El Salvador
October 2023
Monthly Update #10

Girl in Nahuizalco participates in street soccer tournament organized by UNHCR and the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion
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Key figures

Community-based protection

410 individuals assisted through UNHCR's helpline in October, and 3,549 in 2023.

423 people assisted at the Support Spaces in October and 3,025 in 2023.

5,717 people reached via Support Spaces mobile units in October, and 67,410 in 2023.

Cash assistance

598 households (**1,982** individuals) at heightened risk received cash assistance in October and 1,712 households (4,930 individuals) in 2023. This support helps cover basic needs such as food, rent, documentation, and transportation, as well as to facilitate livelihoods activities for economic integration and education.

Registration

314 people registered with biometrics in October and 2,216 in 2023.

Funding

55% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 31 October 2023.

Highlights

- **The Refugee Status Determination National Commission (CODER) and the Diplomatic Institute Doctor José Gustavo Guerrero with UNHCR support organized a 20-hour workshop on international protection for 200 public officers of 22 different institutions.** Topics included international refugee law, the asylum national procedure, gender-based violence, human trafficking, child protection, statelessness, and durable solutions. Participants included public officers from the General Directorate for Migration and Foreigners (DGME), the Solidarity Fund for Health (FOSALUD), the National Institute for Women's Development (ISDEMU), Attorney General's Office (PGR), Ombudsperson's Office (PDDH), and the National Council for Childhood and Adolescence (CONAPINA), among others.

- **The Ministry of Labour and UNHCR renewed their memorandum of understanding for the next two years.** During the event, 57 young people signed apprenticeship contracts with 32 companies as part of My First Job programme. The Minister of Labour recognized UNHCR's efforts to address the structural causes of violence in El Salvador through access to decent employment for displaced people and residents of communities historically affected by violence.

- **The Diplomatic Institute Doctor José Gustavo Guerrero, SOS Children's Villages and UNHCR held the graduation ceremony for 72 professionals that finalized the specialized diploma Protection Assistance for Internally Displaced Children and Adolescents.** National child protection staff enhanced their technical knowledge and practical abilities through the three-month and 80-hour course.

Protect

- **Seventy-seven members of the local Children's Rights Committees from eight municipalities completed a six-month training programme developed by UNHCR in collaboration with SOS Children's Villages.** The training focused on key areas, including internal displacement, the rights of children and adolescents, community leadership, gender dynamics, and positive parenting.

National child protection staff during the graduation ceremony of the specialized diploma "Protection Assistance for Internally Displaced Children and Adolescents".
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- **UNHCR and the Attorney General's Office (PGR) inaugurated two psychosocial attention rooms to strengthen PGR's Internal Forced Displacement Unit in San Salvador.** These rooms will improve reception conditions, and confidentiality for forcibly displaced people who receive services.

Respond

- **As part of the Risk Reduction Fair organized by the General Directorate of Civil Protection, UNHCR presented its work in response to emergencies and in communities.**

- **To monitor the impact of tropical storm Pilar, UNHCR attended daily meetings of the UN Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) and the Humanitarian Country Team as lead of the Protection, and co-lead of the CCCM and Shelter Sectors.** UNHCR monitored the situation in over 43 communities with the support of outreach volunteers, community groups and implementing partners in the field. The inter-sector assessments and complementary response were deemed unnecessary during the emergency phase.

- **UNHCR, as leader of the Shelter Sector, delivered humanitarian kits to ten families who suffered severe damage to their homes due to heavy rains in the municipality of Ciudad Arce, La Libertad department.** In coordination with the National Directorate of Shelter, UNHCR delivered ten temporary accommodation kits, fifteen hygiene kits) and clothing for children under 14 years old.

Empower

- **The Champions Final of the street soccer tournament (Fútbol Callejero) took place in San Salvador with 16 men and 12 women teams.** Over 1,000 young people participated in the 15 municipal tournaments organized in the past three months. This joint initiative between UNHCR and the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion contributed to mitigate the impact of historical violence for the youth.

Children, youth, adults and older people enjoying the street soccer tournament in San Salvador.
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- **UNHCR-supported Comprehensive Centre for Emotional Intelligence (CIIE) collaborated with the seven youth committees part of the "Without Borders" Youth Network (Red Juvenil Sin Fronteras) to paint a mural in Soyapango addressing the importance of mental health.** Youth included a message in the drawing "your mental health is priceless, don't let anyone or anything affect you".

Youth committees from Soyapango in front the mural they painted to raise awareness on the importance of mental health.
© **CIIE/Comprehensive Centre for Emotional Intelligence**

- **Under the UNHCR's Youth Fund initiatives, the Without Borders Youth Network organized a local festival called *Orgullosamente Salvadoreño* "Proud to be Salvadoran".** The festival accompanied by the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion promoted traditional games with 70 boys and girls using homemade kites, spinning tops, *capiruchos* and *yoyos*.

Children, young people, adults and older adults participating in a festival organized by youth committees in Soyapango to promote peaceful coexistance.
© **UNHCR/Franklyn Ruiz**

- **UNHCR participated in a service fair in Tutunichapa 3, in San Salvador, as part of the *Plan de Activación Territorial* "Territorial Activation Plan", led by the National Council for Childhood and Adolescence (CONAPINA).** Alongside government institutions, the Support Space Mobile Unit "By your Side provided 110 people with information on internal displacement and support services.

Solve

- **In San Miguel, UNHCR, in coordination with World Vision, held an evaluation panel where 16 *Súper Pilas* entrepreneurs presented their projects.** Eleven entrepreneurs will receive seed capital.

Stories from the field

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Street soccer tournament in El Salvador promotes social cohesion and community resilience

"This space has been a valuable opportunity to share with people from other communities and make friends. That's the power of football! Shared Roxana, from Nahuizalco women's team.

Over 1,000 young people participated in fifteen municipal tournaments between August and October 2023 as part of the second street soccer tournament organized by Youth committees, the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion and UNHCR. This activity aims to boost integration, peaceful coexistence and prevent displacement.

Young people in San Salvador participating in the champion's final of the street soccer tournament.
© **UNHCR/Sonia Aguilar**

Youth committees reached out to young people in neighbouring communities within their municipality, and extended invitations for them to join the tournaments, a significant step considering the historic restrictions to freedom of movement known as "invisible borders" established by gangs.

"In El Salvador, the impact of decades of violence caused internal and cross-border forced displacement. Also, restrictions to the freedom of movement affected community participation and prevented children from being able to play freely outside their homes" said Paulo Lugoboni, Community-based Protection Officer with UNHCR.

UNHCR works with the Government and communities for the recovery and revitalization of public spaces, as well as to strengthen community structures and participation.

Youth committees also received a complete "soccer tournament kit", with soccer balls, vests, gloves, whistles, and a speaker to set the tone for these community events. These essential tools enable the committees to continue practicing soccer together after the official season is over.

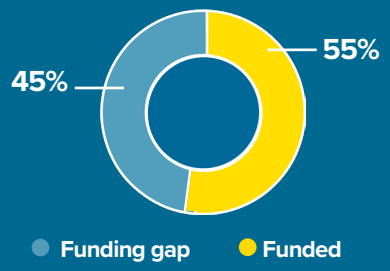
The winners of each municipal tournament gathered on 15 October for the Champions final in the country's capital, San Salvador, to compete for a USD 1,000 prize in the men and women categories, sponsored by UNHCR.

One of the defining features of these tournaments is the respect to street soccer rules and the cultivation of core values such as teamwork, respect, unity, and integrity. As a lasting reminder of the activity, each tournament had a mural painting by local artists with themes highlighting these values.

In addition, UNHCR's Support Spaces mobile units were stationed at each tournament, to provide information on services and identify cases of forcibly displaced people or those at risk of displacement. Furthermore, UNHCR-supported entrepreneurs sold their products at the Champions final.

Funding

In 2023, UNHCR is appealing for USD 26 million to provide protection, response, 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 global level is key in allowing a timely response to the evolving needs wherever required.



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