



HIGHLIGHTS

3,929

Asylum seekers, mostly from the El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala

2,052

Asylum seekers provided with direct humanitarian assistance (medical, food, rent) in 2016

8,175

Estimate number of beneficiaries of 2016 community projects focusing on health, security, livelihoods, and road infrastructure

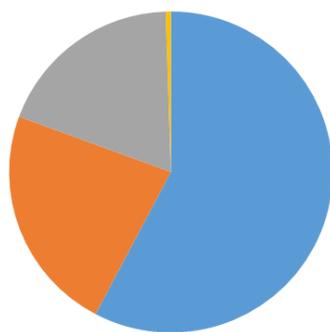
Population of Concern

UNHCR re-established a physical office in Belize in 2016 to support the Government in the reactivation of the asylum system in the country and to respond to the growing numbers of asylum seekers, mostly from the Northern Triangle of Central America. In May 2016, the Refugees Department was reopened by the Belizean Government and took over registration activities of asylum seekers.

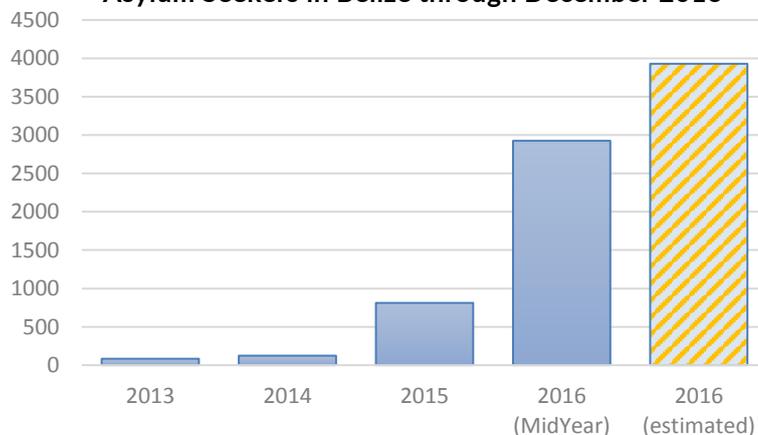
The main population of concern are asylum seekers as there are currently no recognized refugees in Belize. Since November 2015, the Refugee Eligibility Committee has recommended more than 200 persons for recognition as refugees, and final endorsement remains pending with the Ministry of Immigration.

Countries of origin

■ El Salvador (58%) ■ Honduras (23%)
■ Guatemala (19%) ■ Other (>1%)



Asylum Seekers in Belize through December 2016



UNHCR Presence

Staff:

- 2 International staff
- 6 National staff
- 1 Affiliate Workforce staff

Offices:

- 1 National Office located in Belmopan



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

- In the 1980s and 90s, UNHCR partnered with a local non-governmental organization, Help for Progress, to carry out protection and durable solutions activities on behalf of thousands of Central American refugees fleeing the civil wars of that period. When UNHCR closed its physical office in 1998, Help for Progress continued acting on behalf of UNHCR under the guidance of the Regional Office in Washington and assumed protection activities to assist asylum seekers and refugees.
- Based on the 1992 host country agreement, UNHCR re-established its presence in Belize in October 2015. The Belizean Government reconstituted the Refugee Eligibility Committee in June 2015, and re-opened a new Refugee Department in May 2016. UNHCR works closely with the authorities to ensure protection and support of new asylum seekers. UNHCR also partners with other UN agency partners, NGOs, and communities; and continues to work in close partnership with Help for Progress to address the needs of an increasing number of asylum seekers who present themselves for assistance. To support hosting communities, in 2016 and 2017 UNHCR and Help for Progress jointly carried out 10 community projects in three refugee-hosting communities; and in 2016 provided direct assistance to more than 2,000 vulnerable asylum seekers in the form of humanitarian support and supplies.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Protection

- Provide technical support on refugee status determination procedures for adjudicators and members of the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC), including through technical assistance, the sharing of country of origin information, and participation in REC meetings;
- Support capacity-building for Government officials through trainings of Officials from Immigration, Police, and Defense Forces;
- Support the newly created Department of Refugees to register asylum seekers with the provision of equipment and support;
- Engage with the judiciary to ensure effective legal recourse in protection cases;
- Advocate on behalf of persons of concern for access to public services and enjoyment of rights;
- Conduct needs assessments as well as counseling activities and other interventions for persons of concern;

Community Projects

- Implementation of 10 community projects in three refugee-hosting communities in central Belize. The projects, which stand to benefit over 8,000 people (refugees, asylum seekers, and host community), include a focus on community security, health, livelihoods, provision of electricity, and road infrastructure.

Health

- Assist asylum seekers to pay for medical expenses not covered by public hospitals. Cash assistance is given to the most vulnerable individuals to pay for prescription drugs, x-rays, ultrasounds and overnight hospital stays, among other services. Approximately 170 vulnerable individuals were assisted in 2016.



Photo: Health Resource Center in Armenia Community, provided by UNHCR in joint project with the Ministry of Health.

Food Security and Nutrition

- Provide cash assistance and distribute food items to the most vulnerable to ensure food security. Food items frequently include rice, beans, flour, eggs, potatoes, cooking oil, and sugar, and are adjusted according to family size. Approximately 564 individuals were assisted in 2016.

Shelter

- Support a shelter, managed by Help for Progress, which has accommodated more than 25 families in 2016; and provide support for emergency hotel stays for nine urgent protection cases.
- Disbursement of rental assistance and building materials for single-family homes, such as siding, plastic sheeting for 480 asylum seekers. Provision of household necessities like butane, mattresses, linens, and cooking supplies for 333

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