UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

January 2024

Operational Update 25

HONDURAS

Population figures

Internal displacement

+247,000

people have been internally displaced in Honduras as a result of violence between 2004 and 2018. Internal displacement is expected to continue at a high rate in 2024 as root causes persist.

Mixed Movements

38,495

refugees and migrants in mixed movements entered Honduras irregularly in January 2024 and registered with the National Migration Institute (INM), more than double than the same period in 2023.

Asylum

3,213

Honduran nationals sought asylum in Mexico in January 2024, ranking as the first nationality in the number of asylum requests to this country.

10

people sought asylum in Honduras in January 2024, Nicaraguans (80%) and Ecuadorians (20%).

Return

48,497

Hondurans were returned to the country between January and October 2023, mainly from the United States of America, Mexico, Guatemala and Spain.

Refuge

183

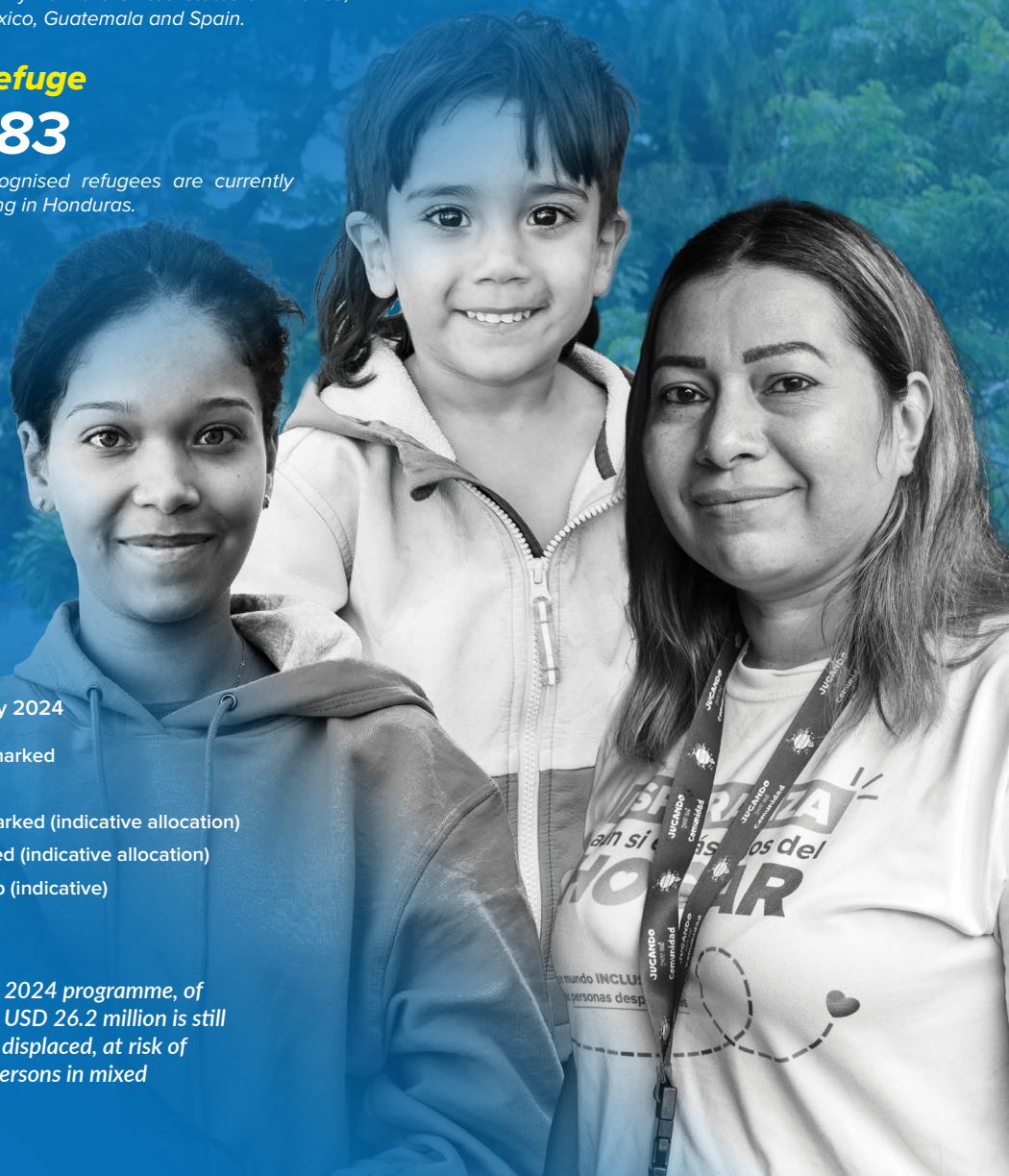
recognised refugees are currently living in Honduras.

Our response

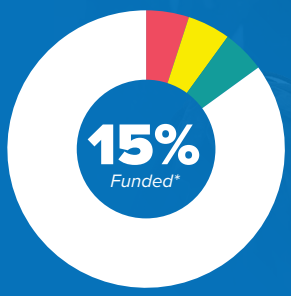
11,300 people

have been reached in January 2024 by UNHCR and its partners, mainly people in mixed movements and internally displaced persons, but also asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees, and host community members, with services such as shelter, cash and voucher assistance, case management, protection monitoring, livelihoods activities, risk mitigation and through community-based protection activities.

700	800	3,700	6,100	59
Girls	Boys	Women	Men	LGBTQI+



Funding



As of 31 January 2024

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

**UNHCR appealed for USD 30.8 million for its 2024 programme, of which only USD 4.6 million (15%) was funded. USD 26.2 million is still needed to continue supporting people forcibly displaced, at risk of displacement, asylum-seekers, refugees, and persons in mixed movements.*

Context

Forced internal displacement persisted in January 2024.

The summary below highlights the significant challenges faced by Honduras, including generalized violence, human rights issues, political instability, and environmental threats:

Violence and Extortion

Despite the State of Exception in place from December 2022 to January 2024, there were

nine deaths in three multiple killings and 11 violent deaths

were reported in four departments of the country in the last weekend of the month.

Honduras continues to have the highest murder rates in all of Central America.

Public transport has been forced to **cease operations due to violent threats of extortion,** particularly in the northern and southern regions. In Tegucigalpa, extortionists' armed attack on buses led to disruptions in public transportation.

The **increase in violence** was due to ongoing influence of various criminal groups controlling territories and extortion threats.

Gender-Based Violence

In January 2024, 21 women were violently killed with an impunity rate of 95%.

Honduras ranks first in Latin America and the Caribbean, and fifth globally for femicide rates.

LGBTIQ+ persons are particularly affected by violence.

Human rights violations

Journalists, human rights advocates, and teachers continue to be at the forefront of human rights violations with threats of being killed.

The Moskitia region's natural resources and strategic location make it a hotspot for drug trafficking. Local indigenous communities are highly vulnerable to being forced into the drug trade by organized crime, driven by food insecurity.

Forced Recruitment of Children

Criminal groups are forcibly recruiting children and youth.

Compared to the same time last year, there has been a 19% increase in killings of youth and children. Nine children were rescued from human trafficking in three different areas of the country.

In January 2024, children and youth were amongst the highest in returnees, many were unaccompanied.

Aggravating factors:

Political and Legislative Challenges

Congressional disunity and **failure to ratify new laws fuelled uncertainty and the potential for social unrest.** The political context has been named by the local press as a "political hurricane."

Environmental Challenges

Droughts and rising temperatures are impacting people's livelihoods and increasing poverty.

Climate change is worsening vulnerability to forced displacement.

Livelihoods

Economic factors further exacerbate vulnerabilities, with low incomes making it difficult for many Hondurans to meet even basic needs.

Economic insecurity and unemployment hinder the recovery of livelihoods following forced displacement and exacerbates vulnerability in a context of generalized violence.

Context

Results

Internal Displacement

Widespread violence, the influence of organized crime, extortion, political instability, and economic challenges create an environment conducive to forced displacement.

UNHCR and other international organizations lauched a campaign to raise awareness about the **causes and impacts of internal forced displacement in Honduras.**

Students from UNAH together with UNHCR published two videos addressing the root causes of displacement in Honduras and provided insights on recognizing cases of forced displacement.

Mixed Movements

The trend of increasing numbers of refugees and migrants entering and transiting through Honduras continues in 2024,

which is having a severe impact on the already limited reception conditions. conditions.

38,495 people in transit

registered with the National Institute of Migration (INM) after entering irregularly, more than double the number of the same period in 2023. **49%** of the irregular entries were women, children, and youth.

Main nationalities were Venezuelans, Cubans, Haitians, Ecuadorians, and Guineans.

UNHCR estimates through border monitoring that more than

50,000 people transited Honduras,

as not all of them registered with INM.

In addition, the first caravan of the year with around 500 people left on 20 January from San Pedro Sula.

Mostly Hondurans and some Venezuelans crossed into Guatemala at El Corinto border. The Guatemalan authorities dispersed the group and returned several of the persons who entered the country irregularly to the Honduran border.

Migratory amnesty:

The National Congress in Honduras approved the extension of the migratory amnesty for irregular entries until 31 December 2024.

The amnesty reduces protection risks for persons on the move as less people are forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms such as begging or survival sex to pay the administrative fine. In addition, the amnesty decreases their vulnerability to fall into smuggling and/or trafficking networks.

RESPONSE

PROTECT

In January, UNHCR continued efforts to monitor and improve the protection situation of refugees and migrants in Honduras.

This included **strengthening government capacities, raising public awareness, and monitoring border areas and main transit hubs** to assess the needs and trends of refugees and migrants. UNHCR collaborated with a variety of partners, including governmental bodies and regional platforms, to coordinate protection activities effectively. UNHCR also published its newest mixed movement protection monitoring report.

UNHCR launched several initiatives to address the challenges faced by vulnerable populations, particularly children and youth, in accessing their right to education amidst threats of extortion and violence. To mark Women's National Day in Honduras, UNHCR released a video to support women's rights and advocate for their protection and inclusion.

Public awareness efforts included **highlighting child forced recruitment as a key driver of forced displacement,** as reported by La Prensa.

Additionally, the National Property Institute and UNHCR continued the "Your registered home, your assured right" campaign, aimed to **inform people on property rights and the importance of property registration** to protect against dispossession due to forced displacement or climate change.

Through border monitoring, **UNHCR observed concerning presence of human smugglers in entry and exit border points.** The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and UNHCR conducted a joint mission to the El Pescadero internal border office to assess needs related to gender-based violence and identify safe spaces for their activities, engaging with local actors to strengthen the response to such violence.

To support **identification and registration of returnees in need of protection,** UNHCR donated computer equipment to the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL), enhancing the capacity of SEDESOL's Social Development Observatory (ODS) at the Centres for Returned Migrants (CAMRs) in northern Honduras.

To strengthen the Honduran asylum system, UNHCR donated 20 power supply units, four multifunctional printers and 32 toners to INM's Human Rights Unit. The new IT equipment will improve the registration of asylum claims and the issuance of special stay permits for humanitarian reasons.

UNHCR continued leading the local coordination groups at the north and central district areas, and at the south-east and western borders. With more than 30 actors, the groups continue to support the government to provide reception services. The Government of Honduras, with UNHCR's support, participated in the VI annual meeting of the MIRPS in Panama, highlighting the Government´s activities in furthering regional political dialogue and its contributions to addressing internal displacement and supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

Overall, **UNHCR's activities in January focused on enhancing protection, raising awareness, and strengthening response systems to support refugees, migrants, and individuals at risk of forced displacement in Honduras,** demonstrating a comprehensive approach to address the complex challenges they face.

With UNHCR's support, the Government of Honduras participated in the VI annual meeting of the MIRPS in Panama.

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RESPOND

In January, UNHCR continued to support refugees, migrants, and returnees in Honduras by enhancing reception facilities and raising public awareness on forced displacement issues.

Essential shelter items, including mattresses, blankets, bed bunks, hygiene products, amongst others, were distributed across five shelters and temporary accommodation facilities. In Choluteca and El Paraiso, UNHCR provided 300 mattresses, 500 blankets, and various other items to improve temporary shelters conditions. Additionally, 89,620 hygiene items were donated to five organisations and institutions serving people entering through the southeastern border, further supporting the well-being of people in mixed movements.

UNHCR's also continued regular visits to the Migrant House in Ocotepeque, to ensure that **those in need of protection were identified and received protection information.**

INM with the support of UNHCR provided 71 humanitarian aid kits with food supplies as well as hygiene, household products and clothes to 118 asylum-seekers and refugees throughout the country. INM also used the opportunity to deliver new asylum-seeker certificates renewable every three months, update the persons on the status of their cases and follow up on their protection needs.

Public awareness initiatives play a crucial role in UNHCR's protection strategy, with activities ranging from media coverage on forced recruitment to the launch of the "Protegiendo vidas" campaign. This campaign aims to inform about the challenges of forced displacement and the institutional protection mechanisms available under the Displacement Law, included an art contest and educational videos.

By delivering gender-differentiated hygiene kits in Tegucigalpa and engaging in comprehensive awareness-raising efforts, UNHCR addressed immediate needs and **worked towards creating a more informed and empathetic environment for people in mixed movements throughout Honduras,** as hundreds of persons, including women and children, spent the night in public spaces in January.

UNHCR, through its partner NRC, registered **352 individuals for case management,** primarily focusing on internally displaced persons and those at risk of displacement.

90 incidents were recorded, 30% of which related to serious incidents, such as murders.

To address these urgent protection needs, UNHCR provided USD 39,300 in cash assistance to 88 families, benefiting 270 people.

UNHCR has also identified and registered 38 cases of 96 returnees with international protection needs in the Centres for Returned Migrants in Honduras. UNHCR provided them with protection information, legal assistance, and referral to partners for cases with specific needs.

To improve reception conditions for refugees and migrants, **in January 2024, UNHCR's Mobile Information Service reached 10,199 people in mixed movements in Choluteca, Danlí, and Trojes, as well as 3,441 people in Machuca, Agua Caliente.** The service operated by World Vision provides vital information about legal protection, temporary shelter locations, and the U.S. Parole Program. Most of the individuals attended were Venezuelans, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Haitians, and Cubans.

UNHCR and its partners also provided temporary shelter to over 1,400 people in mixed movements in vulnerable situations who were transiting through Honduras. This was done in six different shelters across the country.

UNHCR and its partners provide temporary shelter to families like Kaira's, mother of three forced to flee from violence.

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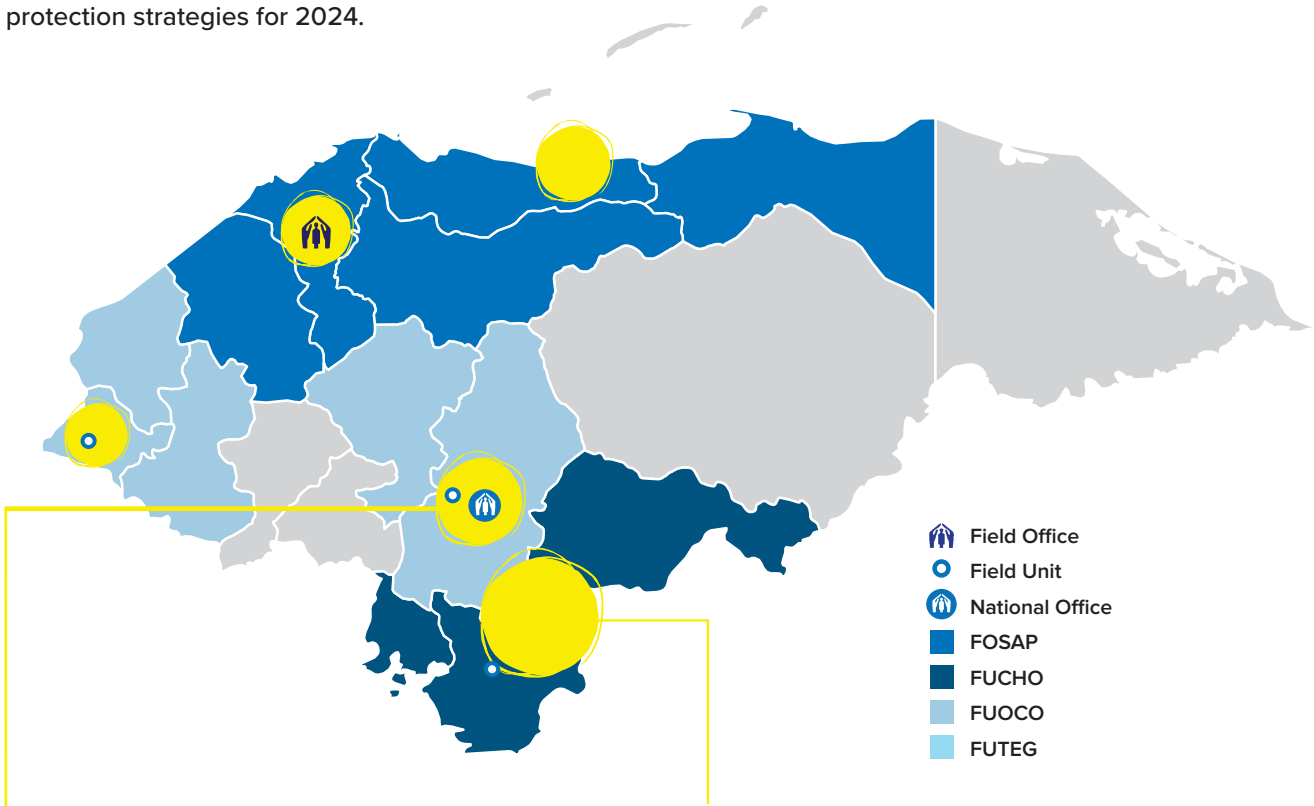
EMPOWER

UNHCR continued initiatives aimed at empowering vulnerable communities and enhancing their resilience against protection risks.

In the central district, south-east, north and north-west zones, UNHCR worked closely with youth groups, LGBTIQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and local community leaders to develop and implement comprehensive protection strategies for 2024.



Offices:
01 Country office in Tegucigalpa
01 Field office in San Pedro Sula
03 Field units in Choluteca, Ocotepeque and Tegucigalpa

Central Distict

In the central district, UNHCR donated sports supplies to the Villa Olímpica complex in Tegucigalpa in collaboration with the National Commission for Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation (CONDEPOR). This initiative, part of the Sports for Protection strategy, targeted over 100 children and youth from eight high-risk urban communities, aiming to **foster a sense of community and reduce vulnerability to violence and displacement.**

UNHCR delivered a menstrual hygiene workshop to 20 girls, aged between 9 and 15, in an urban community affected by gang violence. This workshop was organized in collaboration with a local youth group and aimed to challenge the stigma around menstruation and address its impact on the education of young girls, particularly school drop-out issues. The initiative also sought to empower the youth group and extend its reach to more girls in their communities.

South-east

In the south-east, **UNHCR facilitated strategic discussions in 18 communities engaging local leaders in integrating community protection plans into municipal agendas.** These efforts were designed to reduce internal displacement risks and strengthen community cohesion. In Las Flores, San Marcos de Colon, the inauguration of a school and community space supported by UNHCR provided safe spaces for people in vulnerable situations and improved the learning environment.

To address gender-based violence (GBV), **UNHCR disseminated information on referral channels for GBV cases in Choluteca,** improving local capacities to respond to such incidents effectively.

UNHCR donated sports equipment to the Fronterizos de San Miguel baseball team to **promote peaceful coexistence and mitigate forced displacement risks.** While the José Cecilio del Valle Educational Centre received musical instruments to encourage youth participation in cultural activities, contributing to the promotion of peaceful coexistence.

Overall, UNHCR's multifaceted approach in Honduras involved **enhancing protection mechanisms, empowering communities through sports, education, and awareness initiatives, and addressing gender-based violence,** all geared towards creating safer and more resilient environments for vulnerable populations.

SOLVE

UNHCR, in close collaboration with a variety of partners, has advanced education and livelihood opportunities for individuals forcibly displaced or at risk of displacement in Honduras.

UNHCR participated in events organized by the INTUR Foundation in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa on 23 and 25 January, respectively. These events, which saw participation from over 15 organizations across the private sector and civil society, underscored the significance of the UNHCR-supported formal education programme designed for internally displaced persons, refugees, and those at risk of displacement. In a strategic partnership with INTUR, **UNHCR has set a goal to facilitate the completion of formal high school education for 60 adults in 2024.**

IOM and UNHCR co-organized a workshop on the best practices for risk mitigation during livelihood interventions. Attended by representatives from 15 partner organizations, the workshop provided a platform to share various risk prevention and mitigation strategies implemented by partners. The involvement of key stakeholders, including the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP), the Honduran Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility (FUNDAHRSE), chambers of commerce, and several civil society organizations, was pivotal in enhancing coordination and developing effective, sustainable solutions for the challenges faced by displaced individuals and those at risk in Honduras.

In El Triunfo, south-east Honduras, UNHCR collaborated with the Local Municipal Economic Development Unit to link UNHCR's actions in community-based protection and livelihoods to the municipality's annual operational plan, strengthening synergies and resources.

This multi-faceted approach highlights **UNHCR's ongoing commitment to identification of durable solutions for vulnerable populations** through education and economic empowerment initiatives.

UNHCR supports Honduran youth by promoting education and livelihood opportunities through strategic partnerships.

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We thank the contributions of our donors

as of 31 January 2024

UNHCR is grateful for the contributions of donor countries that contribute to the office in Honduras and to global programmes with flexible funding:

Australian Aid · Belgium partner in development · In partnership with Canada · Irish Aid Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland · UKaid from the British people

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