UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Refugees find **hope and home** in Mexico

2024 Highlights UNHCR Mexico

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2024
Highlights
UNHCR Mexico

Letter from Giovanni Lepri

UNHCR is committed to protect people who had to flee their homes and assist them to restart their lives, worldwide. Our mission is to help them not only to survive but to thrive.

More than half of the people who arrive in Mexico declare to have left their countries due to violence, insecurity, and threats. This confirms that the majority are forced to flee, which makes our work not only necessary and relevant but also lifesaving. In Mexico, we support strengthening the asylum system so that people who were forced to flee their homes can be protected and have integration options, an important contribution to solve the complex human mobility situation persisting in the region.

Asylum applications in Mexico decreased by 40 per cent in 2024 compared to the previous year. Despite this decline, Mexico remained among the top ten countries receiving the most asylum requests in the world. The number of some 80,000 claims of 2024 is still high considering the difficulties for asylum-seekers to access documentation, a measure introduced to prevent those not in need of international protection from initiating applications with the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR). By the last quarter of the year, asylum requests have shown an upward trend.

Mexico's Local Integration Program (PIL) has provided 50,000 refugees[1] with the meaningful opportunity to start a new life in Mexico since the program was launched in 2016. The PIL has boosted integration as it fosters effective social, economic, and cultural inclusion, enabling refugees to contribute to the development and well-being of local communities and the country. It has become a model where refugees, businesses that employ them, and host communities, all benefit. 2024 was the year in which a record number of nearly 13,000 refugees chose to be relocated from southern Mexico to cities where they can begin their integration process.

We know that when refugees and forcibly displaced people have access to education, healthcare, and employment, economies and communities become stronger. At UNHCR Mexico, we will continue working to expand the space for protection, alongside the government, shelters, and civil society. We will keep strengthening ties with federal, state and municipal authorities, the private sector, academia, the media, and UN agencies, ensuring the meaningful participation of refugees in everything we do. We will also continue efforts to diversify contributions from our donors, to whom we are grateful for their generosity towards people forced to flee.

Most displaced people in the Americas remain in Latin American countries, with Mexico being one of the main destinations. In 2024, Mexico and the countries of the region reaffirmed their commitment to protecting refugees through the adoption of the Chile Declaration and Action Plan, as part of the 40th anniversary celebrations of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees.

I am convinced that with everyone's efforts, and by ensuring that the voices of who were forced to flee are heard, the right to asylum will continue to prevail. As demonstrated by our 75 years of existence, we will continue to stay and deliver.

Giovanni Lepri
Representative
March 2025

[1] Numbers as of February 2025.

Refugees rebuild their lives in southern Mexico thanks to the support of UNHCR.

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Chapter **1**

Context **and regional processes**

1.1 Context

The year 2024 witnessed an unprecedented number of elections held in various countries of the world. In Mexico, Claudia Sheinbaum made history on 2 June, becoming the nation's first female president. The country continues to be a global champion receiving and integrating people forced to flee, while fostering inclusive environments and demonstrating solidarity, allowing them the opportunity to rebuild their lives and providing them with a new home.

This year also saw the highest number of new participants in Mexico's Local Integration Program (PIL) for refugees, with nearly 13,000 people taking up jobs in the formal sector, enhancing their access to educational and healthcare services. So far, UNHCR's supported PIL program has allowed 50,000[2] refugees to find stability and a new home in Mexico. It has revolutionized integration through effective social, economic, and cultural inclusion, enabling refugees to contribute to the development and well-being of local communities and the country.

Mexico received nearly 80,000 new asylum claims, consolidating itself as one of the main destinations for asylum-seekers worldwide. Most are from Central American countries, Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela. More than half of the people arriving in the country report that the main reasons for leaving their homes were violence, insecurity and threats in their countries, indicating that a significant number of people may require international protection. This reality is reflected in the high rate of recognition of refugee status of more than 60 per cent, highlighting the effectiveness of the asylum system and progressive legal framework. Mexico is the only country of Latin America having incorporated the Cartagena Declaration fully into national law.

Who is a refugee?

Refugees are people who are outside their country of origin and cannot return due to a well-founded fear of persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disrupted public order. As a result, they require protection in other countries.

Refugees and migrants often travel together. However, these two groups are governed by different legal frameworks and refugees have more far-reaching rights, e.g. the right of non-refoulement. Treating both groups the same could have serious consequences for the lives and safety of those fleeing persecution or conflict, as refugees are protected under international refugee law.

[2] Numbers as of February 2025.

UNHCR intensified its collaboration with the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR), improving registration and processing systems. One of the most important advances in this regard has been the Commission's digitization and adoption of biometric recognition technology, improving efficiency in processing asylum claims. At the end of the year, COMAR was processing an average of more than 2,800 resolutions per month, almost 40 per cent more than in 2023. COMAR continues to face budgetary constraints, which coupled with the limited availability of legal stay alternatives for people, has resulted in an overburdened asylum system.

More than 60 per cent of people interviewed by UNHCR expressed fear to return to their home countries. The high number of asylum claims is especially remarkable given challenges for asylum-seekers to access documentation, including the Temporary Visitor Cards for Humanitarian Reasons (TVRH). In 2024, the National Migration Institute (INM) reduced the issuance of TVRH by 97 per cent[3] for people in need of international protection compared to the previous year. This continued lack of documentation makes it difficult for asylum-seekers to access essential services, formal work and education during their asylum process which might take months, and has exposed them to increased protection risks, including of violence against women and girls, fraud and extortion. Permanent Residence Permits continued to be issued to recognized refugees.

The **southern border** of Mexico is the main point of entry of people who have been displaced from their homes in other countries in Latin America and other continents. This region saw a consistent increase of arrivals with more than three quarters of all asylum claims being filed in Chiapas – a state with already stretched services and resources. The geolocation of the CBP One application, used to obtain appointments to enter the U.S. regularly, including to seek asylum, was expanded to southern Mexico in August 2024. Before, people were only able to apply through the app from the Mexican capital northwards.[4]

Mexico City received more than 14,300 asylum claims, making the capital the second largest recipient of asylum-seekers. Some of Mexico City's shelters were operating at up to 500 per cent capacity, exposing unaccompanied children, pregnant women, older persons, and people with disabilities to protection risks and tensions with the local population. In response, UNHCR has implemented several initiatives to enhance response capacity and promote peaceful coexistence. We are supporting shelters to improve their reception conditions with the delivery of core-relief items, food, cleaning and hygiene products, dormitory and office equipment.

There has been a significant increase of displaced Mexicans in 2024, accounting for more than half of the shelter occupation in **northern Mexico**. Extreme weather conditions, severe security incidents, including kidnappings and extortions, as well as poor health and hygiene conditions are important protection risks for refugees and asylum-seekers across the country, but more so, near the northern border.

[3] Between January and November 2024, INM issued 3,755 TVRHs, compared to 128,974 issued in the same period the previous year, according to data from the Migration Policy Unit, Registry, and Identity of Persons (UPMRIP).
[4] The CBP One application was disabled on 20 January 2025.

UNHCR has presences in 13 localities across Mexico and works with 34 partners to respond throughout the country and promote durable solutions for refugees and their communities.

UNHCR Mexico presence

Country office

1. Mexico City

Sub-Offices

2. Monterrey

3. Tuxtla Gutiérrez

Field Offices

4. Tapachula

5. Ciudad Juárez

6. Tijuana

Field Units

7. Tenosique

8. Palenque

9. Guadalajara

10. Aguascalientes

11. Saltillo

UNHCR Presence

12. San Luis Potosí

13. Villahermosa

UNHCR liaison officers on internal displacement

- Michoacán (Morelia)
- Sinaloa (Culiacán, Mazatlán, Choix)
- Chihuahua (Chihuahua, Cd. Juárez, Parral)
- Chiapas (Tuxtla Gutiérrez)
- Guerrero (Acapulco & Chilpancingo)
- Oaxaca (Oaxaca de Juárez)

UNHCR collaborates with local authorities to promote solutions based on the needs of internally displaced people.

© UNHCR/Jesús González

More than 320,700 families changed their home or place of residence within the country to protect themselves from crime in 2023.[5] Violence caused the displacement of 11,000 people in Chiapas in 2024, leading some 600 people to cross the border to Guatemala. Responding to an important increase of internal displacement in the last years, UNHCR supports the governments of Chiapas, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, Oaxaca and Sinaloa through liaison officers providing technical support and developed a national registration guide for IDPs with the Ministry of Interior.

1.2 Regional processes

In 2024, the 40th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration took place, a historical legal instrument that extended the 'refugee' definition to include, among others, people impacted by generalized violence or disturbances of public order. To develop it further, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil held three thematic consultations on the topics of protection, integration and displacement due to disasters with technical assistance of UNHCR. For the first time, refugee led-organizations participated in the

[5] Numbers according to the National Survey of Victimisation and Perception of Public Safety 2024 (ENVIPE, for its acronym in Spanish).

subsequent rounds of negotiations on the content of the Chilean Declaration and Action Plan (PAC), including a list of actions for the protection of refugees, stateless or climate and disaster-displaced populations to be implemented within the next decade.

Following up on the Global Compact on Refugees and the commitments made in the Los Angeles Declaration, Mexico participated in four regional technical teams on reception, employment and livelihoods, internal displacement, and local governance. Among the country's main achievements were 48,000 asylum-seekers being issued a temporary Unique Population Registry Code (CURP), the support of more than 1,300 unaccompanied children seeking asylum and the referral of 1,600 individuals to public health services.

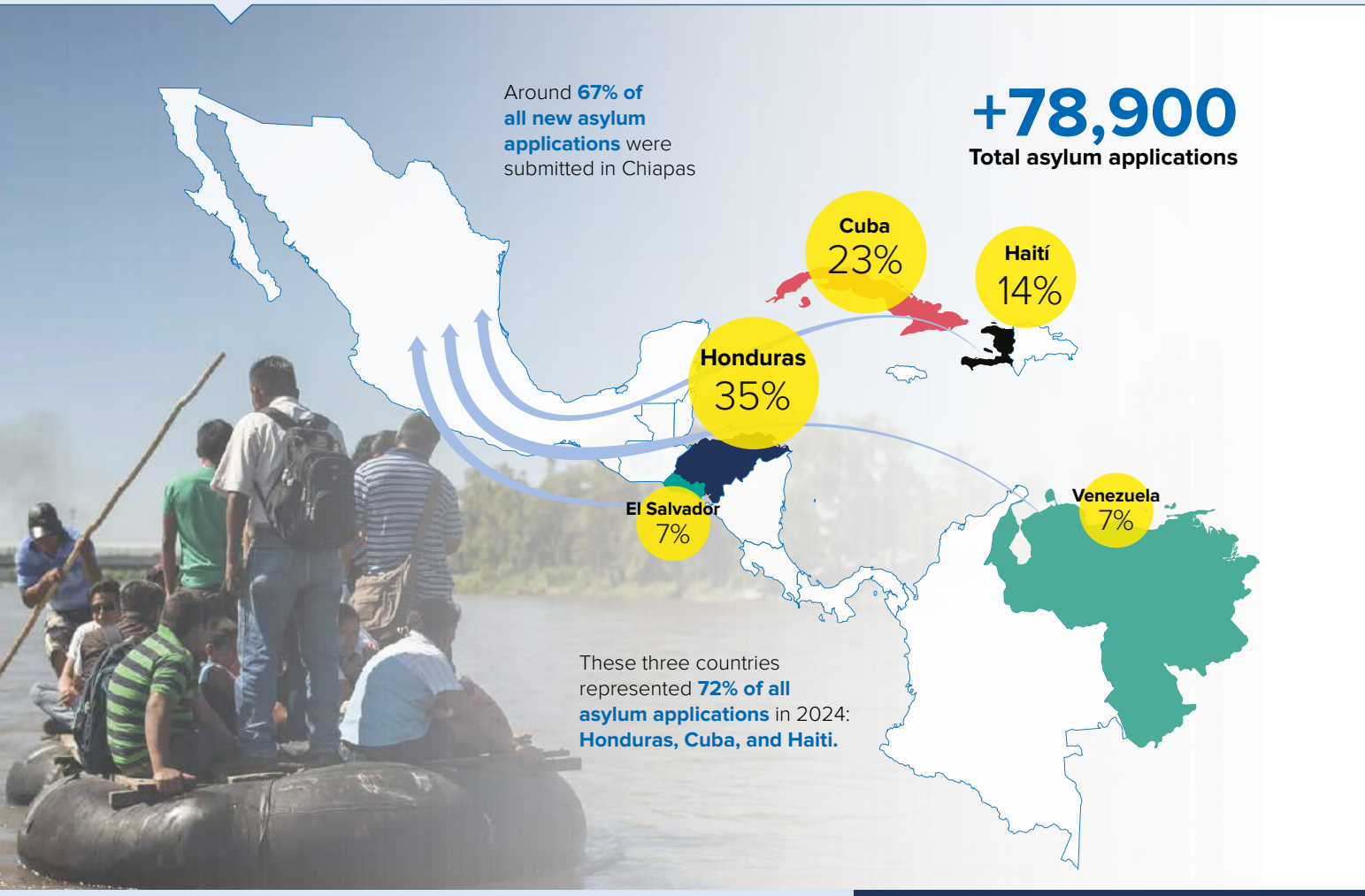
The Interagency Group on Human Mobility, co-led by UNHCR and International Organization for Migration (IOM), analyzes human mobility trends, discusses strategies and joint interventions, coordinates responses and supports the Mexican government to promote public policies and actions to enhance the rights of people in the context of mobility. UNHCR and IOM are also co-leading the Response for Venezuelans (R4V), a regional platform including international organizations, governments and civil society, which focuses on diverse areas of protection and socio-economic integration for the Venezuelan population in Mexico.

To foster joint strategies on international protection and durable solutions for refugees and displaced populations, UNHCR is accompanying the Mexican government and other stakeholders in the implementation of the Regional Integrated Framework for Protection and Solutions in Mexico (MIRPS), a regional initiative of Central American countries and Mexico.

Representatives from Latin American and Caribbean countries participate in the first thematic consultation of the Cartagena +40 Process.

© UNHCR/Arturo Almenar

1.3 UNHCR Mexico at a glance



NEW ASYLUM APPLICATIONS PROFILE

WOMEN & GIRLS 44%

MEN & BOYS 56%

25% **CHILDREN**

+26,800

RECOGNIZED REFUGEES
in 2024

(including complementary protection), an average of **+2,800** substantive decisions per month, representing an **increase of +20%** compared to the previous year

WORK OF COMAR

+69,000
INDIVIDUAL RESOLUTIONS
by COMAR

COMAR has increased its processing capacity by **five times** since 2018

+60%
REFUGEE RECOGNITION
Rate

COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES

+25,000
INQUIRIES
were handled through UNHCR's Help Desk

CONFÍA EN EL JAGUAR

+266,600
USERS
per month were reached through the "Confía en el Jaguar" Facebook page

+153,400
VISITS
to the UNHCR Help website

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

+185,000
LEGAL ACCOMPANIMENT SESSIONS
provided

+96,800
PEOPLE
were advised and legally represented

+4,100
PEOPLE
were represented by UNHCR's legal network

45 LAWYERS
45 PARALEGALS
20 ACTIVE LAW CLINICS
+40 PUBLIC DEFENDERS

COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED PEOPLE

+800
REFUGEES, ASYLUM-SEEKERS, AND HOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS
were part of UNHCR's Participatory Assessments

+1,000
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE
participated in consultations to inform law proposals in Chiapas, Michoacán, and Oaxaca

+220
REPORTS
were received through the UNHCR community-based feedback and complaint response mechanism, and **+90%** were resolved by UNHCR

CHILD PROTECTION

+800
CHILDREN AT RISK
supported with specialized case management

+4,600
CHILDREN
participated in psychosocial and recreational activities

+2,700
MOTHERS, FATHERS AND CAREGIVERS
received positive parenting tools and psychosocial support

+2,000
PEOPLE
including UNHCR staff, government partners, and civil society received specialized capacity-building on child protection

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: PREVENTION, MITIGATION, AND RESPONSE

+1,700
WOMEN AND GIRL SURVIVORS
of violence received specialized assistance from UNHCR and partners

+1,800
STAFF
from partners, government and UNHCR received capacity-building sessions on prevention and response mechanisms and PSEA

+1,300
ASYLUM-SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE
sensitized on the prevention of violence against women and girls

RECEPTION CONDITIONS AND SUPPORT FOR SHELTERS

140
SHELTERS
were supported by UNHCR

45,000
PEOPLE
accessed comprehensive services in shelters, incl. accommodation, food, psychosocial support or legal guidance through **26 partner shelters**

+1,500
VISITS
to **+130 shelters**

+80
SHELTER WORKERS
participated in capacity-building initiatives on international protection, mental health and durable solutions

LOCAL INTEGRATION

+12,900
REFUGEES
chose to be relocated as part of Mexico's Local Integration Program (PIL), bringing the total to **+50,000** participants since the start of the program in 2016

+13,300
REFUGEES
already present at their cities of integration were supported, marking a total of **+113,000** people supported since 2021

+650
PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES
COMPANIES have partnered with UNHCR and employ refugees

+630
REFUGEES
started their naturalization process, and **+300 were naturalized**

EDUCATION

+2,400
ASYLUM-SEEKING AND REFUGEE CHILDREN
received support enrolling in school

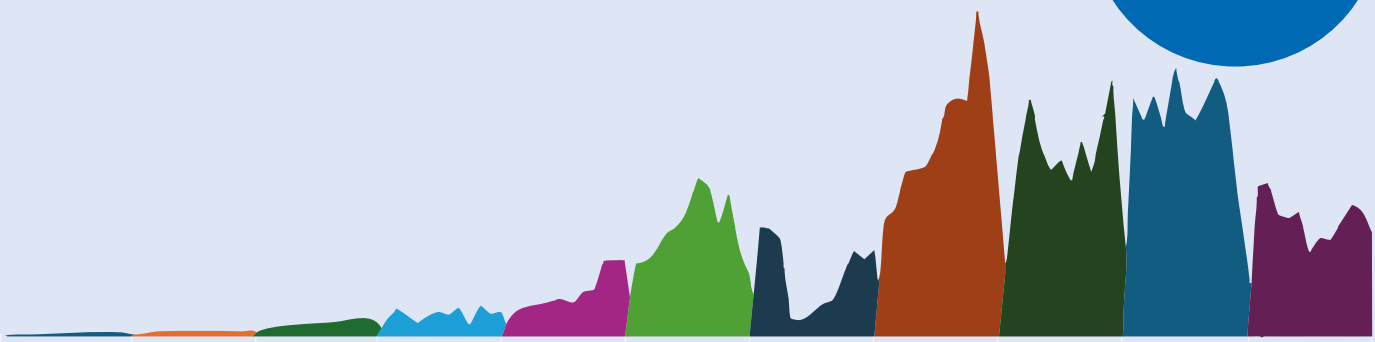
+220
ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES
enrolled in technical training or certification of labour competencies

+130
REFUGEE STUDENTS
received scholarships for university studies

200
PEOPLE
received assistance for the recognition of their academic credentials

New Asylum Claims in Mexico Monthly Evolution I 2014 – 2024

In 2024
+78,900
asylum claims were filed



2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
2,137 Claims	3,424 Claims	8,796 Claims	14,603 Claims	29,631 Claims	70,431 Claims	41,303 Claims	131,414 Claims	118,756 Claims	140,812 Claims	78,975 Claims

Source: COMAR 2014-18, SIRE 2019-2024

UNHCR collaborates with the shelters around Mexico to reinforce the first line of humanitarian response.

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Chapter **2**

Ensuring the right to asylum **and protection responses**

UNHCR works to provide assistance to people in need of international protection.

2.1 Access to asylum

The Americas continued to face an unprecedented scale and complexity of displacement, where people fleeing conflict, persecution, and violence moved alongside those escaping poverty, lack of opportunities, and the impact of natural disasters. By mid-2024, the Americas hosted more than 20.3 million forcibly displaced or stateless people, including 5.8 million refugees and asylum-seekers, 8.1 million internally displaced persons, and 5.8 million other people in need of international protection.[6]

In this context, Mexico continued to evolve from being a country of origin and transit to also a destination for people forced to flee. In recent years, it has ranked among the top countries globally in terms of new asylum requests. More than 78,900 individuals applied for asylum through COMAR this year, mostly Hondurans (+27,700), followed by Cubans (+17,600), Haitians (+10,300) and Salvadorans (+5,400). Mexico City accounted for 18 per cent of the country's claims despite the temporary closure of COMAR's office from 24 May until 5 August. The increase of refugees in the capital led to the creation of a new UNHCR field office in February 2024.

The increase of arrivals over the last years together with the absence of alternative migratory pathways has resulted in significant pressure on an already overstretched asylum system. UNHCR provided structural, technical, and financial assistance to COMAR to maintain the integrity of the asylum process and ensure proper support for those seeking refugee status in Mexico.

In collaboration with partners, UNHCR implemented the Mixed Movements Monitoring survey and carried out more than 5,000 interviews with refugees and migrants in Mexico to gain a broader understanding of their profiles and protection needs. Seven out 10 people stated they were forced to leave their homes due to general violence and/or direct persecution. Likewise, more than 60 per cent expressed fearing for their lives, security, or freedom if they were to return to their countries of origin, indicating their need of international protection. More than 60 per cent of asylum-seekers are recognized as refugees.

[6] Other people in need of international protection' include stateless people, returnees, or those who, due to persecution, armed conflict, violence, or serious human rights violations, are unable to receive protection from their country of origin.

Profiles

Women represented more than half **(54 per cent)** of all asylum claims in 2024, continuing the trend of 2023 **(57 per cent)**. Meanwhile, **25 per cent** of people seeking safety were children. **More than 700** of all asylum claims were filed by unaccompanied children.

Expanded Cartagena definition for Haitians

As the situation in Haiti worsened, Mexico began applying the expanded definition of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration to Haitian asylum-seekers to ensure their protection. As a result, 90 per cent of Haitians fleeing public order disturbance and violence between 2023 and 2024, found safety in Mexico, including both refugee status or through complementary protection.

SUPPORT TO THE MEXICAN COMMISSION FOR REFUGEE ASSISTANCE (COMAR)

175

COMAR STAFF

positions supported to increase registration and processing capacity

9

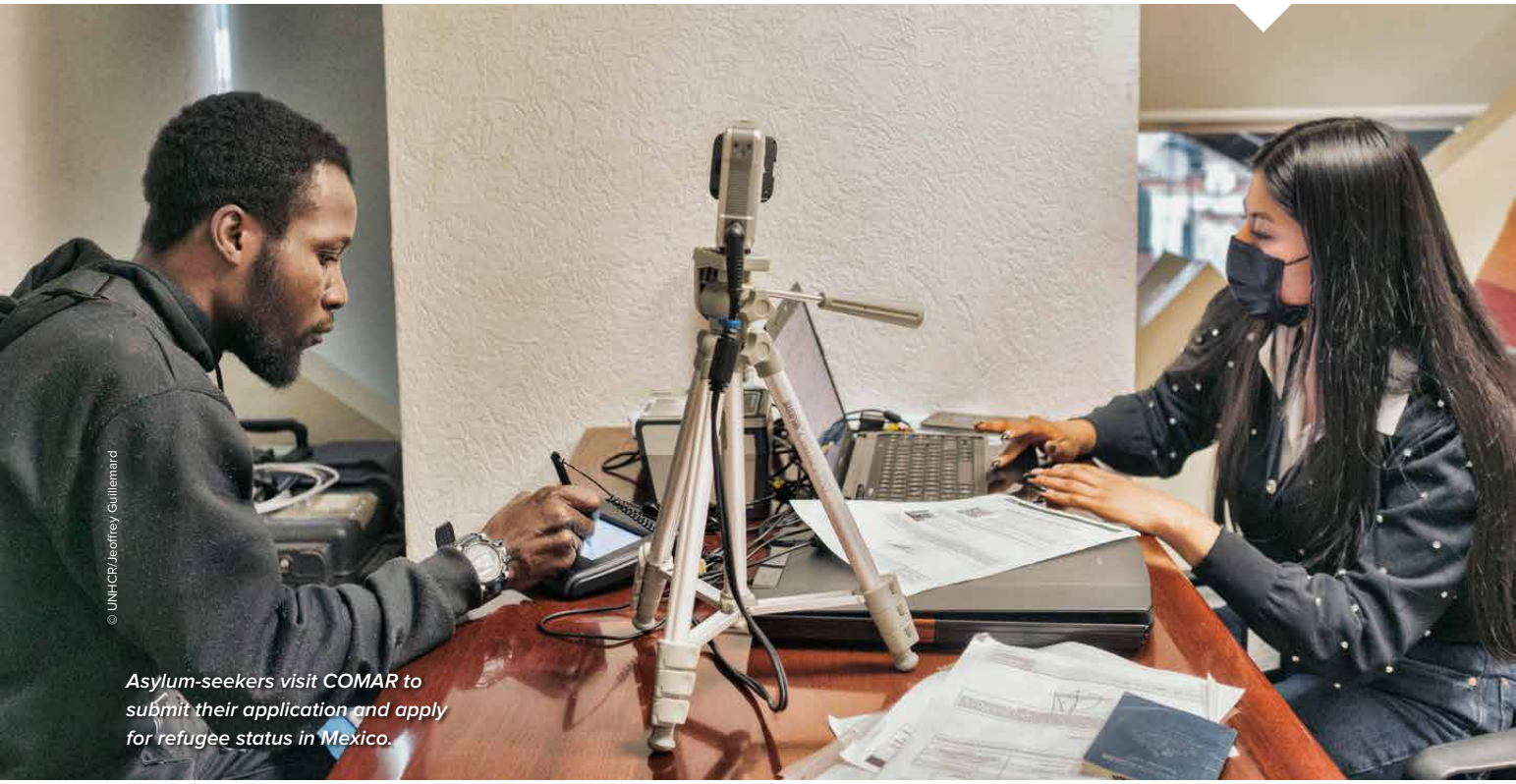
COMAR OFFICES

were supported and strengthened

+30

INTERPRETATION SERVICES

for asylum interviews delivered, including through **9 creole interpreters**



© UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

Asylum-seekers visit COMAR to submit their application and apply for refugee status in Mexico.

A fairer and more efficient asylum process

COMAR resolved 40 per cent more asylum cases in 2024 than in 2023, partly as a result of increased efficiency generated by the Quality Asylum Initiative (QAI). The improvement of nationality and profile-based differentiated procedures contributed to a fairer and more efficient asylum system. UNHCR provided technical and financial support for this.

COMAR Digital was launched in 2024. This platform allows asylum-seekers to track their application status, receive updates, and access information about their asylum process. Available in four languages, it enhances communication, speeds up procedures, and reduces the need for in-person visits to COMAR offices. While it serves as a consultation tool, all asylum procedures remain in-person, confidential, and free of charge. This year was marked by improvements and milestones, including the migration of digital systems to the infrastructure of the Ministry of Interior, better integration and coordination with other government systems and the provision of biometric devices to help the government assign asylum-seekers and refugees a unique digital identity.

COMAR further developed the **Refugee Information System (SIRE)** with UNHCR's support. The case management system aims at automatizing all operative activities and to produce statistical reports. Three new SIRE modules were launched: 1) Translation and Interpretation module, that facilitates the access and internal management of such services, 2) Triage[7] module that allows the referral of cases by nationality and profiling, to trained eligibility officers and thus reduce processing times, and 3) Family Reunification module, to ensure case

[7] Triage is a method used to prioritize cases based on their urgency. In asylum systems, it helps profiling the applicants to identify those with a higher vulnerability and/or with profiles indicating a higher or lower likelihood of eligibility for the refugee status (according to comprehensive and updated country of origin information) and assigning them to qualified staff for accelerated procedures leading to quick and fair decisions.

management. The new digital tools, also allow INM (Migration Authority) to consult the status of asylum-seekers' cases in real-time, helping to prevent refoulement, and assist in registering their attendance signatures. SIRE also contributes to a specific statistics module, including monthly analysis of refugee status determination data to identify trends, areas for improvement, enabling informed decision-making.

Digital Transformation enabled the adoption of digital signatures. This project will continue in 2025, aiming to make the asylum procedure more efficient and to avoid the physical archive from growing. These efforts were supported by two key campaigns: 1) directed to asylum-seekers and key partners to promote the use of COMAR Digital, and 2) the #IUseSIRE campaign encouraging COMAR staff to engage with the new systems.

GOBERNACIÓN SECRETARÍA DE GOBERNACIÓN | COMAR COMISIÓN MEXICANA DE AYUDA A REFUGIADOS | RENAPO DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE REGISTRO NACIONAL DE POBLACIÓN E IDENTIDAD | UNHCR ACNUR La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

COMAR and progress on the refugees' identity project

When people are forced to flee their homes, they often do so without a passport or identity document. This can severely compromise their dignity and safety upon arrival in Mexico, as without documentation they are unable to exercise their rights or access essential services, such as healthcare, education, or transportation. Thanks to its global expertise in identity management for forcibly displaced people, UNHCR plays a key role in the development of international standards and best practices on the use of biometric data, policies, and identity verification methods.

COMAR, the National Population Registry (RENAPO) and UNHCR have jointly developed important tools to ensure the right to identity for asylum-seekers. These include the use of biometrics and issuance of a CURP for asylum-seekers and refugees, and a system designed to guarantee access to identity documents for refugees and beneficiaries of complementary protection. These initiatives represent significant strides in safeguarding the rights of asylum-seekers, ensuring they are provided with the necessary documentation for a smooth integration process.

IDENTITY OF REFUGEES - Results of the tripartite program UNHCR-COMAR-RENAPO

7

COMAR OFFICES

acquired the capacity to issue CURP and biometric registration (Guadalajara, Mexico City, Oluta, Palenque, Tapachula, Tenosique and Saltillo)

7

STATE CIVIL REGISTRY OFFICES

now issue CURP and biometric registration (Cancún, Chetumal, Monterrey, Tepic, Tijuana, Tuxtla Gutierrez and Villahermosa)

1

SOFTWARE

for biometric engines acquired, and **2 systems developed** for identity validation

©UNHCR/Pierre-Marc René

"Although asylum-seekers are numbers and although they are sheets of paper, each file represents the life of a person, their reason for their departure and their reason to apply for refuge here in Mexico."

Juan Manuel Pedraza and his team have digitised more than 191,000 records in COMAR. Previously, asylum applications were only worked with on paper, making processing slow. Now, Juan Manuel and his team can digitize up to 150 files per day allowing real-time access to information and speeding up the asylum process.

Juan works on digitizing the documents of thousands of people who have applied for asylum in Mexico.

Participation of refugees and follow-up of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum

To foster the active participation of refugees, COMAR launched the **Quadripartite Mechanism for the Protection and Integration of Refugees** in September 2024. This initiative also includes refugee representation, civil society organizations, and UNHCR. Apart from the federal Quadripartite Mechanism, ten Quadripartite Mechanisms were created in ten cities across eight states.[8]

This initiative is an innovative step in both Mexico and the region, creating spaces for participation and direct engagement with refugees to shape strategies and influence public policies that will positively impact their protection and integration. It is part of Mexico's commitments at the Global Refugee Forum 2023, for which UNHCR provided technical assistance and support.

National Refugee Population Survey (ENPORE)

COMAR, the Migration Policy Unit, Registry, and Identity of Persons (UPMRIP), UNHCR carried out the third National Refugee Population Survey (ENPORE) in 2024. The survey aims at providing insights into the demographic and socioeconomic profile of refugees, who were granted refugee status in Mexico between 2018 and 2023. The findings can be used to evaluate the public programs and services for refugees by UNHCR and the government. The results from ENPORE are set to be released and presented in 2025.

[8] Acayucan, Ciudad Juárez, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Palenque, Saltillo, Tapachula, Tijuana, Tuxtla, and Tabasco (one for two cities, Tenosique and Villahermosa).

Refugees and asylum-seekers access essential information about their rights through legal assistance.

© UNHCR/Archive

2.2 Access to legal assistance

Legal assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers is key to guarantee their fundamental rights. By providing them with information about their rights, they can make informed decisions, advocate for themselves, navigate complex administrative processes, and ultimately integrate into their new communities.

Through a robust collaboration network of legal professionals, civil society, pro-bono law firms, and the government, UNHCR works to ensure that refugees have the necessary legal support to exercise their right to asylum and find safety and stability within Mexican borders. Across 40 cities, the network has provided nearly 100,000 people with legal information and assistance. 45 lawyers, 45 legal assistants, more than 40 public defenders from civil society organizations, more than 20 human rights clinics and more than 40 pro-bono law firms helped people in need of international protection reunite with their families or navigate their asylum process. More than 300 legal cases were referred to the Federal Public Defense Institute (IFDP) for their support. UNHCR works with the Mexican Bar Association in 27 out of 32 Mexican states to provide legal advice to asylum-seekers.

To monitor detention conditions and give detainees access to information, UNHCR conducted more than 200 visits to INM's detention centres, informing 4,000 people on their rights, including to seek asylum in Mexico. As part of the Migratory Detention Exit Program, more than 20 asylum-seekers were able to leave detention centres through collaboration between COMAR, INM and UNHCR.

Advances and challenges in access to documentation

UNHCR works closely with the Mexican government and partners towards improving timely and effective access to documentation for refugees, asylum-seekers, and other displaced populations. Since November 2023, asylum-seekers have experienced challenges in obtaining the TVRH, limiting their access to essential services and formal employment in Mexico. This exposes them to heightened protection risks, including extorsions, kidnappings and abuse, leading many of them to feel compelled to move onward. The network of legal partners has

provided support in obtaining documentation for many refugees and asylum-seekers.

Law clinics

Many universities established law clinics to provide free legal advice to asylum-seekers and refugees. Under the supervision of experienced practitioners, trained students counsel people in need of international protection enabling them to claim their rights. Law clinics help build the capacity of future asylum lawyers.

This year, new clinics were opened in Mexico City, Monterrey, Palenque, Puebla, Querétaro, San Cristóbal de las Casas and Tapachula. In 2025, UNHCR plans to open more in Monterrey, Puebla, Querétaro, and Toluca. UNHCR now supports 34 law clinics, of which 20 are already fully operational.

+96,800
PEOPLE
were advised and legally represented

+88,500
LEGAL ORIENTATIONS

+92,700
CONSULTATIONS

+4,100
LEGAL REPRESENTATIONS

Confía en El Jaguar is one of the main sources of information and assistance for refugees and asylum seekers.

©UNHCR/Adrián Gonzalez

2.3 Access to information

To ensure that people forced to flee can make informed decisions, UNHCR and partners regularly update a number of innovative communication channels. The more people know, the less likely they are to fall prey to abuse or misinformation.

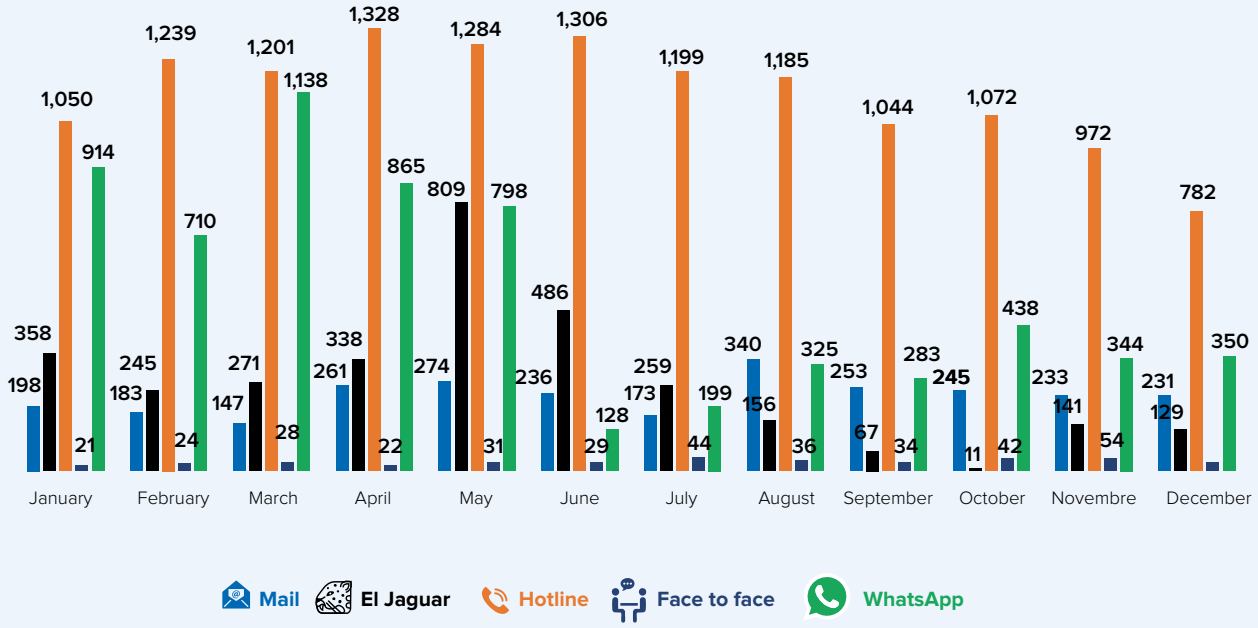
Refugees play a central role in sharing information with their peers through community meetings, awareness raising campaigns, and rights workshops. As an example, Refugee-Led Organizations, identified needs and created a video with UNHCR support on documentation that went viral and reached more than 156,000 people.

UNHCR's Help Desk, provides a helpline service to support and answer questions for refugees, asylum-seekers, and other people seeking assistance. It explains how to apply for asylum in Mexico and provides guidance on access to essential services for a successful integration. The Help Desk also offers assistance via email, and online chat, ensuring that people can get the help they need.

Refugees report that one of the main challenges they face is misinformation through trafficking groups or smugglers. This is why UNHCR created the Facebook page Confía en El Jaguar. Since 2017, the initiative offers dynamic materials and accessible information, specifically designed for displaced people, who primarily use mobile phones and social media to stay informed and communicate.

This year, El Jaguar surpassed 200,000 followers, with 625,000 visits and a reach of 3.2 million users. This dynamic and accessible channel provides information about the right to asylum and access to essential services, in addition to offering personalized guidance through private messages. It addressed 3,200 direct consultations with full confidentiality and generated 106,000 interactions within its community. As part of the digital communication strategy, UNHCR also strengthened the help.unhcr.org website, enabling refugees to access information about available services and programs tailored to their needs in various locations.

Monthly evolution by communication channel



Location of information consultations via the Help Desk

UNHCR engages with communities to listen, support, and empower, ensuring their voices are heard and needs are met.

© UNHCR/Ricardo Ramirez

Shelters work to meet the essential needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.

© UNHCR/Iván Stephens

Chapter **3**

Shelters

In Mexico, most shelters are operated by faith-based or civil society organizations.

©UNHCR/Adrian Gonzalez

Shelters play a crucial role by offering much more than temporary accommodation for asylum-seekers and refugees. They provide protection for those fleeing danger, while ensuring access to information and essential services such as food, clean water, and medical care, covering basic needs. Shelters are essential safe spaces to identify specific protection needs and offer support to women and girl survivors of violence and children at-risk. They have transformed into multifaceted resource centres, with the participation of UNHCR and partners, which provide support in offering multiple services, such as information, guidance on asylum procedures in Mexico, educational capacity-building opportunities and professional development, paving the way towards self-sufficiency and integration.

By the end of 2024, almost 300 shelters across the country were operational, with most run by faith-based organizations or civil society. Often the capacities are overstretched, forcing people to sleep in informal settlements on the streets, exposing them to significant protection risks, such as violence against women and girls, insecurity, lack of access to basic services or health risks. By working alongside local partners, we aim to improve protection standards, ensure access to essential services, and create safer environments for those in need. Over the year, UNHCR supported 140 shelters and delivered information sessions benefiting more than 8,000 people. More than 200 individual counselling sessions were held in nearly 50 shelters.

One of the key areas of UNHCR's work during 2024, was supporting shelter staff to strengthen their technical capacities to improve the living conditions and protection standards, especially for vulnerable people, such as unaccompanied children. Technical support was given to newly established shelters from civil society organizations and temporary collective accommodation spaces for emergencies in central Mexico, such as in Guerrero, Michoacán and the State of Mexico. Upon their request, UNHCR provided technical assistance regarding shelter implementation and protection standards to the state governments of Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, and Sinaloa.

UNHCR implemented the "Shelter Protection Tool" allowing shelters to identify the shelter conditions with regards to the minimum protection standards, to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, violence against women and children, among others. UNHCR stands by to support and develop work plans with the shelters to assure optimal protection conditions in the long term. In the past two years, the tool has been applied in more than 100 shelters nationwide.

UNHCR co-leads the Inter-agency Shelter Working Group that comprises the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IOM, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), aimed at coordinating the inter-agency response to shelters. Together, we developed a digital platform in collaboration with UN agencies to coordinate actions, systematize key information, and share protection standards.

The newly established National Shelter Network created a joint communication channel to share sensitive cases and updates on human mobility trends, best practices and jointly address challenges. UNHCR offered capacity-building to shelter coordinators regarding the mitigation of protection risks.

45,000
PEOPLE
accessed comprehensive services in shelters, including accommodation, food, psychosocial support or legal guidance through **26 partner shelters**

26
SHELTERS
received direct financial support from UNHCR

5
SHELTERS
received support with infrastructure improvement projects

60
SHELTERS
nationwide were trained in preventive security tools

UNHCR DONATED EQUIPMENT AND ITEMS TO +95 SHELTERS:

+196,300
personal hygiene items distributed to people staying in shelters

+13,300
blankets and other bedroom items

+600
items to equip bedrooms, such as mattresses, bunk beds, and mats

+69,100
cleaning items

+350
items to equip kitchens and offices

How UNHCR supports shelters in Mexico

Shelters provide accommodation for refugees and asylum-seekers across the country.

© UNHCR/Ivan Stephens

UNHCR staff working at the Multiservice Centre Tijuana.

© UNHCR/Aurora Herrera

Chapter **4**

Multiservice **centres**

UNHCR staff provides information at the Refugee Attention Centre in southern Mexico.

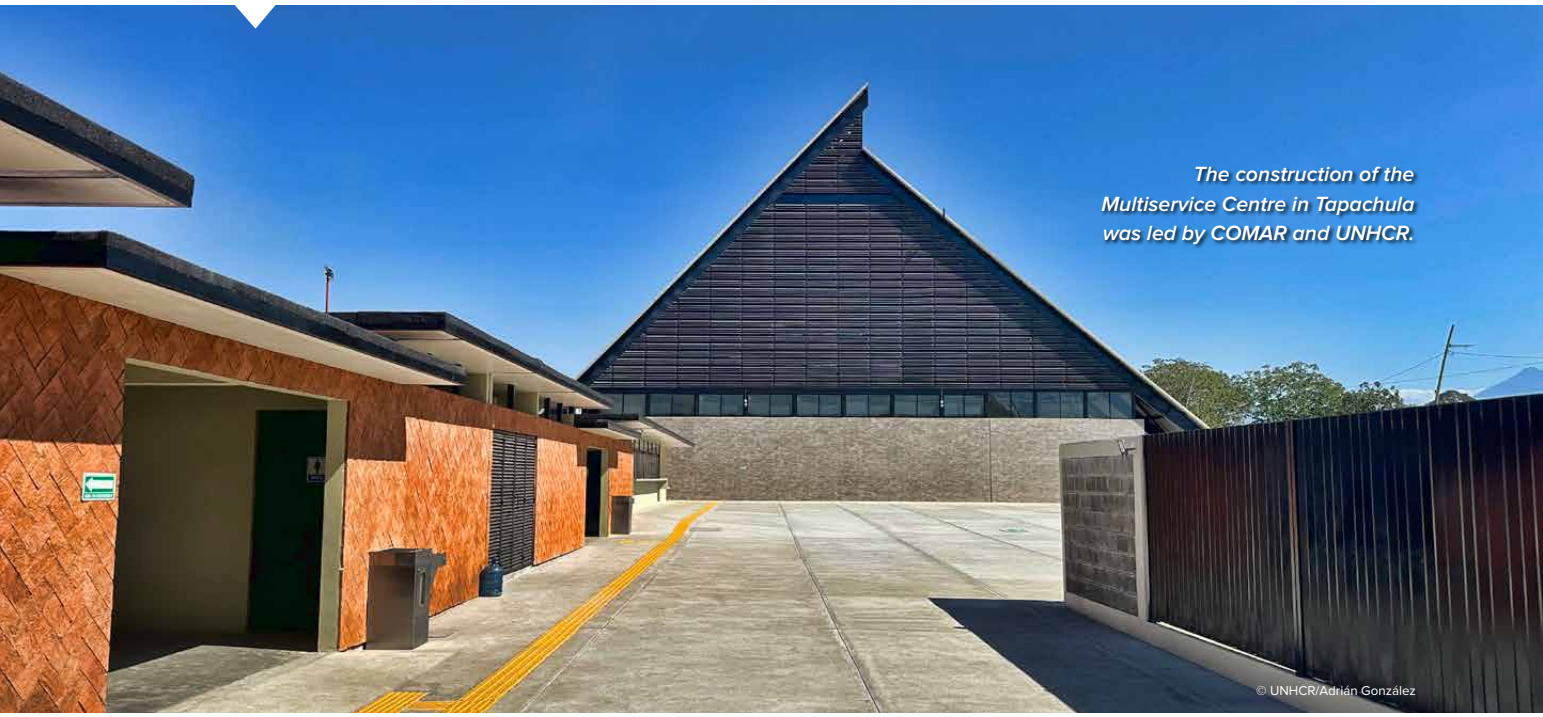
© UNHCR/Archive

Multiservice Centres are one-stop shops that bring together all essential services for refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced people under one roof. The presence of different government entities, UNHCR, other UN agencies and civil society organizations, enables people to access asylum and to receive orientation, assistance and referrals to vital services and labour opportunities for a comprehensive socio-economic inclusion.

Currently, there are four Multiservice Centres in Mexico supported by UNHCR, located in Ciudad Juárez, Monterrey, Tapachula and Tijuana. These align with the priorities indicated by the Mexican Government in assisting refugees and migrants. The centres aim to strengthen the humanitarian response and provide more efficient, equitable access to essential services for those in need of international protection.

Tapachula

Until now, the services of COMAR, UNHCR and other local entities are distributed in different locations in the city of Tapachula, requiring asylum-seekers to constantly move, generating additional costs and protection risks for them. More than 60 per cent of asylum applications were registered in Tapachula, where spaces are unprepared for high numbers. Reception centres are often overcrowded, creating long lines, and straining local services and neighbours.



The construction of the Multiservice Centre in Tapachula was led by COMAR and UNHCR.

© UNHCR/Adrián González

As a solution, the Multiservice Centre Tapachula is being built on a 7,000 m^2 plot of land, donated by the Government of Chiapas to the Ministry of Interior, with the support of UNHCR. Led by COMAR and UNHCR, this collaborative effort aims to strengthen the humanitarian and protection response. Government entities, UN agencies, and civil society organizations will provide comprehensive and timely services. The centre will have a capacity to assist up to 1,500 people on a daily basis.

Due to the scale of the project, the construction process will occur in two phases, with the first completed in January 2025. The centre infrastructure features sustainable elements, including rainwater harvesting and solar panels to generate electricity. When fully operational, the centre is expected to produce around 70 per cent of the energy required for its day-to-day operations.

Ciudad Juárez

The Multiservice Centre Ciudad Juárez has been an early model for Multiservice Centres in Mexico since its inauguration in 2019. Located in a facility provided by the State Population Council (COESPO), the space centralizes services of COMAR, UNHCR, UN agencies, NGOs, and the IFDP. The Health Centre 'We are all Mexican' provides medical and mental health services, legal guidance and employment support under the same roof, ensuring efficient access to essential services for those in need.

The centre, supported by UNHCR, has been successful in being a model of inter-institutional collaboration and providing an efficient humanitarian response in Ciudad Juárez. In 2024, the centre assisted 18,000 refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and migrants.

Tijuana

With the goal of providing a comprehensive response to the protection and integration needs of asylum-seekers and refugees in Baja California, the Multiservice Centre Tijuana was initially established as a collaboration between COMAR, UNHCR and a partner organization in 2021.

The Multiservice Centre in Tijuana, northern Mexico works to provide protection to refugees and asylum-seekers.

© UNHCR/René Arguellez

In the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, Baja California's government pledged to expand the Multiservice Centre in Tijuana and to extend its services beyond refugees and asylum-seekers to include members of the local community as well. As of 2024, more than 20 institutions, including government entities, civil society, academia, international organizations, and the private sector, are working together to offer a variety of services. They range from legal assistance, employment support, education, healthcare, child protection services to support for women and girl survivors of violence. The centre cooperates with more than 40 shelters, to which people in need can be referred.

The centre provided services to more than 13,200 people from more than 40 different countries in 2024, most from Haiti, El Salvador, Colombia, and 500 Mexican nationals from Baja California, Michoacán, Guerrero, and Chiapas. Nearly 40 per cent were women. In 2025, the centre plans to strengthen mental health programs and services for internally displaced people.

Having become a hub for socioeconomic, cultural and local integration, the centre also hosts art and cultural activities. Thanks to a collaboration with Baja California's Ministry of Culture, more than 2,200 refugee children and members of the local community participated in concerts and musical workshops building social cohesion. The centre provided capacity development opportunities for 260 government officials working with asylum-seekers, refugees, and displaced people.

Monterrey

From 2022 until early 2024, the Multiservice Centre Monterrey operated as a community centre to assist refugees and migrants. In early 2024, the centre relocated to a larger space to include COMAR. To improve the quality of services provided, UNHCR funded a renovation of the centre and equipped it with new electronic equipment, furniture and child-friendly spaces. The centre is run by the state of Nuevo León.

The centre reunites UN agencies, civil society organizations and humanitarian entities under one roof and serves an average of 120 people daily. It offers support with asylum applications in Mexico, family reunification guidance, healthcare and identity services, educational support, and other referrals to enhance integration efficiency. It also includes private sector partners, helping refugees to find work opportunities.

Access to citizenship helps refugees rebuild their lives anew.

© UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

Chapter **5**

Solutions

© UNHCR/Ivan Stephens

The Local Integration Program relocates and accompanies refugees to cities in central and northern Mexico.

In-situ integration: an opportunity to rebuild lives with dignity and security

5.1 Local integration

In close collaboration with the Mexican government, the private sector and civil society, UNHCR supports the integration of refugees through a robust strategy, from the moment they enter the country, until they can restart their lives. This includes but is not limited to assisting in access to rights, including asylum, documentation, education, health and employment, while also providing safe spaces, psychosocial support, and opportunities to build peaceful coexistence.

More than 110,000 refugees already present at their cities of integration have been supported by UNHCR since the launch of the program in 2021. In 2024, UNHCR and partners implemented more than 54,000 activities to support the integration of refugees in Aguascalientes, Ciudad Juárez, Guadalajara, Mexicali, Mexico City, Monterrey, Palenque, Saltillo, San Luis Potosí, Tapachula, Tenosique and Tijuana.

Mexico's PIL broke a new record enabling nearly 13,000 refugees to rebuild their life and integrate into the formal labour market. In its ninth year, the largest relocation was carried out in May with 2,000 refugees relocating from the south of the country to cities with more opportunities to restart their lives. The initiative reduces strain on local services in southern states, like Chiapas and Tabasco, and addresses labour shortages in central regions. So far, 50,000[9] refugees have relocated to cities in central Mexico. In these cities, the program has built public and private partnerships to assist and facilitate the integration process through personalized support, assistance to find a place to live, education opportunities, and a fairly paid job. Refugees participating in the program have already contributed with more than 275 million Mexican pesos (approximately 15 million USD), annually in taxes. The PIL has revolutionized integration as it fosters effective social, economic, and cultural inclusion, enabling refugees to contribute to the development and well-being of local communities and the country.

[9] Numbers as of February 2025.

PIL participant profiles

WOMEN	FAMILIES	SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS
46%	42%	20%

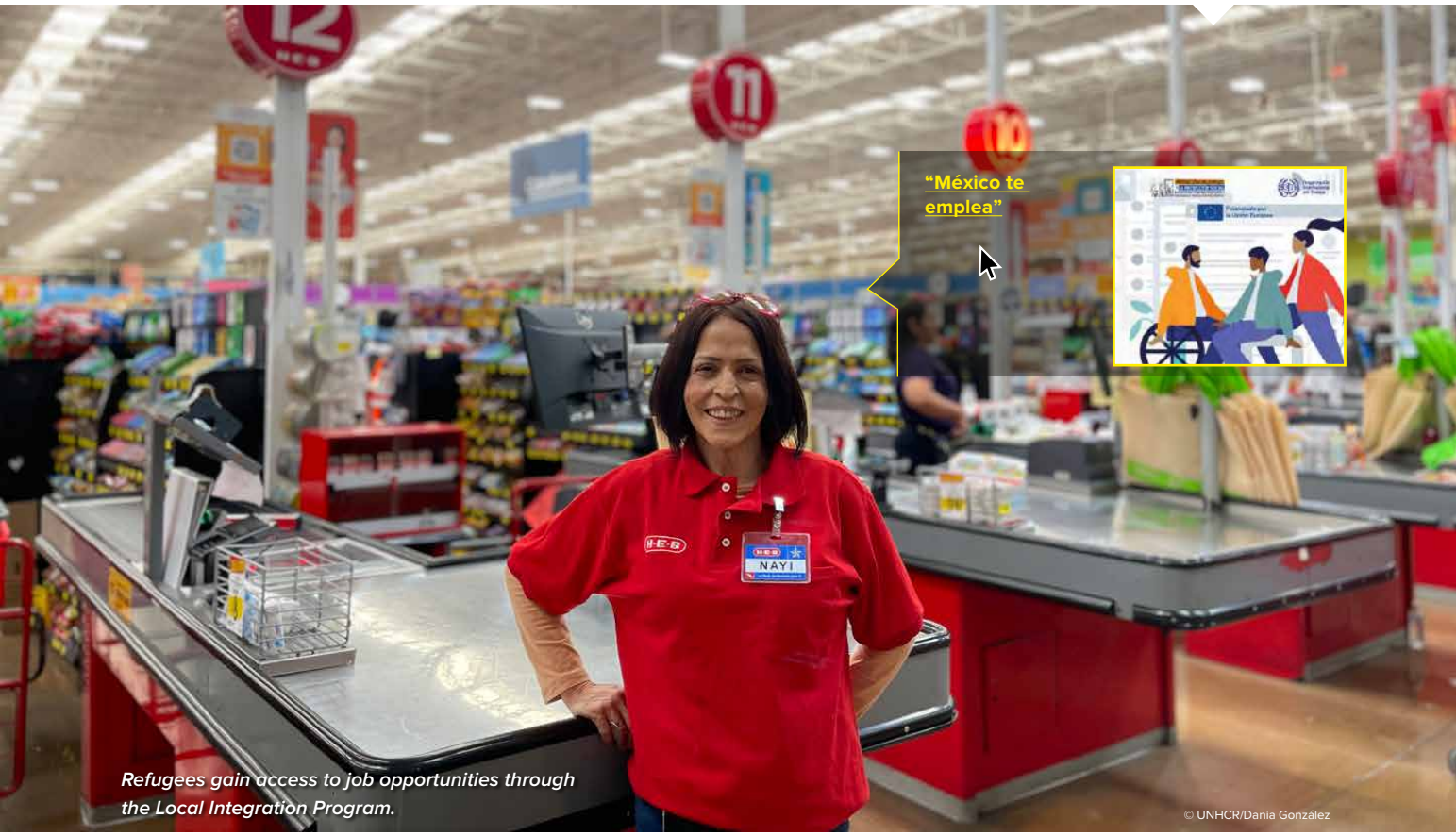
Nationalities

Honduras **70%**	Cuba **9%**	Haití **8%**	El Salvador **7%**	Other countries **3%**

© UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

Refugees can rebuild their lives in Aguascalientes through the Local Integration Program.

Mexico marks a milestone: 50,000 refugees and asylum-seekers find stability and rebuild their lives



Refugees gain access to job opportunities through the Local Integration Program.

© UNHCR/Dania González

A significant milestone was achieved when the Ministry of Welfare took over the responsibility of providing financial support for refugees' participation in the PIL through the Social Emergency Program (PESN).[10] This shift not only facilitated refugees' initial integration into their new communities through a financial start-up contribution but also demonstrates Mexico's commitment in the integration of refugees, and enhancing the sustainability of the program.

The National Employment Service (SNE) launched the microsite "México te emplea", initially designed with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNHCR thanks to a grant received by the European Union, with job offers from employers who have been previously sensitized to the hiring processes of refugees and migrants in Mexico. Since the launch, nearly 5,000 people have been assisted through the portal.[11]

Through the #TuSiPuedes (#YouCanDoIt) initiative, the PIL became a model for tailored integration pathways for people with specific needs. This required mapping of specialized services, comprehensive care, including childcare and safe spaces, as well as strategic alliances with the national systems. Nearly 4,000 people from vulnerable groups, including single-parent families, internally displaced people, LGBTIQ+ people, non-Spanish speakers, older persons, and people with disabilities, found employment in the labour market through the initiative.

[10] The financial contribution through the PESN has not yet been confirmed for 2025.
[11] This initiative was made possible with funding from the European Union and support from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

IMPACT OF THE PIL PROGRAM ON THE LIFE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

89%
WORKING-AGE
participants found formal employment

85%
CHILDREN
were enrolled in school

82%
PARTICIPANTS
had access to social security in the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS).

98%
PARTICIPANTS
earned incomes above the thresholds associated with poverty indexes.[12]

83%
PARTICIPANTS
had access to a bank account.

SOLUTIONS

79%
HOUSEHOLDS
reported access to employment within the first month after arrival

89%
HOUSEHOLDS
indicated that at least one adult is working six months after integration

86%
HOUSEHOLDS
reported job satisfaction after one month

93%
HOUSEHOLDS
satisfaction remains six months after starting the job

54%
PEOPLE
were registered with the Mexican Social Security Institute after one month of work

67%
HOUSEHOLDS
reported that all school-aged children were out of school before the program

44%
HOUSEHOLDS
reported all children enrolled in school after one month of the program

84%
SCHOOL-AGED GIRLS AND BOYS
are enrolled in school after six months of the program

49%
PARTICIPANTS
lived below the poverty line before relocation. One month after relocation, the percentage living below the poverty line dropped to 23%

62%
HOUSEHOLDS
one month after the program, had a bank account **(+11% compared to 2023)**

83%
HOUSEHOLDS
six months after the program, had a bank account

[12] According to PIL data, 55 per cent of program participants lived in poverty before relocation, including 41 per cent in extreme poverty according to Mexico's official poverty measurements. One month after relocation, 82 per cent were above the poverty line, rising to 98 per cent after six months.

5.2 Working with the private sector

Collaboration with the private sector is essential for a successful socio-economic integration of refugees. As of 2024, more than 650 companies have joined the PIL and are committed to the rights of refugees. They report that hiring refugees has resulted in a diverse pool of talent, an enriched corporate culture and, most importantly, a lower turnover rates of staff.

UNHCR offered capacity-building on refugee documentation and equitable employment opportunities to more than 1,100 members of the private sector and local governments and to an additional 1,500 people on refugee inclusion. 110 human resources directors from companies in Mexico participated in UNHCR events to facilitate the hiring of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Alliance for Inclusion

As the private sector's collective voice championing the cause for refugee inclusion, the "Alliance for Inclusion" was launched by UNHCR in 2023. In line with the Global Compact on Refugees, the alliance is a platform aimed at spotlighting companies committed to hiring refugees and showcasing good-practice inclusion policies, to encourage others to adopt the same. This year, 48 new companies committed to hire refugees and the Alliance completed its first year of implementation.

ALIANZA POR LA INCLUSIÓN

FEMSA has become a strategic ally for formal labor inclusion.

©UNHCR/Alejandra Leyva

Refugees can access naturalization to remove the final barriers to rebuilding their lives in their new communities.

© UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

5.3 Naturalization

For refugees, obtaining the Mexican nationality marks a milestone in the process of beginning a new life in stability and hope. Providing support through legal partners and covering processing fees, UNHCR and partners assisted nearly 650 refugees in submitting their naturalization applications before the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and informed more than 1,400 refugees about the naturalization process in Mexico. More than 300 people obtained their naturalization certificates.

NATURALIZATION

+630

REFUGEES

started their process, while **+300 received their naturalization letters** in 2024, highlighting the direct support from UNHCR and partners, who provided guidance on the process for **+1,440 people**

After being forced to flee and leaving everything behind in her home country Venezuela, Stephany and her child found safety in Mexico. Stephany began studying medicine at the Autonomous Metropolitan University of Xochimilco with the support of the DAFI scholarship from UNHCR (funded by the German Government).

But Stephany went further. When many other refugees arrived in Mexico City, she organized brigades with her classmates from medical school to provide primary health care at a temporary shelter in Tláhuac.

As soon as she was eligible, Stephany decided to make Mexico her permanent home. With the support of UHNCR, she submitted her naturalization application to the MFA and only a few months later, received the Mexican nationality.

"Becoming Mexican after having been born in Venezuela is an experience that has filled me with gratitude and commitment. Mexico has welcomed me with open arms, and as a medical intern completing my social service, I feel honored to contribute everything I have learned in this beautiful country. Every day is an opportunity to help people, share my knowledge, and, through my own story of adaptation and growth, raise awareness about the importance of caring for our health and our community. Mexico has become my home, and being a part of it fills me with pride and purpose."

© UNHCR/Adrián González

5.4 Access to education and opportunities

UNHCR continued to work to facilitate school enrollment of refugee and asylum-seeking children with federal and local authorities, as well as partners. Through covering enrollment fees and school-related expenses, UNHCR and partners helped more than 2,400 children to return to school and continue their education this year. UNHCR also helped 580 refugees validate their educational degrees, enhancing their employment prospects. UNHCR cooperates closely with the UNICEF in those efforts.

The state of Baja California newly introduced a protocol with a cost exemption for refugees and asylum-seekers for their revalidation of secondary educational degrees. This marks an important step towards lowering the barriers and is the result of collaboration between the Ministry of Public Education, COMAR, the Binational Migrant Education Program (PROBEM), and UNHCR.

Aware of the impact university programs can have on the life of forcibly displaced people, UNHCR supports refugees' access to tertiary education, enhancing their skills to contribute to the community that welcomes them.

University refugee students in Mexico are part of the seven per cent of refugee youth worldwide, who have access to higher education. Through UNHCR's and DAFI's tertiary education scholarships, more than 135 forcibly displaced people could continue their university studies[13] in 2024, and three refugees received new DAFI scholarships to begin their university studies and excel in their respective subjects.

[13] 46 people were supported through DAFI scholarships, while 90 received direct support from UNHCR.

The Refugee University Students Network (TRSN) aims at increasing refugees' self-reliance and access to higher education. This year, refugee students in Mexico launched a new Latin America branch, leading them to participate in the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in September, representing refugee youth from the Americas.

In line with Mexico's commitment with the 2023 Global Refugee Forum,[14] the MFA, COMAR, UNHCR, and civil society organizations consolidated a project with Habesha to offer education opportunities to refugees based in countries where they have no integration prospects, allowing them to have an opportunity for a fuller life. This year, 12 refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Federal Republic of Somalia, and the Republic of South Sudan arrived in Mexico through the program to pursue their studies.

5.5 Family reunification

Family reunification plays a crucial role in restoring the stability and well-being of refugees, allowing them to rebuild their lives with their loved ones in a safe and supportive environment.

COMAR received more than 200 family reunification requests in the first nine months of 2024, of which nearly 60 were approved. UNHCR partners and law clinics supported and accompanied some 40 refugee families during their reunification process.

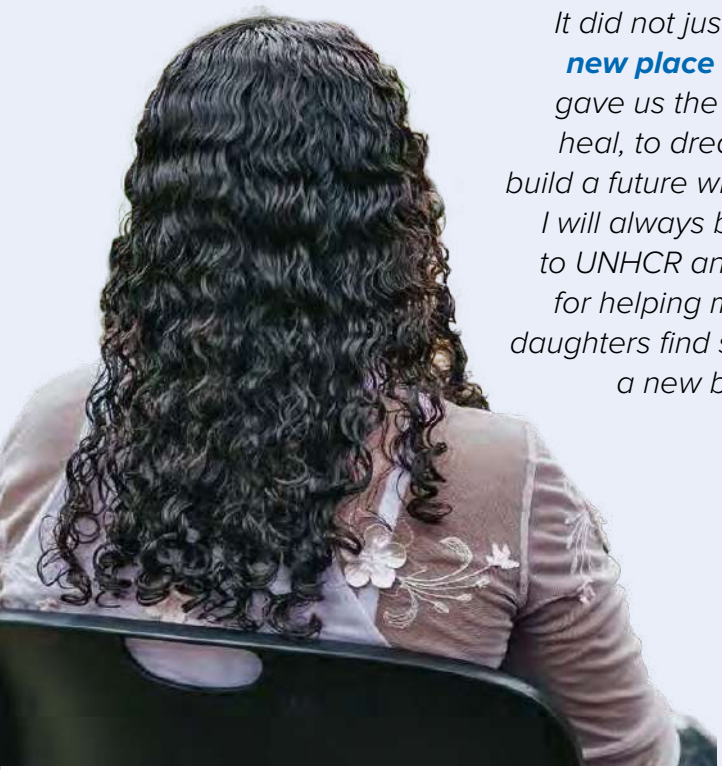
To simplify the heavily administrative reunification processes, COMAR established an information module in Mexico City, offering preliminary assessments on documentation and in-person guidance. As a result, they improved efficiency, reporting an 80 per cent reduction in requests for additional documents for cases.

Photo courtesy of Love

Love, a single Haitian mother, who arrived in San Luis Potosí with her son, made great efforts to complete her family reunification process. Through the support of UNHCR, she was able to bring her daughter and mother to San Luis Potosí, where she has a formal job, and both her children are enrolled in school. They had been separated for more than a year. Love's story highlights how the support provided by UNHCR at every stage of the integration process can change lives.

[14] The commitment was initially made during the first edition of the forum in 2019 and was later reaffirmed during the second edition of the forum in 2023.

Claudia, a survivor of sexual violence in Mexico, was resettled to Canada with her two daughters



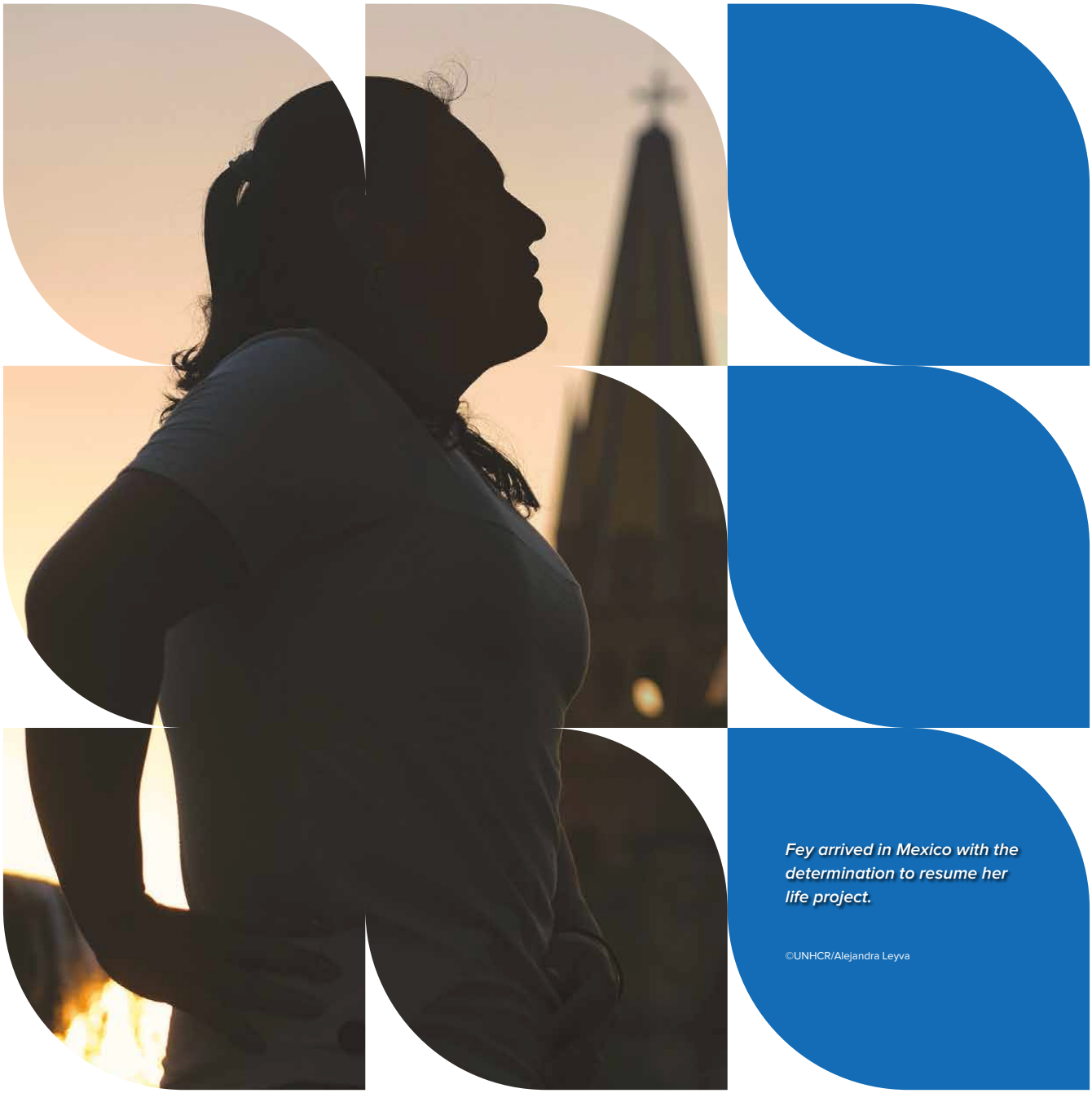
*"Resettlement gave me a **second chance** in life. It did not just give us a **new place** to live — it gave us the chance to heal, to dream, and to build a future without fear. I will always be grateful to UNHCR and Canada for helping me and my daughters find safety and a new beginning."*

UNHCR successfully identified, interviewed, and referred nearly 400 people to resettlement countries, including special urgent cases. Resettlement is an alternative that UNHCR seeks for refugees who cannot remain in their first countries of asylum due to threats to their safety or lives. Through this process, another state admits them as recognized refugees.

Almost 60 per cent of people resettled were survivors of violence or torture, and 30 per cent were women and girls in high-risk situations, including violence and rape. Regarding nationalities, the vast majority were from Honduras, followed by Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. During this year, 165 people departed from Mexico to be resettled in the United States or Canada.

RESETTLEMENT

UNHCR identified, interviewed, and submitted the cases of **+400 people**. Most refugees considered for resettlement were from Honduras the vast majority, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua much smaller proportion. **29%** were women and girls at high risk, including of sexual violence; **58%** were survivors of violence or torture, and **13%** had other critical legal or physical protection needs. This year, **165 people** left Mexico for resettlement.



Fey arrived in Mexico with the determination to resume her life project.

©UNHCR/Alejandra Leyva

Chapter **6**

Specific **protection needs**

©UNHCR/Archive

UNHCR estimates that globally some 20 per cent of individuals forced to flee are living with some form of a disability. They often face barriers in accessing services and exercising their rights. As per 2024, UNHCR has registered more than 2,500 refugees or asylum-seekers with physical or mental disabilities.

As a result of a multi-year collaboration, UNHCR, the Mexican Coalition for the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Christoffel Blindenmission collaborated in developing a "Humanitarian Response Guide for People with Disabilities in Human Mobility Contexts" to assist COMAR, civil society, shelters, and Refugee-Led Organizations to strengthen their technical capacities and better respond to the needs of people with disabilities. Following UNHCR's staff capacity-building on disability inclusion and a successful piloting of the guide in shelters in Tijuana and Mexico City, we will now support the implementation phase in the whole country.

Mexico hosts LGBTIQ+ people who fled from persecution in Central America, Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela. For people who experienced violence or trauma, UNHCR provides support and referrals to safe spaces. So far, 50 refugees have found safe shelter and dignified employment in Mexico City, through partner support and assistance.

One of the greatest needs identified through participatory assessments and community dialogues, was refugees' access to mental health services to help them navigate and recover from the emotional impact of forced displacement. Trauma significantly affects their health as well as their ability to develop life plans and make decisions, engage with their communities, and integrate in Mexico.

Through committed efforts and specialized interventions, UNHCR partners provided psychosocial and psychological services to more than 15,000 people across Mexico, including individual psychotherapy and group therapy sessions as well as psychoeducational workshops on emotional management, strategies for positive coping mechanisms, and cultural adaptation in Mexico. This helps prevent violence, enhances peaceful coexistence and promotes stable communities.

As part of building and strengthening local capacity, together with 100 psychologists from the Aguascalientes Municipal Institute of Mental Health we built capacity and created mental health pathways for refugees. 85 people from Sinaloa's National System for the Integral Development of the Family (DIF) also participated in capacity-building sessions on psychosocial care for internally displaced people in emergencies.

UNHCR works to provide specialized assistance to refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls in Mexico.

©UNHCR/Ginette Riquelme

Chapter **7**

Displaced **women and girls**

Across the world, more than 60 million forcibly displaced women and girls are at a high risk of violence. UNHCR is committed to address the root causes and support women and girl survivors of violence, so they have access to high-quality services. More than 1,700 women and girls received specialized and comprehensive services, including medical, legal, psychosocial and/or employment assistance through UNHCR and specialized partners. To strengthen the quality response for survivors of violence, UNHCR built the capacity of more than 1,300 key actors, such as partners, authorities, service providers and shelters. Additionally, UNHCR provided an updated service map for survivors.

To gain a deeper understanding of the different types of violence against women and girls forced to flee in Mexico, UNHCR conducted a study, which revealed:

- All women interviewed experienced some form of violence in their life, with many experiencing sexual violence in Mexico or citing this type of violence as the reason for leaving their country of origin. The forms of violence described by them included rape, physical assault, sexual assault, forced marriage, denial of resources, and emotional abuse.
- Groups most at risk included women aged 15-49 traveling alone or with children. Especially women from Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, Honduras and Venezuela face an intersection of racism or hypersexualization stereotypes. Any interaction with organized crime groups increased the risk of being subjected to sexualized violence.

UNHCR works to provide specialized services to women and girls, including medical, legal and psychosocial assistance.

©UNHCR/Archive

UNHCR strengthens community-driven mechanisms to prevent violence against women and girls.

©UNHCR/Pierre-Marc René

- Men also reported having experienced sexual violence, particularly related to kidnappings by organized crime. Groups most at risk were men between 20-39 years old, who were intercepted by organized crime groups and gay men who experienced homophobia in addition to sexual violence.
- Humanitarian organizations and government entities, like Women's Justice Centres, were identified as key support sources by the respondents.
- Formal, well-paid formal work was seen as the most important protection mechanism, along with capacity-building, empowerment, and access to information on rights. The survey showed that local integration opportunities, especially participation in Mexico's PIL program, significantly reduced the risk of violence against women and girls.

To prevent violence against women and girls, UNHCR is focusing increasingly on community-driven and creative mechanisms. Aimed at sharing key techniques to help women feel safer and supported as part of a network, UNHCR conducted self-defense workshops with more than 230 women, including refugee, displaced, and migrant women, as well as humanitarian workers.

UNHCR is committed to tackling the root causes of violence, supporting women and girl survivors, and strengthening prevention efforts.

©UNHCR/Archive

+1,300

ASYLUM-SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PEOPLE

were sensitized on the prevention of violence against women and girls

+280

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES to mitigate risks of violence against women and girls

16

DAYS OF ACTIVISM

Nearly **60 events** during the 16 days reached **+2,000 people**

We strengthen women-led organizations and promote their participation in regional and global decision-making spaces, e.g. in UNHCR's Global Consultations with NGOs, an important forum in Geneva to debate global themes, explore collaborations and advocacy, and the Regional Meeting of Women-Led Organizations in Human Mobility Contexts, which took place in Colombia in November.

As part of a pilot program between UNHCR and the National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence Against Women (CONAVIM), we built the capacity of key actors, including representatives from ten Women's Justice Centres across the country, on concepts of the prevention and response of violence against women and girls, international protection and integration.

UNHCR shows zero tolerance for any form of sexual exploitation and abuse. This year, more than 500 UNHCR staff members, partners, and counterparts were trained on prevention, response, and reporting obligations regarding the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). UNHCR also co-leads the UN PSEA Network in Mexico.

UNHCR supports authorities and works with other partners to protect children.

© UNHCR/Aurora Herrera

Chapter **8**

Child **protection**

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Forcibly displaced children are exposed to various protection risks, including violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

More than 40 per cent of people forcibly displaced worldwide are children. Situations of forced displacement can have a devastating and long-lasting impact on their lives and development. Often being separated from family members, children may be exposed to discrimination, violence, abuse or exploitation. Many will spend their entire childhood away from home, in search of a new place to belong. With the right tools to prevent and respond to these risks, they can develop and rebuild their lives in Mexico. 800 refugee and asylum-seeking children at risk were referred to the appropriate authorities and services. In 15 child-friendly spaces in Baja California, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Tabasco, and Tamaulipas, 4,600 forcibly displaced children learned about their rights and emotional coping strategies through psychosocial, artistic and sports activities provided by UNHCR and partners. To address the specific needs of forcibly displaced children, improve reception conditions and advocate for ending child detention, UNHCR continues to strengthen the national Child Protection System to foster inclusive best interest procedures, early identification of children in need of international protection and ensure their access to asylum. Also, we offered capacity-building sessions to 2,000 government officials

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UNHCR promotes child-friendly spaces to develop psychosocial, recreational and educational activities

to join efforts towards the inclusion of forcibly displaced and refugee children in national systems. In line with the principles of family unity and the best interests of the child, UNHCR will continue working closely with COMAR to enhance child-friendly procedures and simplify family reunification processes for unaccompanied children.

When family reunification is not possible, community and family-based care options for children become essential to ensure their well-being and development. This is why UNHCR and partners provided alternative care options for more than 20 children who were separated from their families, offering psychosocial and legal support, school enrollment and life skill programs.

15

CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACES

in shelters across the country to offer **+4,600 girls and boys** with a safe space to play with their peers and receive psychosocial support.

+2,000

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

partners, and other stakeholders received capacity-building on refugee child protection.

800

REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN AT RISK

received case management services from UNHCR and partners.

+2,700

PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND FAMILIES

received psychosocial support and positive parenting tools to prevent violence against children.

+20

CHILDREN SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES

received alternative care, psychosocial and legal support, schooling, and life skills programs from UNHCR and its partners.

Reading sessions for 450 children of the book Bolay in elementary schools located near informal settlements and shelters in Mexico City raised awareness about the realities of refugee children and the importance to welcome them in the host communities.

© UNHCR/Iván Stephens

Internally displaced people often endure dangerous conditions and remain at risk even after fleeing to safety.

© UNHCR/Jesús González

Chapter **9**

Internal **displacement**

UNHCR was the agency historically first called upon by the General Assembly and the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to protect and assist internally displaced people in the 1970s for its particular expertise. Since then, we support and complement the efforts of governments, who hold the primary responsibility to protect and assist the displaced within their borders. In Mexico, at the request of the authorities, UNHCR has been working since 2019 to provide technical assistance and strengthen existing prevention and response mechanisms to protect internally displaced people. In addition, the governments of Baja California, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, and Sinaloa have also requested UNHCR's support.

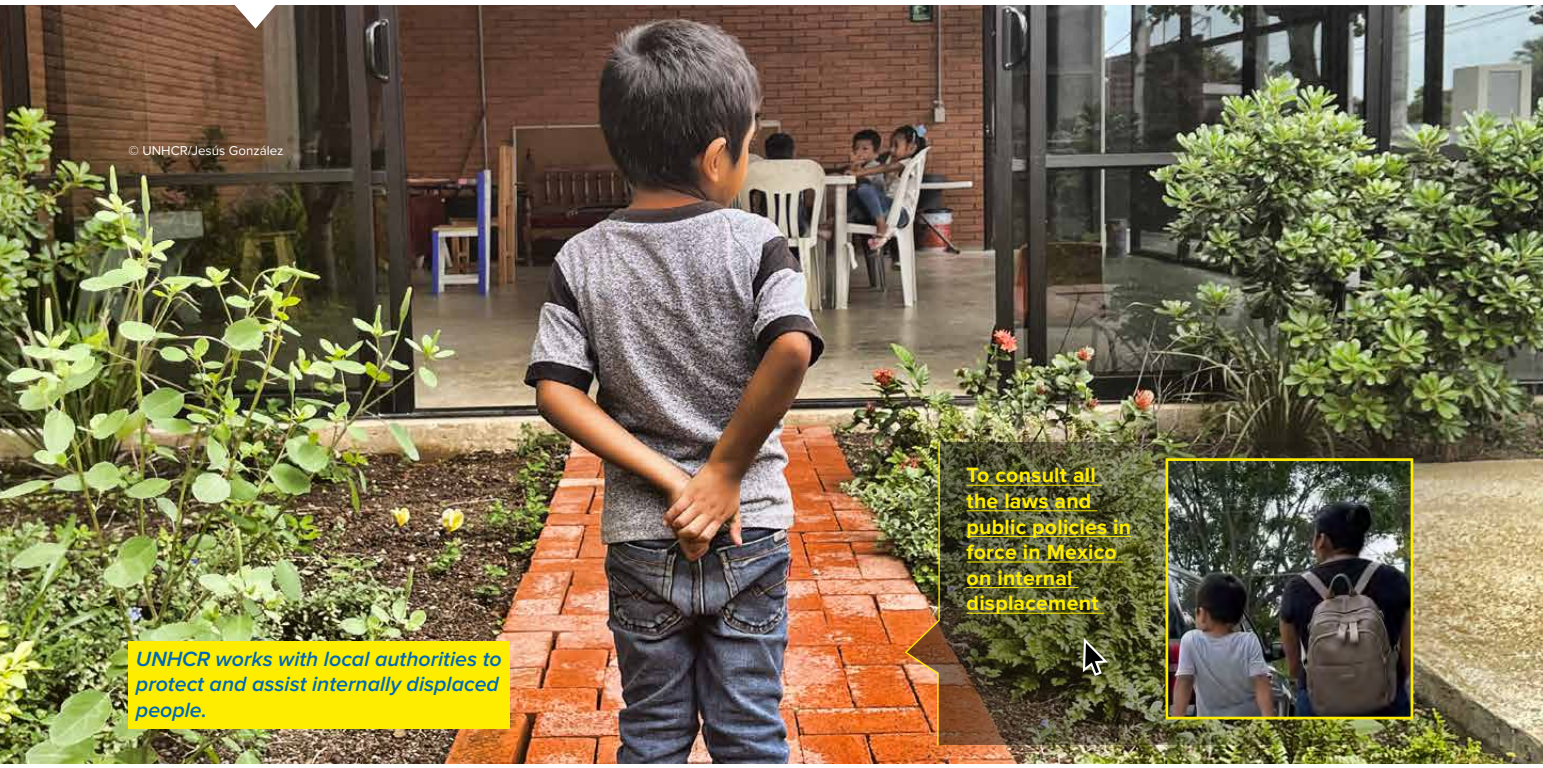
Who is an internally displaced person?

According to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced people are persons who have been forced to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, human rights violations, or disasters, and who have not crossed any internationally recognized state borders.

Mexico has seen an important increase of internal displacement with thousands of people forced to flee their homes and seek safety in temporary shelters or with relatives in less affected areas. In 2024, violence led to the displacement of at least 28,000 people in mass events, mostly related to organized crime, according to preliminary data[15] by the Human Rights Program of the Ibero-American University (IBERO) and the Mexican Commission of Defense and Human Rights Promotion (CMPDPH). For example, violence in Chiapas caused the displacement of more than 11,000 people between July and August in mass events and forced several hundred people to flee across the border to Guatemala. Major displacements also occurred in Chihuahua, Durango, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, Sinaloa, Sonora and Veracruz. This highlights the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address the root causes and provide durable solutions for affected populations.

To generate official national data on internal displacement, UNHCR closely collaborated with the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) and the National Population Council (CONAPO) to include internal displacement-related questions in the 2025 Intercensal Survey in accordance with the recommendations

[15] The data was obtained through media monitoring.



UNHCR works with local authorities to protect and assist internally displaced people.

of the Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (EGRIS).

At the national level, the draft *General Law to Prevent, Attend and Comprehensively Repair Internal Displacement,* approved by the Chamber of Deputies in 2020, was concluded by the Senate with the change of Legislature in 2024. There are four state laws on internal displacement in Chiapas, Guerrero, Sinaloa and Zacatecas. UNHCR assists the development of laws and policies also in Michoacán, Nuevo León and Oaxaca.

To give a voice to those most affected by the phenomenon, community consultations were promoted in Chiapas, Michoacán and Oaxaca to inform legal proposals.

To develop and enhance 35 tools and instruments addressing internal displacement, UNHCR provided technical assistance to federal and state governments to develop registration forms, needs assessments, referral pathways and policies aimed at enhancing early warning mechanisms of displacements, emergency responses, assistance and solutions for the displaced to restart their lives. In Michoacán, Oaxaca and Sinaloa, nearly 1,000 internally displaced people participated in UNHCR workshops and in the whole country 940 members of the government, civil society, internally displaced and academia worked on enhancing their capacities through UNHCR's support.

In Chiapas, UNHCR provided registration support to help improve the state's response, including during emergencies, and strengthened specific response instruments, such as regulations and protocols. In Sinaloa, UNHCR worked together with the Ministry of Welfare and Sustainable Development (SEBIDES) and the Autonomous University of the West to strengthen the IDP State Registry and to develop an assistance program.

In Guerrero, UNHCR established a law clinic and a Sergio Vieira de Mello Chair with the local Autonomous University. In the case of massive displacement events, it can provide legal and psychosocial support to displaced populations through mobile units across the state.

UMPRIP, the Ministry of Migrants of Michoacán, and UNHCR hosted the first national meeting on internal displacement in Morelia, Michoacán, bringing nearly 80 participants from federal, local institutions, and UN agencies together to share experiences and best practices for supporting internally displaced people. As a result, a directory of services is now available to displaced people across the country.

To increase livelihood opportunities, UNHCR and partners organized a community market in Mexico City, where displaced women from Chihuahua, Oaxaca and Sinaloa could sell their handicrafts

Community consultations in Oaxaca

In 2024, UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Oaxaca to collaborate on addressing internal displacement. The government of Oaxaca made important steps to build a law initiative on internal displacement, developed from the consultations of more than 1,000 displaced people, mostly from indigenous communities, in 20 often remote localities. The consultations were carried out with technical assistance from UNHCR. The local government presented it to the Oaxacan Congress in December.

Registration guide for internally displaced people

Registering and identifying people forced to flee their homes is essential for protecting them. It allows authorities to identify their needs, offer appropriate services, and reunite separated families. Based on best practices from more than 100 local and federal institutions and national and international standards, UPMRIP and UNHCR developed the Guide for the Registration of Internally Displaced People in Mexico, setting a precedent worldwide and highlighting the importance of state registries to allow the identification of IDPs and their specific needs.

Registration Guide for Internally Displaced People - UNHCR Mexico

Internal Displacement | UNHCR Mexico

IDP Newsletter August - October 2024

Refugees, internally displaced, and stateless people are among the most affected by the climate crisis.

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Chapter **10**

Climate, **disasters and displacement**

UNHCR helps States protect displaced citizens and develop policies on internal displacement amid climate change.

©UNHCR/Archive

Extreme weather events, like hurricanes, floods and heatwaves not only uproot communities but also exacerbate risks for displaced populations, undermining their safety and well-being. UNHCR works along civil society organizations and government institutions to provide essential support and build resilience in these affected communities.

In San Mateo del Mar, Oaxaca, according to the population, some 200 families were affected due to rising sea levels, which have increased in the last years. Only 100 families have relocated by their own means. As per the request of the government of Oaxaca, UNHCR organized a consultation with the community in October to help create a law covering natural disasters and climate as a cause of displacement. UNHCR is working also with the authorities of Guerrero to strengthen regulatory frameworks on internal displacement, incorporating measures for prevention and response to displacement caused by natural disasters and adverse climate effects.

In September, hurricane John struck Acapulco, Guerrero and left more than more than 40,000 homes, and over 150,000 people, affected, right after more than 274,000 homes had already been destroyed by hurricane Otis the previous year. UNHCR and the government of Guerrero are working on developing assistance pathways to support people affected by the impacts of climate events. After the hurricane, an interagency mission with IOM and UNICEF was conducted to assess temporary shelters in

Acapulco, Benito Juárez, Chilpancingo and Tixtla, in coordination with the State Civil Protection Secretariat and local authorities. Following this assessment, recommendations were issued to improve conditions. Together with local authorities and other UN agencies, a training program on Protection Standards in Shelters and Irregular Settlements was developed, including a module on the identification of individuals at risk of internal displacement.

Together with the authorities, UNHCR analyzes internal displacement in Mexico caused by environmental factors and natural disasters, including how these events can exacerbate violence. This knowledge allows policies and interventions to address the humanitarian and security needs of affected populations.

UNHCR worked with CONAPO on the first national diagnosis on environment, natural disasters and internal displacement, to get a better understanding of the magnitude of the situation and make public policy recommendations.

In its ongoing efforts to support sustainable solutions for displaced communities, UNHCR fostered local integration through community gardens in Guadalupe and Calvo, Chihuahua, where displaced people actively participate in growing food together with their host community, strengthening their livelihoods as well as fostering peaceful communities. In this regard, in December, UNHCR delivered more than 230 agricultural supplies to establish nearly 30 family and community gardens and maintain the traditional and sustainable livelihoods of 180 indigenous families in their new homes. The project was developed by female heads of the displaced families, the local church and civil society organizations. It is complemented by capacity-building sessions in agroecological methods and

Climate change and natural disasters can also be a source of potential conflict between refugees and their host communities if there is competition over natural resources.

© UNHCR/Archive

seeds to make it self-sustaining. These actions complement the State Government response in Baborigame, which includes regular visits by the State Victims Commission, medical convoys and workshops on IDP rights.

UNHCR works closely with legal partners, professors from universities, law clinics and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with whom we established a working group to harmonize legal frameworks regarding climate-change and international protection and created a regional diagnosis and situation report. We helped to host the first Forum on Climate, International Protection, and Displacement, bringing together more than 100 participants, including refugee leaders, government officials, international organizations, and civil society representatives. It featured four working groups focused on displacement due to natural disasters and international refugee law with a component on human rights, legislative reform, harmonizing international protection with climate issues, and developing differentiated public policies. In 2025, the working group plans to hold a second forum and wants to create a guide for judges, draft reports on climate-induced displacement and publish academic materials to raise awareness.

UNHCR also promotes the use of renewable energy in shelters. The newly built Multiservice Centre in Tapachula collects rainwater for conservation and features high ceilings to reduce the need for air conditioning.

UNHCR, OHCHR and IOM are coordinating the UN Interagency Working Group on Internal Displacement.

UNHCR collaborates with authorities and local responders to enhance social protection services for displaced persons impacted by climate shocks and disasters.

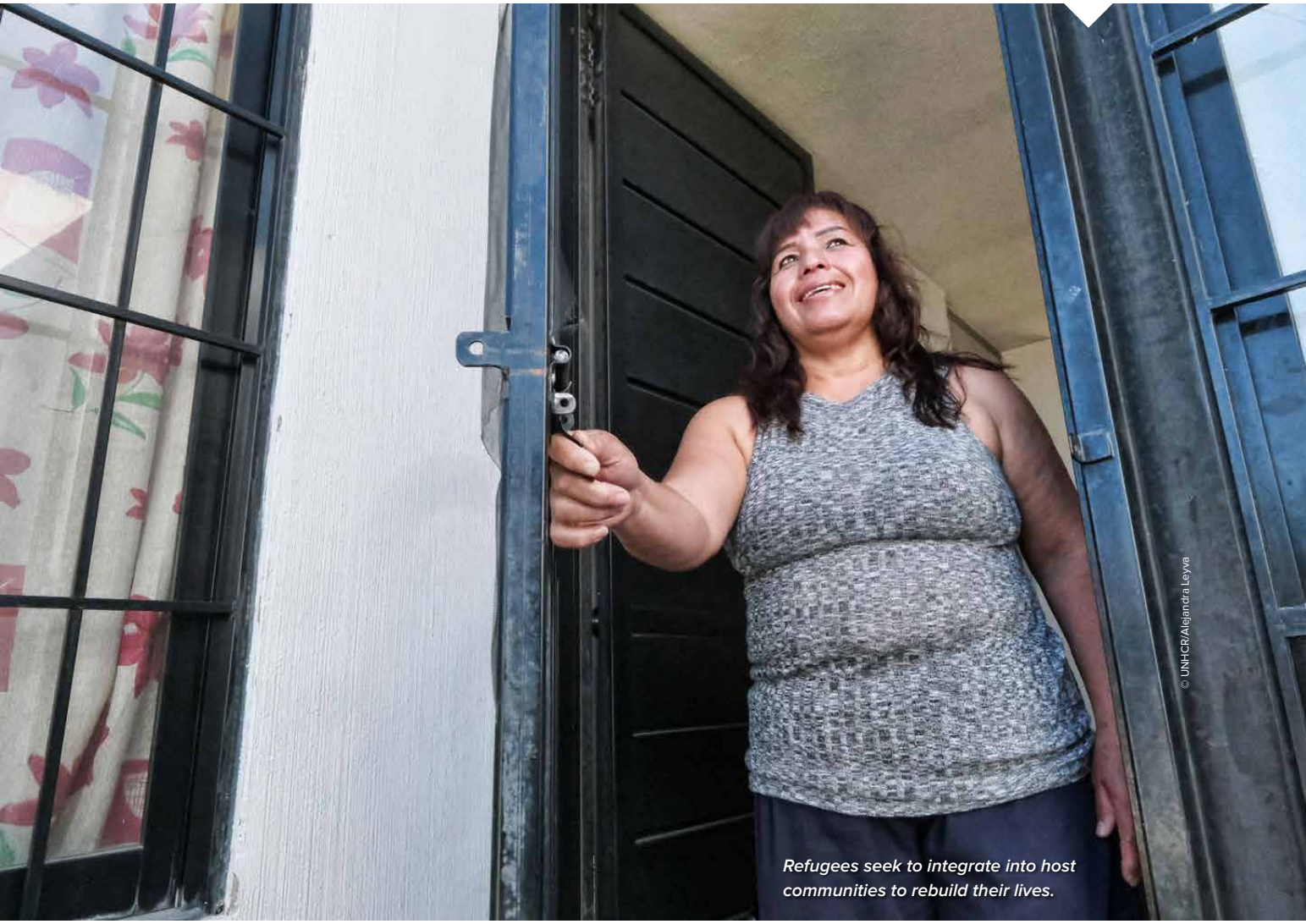
© UNHCR/Archive

UNHCR promotes that refugees and internally displaced people develop sustainable, long-term solutions to the challenges that affect them.

© UNHCR/Archive

Chapter **11**

Refugees **in their new communities**



© UNHCR/Alejandra Leyva

Refugees seek to integrate into host communities to rebuild their lives.

With a particular focus on promoting refugee-leadership, UNHCR continued to support community initiatives led by refugees and internally displaced people. Meaningful participation is fulfilled when refugees are prepared for and participate in important decision-making processes.

We believe refugees and internally displaced people are best placed to develop more sustainable long-lasting solutions to the challenges that affect them.

This year, refugees and internally displaced people developed 20 community initiatives across Mexico, which were supported by UNHCR and partners. Among these was the *Committee of Solidarity and Support for Refugees* (CSAR) in Tenosique, comprised of 10 refugee women and men from diverse age groups, profiles and nationalities dedicated to fostering a favorable environment for the inclusion of refugees in the city.

The Dialogue Mechanism Between Organizations Led by Refugees or Forcibly Displaced People and UNHCR Mexico (MERLOS Mexico) has been pivotal in fostering meaningful participation. Consolidated in 2024, MERLOS is currently composed of five organizations. Bringing RLOs together with COMAR, donors, and civil society, MERLOS held the first National Meeting bringing together more than 40 refugee and IDP spokespersons from more than 10 nationalities and nearly 20 cities.

MERLOS played a key role in the Cartagena +40 process by coordinating the participation of more than 20 refugee spokespersons in the consultations held in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia, which led to the formulation of the Chile Declaration and Action Plan 2024-2034 that will lead the regional agenda during the next decade. MERLOS also established a Regional Networking Group of RLOs, including more than 120 organizations.

In the Global Refugee Forum, the Mexican government was committed to open consultation and coordination spaces with the refugee population. The Quadripartite Mechanism for the Protection and Integration of Refugees and Persons with Complementary Protection in Mexico is an innovative initiative that meets this objective, as it includes refugee representatives and RLOs alongside COMAR, UNHCR, and NGOs to create a common decision-making space to improve the access to services and rights of refugees in Mexico. It was implemented both at the national level and in ten localities with COMAR/UNHCR's presences.

Jessica (on the left) and Jessie (on the right) are refugees working in northern Mexico to improve conditions in their host communities.

© UNHCR/Aurora Herrera

Lizbeth Guerrero – Co-director of the RLO *Apoyo a Migrantes Venezolanos*

*"Forcibly displaced people and refugees are a **driving force of support and advocacy,** helping to shape effective and assertive asylum and migration policies."*

"Refugee Led-Organizations (RLOs) are spaces where we, who have lived forced displacement, can play a primary leadership role to address challenges refugees face and create a better environment for all of us."

Refugee-Led Organizations talking about UNHCR's role supporting their initiatives

"Since UNHCR is the agency with the mandate for the protection of refugees, its presence supports our initiatives and provides relevant insights of the global and regional contexts that help us define our organizational planning and strategies. Being supported by UNHCR also allows us to show the positive relationship that arises between the RLOs and humanitarian and protection actors when spaces for participation are opened in a horizontal and transparent manner. In this way, we consider that UNHCR's accompaniment is fundamental to promote meaningful participation and making this support respectful, constant and comprehensive."

Carlai Zapata – active member of the RLO *Colectivo Futuro sin Fronteras* and member of MERLOS

"Listening to our voices, valuing our experience, and making us active participants in the decisions that affect us is an act of justice and dignity. Together, we can create spaces where all people, regardless of their origin, have the opportunity to contribute and thrive."

"Refugees are not only those who seek a new beginning, but also those who have stories, talents, and dreams that can enrich their communities. Their meaningful participation is not only a right, but also an opportunity to build more humane and sustainable solutions."

UNHCR organizes cultural activities to raise awareness in host communities and promote the integration of refugees.

© UNHCR/Claudia Sepúlveda

Chapter **12**

Fostering **peaceful coexistence through sports, culture and academia**

UNHCR is committed to fostering peaceful coexistence between refugees and their host communities. When given a chance, refugees can rebuild their lives and contribute meaningfully to the societies and economies that welcome them.

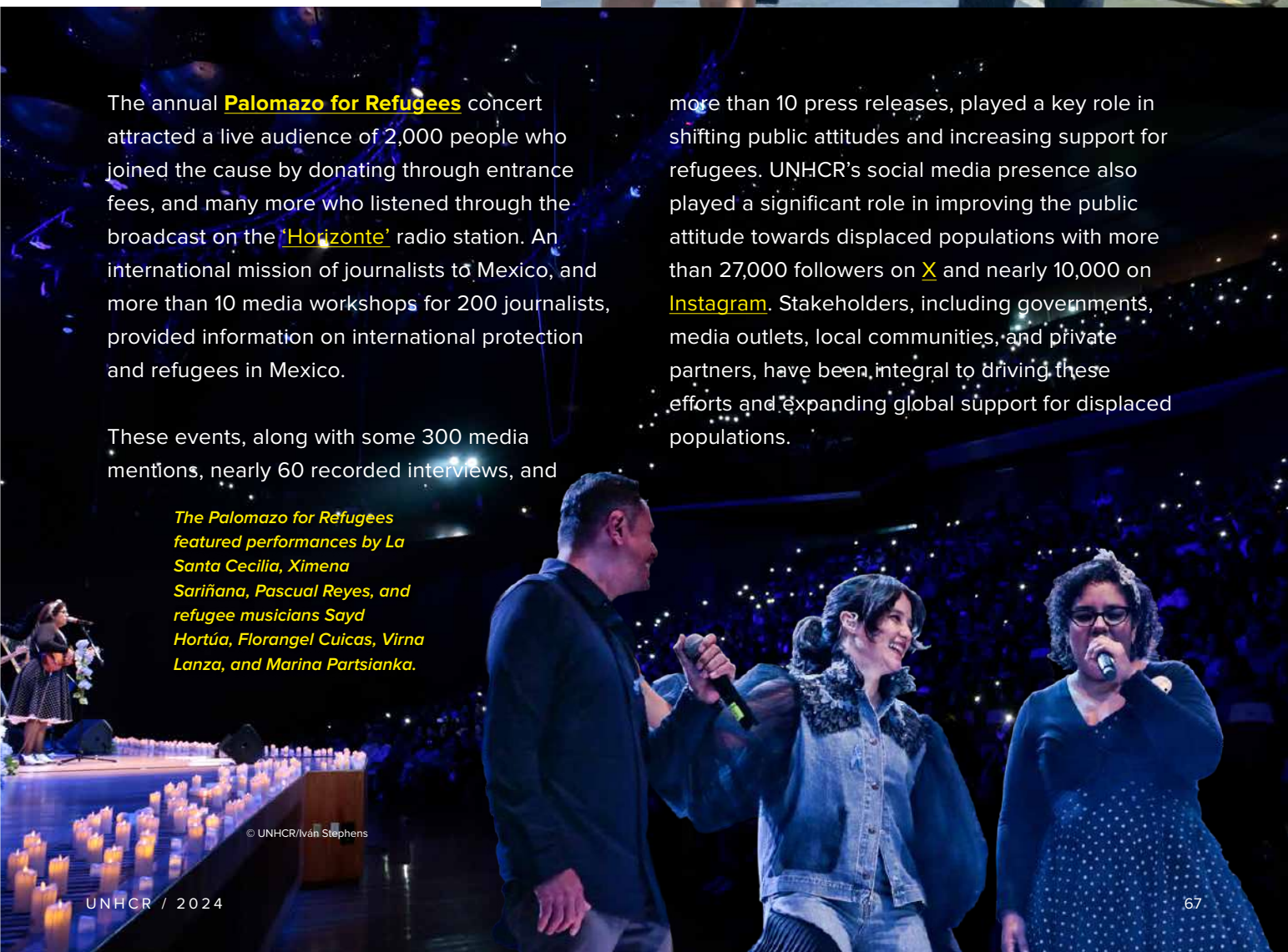
To create lasting, positive change for refugees and host communities alike in Mexico, UNHCR through a range of culture, sports, and academic activities enhances spaces of common understanding, fostering local integration and stability.

© UNHCR/Rodrigo Barcón

UNHCR's World Refugee Day Report.

The annual **Palomazo for Refugees** concert attracted a live audience of 2,000 people who joined the cause by donating through entrance fees, and many more who listened through the broadcast on the 'Horizonte' radio station. An international mission of journalists to Mexico, and more than 10 media workshops for 200 journalists, provided information on international protection and refugees in Mexico.

These events, along with some 300 media mentions, nearly 60 recorded interviews, and more than 10 press releases, played a key role in shifting public attitudes and increasing support for refugees. UNHCR's social media presence also played a significant role in improving the public attitude towards displaced populations with more than 27,000 followers on X and nearly 10,000 on Instagram. Stakeholders, including governments, media outlets, local communities, and private partners, have been integral to driving these efforts and expanding global support for displaced populations.

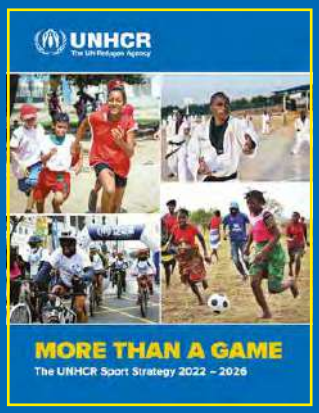


The Palomazo for Refugees featured performances by La Santa Cecilia, Ximena Sariñana, Pascual Reyes, and refugee musicians Sayd Hortúa, Florangel Cuicas, Virna Lanza, and Marina Partsianka.

© UNHCR/Iván Stephens

12.1 Sport as a vehicle for integration

Sport has proven to be an invaluable tool for promoting integration and fostering peaceful coexistence. It has the power to promote social ties, teamwork, and fosters collaboration. As part of the **UNHCR Sport Strategy 2022 - 2026** for protection and integration, some 40 activities were organized. More than 5,000 people, including nearly 1,000 girls and 1,200 boys, actively played football, basketball, and volleyball, cycled or climbed together with their peers of the host communities.



UNHCR Sport Strategy 2022 - 2026

UNHCR provided support to two outstanding refugee athletes in pursuing their dreams. **Edilio Centeno Nieves** joined the Refugee Olympic Team at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. **Ibrahime Sylla** continues to pursue his sports career as a member of the Necaxa Football Club.

EDILIO

Partnerships with local sports teams have further reinforced integration between refugees and the local communities. UNHCR's cooperation with the Rieleros baseball team and the Necaxa football club in Aguascalientes have allowed refugee children to be part of the clubs but have also fostered new community-building and healthcare initiatives. Necaxa donated 100 mammograms for early breast cancer detection along with more than 2,200 tickets for team matches. The Rayados football team in Monterrey and their fans surprised 1,500 refugee children with toys and Christmas gifts. This year, 50 new strategic sports partnerships were established, including with the Mexican Football Federation (FEMEXFUT) and FIFA for the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup.

IBRAHIME

"We are all one for football, play fair, feel your league",

Opening message of Emilio, 11-year-old refugee boy in front of more than 38,000 spectators of a football game.

© UNHCR/Miriam Jiménez

© UNHCR/Pierre-Marc René

12.2 Cultural exchanges

Cultural initiatives can break down barriers between refugees and local populations and give them the opportunity to share their talents, traditions and stories. Engaging in art allows refugees to dive into and contribute to the rich cultural landscape of their new home country.

The book Small and Extraordinary Things gives a voice to displaced children and was launched at the Guadalajara International Book Fair (FIL) to provide an insight into what children feel and experience when forced to flee. At the Monterrey Book Fair, more than 2,000 people took part in painting windows inspired by the book Windows in other Places, sending welcome messages for refugees who have found a home in Mexico.

The theatre play Grillos y Chicharras toured shelters, schools, and theaters across Mexico reaching more than 1,000 children and adults, sparking conversations around the challenges refugees face as part of integration and peaceful coexistence efforts.

Laughter and art are two of the most powerful tools to build resilience, improve mental health and offer an emotional release for those facing the trauma of displacement. Clowns Without Borders toured Mexico for the third year, with nearly 20 performances reaching 3,200 people in shelters, schools, and public spaces in Chiapas, Guerrero, Mexico City, Michoacán and Tabasco.

Many murals created across Mexico have become a powerful symbol of peaceful coexistence. Through collaborations with partners, these artworks transformed public spaces, promoting hope, resilience, and unity. The murals fostered belonging for refugees and displaced people while encouraging solidarity and understanding between local communities.

Days for inclusion and non-discrimination features a wide range of cultural activities, capacity-building sessions for authorities, and medical and educational assistance for the communities.

© UNHCR/Archive

12.3 Days for inclusion and non-discrimination

To foster peaceful coexistence between host communities and displaced populations, together with government counterparts and partners, UNHCR organized the Days for inclusion and non-discrimination across 10 cities.[16] Nearly 3,000 refugees, asylum-seekers and Mexicans engaged in community activities to foster social cohesion. Mexican journalists, students, entrepreneurs and nearly 650 public officials from all levels of government, worked together to create spaces for cultural exchange and to build stable and peaceful communities.

The Days for inclusion and non-discrimination initiative focuses on five key areas:

1 Context analysis
2 Advocacy
3 Capacity-building
4 Peaceful coexistence
5 Partnerships and alliances

[16] Ciudad Juárez, Mexico City, Monterrey, Oluta, Saltillo, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, San Luis Potosí, Tapachula, Tenosique, and Tuxtla Gutiérrez.

The Universidad Autónoma de Baja California joined the Sergio Vieira de Mello Chair to promote topics related to asylum, international protection, and forced displacement.

© UNHCR/Aurora Herrera

12.4 Academia

By providing access to education and skill-building opportunities, academia plays an essential role in providing refugees the opportunity to rebuild their lives. UNHCR aims at giving a maximum of refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs the possibility to study, e.g. by facilitating the recognition of high-school decrees or providing scholarships (see more in chapter 4.3 Access to education and opportunities).

Universities also possess significant potential, resources, and infrastructure to provide services to refugee and displaced populations. UNHCR has established eight Sergio Vieira de Mello Chairs[17] with universities across the country to join forces in protecting refugees, enhancing their access to education and strengthen research on their rights. The first national meeting of Sergio Vieira de Mello Chairs gathered university leaders to exchange on experiences and best practices to strengthen the academic network for the areas of asylum, international protection, and internal displacement. Academia plays a fundamental role in creating evidence to inform decision-makers' responses to the challenges and opportunities of forced displacement.

The National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) joined UNHCR's initiative and with partners held the second edition of the Diploma in International Refugee Law, from which 60 students graduated. Throughout 2024, the Diploma in Psychological First Aid for Displaced Populations was launched by Iniciativa Ciudadana with more than 100 students.

Read more about UNHCR's community-outreach activities in 2024's Operational Updates at:

Operational Update January - May 2024

Operational Update June - November 2024

[17] ITESM Campus Guadalajara, Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Instituto Mora, Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, and Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.

UNHCR's work is made possible thanks to the contributions of donors around the world.

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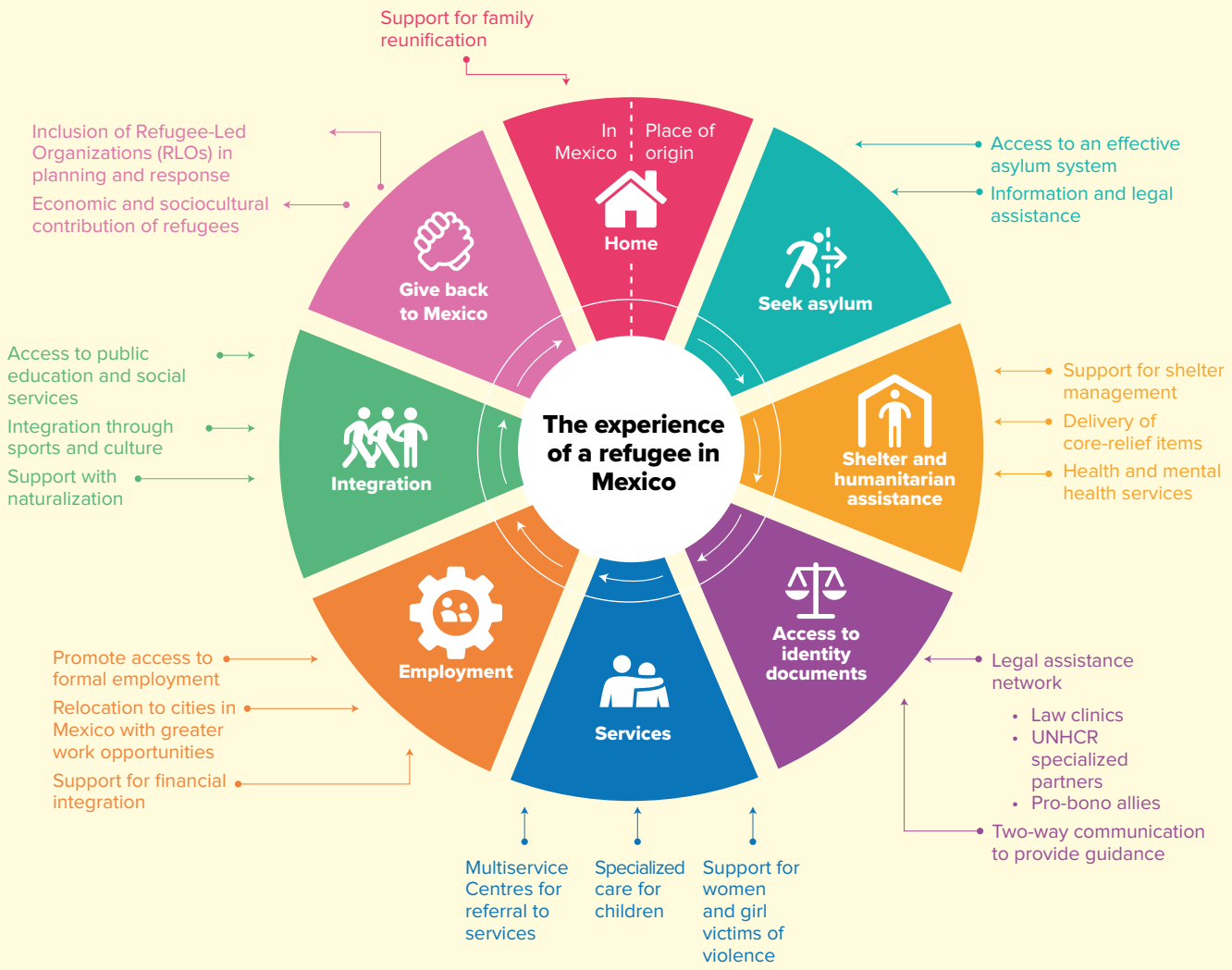
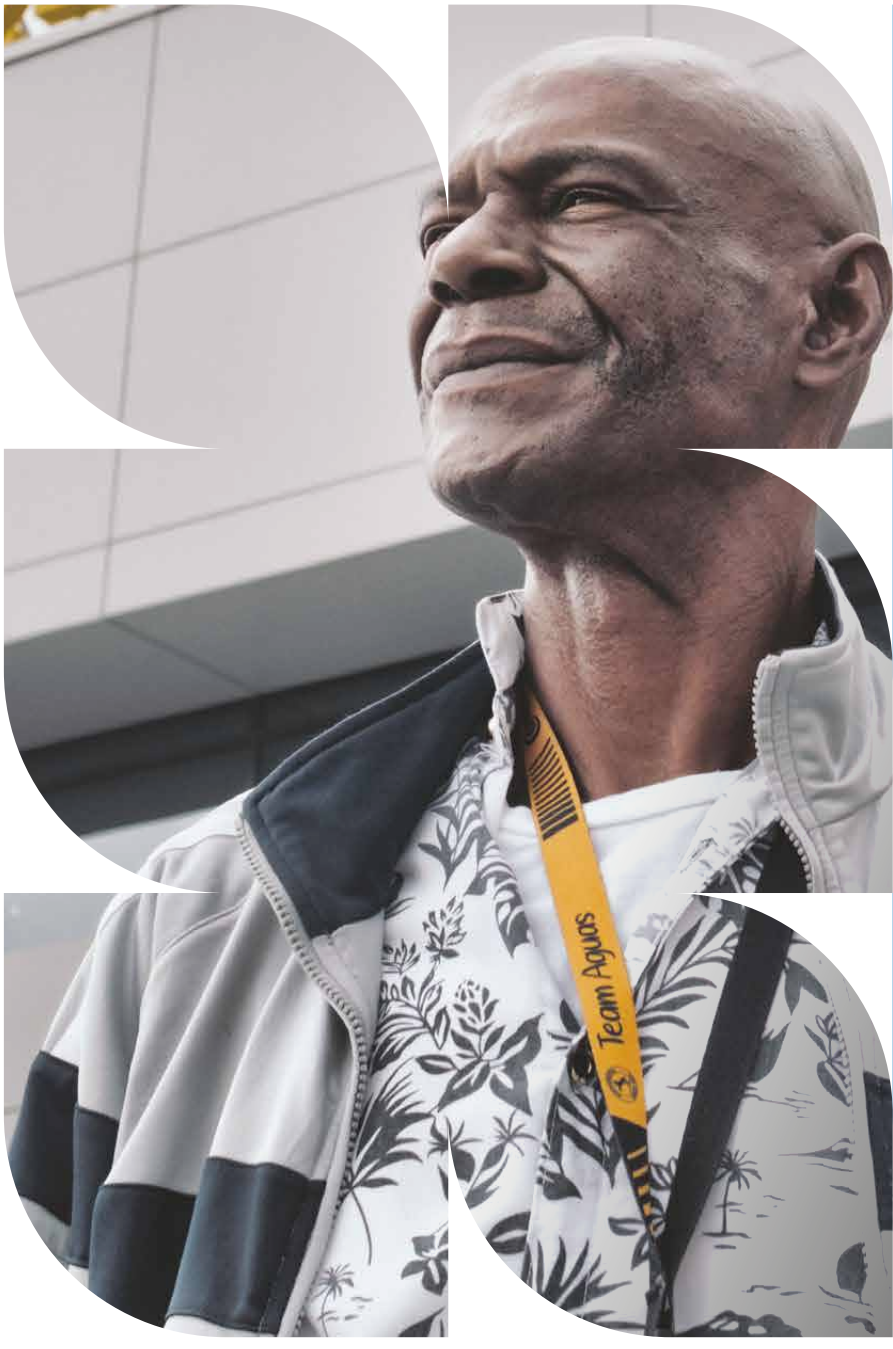
Chapter **13**

External **engagement and funding**



The initiatives outlined in this report reflect UNHCR's ongoing commitment to assisting refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people, stateless people, and others affected by displacement. These efforts were made possible by the invaluable contributions from governments, private sector partners, and individuals who generously supported our mission. This year, nearly USD $58 million were raised, enabling us to provide critical aid and create opportunities for displaced communities to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope. Funding primarily consisted of contributions from governmental donor partners this year, representing 89 per cent of the total funds, with the remaining 11 per cent provided by private sources. Governmental donors included Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Mexico, the United States. Contributions from private donors reached a significant total of nearly USD $6.9 million, thanks to the generosity of individuals, corporations, and religious organizations, including Islamic Relief USA and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

For the first time, diplomatic missions also joined efforts to engage the private sector for both employment of refugees and funding to UNHCR. We fostered strong private partnerships and saw a marked increase and diversification in funding sources.



UNHCR will focus all its efforts on continuing to work for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers.

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Chapter **14**

Looking **ahead**

In 2025, we will harvest the fruits of the seeds we have planted in the past years. With a renewed focus on digitalization, collaboration, and sustainable solutions, UNHCR will strive to continue to build on the progress achieved in recent years in strengthening refugee protection and integration in Mexico. This year marks a crucial point in advancing our shared goals and foster opportunities for refugees' successful integration into the Mexican society. Working alongside the federal, local and municipal governments, civil society, and key stakeholders remains central to our mission of fostering opportunities for refugees' successful integration into the Mexican society and their contribution to the economy.

UNHCR will continue supporting COMAR, as they identify key needs to enhance efficiency and safety, through tools like SIRE, biometric systems, and COMAR Digital, ensuring faster and transparent processes to streamline integration efforts of refugees. The role of digital tools in refugee protection will become increasingly pivotal in the coming years. By supporting the digital transformation of Mexico's asylum system, UNHCR aims to create a more agile and responsive framework that will meet the growing needs of displaced populations. These tools will also support refugees in accessing their rights, fostering smoother integration and enhancing their ability to rebuild their lives in Mexico.

While UNHCR has played an integral role in supporting shelters and protection services by funding staff positions and infrastructure to ensure a coordinated response to refugee needs, the stability and success might be at risk with a reduced funding.

© ACNUR/Pierre-Marc René

Father and daughter at the cultural and service fair in Villahermosa, Tabasco.

In close collaboration with the local and federal governments, UNHCR will continue to enhance Multiservice Centres across the country. Given the increase of asylum claims in Mexico City, we will focus on opening a new centre in the capital and complete the second phase of construction of the Multiservice Centre Tapachula.

The success of integration depends not only on access to services but on the creation of sustainable opportunities for refugees. UNHCR's role will be to work alongside national and local authorities to ensure the long-term sustainability of integration programs, ensuring that refugees have the support they need to thrive in their new communities.

Initiatives such as Mexico Employs You, which promotes refugee employment, and the PIL will remain at the core of our efforts to support refugees in becoming self-reliant members of society. Its sustainability will depend on the support from both public and private partners.

Building on the momentum of the Cartagena +40 consultations, UNHCR will continue to support the implementation of the Chile Action Plan, a key regional framework designed to address displacement and strengthen protection efforts across Latin America. This plan plays a crucial role in shaping the region's response to displacement challenges, aligning with the broader objectives of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

Documentation enables asylum-seekers to access public services and begin the integration process in their new communities.

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The establishment of law clinics and academic collaborations remains integral to refugee protection. UNHCR is excited to launch the Sergio Vieira de Mello Chair and the law clinics at the Autonomous University of Chiapas (UNACH) in various locations, including Tapachula and San Cristóbal de Las Casas. These clinics provide vital legal services and empower students to gain hands-on experience while offering essential support to refugees navigating the legal system. Through expanding these initiatives and strengthening our partnerships with universities, civil society organizations, and legal professionals, we aim to enhance the protection of refugees while ensuring the sustainability of these critical services.

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Through continued partnerships, innovation, and unwavering commitment, we are poised to meet the challenges ahead and provide refugees with the opportunities and support they need to rebuild their lives in Mexico and contribute to the stabilization of the region. Together, we can create a future where people are less likely to flee, find safety and thrive, allowing them to contribute to the economic growth of the country. UNHCR stays and delivers, helping refugees rebuild their lives.

Refugee children participate in the service fair activities in Tapachula, Chiapas.

UNHCR's work is made possible thanks to the collaboration of donors, as well as the joint efforts with governments, partners, allies, and United Nations Agencies.

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Chapter **15**

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Ibrahime has two dreams: to play professional soccer representing Mexico and to be an engineer who invents communication devices that bring people closer together.