

Mexico

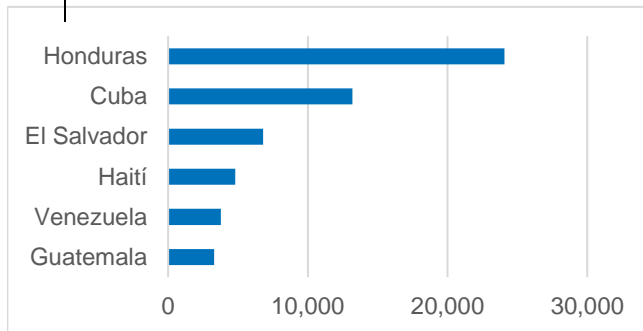
More than **61,800 people** in Mexico applied for asylum in 2024 as of 18 October. In 2023, Mexico received a record number of **140,000 asylum claims**, making it one of the countries with the highest number of asylum claims worldwide.

The Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR) has quadrupled its processing capacity since 2018 with the support from UNHCR. **More than three quarters** of all asylum claims in the country are filed in the South of Mexico.

UNHCR's flagship **Local Integration Programme (PIL)** has provided relocation and integration assistance to more than **48,000 recognized refugees** since 2016, who are now working for more than **600 private companies** in Mexico.

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS 2024

TOP NATIONALITIES

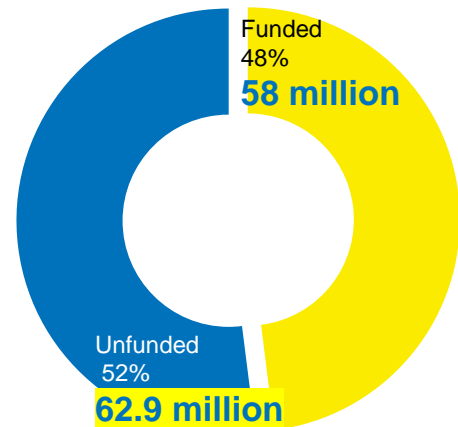


* Data of COMAR available as of 18 October 2024. Due to the migration of data onto a new registration system, these figures may be subject to variation and may not therefore be considered final.

FUNDING (AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2024)

USD 120.9 million

requested for Mexico in 2024



Operational Context

Mexico has evolved from being a country almost exclusively of origin and transit of many refugees and asylum-seekers, to also being a destination. In 2023 more than **140,000 people** from more than **100 nationalities** sought asylum in Mexico, representing a new record and a **17 per cent increase** compared to the previous year. In 2022 almost **120,000 individual asylum applications** were filed, and more than **130,000 applications** were registered in 2021. These numbers pose additional pressure on the already strained asylum system. Though COMAR has made remarkable progress in increasing its processing capacity over the years with the support from UNHCR, it remains insufficient to meet the current needs, also against the background of a lack of legal stay alternatives to asylum. To accelerate the asylum procedures and to prevent misuse of the asylum system by people wanting to transit Mexico and not having an intention of staying, COMAR has introduced **triage** procedures. Among the main challenges faced by asylum-seekers and refugees is the **lack of documentation**, such as Humanitarian Visitor Cards (TVRH), increasing vulnerabilities due to the lack of access to essential services and leading some people to feel compelled to continue the journey north.

Mexico is characterized by complex and dynamic mixed movements with an added dimension of internal displacement. The **southern border** of Mexico has seen a consistent increase of arrivals, reflected in the high number of people seeking to pre-register with COMAR. As of July 2024, more than **three quarters** of all asylum claims were filed in the south of Mexico (Chiapas, Tabasco, and Veracruz). **Hondurans** are the main nationality, followed by Cubans and Haitians.

Mexico City has seen an ever-growing number of asylum claims, accounting for more than **20 per cent¹** of all claims in the country in 2023. Shelters continue to be oversaturated, with the main shelter CAFEMIN working at **500 per cent** capacity. Given the overcrowding, an increasing number of people, mainly families with children, are sleeping on the streets exposed to high protection risks, such as **Gender-based Violence (GBV)**. Churches have opened their doors, hosting more than **1,000 persons** in provisional settlements.

In **Northern Mexico**, several thousand people on the move live in shelters and informal settlements. Extreme weather conditions as well as poor health and hygiene services create important protection risks. UNHCR is supporting shelters to improve their reception conditions with the delivery of core relief items, food, cleaning and hygiene products, dormitory and office equipment. In the last months, there has been a significant increase of displaced Mexicans.

Mexico experienced an increase in **internal displacement** in recent months, due to increased violence perpetrated by criminal groups and land disputes in at least **seven states**. This year, internal displacement has grown especially in the states of Chiapas, Michoacan and Oaxaca. According to the Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (CMDPDH), some **400,000 people** were displaced in Mexico by incidents of violence in recent years.

Working with partners

In Mexico's context of complex mixed movements, UNHCR has sought to strengthen coordinated protection responses, maximising efforts, which is why we work directly with refugees, their communities, and the government. UNHCR also works with other UN Agencies to maximise synergies and avoid duplication. UNHCR co-leads the **UN Inter-agency Group on Human Mobility (GIMH)** together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which brings together ten UN agencies as a cross-cutting area under the UN Cooperation Framework. The GIMH is composed of various working groups on protection, internal displacement, socio-economic inclusion, GBV, shelters, among others. The interagency working groups are coordinated by different UN agencies and include membership of non-UN entities such as national and international NGOs and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

With more than **35 funded partners** across the country, UNHCR continues to strengthen its network to enhance coordination in the areas of protection and durable solutions. In addition, UNHCR Mexico also holds important cooperation agreements with authorities of federal and local governments, academic institutions, and the private sector. UNHCR's presence is especially strong in the field, where enhanced dialogue and collaboration mechanisms are established with state and municipality government authorities. More than **600 private sector companies** partner with UNHCR's **PIL** and actively hire refugees in Aguascalientes, Baja California, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Mexico City, Querétaro, Quintana Roo, Nuevo León, Puebla, San Luis Potosí, and Tabasco.

¹ This includes claims from asylum-seekers in Mexico City summed with those who have been processed by COMAR in Mexico City in addition to asylum claims from people living in parts of the country where there is no COMAR delegation.

Key Priorities

Ensuring access to protection and protection responses

UNHCR provides technical support to COMAR through the **Quality Asylum Initiative** programme since 2018 working on the implementation of simplified and more efficient processing measures, allowing the efficient reception of asylum claims in contexts of mass influx and mixed movements. This includes consistent work to guarantee the quality of interviews, legal assessments, and the integrity of the asylum system. UNHCR also provides financial support in terms of personnel and material resources to COMAR. The Agency continues to advocate for the correct interpretation of Refugee Status Determination standards.

It is a priority for UNHCR to give people on the move **access to timely and reliable information** to inform their decisions, be it about access to international protection, their rights or local integration perspectives. Refugee outreach volunteers, as well as a wide variety of innovative channels are used to produce and distribute information.

Through a robust network of almost **80 lawyers, 60 paralegals, 40 public defenders, 16 law firms and 20 human rights clinics** strategically placed in over **30 cities** across the country, UNHCR provides protection counselling and orientation and representation, guaranteeing **legal assistance** for people in need of international protection. Legal representation of complex cases is taken on by UNHCR's pro-bono allies, who also provide legal opinions on intricate matters both for UNHCR and its NGO partners. At the same time, UNHCR works with almost **20 human rights clinics** in universities in Aguascalientes, Baja California, Chiapas, Coahuila, Guadalajara, Mexico City, Monterrey, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Tabasco, and Veracruz. In 2023, paralegals and lawyers reached more than **236,000 people** with information, legal advice, and representation, ensuring efficient access to asylum or immigration procedures in Mexico.

Through **resettlement**, UNHCR finds durable solutions for the most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers who face protection challenges in the country. In accordance with the Global Compact for Refugees and thanks to the solidarity of countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United States, UNHCR Mexico was able to submit almost **150 cases** to Canada and the United States in 2023, representing more than **480 people**. Some "emergency" priority cases were submitted to Australia.

UNHCR Mexico prioritizes the effective participation of refugees and host communities in its programming as part of its approach in **Community-based Protection**. Yearly participatory assessments and feedback sessions are conducted with people on the move and their hosts to integrate their opinions into the operation's planning exercises. Feedback and complaint mechanisms for refugees and asylum-seekers are in place as a two-way communication channel in accordance with UNHCR's commitment to the Accountability to Affected Populations. Communication with Communities. More than **19,000 queries** were answered through the Helpdesk team in the first eight months of **2024**, the main concern of people calling was the access to the asylum system in Mexico and documentation. During 2023, UNHCR's information channel El Jaguar reached more than **4.5 million Facebook users** (a monthly average of **386,000 users**), registered almost **7.5 million visits** to its page (a monthly average of **619,000 visits**) and its publications generated more than **330,000 interactions** (a monthly average of **28,000 interactions**).

Meaningful participation is key to ensure a conducive protection environment. Therefore, UNHCR is strengthening **Refugee-led organizations (RLOs)** through workshops, periodic dialogues, as well as supporting community initiatives through the implementation of Grant Agreements. UNHCR is also accompanying COMAR, and other authorities' institutional efforts to foster the inclusion and participation of refugees in discussions that inform important decision-making processes which directly affect their lives. UNHCR is also supporting the participation of refugees in meaningful events in the international arena. Examples are the **Global Refugee Forum** in which several refugee women participated, and a Venezuelan athlete participating in the **Refugee Olympic Team**.

Reception conditions and access to services with attention to specific needs

In Mexico, **shelters** play a significant role in the humanitarian response and in the delivery of protection services to people forced to flee. They provide not only accommodation, but also access to information, assistance to specific needs, legal orientation and advice, medical support, and psychosocial assistance. In partnership with 26 **shelters** and three **shelter networks**, UNHCR ensured that more than 36,101 persons accessed comprehensive assistance in 2024, including adequate housing, medical care, and psychosocial support. In close collaboration with ICRC, IOM, and UNICEF, UNHCR supported 80 **shelters** in 2024 through interventions including infrastructure improvement, staffing, distribution of Non-Food Items and capacity building. So far, UNHCR implemented the spotlight protection tool across **105** of the **119 shelters**. Shelters with a yellow (41 shelters) or red (28 shelters) are prioritized for support by UNHCR through protection interventions and development of work plans to reduce risks. In 2024, we supported the Hospitality Solidarity Shelter Network by implementing and training two generations of full-time volunteers for six consecutive months. Both generations of volunteers assisted 14 shelters in Mexico, located in Tabasco, Chiapas, Querétaro, Nuevo León, Mexico City, Baja

California, Coahuila, and Sonora. Additionally, this year a monthly training program was established for shelters in Mexico. Trainings are conducted virtually and target approximately 128 shelters. To date, sessions have been held on the following topics: Civil Protection Programs for Shelters, Fundraising for Shelter Management, Internally Displaced Persons, Authorized Donors, Volunteering, Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PEAS), Child Protection, and Humanitarian Assistance for the LGBTIQ+ population.

UNHCR implements a cash-based **Humanitarian Assistance Programme** through the disbursement of Multi-Purpose Cash Grants allowing asylum-seekers considered as most vulnerable, to be able to cover most of their essential needs during their asylum process.

UNHCR has strengthened the inclusion of refugee children in the national child protection system to address their specific needs and ensure timely and comprehensive protection responses, in close coordination with UNICEF. In addition, UNHCR is improving reception conditions and access to asylum for children and advocating for the eradication of the detention of children on the move. Through its partners, UNHCR seeks to ensure alternative care arrangements for asylum-seeking and refugee children, including educational activities and school enrolment. In partnership with Save the Children, UNHCR implemented psychosocial and recreational activities for more than **9,000 children** in **twelve child-friendly spaces** in shelters across the country. To prevent family violence, UNHCR also supports peaceful coexistence activities and positive parenting strategies. UNHCR and Save the Children provided specialized case management services to almost **1,300 asylum-seeking and refugee children** and referred them to **Child Protection Authorities** and other services to ensure their access to education and other programs.

UNHCR seeks to increase community awareness and prevent the risk of **Gender-based Violence (GBV)** through capacity-building and coordination with partners. Between January and August 2024, UNHCR's specialized partners provided a quality multi-sectoral response to over **800 GBV survivors**. As part of the GBV risk mitigation strategy, UNHCR partners are evaluated according to IASC standards on protection against **sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**. During the same time period, **more than 1,100 staff from UNHCR and UNHCR partners, key government counterparts and other organizations** participated in trainings on GBV prevention, including techniques for safe disclosure, survivor protection, interview techniques to prevent secondary trauma and quality case management. In addition, **365 staff members, partner staff and key counterparts** participated in UNHCR trainings on PSEA so far in 2024.

Sustainable solutions for refugees

Thousands of recognized refugees continue to choose to relocate to cities with more formal employment prospects through **UNHCR's local integration programme** known as **PIL**. Some **11,000** people were relocated between January and September 2024. Once relocated, UNHCR accompanies participants to access employment, long-term accommodation, education, and health services. Since its inception in 2016, more than **47,000 people** have participated and benefited from the program. An additional **105,000 individuals** have been assisted with *in-situ* integration. UNHCR has cooperation agreements with federal and state authorities, employment offices, and more than **600 private companies** hiring refugees. Recent studies of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean estimate **US\$13.4 million** of tax contributions per year were generated by the first **45,000 participants** of the program.

In 2024, **nearly 400** refugees have submitted their naturalization requests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 75 per cent Venezuelans, 10 per cent Salvadorians and 9 per cent Hondurans. Nearly 1,000 refugees have received orientation regarding the process, and 93 refugees, who were accompanied by UNHCR and its partners, have obtained their naturalization certificates.

UNHCR supports young refugees to access higher education in Mexico. Under the **Global DAFI Programme**. More than **46 students** were supported in 2024, with **16 DAFI students** graduating this year. UNHCR and partners supported another **90 students** within its tertiary education programme, including more than **50 per cent** women. As part of the programme, **32 students** were referred to university programmes.

Internal Displacement

UNHCR supports Mexican authorities and civil society in the development of regulatory and public policy frameworks that enable the **protection of IDPs and the achievement of durable solutions**. UNHCR has been working with the Government on **five main axes** since late 2019: (i) technical assistance for the development of regulatory and public policy frameworks; (ii) information management; (iii) capacity building; (iv) strengthening coordination spaces; and (v) promotion of operational responses. UNHCR provides technical assistance to all three branches of government.

UNHCR and OHCHR collaborated with the Migration Policy, Registration, and Identity of Persons Unit (UPMRIP) to organize the **International Meeting on Human Mobility 2023**. As part of this initiative, they facilitated the academic visit of the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur. During her visit, Ms. Gaviria presented a report authored by her predecessor, which was initially delivered during an official visit to Mexico in 2022. The Special Rapporteur's report

highlights the multifaceted causes of internal displacement, including violence from organized crime, land conflicts or climate change. It also stated that internal displacement predominantly affects **indigenous Peoples, women and girls, children, relatives of disappeared persons, human rights defenders, journalists, and LGBTIQ+ persons**.

At the request of the Supreme Court of Justice, UNHCR and ICRC coordinated the **Manual on Internal Displacement for Justice Institutions**, a key tool in the resolution of cases before the Federal Judiciary. Together with UPMRIP of the Ministry of the Interior, UNHCR has developed a **guide for registration and referral pathways for IDPs** at the national level to support the authorities. UNHCR seeks to strengthen its technical support in the **analysis of data**. To do this, a report on the population exercise undertaken with **20 actors** in Chihuahua was presented to the State Commission on Internal Forced Displacement. Likewise, UNHCR advocates for the inclusion of internal displacement in **statistical exercises**, e.g., for the inclusion of a question on internal displacement in the Intercensal population Survey of Mexico.

At the local level, UNHCR continues to support the states of **Chiapas, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, and Sinaloa** to strengthen and harmonize their instruments on internal displacement. In some cases, technical assistance has been provided to address emergencies from a protection perspective. For example, when major internal displacements occurred in Apatzingán, Michoacán, UNHCR and UNICEF supported the local authorities to respond within 48 hours. UNHCR shared standards for protection in emergencies, a tool oriented to deploy referral pathways for the population, including details on shelter spaces and non-food items. In addition, together with UNICEF, psychosocial first aid strategies were provided, among other actions.

Following a request from the state of **Guerrero**, UNHCR provided technical tools and standards for the adaptation of its legal framework on internal displacement. UNHCR, ICRC and UNICEF led a series of inter-agency trainings. After the damage Hurricane Otis left in Acapulco and Coyuca, Guerrero in October 2023, UNHCR delivered core relief items to shelters in the affected municipalities.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds. As of 30 September 2024, UNHCR Mexico is **48 per cent funded** having required **US\$120.9 million** to respond to the needs of thousands of asylum-seekers, refugees and those internally displaced in Mexico. **Timely funding** is urgent to ensure the continuity of our activities. UNHCR's humanitarian and durable solutions response in Mexico is made possible thanks to the **generous support** of major donors who have contributed unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations, and to donors who have generously contributed directly to UNHCR operations in Mexico.

Special thanks **all our donors in 2024** (as of October 2024):



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Private Donors Netherlands | Private Donors Republic of Korea | Private donors Spain
Private Donors Sweden | Private Donors United States of America**

UNHCR thanks all our individual donors who contribute to our mission every month.

Read more at : [UNHCR Mexico Annual Report 2023](#); [UNHCR Mexico Website](#); [Mexico Global Focus](#); [Mexico Data Portal](#); [Global Appeal 2024](#); [Twitter](#).