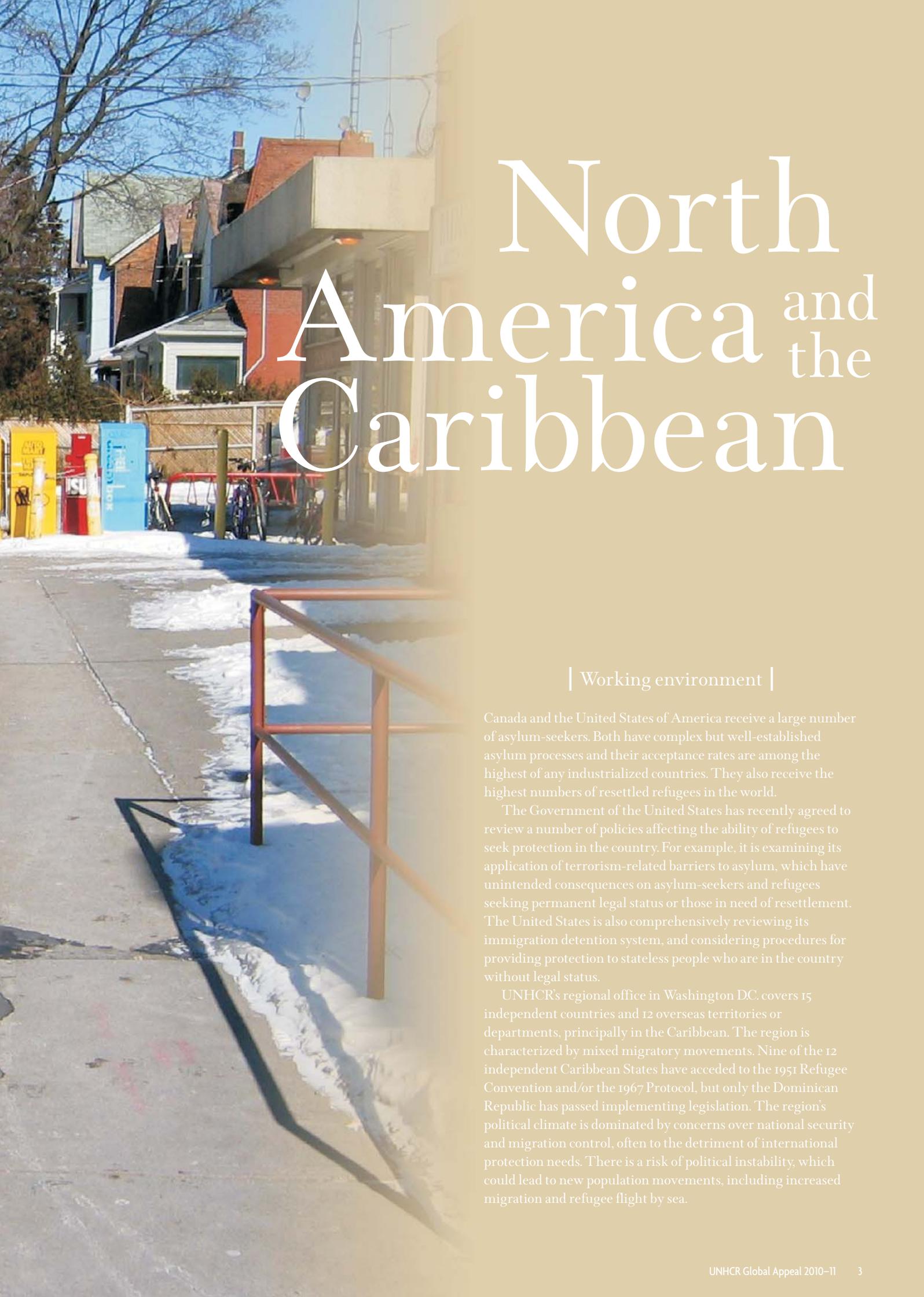




Antigua and Barbuda  
Bahamas  
Barbados  
Belize  
British overseas territories (Anguilla, Bermuda,  
British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Turks and  
Caicos Islands, Montserrat)  
Canada  
Dominica  
Dominican Republic  
French overseas departments (Martinique,  
Guadeloupe, Saint-Barthelemy, Saint-Martin)  
Grenada  
Guyana  
Haiti  
Jamaica  
St. Kitts and Nevis  
St. Lucia  
St. Vincent and the Grenadines  
Suriname  
Trinidad and Tobago  
United States of America

BLOOM  
COURT  
CAFÉ  
COFFEE  
PASTRY  
SANDWICHES  
DESSERTS  
ESPRESSO  
CAPPUCCINO  
LATTE

A Karenni refugee resettled from Thailand  
now studying in Toronto, Canada.



# North America <sup>and</sup> the Caribbean

## | Working environment |

Canada and the United States of America receive a large number of asylum-seekers. Both have complex but well-established asylum processes and their acceptance rates are among the highest of any industrialized countries. They also receive the highest numbers of resettled refugees in the world.

The Government of the United States has recently agreed to review a number of policies affecting the ability of refugees to seek protection in the country. For example, it is examining its application of terrorism-related barriers to asylum, which have unintended consequences on asylum-seekers and refugees seeking permanent legal status or those in need of 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 DC, covers 15 independent countries and 12 overseas territories or departments, principally in the Caribbean. The region is characterized by mixed migratory movements. Nine of the 12 independent Caribbean States have acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and/or the 1967 Protocol, but only the Dominican Republic has 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.

# North America and the Caribbean



## Strategy

In North America, UNHCR monitors and supports national refugee protection mechanisms, builds awareness of the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers, and seeks 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 access to refugee status determination (RSD) procedures; that persons of concern are not unnecessarily detained; that all RSD claims, including gender-based claims, are considered 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 the integrity of its resettlement programme. 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. It will strengthen its own capacity and that of the States to receive newly arriving

asylum-seekers. It will build protection networks with NGOs and legal and academic communities, as well as strengthen its network of honorary liaisons, who serves as UNHCR's "eyes and ears" in the absence of a permanent presence. 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 and some individuals from being granted asylum. While the Government is taking a fresh look at such issues, legislative change may be required, and lawmakers, including some who favour strengthening refugee protection, may be reluctant to challenge restrictive national security legislation for political reasons. It is expected that the judiciary will play an important role in striking a balance between protection and national security concerns.

UNHCR does not have enough staff in the United States to monitor all ports of entry, and visit detention centres and areas where asylum claims are being processed. This makes monitoring a challenging task, including with respect to compliance with the terms of the Safe Third Country Agreement.

Asylum issues are expected to remain a low priority for most Caribbean States, reducing UNHCR's scope for engagement 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.

**Operations**

In **Canada**, the Office seeks to ensure that asylum-seekers have access to RSD procedures. In this context, it monitors the implementation of the Safe Third Country Agreement, as well as asylum claims lodged inland and at airports.

The Office monitors detention policies and practices as they relate to persons of concern to UNHCR. Furthermore, it raises awareness of asylum matters to ensure that claims are effectively dealt with and that the highest possible protection standards are maintained. It will also seek increased financial and political support, as well as opportunities to resettle more refugees.

In the **United States**, UNHCR will promote screening procedures for asylum-seekers that guard against *refoulement*. This will be done by monitoring expedited removals at entry points. The Office will support the development of policies regarding the detention of asylum-seekers, including for families and minors, which favour release unless detention is necessary. UNHCR will also work with the Government on ensuring the integrity of the asylum system by developing mechanisms to guard against fraud and abuse without detrimental impact to legitimate cases. Furthermore, it will continue to lobby for a clear separation of asylum and terrorism issues.

To bolster its advocacy efforts, UNHCR will conduct congressional briefings and organize field missions to regions of strategic interest to the United States. It will promote awareness

and respect for persons of concern through briefings for Congressional staff, Administration officials, as well as media campaigns. The Office will also work to maximize support for resettlement.

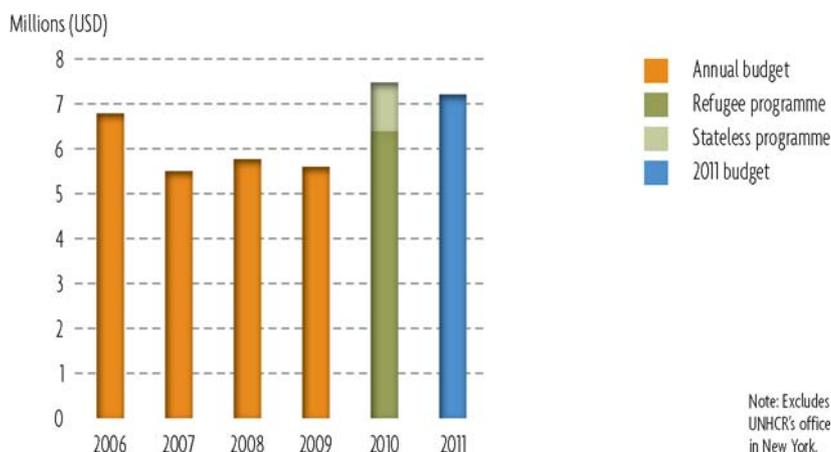
For both the United States and the **Caribbean**, UNHCR will maintain and update contingency measures in case of large population movements. The Office will monitor political, human rights and socio-economic conditions, while strengthening partnerships with international organizations.

In the **Dominican Republic**, UNHCR will increase its presence through regular missions. This will enable UNHCR to strengthen its support to the Government in RSD and the identification of durable solutions, as well as bolster its work with NGOs in delivering humanitarian assistance and support local integration.

**Financial information**

UNHCR's financial requirements in North America and the Caribbean have remained relatively stable over the past few years. The biggest increase was in 2006, arising from the Office's efforts to provide better coverage of the Caribbean region and strengthen its protection efforts in Canada and the United States. Higher staff costs have also increased the requirements for these staff-intensive operations. In 2010, an increased presence in the Dominican Republic will require more resources.

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



**UNHCR budget for North America (USD)**

COUNTRY	2009 REVISED BUDGET	2010			2011
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	TOTAL	
Canada	1,581,392	1,802,051	0	1,802,051	1,683,300
United States of America <sup>1</sup>	4,015,120	4,591,195	1,086,434	5,677,629	5,522,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,596,512</b>	<b>6,393,246</b>	<b>1,086,434</b>	<b>7,479,680</b>	<b>7,206,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes protection of refugees and capacity building in the Caribbean and local integration in Belize, Guyana and Suriname