

UNHCR provided tents to Camp Hope, which accommodates patients who have sustained injuries from the earthquake in Haiti.

Antigua and Barbuda

Bahamas

Barbados

Belize

British overseas territories (Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, Montserrat)

Canada

Dominica

Dominican Republic

Dutch overseas territory (Aruba)

French overseas departments (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint-Barthelemy, Saint-Martin)

Grenada

Guyana

Haiti

Jamaica

St. Kitts and Nevis

St. Lucia


St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Suriname

Trinidad and Tobago

United States of America





North America ^{and} the Caribbean

| Working Environment |

Both Canada and the United States of America receive a large number of asylum-seekers. Their asylum procedures are complex but well established, and their acceptance rates are amongst the highest of any industrialized country. They also receive the highest number of resettled refugees in the world.

In the United States, the Government has recently undertaken to review a number of policies affecting the ability of refugees to seek protection in the country, including the application of terrorism-related barriers and their unintended consequences on asylum-seekers, on refugees seeking permanent legal status, and on admissions for resettlement. The United States is also comprehensively reviewing its immigration detention system, and considering procedures for providing protection to stateless people who are in the country without legal status.

UNHCR's regional office in Washington D.C. covers 15 independent countries and 15 overseas territories or departments, principally in the Caribbean. The region is characterized by mixed migratory movements. Eleven of the independent countries and Caribbean States have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and/or the 1967 Protocol, but only the Dominican Republic and Belize have passed implementing legislation. The region's political climate is dominated by concerns over national security and migration control, often to the detriment of international protection needs. There is a risk of political instability, which could lead to new population movements, including increased migration and refugee flight by sea.

In Canada, the imposition of visas and removal of a number of exceptions to the Canada-USA Safe Country Agreement have resulted in a significant reduction of new asylum claims. It is anticipated that the enactment in 2010 of the new refugee reform legislation will result in more expeditious processing of asylum claims. UNHCR will continue to work closely with national authorities, to ensure that the high standards for processing of asylum claims in Canada are maintained.

In the Caribbean, priorities were dominated by the humanitarian response to the massive earthquake that destroyed Haiti's capital in January 2010. UNHCR provided initial

North America and the Caribbean



emergency relief and shelter to more than 200,000 people in and outside of Port-au-Prince, and supported the evacuation of the injured to the Dominican Republic. UNHCR continues to provide support to the protection cluster led by OHCHR, and to implementation of quick impact projects along the border with the Dominican Republic and in remote areas outside of Port-au-Prince. In June 2010, UNHCR opened an office in Santo Domingo.

| Strategy in 2011 |

In North America, UNHCR will pursue its support of national refugee protection mechanisms, build awareness of the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, and seek to secure political and financial support for its operations. The Office will continue to work with the Governments to achieve the highest standards of refugee protection. Such standards include ensuring that asylum-seekers are granted full and meaningful access to refugee status determination (RSD) procedures; that persons of concern are not unnecessarily detained; that all RSD claims are considered in a manner consistent with international standards; and that separated children are treated appropriately. The Office will also work to ensure that stateless people can enjoy their basic rights, such as the right to liberty, work and travel.

UNHCR will continue to support Canada and the United States to find the right balance between legitimate security concerns and the principles of international refugee protection.

The Office will work with the Governments to increase the number of resettlement places in North America, while ensuring resettlement programmes respond appropriately to refugees with special needs. UNHCR's office in Washington DC.

is responsible for maintaining global resettlement statistics and for providing global resettlement support.

In the Caribbean, UNHCR advises Governments on RSD procedures and refugee protection standards. It also undertakes mandate refugee status determination and actively seeks durable solutions, principally through local integration initiatives and resettlement. UNHCR will strengthen its own capacity by increasing protection staffing, particularly in its new office in the Dominican Republic. It will also strengthen the capacity of States to identify and receive newly arriving asylum-seekers. The Office will also work to solve statelessness situations.

| Constraints |

In the United States, significant constraints arise from laws which include broad criminal and "terrorism-related" bars that may inhibit or prevent certain categories of refugees from being resettled in the country; others may be denied asylum or opportunities for full integration in the United States. UNHCR does not have enough staff in the United States to monitor border processing, detention centres, areas where asylum claims are being processed or screening and processing of separated children. The Office will explore mechanisms to augment its capacity in this regard.

Poor economic conditions continue to inhibit the ability of refugees to find employment and become self-sufficient, and limit the ability of state and local governments to adequately fund social and educational services for refugees.

Public debate around perceptions of an abuse of Canadian generosity by newly-arrived asylum-seekers has increased, despite their diminished numbers. Attitudes on the part of the

Government and of the general public towards immigration are increasingly restrictive. Its limited staff resources in Canada also restrict UNHCR in monitoring and intervening in individual cases.

Asylum issues are expected to remain a low priority for most Caribbean States, reducing UNHCR's scope for involvement at the policy level. The Office's lack of physical presence in the region will also make it difficult to make significant progress in this area. The opening of a new office in the Dominican Republic in 2010 presents new opportunities for engagement.

Operations

The Office seeks to ensure that asylum-seekers have effective access to RSD procedures. In this context, UNHCR is monitoring new detention release policies in the **United States**, as they relate to persons of concern to UNHCR, and consulting with the Government on its comprehensive detention reform effort. The Office is seeking to raise awareness of asylum matters in order to ensure that claims are effectively adjudicated, and that the highest possible protection standards are maintained. UNHCR will also promote increased financial and political support, as well as opportunities to resettle more refugees. It will continue to promote screening procedures for asylum-seekers that guard against *refoulement* and will strive to expand the monitoring of expedited removals at entry points. The Office will seek resources to monitor the screening of separated children apprehended along the southern border.

In **Canada**, UNHCR will focus its work on monitoring the new regulations and rules linked to the recent refugee reform legislation, covering detention, child rights, smuggling and trafficking, as well as evolving enforcement policies.

The Office will continue to work with governmental partners to ensure more effective resettlement processing. Increased emphasis will be placed on meeting the particular needs of resettled refugees after their arrival in Canada. This involves developing more comprehensive monitoring and reporting on the follow-up to reception and integration. The Office will continue to lobby for a clear separation of asylum and terrorism issues.

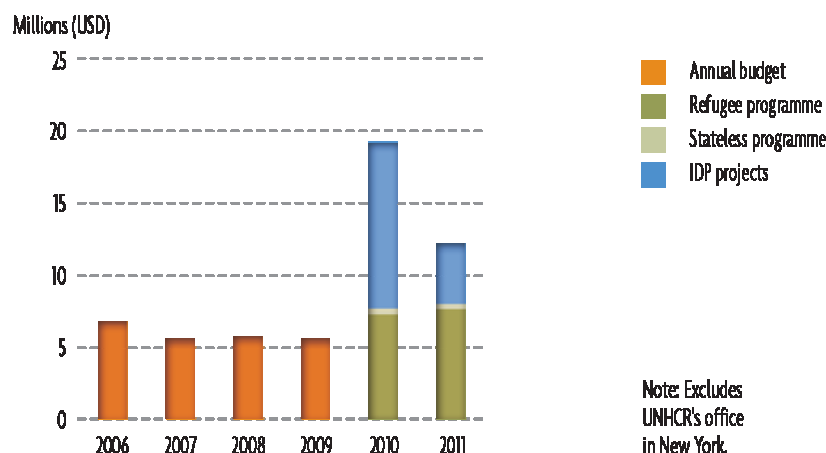
For both the United States and the **Caribbean**, UNHCR will maintain and update contingency measures in the case of large population movements. The Office will monitor political, human rights and socio-economic conditions, while strengthening partnerships with other international organizations.

In the Caribbean, UNHCR will increase its presence through regular missions. This will enable the Office to strengthen its support to governments in their RSD processing, and in identifying durable solutions. It will also bolster its work with NGOs in delivering humanitarian assistance and supporting local integration.

Financial information

While financial requirements in North America and the Caribbean have remained relatively stable over recent years, the budget for this subregion in 2011 is substantially higher (USD 12.1 million) than in 2010 (USD 7.5 million). The increase is due to the increased presence in the Dominican Republic. Strengthened protection activities in the United States have marginally increased financial requirements. In Canada, on the other hand, efforts have been made to reduce administrative costs in 2011, and operational costs have remained stable.

UNHCR's budget in North America and the Caribbean 2006 – 2011



UNHCR budget for North America and the Caribbean (USD)

OPERATION	2010 REVISED BUDGET	2011				TOTAL
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	
Canada	1,802,051	2,078,946	0	0	0	2,078,946
United States of America Regional Office ¹	17,469,981	5,639,323	279,057	0	4,142,080	10,060,460
Total	19,272,032	7,718,269	279,057	0	4,142,080	12,139,406

¹ Covers 15 independent countries and 15 overseas territories or departments, principally in the Caribbean.