

2019 Planning summary

14/2/2019

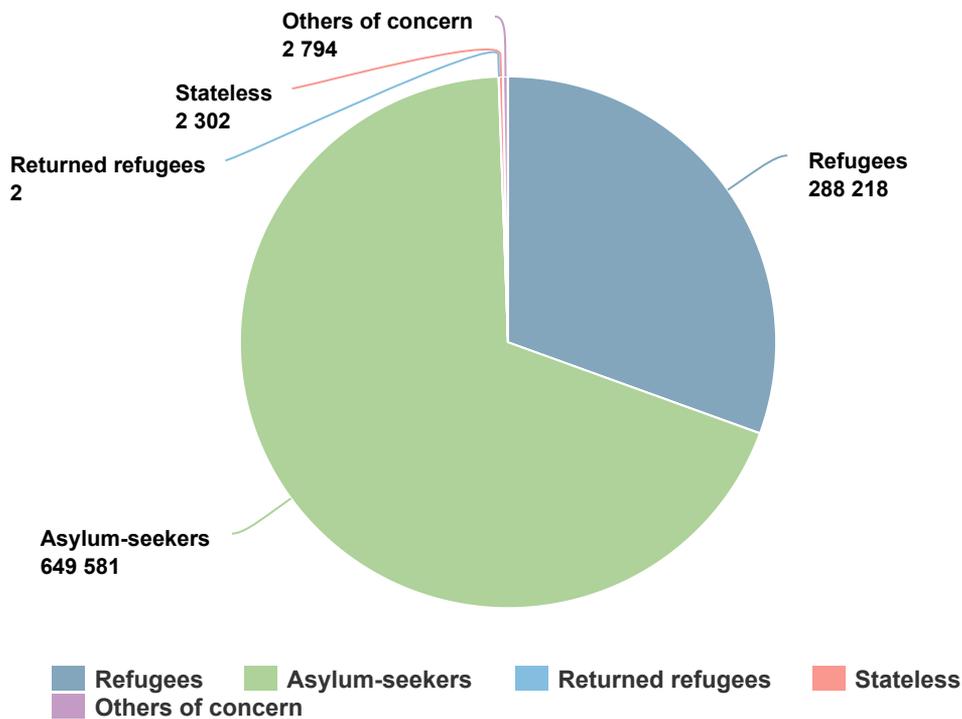
Operation: United States of America Regional Office



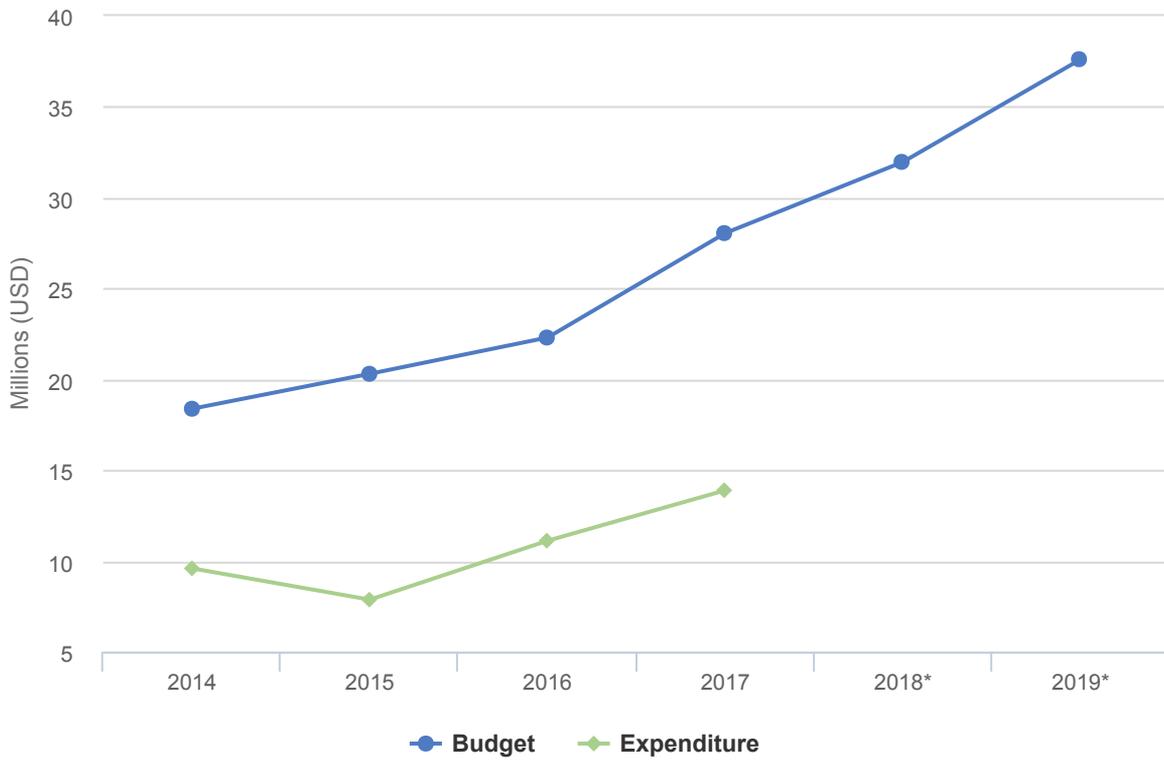
People of Concern

14% INCREASE IN 2017

2017	942,897
2016	824,071
2015	696,796



Budgets and Expenditure for United States of America Regional Office



Working environment

Over the past year the operating environment for UNHCR in the United States of America has remained challenging. Significant changes to US asylum policy narrowed the protection space, especially for asylum-seekers arriving at the southern border, while the downsizing of the US Refugee Admissions Program also impacted UNHCR's global resettlement efforts. These changes have taken place amidst continued instability in Central and South America, prompting large movements of refugees northwards towards the US, via Mexico and the Caribbean states and exerting significant pressure on the asylum system.

UNHCR will continue to work closely with Congress and the US administration to maintain political and financial support for UNHCR global programs to maximize access worldwide to effective protection and solutions for beneficiary populations, and to promote favorable protection environments in the US and in the Caribbean countries for people of concern to UNHCR.

In the Caribbean, where Aruba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago are increasing hosting Venezuelan refugees and asylum seekers, it is estimated that around 147,000 individuals will have arrived by air, land, and sea by the end of 2018, including some returnees in Guyana. UNHCR will continue to strengthen its emergency response to these influxes. It will also continue to respond to the needs of refugees in mixed migratory flows, including access to resettlement when needed. This will require enhancing asylum and refugee status determination (RSD) capacity complemented by community-based protection initiatives in key countries throughout the region, and the promotion of protection sensitive migration systems through regular engagement with relevant national authorities and IOM. UNHCR will further promote local integration in the Caribbean while continuing to facilitate resettlement for refugees with specific needs.

In the Dominican Republic, UNHCR will continue to pursue nationality solutions for people of foreign descent. In Haiti, UNHCR will ensure continued engagement with the Government, in particular to provide technical assistance for the implementation of the international statelessness conventions (following Haiti's accession in 2017) and the adoption of a new nationality law.

In the US, UNHCR will continue to work with an array of governmental and civil society actors to promote good policy and practice, including in relation to reception (such as support for humanitarian respite shelters along the southern border), the promotion of alternatives to detention, access to asylum, the management of the influx of asylum-seekers from Central America and follow up with Caribbean interlocutors to the Brazil Plan of Action.

UNHCR will maintain and enhance advocacy partnerships with US-based national and international NGOs, multilateral organizations (including the World Bank and the Inter-American Bank), and in particular with the two main NGO coalitions (InterAction and Refugee Council USA) as well as with other informal working groups and individual NGOs, many of whom are invaluable advocacy partners for UNHCR. UNHCR also works closely with Church World Services to implement the resettlement deployment scheme for the Caribbean region and to support the Refugee Congress initiative.

In the Caribbean, the successful creation of the Caribbean Migration Consultations in 2016, with the support of UNHCR and IOM, provides an important regional forum to address challenges related to mixed migration and develop consistent and protection-sensitive responses across the region. UNHCR began to formalize its cooperation with CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and expects that a Memorandum of Understanding be concluded between both organizations in 2019

Key Priorities

UNHCR estimates that refugee and migrant population from Venezuela will grow to around 222,000 by the end of 2019. Among this population, around 177,500 refugees and migrants from Venezuela are estimated to require assistance throughout the upcoming year.

In the US, UNHCR will focus on:

- Maintaining political and financial support for UNHCR's global programmes, including through proactive engagement with the new Administration and new congressional offices, to maximize access worldwide to effective protection and solutions for beneficiary populations;
- Raising public awareness of priority issues of concern to UNHCR;
- Promoting favourable protection environment, and preserving and strengthening resettlement.

In the Caribbean, UNHCR will focus on:

- Promoting access to territory and prevention of *refoulement*.
 - Promoting access to asylum or other alternative legal pathways
 - Identifying, preventing and responding to the most serious forms of abuse and exploitation
 - Strengthening community outreach and community based protection responses throughout the Caribbean
 - Enhancing access to services, including cash-based interventions, and enjoyment of socio-economic rights in host countries.
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