UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

After being forced to flee, Isabel and her family found hope and support at UNHCR's Support Space "By Your Side". © UNHCR / Franklyn Ruiz

El Salvador

February 2025 | Monthly Update #2

Our 2025 response in figures

13,957
people received support through UNHCR's helpline, Support Spaces and mobile teams.

444
individuals helped with psychosocial support and mental health services.

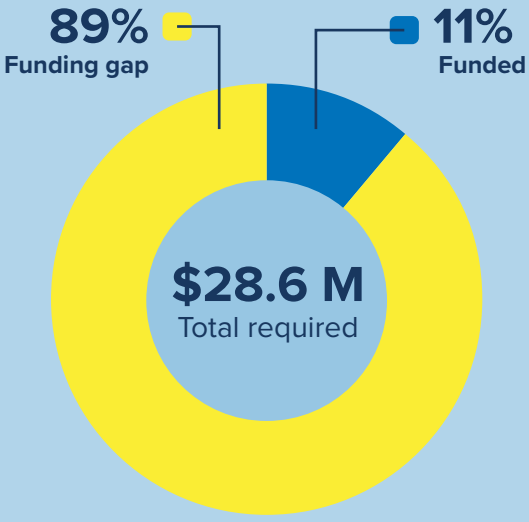
535
people reached through activities to prevent violence against women.

70
people trained in skills for employment or self-employment, supported with vocational training or linked to decent job opportunities.

118
people registered with biometrics.

Funding

11% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 28 February 2025.



*These figures are regularly updated and reflect cumulative data for 2025.

The community of Chinameca celebrates the construction of a community centre CUBO, a future hub for opportunities.
© UNHCR / Jacqueline Henriquez

The community of Las Margaritas in Soyapango gathered to inaugurate their basketball court, revamped through the UNHCR-supported ReVive tu Espacio initiative. | © UNHCR / Juliana Paz

Participants reflect on their community networks during a training session of the Súper Pilas livelihoods programme, supported by UNHCR.
© UNHCR / Andrea Villa

Highlights

- UNHCR joined the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and other national authorities in the first stone-laying ceremonies for the construction of new Urban Centres for Welfare and Opportunities (CUBO) in Altavista, Distrito Italia, and Chinameca. Since 2021, UNHCR support these community centres to promote psychosocial support and opportunities for youth in communities historically affected by violence and forced displacement.

- In Las Margaritas, Soyapango, UNHCR, along World Vision, the municipality of San Salvador Este and local leaders inaugurated a sports field, a park, and revamped basketball courts under the “ReVive tu Espacio” participatory initiative. These initiatives promote integration and peaceful coexistence through the recovery of public spaces in communities previously under gang control.

- Fifty-four participants began training in the Súper Pilas livelihoods programme as part of the first cohort for 2025. During the first session, participants reflected on their community and family relations, resilience, and dreams. This programme, supported by UNHCR, seeks to help them in establishing life plans and implementing their business ideas.

Protect

- To support the provision of specialized attention for asylum-seekers and refugees, four specialized lawyers from the General Attorney’s Office (PGR) enhanced their expertise on forced displacement and international protection through a training by UNHCR. As part of PGR’s Internal Displacement and Childhood units, these professionals provide information on rights and legal assistance for people seeking international protection in El Salvador.

- Officials from the Ombudsperson’s Office (PDDH) enhanced their knowledge protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and the referral of cases of violence against women and girls in a workshop led by UNHCR. With increased capabilities, the staff will be able to identify the specific needs of people forcibly displaced and at risk of displacement.

Members of the communal commission of Las Margaritas, Soyapango, receive tools and protective equipment to strengthen their preparedness for weather-related emergencies.
© UNHCR / Mariana Colocho

Respond

- In collaboration with the General Directorate of Civil Protection, UNHCR delivered first-aid kits, tools, and protective equipment to communal commissions in Tinetti, Las Margaritas, La Campanera, 1° de Mayo, Chancala Alta, Lomas de Mónico, and 10 de Octubre. This donation complements efforts to strengthen local capacities in risk mapping and emergency response planning, and helps communities affected by historical violence and forced displacement to better prepare for extreme weather-related disasters.

Empower

Volunteers of the Judicial Facilitator's Programme in Morazán learned about forced displacement in a training by UNHCR.
© Supreme Court of Justice

- In support of the Supreme Court's Judicial Facilitators programme, UNHCR held a workshop on forced displacement for 70 volunteers and peace judges in Morazán, a department bordering Honduras. These volunteers, who serve as community mediators, play a key role in peaceful conflict resolution and in identifying and referring individuals with specific needs, including those forcibly displaced and at risk of displacement.
- Residents of various communities in the departments of Ahuachapán, La Paz, San Salvador and San Miguel identified community needs and planned activities for 2025 through community mapping exercises led by UNHCR and World Vision. Participants learned about UNHCR's operations in the field, forced displacement, and discusses collaboration opportunities to expand outreach for the identification of people with specific needs.
- Twenty outreach volunteers from community-based groups in San Salvador, San Miguel, Santa Ana, Sonsonate, and San Vicente departments enhanced their understanding of forced displacement in a training by UNHCR. With increased capabilities, outreach volunteers are able to identify individuals with specific needs within their communities and refer them for adequate assistance.

Solve

Under the "My First Job" programme, 21 displaced and at-risk youth strengthened their skills in a workshop to access job opportunities.
© UNHCR / Andrea Villa

- Under the "My First Job" programme, 21 forcibly displaced and at-risk youth from various departments enhanced their soft skills and abilities for employment through a one-day workshop by UNHCR and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MTPS). Participants will soon be linked to decent job opportunities in the private sector.
- In collaboration with the National Commission for Micro and Small Enterprises (CONAMYPE), UNHCR conducted a progress assessment with 11 forcibly displaced entrepreneurs who had previously received UNHCR support under the Súper Pilas livelihoods programme. The assessment identified key needs, and CONAMYPE will now offer tailored assistance to strengthen these ventures and expand their livelihood opportunities.
- Through collaboration between UNHCR and University College London, 20 representatives from CONAPINA, PGR, Fe y Alegría, and community teachers learned about innovative music-based methodologies. Participants learned techniques to help children in vulnerable situations and those affected by forced displacement heal and build resilience.

Stories from the field

A future full of hope: the story of Isabel and her family

After being forced to flee, Isabel and her family found hope and support at UNHCR's Support Space "By Your Side".
© UNHCR / Franklyn Ruiz

Isabel , 47 years old, and her children, lived for years in a rural community in the central region of El Salvador. At the time, her children were teenagers and could not play outside or transit freely due to the control of gangs. She and her children received direct threats from gang members. "I feared that they would harm my children. We had to flee to a new community. When we arrived, we didn't know anyone. It was very difficult," she recalls.

Through social media, Isabel learned about UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and called its helpline. She was then referred to the A Tu Lado (By Your Side) Support Space, where she received guidance and psychological support. "Thanks to the help we received, we found a beacon of light," Isabel shares.

At the Support Space, UNHCR linked her to livelihood programmes in which she received training, tools to rethink her life plan, and support to start a business. Isabel began a clothing sales venture and with effort and perseverance, it grew into a small store.

This experience transformed Isabel's life and that of her entire family. "My son was able to finish his studies. He graduated in business administration and now he helps manage our small family business," she says proudly.

The Support Spaces are safe and accessible facilities for people who have been forced to flee are at heightened need. In these spaces, UNHCR—together with national institutions like the Directorate for Attention of Victims (DAV) and organizations such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Doctors of the World, and the Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (ORMUSA), among others—provides information on rights and comprehensive humanitarian assistance and information to access services, legal advice, psychological care, child-friendly areas, and referral to opportunities.

Since July 2021, 15,000 people received support from the A Tu Lado Support Spaces in San Salvador, Santa Ana, San Miguel, and San Vicente. In addition, four mobile units complement the work of the A Tu Lado Spaces with roving teams that reached nearly 200,000 people in different areas of the country.

Isabel dreams of expanding her business, opening new stores, and helping other displaced families. "These spaces truly have been by our side. There we received the support we needed and reminded us that we are not alone. Today I look to the future with hope," Isabel says with gratitude.

In 2025, UNHCR is appealing for USD 28.6 million to provide protection, responses, empowerment and solutions to refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons in El Salvador. The best way to support UNHCR's appeal is through unearmarked contributions. Such flexible funding at the global level is key in allowing a timely response to evolving needs wherever required.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support in 2025 of:

Australian Aid · Belgium partner in development · KOICA Korea International Cooperation Agency · Irish Aid · Cooperación Española · UKaid · PEACEBUILDING FUND · UN HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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