UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

El Salvador

January 2025 | Monthly Update #1

Representatives from UN Habitat and UNHCR during a field visit to La Campanera community in Soyapango. © UNHCR / Sonia Aguilar.

2024 at a glance

90,175
people received support through UNHCR's helpline, Support Spaces and mobile teams

3,979
individuals helped with psychosocial support and mental health services

1,360
people participated in assessments to prioritize community needs and solutions

8,066
people reached through activities to prevent violence against women

958
people trained in skills for employment or self-employment, supported with vocational training or linked to decent job opportunities

Our 2025 response in figures

8,035
people received support through UNHCR's helpline, Support Spaces and mobile teams

230
individuals helped with psychosocial support and mental health services

279
people reached through activities to prevent violence against women

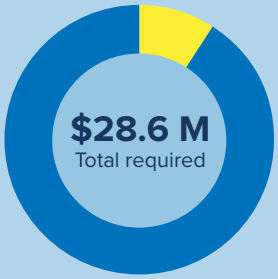
49
people trained in skills for employment or self-employment, supported with vocational training or linked to decent job opportunities

Funding

9% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 31 January 2025.

9% Funded

91% Funding gap



1,432
individuals in vulnerable situations received direct support to cover basic needs such as food, medicine and shelter.

8,035
people registered with biometrics

*These figures are regularly updated and reflect cumulative data for 2025.

Highlights

Neighbours gathered in La Campanera, Soyapango for the inauguration of their renovated communal house.
© UNHCR / Franklyn Ruiz

- The inauguration of the renovated communal house in La Campanera, Soyapango, brought together local leaders, government officials, and cooperation actors to celebrate a space benefiting over 12,000 people. Once controlled by gangs, the collective facility rehabilitated by UNHCR offers a safe environment for learning, recreation, and peaceful coexistence.

  The initiative is part of "Revive tu Espacio", a broader effort by UNHCR to revamp public areas in communities affected by historical violence and displacement.

Representatives from institutions and organizations during the closing event of a UNHCR-supported diploma on international protection.
© UNHCR / Franklyn Ruiz

- Thirty-eight officials from the Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER), the Attorney General's Office (PGR), the National Civil Registry, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and representatives from NGOs and universities completed an 80-hour training on international protection and refugee law, identification of people with specific needs, and prevention of human trafficking.

  The enhanced capacities will further the effective attention to individuals seeking international protection in El Salvador.

Staff from PDDH during a workshop on international protection for Police staff in La Unión.
© PDDH

Protect

- In La Unión, bordering Honduras, 30 police and navy officers increased their understanding of the specific needs that experience people with international protection needs that arrive to El Salvador. The workshop organized by UNHCR and the Ombudsperson's Office (PDDH) provided information on the existing referral pathways, and guided national officers to respond to individuals seeking international protection in El Salvador.

Respond

- The newly established Community Civil Protection Commission in Azacualpa, Panchimalco municipality, received from UNHCR protection equipment and tools for emergencies. This support strengthens local capacities to prevent and respond to extreme-weather related disasters in communities historically affected by violence and forced displacement.

María, a community leader swore-in as part of the local Civil Protection Community in Mejicanos.
© UNHCR Jacqueline Henriquez

Empower

Residents of Tutunichapa came together to revitalize their community by painting the facades of their houses.
© UNHCR

- Residents of the Tutunichapa community in San Salvador along UNHCR and FUNDASAL painted house fronts along the main street. Under the “Revive tu Espacio” initiative, this activity engaged the community in transforming an area once marked by violence, to foster their sense of belonging and to contribute to a more supportive community.

- The Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion rolled out in all 11 Urban Centres for Well-being and Opportunities “CUBO” a data collection tool developed and piloted with UNHCR support in 2024. The digital tool helps gathering key information on the users of the community centres. The information provided on the needs and capabilities of users will inform the planning of activities. Since 2021, UNHCR supports the CUBOs to reach communities historically affected by gang violence, to promote youth access to mental health, as well as cultural, sports, and learning opportunities.

Solve

Representatives from La Campanera community joined the presentation of community mapping.
© UNHCR Jacqueline Henriquez

- UNHCR, as co-lead of the Shelter Sector with the General Directorate of Civil Protection, presented an intersectoral mapping to the Humanitarian Country Team. Developed with the community, the mapping identifies needs and projects using a methodology piloted in La Campanera in 2024 with support from the Global Shelter Cluster. To enhance humanitarian, peace, and development efforts, UNHCR plans to launch a digital map in 2025 to expand the initiative to other communities.

- Residents of La Campanera in Soyapango, San Salvador Este, showcased their community revitalization efforts to UN-Habitat, the UN Resident Coordinator, and government delegates during a UNHCR-organized visit. The visit highlighted Mi Comunidad, Mi Casa (My Community, My Home), a joint initiative by UNHCR and UN-Habitat aimed at fostering community participation, rehabilitating public spaces, and improving housing.

Stories from the field

UNHCR and UN-Habitat join forces to improve urban settlements

Representatives from UN Habitat and UNHCR during a field visit to La Campanera community in Soyapango. © UNHCR / Sonia Aguilar.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency in El Salvador, and UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, launched "My Community, My Home," an initiative that will contribute to the comprehensive transformation of precarious settlements in El Salvador.

The pilot programme runs from December 2024 to June 2025 in the community of La Campanera (Soyapango district, San Salvador Este), a settlement with more than 12,000 inhabitants. The initiative promotes durable solutions to forced displacement and fosters social cohesion in communities affected by violence.

The project is carried out in coordination with the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the Ministry of Public Works, the Municipality of San Salvador Este, as well as other actors present in the area. This intervention seeks to promote social interaction and organization, the reappropriation and improvement of public spaces and housing.

"The transformation of La Campanera will not only contribute to improving the living conditions of its inhabitants but will also highlight the capacity of communities to rebuild when they have the right opportunities and tools," said Fernanda Lonardoni, head of UN-Habitat Mexico, Cuba, and Central America.

"For me, the spaces that have been recovered have a new meaning. They are symbol of hope and that positive changes can indeed be achieved in our community," said Angie, a young woman who grew up in La Campanera and participates in community activities that promote peaceful coexistence.

"The comprehensiveness of the initiative favours that people, and their communities are at the centre of processes for the recovery of public spaces and the improvement of housing. Combining humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding approaches, the work under this partnership promotes citizen participation, peaceful coexistence, economic promotion, and the reconstruction of the social cohesion in communities historically affected by violence and forced displacement," said Mónica Tse Candido, Representative a.i. of UNHCR in El Salvador.

As part of the intervention in La Campanera, the "My Community, My Home" programme includes three key areas: (1) participatory governance for planning and decision-making; (2) transformation of public spaces with the construction of sports fields, recovery of green areas, improvement of lighting, and waste management; and (3) improvement of housing for displaced persons and those in situations of high vulnerability.

This joint programme between UN-Habitat and UNHCR represents a comprehensive effort to address the structural causes of forced displacement, strengthening the social cohesion and promoting peaceful coexistence. La Campanera is expected to become a regional benchmark for the implementation of sustainable and replicable solutions in similar communities.

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In 2025, UNHCR is appealing 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 2025 of:

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