



STORIES OF SURVIVAL AND SOLIDARITY

Photographs by Kibwe Brathwaite

With an aim to raise awareness about the vulnerabilities of female refugees and asylum-seekers facing the common threat of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), UNHCR Trinidad and Tobago produced and published a photo series entitled “*I Survived, But I Couldn’t Do it Alone*”..

As part of UNHCR Trinidad and Tobago’s ‘16 Days of Activism’ efforts, the media campaign highlighted the stories of refugee and asylum-seeker survivors of SGBV in Trinidad and Tobago, sharing their challenges in overcoming the trauma associated with these experiences and displaying items of sentimental value that they either brought with them from Venezuela or found in Trinidad and Tobago, as symbols of hope and healing. The campaign aimed to advocate for the fostering of a sense of shared responsibility by all sectors of society, in ending violence against women and girls, inclusive of refugees and asylum-seekers.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Deportations of Venezuelans continued in November with over 200 persons recorded as returned by authorities from Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) to Venezuela. In one instance, it was widely reported that a group of 29 persons inclusive of 16 children were escorted out of T&T waters with some of these Venezuelan nationals returning to T&T shortly thereafter. This particular deportation led a number of local and international human rights organizations to write another open letter to the Prime Minister, urging for a more humanitarian disposition towards Venezuelan refugees and asylum-seekers in the country and for the upholding of obligations under T&T’s Trafficking in Persons Act, to identify potential trafficking victims and to provide them with protection and reparation. Additionally, the UN Human Rights Office issued a statement encouraging T&T to respect its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Meanwhile, authorities continued to express their intention to deport all Venezuelans not registered with the government, reportedly deporting 160 Venezuelans on November 28 while legal challenges to their deportation remained in process.

UNHCR continued to provide vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in Trinidad and Tobago with much needed individual assistance in November. Weekly field-mission exercises continued, which provided registration services to persons with specific needs living in remote areas around T&T.



POPULATION*
20,143
REGISTERED WITH
UNHCR

80.8% 18-59 YEARS
17.9% UNDER-18 YEARS

46.5%
FEMALE



53.5%
MALE

85.8%
VENEZUELAN

*Figures are as at November 30th 2020. Registration at UNCHR premises had been temporarily suspended from March 13 to May 26 due to COVID-19. 3,402 individual records were inactivated in April due to registration documentation being expired for more than six months.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

CASH-BASED INTERVENTION

Multi-purpose cash grants were approved in November for **103 individuals** facing protection risks with very limited or no ability to achieve self-reliance. Applications for cash assistance continued to demonstrate the heightened protection risks faced by refugees and asylum-seekers due to the onset of COVID-19 and challenges of the operational context. Ninety-four percent of cash applicants reported not being able to meet their basic needs, particularly rent and food. Sixty-seven percent were not able to pay rent, 64% indicated that either they or their children/household members were reducing the quantity of their food intake and 62% were reducing the quality of their food intake. Forty-seven percent of the extremely vulnerable applicants were survivors of SGBV.

EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE

UNHCR implementing partner [Living Water Community](#), provided **1,046 beneficiaries** with emergency food assistance in November, utilising the remote application process, QR coded e-vouchers and the community supermarket system. The supermarket network continued to grow with the addition of three supermarkets in Tobago.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES

UNHCR implementing partner [Family Planning Association](#) conducted **245 consultations** on sexual and reproductive health for 226 refugees and asylum-seekers during November, including for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, **eleven pediatric care consultations** were conducted in November. Health services were delivered through a combination of telehealth and static clinic modalities.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES

Psychosocial support was provided for refugees and asylum-seekers in November, with implementing partner [Rape Crisis Society](#) facilitating **109 counselling sessions**, including for 38 victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Depression and anxiety are still increasingly high in the asylum-seeker population, due to instances of xenophobia as well as challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic which lead many to unemployment and food insecurity.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

UNHCR continues to provide capacity development to government agencies, local civil society and international agencies. In November, training on refugee protection principles and international human rights was delivered to **40 beneficiaries**, including police trainees. Training on Best Interest Procedures and Practices for children was also delivered by UNHCR to members of the Child Protection Working Group which included local community-based organisations.

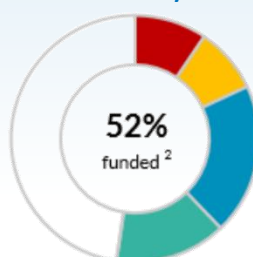
REGISTRATION AND VERIFICATION FIELD MISSIONS

UNHCR's field mission exercises, aimed at providing registration services to persons living in remote areas of T&T, continued in November with missions to Penal, Princes Town and Siparia. Overall, **251 persons** whose documentation had been expired were verified in person and provided with new UNHCR identification, with an additional 13 persons with specific needs receiving UNHCR registration.

FUNDING - United States of America Multi-Country Office

Trinidad and Tobago is part of the United States of America Multi-Country Office along with Aruba, Curaçao, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the United States of America.

Financials requirements in 2020 for this office are \$48.5 million¹. As at December 8th, 2020, it is 52% funded.



■ Tightly earmarked
■ Earmarked
■ Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
■ Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
□ Funding gap (indicative)

¹ The financial requirements for the United States of America MCO include requirements for the Coronavirus Emergency and the Venezuela Situation

² The percentage funded includes indicative allocations of softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions

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For further details on anything included in this report, contact Shemuel London at london@unhcr.org. Find more information about UNHCR [here](#) and [click here](#) for more on the work of the UNHCR T&T Operation.

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