

2017 Planning summary

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Operation: Costa Rica

Location

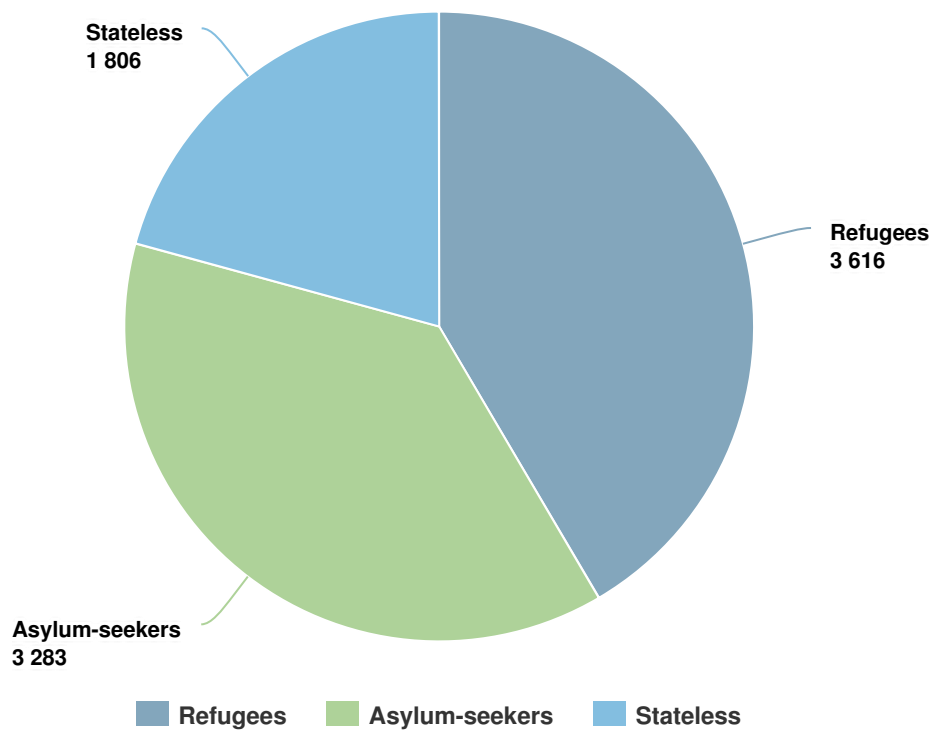


Latest update of camps and office locations **21 Nov 2016**. By clicking on the icons on the map, additional information is displayed.

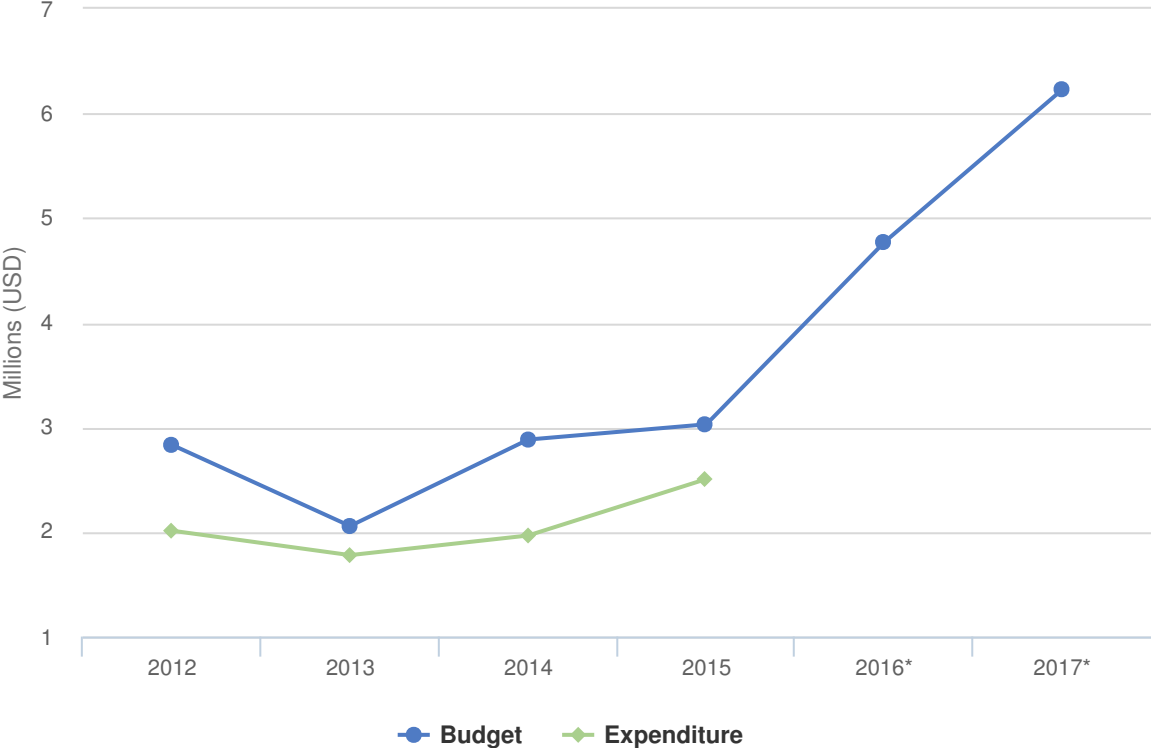
People of Concern

DECREASE IN
63% **2015**

2015	8,705
2014	23,718
2013	21,185



Budgets and Expenditure for Costa Rica



Working environment

Costa Rica has an ever-increasing refugee status determination (RSD) caseload, being the destination country for a rising number of refugees from the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) and from Venezuela, as well as a steady arrival of Colombian asylum seekers. In addition, it has become a transit country for the mixed migration movements further north, some of whom may apply for asylum in the country. A Protection Transfer Arrangement (PTA) was established to host approximately 400 people from the NTCA region who are in transit and awaiting resettlement to third countries in 2017. Based on current trends and making conservative projections, some 5,000 new asylum-seekers are expected in 2017, though higher numbers are not unlikely. With an average recognition rate of approximately 30 per cent, at least 6,700 people are expected to be recognised as refugees, increasing the estimated total to 15,000 people of concern.

The Government of Costa Rica provides a comprehensive legal framework for accessing RSD procedures and allows both refugees and asylum-seekers the legal right to work in the country. However, documentation has a comparatively high cost and timeframes for recognition remain a challenge. The Government also provides access to education and health for refugee children under eighteen.

Key Priorities

UNHCR will work together with the Government of Costa Rica to ensure quality RSD procedures and local integration for refugees, as well as to honour the commitments to eradicating statelessness by 2024. The 2016-2018 Comprehensive Protection and Durable Solutions Strategy is guided by the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action and focuses on enhancing RSD through the Quality Assurance Initiative; border monitoring; addressing mixed migration flows; facilitating local integration through people of concern access to national programmes and implementation of the Living Integration livelihoods initiative and the Graduation approach; and the eradication of risk of statelessness programme, through partnering the Government in addressing sub-birth registration of transnational migrant workers and indigenous populations.

UNHCR Costa Rica has supported the Refugee Unit and the Administrative Migration Tribunal in addressing excessive backlogs as a result of the increasing number of asylum claims - the trend of which is envisaged to continue during 2017 vis-à-vis the government hiring freeze, by deploying additional adjudicators. FY2017, UNHCR will need to continue supporting the GoCR's efforts in addressing such backlogs, at least during the first semester, and in continuing strengthening RSD procedures through QAI, should additional funding is allocated to the Operation. In the area of livelihoods, with the existing funding, the Operation will be able to cater only for the most and neediest vulnerable cases. Should available funding is allocated, the Operation will be in a position to address the needs of the overall vulnerable caseload. The PTA in its pilot phase has been completed in 2016. For the continuation of the PTA during 2017, additional funding is needed for the Operation to be able to continue addressing the protection needs of PoCs from the NCTA countries. UNHCR has successfully implemented the Chiriticós' Project to address sub-birth registration and lack of nationality documentation among the Ngöbe and Buglé communities in the Southern areas of Costa Rica. Should additional funding is available, the project could be extended to additional cantons in the Northern region to cater for other vulnerable populations settled along the border with Nicaragua, who may be at risk of statelessness.
