



PAHO announces Malaria Champions of the Americas 2023

Washington, DC, 3 November, 2023 (PAHO) – The Dominican Republic, Belize and Suriname, as well as the Mexican state of Quintana Roo and the Brazilian city of Manaus, were today awarded the [2023 Pan American Health Organization \(PAHO\) Malaria Champions of the Americas](#) prize for their sustained actions towards malaria elimination in the Region.

The awards were presented at an event to celebrate [Malaria Day in the Americas](#), which takes place on November 6. During the meeting, PAHO and its partners acknowledged the national and subnational efforts of these countries, as well as the impact the projects have had in addressing malaria and improving the health of their populations.

"Despite the significant challenges that remain in eliminating malaria in the Americas, we also have successful experiences like the projects awarded today, which help position us as one of the regions making the most progress towards the elimination of this disease globally," stated the PAHO Director, Dr. Jarbas Barbosa.

The Dominican Republic was recognized for its efforts to interrupt malaria transmission by 2022 in Los Tres Brazos, the main urban focus of the disease in recent years. Belize was distinguished for its continued efforts to eliminate malaria, achieving WHO certification as a malaria-free country in 2023. Suriname was awarded for being the first Amazonian country to report zero malaria cases for a year.

The state of Quintana Roo (Mexico) was also recognized for its efforts to interrupt malaria transmission and prevent the reestablishment of the disease in a context of high population mobility. The municipality of Manaus (Brazil) was distinguished for its intensified surveillance initiatives to interrupt the transmission of *P. falciparum*.

"These actions are best practices that can inspire other countries, decision-makers, and stakeholders, to achieve the goal of eliminating malaria throughout the region. We invite everyone to join efforts against this potentially fatal disease, which disproportionately affects vulnerable populations living in areas with limited access to healthcare services," Dr. Barbosa added.

The Malaria Champions is a collaborative effort between PAHO, the United Nations Foundation, the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University, Johns Hopkins University's Center for Communication Programs, the Florida International University and the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Health.

Since 2009, over 40 projects across the region have been recognized with this award.

Malaria is a disease caused by parasites of the genus *Plasmodium*, which are transmitted to humans through the bite of infected *Anopheles* mosquitoes. It is prevalent in tropical regions, and its symptoms can range from mild, such as fever and headache, to severe forms with a risk of death.

To combat this disease, PAHO has stressed the importance for countries and their partners to prioritize actions to improve access to diagnosis and treatment, addressing the barriers that affected communities may face, such as rural and mobile populations.

Malaria is among over 30 diseases targeted for elimination as part of PAHO's 2030 [Elimination Initiative of Communicable Diseases](#).

Links

[Malaria Champions of the Americas](#)

[Malaria Day in the Americas](#)

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The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system.