UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

EL SALVADOR
APRIL–JUNE 2025

Quarterly update

After fleeing violence, Carlos and his family found safety in El Salvador. He is now excited to receive Salvadoran citizenship and continue contributing to his new home country.
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Our 2025 response in figures

25,485 people
received support through UNHCR's helpline, Support Spaces and mobile teams

807 individuals
helped with psychosocial support and mental health services

2,256 people
reached through activities to prevent violence against women and girls

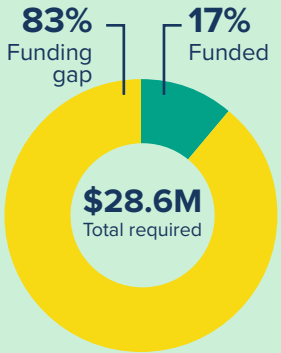
222 people
trained in skills for employment or self-employment, supported with vocational training or linked to decent job opportunities

132 civil society and national officers
with enhanced knowledge on Protection

172 people
registered with biometrics

Funding

17% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 30 June 2025.



*These figures are regularly updated and reflect cumulative data for 2025.

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Highlights

- UNHCR joined the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the groundbreaking ceremony of the Urban Centre for Welfare and Opportunities (CUBO) in Chancuyo, Ahuachapán. These centres promote educational and cultural activities that foster peaceful coexistence in communities historically affected by gang violence and forced displacement. The project aims to benefit approximately 12,500 people in the community and surrounding neighbourhoods. UNHCR contributed with equipment and materials, purchased in previous years, to support learning, cultural and recreational activities.
- As part of the International Women's Day commemorations, 16 women survivors of violence reflected on challenges and the importance of resilience in an event organized by UNHCR and partner Salvadoran Women for Peace (ORMUSA).

With support from UNHCR and the General Directorate for Migration and Foreigners (DGME), and the National Civil Registry, eight eight refugees obtained Salvadoran citizenship, strengthening their access to their rights.
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World Refugee Day

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- In coordination with national authorities such as the General Directorate for Migration and Foreigners (DGME), and the National Civil Registry, UNHCR assisted eight refugees to obtain Salvadoran citizenship. UNHCR organized a high-level event engaging government representatives, donors, and partner institutions for the official awarding ceremony in the framework of World Refugee Day.
- In the framework of World Refugee Day, 35 refugees and asylum-seekers including children participated in a family-gathering at the National Children's Park. Organized by the Forced Displacement Unit of the Attorney General's Office (PGR) and UNHCR, the activity offered child-friendly activities including storytelling, painting, games and refreshments. Participants were from Ecuador, Cuba, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Venezuela and Colombia.
- In Los Lirios, Cuscatancingo, a community historically affected by violence, 50 children participated in a soccer tournament organized by UNHCR and World Vision. Aimed at promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, the activity allowed UNHCR to raise awareness about forced displacement in the framework of World Refugee Day. Participants wrote solidarity messages for those forced to flee.

UNHCR joined institutions and organizations comprising the Municipal Committee for Violence Prevention in San Salvador to strengthen coordinated responses. © UNHCR El Salvador | Mariana Colocho

Protect

Legal staff from PGR enhanced their knowledge on protection through a workshop by UNHCR.
© UNHCR El Salvador | Mariana Colocho

- As part of efforts to strengthen national protection systems, UNHCR led a specialized training on forced displacement and international protection for legal staff from the Internal Displacement and Childhood units of the General Attorney's Office (PGR). With enhanced capabilities, specialized staff provides legal assistance and information on rights to individuals seeking international protection in El Salvador.
- Thirty-three case management staff from the Salvadoran Institute for Women Development (ISDEMU) enhanced their knowledge of international protection, case management, and referral pathways for individuals with specific needs.
- UNHCR participated in the bi-monthly Child Protection Sub-Sector meeting coordinated by UNICEF, where members reviewed the group's Terms of Reference. During the session, UNHCR as the Protection Sector Lead, presented the "Aquí Estoy" and "345W" platforms to register and track humanitarian assistance provided by member organizations, promoting coordination and transparency across the Sector.
- The first 2025 meeting of the Municipal Committee for the Prevention of Violence (CMPV) in San Salvador Este gathered public institutions and organizations to update referral pathways for victims of violence and forced displacement. UNHCR participated to strengthen coordinated protection responses.

Respond

UNHCR donated learning kits to PGR to support displaced and at risk of displacement children and adolescents in San Salvador and San Miguel.
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- UNHCR donated 75 learning kits for children, including colouring sheets and books to the Human Mobility and Displacement Unit of the Attorney General's Office (PGR). These materials promote inclusion and solidarity with people forced to flee and will support play-based activities for children and adolescents in San Salvador and San Miguel.
- To support the well-being of children and adolescents affected by violence and displacement, UNHCR donated recreational and educational materials to the National Council for Childhood and Adolescence (CONAPINA). These items will benefit the Community Spaces for Psychosocial Care supported by UNHCR in four communities, with the aim to strengthen educational and psychosocial activities.
- Thirty-two residents of La Campanera, Soyapango, took part in a session on housing, land and property rights facilitated by UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The session provided legal guidance to address irregularities in land tenure and housing, as part of UNHCR's efforts to support communities previously under gang control and receiving returning residents.
- UNHCR, together with partners, municipal authorities and community leaders, facilitated sessions on housing, land and property rights in La Campanera and 1 de Diciembre, Soyapango. These activities provided legal guidance on land tenure and property regularization for residents in areas previously under gang control, many of whom include forcibly displaced families. Communities also discussed initiatives to recover and transform communal spaces for recreational use.

Participants of the JuegaXlaPaz project in Zacamil participate in weekly sessions aimed at preventing violence and enhancing peaceful coexistence. © UNHCR El Salvador

Empower

Seventeen youth from San Salvador and Santa Ana enrolled in the Community Communicators initiative under the "JuegaXlaPaz" project, which includes four weeks of training and the presentation of their audiovisual projects.
© UNHCR | Jacqueline Henriquez

- Under the "JuegaXlaPaz" project funded by the Barça Foundation, prioritized communities in San Salvador and Santa Ana participated in workshops on SportNet, a methodology that promotes values such as teamwork, respect, resilience and peaceful conflict resolution, helping to strengthen social cohesion and prevent violence. The project will benefit some 600 children and youth across six communities. In addition, 17 youth will take part in the Community Communicators programme, launched in partnership with the University Dr. José Matías Delgado, to lead a multimedia campaign that fosters peaceful coexistence and participation.
- Local leaders, residents and sports promoters in communities IVU (San Salvador Centro), San José (Soyapango), and Lamatepec (Santa Ana Centro), participated in an informative session on the SportNet methodology under the "JuegaXlaPaz" project funded by the FC Barça Foundation. This project aims to reach 600 children and youth across six communities to promote peaceful conflict resolution, teamwork, enhance social cohesion, and contribute to violence prevention.
- Seventy-five community leaders from San Miguel, San Vicente, Santa Ana and Sonsonate departments completed a seven-month advanced capacity-building programme under the UNHCR-supported School of Human Rights, Leadership and Community Organization facilitated by partner FUNDASAL. This transformative experience bolstered their leadership skills and equipped them with knowledge and tools to identify people with specific needs, prevent violence, and lead change in their communities.

Solve

Supported by UNHCR and World Vision, participants of the Súper Pilas programme developed skills to enhance their livelihood opportunities and presented their business projects.
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- As part of the Súper Pilas programme, 46 displaced or at risk of displacement individuals from San Salvador, San Miguel and Santa Ana presented their business projects to evaluation panels organized by UNHCR and World Vision. The programme supported participants in developing life and business plans to expand their livelihood opportunities. Participants will be linked to national entities supporting entrepreneurship initiatives to seek funding opportunities.
- UNHCR held a working session with the National Institute for Training and Education (INCAF) to define priorities for inclusion in an upcoming Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). These efforts will focus on integrating forcibly displaced people into national training and labour programmes, leverage institutional resources, and identify opportunities for joint resource mobilization to strengthen support for vulnerable populations in El Salvador.
- Through the Creating Opportunities programme, 18 women from La Campanera joined a workshop on equality and women inclusion facilitated by partner Fe y Alegría. Participants learned practical approaches to overcome inequalities and strengthen their ability to face challenging situations.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

A new beginning: From uncertainty to belonging

"We want to give back a little of what this country has given us", says Carlos, a refugee who recently received Salvadoran citizenship.
© UNHCR / Jacqueline Henriquez

Carlos* arrived in El Salvador in 2009, at just nine years old. Together with his family, he was forced to leave his country because of violence and threats. Starting again in a new place and adapting to a new environment was not easy, but step by step they adapted and found support to integrate into their new community.

"At that time, enrolling in school was harder, and I couldn't join the football academy because I didn't have documents," Carlos recalls.

Over time, and thanks to the coordinated efforts of national institutions and with UNHCR's assistance, Carlos obtained Salvadoran citizenship. This milestone opened doors to access services, opportunities, and full participation in Salvadoran society.

Today, Carlos and his family live in community located in a small town in the eastern region of El Salvador. There they have built strong friendships and developed a small family business that is growing steadily. With their documentation, they now plan to formalize the business and continue contributing to the local economy: "We want to give back a little of what this country has given us," Carlos says proudly.

For Carlos, the granting of Salvadoran citizenship has meant rights, belonging, and the chance to rebuild his life in a safe environment. He also values the solidarity of the community that welcomed him: "Even if it's not your original home, being received as if it were your own is something truly admirable".

Carlos' story reflects how durable solutions create opportunities for refugees and strengthen communities. These efforts form part of El Salvador's commitment as a member of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) and resonate with the principles of the Cartagena Declaration, which reached its 40th anniversary last year.

UNHCR has supported El Salvador for more than four decades. Since 2017, it has worked to strengthen the national asylum system. As part of these efforts, new premises for the Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER) were inaugurated in 2024 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with UNHCR's support, to provide dignified and efficient services to asylum-seekers and refugees.

*Name changed for protection reasons.

In 2025, UNHCR is appealing for USD 28.6 million to provide protection, responses, empowerment and solutions to refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons in El Salvador. The best way to support UNHCR's appeal is through unearmarked contributions. Such flexible funding at the global level is key in allowing a timely response to evolving needs wherever required.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support in 2025 of:

Australian Aid · Belgium partner in development · Canada · German humanitarian assistance · Irish Aid · KOICA Korea International Cooperation Agency · Cooperación Española · Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC · UKaid · Peacebuilding Fund · UN-Habitat For a better urban future

Private donors: Australia, Italy, Japan, Spain, Republic of Korea

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