UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

September 2024

# Operational Update 33

# HONDURAS

## Population figures

### Internal displacement

**+247,000**

*people have been internally displaced in Honduras as a result of generalized violence between 2004 and 2018. Numbers could be higher in 2024, as triggers of internal displacement persist.*

### Asylum

**23,169**

*Honduran nationals sought asylum in Mexico from 1 January to 31 July 2024, continuing to rank as the first nationality in the number of asylum requests to this country.*

**110**

*people sought asylum in Honduras from 1 January to 30 September 2024 and are mainly from Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia, Cuba, and El Salvador. 37% of the applications were made by women and girls, 63% by men and boys. Compared to the same period in 2023, the asylum applications in Honduras have increased by 32%.*

### Mixed Movements

**312,553**

*refugees and migrants in mixed movements entered Honduras irregularly from 1 January to 30 September and registered with the National Migration Institute (INM), which represents a 8% decrease compared to the same period in 2023.*

### Return

**32,975**

*Hondurans were returned to the country in 2024 until 30 September.*

### Refuge

**195**

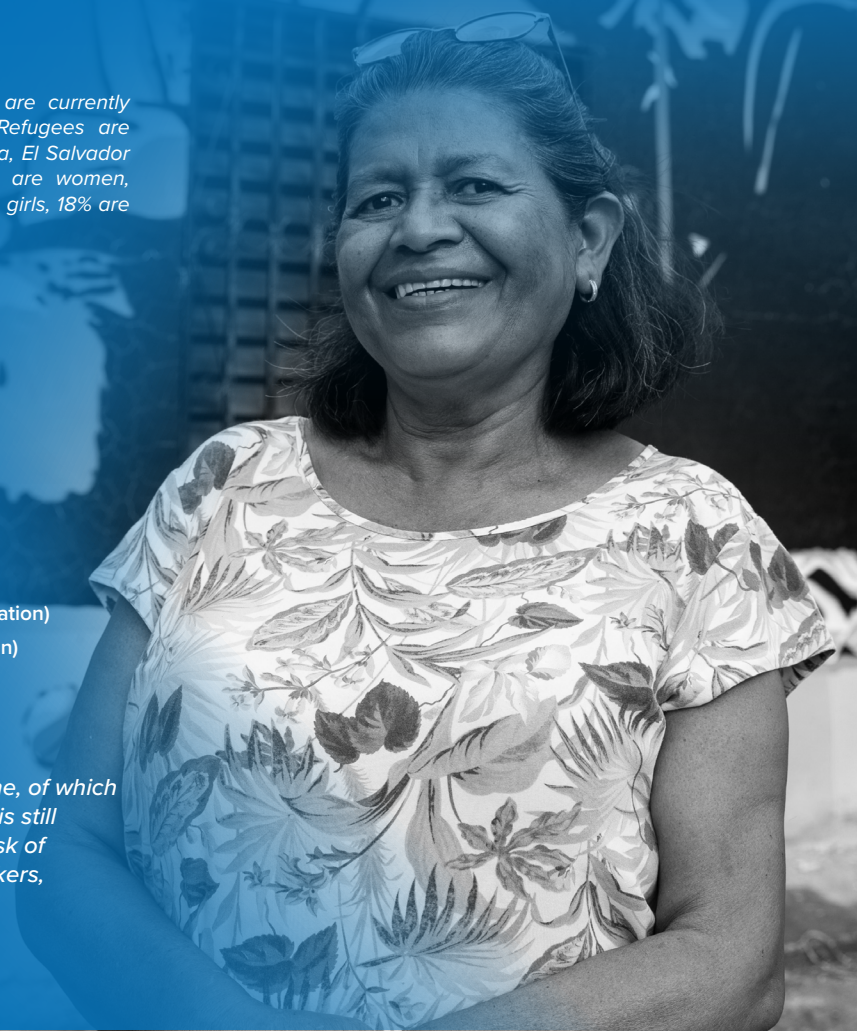
*recognised refugees are currently living in Honduras. Refugees are mainly from Nicaragua, El Salvador and Venezuela. 23% are women, 44% are men, 14% are girls, 18% are boys.*

## Our response

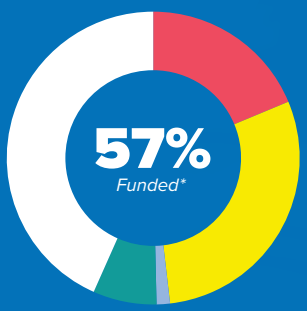
**134,884 people**

*mainly people in mixed movements and internally displaced persons, but also asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees, and host community members, with services such as shelter, cash and voucher assistance, case management, protection monitoring, livelihoods activities, risk mitigation and through community-based protection activities.*

| 13,923 | 13,960 | 52,441 | 54,394 | 166 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Girls | Boys | Women | Men | LGBTQI+ |



## Funding




As of 30 September 2024

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

**UNHCR appealed for USD 30.8 million for its 2024 programme, of which only USD 17.4 million (57%) has been funded. USD 13.4 million is still needed to continue supporting people forcibly displaced, at risk of displacement, returnees with needs of protection, asylum-seekers, refugees, and persons in mixed movements.*

# Context

**In September 2024, Honduras continued to face violence and insecurity, driving ongoing forced displacement and heightening risks for vulnerable communities.**

## Violence and extortion

In 2024, **over 11,000 homicides were reported**, underscoring the country's ongoing struggle with high levels of violence.

**Indigenous environmental defenders** face safety risks, as Honduras continues to rank among the most dangerous countries for these activists. Global Witness reports an average of **18 killings per year** targeting environmental defenders.

The **recent murder of Juan López, an environmental activist killed** on 14 September following months of threats and intimidation, underscores the urgent need for enhanced protection and support mechanisms for this vulnerable group.

The ongoing violence in Honduras demands urgent and coordinated interventions to ensure protection and rights of all vulnerable populations. There is a pressing need for targeted programs that address **the root causes of violence and enhance protective measures**, particularly for at-risk groups such as environmental defenders and women. These efforts are essential to promoting a safer and protection environment and to drive meaningful change.

## Gender-based violence

Over **170 women** have been **violently killed** in 2024, placing Honduras as one of the countries with the **highest feminicides rates.**

LGBTQI+ persons are also direly impacted by gender-based violence, with **15 having been killed** so far in 2024 (265 total since 2017).

## Human rights situation

Hondurans **fleeing north continue to face perilous conditions**, often having to make difficult choices between basic necessities such as **medicine and food or continuing their journey**.

Frequent disappearances are evidenced, which have raised alarm among human rights organizations. These groups have called on the State to **intensify efforts to locate missing persons** and support affected families, underscoring the **urgent need for comprehensive and coordinated measures** to address the humanitarian crisis impacting Honduran refugees and migrants particularly those who have disappeared in Mexico on their journey towards the United States.

## Political and legislative challenges

In recent UN developments, Alice Shackelford, the **UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras** since July 2020, concluded her tenure by underscoring the **urgent need for national dialogue** and strengthening **anti-corruption measures.**

# Context

## Environmental challenge

In September 2024, Honduras faced multiple compounding crises, **exacerbating the vulnerabilities of affected communities.** The reactivation of a geological fault in the Department of Cortés triggered landslides and structural risks, impacting homes and infrastructure, while rising water levels around the Ulúa River caused severe flooding that cut off access to several regions.

The 21st tropical storm of the season **further worsened conditions, resulting in additional floods, landslides, and the isolation of several communities.**

Heavy rainfall during the month affected more than **3,700 families** and **left 52 communities in southern Honduras cut off**, causing significant damage to infrastructure.

Local authorities responded by mobilizing food and shelter, though the situation underscored the need for long-term strategies to mitigate climate-related disasters and enhance community resilience.

The public health situation also **reached critical levels**, as 2024 saw the highest number of suspected dengue-related deaths on record, with **190 fatalities**, **surpassing the previous peak in 2019.**

With **over 100,000** reported cases across the country, dengue has become a major public health concern, **necessitating urgent efforts to bolster health systems** and prevent further outbreaks.

These concurrent challenges highlight the **pressing need for long-term resilience to climate and health-related emergencies.** Strengthening health systems, implementing disaster mitigation strategies, and improving infrastructure are essential steps to protect vulnerable communities and prevent future crises.

## Mixed Movements

In September 2024, **21.657 people** in mixed movements received transit permits to cross Honduras.
**This represents a 16% increase in comparison to the previous month.**

From January to September 2024, the National Migration Institute (INM) reported

**312,553 people in mixed movements had registered for a transit permit,**

an 8% decrease compared to the same period in 2023.

The primary nationalities were Venezuelan (49%), Cuban (16%), Haiti (5%), Ecuador (5%), and Colombian (5%).

**11% of the people in mixed movements are girls, 14% boys, 26% women, and 48% men.**

97% entered through El Paraíso department (mainly at Las Manos border followed by Trojes). The remaining 3% entered Honduras through the Choluteca department.

At the Guasaule border, many people in mixed movements **are choosing to walk instead of taking buses due to high costs;** bus fares are around USD 30, while locals pay approximately USD 2; the high cost of transportation is one of the greatest barriers to access a transit permit at the CAMI in Choluteca.

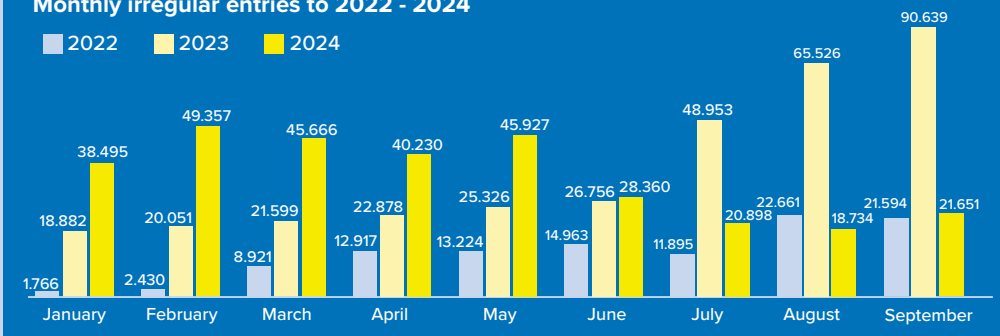
At the El Poy border with El Salvador, there has been **an increase in the number of people in mixed movements** who later join the Machuca route to Guatemala. El Poy, in the Ocotepeque Department, is an entry point for people in mixed movements that arrive via San Salvador's airport. In September, at least 10 people crossed at El Poy with the intent to exit Honduras through Agua Caliente to Guatemala.

# Context

## Mixed Movements

According to official figures from the National Migration Institute of Honduras and Migration Panama, in the first eight months of 2024, Honduras has reported a **greater number of irregular entries of people in mixed movements** than in Panama, with June being the exception. This could be due to the closures of several entry points at the Colombia-Panama border, specifically in the Darien region.

**Monthly irregular entries to 2022 - 2024**




**Nationalities:**
**62%** Venezuela | **12%** Cuba | **3%** Colombia | **3%** Haiti | **2%** Ecuador

**Demographic breakdown:**

**41%** Women and girls | **59%** Men and boys | **72%** Adults | **28%** Children and adolescents

The National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH) has warned of the urgent need for **psychological support for people in mixed movements,** particularly those who face violence along the route.

These findings reflect the broader context of vulnerability and unaddressed needs within the mixed movement population, especially for children, who remain at high risk.

As not all persons on the move who enter Honduras irregularly register with INM, UNHCR and its partners, based on its border monitoring, estimate that about **400,000 persons entered and transited through the country between January and September 2024.**

UNHCR, with the collaboration of UNICEF and WFP, published its newest mixed movement protection monitoring report, which can be accessed here in Spanish and here in English. Of the **193 interviewed individuals, 35% reported to be in need of international protection.**

**46%** of the persons indicated traveling with someone who has specific protection needs. The main needs are food, clothing and footwear, water, and shelter.

*For more information, please access the latest Mixed Movements Report in English and Spanish here.*

## Returnees

In 2024, **over 6,000** Honduran children have been returned and continue to face protection gaps upon their return.

# RESPONSE

## PROTECT

**This month, UNHCR actively engaged with various Honduran institutions to enhance protection mechanisms for vulnerable populations, such as forcibly displaced children and survivors of gender-based violence.**

UNHCR held a workshop with the National Institute for the Attention of Juvenile Offenders, the Secretariat of Childhood, Adolescents and Family (SENAF), the Secretariat of Human Rights (SEDH), and the Inter-institutional Commission Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons of Honduras (CICESCT) to design a protection **route for children who have been forcibly displaced or forcibly recruited and are in conflict with the law.**

As a result, the institutions designed a reponse that includes prevention, humanitarian assistance, child protection, and reintegration for forcibly recruited children and their families. This initiative **is a fundamental step towards defending their rights and strengthening the protection mechanisms** for children affected by forced recruitment.

UNHCR held training sessions on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for public officials from SENAF, INM, SEDH, CONADEH, and SEMUJER, who are responsible for the protection response to people in mixed movements in Danlí, the humanitarian space of "El Pescadero", and the CAMI. This session is part of UNHCR's efforts to **prevent and mitigate the risks of sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian personnel.**

UNHCR held strategic meetings with the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Municipal Women's Office in La Entrada, Copán, to establish stronger coordination efforts in relation to the response of cases of gender-based violence survivors. UNHCR will be leading an interinstitutional process to develop an integral response **route amongst all relevant local institutions to improve coordination and ensure strengthened protection responses for GBV survivors.**

Two sessions were held to discuss cross-cutting approaches in the Needs Assessment and Humanitarian Response Plan for 2025. These sessions aim to promote effective and inclusive humanitarian interventions, **with a focus on gender equality, protection, accountability to affected populations, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and prevention of and attention to gender-based violence.** The main audience for this activity was the Humanitarian Country Teams in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

In September, **UNHCR, UNICEF, and IOM supported a self-care and mental health workshops for frontline humanitarian actors** where more than 50 Local Southern Border Cluster Team (ELFS) members participated. Moreover, UNHCR organized a self-care and mental health capacity building workshop for frontline humanitarian actors in which more than 35 Local Western Border Cluster Team members participated.

**UNHCR held the first meeting with the Solidarity Cities Committee of the municipality of the Central District** to discuss a work plan for 2025, which aims to promote access to and inclusion of asylum-seekers, refugees, and people in mixed movements in municipal services.

The MIRPS National Technical Team, made up of the Honduran Foreign Ministry, the Secretariat for Human Rights and the National Migration Institute, organized a workshop in Tegucigalpa for strategic planning analysts from more than 14 State Secretariats to **socialize the commitments of the Honduran government within the MIRPS framework regarding IDPs, asylum-seekers, refugees, people in mixed movements, and returnees in need of protection.**

On 25 September, **UNHCR and the Hague Institute for the Innovation of the Law (HiiL), launched a study on Access to Justice for IDPs highlighting gaps in access to formal dispute resolution mechanisms as well as analysis on the primary types of legal disputes faced by displaced people.**

*The report, launched by UNHCR and HiiL, highlights how data-driven insights can pave the way for reforms aimed at addressing the legal challenges faced by displaced and vulnerable populations.*

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With technical inputs from the judicial community, legal service providers and community members, the study provides insights for development of people-centred justice policies. **This is the fourth study by HiiL and UNHCR, and the first in the Americas Region.**

The National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH) and UNHCR organized an event in El Paraíso to officially launch the Ombudsmovil project. The objective of CONADEH's mobile unit is **to provide information to people in mixed movements on their rights, deter human rights violations and register them if they occur.** In September, CONADEH assisted over 220 persons in mixed movements in El Paraíso department.

UNHCR in Tegucigalpa provided a workshop to 15 persons of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) on the rights of asylum-seekers, refugees and IDPs in Honduras. All participants are working at UNAH's Ombudsperson's Office. **This workshop aims to promote the inclusion of displaced people in higher education.**

UNHCR and CONADEH held a training on international protection and the principle of non-refoulement for 25 members of the National Police, Border Police, Tactical Special Operations Group and the Direction of National Investigation.

These collaborative efforts underscore UNHCR´s commitment to creating comprehensive support systems that address immediate humanitarian needs while promoting long-term solutions for displaced individuals and communities affected by violence.

## RESPOND

UNHCR addressed numerous cases requiring international protection, assisting various individuals and families from Honduras and other countries who faced challenges related to asylum, family reunification, and continued to provide access to humanitarian services.

In September, **UNHCR managed a wide range of cases in need of international protection**, among them: a refoulement case of a six member Honduran family returned from Mexico, a Honduran couple who is seeking asylum in Mexico at risk of being returned, two cases of Honduran mothers in the United States of America seeking family reunification with their children who are still in Honduras, referral of several Nicaraguans and Venezuelans to INM to access the Honduran asylum system, and the follow up for an unaccompanied Venezuelan girl in need of international protection. Moreover, **UNHCR referred to INM in Agua Caliente two cases of a total of 10 Venezuelans who intend to seek asylum in Honduras.** Also, UNHCR assisted a family from Venezuela who was on their way back.

Throughout September, Ocotepeque's Migrant Shelter **provided assistance to 236 persons in mixed movements.** Also, UNHCR´s partner Doctors of the World provided **408 individual medical attentions, 351 assistances in mental health, 1,165 people received general orientation and 176 people received information on sexual and reproductive health.** Over 5,000 women were assisted in Machuca's humanitarian services site.

UNHCR's partner World Vision, through its four mobile information services located in Trojes, Las Manos border, Choluteca and in Machuca, **provided information to over 14,000 people in mixed movements on their rights, including the right to seek asylum in Honduras, and the humanitarian services available in Honduras.**

**UNHCR´s partner Caritas in Danlí and Choluteca provided shelter to over 1,800 people in mixed movements, mostly families from Venezuela and Colombia.** So far in 2024, Caritas has sheltered over 13,000 people.

In September, **3,609 Hondurans were returned to the three Centres for Returned Migrants. Compared to the previous month, the number of returnees decreased by 9%.** Of the returnees, 2,677 were men, 577 women, 355 accompanied children in family units. UNHCR identified 23 cases of returnees with protection needs, totalling 65

*56% of all people in mixed movements in September were women, girls and boys, which is the highest percentage recorded in recent years.*

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persons and 23 internally displacement cases of 100 persons. All cases were referred to partner Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) for humanitarian assistance and case management.

**UNHCR and Children International organized activities to raise awareness about stigma and to prevent forced recruitment.** The events involved 420 leaders, volunteers, and community members, including youth, women, and elders from north and south Chamelecón and Cofradia sectors. The activities included a festival of traditional games and a marathon **as part of the sports for protection** strategy to mitigate protection risks.

**UNHCR, as co-leader of the South-eastern Border Team, continued to organize the Pescadero Humanitarian Space with other humanitarian actors.** UNHCR is currently in the process of installing 14 RHUs and improving the infrastructure to enhance the protection environment.

The comprehensive support provided by UNHCR and its partners **highlights the ongoing commitment to safeguarding the rights and well-being of vulnerable populations in the region.**

*The main needs of refugee and migrant children and adolescents, according to their caretakers, are food (71%), clothing and footwear (65%), food and vitamin supplements (32%), weight and height assessment (32%).*

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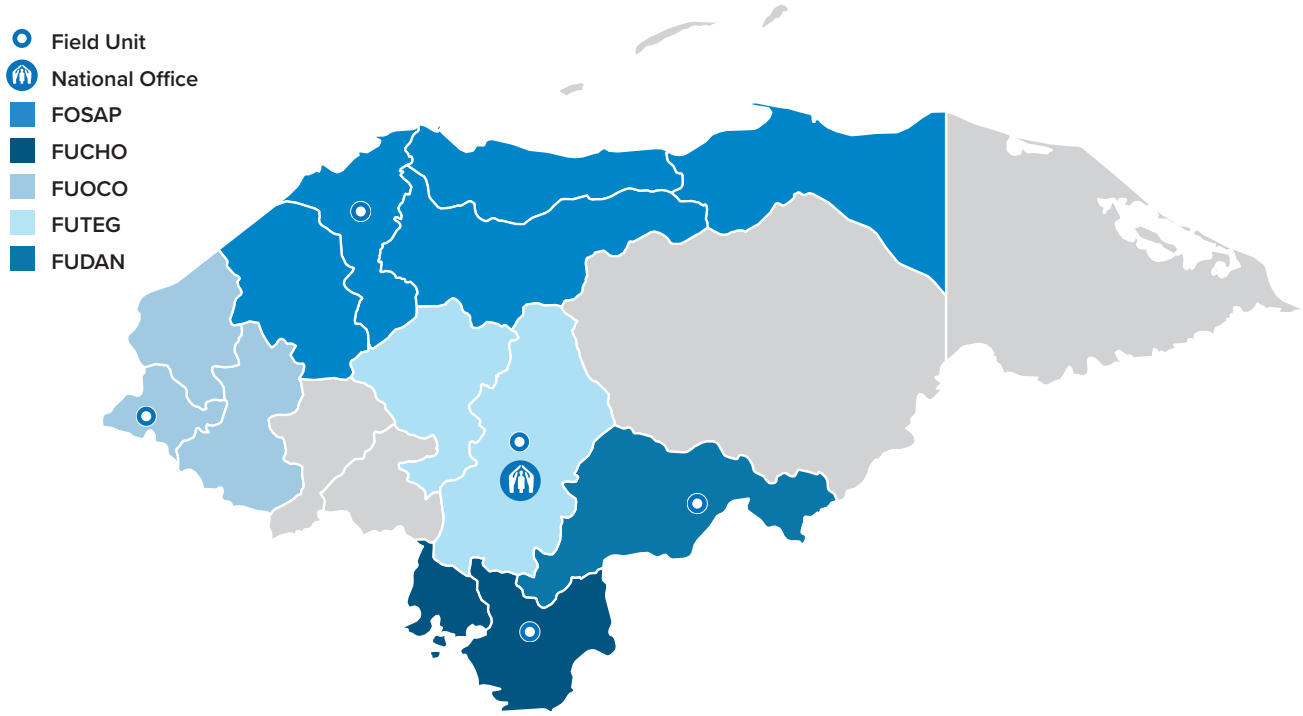
# EMPOWER

In September, UNHCR and its partners engaged in various community initiatives across Honduras aimed at promoting social cohesion, preventing forced recruitment, and raising awareness about children's rights and gender-based violence.




In Tegucigalpa, UNHCR, in collaboration with Save the Children and Honduras' National Commission for Sports, Physical Education and Recreation (CONDEPOR) held sports activities in the Villa Olímpica complex **to promote social cohesion and mitigate the risk of forced recruitment,** over 150 children and youth from five communities at high risk of displacement due to violence participated.

On 10 September, Honduras celebrated Children´s Day. UNHCR celebrated the event by assisting a community event in Ocotepeque with 20 children and eight adults , which was organized by the local Women's Network that is supported by UNHCR to promote social cohesion. **UNHCR donated sports equipment (uniforms and balls) to promote healthy community activities.** A potluck was also hosted raising awareness on the rights of children; the activity was carried out jointly with the Municipality of San Marcos and more than 35 children participated.

**In the Central District, through partner Save The Children (STC), protection fairs were held in seven communities as part of the Children´s Day celebrations.** More than 900 girls, boys, and adolescents were reached.

Also, UNHCR participated in the "Violence Prevention Fair" carried out by the Secretariat of Education on Children's Day. **UNHCR conducted board games and an illustration contest to raise awareness on prevention of forced recruitment among children and adolescents in public schools.**

Through storytelling activities using "The Shooting Stars of Miska", a tool developed by UNHCR in 2022, children were able to imagine and discuss ways of protecting themselves from forced recruitment, and to foster social cohesion within their communities.

On Children´s Day, **UNHCR and CONADEH published an infographic about forced displacement in children and youth.** The infographic was picked up by different local media outlets.

From 16-20 September, **UNHCR held four consultation sessions with more than 10 institutions, key partners, and community networks to design a campaign for the prevention of forced recruitment of children and adolescents by organized crime groups.** These participatory consultations will help to define strategic key messages and activities of the campaign. The campaign is part of UNHCR's child protection strategy, which aims to address forced recruitment as one of the main causes of forced displacement in Honduras.

On 23 September, UNHCR participated in an Educational Fair in the Julia Zelaya Institute in the Municipality of Marcovia in Choluteca Department in which **150 children were engaged to discuss the risks of forced recruitment of children and other causes of internal displacement in Honduras.** They were also informed about the protection mechanisms available in the Department of Choluteca. Organizations such as Plan Internacional, OPS, SESAL and SENAF participated in the activity.

**UNHCR and ADETRIUNF carried out a training on gender-based violence as a cause of internal displacement** in El Triunfo, Choluteca, where 40 community leaders from the Carao, Las Uvas, and Río Grande communities were trained.

UNHCR delivered module VI of the **Gender-Based Violence Training Program for parents in the community of Las Flores, San Marcos de Colón.** The activity was coordinated with the Community Education Module of SEMUJER. Participants collaborated on a mural to inform about the types of gender-based violence and how gender-based violence triggers internal displacement; 14 parents participated in the activity.

UNHCR made the first delivery of construction materials to the Municipality of Danlí, for the rehabilitation of Solidarity Park to serve as **a protective public space for the community and asylum-seekers and refugees residing in the municipality of Danlí.**

In San Pedro Sula, **UNHCR and Children International held sessions focused on developing a protection plan as part of a community diagnosis.** These sessions included discussions on implementing Community Art and tactical urbanism strategies; a total of **50 leaders and volunteers participated from sectors affected by forced recruitment in the Rivera Hernández, Chamelecón Norte and La Planeta sector.**

Additionally, **UNHCR and Children International continued their efforts to strengthen and empower communities' awareness of human rights by presenting the role of the National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH).** These sessions contributed to strengthening the relationship between the State and the communities. A total of 67 leaders and volunteers participated.

UNHCR held training and analysis sessions for the **implementation of routes for the identification and referral of cases of gender-based violence from the communities to institutional protection mechanisms**; 40 volunteers and community leaders from the medical clinics of the communities of Rivera Hernández, La Planeta and Chamelecón participated.

From 23-25 September, **UNHCR welcomed the Goodwill Ambassador, Luis Gerardo Méndez, in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.** The GWA visited communities with high levels of violence to learn about how violence leads to internal displacement. **Mr. Méndez emphasized his appreciation for meeting young people with big hearts and a desire to change the environment in their communities.**

In Ocotepeque, UNHCR facilitated a digital safety workshop in La Labor with the Youth Network with 25 participants. **The aim is to strengthen capacities and knowledge of the network to communicate to youth about prevention of digital protection risks and trustworthy source of on-line information.** Recruitment through on-line apps is a protection risk for youth in the area.

**UNHCR supported the community of Agua Caliente, with Santa Fe Municipality and the Departmental Secretary of Education of Ocotepeque, in the refurbishment of the community playground.** The event is part of an integration process to create social cohesion and a more empowered community. The event counted with the participation of 90 members from the community: 32 women, 10 men, and 48 girls and boys.

These activities reflect a **comprehensive approach to strengthening community resilience and support systems for vulnerable populations while addressing the underlying factors contributing to displacement and violence in the country.**

*The actor, director and producer visited Honduras as part of his work with UNHCR to speak out about the stories of people forced to flee their homes as a result of violence in their communities.*

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## SOLVE

**UNHCR advanced its livelihood initiatives by launching work internships and entrepreneurship programs** aimed at improving economic opportunities for young people and vulnerable populations.

UNHCR in collaboration with the Business Development Centre has supported 124 young people with cash assistance as part of the Apprenticeship and Job Placement Internship programme. **The young people have managed to find training opportunities with 74 companies located in the departments of Choluteca, Ocotepeque, Tegucigalpa, and San Pedro Sula.**

This month, **UNHCR the GraphXacademy, Graphic Design Academy, and the CDE Business Development Centre, held a graduation for 27 young people from San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa.** The technical training process lasts six months and is part of the Training Program in Graphic Design that will allow them to improve their opportunities for economic inclusion.

Moreover, UNHCR and partner CDE, launched the second cycle of the entrepreneurship development program, which **aims to strengthen the skills and knowledge in business development of people displaced by violence, refugees and returnees with protection needs.** For the second stage of training in 2024, the program has 35 participants, of which 71% are women.

**UNHCR delivered cash assistance to 235 persons in livelihoods initiatives,** for a total of more than USD 44,000.

These efforts highlight UNHCR's and partners commitment to **fostering skills development and economic inclusion, providing participants with essential resources and training** to enhance their prospects for sustainable livelihoods in a challenging environment.

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**UNHCR thanks the contributions of donor countries such as**

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**Australia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Spain**

We thank the fundamental support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR's global programs with flexible funding

*As of September 2024

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