UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

GUATEMALA 2024

4,702
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Our Response | In Figures

448,465
ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY UNHCR AND ITS PARTNERS

186,626
PEOPLE ASSISTED BY UNHCR AND ITS PARTNERS

143,302
PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE ABOUT THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE AND OTHER RIGHTS

76,921
PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE SHELTER OR HOUSING SOLUTIONS

58,119
OFFICIALS AND CIVIL SOCIETY TRAINED IN PROTECTION

40,260
PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED MENTAL HEALTH CARE SUPPORT

Source: UNHCR Response Monitoring 2024. Data for Guatemala.

Fact sheet
2024

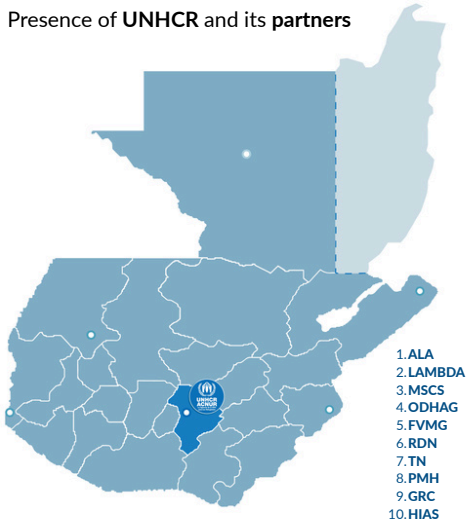
UNHCR IN GUATEMALA

Protection Agents in Livingston, Izabal ©UNHCR/ Victor Sanchez Mejia

In 2024, UNHCR operated six field offices across Guatemala to protect refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced Guatemalans, and returnees. In collaboration with the Guatemalan Government and 10 partners, UNHCR implemented initiatives to strengthen institutions, empower host communities, and facilitate access to rights and solutions for these populations.

These six field offices, strategically located in Guatemala City, Tecun Uman, Izabal, Esquipulas, Peten, and Huehuetenango, support government institutions by enhancing protection capacity, improving technical and operational capabilities, and ensuring a coordinated response to displaced populations, returnees, and host communities.

Presence of **UNHCR** and its **partners**



MOBILE INITIATIVES | ENSURING RIGHTS AND PROTECTION

The Secretariat Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Human Trafficking (SVET) and the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson (PDH) lead critical mobile initiatives to strengthen protection and access to rights.

UNIVET, led by SVET, deploys mobile units to prevent violence and human trafficking in communities and border areas with a high prevalence of these crimes.

PDH Mobile, implemented by PDH, enhances assistance and outreach, ensuring that PDH services reach vulnerable populations in priority areas.

Both initiatives focus on ensuring information and protection of rights along isolated routes and within at-risk communities.

UNIVET: Prevention of Crimes of Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Human Trafficking mobile units
PDH Mobile: Mobile Unit of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office

UNIVET

7 UNIVETS	**23,797** PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN ACTIVITIES.
61,341 INDIVIDUALS INFORMED	**62** MUNICIPALITIES ADDRESSED

PDH MOBILE

8 PDH MOBILE	**1** PDH BOAT
1,350 INDIVIDUALS TRAINED	**495** FIELD MONITORING VISITS

*1. ALA | La Alianza Association, 2. LAMBDA | LAMBDA Association, 3. MSCS | *Misioneros de San Carlos Scalabrinianos*, 4. ODHAG | Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala, 5. FVMG | World Vision Guatemala, 6. RDN | *Refugio de la Niñez* , 7. TN | *Tierra Nueva* , 8. PMH | Human Mobility Pastoral, 9. GRC | Guatemalan Red Cross, 10. HIAS | Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society .

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

PROTECT

Activity at the Department for the Recognition of Refugee Status in the framework of World Refugee Day©UNCHR/ Nicolo Rosso

Thousands of people arrive in Guatemala fleeing their countries due to violence, persecution, and insecurity.

UNHCR supports them by providing guidance and assistance, facilitating their access to humanitarian assistance and protection services, and offering information about the refugee status application process.

Additionally, UNHCR advocates to ensure that refugee children have access to effective protection services.

REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION

By the end of 2024, 4,702 refugees and asylum-seekers had been hosted in Guatemala, with the highest number of asylum applications and refugee status recognitions recorded in its international protection system's history.

A holistic approach was employed to achieve this milestone, including efforts by the government to decentralize the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process, interventions by UNHCR through Community-Based Protection (CBP) strategies, and initiatives by UNHCR partners to identify and refer asylum seekers to the RSD system.

10
DECENTRALIZATION MISSIONS

61%
RECOGNITION RATE

1,879
NEW ASYLUM APPLICATIONS

315
REFUGEES IN 2024

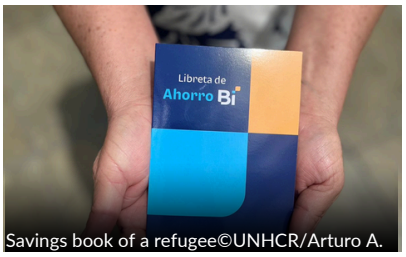
EXERCISE OF RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

UNHCR, in coordination with state institutions and its partners, has strengthened refugees' access to financial services and economic inclusion, allowing them to open bank accounts.

The National Registry of Persons (RENAP) and the Guatemalan Migration Institute have facilitated the issuance of special identification documents and temporary residency for refugees. Government efforts have improved access to financial services, enabling the opening of bank accounts and fostering economic inclusion.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare has accelerated the process of obtaining work permits through its virtual platform. Refugee children and adolescents now have greater access to education, as they can enroll in school using the documentation provided by RENAP.

Children's Museum Activity ©UNHCR/Victor S.



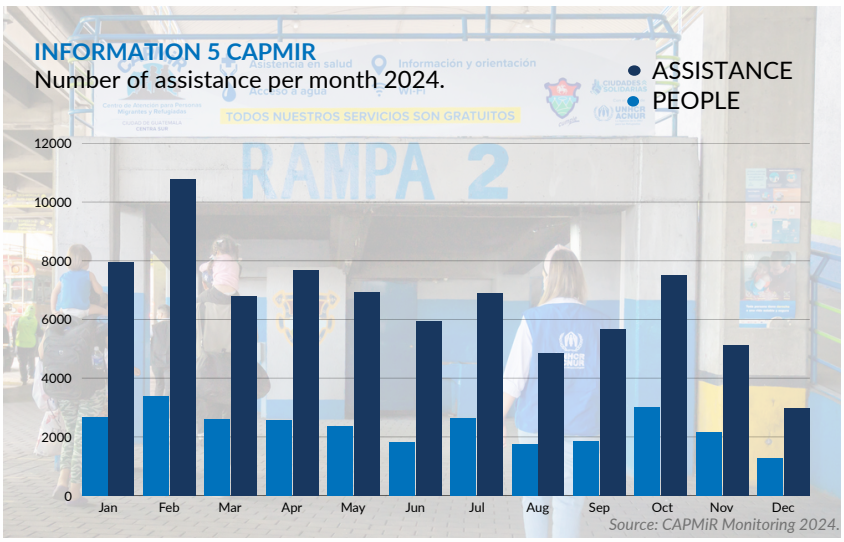
Savings book of a refugee©UNHCR/Arturo A.

CAPMiR Centra Sur ©UNHCR/ Víctor Sanchez Mejía

THE RECEPTION CENTER FOR REFUGEES (CAPMIR)

The CAPMiR initiative, situated at key locations, provides a safe space where various actors coordinate to deliver a range of services and assistance. These include information on accessing rights and services, and the refugee status determination process, as well as mental health assistance, first aid, and emotional support.

The initiative also offers urgent triage medical assistance and features safe and welcoming areas for children and adolescents, along with hygiene and hydration stations. Additionally, these spaces include charging stations to facilitate communication, and they distribute hygiene supplies and food kits.



Source: CAPMiR Monitoring 2024.

28,092
PEOPLE ASSISTED

78,299
ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

58%
MEN

42%
WOMEN

NATIONAL PROTECTION NETWORK

The National Protection Network plays a key role in humanitarian assistance and the protection of refugees and displaced populations, serving as a recognized reference at both national and regional levels. As the technical secretariat for the 16-member institutions, UNHCR provided guidance and support in interventions, meetings, trainings, and case management. Within this role, UNHCR identified the need for a structured pathway for case management, ensuring effective identification and referral. The development of Standard Operating Procedures enhanced coordination and teamwork, enabling more efficient and tailored protection services.

RESPOND

Supervision of construction sites in Huehuetenango ©UNHCR/

UNHCR provides immediate humanitarian assistance such as food, water, healthcare, and shelter to safeguard the lives of those facing extreme hardships.

SHELTER | ASSISTANCE

Shelters serve as a vital mechanism during crises or displacement to restore personal safety and dignity. UNHCR supported 76,921 people (including 27,100 children), providing nearly 152,200 shelter nights across 13 shelters. Additionally, it distributed 4,625 hygiene kits. UNHCR also assisted with the response to Mexican individuals who fled to Cuilco, Huehuetenango, providing assistance, and collaborated with government institutions to identify cases requiring international protection.

UNHCR contributed to the refurbishment of 4 shelters, integrating solar panels, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities, structural improvements, roofing, and evacuation routes. It also collaborated on the development of the Standard Operating Procedure for shelters to uphold minimum protection and human rights standards, marking the first reference framework within the shelter network.

13 SHELTERS

76,921 PEOPLE ASSISTED

27,100 CHILDREN ASSISTED

152,200 SHELTER ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

4,625 HYGIENE KITS

4 RENOVATIONS OF SHELTERS

EXTREME-WEATHER RELATED DISASTERS

Many people relocate due to emergencies, with many seeking international protection. UNHCR takes a leading role in these cases and works with the government to provide a coordinated response to human mobility resulting from extreme-weather-related disasters.

In response to extreme-weather-induced emergencies, in 2024, UNHCR distributed 916 essential items (CRIs), including blankets, solar lamps, cooking sets, and more, to assist affected populations. UNHCR also joined forums to showcase its humanitarian efforts. Additionally, it pre-positioned 2,694 assistance items so that CONRED could use them in emergency responses.

40 YOUTH TRAINED IN EXTREME-WEATHER RELATED DISASTERS

1 COMMUNITY ACCREDITED AS COLRED

1 SCHOLARSHIP FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT

7 SHELTERS WITH RENEWABLE ENERGY

916 CORE RELIEF ITEMS DELIVERED

2,694 CORE RELIEF ITEMS PREPOSITIONS

EMPOWER

Young woman involved in the NGO *Acciona Por El Cambio* ©UNHCR/ Victor Sanchez Mejia

Through a community-based protection approach, UNHCR strengthens the leadership and capacities of refugees and host communities, with a special focus on women, youth, LGBTIQ+ individuals, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendant communities.

COMMUNITY PROTECTION | PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

UNHCR Guatemala adopts a protection approach centered on empowering strategically prioritized communities across the country. Recognizing that communities are not only beneficiaries of protection but also key actors in their safety and well-being, this approach builds on their existing capacities, structures, and mechanisms to address risks and safeguard their members.

Through Community-Based Protection (CBP) processes, UNHCR works hand in hand with these communities to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerabilities by fostering sustainable community-led structures that promote long-term protection and development. This participatory approach ensures that communities have the tools and knowledge to identify and mitigate risks, advocate for their rights, and enhance their ability to respond to challenges collectively. UNHCR integrates awareness-raising activities into its CBP strategy to promote sustained engagement. Conducted in 8 departments with community leaders, these initiatives strengthen social cohesion, equitable rights, and conflict prevention.

28
COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

2,233
PEOPLE TRAINED IN THE FIELD

19,448
PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN ACTIVITIES

9,073
ACCESSED FEEDBACK MECHANISM

INTEGRATION

UNHCR Guatemala developed specific and cross-cutting work guidelines to enhance the inclusion and protection of individuals across all areas of UNHCR's interventions.

Additionally, UNHCR Guatemala created specific guidelines to work with Maya, Xinca, Garífuna, and Afro-descendant populations. These efforts strengthen the protection approach by integrating and mainstreaming diverse activities throughout UNHCR's entire operation.

FEEDBACK MECHANISM

For UNHCR, actively listening to and addressing community feedback is essential for deliveing timely responses, shaping strategic and operational decisions, and mitigating risks.

UNHCR and its partner organizations received and processed a total of 9,073 feedback submissions, ensuring that concerns are properly addressed.

RESOLVE

Refugee, Park Ranger in Izabal©UNHCR/ Víctor Sánchez Mejía

UNHCR seeks durable solutions for people forced to flee by partnering with strategic allies who facilitate the inclusion of refugees in the labor market, empowering them to achieve self-reliance and integration within host communities.

However, when protection risks persist, UNHCR implements other programs to support the resettlement of refugees and individuals at risk, providing them with opportunities to rebuild their lives in safe, stable environments.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Finding durable solutions that allow refugees to live with dignity and peace is essential to our work. Local integration is a gradual process that encompasses legal, economic, social, and cultural dimensions, where both refugees and host communities play a crucial role.

In Guatemala, UNHCR achieved the approval of four loans, two through a pro-women NGO and two with the Industrial Bank, driving life-improvement projects. It also supported the certification of 31 park rangers in collaboration with the Technical Institute for Training and Productivity (INTECAP) in the course "Rangers in Terrestrial Ecosystems". This strengthened the protection and conservation of natural resources.

62 ENTREPRENEURSHIPS

21 STRENGTHENING SEED CAPITAL

50 INTERNSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

37 CERTIFIED RESOURCE KEEPERS

SOCIOECONOMIC INCLUSION

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare launched four employment inclusion guides as part of the *Empléate Inclusivo* Relaunch Program. These guides aim to help businesses adjust and/or strengthen their hiring processes to make them more inclusive. They provide insights into the current context and outline key considerations for integrating these vulnerable populations into the workforce.

Labor Inclusion Guides ©UNHCR/ Cristina G.

Park ranger ©UNHCR

Food Entrepreneurship Fair for refugees and asylum-seekers ©UNHCR/ Sebastián Rodríguez

Esquipulas women leaders activity ©UNCHR/

CITIES OF SOLIDARITY

Cities of Solidarity, a regional UNHCR initiative, recognizes local governments that support refugees and highlights their role in promoting social and economic inclusion within host communities. Municipalities and departments develop projects in coordination with UNHCR, public and private sectors, and civil society to integrate refugees and asylum seekers into municipal programs.

Cities of Solidarity create safe spaces where refugees and asylum-seekers find opportunities to live independently, exercise their rights, access essential services, and participate actively in community life.

Host communities play a key role in refugee protection and integration, while local authorities implement policies that ensure the rights of this population.

19 CITIES OF SOLIDARITY

7 DEPARTMENTS

2 NATIONAL CONFERENCES

1 TU BUS CITY OF SOLIDARITY MOBILE

Cities of Solidarity Conference
©UNHCR/ Víctor Sánchez M.

Private Sector Event, Cooperation Agencies
©UNHCR/ Víctor Sánchez M.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

UNHCR carries out work in Guatemala thanks to the generosity and dedication of all our donors.

UNHCR and donors confucted more than 20 meetings and field missions to highlight community work and collaboration with institutions and local authorities.

UNHCR hosted two events to showcase its efforts to diplomatic personnel, international cooperation agencies, and the private sector.

Luis and his family demonstrates that with every firm step, it is possible to create a positive impact not only on his own life but also on the lives of an entire community.

Paso a paso Entrepreneurship ©UNHCR/ Víctor Sánchez Mejía.

THE DETERMINATION AND EFFORT OF LUIS WERE KEY TO TURNING HIS DREAM INTO REALITY.

Luis, along with his family, started a new life in Guatemala. His story is an example of perseverance and hard work. With determination, he founded "Paso a Paso," a venture that has experienced steady growth. Today, this project has not only been a success for Luis but has also positively impacted the community. It has provided employment to other families, who now work as distributors of his products.

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UNHCR is grateful for the contributions of donor countries that contribute to our operation in Guatemala and to global programmes with flexible funding:

Australian Aid · Belgium partner in development · Canada · german humanitarian assistance · Irish Aid An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha Department of Foreign Affairs · From the People of Japan · LUXEMBOURG AID & DEVELOPMENT · KOREA · Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC · UKaid from the British people · United Nations CERF Central Emergency Response Fund · Internal Displacement Solutions Fund · UNAIDS

Also, we thank the contributions of our global private donors in Argentina, Australia, Chile, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and the Uniked Kingdom.

**As of 31 December 2024*

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