

AMERICAS

May 2023

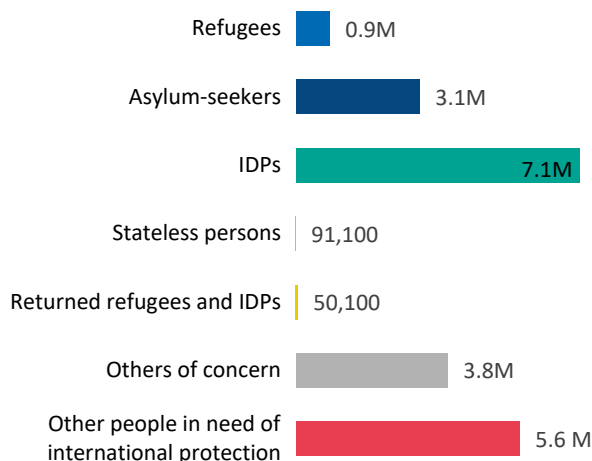
Forced displacement is expected to rise in the Americas in 2023, as political instability, violence, persecution, and climate-related disasters continue to force people to move seeking protection and safety.

The complexity of **mixed movements** has increased. Refugees and migrants face life-threatening and protection risks along displacement routes, while some find themselves stranded.

UNHCR prioritizes **protection interventions, humanitarian aid** and **long-term solutions**, including integration. A collaborative, hemispheric approach is needed, as endorsed by the 2022 [Los Angeles Declaration](#).

POPULATION PROJECTIONS FROM THE GLOBAL APPEAL 2023

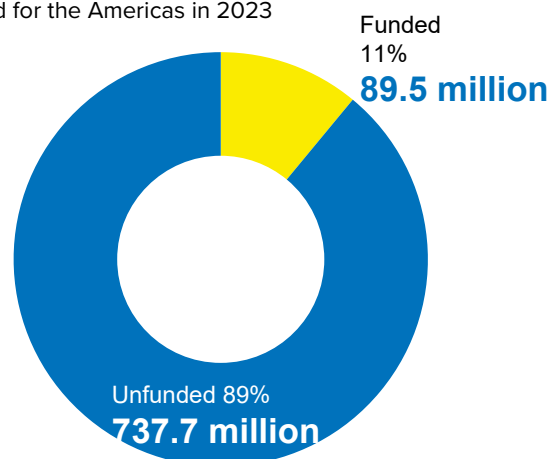
20.6 million people UNHCR serves | 18% of global total



FUNDING (AS OF 27 APRIL 2023)

USD 827.2 million

requested for the Americas in 2023



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

1,880 National Staff

491 International Staff

57,9% Women and 38,6% Men

Offices:

1 Regional Bureau in Panama

3 Multi-Country Offices in Argentina, Panama, and U.S.

11 Country Offices

1 Country Mission in the Dominican Republic

7 National Offices

23 Field Offices

10 Sub Offices

53 Field Units



Panama. Refugees and migrants queue for a canoe at the indigenous community of Bajo Chiquito, Panama. They will take the canoes to get to a reception centre in Lajas Blancas. Hundreds of refugees and migrants arrive daily in Bajo Chiquito, the first village they reach after trekking through the dangerous Darien jungle for days. © UNHCR/ Ilaria Rapido

Operational context

The Americas region is facing a forced displacement crisis that is unprecedented both in its complexity and scale. By the end of 2022, 16.7 million people were displaced in the region. According to the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela ([R4V](#)), to date, over 7.24 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela have left their homes, of whom more than six million are in the Americas.

Other people UNHCR serves include over 7.4 million IDPs in Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico, and some 285,000 asylum-seekers and refugees from Nicaragua throughout the region, in addition to 636,000 asylum-seekers and refugees from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala.¹

Mixed Movements

The number of people in mixed movements from various nationalities making their way to the United States of America through extremely hazardous conditions set a new record in 2023. According to the [Panamanian authorities](#), as of 14 April, over 100,000 people have crossed through Darien, representing six times more than those who arrived in the same period in 2022. As of 31 March, Venezuelans were the largest group (30,250), followed by Haitians (23,640) and Ecuadorians (14,327). Authorities estimate that, if the trend continues, by the end of 2023, some 400,000 people will have crossed the Darien. UNHCR and IOM released a [joint statement](#) expressing their concern due to the increase of people crossing the Darien jungle in search of protection and opportunities.

Changes have been observed in the profile of people engaged in mixed movements, with the highest number of people crossing the Darien coming from Venezuela, Ecuador and Haiti, while increasing numbers of nationals from Cuba and Nicaragua have been reported in Central America and at the U.S. border.

UNHCR [welcomed](#) the adoption by 21 countries in the Americas and the Caribbean of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection in June 2022, which seeks to promote a collaborative response to the challenges emerging from increasingly complex human movements in the region. The Office is committed to support states in advancing key components of the Declaration, particularly initiatives and pledges to enhance protection-sensitive entry systems, ensure access to asylum and other protection-oriented arrangements, stabilize populations in communities of destination, origin, and return, and expand pathways for admission and international protection.

Coordination and Partnerships

- Prioritisation of life-saving assistance goes hand in hand with efforts to find long-term solutions by fostering cooperation with a wide array of actors, such as **local authorities** and the **private sector**, including to provide livelihood opportunities and promote inclusion into national systems.
- UNHCR also partners with the people it serves, the public sector, NGOs and civil society organizations in their operations across the Americas, contributing to the

¹ Year-end population data 2022.

whole-of-society approach in the refugee response, and in line with the [UN Global Compact on Refugees](#).

- UNHCR co-leads with IOM the regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), coordinating amongst 228 organizations who are implementing the [2023-2024 Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan \(RMRP\)](#) across 17 countries. Both agencies also provide technical support to intergovernmental coordination in the [Quito Process](#)—an initiative including several Latin American countries that seeks to harmonize domestic policies in receiving countries.
- The International Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants and their Host Countries and Communities co-organized by the European Union and Canada, with the support of UNHCR, IOM and R4V took place in Brussels on 16-17 March 2023. At the outset of the Conference, UNHCR and IOM urged in a [joint statement](#) for increased international support for refugees and migrants from Venezuela and the communities in Latin America and the Caribbean that host them.
- UNHCR continues to strengthen strategic partnerships with key development actors across the Americas region including the [World Bank](#), [Inter-American Development Bank \(IDB\)](#), and [Central American Bank for Economic Integration \(CABEI\)](#). In addition, UNHCR is actively exploring opportunities to engage with other potential partners including the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#), [Development Bank of Latin America \(CAF\)](#) and [International Finance Corporation \(IFC\)](#), among others. These efforts have led to scaled-up investments in key hosting countries such as Costa Rica and Ecuador through the [Global Concessional Financing Facility \(GCFF\)](#), as well as the design of relevant data and evidence-generating activities that inform policy and programming for the populations we serve.
- In **Central America and Mexico**, UNHCR, jointly with the [Organization of American States \(OAS\)](#) as the Technical Secretariat, supports the [Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework \(MIRPS\)](#), currently led by Panama as [2023 Pro-Tempore Presidency](#). The MIRPS Support Platform, led by the [United States as Chair](#), has increased the engagement of development actors and continues to support MIRPS States in the implementation of their [MIRPS National Action Plans](#).
- Since 2019, UNHCR works within the framework of the [Humanitarian Response Plan \(HRP\)](#) for people who spontaneously returned to Venezuela, IDPs, persons at risk of displacement, refugees, asylum-seekers, and persons at risk of statelessness who require humanitarian assistance and protection safeguards. Since 2021, UNHCR works with other UN agencies, actors and stakeholders within the framework of the HRP for people with protection needs in [El Salvador](#), [Guatemala](#) and [Honduras](#). The UN estimates that 8.3 million people across the three countries require humanitarian assistance, compared to the 5.2 million in early 2020. UNHCR also contributes to inter-agency structures and UN Bodies and Regional Fora for joint responses, monitoring and advocacy, and investment in national and regional protection networks.
- In Haiti, the [Humanitarian Needs Overview](#) released on 17 March cited a figure of 5.2 million people in need of up from 4.9 million last year, with nearly one in 10 households expressing their intention to migrate in the next six months.

UNHCR and its partners are monitoring the situation of Haitians temporarily residing in countries in the region or engaging in mixed movements, in order to ensure their access to protection or temporary stay arrangements and to prevent forced returns and potential situations of refoulement.

- In 2024, the region will commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. As done every decade, there would be preparatory meetings to discuss and agree on regional priorities and way forward to establish a common roadmap on protection and solutions for the next ten years.
- UNHCR in the Americas works in Spanish, Portuguese, French and English with over 236 partnership agreements, including local and international NGOs, governments and other partners. **Seventy per cent of partner agreements in the Americas are with local and refugee or IDP-led NGOs.**

Strategy

Protect

Assert the centrality of protection in response to displacement

- UNHCR works with States to strengthen **asylum capacities and digitalize its systems** and promote protection-sensitive regular stay arrangements and documentation through training and capacity-building of government officials.
- UNHCR supports States in terms of assistance to people with specific needs, **registration**, and links with the national protection services, which also help UNHCR identify and assist the most vulnerable.
- Investing in **protection monitoring**, evidence-based programming and analysis is at the core of regional strategies oriented by age, gender, and diversity considerations, ensuring protection from exploitation and abuse.
- Through a strengthened network of **support spaces**, the provision of information and orientation, identification and secure reference, helps to prevent displacement.

Assist

Ensure operational response capacities and life-saving aid for the most vulnerable during emergencies

- Across the region, UNHCR responds to the **immediate needs** of increasing numbers of people that UNHCR serves. Because of the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, rising poverty and inequality triggered unprecedented levels of need for **basic relief items, emergency shelter, food, safe water, and sanitation supplies**.
- **Cash assistance** has proven the preferred option for refugees and other people forced to flee to meet basic needs such as food, rent or medicines.
- As severe **climate events** further aggravate the situation of displaced populations and communities at risk of displacement, UNHCR responds with **emergency relief items** to support authorities' response to these situations.

Empower

Empower communities and achieve gender equality

- To prevent displacement, mitigate protection risks and build on the resilience of affected communities, operations prioritise **community-centred interventions**, including supporting volunteer networks in prioritised communities. UNHCR promotes communication and integration, identification, and referral of cases with specific needs, as well as enhanced access to information and complaint mechanisms.
- UNHCR boosts feedback and complaint mechanisms across the region, allowing for **constant communication with the affected population and** strengthening two-way communication, to ensure the response adapts to their needs, particularly in increasingly risky environments such as borders.

Solve**Include people UNHCR serves in national/local services with development support**

- Through a whole-of-society approach, UNHCR fosters **partnerships** mainly with governments and private sector **to mobilise support** for the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in national systems and the labour market.
- UNHCR actively advocates for enhanced national efforts to provide **regular stay** (such as temporary or permanent schemes, professional or work-related permits, education programmes) allowing for full enjoyment of rights and integration.

Climate Action

Countries in the Americas continue to be exposed to severe effects of climate change, aggravated the situation of displaced populations and communities at risk of displacement exacerbating their vulnerability and accelerating mobility. Numerous displaced people settle in declared risk zones, often due to a lack of knowledge of their new environment and its potential threats, especially in urban areas. UNHCR's protection mandate includes protection against disaster risks; hence, potential disaster risks should be identified in the situation analysis.

A [World Bank study](#) predicts that by 2050 the internal climate displaced people - i.e. persons forced to displace within their own countries due to slow onset climate impacts such as water stress, crop failure and sea level rise - will account between 9.4 million and 17.1 million in Latin America (up to 2.6 per cent of the total population of the region).

UNHCR is strengthening its operational footprint to meet the humanitarian and protection needs exacerbated by the climate emergency, ranging from preparedness and response to disaster-related displacement, to the implementation of environmentally friendly programmes that protect people and the environment, to enhancing the resilience of both displaced and host communities to climate shocks.

UNHCR engages in advancing the implementation in the region of the [Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#), the [Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability](#), as well as follow-up to the UN Climate Conference - COP27- and its impact in the Americas.

Timely funding

As of 27 April, UNHCR in the Americas is 11 per cent funded, having required in 2023 **\$827.2 million** to respond to the needs of millions of refugees and others seeking safety and dignified lives. **Timely funding** is urgent to **ensure the continuity of life-saving activities** in the region: unrestricted **cash assistance**; distribution of **core and hygiene items**; provision of **emergency shelter** in border areas and for those facing evictions, and support to States for **regularisation** and documentation.

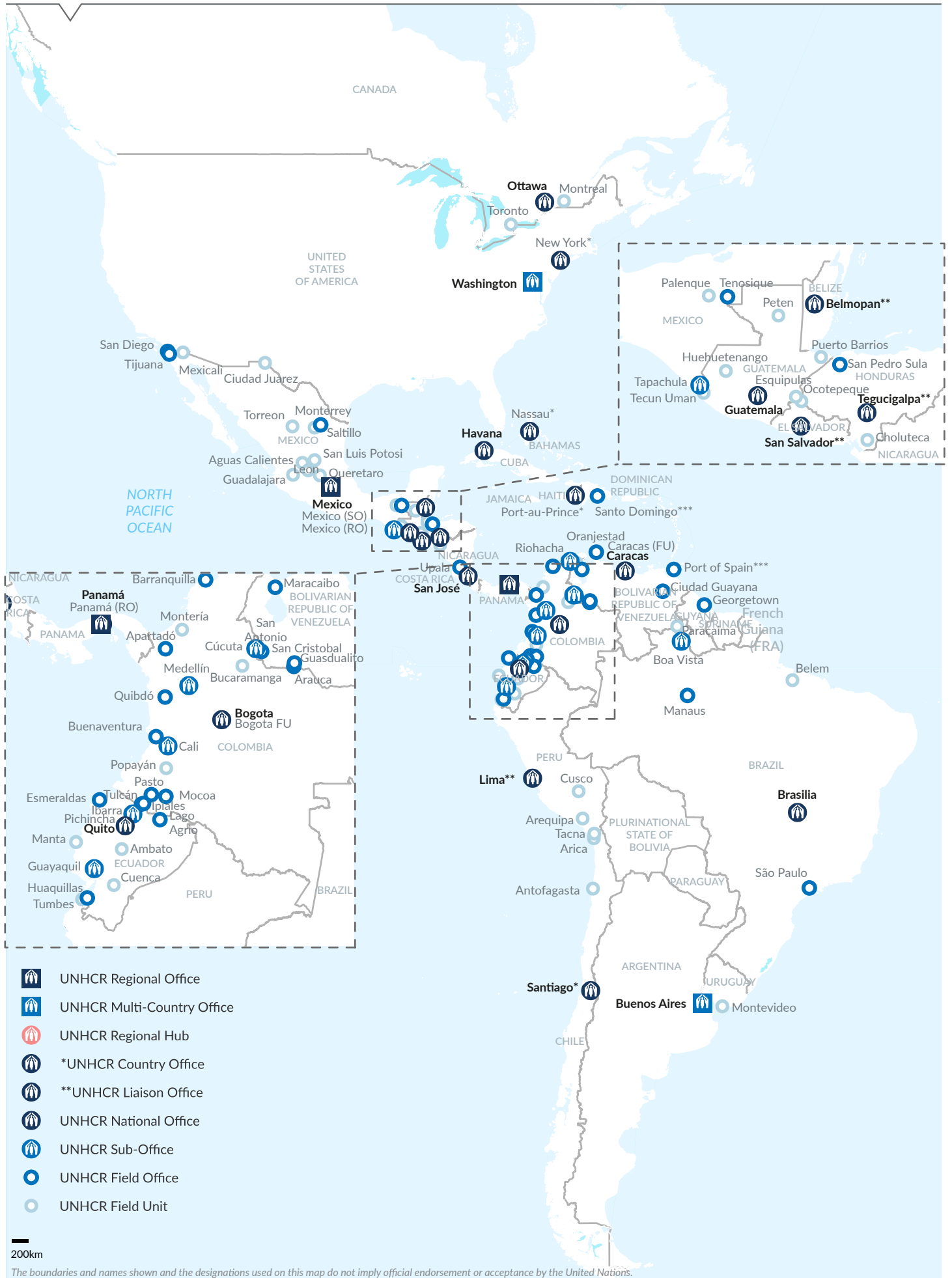
UNHCR's humanitarian and longer-term response in the Americas is made possible thanks to the **generous support** of major donors who have contributed unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations, and to donors who have generously contributed directly to UNHCR operations in the Americas.

Thanks to **all our donors in 2023** (as of 27 April)

Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Luxembourg | Norway | Netherlands | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United States of America | Corporación Andina De Fomento (CAF) | UN Children Fund | UN Joint Programmes | UN Peacebuilding Fund | UN Programme On HIV/AIDS | UNESCO | UN Women |

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