

North of Central America Situation

May 2020

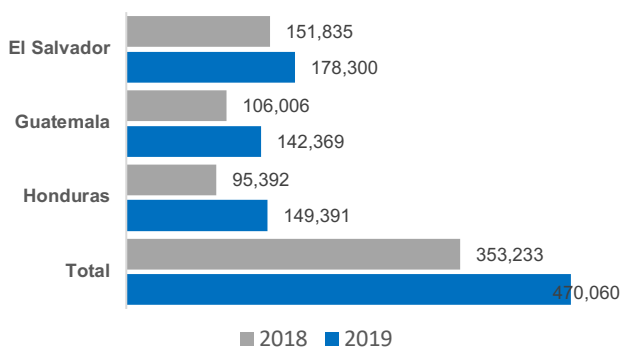
Around **470,000** refugees and asylum-seekers from the North of Central America in the world and **318,590** internal displaced people in Honduras and El Salvador have been forced to flee their homes because of brutal violence.

As at May, countries in the region continue to maintain official borders closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Cases of violence and internal forced displacement in countries of origin nevertheless continue unabated.

UNHCR and partners have been identifying and assisting people with protection needs, including unaccompanied children, SGBV survivors (women and LGBTI people), men victims of recruitment and witnesses of serious crimes.

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

By country of origin

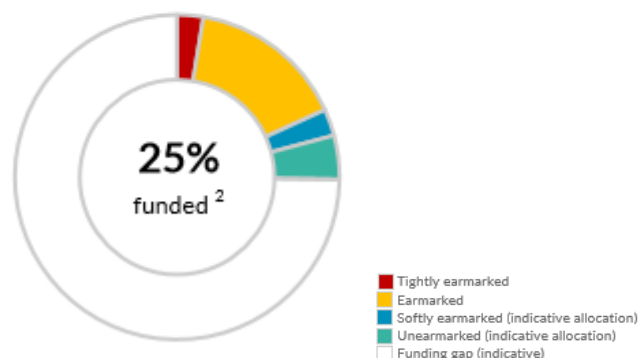


Source: Based on data provided by governments to UNHCR as of Dec-19.

FUNDING (AS OF 28 MAY 2020)

US\$ 113.6 M

requested for the NCA situation¹



- The financial requirements of the North of Central America Situation include requirements in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.
- \$84,985,130 gap in funding represents 75% of the financial requirements.

Overview

Governments in the NCA maintain curfews and quarantine to avoid a new wave of COVID-19 infections, which continues to impact UNHCR's presence in communities and people of concern's jobs and livelihoods. These restrictions also worsen the situation for people at risk in countries of origin, who will face additional difficulties to flee when persecuted. Internal forced displacements continue despite the pandemic.

LGBTI community leaders in the NCA continue to report violence and persecution by gangs that aim to force them into criminal activities or threaten their lives because of who they are. They also experience limitations in accessing humanitarian aid, health care, and economic opportunities during the pandemic.

UNHCR continues to ramp up efforts to support government responses to support IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers to cope with critical needs, like access to protection, food, housing and healthcare, including mental health.

In addition, UNHCR continues to support reception conditions for deportees and returnees and collaborates with partners and governments in the identification of protection needs among those in quarantine.



UNHCR and the Izabal Health Directorate in Guatemala launched a communicating with community's project where a loudspeaker on a car travels through border communities and Puerto Barrios sharing information on UNHCR and COVID-19 prevention measures. ©UNHCR

UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works with over 70 partners in the region and supports states to implement their national plans under the Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). The MIRPS is a pioneering application of the Global Compact on Refugees. In May, the OAS Permanent Council approved the establishment of a **voluntary fund for the MIRPS**, which will allow for the mobilization of resources to help implement action plans in each country.

Main Activities

Alongside governments, partner organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, development actors and UN Agencies, UNHCR undertakes protection and solutions activities, including:



Safe reception and admission

UNHCR in Belize supports the Refugees Department in undertaking their duties, including through the donation of an infrastructure to resume registration while ensuring COVID-19 prevention measures. UNHCR in Honduras and El Salvador is supporting the government response to COVID-19 through the conditioning and endowment of reception centres for deportees.



Advocacy and Coordination

In Belize, thanks to UNHCR's advocacy, all family members no longer must be present for the renewal of asylum certificates. In Guatemala, UNHCR is coordinating with the Ministry of Labour to support refugees and asylum seekers who have not been able to renew or apply for work permits during the pandemic. Under the Protection Cluster, UNHCR El Salvador coordinates the delivery of cell phones and tablets to support child protection interviews. UNHCR is coordinating the delivery of food and hygiene kits through government institutions and community leaders in Honduras and El Salvador. In Costa Rica, UNHCR is working with the Migration Authority to ensure that COVID-19 measures do not affect the due process for NCA asylum seekers. Also, UNHCR works with translators to provide Miskita versions of health prevention information and access to RSD processes.



Providing safe spaces and shelter

Across the region, UNHCR is supporting refugees and internally displaced people with cash for rent. In Mexico, UNHCR began the distribution of PPE to over 80 shelters across the country, including facemasks, goggles, gloves, medical gowns and hats, and footwear protection. Through partner HIAS, UNHCR in Panama donated food, cleaning and personal hygiene supplies, blankets, clothing and educational games to the Migrant Reception Center in Chiriquí Province, a place currently sheltering 540 persons on the move. In Costa Rica, UNHCR continues to support the Migration Authority with the rental of a facility at the northern border to serve as a quarantine station for recently arrived asylum seekers and provides them with cash-based assistance.



Community-based protection interventions

UNHCR partner Jóvenes contra la Violencia in Honduras is supporting efforts to monitor violence in communities while disseminating COVID-19 prevention information. In Mexico, a series of videos to inform of contingency-related topics was launched, providing information on access to [health services](#) and [continuing education](#). In El Salvador, UNHCR conducted a training on psychological first aid to community leaders. In Costa Rica, UNHCR's hotline to address information needs of asylum seekers registered an increase of inquiries particularly related to humanitarian assistance programmes, and on RSD procedures.



Durable solutions and livelihoods

UNHCR's partner hired refugees and asylum seekers in Petén (Guatemala) as [forest rangers](#) to support efforts preserve the environment. UNHCR Panama and [BANESCO signed a letter of understanding](#) for the issuance of prepaid debit cards to deliver cash assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. US-based NGO "Soliya" included refugees and asylum seekers in Belize at an intermediate level of English within their "Social Circles", to help expand their language skills. In Costa Rica, UNHCR's partner *Fundación Mujer* continuously delivers online training for asylum seekers and refugees to increase their skillset and employment prospects; it has also allocated reactivation grants to businesses affected by COVID-19.



Campaigns against xenophobia

UNHCR and IOM, through the joint anti xenophobia campaign *Somos Lo Mismo*, joined Panama's International Film Festival's 2020 edition. Moreover, solidarity and anti-xenophobia messages are being disseminated through the campaign, including through its [latest video](#). In Mexico, COVID-19 and anti-xenophobia audio spots in Maya, Nahuatl and Spanish have been disseminated in national media.



Working with partners

UNHCR and partners distributed hygiene prevention kits, food items and recreation materials for children to 295 refugees and asylum seekers in Guatemala since 30 April. UNHCR Panama and *Cuentos Sin Fronteras* launched a pilot online initiative reaching over 100 children and adolescents in vulnerable situations including refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR Honduras, through partner Save the Children, is providing psychological telephone assistance to teenagers and young people linked to community projects and initiatives in Tegucigalpa. In Costa Rica, UNHCR along with partners delivered 1,600 hygiene and food kits to asylum seekers that have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

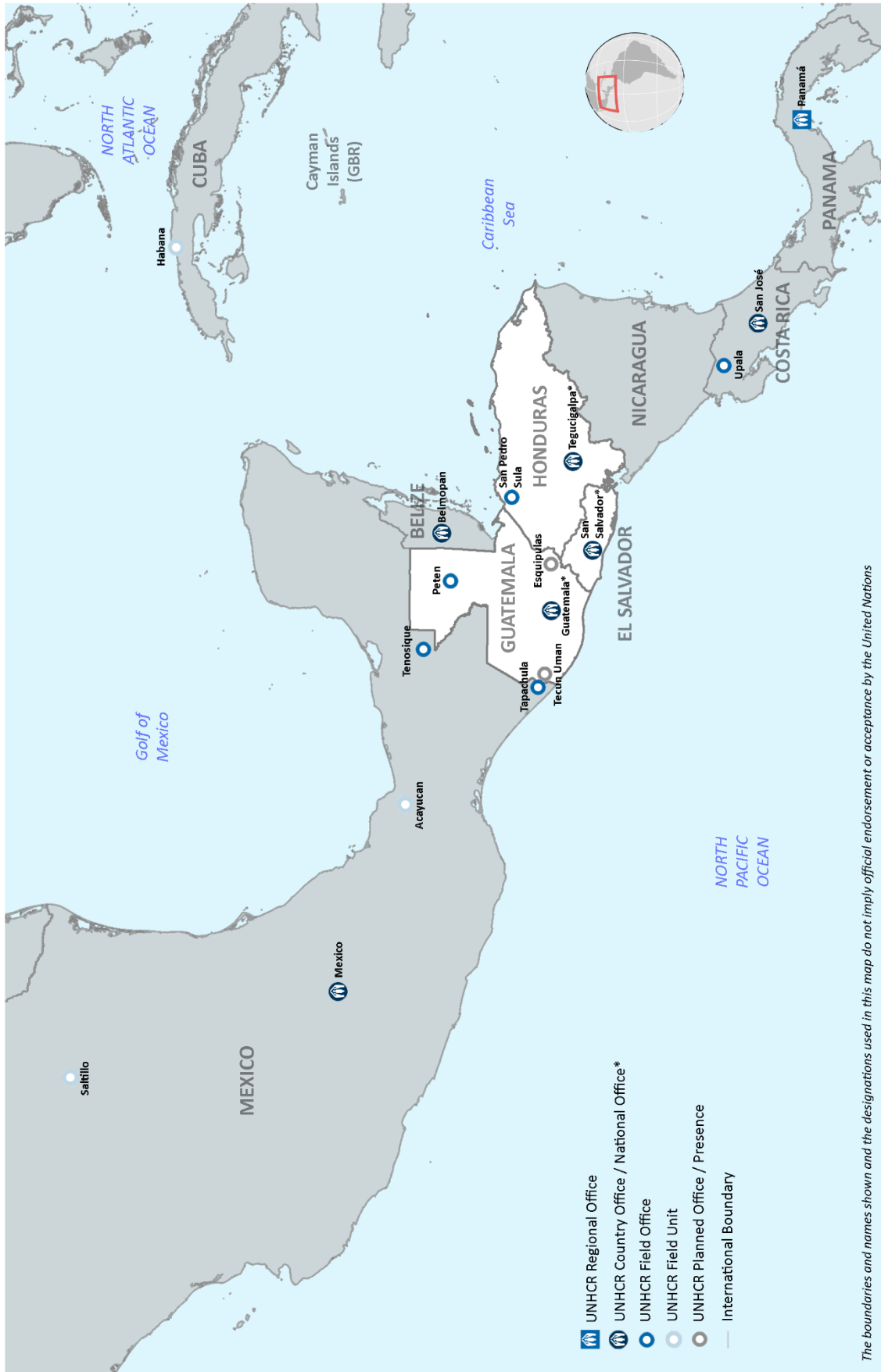
Thanks to donors in 2020: UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have provided generous and timely support to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation globally, and countries in Central America, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked funding: Canada | Denmark | European Union | Germany | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

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North of Central America (NCA) Situation: UNHCR Presence



- UNHCR Regional Office
- UNHCR Country Office / National Office*
- UNHCR Field Office
- UNHCR Field Unit
- UNHCR Planned Office / Presence
- International Boundary

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