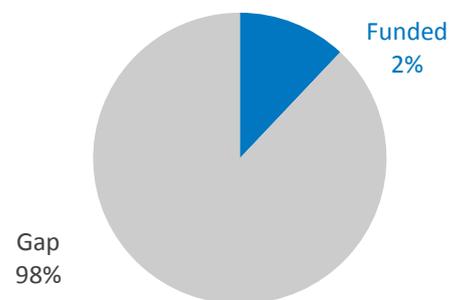
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Total number of refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly from Cuba.

Funding - Regional Office Washington

- UNHCR’s Regional Office in Washington operationally and financially oversees UNHCR’s operations in the Caribbean Region including The Bahamas, Belize, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago.

USD 17.1 million requested



Context information

- UNHCR’s presence in The Bahamas focuses on the issue of statelessness. UNHCR is also working with the authorities to develop asylum procedures, as The Bahamas does not have a regulatory framework for the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees.
- UNHCR focuses on the gaps in the nationality law that can lead to statelessness including gender discrimination in nationality provisions, and the lack of legal safeguards to prevent statelessness amongst children born in the Bahamas to non-Bahamian parents.

UNHCR Presence

Staff:

1 national staff

Offices:

1 National Office located in Nassau



UNHCR Presence Refugee Dispersed

Map Sources: UNCS, UNHCR
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Printing date: 15 Jun 2016

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- UNHCR supports the Government of The Bahamas to implement the provisions of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The office participates in an advisory capacity on the Government's inter-agency Migration Task Force, which was formed to draft asylum procedures and develop refugee legislation.
- UNHCR partners with the Bahamas Red Cross to provide direct material and psychosocial support to persons of concern, as refugees and asylum-seekers are not eligible for social services in the Bahamas. The support consists of medical services, food assistance, cash disbursements and acquiring legal documentation. The Bahamas Red Cross also conducts periodic visits to the Carmichael Road Detention Centre to distribute toiletries and food items.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Statelessness

UNHCR's presence in The Bahamas focuses on reducing statelessness. In The Bahamas, statelessness arises from a combination of factors, including gender discrimination in nationality provisions and a lack of legal safeguards to prevent statelessness in a jurisdiction where citizenship is acquired based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*. UNHCR's activities to reduce statelessness include:

- A survey on statelessness amongst the population of Haitian descent, who do not acquire Bahamian citizenship at birth, and are often unable to acquire or confirm their Haitian nationality;
- Capacity-building of Government officials and civil society actors on the issue of statelessness;
- Facilitate naturalization of those identified as stateless, through partnership and advocacy with the authorities; assist individuals confirm nationality on a case-by-case basis through obtaining required documentation.

Refugee Protection

The Bahamas does not have regulatory framework for the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees. Yet, the geographic position of The Bahamas renders it susceptible to mixed migration flows. In 2015, more than 30 maritime incidents were recorded and the number of irregular migrants arriving in The Bahamas has continued to increase in the past few years. In light of these factors, UNHCR's key activities on refugee protection include:

- Advocacy with the Government of The Bahamas to adopt refugee legislation and institutionalize asylum procedures;
- Capacity-building with the Government to strengthen its Refugee Administration Unit, on key aspects of refugee protection, such as developing protection sensitive entry mechanisms, screening of persons who may be in need of international protection and the adjudication of asylum claims;
- Advisory opinions provided to the Government on individual cases to ensure the effective protection of refugees;
- Technical support to the Migration Task Force on the development of asylum procedures;
- Resettlement of refugees recognized by the Government or UNHCR.

Contacts:

Deneisha Moss Balboni, Assistant Protection Officer, MOSS@unhcr.org, Tel: +1 (202) 461 2344

Catia Lopes, External Relations Officer, LOPES@unhcr.org, Tel.: +41 (0)2 27397204 **Website:** www.unhcr.org