

## CURRENT CONTEXT

With reduced operations continuing for certain economic sectors in Trinidad and Tobago, many refugees and asylum-seekers continued to face challenges in October with accessing basic needs, particularly rent and food. Detentions and deportations to Venezuela continued, even after [an open letter](#) was written to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago from a number of local, foreign and international human rights organisations, urging for a more humanitarian disposition towards Venezuelan refugees and asylum-seekers in the country. Allegations were also made that the US government had deported persons back to Venezuela via T&T, however local authorities have [denied](#) that these allegations are true. Instances of sexual and gender-based violence continued to be reported, with [one](#) Venezuelan woman being murdered by her partner. Government authorities continue to [reiterate](#) their position against an “open-door” policy toward non-nationals in T&T, but [indicated](#) that Venezuelans registered with the Government in June 2019 are likely to have their documents extended into 2021, pending a cabinet decision on this matter.



\*Figures are as at October 31<sup>st</sup> 2020. Registration at UNHCR premises had been temporarily suspended from March 13 to May 26 due to COVID-19. 3,402 individual records were inactivated in April due to registration documentation being expired for more than six months.



Photographs: Georgina Quinonez

## REGISTRATION FIELD MISSIONS

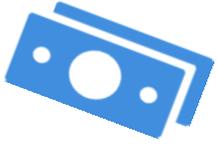


UNHCR in October began the roll-out of a new format of field mission exercises, geared towards providing registration services to persons with specific needs living in remote areas of T&T. For many reasons, these asylum-seekers are unable to travel to the UNHCR premises in Port of Spain to have these processes completed. On 29 October 2020, the Registration team conducted a verification exercise in Sangre Grande, renewing the expired UNHCR ID cards for asylum-seekers in the area. This was a fruitful piloting exercise in the context of COVID-19, as it assisted in the implementation of new protocols and public health measures within the field missions setting.

## OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

### CASH-BASED INTERVENTION

Multi-purpose cash grants were approved in October for **320 individuals** facing protection risks with very limited or no ability to achieve self-reliance. Applications for cash assistance continued to demonstrate the heightened risks faced by refugees and asylum-seekers due to the onset of COVID-19 and challenges of the operational context, which are expected to have a long-term impact. Ninety-eight percent of cash applicants reported not being able to meet their basic needs, particularly rent and food. Sixty-three percent attributed their application to job loss or reduced working hours due to COVID-19, while 75% indicated that either they or their children/household members were reducing the quantity of their food intake. Twenty-five percent of the extremely vulnerable applicants reported engaging in survival sex as a means to fulfil their basic needs for themselves and their families.



### EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE

Implementing partner [Living Water Community](#) (LWC), provided **11 beneficiaries** with emergency food assistance in October. Beneficiaries apply for emergency food assistance remotely through an online form and once approved, receive QR coded e-vouchers that are redeemed at 29 supermarkets in communities nationwide. Assistance was provided only to cases with extreme emergencies as a result of funding constraints.



### ACCESS TO MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES

UNHCR implementing partner [Family Planning Association](#) (FPATT) conducted **228 consultations** on sexual and reproductive health for 206 refugees and asylum-seekers during October, including for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, **nine pediatric care consultations** were conducted in October. Health services were delivered through a combination of telehealth and static clinic modalities.



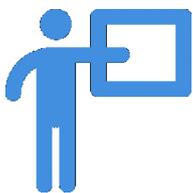
### MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES

Psychosocial support was provided for refugees and asylum-seekers in October, with implementing partner [Rape Crisis Society](#) facilitating **120 counselling sessions**, including for 34 victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Depression and anxiety are still increasingly high in the asylum-seeker population, due to instances of xenophobia as well as challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic which lead many to unemployment and food insecurity.



### TRAINING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

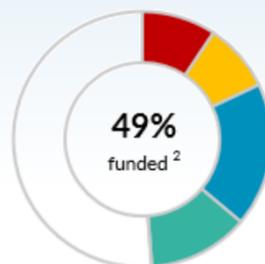
UNHCR continues to provide capacity development to government agencies, local civil society and international agencies. In October, training on refugee protection principles and international human rights was delivered to **65 police officers**, and to other members of national security including immigration and the Defence Force. Similar trainings were also conducted for post-graduate students from the Institute of International Relations at the University of the West Indies and members of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago.



## FUNDING - United States of America Multi-Country Office

Trinidad and Tobago is part of the United States of America Multi-Country Office along with Aruba, Curaçao, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the United States of America.

Financials requirements in 2020 for this office are \$48.5 million<sup>1</sup>. As at November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020, it is 49% funded.



■ Tightly earmarked  
■ Earmarked  
■ Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)  
■ Unearmarked (indicative allocation)  
□ Funding gap (indicative)

<sup>1</sup> The financial requirements for the United States of America MCO include requirements for the Coronavirus Emergency and the Venezuela Situation

<sup>2</sup> The percentage funded includes indicative allocations of softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions

The UNHCR United States of America MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the United States of America and the European Union, as well as to the following donors of unearmarked and softly earmarked funds:

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