

Aruba & Curacao

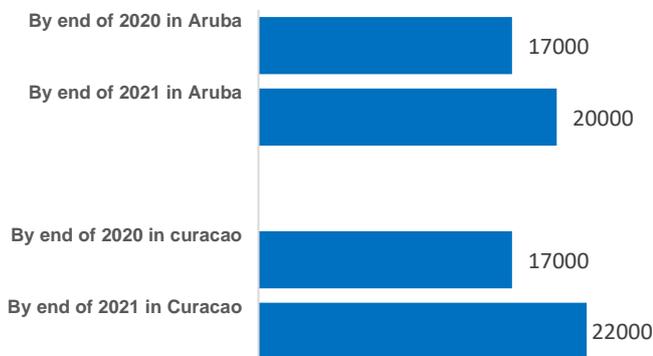
January 2021

Estimated **17,000** Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Aruba and **17,000** in Curacao.

Aruba and Curacao continue to receive the outflow of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, who often undertake dangerous journeys to reach safety.

UNHCR provides information and guidance on asylum processes, regularization and documentation to refugees and asylum seekers, while exploring opportunities for local integration.

Population of concern*



*Source: Estimates as per the RMRP 2021.

CONTEXT

The islands host the largest number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants compared to the local population, with 1 in 6 in Aruba and 1 in 10 in Curacao being Venezuelans.

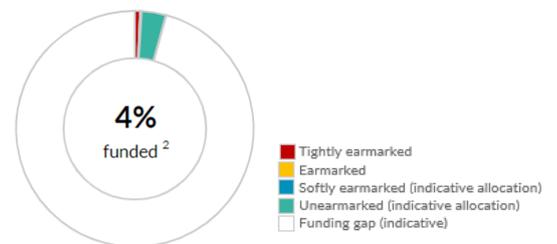
While most arrived to the islands as a tourist or with an initial permit, many overstayed, and have struggled to regularize their status therefore remaining undocumented in both countries. While the 1951 Convention applies to Aruba, Curaçao does not consider itself bound by this instrument and there are no easily accessible avenues to obtain legal status. Lack of documentation further exposes Venezuelans to abuse, sexual and labour exploitation, and detention, while excluding them from accessing basic services. In response to the high number of undocumented people, including Venezuelans, the Government of Curacao has announced in January 2021 their willingness to put forward a policy that allows for the issuance of labour visas for those already in the country.

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 advance on facilitating access to legal counselling, integration, peaceful co-existence and self-reliance through social cohesion campaigns and livelihood opportunities for Venezuelans.

FUNDING (AS OF 2 FEBRUARY 2021)

US\$ 48.7 M

requested for the Panama Multi-Country Office for 2021



1 The financial requirements for the Panama MCO include requirements for the Coronavirus Emergency and the Venezuela Situation. Aruba and Curaçao are part of the Panama Multi-Country Office in 2021 along with Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, Panama, Nicaragua, Cuba and Belize.

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



UNHCR AND THE SALU PA TUR FOUNDATION PROVIDE HEALTH SERVICES TO REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN CURACAO

Through the local Foundation Salù pa Tur, UNHCR helps provide basic health care, reproductive health consultations, prenatal and maternity care, psycho-social support, as well as HIV and diabetes care for undocumented refugees and migrants on the island, who are not able to benefit from the national health insurance. Salù pa Tur also conducts COVID-19 tests for the undocumented population. [See more about this service.](#)

UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works with 1 partner in Aruba and 2 in Curacao, and supports the States in the delivery of assistance and protection to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR also works in coordination with 4 partners in the Aruba R4V platform and 10 partners in the Curacao R4V platform to provide responses on education, food security, health, integration, protection, shelter, WASH, cash assistance among others. See the [R4V Subregional portal](#) for more information.

Main Activities

Alongside the government, partner organizations, civil society, and faith-based organizations, UNHCR undertakes protection and solutions activities, including:



Protection

Along with partner HIAS, UNHCR monitors the situation of Venezuelans arriving in Aruba to ensure that assistance is provided to vulnerable individuals and families, through individual counselling and case management. In January, 88 people in Aruba and Curacao were counselled for issues related to legal, humanitarian assistance, health, education, or documentation by UNHCR. UNHCR's partner HIAS also conducted 169 protection assessments. Legal interventions are ongoing, including referrals for legal representation.

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a particular concern in Aruba and Curacao. Partners have reported that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to lead to a significant rise of intimate partner violence. Specific vulnerabilities also exist among persons presumed to have been trafficked and/or engaged in sex work, including women, girls and LGBTI persons. In this context, UNHCR commenced remote case management services for GBV survivors in Curacao, to ensure access to different medical, psychological and legal support services as well as material assistance and physical safety, through a survivor-centred approach. Moreover, UNHCR is currently providing legal assistance to 8 GBV survivors in Aruba and Curacao.



Advocacy

UNHCR and partners work closely with the Governments in Aruba and Curacao to offer support and advocate for protection of Venezuelans with international protection needs. Specific areas of advocacy have focused on access to education and health care, access to asylum procedures for persons in detention, as well as highlighting some of the challenges faced by Venezuelans who are unable to renew local documentation due to expired Venezuelan passports.



Cash-based interventions and assistance

Through partners, UNHCR provides cash assistance to vulnerable individuals and families to meet their basic needs, particularly those gravely affected by the pandemic. In Curacao, 2 Venezuelans were provided with cash assistance to respond to urgent protection situations. Partner HIAS referred over 730 individuals to external partners like the Red Cross and Fundacion Pa Nos Comunidad (FPNC) for food assistance and other services in Aruba.



Access to medical services

In coordination with the local Foundation Salù pa Tur, UNHCR has provided basic health care, reproductive health consultations, prenatal and maternity care, psycho-social support, as well as HIV and diabetes care in 838 consultations for undocumented refugees and migrants in Curacao in January 2021. These included 17 home visits, 9 consultations for HIV cases, and 81 COVID-19 tests. UNHCR's partner HIAS in Aruba provided vouchers for medical care to 55 individuals in January 2021.



Community-based protection

UNHCR's partner, HIAS, established a network of community mobilizers who identified 55 individuals for referral to HIAS for further services. As part of the community-based protection activities, HIAS also offered language (Papiamentu, Dutch, English) and other courses (Aruban history, technology for beginners, parenting and family courses) to 61 individuals.

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