UNHCR ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

# FACTSHEET
*August 2023*

## CHOLUTECA

The prevalent presence of people in mixed movements in the south-eastern border area of Honduras as a consequence of mobility restrictions after the 2020 pandemic and internal changes in Nicaragua, as well as more recently the overflow of people in mixed movements in the region have regenerated the need to **strengthen UNHCR's field** presence in Honduras.

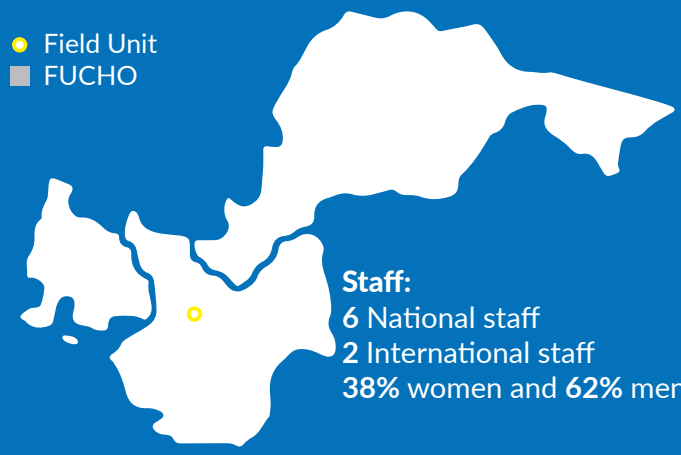
One of the objectives of the **Global Compact on Refugees** is to improve the conditions of access to the territory. This office seeks to support the State and contribute in particular to this objective.

UNHCR is identifying **new routes** used in mixed movements, **protection risks** on the route and addressing and coordinating **humanitarian response** needs in a timely manner.

## THE PEOPLE WE SERVE
FIELD UNIT CHOLUTECA 2023

UNHCR's field unit in Choluteca was established to cover the **south-eastern** border of Honduras, comprising the departments of Valle, on the border with El Salvador; Choluteca and El Paraíso, on the border with Nicaragua. UNHCR monitors regular and irregular border points on the entry spots for **people in mixed movements** seeking protection in Honduras or transiting northwards. A weekly average of 9,000 people enter through these points, mainly through Guasaule and Trojes, according to UNHCR's monitoring. Part of this population is in need of international protection. In addition, these departments have a presence of **people at-risk of displacement** or internally displaced due to violence and that required protection, as well as communities affected by the impact of climate change disasters.

## UNHCR PRESENCE




**Staff:**
**6** National staff
**2** International staff
**38%** women and **62%** men

### PARTNERS

World Vision
CARITAS de Honduras
MÉDICOS DEL MUNDO
CONADEH
INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

## Response

*UNHCR's response integrates regional and community protection mechanisms at the national and local level. In addition, UNHCR works with monitoring of mixed movements, identification of persons with international protection needs, strengthening existing reception mechanisms, training, and technical support for local authorities, strengthening the humanitarian response, amongst several other actions to prevent, care and respond to forced displacement and mixed movements in Honduras.*

## PROTECT

**Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement benefit from a comprehensive protection mechanism.**

**BORDER MONITORING |** UNHCR monitors regular and irregular entry points in the three departments it has a presence along the southeast border of Honduras. Apart from direct monitoring exercises, UNHCR counts with the support of 62 community leaders of 37 communities, as well as shelters, contact with officials from the National Institute of Migration (INM), the International Health Bureau (OSI), and other international and national humanitarian organisations. At the same time, UNHR is developing processes to identify needs and priorities for community protection.

These efforts include leadership training to strengthen communities' capacity to respond to protection situations of people in mixed movements, internal displacement, climate change disasters and risk management; articulation with institutional actors that ensure human rights and the self-protection of these communities; promotion of non-discrimination, and peaceful coexistence as strategies to promote local integration, a favourable environment for protection and prevention of violence; and strengthening communities in self-protection. In addition, UNHCR stablished relationships with women and youth networks, as well as LGBTIQ+ organisations, initiating training processes on issues of international protection, mixed movements, and internal displacement.

**PROTECTION |** In order to strengthen the services provided by the State, UNHCR continuously provides training for multiple actors present at the borders of Nicaragua and El Salvador to identify international protection cases and refer them to UNHCR. In addition, UNHCR guarantees people in need of international protection can access the asylum system, that the principle of non-refoulement is respected and that cases are referred to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) for humanitarian assistance, providing support for comprehensive case management. Additionally, UNHCR identifies situations of human rights violations, makes the appropriate referrals and advocates with decision-makers to mitigate the identified situation.

**ASYLUM |** UNHCR strengthens the asylum system through support to human rights officers from the National Institute of Migration, in addition to providing training for local public officials on the asylum system in Honduras and referral channels.

## RESPOND

**Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement meet their basic needs in a safe environment.**

**PROTECTION BY PRESENCE |** UNHCR is the only institution of the United Nations System under the protection sector with a permanent presence in the southeast region. Its presence calls attention of the national and international communities to the local problem of internal displacement in this area. UNHCR identifies and refers cases to its Internal Displacement Sub-Unit, as well as refers cases to available services and resettlement when applicable.

**COORDINATION |** UNHCR leads the Local Response Team for the Southern Border, which belongs to the Protection Cluster. This Team works in coordination with all humanitarian actors that have a presence on the southern border to provide humanitarian response to people in mixed movements in the municipalities of Danlí, Trojes and El Paraiso. Additionally, the Team works alongside Cluster coordinators, to discuss all relevant aspects of the response. In the first seven months of 2023, 144,000 people were served in the departments of Choluteca and El Paraíso.

In addition, UNHCR actively participates in the Choluteca Departmental Committee for Attention to People in Mixed Movements and in Need of International Protection, supporting the response to persons in mixed movements in the Department and providing technical support to the coordination platform. UNHCR is also part of the Southern Risk Management Table, which in 2023, thanks to the coordinated work, a Commission on Displacement due to Climate Change was created.

**TEMPORARY COLLECTIVE SHELTERS |** UNHCR strengthens reception mechanisms in temporary collective shelters in Choluteca, San Marcos de Colón, Danlí, El Paraiso and Trojes through donations of shelter kits, hygiene and WASH items, items and it also provides technical support and training. Some of these accommodations offer legal assistance and psychological support for different people forced to flee in connection with a Honduran university and its students. On average in 2023, 6,000 people have been weekly served with shelter services in these locations, thanks to the support of multiple organisations, including UNHCR.

**INFORMATION |** UNHCR and its partner World Vision established three Mobile Information Services (SIM) to attend people in mixed movements in strategic areas of Choluteca (Guasaule, San Marcos de Colon and Choluteca) and El Paraíso (moving between Danlí and Las Manos) and in Trojes. The SIM moves between these different locations on a weekly basis to provide information about international protection, the asylum system in Honduras, address general questions and serve as a mechanism to articulate different protection and case referral services. From January to July 2023, 44,100 persons have been served.

**HEALTH |** Through its partner Doctors of the World, UNHCR provides emergency medical assistance for physical and mental health needs for asylum-seekers. Services are delivered in coordination with the regional health system to provide assistance to those in need, all of them asylum seekers.

Additionally, to ensure access to public health services for people in mixed movements, UNHCR advocates for their inclusion through articulation with the Migration Committee of the Department of Choluteca, as well as in meetings with government authorities. In addition, UNHCR strengthens the health infrastructure with donations and provisions for the improvement of services.

## EMPOWER

**Displaced communities and communities at risk of displacement can mitigate the differentiated impact of violence.**

UNHCR works with asylum-seekers and refugees to identify opportunities for community organisation and networking that will enable them to strengthen local integration and coordination with institutions to guarantee their rights.

UNHCR supports women's networks and the various civil society and local government mechanisms set up for survivors of gender-based violence to guarantee women can live a life free of violence. UNHCR has provided training to three women networks in Choluteca and El Paraiso. Furthermore, alongside with Ciudad Mujer, UNHCR is providing a Diploma on Gender-based Violence and women human rights with all Municipal Offices for Women of the Department of Choluteca in order to strengthen their capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence considering is the fourth cause of forced displacement in the country.

**SOLVE** Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement have access to solutions that contribute to breaking the cycle of violence and forced displacement.

**LIVELIHOODS |** UNHCR has prioritised four technical-vocational training centres to generate opportunities for young people, refugees, asylum seekers, LGBTIQ+ persons, and women from communities at risk of displacement due to violence or climate change in Choluteca. The centres were provided with equipment in order to strengthen their training offer.

UNHCR also supports the internal forced displacement unit of the National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH) in Choluteca. CONADEH identifies and refers international protection cases to UNHCR and, in turn, UNHCR refers people in mixed movements who suffered extortion to CONADEH for follow-up case management.

Furthermore, UNHCR has been working to raise awareness of UNHCR's activities to prevent forced displacement in the municipalities of Choluteca and El Paraíso and to call attention to this issue.

## We thank the contributions of our donors

By 31 August 2023

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

**Also, we thank the contributions of our global private donors in Australia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Spain, United Kingdom, and United States of America.**

## For more information:

**Caroline Scotti Vilain**
*Associate Reporting Officer, Honduras*

scottivi@unhcr.org
+504 2270-7155,
+504 3174 3122

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