



**UNHCR  
ACNUR**

La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

# El Salvador

## May 2024

### Operational Update #5



Alexa (right), poses with her friend Camila during the inauguration of the rehabilitated soccer field at the IVU community in San Salvador. This new space offers a place for inclusion and social cohesion, improving the psychosocial well-being of community members.

© UNHCR / Jacqueline Henríquez

#### Key figures

##### Community-based protection

**473**

individuals assisted through UNHCR's helpline in May, and 2,145 in 2024.

**348**

people assisted at the Support Spaces in May, and 1,884 in 2024.

**8,946**

people reached via Support Spaces mobile units in May, and 35,283 in 2024.

\*These figures are updated regularly and may change.



##### Cash assistance

**256**

households (1,138 individuals) at heightened risk received cash assistance in May, and 785 households (2,554 individuals) in 2024. This support helps cover basic needs and facilitates livelihoods and education.

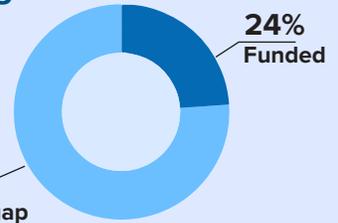


##### Registration

**244**

people registered with biometrics in May, and 1,325 in 2024.

##### Funding



**24%** of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 31 May 2024.

#### Highlights

- UNHCR and the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion inaugurated a soccer field in the IVU community in San Salvador Centro. The Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Attorney General joined the event, which featured a friendly match between the community soccer team and the national champion, Alianza. The revamp of this public space is part of UNHCR's efforts to promote peace in communities historically affected by gang violence.
- The people of San Matías in Quezaltepeque now have access to the Community Integration Centre (CIC) inaugurated by UNHCR, the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion, and the municipality of La Libertad Centro. This is the first public space in the area to offer capacity-building, sports, cultural, and recreational activities for youth and people of all ages.



Community members from San Matías celebrating during the inauguration of the new Community Integration Centre (CIC).  
© UNHCR

## Protect

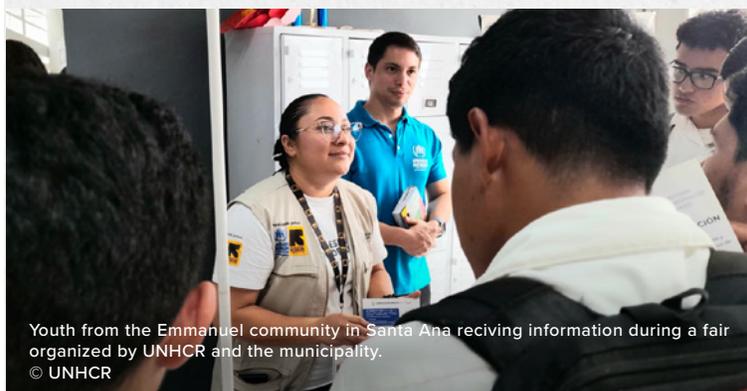
- UNHCR joined the Ombudsperson's Office (PDDH) in the initial field visits of its annual protection monitoring of internally displaced people. The first interviews occurred in rural communities in Acajutla, Sonsonate, and Tecoluca, San Vicente, allowing UNHCR to understand PDDH's approach to the communities.
- Twenty-one staff from institutions at the La Hachadura border crossing with Guatemala, including the National Police, Customs, and health staff, participated in a training on international protection facilitated by UNHCR. This training, led by the Refugee Status Determination Commission (CODER), the Ombudsperson's Office (PDDH), and the Attorney General's Office (PGR), strengthened the ability of front-line staff to identify individuals on the move at heightened risk.



Front-line staff working at the La Hachadura border crossing during a workshop on international protection facilitated by UNHCR.  
© UNHCR

## Respond

- In Santa Ana, the community Emmanuel and its surroundings received legal guidance, health services and information on livelihoods programmes during a fair organized by UNHCR and the municipal Social Development Management Office. The primary health service SIBASI, local organizations and IOM joined forces in the event.



Youth from the Emmanuel community in Santa Ana receiving information during a fair organized by UNHCR and the municipality.  
© UNHCR

- During participatory assessments organized by UNHCR and World Vision, women, men, youth, and older people from prioritized communities Emmanuel and Rio Zarco in Santa Ana, and Las Margaritas and Pachimalco in San Salvador, identified protection risks, needs, priorities, and solutions. The findings will inform community work plans for 2024.

## Empower

- Fifteen community leaders from La Campanera, Soyapango, participated in a mental health workshop organized by UNHCR and World Vision. The activity promoted self-esteem, helped identify mental health issues, and proposed ways to enhance social cohesion in this community, which used to be under gang control.
- UNHCR, the Comprehensive Centre for Emotional Intelligence (CIEE), and youth committees from Soyapango organized an outdoor activity to promote mental health. Participants painted a mural in Villa Kwanis, a public area formerly under gang control, to re-signify a place historically marked by violence.



People from the Villa Kwanis community painting a mural as part of the activities organized by the CIEE to promote mental health.  
© CIEE

## Solve

- The second annual cohort of Super Pilas, a livelihoods programme, started with 88 participants from different departments. Among them, 27 women referred by the national women institution ISDEMU-Ciudad Mujer, joined this three-month training that aims to empower participants and guide them to outline life plans.



Participants of the 'Super Pilas' program in San Martín (San Salvador) engaging in dynamic activities during workshops.  
© UNHCR



# A field of dreams: A community thriving through sports

Alexa and Camila enjoying of the renovated sports area in the IVU community. This initiative is part of UNHCR's projects to support communities affected by historical violence.

© JACQUELINE HENRIQUEZ



"I am very happy because now I can practice here, near my home," says 8-year-old Alexa. Together with her mother, Wendy, and her best friend, Camila, she attended the inauguration of the newly renovated sports area located by the community centre CUBO in the IVU community in San Salvador.

This project represents hope for a community once restricted by "invisible borders" and curfews imposed by gangs. Over 9,000 people from the IVU community and surroundings now enjoy playing and practicing sports thanks to the alliance by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, with the Directorate for Reconstruction of Social Cohesion, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and the municipality of San Salvador.

UNHCR supports the enhancement of recreational and sports spaces, recognizing the potential of sports as a tool for protection and personal development, especially for children and youth. This project offers a place for inclusion and social cohesion, improving the psychosocial well-being of community members.

The soccer field's renovation includes a complete transformation: new goals, turf, drainage and irrigation systems, restored bleachers, a running track, and improved access for people with disabilities.

Alexa, a passionate young soccer player, is thrilled about the new field. She is part of a soccer school, but previously, she had to practice in improvised spaces. "It might just be a field to others, but for us, it means so much more," she said. "It's an important space for the children and everyone in the community" added her mother.

This initiative is part of a series of projects that UNHCR is implementing in this community to support those affected by historical violence and forced displacement. The renovated sports space will foster an environment of coexistence, healthy recreation, and resilience.

For Alexa, the field is more than just a place to play soccer; it is a space to dream big. "I want to be a professional footballer and inspire other children in my community".

**In 2024, UNHCR appeals for USD 28.6 million to provide protection, responses, 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 the global level is key in allowing a timely response to evolving needs wherever required.**

## UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support in 2024 of:



Private donors: Australia for UNHCR | España con ACNUR | Japan for UNHCR

### For more information, please contact:

Sonia Aguilar | aguilar@unhcr.org  
External Relations Officer

Franklyn Ruiz | ruizdiaz@unhcr.org  
Associate Reporting Officer



<https://www.acnur.org/pais/el-salvador>  
<https://reporting.unhcr.org/elsalvador>



@ACNUREISalvador  
@ACNUREISalvador