



HIGHLIGHTS

Statelessness

UNHCR assists the Government of The Bahamas to address the gaps in the nationality law that can give rise to statelessness and to enhance safeguards to prevent statelessness amongst children born in the Bahamas to non-Bahamian parents. An undetermined number of persons of Haitian descent born in The Bahamas are estimated to be stateless as they are unable to acquire either Bahamian or Haitian nationality due to administrative barriers.

Protection

There are 31 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly from Cuba.

Context Information

- The Bahamas does not have a regulatory framework for the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR is working with the authorities to develop asylum procedures.
- UNHCR assist the Government in The Bahamas to prevent and reduce statelessness in the country.

Financial requirements

UNHCR's Office in the Bahamas is operationally and financially managed by UNHCR's Regional Office in Washington.

UNHCR Presence

Staff:

1 National staff

Offices:

1 National Office located in Nassau



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: 03 Mar 2017

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- UNHCR supports the Government of The Bahamas to effectively implement the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The office participates in an advisory capacity in the Government's inter-agency Migration Task Force, which has drafted asylum procedures and is promoting the adoption of 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 provided 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. Additionally, in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, a Category 4 hurricane that struck The Bahamas in October 2016, UNHCR channeled \$100,000 through the Bahamas Red Cross to respond to the emergency. Non-food items were distributed to affected victims through the end of 2016 and early 2017.
- UNHCR has also partnered with the Caribbean Institute for Human Rights to undertake a survey to assess the scope and impact of statelessness among the population of Haitian descent.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

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 large mixed migration flows. In 2016, more than 1,400 persons were interdicted in over 65 maritime incidents near The Bahamas. 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 to institutionalize asylum procedures;
- Capacity-building with the Government to strengthen its Refugee Administration Unit, with regard to 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 and/or UNHCR.

Eradication of Statelessness

UNHCR is providing technical advice and support to the Government in The Bahamas to prevent and reduce statelessness. The issue of statelessness arises in The Bahamas given a combination of factors, such as gender discrimination in nationality provisions and insufficient legal safeguards to prevent statelessness, in a jurisdiction where citizenship is acquired based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*. UNHCR's activities on statelessness include:

- The undertaking of a survey, in partnership with the Caribbean Institute for Human Rights, 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;
- Provide 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 and assist individuals confirm nationality on a case-by-case basis through obtaining and compiling necessary documentation.

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