UNHCR ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

El Salvador

August 2024 || Monthly Update #08

Hundreds of young people and UNHCR-supported youth committees from across the country enjoying sports, cultural, and recreational activities during International Youth Day in San Miguel.
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Our 2024 response in figures

3,290 individuals assisted through UNHCR's helpline.

2,738 people assisted at the Support Spaces "By Your Side".

53,408 people reached via Support Spaces' mobile units.

2,688 individuals assisted with mental health services and psychosocial support.

888 people engaged in participatory assessments.

5,434 people benefited through programmes for the prevention of violence against women.

543 people trained in skills for employment and self-employment.

32 people linked with a decent job opportunity.

125 individuals completed vocational training.

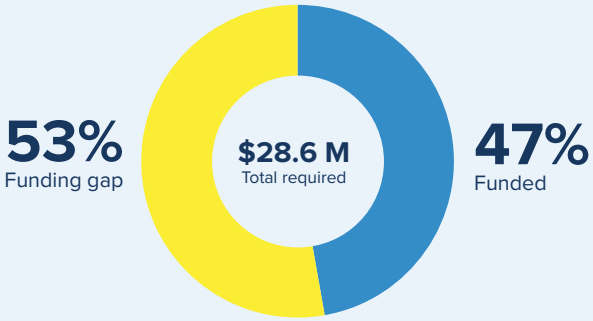
45 adults supported to return to formal education.

4,441 individuals at heightened risk received cash assistance

This support helps cover basic needs such as food, rent, documentation, and facilitates activities for economic integration, education, and naturalization.

2,016 people registered with biometrics.

Funding



47% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 31 August 2024.

*These figures are regularly updated and reflect cumulative data for 2024.

Highlights

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- UNHCR and the municipalities of San Miguel Centro, Santa Ana Centro, and San Vicente Sur renewed the Letters of Understanding to advance joint work through the Support Spaces "By Your Side". Through this continued collaboration people forcibly displaced, at risk of displacement, and those from communities historically affected by violence already access specialized support, information on rights and access to services, and humanitarian assistance.

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- UNHCR launched participatory assessments in 44 prioritized communities engaging women, men, youth, older people, and LGBTIQ+ individuals. The exercise planned in August and September, identifies protection risks, needs, capacities, and solutions to inform 2025 work plans. Initial assessments took place in communities in San Salvador, San Vicente, and San Miguel.

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- In San Miguel, UNHCR joined the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion in the commemoration of the International Youth Day. Hundreds of young people and youth committees from across the country participated in sports, recreational, cultural, and entrepreneurship activities. UNFPA, the Mayor of San Miguel Centro, and national authorities joined forces in the event.

Protect

Front-line staff at El Amatillo border point with Honduras participating in capacity building sessions on international protection by UNHCR and CODER. © UNHCR

Twenty front-line staff working at El Amatillo border with Honduras, including the National Civil Police, Customs, and health staff, enhanced their knowledge about international protection. The session, organized by the Refugee Status Determination Commission (CODER) and UNHCR, furthered the field staff's ability to identify individuals on the move with specific needs.

UNHCR provided training on international protection, gender-based violence, internal forced displacement and case management to 47 officers from: the Supreme Court of Justice, PDDH, PGR, ISDEMU, OLAV; delegates from the Mayor's Office of San Miguel Centro, Moncagua, Chirilagua, La Unión Sur and Uluazapa; and organizations Ayuda en Acción, EDUCO, IRC and ORMUSA.

UNHCR joined the Ombudsperson's Office (PDDH) exercise to monitor the situation of internally displaced persons through interviews in two rural areas in Sonsonate and San Miguel. In the final stage of the exercise, PDDH will conduct informative sessions about rights in various communities nationwide.

Respond

People in Verapaz, San Vicente receiving information about rights and access to services by UNHCR-IRC Support Space's mobile units.
© UNHCR

UNHCR briefed 14 regional coordinators of the First Lady's "Social Welfare" programme on the identification of people with specific needs and referral pathways. This effort aims to expand UNHCR's outreach through Social Welfare's national volunteer network.

Some 600 people in Verapaz (San Vicente) and Corinto (Morazán) received information on rights and access to services, and medical, legal, and psychosocial services through the services fair "By Your Side" (Feria a Tu Lado). UNHCR, IRC, and the municipality of San Vicente Sur organized the activity with participation of the Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare, Education, Health, ISDEMU, CONAPINA, PGR, PDDH, the First Lady's Social Welfare programme, and other organizations.

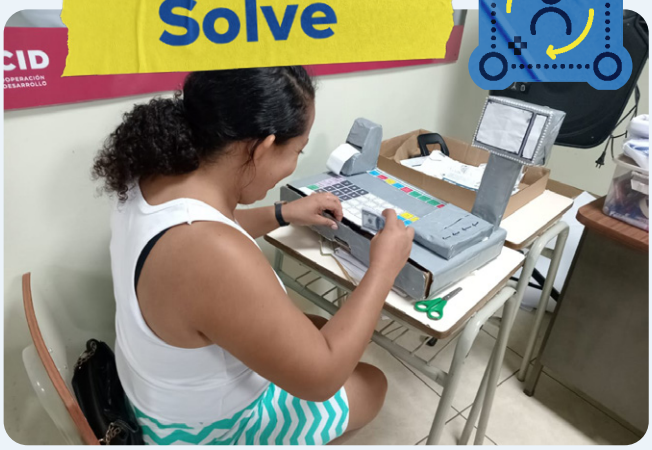
Empower

Youth committees interacting during the National Youth Forum organized with UNHCR's support in San Salvador.
© UNHCR / Maria Elena Enriquez.

Six UNHCR-supported youth networks organized the first National Youth Forum. The event brought together 104 local youth representatives to discuss priorities, share best practices, and explore collaboration opportunities. The committees agreed to create a common document outlining their goals and work to promote positive change and strengthen community resilience.

In San Salvador and La Unión departments, 336 judicial facilitators enhanced their knowledge on international protection and forced displacement in workshops organized by the Supreme Court of Justice and UNHCR. It's expected that by the end of 2024 over 1,000 judicial facilitators nationwide had improved capacities to foster community conflict resolution and to prevent forced displacement.

Solve



A young women in Santa Ana during capacity building for commercial cashier facilitated by UNHCR partner Fe y Alegría. © Fe y Alegría

Under the UNHCR Creating Opportunities programme, 25 internally displaced individuals and at risk of displacement in Santa Ana enrolled in an 80-hour training course for commercial cashiers. To expand participants' livelihood opportunities, the training responds to market demands in the department.

UNHCR and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MTPS) held the fourth 2024 Youth Employment Route under the My First Job programme with 70 IDPs and at-risk youth from different regions. One-day workshops by MTPS experts helped improve their job skills. As next step, UNHCR and MTPS will connect them with decent job opportunities through apprenticeship contracts.

Stories from the field

Miguel's story: Transforming lives, one kilometre at a time

#WorldHumanitarianDay

Twelve years after being forced to flee La Campanera due to violence, Miguel returns as a UNHCR driver, helping others who faced similar situations. © UNHCR Markel Redondo

"Every kilometre I drive is an opportunity to bring hope to the communities that need it most," says Miguel, a UNHCR driver, with a smile. His job deeply connects him to La Campanera, the community where he once had his home. As many other communities in the country, La Campanera is well known for decades of violence and gang control.

Miguel fondly remembers his years in La Campanera. He also mentions the difficult times when gang violence, extortion, and threats intensified, forcing many people, including him, to leave their homes.

Despite the challenges to start over, Miguel rebuilt his life and found a new passion in his work. As a driver for UNHCR, he transports colleagues and supplies, offering support to people in vulnerable situations.

"Driving isn't just a job for me. It's my way of helping those facing difficult situations, similar to what I experienced," says Miguel, who sees every field activity as an opportunity to make a difference.

Twelve years after he had to flee, he returned to La Campanera as a UNHCR staff. Miguel is filled with joy to see the ongoing transformation in the community.

'Visiting the community today fills me with nostalgia. But it also makes me happy to see its transformation and to know that my work contributes to that change,' he shares during a recent visit.

UNHCR works in La Campanera since 2022, along with its partners and in coordination with the Government, implementing activities to strengthen community participation, prevent violence and forced displacement, enhance communication with communities, expand access to livelihoods, and foster peaceful coexistence. These interventions are based on annual participatory consultation exercises that identify needs, protection risks, capacities, and solutions.

In 2024, UNHCR, in coordination with the Ministry of Housing and the San Salvador Este municipality, began renovating the communal house. The space will serve as a hub for social, educational, and recreational activities, promoting social cohesion, community participation, and access to opportunities. Also, there are actions to improve public spaces and attract other actors to engage in revamping this historically stigmatized community. These interventions contribute to creating opportunities for people forced to flee to integrate in their communities and rebuild their lives with dignity.

Miguel feels proud to be part of this process. "As a humanitarian worker, I know that every action counts, and that motivates me every day," he concludes.

In 2024, 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 2024 of:

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Private donors: España con ACNUR / Japan for UNHCR / Australia for UNHCR, Private donors in Italy, Private donors in the Republic of Korea

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