UNHCR ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

El Salvador Monthly Update #1
January 2024

The VI Annual Meeting of MIRPS highlighted the solidarity and shared responsibility among States, donors, international financial institutions, and civil society.
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Key figures 2024

Community-based protection

425 individuals assisted through UNHCR's helpline in January.

382 people assisted at the Support Spaces in January.

6,828 people informed through the Support Spaces' mobile units in January.

Registration

354 people registered with biometrics in January.

Cash assistance

23 households (**78** individuals) at heightened risk received cash assistance in January to cover basic needs and facilitates livelihoods and education.

Funding

14% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 31 January 2024.

2023 at a glance

Community-based protection

4,286 individuals assisted through UNHCR's helpline.

3,585 people assisted at the Support Spaces.

78,394 people reached through the Support Spaces' mobile units.

Cash assistance

2,181 households (**6,096** individuals) received cash assistance to cover basic needs and to facilitate livelihoods and education.

Mental health

1,998 people received mental and psychosocial services.

Legal aid

690 people received legal information or guidance.

Livelihoods

1,312 forcibly displaced people supported with employment or self-employment training, technical or vocational skills certification and linked to employment opportunities.

Gender-based violence

4,925 survivors received services.

Highlights

- **El Salvador participated in the VI Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) annual meeting, which took place 24 January in Panama.** El Salvador's Ambassador to Panama presented good practices and achievements of the MIRPS National Action Plan. MIRPS States reiterated in the Panama City Declaration their commitment to provide protection and durable solutions to the displaced people in the region.

- **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as MIRPS National Leader, and UNHCR co-hosted the first 2024 MIRPS National Technical Team meeting attended by all government institutions part of the team.** At the meeting, the team discussed progress made and shared the annual work plan, including the roadmap to achieve the II Global Refugee Forum pledges, held in December 2023.

- **UNHCR, World Vision and FUNDASAL presented and validated the 2024 work plans with 11 communities in Santa Ana, San Miguel, San Vicente and Sonsonate.** Community leaders and members prioritized activities on the prevention of forced displacement, community empowerment, social cohesion, and facing gender-based violence.

- **Communities of Santa Marta, San Salvador, and the youth network in Morazán received basketball and football kits donated by UNHCR.** The sports kits will serve to promote local tournaments that foster social cohesion and local integration.

Protect

- **UNHCR supported the Attorney General's Office Specialized Units for Women (PGR) on the launch of 14 support groups for survivors of gender based violence nationwide.** To foster a conducive environment, UNHCR furnished the spaces where the groups will meet.

UNHCR supports the efforts of the Attorney General's Office Specialized Unit for Women.
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Respond

- **UNHCR organized the first "case management committee" for refugees and asylum-seekers with the participation of IRC and UNHCR's multifunctional team.** Scheduled to meet monthly, the committee aims to ensure timely and comprehensive responses to critical cases.

Empower

- **In the municipality of Nahuizalco (Sonsonate), UNHCR participated in an inter-institutional meeting to establish the Intersectoral Committee for Local Development of Nahuizalco, Sonsonate.** The gathering, attended by representatives from 23 entities, served to share ongoing initiatives in Nahuizalco and to identify areas for collaboration regarding forced displacement, gender-based violence, and livelihoods. Institutions such as the Municipality, the Local Women and Health Secretariat, as well as the local Indigenous community, the Xóchilt Women's Association, Doctors of the World and the Women's Business Association attended the meeting.

Representatives from various stakeholders of Nahuizalco found opportunities for collaboration.
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- **In San José (Soyapango) and IVU (San Salvador) communities, UNHCR monitored the pilot mechanism of community feedback developed with youth committees in two Urban Centres for Welfare and Opportunities (CUBOS).** The system, launched in December 2023 with the installation of physical and digital feedback tools, received positive comments from the communities and will be expanded to other centres in 2024.

Solve

- **UNHCR met with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (CONAIPD) to present UNHCR's livelihoods programmes in 2024 and to strengthen the identification and referrals of people with disabilities in UNHCR's interventions.** CONAIPD agreed to carry out awareness- raising sessions with UNHCR's staff and partner organizations.

Stories from the field

Empowering youth: overcoming obstacles to find opportunities

"It doesn't matter where we come from, that's not what's important. We all have the ability to learn new things and to contribute with what we our knowledge," said Dayana, a 20 year-old young woman from Ilopango (San Salvador, El Salvador).

However, as she added, she faced two obstacles before finding employment: her lack of previous experience and the place where she resided. "I looked for a job, but nothing came up. It was hard without experience, but mostly because of where I lived."

Historical violence in communities in El Salvador caused significant stigma. As a consequence, many people, like Dayana, experienced challenges to develop skills, find employment and contribute to their communities development.

For Dayana, the change came thanks to the Creating Opportunities programme, implemented by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and partner Fe y Alegria. This initiative, which enabled 762 individuals to acquire technical training since its inception, strengthens participants' professional or entrepreneurial skills according to their personal or family life plan.

Upon completion, participants receive official technical certifications and can access job vacancies via the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare's employment pool. Additionally, Creating Opportunities follows a methodology of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to assist participants who prefer starting a business.

In order to ensure the participation of those at higher risk, UNHCR offers participants psychosocial support services to improve their mental health. Furthermore, individuals in greater vulnerability receive assistance in cash support to cover basic needs such as food during the duration of the courses.

As part of the efforts to strengthen opportunities and solutions for forcibly displaced individuals, UNHCR works to enhance vocational training centres with equipment and capabilities that improve the skills, qualifications, and employability of internally displaced and at-risk individuals.

Thanks to Creating Opportunities, Dayana secured employment at a well-known hotel chain. Also, she developed an entrepreneurial spirit that motivates her to explore new opportunities. "I will continue working and saving money to open my own business and help others," she said.

Just like Dayana, 762 young people completed the Creating Opportunities programme.
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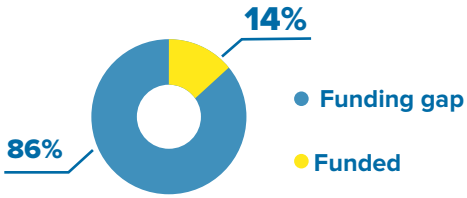
Funding

In 2024, UNHCR appeals for USD 28.6 million to provide protection, response, empowerment and solutions to refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees with protection needs, internally displaced persons and people at risk of displacement 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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