

Belize

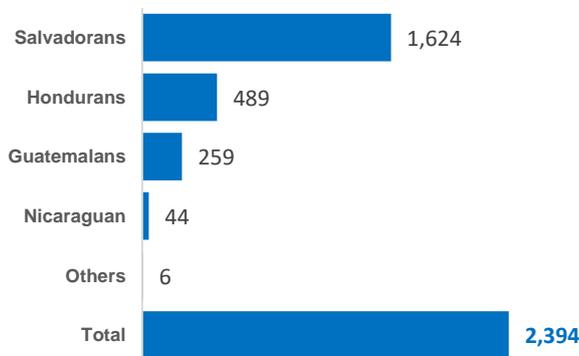
January 2021

Belize is home to **+2,000** refugees and asylum-seekers. **1,600** Salvadorans are estimated to be living in the country.

UNHCR continues to engage refugees and asylum seekers in livelihoods opportunities, including technical skills trainings. **24** asylum seekers were trained in January.

67 refugees and asylum-seekers were supported through CBI and multipurpose grants during the month of January.

Population of concern*



Data includes registered refugees and asylum seekers. Source: Refugees Department, as of January 2021

*The number of people in need of international protection in Belize may be higher; the Government of Belize is currently reviewing the results from a recent POC profiling exercise.

CONTEXT

The refugee and asylum-seeker population are mainly composed of persons from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued in January, refugees and asylum seekers in Belize have faced new and exacerbated risks with the loss of opportunities to generate an income; this adds to their already difficult situation of providing for themselves and their families as asylum seekers are not granted permission to work in the country while awaiting approval of their refugee status.

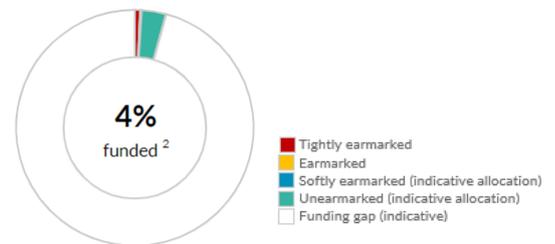
Movements of people entering the borders decreased during the pandemic due to the closure of Belize's land borders; however, persons with international protection needs continued to arrive through the Western border asking for asylum.

Upon arrival in the country, persons of concern are placed in a quarantine center for two weeks and tested for COVID-19 before continuing with the asylum-seeking process.

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. Belize is part of the Panama Multi-Country Office in 2021 along with Panama, Nicaragua, Cuba and the Southern Caribbean

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



UNHCR donated hand wash stations and hygiene products to 12 primary schools in communities that host asylum seekers in Belize. These schools provide education to refugee children free of charge. UNHCR/Aida Escobar

UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works in close coordination with the Government, civil society, UN agencies and refugees and asylum-seekers in Belize. A partnership with the Refugees Department is maintained, to channel support and continue strengthening the asylum system in the country. Additionally, UNHCR works in close coordination with partners Help for Progress, HUMANA People to People, and Human Rights Commission of Belize. Recently, it has begun efforts to establish a new partnership with the Department of Youth Services, a government department under the Ministry of Youth and E-Governance. Furthermore, UNHCR supports the government in implementing their commitments under the [Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework \(MIRPS\)](#).

Main Activities

Alongside the government, partner organizations, civil society, development actors and UN Agencies, UNHCR undertakes protection and solutions activities, including:

Protection

UNHCR continues to assist asylum seekers entering the country in a resource center in Benque Viejo at the Western border, through partner Help for Progress. Here, asylum seekers receive information on the steps to apply for asylum. In January two asylum seekers received assistance upon entering the country through this medium and supported in the process to seek asylum.

Advocacy and peaceful coexistence

UNHCR is preparing to launch a Public Awareness Campaign targeted to the Belizean public to provide information on the plight of refugees and asylum seekers living in Belize, who they are, where they come from, why they have fled from their countries of origin. Moreover, the campaign will seek to demonstrate how refugees are coexisting peacefully with their host communities across Belize.

A partnership was created with five local influencers in the country who will be helping to amplify the personal stories of asylum seekers through their personal social media pages to continue bringing awareness.

Cash-based interventions and assistance

During the month of January, UNHCR provided cash assistance to 67 refugees and asylum seekers through partners for food supplies, medicine, education, and rent.

Health

UNHCR donated hand washing stations to 12 primary schools in Belmopan and surrounding communities with the support of Help for Progress. This donation included soap, soap dispensers, and paper towels apart from the wash stations to support 5,700 students, staff, and visitors in host communities in order to support the national response against COVID-19.

Durable solutions and livelihoods

HUMANA People to People has conducted training courses for 24 asylum seekers on skills to enhance their self-reliance. These include courses on basic electricity skills, sewing, and English as a second language, which aim at supporting their local integration into Belizean communities.

Thanks to donors: UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have provided generous and timely support to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation globally, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked funding: Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

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