



Housing, Land and Property Protection as a Strategy for Conflict Prevention and Promotion of Solutions to Forced Displacement in Honduras

Results and Challenges in the Identification and Protection of Abandoned Property in Contexts of Generalized Violence

Context of Forced Displacement

The impact of violence and human rights violations in Honduras is evidenced by the magnitude of asylum seekers (the sixth country with the highest number of asylum seekers in 2021) and forced internal displacement (2.7% of the population was affected by internal displacement between 2004-2018). The violence is associated with criminal activities linked to drug trafficking and the presence of gangs. The control exercised over various communities and territories by criminal groups and the limitations of the State to guarantee security and protect fundamental rights are manifested in (i) extortion, (ii) forced recruitment, (iii) gender-based violence, (iv) restrictions on freedom and mobility, and (v) **dispossession of housing, land, and property (HLP)**, as the main structural causes of forced displacement in Honduras.

Challenges

Honduras has less than 30% of its land clearly identified in images or maps in a national cadastre, and less than 27% of the land is officially registered. In addition, there is a lack of land titles and/or multiple titles to the same property.

Widespread violence and extortion severely affect property rights. In addition, housing and lands are dispossessed and destroyed, which threatens and violates the rights to a dignified life, housing, and socio-economic security, among others. In this context, it is necessary to:

Support the State to strengthen mechanisms to guarantee security over the HLP rights of the population in general and ensure adequate and expeditious routes to guarantee security of tenure of displaced persons' assets.

- Deepen the analysis of land use planning, urbanization processes and integration of "informal cities" to contribute to the inclusion and modeling of public intervention schemes.
- Contribute with the State in the design of the mechanism of material protection of the VTP abandoned by IDPs.

What UNHCR is doing to promote housing and land protection?

UNHCR is strengthening the technical and operational capacity of the **Property Institute (IP, as per the acronym in Spanish)** to adapt legal frameworks and public policies to ensure the legal and material protection of houses and land of displaced people or those at risk of displacement. The IP is the competent institution for the protection and regularization of property rights in Honduras.



68% of displaced people in Honduras who owned houses or properties no longer have them because they suffered dispossession, usurpation, destruction or because they were forced to sell them.

How UNHCR supports the Property Institute?



- Technical support for the definition of the inter-institutional coordination strategy for the identification, analysis, and registration of property information with signs of abandonment due to forced displacement.

- Promoting the need for a regulatory framework consistent with the guarantee of the economic rights of the displaced population in Honduras.

- Technical assistance for the collection and analysis of information on the typologies of dispossession, usurpation and abandonment of property, and their impact on land and housing tenure of displaced persons in Honduras, to contribute to the design of mechanisms and policies for the protection of property.

- Technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of the IP and other institutional actors to protect the property rights of the displaced population, in line with the Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons, and other international standards.

- Technical and financial support to improve logistical capacities that contribute to the processes of legal protection of property abandoned due to violence, using cadastral georeferencing technologies.

- Technical assistance for the adjustment of the Cadastral Measurement Regulations and Unified Registration Criteria, so that they protect the HLP rights of forcibly displaced and persons at-risk of displacement.



Main achievements

- International recognition of the abandoned property registration process as a Good Practice in the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement for achieving durable solutions.
- Adoption of the Law on the Prevention, Assistance and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons. The law mandates the design and implementation of the **Registry of Abandoned Property**, which will allow the legal and material protection of the HLP against dispossession and usurpation.
- Design of the **institutional tool for the identification of properties with signs of abandonment for reasons of violence** in the cadastral measurement exercises carried out by the IP, using **geographical, cadastral, and spatial information systems**, incorporating it into the processes of the Cadastral Directorate.
- IP staff trained to advise displaced populations or those at risk of displacement on the judicial or administrative mechanisms they could access to ensure the protection of their property.
- **More than 89 properties with signs of abandonment entered the virtual module of assets abandoned due to forced displacement, which is hosted on the Unified Registry System (SURE) platform of the IP.**

Current processes

- To date, more than 36 HLPs have been identified by the Secretariat of Human Rights - - as the entity that coordinates the response to forced displacement - to be protected through the mechanisms established by law.
- Review, analysis and adjustment of the normative frameworks (regulations and manuals) of the IP in relation to registration and cadastral measurement criteria, to make them more sensitive to the situation of conflict and violence in the country, usurpation and destruction.
- Design and implementation of the Registry of Abandoned Assets (RBA), in coordination with the Secretariat of Human Rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Internal Displacement Law.
- Piloting of the identification card of abandoned HLP due to events associated with violence in the cadastral measurement exercises carried out by the IP, systematization and analysis.

Next steps

- Validation of the technical proposals for adjustment and modification of the IP's regulatory tools for registration and cadastre by the Board of Directors of the Property Institute (highest decision-making body).
- Adoption of the Regulations of the Displacement Law to make the registry of abandoned goods operational.



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