

Operation: United States of America Regional Office

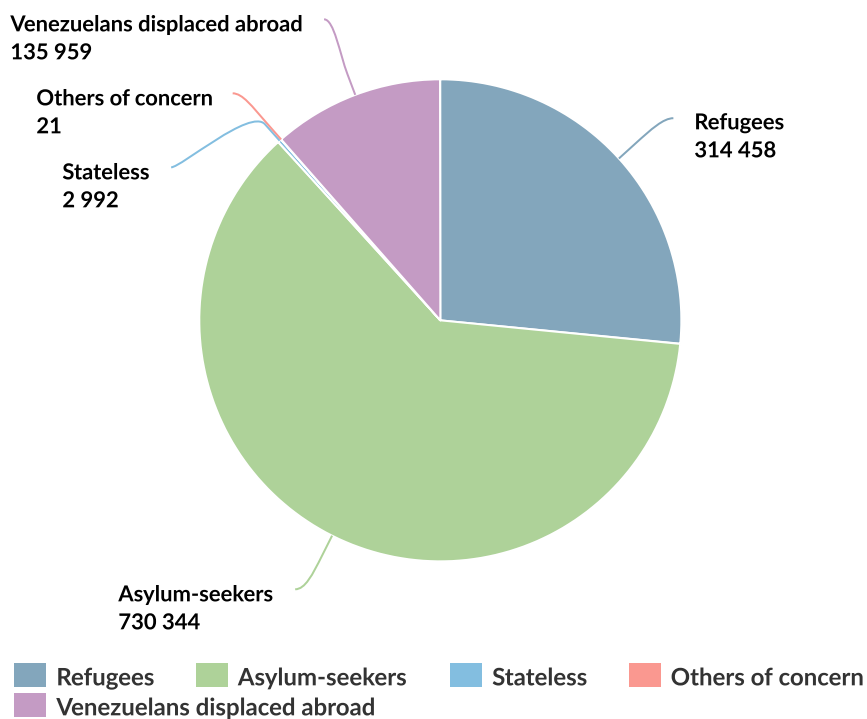


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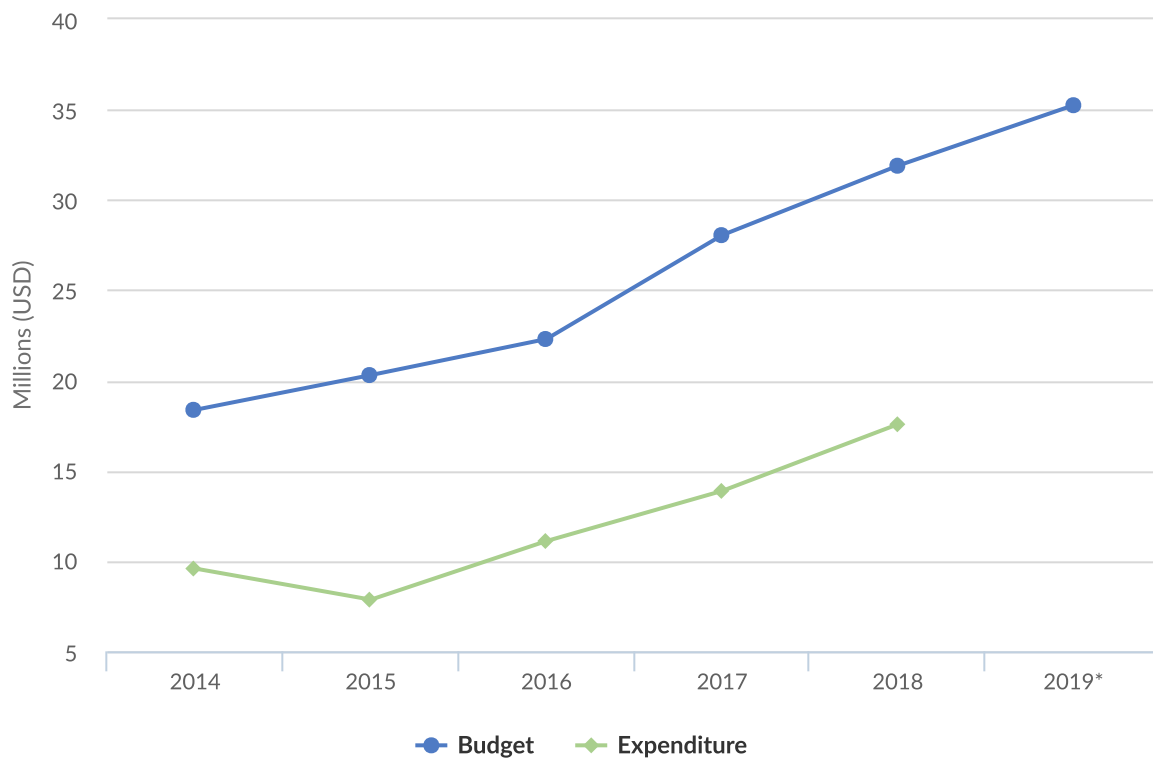
People of Concern

INCREASE IN
26% 2018

2018	1,183,774
2017	942,897
2016	824,071



Budgets and Expenditure for United States of America Regional Office



Population trends

More than 240,000 new asylum applications were filed in the United States in 2018, with the highest number of new claims from Venezuelans (over 41,000). Over 590,000 people crossed to the United States through the southern border, at an official port of entry or irregularly; of these 37% arrived in family units and 10% were UASC. Although the volume of irregular border crossers is lower than a decade ago, the composition has drastically shifted away from single males to adults, families and UASC.

As predicted, UNHCR's population of concern increased significantly in the Caribbean. Several countries received increasing numbers of Venezuelans: 50,000 in Trinidad and Tobago; 36,400 in Guyana; 28,500 in the Dominican Republic; 26,000 in Curacao; and 16,000 in Aruba.

Overall, there was also a significant increase in the registration of asylum-seekers by UNHCR with over 9,500 asylum-seekers registered in the Caribbean, compared to 2,500 in 2017. This increase is partly due to the dramatic rise in asylum applications in the southern Caribbean, particularly Trinidad and Tobago, which registered some 8,690 people in 2018 compared to 1,990 in 2017. At year-end, there were 12,700 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in the Caribbean. Registered people of concern in the Caribbean represent 46 different countries of origin, with the majority from Venezuela (74%) and Cuba (19%).

Key achievements

Achievements as a result of advocacy with the Government of the United States of America included support for the MIRPS and improved reception conditions along the southern border. UNHCR's amicus interventions helped to secure temporary injunctions to halt an asylum ban for irregular border crossers and new restrictions to asylum for victims of gang and gender-based violence claims. Other results included: strengthening of nine humanitarian border shelters; reunification support for several hundred children impacted by the family separation policy; design of a new online resource to link refugees and asylum-seekers to services in local communities; development of a new manual on family reunification; and creation of a new self-advocacy network of stateless persons called 'United Stateless'.

Regarding statelessness, UNHCR welcomed steps taken by the Government of the Dominican Republic to facilitate naturalization for children born to migrant parents.

In response to the Venezuela crisis, UNHCR scaled up its operations in the Caribbean by increasing its staff in Trinidad and Tobago and deploying international staff in Aruba, Curacao and Guyana, in addition to its established presence in the Dominican Republic. In these five Caribbean countries mostly affected by the influx, UNHCR adapted to the national protection contexts and implemented its multi-year protection and solutions strategy.

Unmet needs

Many people of concern in the Caribbean do not have legal status and lack documentation to be able to work legally or enrol their children in schools. The need for predictable regular status and documentation are two of the most pressing needs of Venezuelans that could not be met without the necessary governmental decisions and policies in the host countries. In the absence of functioning Government-run asylum systems or alternative legal pathways (with the exception of Guyana, although their permits do not allow Venezuelans to work legally), Venezuelans continue to live in a situation of legal limbo. This is making it exceedingly difficult for Venezuelans to access basic services, including health and education, and obtain safe and dignified employment. The majority of Venezuelans continue to live in the shadows, working in highly exploitative environments, suffering from discrimination and xenophobia. The provision of humanitarian assistance by UNHCR could only reach part of the population of concern due to the budgetary constraints but also to the scarcity of partners in some Caribbean

countries.

(<http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/24281/edit>)
