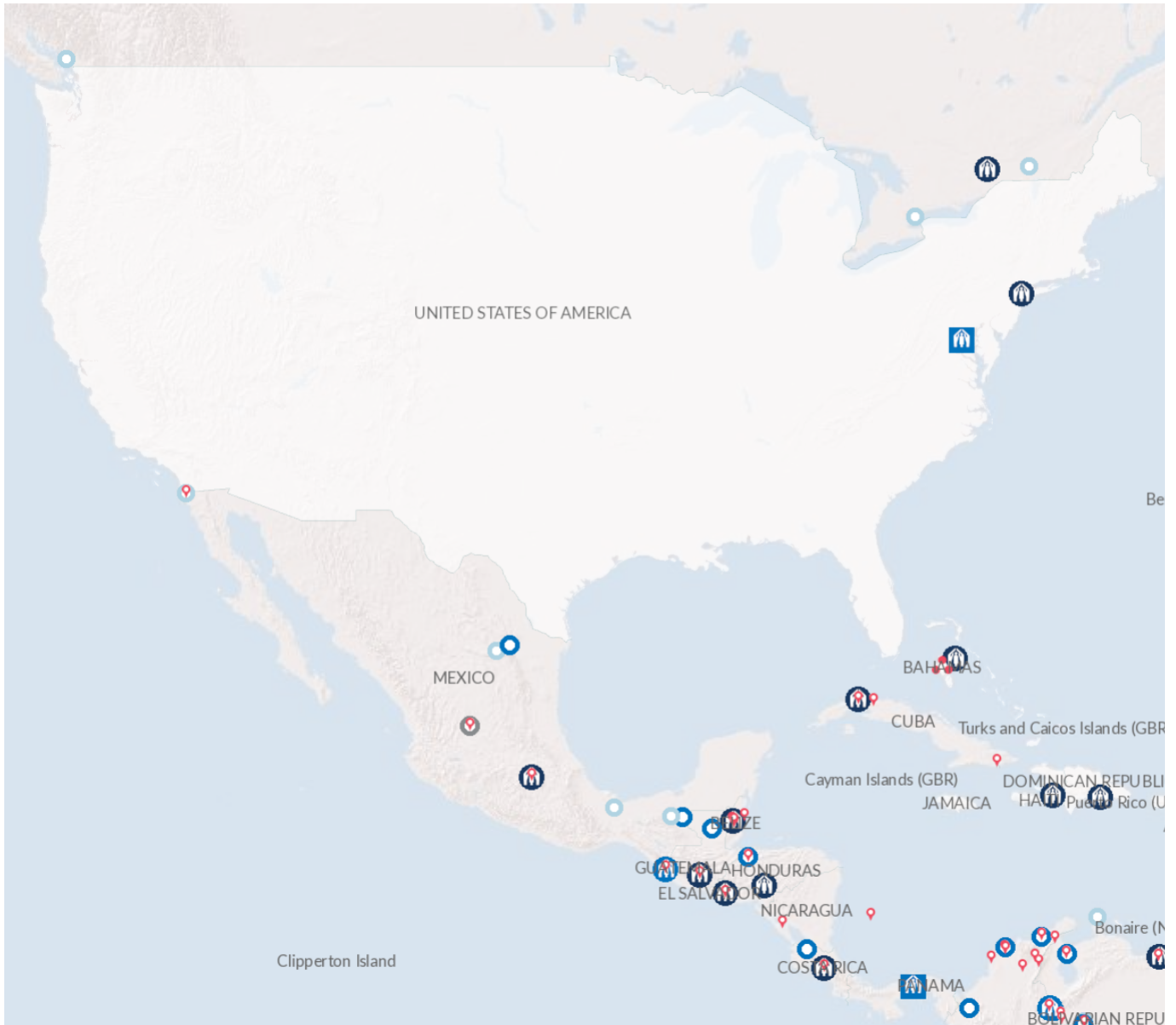


## Operation: United States of America Multi-Country Office



*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*

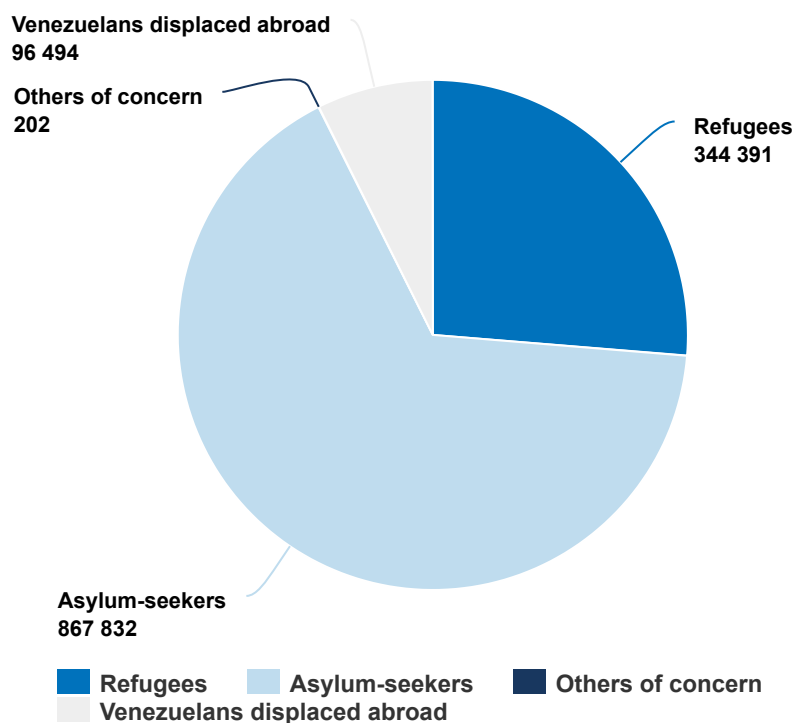
# People of Concern

INCREASE IN  
**11 %** 2019

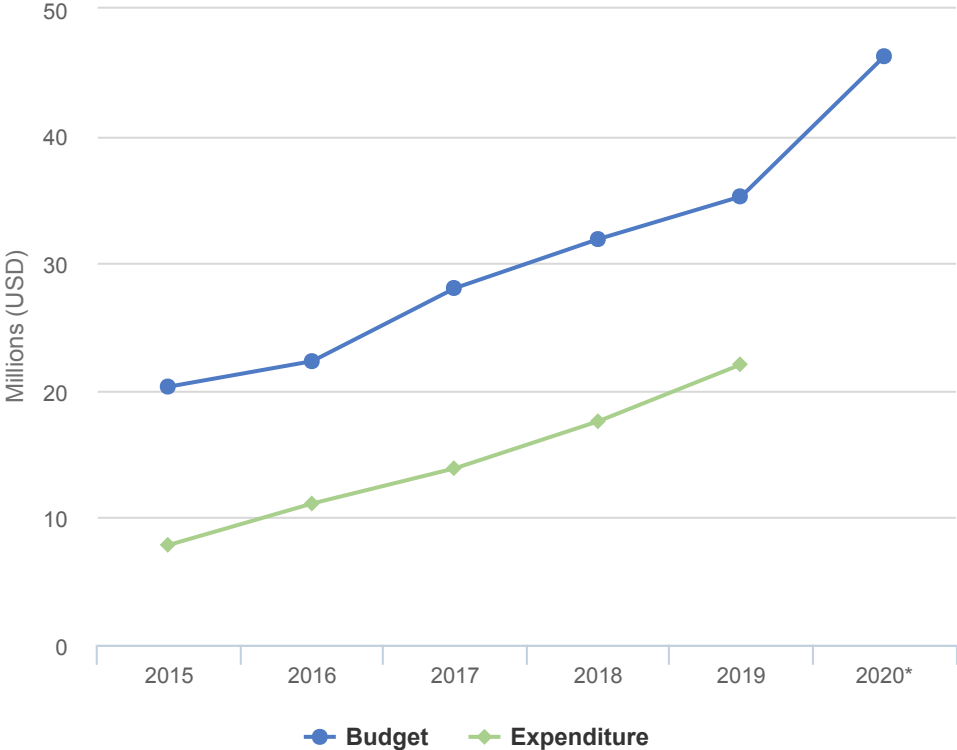
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<b>2019</b>	1,308,919
<b>2018</b>	1,183,774
<b>2017</b>	942,897

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# Budgets and Expenditure for United States of America Multi-Country Office



## Operational context

The protection environment in the United States of America (United States) and the region faced significant challenges in 2019. New deterrent policies prompted more asylum-seekers to enter the United States irregularly, with a 71% increase in apprehensions between ports of entry in comparison to 2018. Nationals from countries in the north of Central America and Mexico represented the largest numbers of arrivals, though the number of arrivals from Cuba also increased significantly during the year.

The Venezuela crisis disproportionately impacted countries in the Caribbean region given their limited capacity to absorb the increasing arrivals in a protection-sensitive manner. Mixed movements, intra- and extra-continental, also continued. This, coupled with restrictive migration policies, weak institutional capacities and lack of protection screenings, resulted in people of concern to UNHCR facing an enhanced risk of refoulement. Arrivals of Venezuelans and others as part of mixed movements required direct protection and assistance interventions by UNHCR, and led to an increased demand for inter-agency coordination as well as capacity-building, advice and emergency preparedness support to host governments. Vulnerability to human trafficking and heightened risk of exploitation and abuse remained a serious concern.

Additionally, instability in Haiti created a strong need for contingency planning in the Dominican Republic, where UNHCR observed an increase in arrivals of Haitians in late 2019.

## Population trends

Arrivals to the southern border of the United States exceeded 921,900 people in 2019, the highest level since 2014, with 52% of all people arriving in family units, while a further 8% were unaccompanied children.

In 2019, UNHCR submitted over 24,800 refugees for resettlement to the United States. During that same period, over 21,100 refugees submitted by UNHCR departed to the United States.

The Caribbean was host to refugees and asylum-seekers of over 40 nationalities, with the scope, size and complexity of mixed movements increasing since the start of the Venezuela crisis.

In 2019, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela remained the largest country of origin (83%), followed by Cuba (12%). According to the inter-agency refugee and migrant response plan (RMRP), the number of Venezuelans in the Caribbean was estimated to have reached a total of 113,500 by the end of 2019, with 33,800 in the Dominican Republic; 27,600 in Trinidad and Tobago; 22,100 in Guyana; 17,000 in Aruba; and 16,600 in Curaçao.

## Achievements

- UNHCR sustained robust engagement with the United States Government, providing technical assistance on an alternative reception model at the southern border.
- UNHCR continued to monitor the changing procedures and policies applied by governments in the region, with emphasis on advocating for access to territory and asylum procedures, alternative legal pathways, and alternatives to detention.
- The first medical clinic was opened in Curaçao to assist people of concern to UNHCR, with the support of the Office.
- UNHCR established the first online accredited education programme for people of concern in Trinidad and Tobago.
- A national refugee and migrant working group was established in the Dominican Republic.
- The Dominican Republic and Guyana were the first southern Caribbean countries to sign the Quito IV Declaration and Roadmap in 2019, reinforcing cooperation between countries of transit and destination for Venezuelans and identifying actions to be taken to protect vulnerable refugees and migrants.

## Unmet needs

- As operations' funding was extremely limited, UNHCR was obliged to reduce the size and scope of its programmed activities in the United States.
  - In the Caribbean, there was a lack of shelter for urgent and emergency cases, coupled with a need to strengthen programming and services related to SGBV and countering human trafficking.
  - In Guyana, the provision of humanitarian assistance by UNHCR reached a limited number of people of concern due to budgetary constraints and scarcity of partners.
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