

Strategy and response to **displacement in and from**

El Salvador, Guatemala & Honduras

December 2021

Around **550,000** refugees and asylum-seekers from **El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras** and **318,700** internally displaced people in **El Salvador** and **Honduras** are considered people of concern to UNHCR.

Violence and crime together with food insecurity and a lack of opportunities are the main drivers of forced displacement in and from these countries. **Climate change** is exacerbating the violence and economic hardship that are spurring **increased displacement**.

UNHCR works to boost the capacity of national asylum systems and to promote **integration of refugees** in host communities, while addressing the **needs of internally displaced persons**.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF POPULATION OF CONCERN

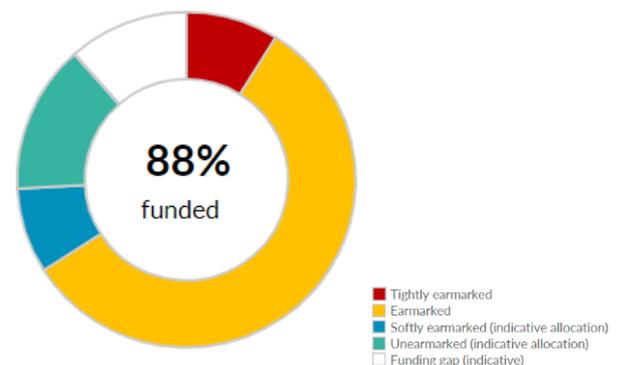


Source: Data provided by governments to UNHCR, Data for mid-2021 is preliminary and can be subject to changes.

FUNDING (AS OF 29 DECEMBER)

USD 178.2 M

requested for **North of Central America** situation in 2021



Note: The financial requirements of the North of Central America Situation include Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama.

Operational context

A complex inter-relation between gang violence and domestic abuse, food insecurity, increasing poverty, and the effects of climate change, drive forced displacement from **El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras** already visible in the uptick of asylum claims in countries like Mexico, which reached record numbers of people who applied for asylum this year.

Around 40% of the people who arrived in **Mexico** from **El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala** left their homes after suffering violence and persecution, according to research by UNHCR. The report « [Forced displacement to Mexico from Central America, 2014-2019](#) » (ES), analyzes the multiple causes behind displacement from and within Central America. Also, a joint UNHCR and UNICEF [Families on the Run](#) documents the interrelated and compelling reasons behind the shift in forced displacement trends in northern Central America, from individuals –notably children– to entire family units fleeing.

The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic led more refugees and asylum seekers to request assistance, mainly to cover basic needs such as rent, food and medicine. In **El Salvador**, poverty levels rose from 31 to 41% and in **Guatemala**, labour informality is rising from 70 to 75%.



El Salvador. Young local artists work part of a mural being painted at a UNHCR supported community centre that provides psychosocial care and humanitarian aid to internally displaced persons and those at risk. The support space "A tu lado" is a meeting point for different organizations to provide community-level attention services to people with protection needs. © UNHCR/Tito Herrera

Priorities in 2021

UNHCR works with **over 70 partners** in countries responding to displacement in and from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The Office supports States to implement their national plans under the **Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS)**, the regional framework implementing the Global Compact on Refugees in Central America and Mexico. Guatemala holds the Pro-tempore presidency for 2021 after the [third annual MIRPS meeting in December](#), during which the countries adopted the [San Salvador Declaration](#).

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

Investment in **Governance, Displacement Prevention and Protection**

- Strengthen institutional frameworks, legislation and policies for the prevention of forced displacement, and protection and assistance in states hosting internally displaced persons and other persons at risk.
- Strengthen refugee protection frameworks and asylum systems and enhance national protection systems, including response to child protection, gender-based violence, LGBTQI+, while strengthening the independent role of the ombudspersons.

Community-based protection in communities affected by violence and at risk of forced displacement

- Expansion of UNHCR and partners field presence.
- Increased use of multi-stakeholder area-based approaches.
- Empowerment of, and support to community prevention and protection initiatives.
- Promote cultural programmes to build bridges between communities and young refugees and asylum seekers.
- Support for the presence of state institutions in targeted communities, related to gender-based violence and child protection programmes.

Diversify **solutions**

- Expansion of internal relocation programme for refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, together with the expansion of legal pathways.
- The expansion of identification and referral mechanisms for deportees and returnees with protection needs, including the use of internal relocation programmes, together with activities that support returnees with protection risks and people on the move.
- Expanded sustainable local integration programmes: including livelihood opportunities and involvement of the private sector.

Alignment and Opportunities with **Regional Processes**

- UNHCR seeks to foment long-term cooperation among all partners, including development actors, financial institutions, and the private sector.
- This includes linking the MIRPS with the Comprehensive Development Plan for Honduras, El Salvador Guatemala and southern Mexico.
- UNHCR aims to strengthen regional collaboration and joint resource mobilization, use the MIRPS support platform and seek engagement and cooperation with development and financial actors such as the Inter-American Development Bank which joined the MIRPS support platform.

UNHCR's humanitarian response in the Americas is made possible thanks to the generous support of major donors who have contributed with unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations, and to donors who have generously contributed to operations responding to the situation of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

Thanks to all our **donors in 2021 (as of 29 December)**:

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AMERICA CENTRAL
UNHCR Presence map



Sources: UNCS, UNHCR Author: UNHCR - HQ Copenhagen Feedback: mapping@unhcr.org Filename: amn_central_presence_v2

For more information visit: [Central America and Mexico Data Portal](#)