



Left photo: National UN Volunteer Protection Assistant for Monitoring, Sommer Hunte (right), with a colleague from UNHCR. Right photo: The UNHCR Trinidad and Tobago team with UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Mr George Okoth-Obbo, who is in the top row, fifth from left, with Andrew Welch, national UN Volunteer Protection Assistant for Community Services, to his left, and Sommer Hunte to his right.

Responding to displacement in Venezuela through integration in Trinidad and Tobago

In September 2017, Andrew Welch and Sommer Hunte were assigned as national UN Volunteer Protection Assistants with UNHCR in Trinidad and Tobago. As part of the UNHCR team, their role was to provide support to the 40,000 asylum-seekers and refugees from Venezuela seeking international protection in Trinidad and Tobago.

The number of asylum applications in Trinidad and Tobago by citizens of Venezuela is on the increase. In 2017, nearly 40,000 people applied for asylum.

In response, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is working to support countries throughout the Americas and the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago, by engaging in registration and profiling of the population, reinforcing reception capacity of host communities, assisting with emergency preparedness and contingency planning, and providing basic humanitarian assistance.

Andrew served as UN Volunteer Protection Assistant for Community Services. He worked closely with the population of concern, Living Water Community (UNHCR's partner), and with government institutions to ensure the incoming population can live dignified lives in the country.

He also worked to support a tripartite, collaborative approach to respond effectively to the needs and concerns of the refugee population.

Sommer was a UN Volunteer Protection Assistant for Monitoring, and conducted a mapping assessment of the living conditions and livelihood opportunities of asylum-seekers and refugees in the country.


“ My main responsibility was to ensure that projects and programmes to support persons of concern were implemented, and that new partnerships were formed to support the growing population. --Sommer Hunte, national UN Volunteer Protection Assistant

Andrew and Sommer assisted with hosting several missions of UNCHR senior colleagues, including the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Mr George Okoth-Obbo. The missions sought to deepen cooperation between UNHCR, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and other countries in the region.

The Assistant High Commissioner placed special emphasis on understanding and addressing the impact of increased migration from Venezuela in a protection-sensitive manner.

Mr Okoth-Obbo commended the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for its commitment to refugee issues since the adoption of the 2014 Refugee Policy, for its leading role in the Caribbean region and the good practices it is developing for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers. He also praised the local UNHCR team and its implementing partner for the continued work to provide support and comfort to persons in need of international protection.

On World Refugee Day 2018, sign the [petition](#). #WithRefugees

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