UNHCR ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

September 2023
Operational Update 21

HONDURAS

Key Figures

+247,000

people have been internally displaced in Honduras as a result of violence between 2004 and 2018.

588,557

Honduran nationals have been returned between January 2015 and 31 July 2023, according to data from CONMIGHO.

340,611

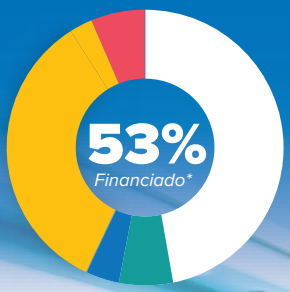
persons of different nationalities entered Honduras irregularly by the end of September 2023, according to the National Migration Institute (INM).

Our Response

60,993

mainly internally displaced persons, but also asylum-seekers, returnees, mixed movements, and host community members were served by UNHCR and its partners by September 2023, with services such as shelter, cash and voucher assistance, community protection, case management and risk mitigation.

Funding



*As of 4 October 2023

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

UNHCR is appealing for USD 30.1 million for its 2023 programme, of which USD16.0 million (53%) is already funded. USD14.1 million is still needed to continue supporting people forcibly displaced, at risk of displacement, asylum-seekers, refugees, and persons in mixed movements.

ACNUR/Danielle Alvarez

Highlights

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. Furthermore, there is a lack of land titles and/or multiple titles to the same property. In a country where generalized violence and extortion severely impact house, land, and property, causing dispossession and usurpation, this context aggravates the impact to those at-risk or forcibly displaced internally. To tackle this, UNHCR and the National Property Institute (IP) are reviewing, analysing and adjusting the Cadastral Measurement Regulations, whose objective is to incorporate the protection of rights related to house, land, and property, according to UNHCR's protection strategy for those properties abandoned and dispossessed. The definition of concepts to be included in the new regulation are being defined, as well as new functions of the Cadastre Directorate in this area are being defined.

UNHCR supported the training of 20 officials of the IP in September to capacitate them on the application of the form for the identification of property abandoned due to violence. The form is being piloted in the Villanueva Sector in Cortés, north of Honduras and at high risk of forced displacement, from 18 September to 8 October.

This form will be applied to approximately

800

properties.

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Context

In September 2023, the lack of consensus to define the new Public Prosecutor Officer generated political polarisation and social unrest. In addition, there has been an increase in the vulnerability of children and in complaints of human rights violations, leaving more people at risk of displacement. This is also the case for journalists and social communicators who are being persecuted, as well as human rights defenders. In this scenario, the following events are highlighted.

Children and youth are evermore exposed to the risks of forced recruitment by organised crime, with high school dropout rates, lack of adequate infrastructure for schools which are getting shut down, and with an estimated 20,000 children being on a street-like situation, on forced labour and vulnerable to drug trafficking association, according to the NGO Casa Allianza. Gang members are also increasingly using social media and the internet to forcibly recruit children and youth.

Similarly, Hondurans are vulnerable to human rights violations, exposing them to risks of forced displacement. In the first semester of 2023, the National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH) reported to have received 5,889 complaints of human rights violations. The numbers increased from an average of 815 complaints per month in 2021 to 863 in 2022, and 982 in the first half of 2023. More than 50 government bodies and state institutions were denounced for violating human rights.

According to CONADEH, in the first semester of 2023 they received

1 complaint
of human rights violations
every 43 minutes.

In addition, between January and July 2023, CONADEH received 21 complaints from journalists and social communicators, the highest number since 2016. They reported being at risk and victims of forced displacement, subject to threats that put at risk the exercise of their profession, their integrity, and their lives.

So far in 2023, at least 10 land rights defenders have been executed.

During the weekend of 23 September, Juana María Martínez, a Pech indigenous woman, was murdered in the Department of Olancho, along with a person whose identity is still unknown. Meanwhile, José David Fortín, secretary general of a peasant group, was murdered.

Violence is the main cause of forced displacement in Honduras and forced recruitment, extortion, gender-based violence and climate change related disasters are amongst its main triggers. Considering the increase in violence, human rights violation in Honduras and political instability, more people are at risk of forced displacement in the reporting month.

The number of femicides in the country continues to increase.

According to the Center for Women's Rights (CDM), as of September 30 2023, the following have been committed

317 femicides

exceeding the total number of the previous year (308).

RESPONSE

PROTECT

The rights of the people UNHCR serves are recognised and guaranteed through the national legal framework and public policies.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK I

Honduras is rapidly advancing in the implementation of the Law for the Prevention, Care and Protection of internally displaced persons, a process closely supported by UNHCR.

In September, UNHCR, within the framework of the sessions of the Inter-institutional Commission for the Protection of Forcedly Displaced Persons (CIPPDEF), presented the proposed methodology for participatory consultations with displaced population as envisioned in the Law. The consultations will support the construction of the regulation of the Law and its methodology was built jointly with civil society organisations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. This process has stablished the commitment of the CIPPDEF Commission in leading this process.

Furthermore, CIPPDEF developed its first Work Plan 2023-2024, following a training session delivered by UNHCR on internal displacement for capacity building. The plan defined the CIPPDEF's main goal, namely, to promote and consolidate the response capacities of the institutions that make up the National Response System on Internal Displacement (SINARDEFI) for the protection of the human rights of persons internally displaced by violence, as well as two strategic outcomes and 13 concrete outputs.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS I In order to support a long-lasting solution to forced displacement in Honduras, led by the State as the primary responsible to provide a response, UNHCR delivered several trainings and workshops to different public actors in the country that are involved in preventing forced displacement and providing attention after the displacement. Particularly in September 2023, UNHCR held a workshop on internal displacement for officials of the Secretariat of Social Development (SEDESOL), the Directorate for Children, Adolescents and Families (DINAF), INM, and CONADEH to discuss the causes of internal displacement in Honduras, the vulnerability of displaced persons and the scope of the law for the protection of displaced persons. This workshop was part of agreements reached with SEDESOL to identify and explore additional avenues for joint interventions.

RESPOND

UNHCR seeks that forcibly displaced people and those at risk of displacement have clear and effective responses to protect their lives, safety, liberty and integrity and access to humanitarian assistance.

CASE MANAGEMENT | To ensure cases of forcibly displaced persons and those at-risk, including returnees, are attended to, UNHCR and partners work to strengthen institutional capacities for the care and identification of returnees with protection needs, and to guarantee that adequate protection alternatives are in place.

So far in 2023, UNHCR has registered 3,113 people for case management in Honduras through its partner Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Most cases are of internally displaced persons and at risk of displacement (97.5%). Most incidents were related to killing, murder or manslaughter, which corresponds to 19.4%. Furthermore, UNHCR has protection routes in place with other actors to provide individual specialised attention, management of cases of gender-based violence, child protection and other protection-related cases, referring them to relevant actors for response services.

Furthermore, UNHCR has a strategic presence in the three Centres for Returned Migrants available in Honduras to identify and refer cases of returnees in need of protection. By September 2023, UNHCR attended 348 cases (611 individuals). The returnees received information on protection alternatives, available services for protection cases, including third country solution's programmes, psycho-social assistance, and internal relocation. In addition, with the support of UNHCR, the National Directorate for Children, Adolescent and Family Affairs (DINAF) is providing some of the children returned with psychosocial support.

To provide emergency support to protection cases

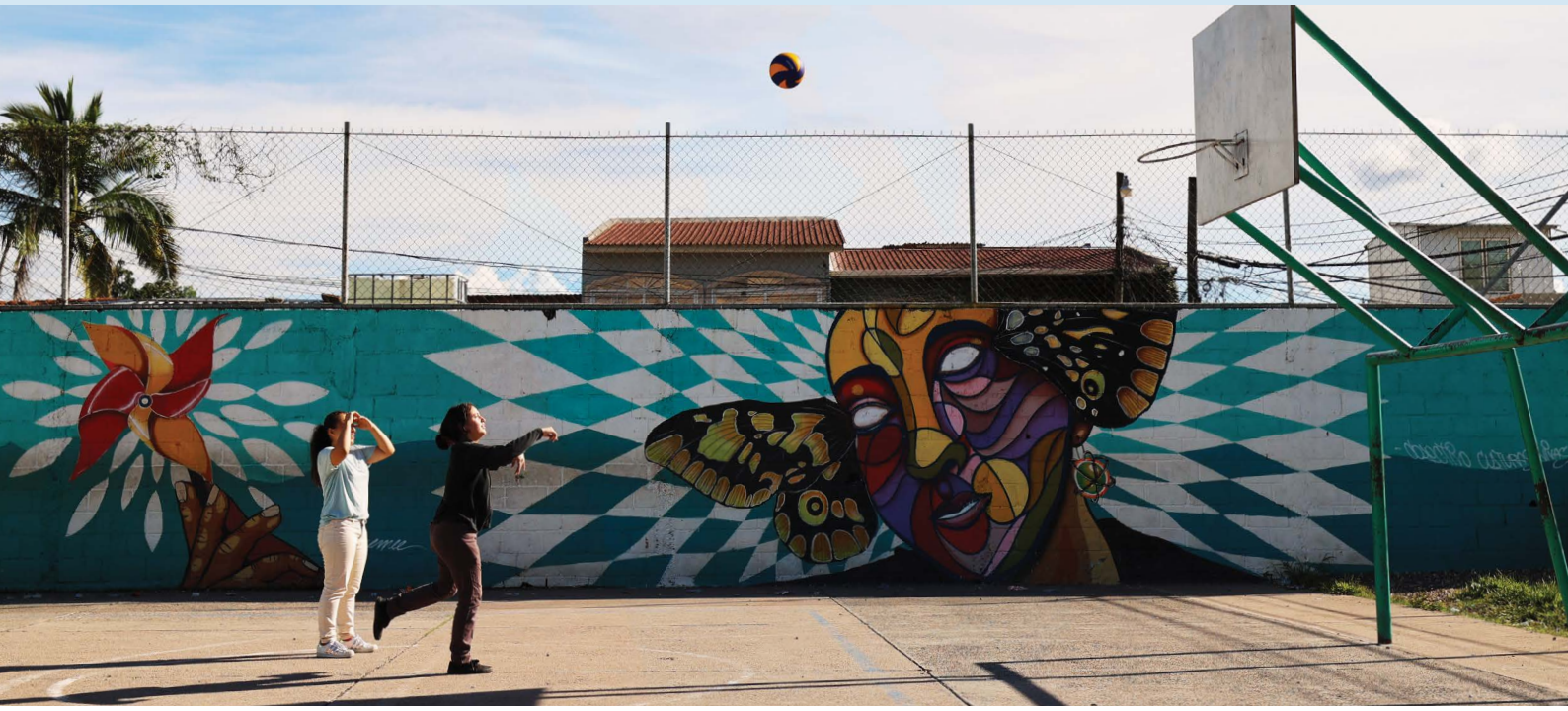
UNHCR has delivered cash-based assistance to

2,049
persons

amounting to approximately 731,717.44 USD.

EMPOWER

People at risk of displacement and internally displaced have access to protection services, including safe spaces, and communities are actively engaged in prevention, risk mitigation and response to the differential impact of violence.



COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION | Considering that territorial disputes by organised crime and associated violence are part of the main forced displacement triggers in Honduras, UNHCR works with communities and people at risk to develop community self-protection strategies and access to inclusive and effective participation mechanisms, serving people forced to flee and at-risk of displacement.

To prevent risks of forced recruitment and association by organised crime through sports activities, UNHCR's partner National Commission for Sports, Physical Education and Recreation (CONDEPOR) provided sports lessons for 78 girls and 113 boys from high-risk communities of Tegucigalpa. In addition, to promote the healthy use of information technologies and mitigate protection risks for children and youth, UNHCR and Save the Children provided workshops on cybersecurity to more than 300 girls and boys from different communities at risk of forced displacement.

UNHCR also held the first communications workshop in coordination with Save the Children for 17 men, women, and children from six high-risk urban communities (Brisas del Valle, San Buenaventura, Rosalinda, San Miguel, Nueva Capital, and La Esperanza). The workshop will result in an advocacy campaign by persons at risk of internal displacement and internally displaced persons to guarantee their participation in the implementation of the Honduras' Displacement Law.

In Ocotepeque, north-west Honduras, UNHCR carried out weekly sessions of the community-based protection strategy of "Digital Literacy" and "Mobile Library". 140 children deepened their understanding on digital protection risks that can exacerbate trafficking and gender-based violence risks, transversally aiming at mitigating chances to fall victims of human trafficking and smuggling. UNHCR also implemented the COMUNYCARTE strategy which aims to promote peaceful coexistence in Las Lajitas community in San Marcos, Ocotepeque. In relation to COMUNYCARTE, on 28 September, UNHCR joined the Municipality of San Marcos and the House of Culture during the celebration of Children's Day were 20 girls and boys and community members participated and carried out various artistic activities in this community.

In San Pedro Sula, the second biggest city of Honduras, 120 girls, boys, and young people completed the first module of the Municipal Community Art Program (Plastic Arts and Folk Dance) implemented jointly with UNHCR. The Municipal Community Art Program aims to mitigate specific risks that affect children and youth in high-risk communities.

GBV | In relation to gender-based violence (GBV), UNHCR works to ensure protection mechanisms and safe spaces for prevention, risk mitigation and care for people at risk and/or victims of GBV are strengthened, as well as community organisations and local protection networks.

From August to October 2023, the Gender, and Human Rights Diploma Course between Ciudad Mujer and UNHCR is taking place. The diploma course will be finalized by 10 representatives from the municipal women's offices of Choluteca. The course has six modules i) Gender and human rights, ii) discrimination and violence against women, iii) comprehensive health and sexual and reproductive health, iv) economic empowerment of women, v) social and political participation of women, and vi) new masculinities. UNHCR led sessions on internal displacement; recognising gender violence as a cause of internal displacement; the Law on prevention, care, and protection of internally displaced persons; response and attention to GBV cases at risk of displacement or forcibly displaced people based on the Minimum Standards for attention to GBV cases; and Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Diploma course aims to strengthen the capacity of authorities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence cases and is currently being implemented.

SOLVE

UNHCR works for forcibly displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement to have access to solutions that contribute to breaking the cycle of violence and forced displacement.

LIVELIHOODS | People forcibly displaced or at-risk of displacement face challenges in recovering livelihoods and meet basic needs. To tackle this, UNHCR fosters coordination between public and private actors to promote socio-economic inclusion and provide information and opportunities to this population related to the labour market, self-employment and/or financial inclusion.

In this sense, in September 2023, UNHCR and partners NRC and the Business Development Centre (CDE) began a three-month internship programme that connects 50 private sector companies with around 100 youth at-risk of displacement, who are last-year students or recent graduates of eight Technical Education Centres from Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Choluteca, and Ocotepeque. This intervention aims at increasing their professional experience and facilitate access to better job opportunities. Some of the companies involved are Kia Motors and Molino Harinero Sula. The programme is also supported by State actors such as the National Vocational Training Institute (INFOP), and the Secretariat of Labour (SETRASS).

In addition, UNHCR and partner Fe y Alegria initiated a series of employability workshops for 45 at-risk of displacement persons in the high-risk Riviera Hernandez sector. These persons are studying technical courses in computing, electricity, and refrigeration at La Central Youth Community Centre (CCJ). The workshops aim at preparing them for their internship phase and strengthening the access to job opportunities after graduation.

UNHCR and the Municipality of San Pedro Sula organised simulated job interviews for youth at-risk of displacement studying graphic design at the Sampedrano Technical Centre. One of the leading graphic design companies in Honduras, Graphx Source was linked to participate as mock interviewers and socialise possible current available vacancies that could be relevant to participants. Similarly, Graphx Academy, the training arm of Graphx Source company, developed a workshop of induction to the labour market for current students of the graphic design course at the municipal technical centre.

In Ocotepeque, UNHCR and its partner Business Development Centre (CDE), started an entrepreneurship training with 20 forcibly displaced persons and persons at-risk of displacement. This program seeks to enhance the livelihoods and socio-economic inclusion opportunities available to these populations by strengthening the necessary skills to develop a business plan, and by facilitating access to seed capital and technical support to begin or escalate their businesses. In addition, 36 forcibly displaced persons received the second grant instalment of their seed capital as a result of a competitive process that involved a series of trainings.

MIXED MOVEMENTS

Between 1 January and 30 September 2023

340,611

people in mixed movements

have entered Honduras irregularly and registered themselves at a delegation of the National Migration Institute (INM)

which is

more than three times

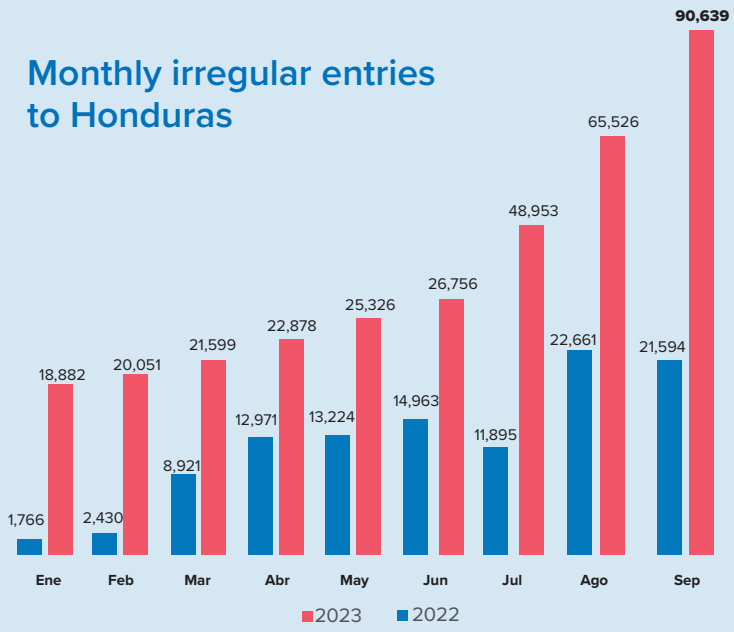
as many than during the same period in 2022 when 110,425 persons entered Honduras irregularly.

The humanitarian emergency caused by the record number of persons in mixed movements in Honduras is leading hundreds of persons each night to sleep on the streets of cities alongside the entry border points with Nicaragua, as well as in the capital Tegucigalpa. Reception conditions are collapsed, leaving people in mixed movements in vulnerable situations and without basic needs met. A video broadcasted by CNN on 16 September, shows the current situation in Danlí.

Between 1 January and 30 September 2023, 340,611 in mixed movements have entered Honduras irregularly and registered themselves at a delegation of the National Migration Institute (INM), which is more than three times as many than during the same period in 2022 when 110,425 persons entered Honduras irregularly. 93% of the persons in 2023 were registered at an INM delegation in Danlí or Trojes. 45% are from Venezuela, 14% from Cuba, 11% from Haiti, 10% from Ecuador, 2% from Colombia, among over 100 other different nationalities. 56% are men, 25% women, 11% boys and 8% girls. The following chart, based on official INM data, shows the strong increase of persons in mixed movements as of September 2023 in comparison to the same period in 2022.

In relation to exits, according to UNHCR's monitoring, the population trend of people in mixed movements crossing through Ocotepeque to exit towards Guatemala significantly increased in September 2023, reaching the highest levels in the last week of the month with an estimated 32,200 exits. This is significantly higher than during the same period in 2022 and also than August 2023, when the highest numbers were around 27,000. Venezuela is the country of origin of most people, followed by Ecuador and Haiti.

The main needs reported to UNHCR by persons in mixed movements are food; medical assistance and medicines; clothing and footwear; accommodation; legal assistance; water; and internet. In addition, there is a constant need for information on the right to seek asylum, safe spaces available along the route, the U.S. Parole Program as well as the CBP One App.



In addition to the official figures of irregular entries for 2023, according to UNHCR's monitoring around

280,000 people on the move

entered Honduras irregularly without registering themselves at an INM delegation.

Therefore, the total number of irregular entries might have reached 620,000 persons by 30 September.

ASYLUM-SEEKERS

According to INM, until 30 September, 84 asylum applications were filed in Honduras in 2023. 36% of the persons are from Venezuela, 31% from Nicaragua, 14% from Cuba, 7% from Colombia, 5% from El Salvador, 4% from Ecuador, and the remaining from Brazil, Guatemala, and Peru. This is the first year in Honduras that the number of asylum claims of Venezuelans exceeds the number of applications registered from Nicaraguans.

RESPONSE

PROTECT

Persons in need of international protection and mixed movements have access to the territory under conditions of dignified reception, fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures and facilitated documentation.

To monitor the situation of people in mixed movements and raise awareness to their needs and protection concerns, UNHCR led missions with several organizations to entry and exit points in Honduras for people in mixed movements; met with members of the protection cluster providing a response in hotspots of people in mixed movements; delivered information through its Mobile Information System; and trained different actors to strengthen institutions and capacity to respond. These actions aim to improve reception conditions and access to international protection by those in need. Details of the operations carried out in Honduras in September 2023 can be found below.

MONITORING | UNHCR and UNDSS led a mission with security officers and focal points from organisations of the Local Response Group of the Southeast Border to assess security and safety conditions of humanitarian staff in Danli, particularly at El Zarzal, on 18 September. The mission was needed given the rising tensions amongst persons in mixed movements generated by the overcrowding and inadequate conditions. The situation is also critic between host communities and persons in mixed movements. During the mission, a meeting was held with the mayor of Danli to request support from the municipality to improve the conditions in the area. Requests were denied since the mayor stressed the office of INM needs to be removed from that location.

In addition, on 19 September, UNHCR monitored the situation at Agua Caliente border point and Machuca's humanitarian spot where its personnel engaged with at least 15 people in transit from Venezuela and Haiti who received information.

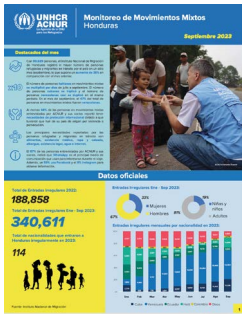
From 27 to 30 September 2023, UNHCR jointly with INM Human Rights officers at the national level conducted a border monitoring mission in the Departments of Choluteca and Valle. The agenda included visits to border delegations for regular and irregular registration, dialogue with key actors, and visits to temporal shelters, as well as to transportation terminals. The mission also included a training on the basic principles of international protection for 20 officials from INM, the National Directorate for Children, Adolescent and Family Affairs (DINAF) and the Choluteca border police.

RESPOND

People in mixed movements, refugees and asylum-seekers have clear and effective responses to protect their lives, safety, liberty and integrity and access to humanitarian assistance.

COORDINATION | Through protection coordination spaces in Honduras, UNHCR works to sensitise and inform humanitarian and development actors, government institutions and the private sector to strengthen the response for forcibly displacement people and those at risk of displacement. Members of these spaces from the south-east and north-west borders, where entry and exit hotspots for people in mixed movements are, met on a weekly basis to discuss the context, share relevant information, and coordinate response to the most pressing issues.

AWARENESS | To increase availability of information on the context and needs of people in mixed movements in Honduras, UNHCR published the results of its sixth High Frequency Survey, applied in September 2023. Amongst the main concerns observed by UNHCR amongst the 238 refugees and migrants in mixed movements who answered the questionnaires, are lack of employment (83%); generalized violence and insecurity (44%); lack of access to food (32%); lack of access to medical care and medicines (12%); victims of violence; threats or intimidation (8%). In addition, main needs reported were food (59%); medical assistance and medicines (33%); clothing and footwear (31%); accommodation (21%); legal assistance (21%); water (20%); internet (15%).



SHELTER AND INFORMATION | People forced to flee are faced with several protection risks in their journey. To ensure they have clear and effective response, UNHCR provides services in the main hotspots of people in mixed movements in Honduras, namely the entry points along the south-east border, transit areas near the capital Tegucigalpa, and exit points along the north and northwest areas.

In the south-eastern border of Honduras, UNHCR provided information to 25,910 persons in mixed movements entering the country. Furthermore, to cover exit flows of people in mixed movements in the north-western area, UNHCR's Mobile Information Service in the Machuca border point with Guatemala attended 6,887 people since the start of operation on 24 July. Apart from information services, persons also received internet to facilitate communication with relatives.

Furthermore, UNHCR participated in the inauguration of the new local shelter in Danlí run by Caritas and the Danlí diocese, after providing with equipment to run the shelter. The temporary resting space started its services on 22 September providing accommodation to approximately 30 people in mixed movements per night arriving in an irregular situation and preventing them to be sleeping on the streets.

Similarly, to strengthen the humanitarian response in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and Ocotepeque 1,000 differentiated kits for women were donated to: 1) INM's Human Right's Unit; 2) a shelter in Tegucigalpa managed by a faith-based organization; 3) UNHCR's partner ASONOG in Ocotepeque; who provide assistance to women on the move.

MIRPS | To strengthen the capabilities for psychosocial health care and enable the replication of these experiences within the institutions of the Honduran government, the country attended on 26 and 27 September an exchange of experiences in the city of San Salvador, El Salvador. The event aimed at enhancing the understanding of mental health and psychosocial support programs for forcibly displaced individuals, with a specific focus on children, youth, and survivors of gender violence. From Honduras, the Department of Care and Protection of Persons Internally Displaced by Violence of the Secretary of Human Rights (SEDH) and the Human Rights Management of the National Migration Institute (INM) participated.

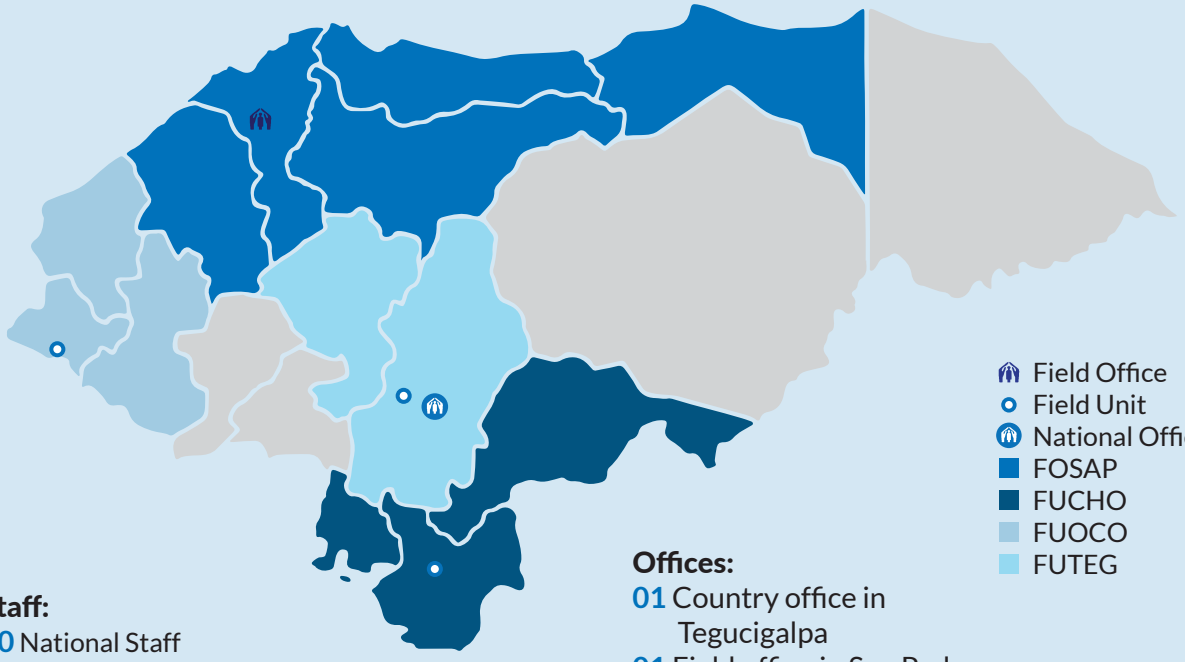
In September 2023, UNHCR served

+32,700

with information on international protection, the asylum system in Honduras and related services available in the country.

These services were provided through Mobile Information Service, which is implemented with UNHCR's partner World Vision.

UNHCR PRESENCE



Staff:
70 National Staff
39 International Staff
60% women and 40% men

Offices:
01 Country office in Tegucigalpa
01 Field office in San Pedro Sula
03 Field units in Choluteca, Ocotepeque and Tegucigalpa

We thank the contributions of our donors

By 4 October 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:

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