EL SALVADOR

QUATERLY UPDATE | APRIL-JUNE 2026

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Our 2026 response in figures

*These figures are regularly updated and reflect cumulative data for 2026.

8,213 people
supported through UNHCR's helpline, Support Spaces "By Your Side" and mobile teams.

192 people
supported with mental health services and psychosocial support.

98 civil servants
from key institutions with enhanced knowledge on international protection.

231 people
people received support with legal guidance and information on documentation.

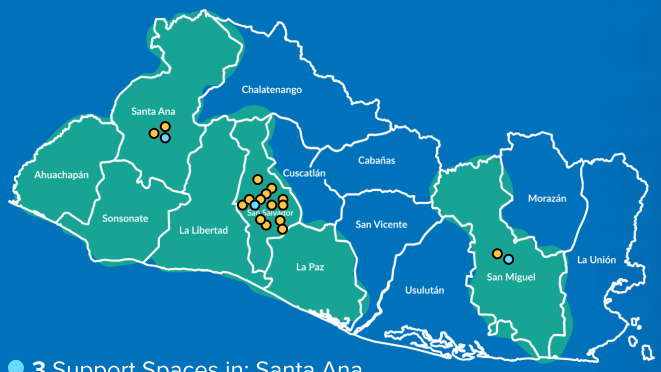
237 people
people consulted through participatory assessments.

1,571 people
in host communities with enhanced capabilities to promote peaceful coexistence and solutions.

55 people
received health care services.

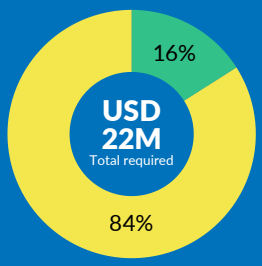
78 people
supported with emergency shelter.

UNHCR's presence in El Salvador



- **3** Support Spaces in: Santa Ana, San Salvador and San Miguel
- **16** prioritized communities and inter-community groups
- **60** communities identified with specific needs

Financial requirements 2026



16% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 30 June 2026.

Julio, a refugee in El Salvador, shares how soccer has played a key role in rebuilding his life after being forced to flee.
© UNHCR/Juliana Paz

HIGHLIGHTS

- An event to commemorate World Refugee Day led by the Ministry of Foreign affairs brought together national authorities, the diplomatic corps, and organizations to reaffirm El Salvador's commitment to protection and opportunities for forcibly displaced people seeking protection in the country. The first-ever refugees and asylum-seekers's entrepreneurs fair allowed them to showcase their products, culinary traditions, cultural expressions and contribution to their host communities.

- As part of efforts to ensure access to territory and the right to seek asylum, UNHCR, the Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER), the General Attorney's Office (PGR), and the Ombudsperson's Office (PDDH) held training sessions at border crossing points for 21 officials from key government institutions and partner organizations. The sessions reinforced their knowledge on refugee status determination, international protection and referral pathways.

- With support from the Humanitarian Fund for El Salvador, UNHCR began a six-month project to expand access to protection and humanitarian assistance. The project resumes activities on hold due to financial constraints since 2025 and aims to reach approximately 29,000 people in 19 prioritized municipalities. UNHCR implements the project in coordination with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Salvadoran Foundation for Development and Minimum Housing (FUNDASAL) and Doctors of the World, delivering legal assistance, psychosocial support, case management, community-based protection initiatives and support to people with urgent needs.

Josefina and her niece, both asylum-seekers in El Salvador, showcased their products and their skills as hairstylists during the fair commemorating World Refugee Day.
© UNHCR/Pan xin

PROTECT

- Refugees and asylum-seekers strengthened their understanding of procedures and available services and opportunities in El Salvador through the Support Spaces "By Your Side". In San Miguel and Santa Ana, 51 participants received guidance on legal documentation, school enrolment and life skills. UNHCR conducted these activities with the General Attorney's Office (PGR) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

- As part of the implementation of a reparation measure, in La Campanera, Soyapango, around 75 women participated in two sessions on violence against women and girls and referral pathways, with the participation of the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), PDDH, the Salvadoran Institute for Women's Development (ISDEMU), FUNDASAL and the Municipality.

- As lead of the Protection Sector, UNHCR held training sessions on the Centrality of Protection and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), enhancing the capabilities of 110 staff from partner organizations and agencies implementing activities under the Humanitarian Fund for El Salvador. The sessions strengthened participants' ability to identify protection needs and navigate referral pathways for timely support.

UNHCR and PGR staff during an informative session for asylum-seekers and refugees in Santa Ana.
© UNHCR/ Pan Xin

Youth from the Lirios del Norte community in Cuscatancingo takes part in a participatory assessment led by UNHCR and FUNDASAL to identify local needs, protection risks and priorities. © UNHCR/ Pan Xin

RESPOND

- UNHCR and IRC, in coordination with the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence (CONAPINA), started community-based psychosocial support activities for children, adolescents and caregivers in neighbourhoods affected by historical violence and forced displacement. The intervention supports identification, referral, case management and follow-up, including access to family reunification, child protection and other specialized services, and aims to reach around 800 children, adolescents and caregivers.

- UNHCR strengthened support for returnees with protection needs identified at the Centre for the Attention of Migrants (GAMI), as part of an intervention expected to assist 500 people. Together with the Directorate for Attention of Victims (DAV) and partners, UNHCR identified people requiring psychosocial support, legal assistance, emergency shelter or access to services, and coordinated referrals for people without support networks.

- UNHCR and the General Directorate of Civil Protection began the process to establish Community Civil Protection Commissions in 15 communities vulnerabe to disasters and affected by displacement. More than 100 residents joined introductory sessions on community roles, coordination with Civil Protection and risk prevention and mitigation, strengthening local preparedness in San Salvador, Santa Ana, San Vicente, La Libertad, Chalatenango and San Miguel.

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EMPOWER

- UNHCR, together with partner FUNDASAL, launched participatory assessments across 16 prioritized communities and community groups to ensure that affected populations, including refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people and host community members, take part in shaping local protection and solutions initiatives. The exercises engage diverse groups, including youth, women, men and older persons, to identify needs, priorities, protection risks and capacities. The findings will inform community work plans and community-led initiatives.

- Under the “Resilient Communities” project, implemented with partner FUNDASAL, 56 leaders from prioritized communities, including Lirios del Norte, La Campanera and Las Margaritas, enhanced their skills in conflict resolution, leadership and community organization. These activities support peaceful coexistence, social cohesion and community self-management in areas historically affected by violence and displacement.

SOLVE

- Through certified documentation issued in coordination with the General Attorney’s Office (PGR), 17 refugees and asylum-seekers were able to open bank accounts, marking an important step towards financial inclusion. This enabled greater access tobroader economic opportunities in El Salvador.

- Six refugees began nationalization processes during the reporting period and received case management support throughout the procedure. Follow-up and coordination continue with the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME), the Attorney General’s Office (PGR), and the National Registry of Natural Persons (RNPN).

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STORIES FROM THE FIELD

For Julio César, a refugee in El Salvador, soccer has been a source of belonging, hope and new opportunities.
© UNHCR/ Jacqueline Henriquez

A new home, one goal at a time

Through soccer, Julio Cesar found belonging, solidarity and new opportunities to rebuild his life in El Salvador.

Julio began playing when he was seven years old and dreamed of developing as an athlete. However, violence forced him to flee his country, leaving behind his home, his team and the life he had built. “When I left my country, I knew that wherever I went, football could open opportunities for me,” he says.

After arriving in El Salvador, Julio received support from UNHCR and partner organizations to meet his basic needs and during the asylum process. The Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER) recognized him as a refugee and supported him in the process of obtaining Salvadoran nationality.

With support from UNHCR, Julio also completed vocational training and started a small automotive parts business. The income now helps him support his wife and daughter as they work towards their dream of building their own home.

Football has also helped Julio become part of his new community. By joining a local team, he has built friendships with players from different nationalities and strengthened his sense of belonging in the country he now calls home. He also plays with children and young people in his community, sharing his experience, offering guidance and donating sports equipment whenever possible.

Through football, Julio has found connection, stability and a way to help others, showing how sport can bring communities together and support refugees as they rebuild their lives with dignity.

UNHCR supports El Salvador in strengthening its asylum system and the institutional capacity of CODER, in line with the country's commitments under the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) — among them, promoting community organization and rebuilding the social fabric through sport, art and culture.

In 2026, UNHCR in El Salvador appeals for USD 22 million to provide protection responses and solutions to people affected by forced displacement.

UNHCR, the UN Agency for Refugees is thankful for the support in 2026 of:

In partnership with Canada · German Humanitarian Assistance · Irish Aid · KOICA Korea International Cooperation Agency · Cooperación Española · Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft / Confédération suisse / Confederazione Svizzera / Confederaziun svizra – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC · UKaid from the British people · RHPF LAC Regional Humanitarian Pooled Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean El Salvador

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