

Guatemala

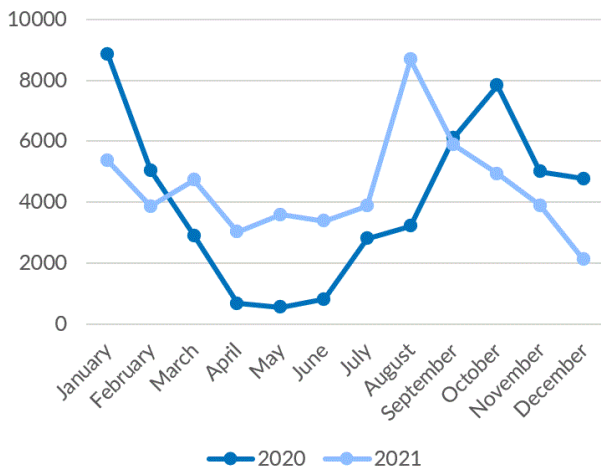
December 2021

During the whole year of 2021, **1,054 new asylum applications** have been registered making it the highest number of applications Guatemala has ever received in one year. In total, there are currently **1,473 asylum-seekers and 487 refugees** living in Guatemala.

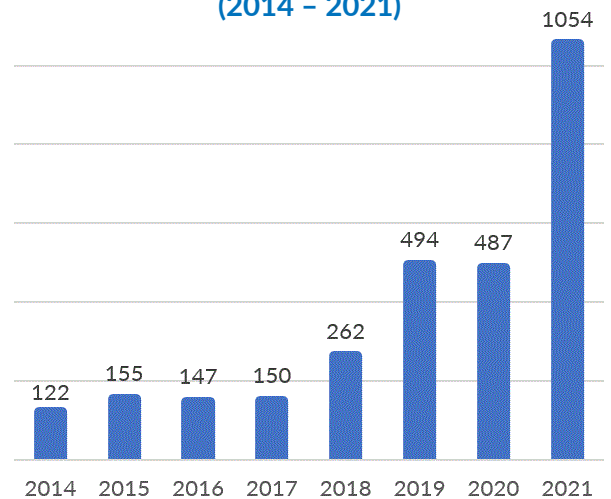
UNHCR and its partners conduct monitoring activities along the main border and transit areas to identify and assist persons in need of protection who are part of the mixed movements. In 2021, the **National Protection Network has assisted over 53,300 individuals in transit, 2,100 of them were assisted in December.**

In the centres for returnees in Guatemala City and Tecun Uman, UNHCR has identified **855 Guatemalans with protection needs among the deportee population.** In addition, **5,332 Guatemalans at risk of displacement** have been identified in departments with high-out migration.

Number of people assisted by the National Protection Network (2020 - 2021)



Trend of asylum claims in Guatemala (2014 - 2021)



UNHCR'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN IZABAL

In response to floods occurred due to heavy rainfall in Puerto Barrios, Izabal, on the Caribbean coast, UNHCR participated in the municipal emergency management committee. Based on the identified needs, UNHCR in coordination with local authorities distributed over 1,500 non-food items including blankets, kitchen sets, mats, mosquito nets, solar lamps and tarpaulins to the 2,900 affected people, among them several refugee families. In addition, UNHCR's partner Guatemalan Red Cross also supported relief efforts in shelters and rural communities by creating response plans, conducting needs assessments and providing basic medical care.

UNHCR's support was provided in the framework of the initiative Cities of Solidarity, of which the Municipality is part, facilitating the integration of and generating livelihoods opportunities for refugees.

- o [READ the press release on UNHCR's humanitarian emergency response to the people affected by the floods](#)



Provision of non-food items by UNHCR and employees of the Municipality of Puerto Barrios to people affected by the floods in the department of Izabal. ©Municipality of Puerto Barrios/2022

Working with Partners

- UNHCR has **partnership agreements** with 13 partner organizations and two sister UN Agencies (UN Women and World Food Program). In addition, UNHCR works closely with other civil society organizations and governmental institutions to protect people in need of international protection.

Main Activities

Response to Basic Needs

- In 2021, **UNHCR has supported 10,121 asylum-seekers, refugees as well as Guatemalans** who are part of the Protection Transfer Arrangement (PTA) programme or at risk of displacement with CBI. In total, UNHCR has **distributed over 3.4 million USD** enabling recipients to fulfil their basic needs, reduce protection risks and improve their livelihood opportunities. In a post-distribution monitoring exercise conducted by UNHCR in November 2021 with 251 households, 91% of the beneficiaries reported significant or moderate improvement in living conditions.
- UNHCR through its partner Refugio de la Niñez and in coordination with the solidarity city of San Benito, **donated medical equipment to the newly constructed municipal health clinic** that will provide high-quality healthcare for free to asylum-seekers, refugees, people in transit and members of the host community.
- In Peten, close to the Mexican border, **UNHCR equipped a previously donated Refugee Housing Unit with an air conditioner and a generator** that is being used by the Health Centre in El Naranjo to provide medical assistance to people of the mixed movements, refugees and the host community.
- User friendly and updated content is now available on the webpage help.unhcr.org that includes information on the refugee status determination process in Guatemala, services provided by UNHCR and its partners, maps, contact details as well as a feedback system for asylum-seekers and refugees.

Governance, Prevention and Protection

- **Guatemala's pro-tempore presidency** of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS in Spanish) **concluded** in December 2021 and was handed over to Honduras.
 - **READ the 2021 annual report of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework**
- Together with the National Registry of Persons (RENAP), the Ministry of Labour and the Guatemalan Migration Institute, UNHCR held a conference to discuss integration opportunities of refugees in Guatemala. During the event, **RENAP presented the new Special Personal Identity Document** to which asylum-seekers and refugees are entitled to and that allows them to access socio-economic integration opportunities.
- In December **UNHCR conducted eight workshops for 98 migration officers from 14 different border posts**. In total in 2021, UNHCR trained over 5,000 people, 315 of them in December, on its mandate, international refugee law and services available to refugees and people who are part of the mixed movements.
- In Quetzaltenango, UNHCR jointly with its partner Tierra Nueva inaugurated three newly implemented projects aiming to promote local integration of refugees and enhance the protection of women survivors of violence: **1) The municipal library was equipped** with books, desks,



Inauguration of the newly equipped municipal children's library in Quetzaltenango. ©UNHCR/Maribel Tobar/2021

board games and stationery to improve the library's capacity to organize activities for refugee and host community children. 2) **A child-friendly space was set up** and equipped in an intercultural centre managed by the civil society organisation Sacándole Brillo a Xela (SBX), where UNHCR already [installed a computer lab and donated 15 bicycles](#) earlier this year. 3) The facilities of the **Comprehensive Care Centre for Women Survivors of Violence (CAIMUS)**, that is being managed by the organisation Nuevos Horizontes, were improved and a water tank, furniture and IT equipment were installed. In addition, food and medicines were donated.

- In Morales, Izabal, UNHCR through its partner Fundaeco **expanded the infrastructure of another CAIMUS** that provides comprehensive protection services to women and girls survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

- To strengthen access to education for refugee and host community children, UNHCR through its partner Save the Children, **refurbished and equipped six schools benefitting a total of 525 girls and boys**. Three of the schools are located in local communities of Esquipulas, two in Asunción Mita and one in Jutiapa Municipality.



Inauguration of the newly renovated and equipped school in the village Las Majadas, Jutiapa. ©UNHCR/Nery Juarez/2021

- In the solidarity city of Esquipulas, Chiquimula, the infrastructure of the Migrant Shelter, that Pastoral de Movilidad Humana (PMH) built in 2020 with UNHCR funds, was expanded. In coordination with partner PMH, that manages the shelter, UNHCR **built a multi-purpose sports court** next to it for people on the move, refugees and the host community. In addition, since August 2021, UNHCR has been providing information sessions to people in transit who are staying at the shelter to identify those in need of international protection and inform them about their rights. In this way, UNHCR has **informed more than 500 people of the mixed movements**.

- [READ the newest fact sheet on the work of UNHCR's Field Unit in Esquipulas](#)

- The project called **UNIVETs** (Unidades Móviles contra la Violencia Sexual y Trata de Personas in Spanish) implemented by the Office against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (SVET) and supported by UNHCR through its partner Refugio de la Niñez (RDN) has further expanded its field activities. Since September 2021, the **six units informed over 27,500 people**, among them people on the move, about the services available for survivors of sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons. In addition, over **2,000 government officials were trained by the UNIVETs** on the prevention of and response to GBV.

- [WATCH UNHCR's newest video on the mobile activities carried out by its partners in the field](#)

- UNHCR and its partners continue conducting protection screenings and referrals in the two Centres for Returnees in Guatemala City and Tecun Uman, San Marcos. As part of a series of **infrastructure improvements implemented by UNHCR in the Centre in Tecun Uman**, bathrooms, including showers, were installed.

Enhanced community-based protection in communities affected by or at risk of displacement

- As part of UNHCR's community-based protection strategy and in the framework of the partnership agreement signed between UNHCR and UN Women, **Municipal Offices for Women as well as female community leaders in Alta Verapaz, Escuintla, Izabal, Jutiapa, Santa Rosa and Suchitepequez are being trained** on leadership, empowerment, public policies and establishing and strengthening community protection networks.
- In Puerto Barrios, Izabal, UNHCR with the support of its partner Guatemalan Red Cross **delivered basic medical supplies and anti-COVID PPEs to solidarity families residing in the communities Cacao Frontera and Jimeritos**, located along the entry borders with Honduras and transit areas. The solidarity families provide information and humanitarian assistance to people who are part of the mixed movements.

Durable Solutions

- With the objective to create additional decent employment opportunities for asylum-seekers and refugees and promote their labour and economic inclusion in private sector businesses, **the Ministry of Labour and UNHCR launched the “Renaciendo en Guate” (Reborn in Guatemala) communication campaign**. 610 work permits have been issued so far by the Ministry to asylum-seekers and refugees and 794 asylum-seekers, refugees and socially vulnerable people from the host communities have carried out internships or had access to work through formal employment or entrepreneurship. In addition, 3,836 Guatemalans affected by or at risk of displacement have benefitted from activities to enhance their employability or entrepreneurship.
- With the support of UNHCR, the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with the National Youth Council and UNHCR’s partner World Vision, **organized five job and entrepreneur fairs** in the departments of Alta Verapaz, Chiquimula, Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango and San Marcos. More than 680 refugees and members of the host community and 65 businesses participated in the fairs.
- In the framework of the **livelihood initiative “TURI-INTEGRA”**, UNHCR together with its partner Refugio de la Niñez as well as the Ministry of Labour, the Guatemalan Tourism Institute and the Municipality of Flores **organized a business event to promote the programme**. 13 already participating companies as well as new ones interested in joining the initiative attended the event, together with refugees from Izabal and Peten. Success stories were shared and the benefits for participating businesses from the service sector were explained.
- In San Marcos, the Municipality of Ayutla, UNHCR and its partner Tierra Nueva, organized a **recreational and mental health day in the nature for 30 asylum-seekers** residing in the area.
- In the solidarity city of San Benito, Peten, **70 girls and boys, among them asylum-seeking and refugee children, participated in a holiday school** managed by the police. Local integration was further promoted by UNHCR through its partner Refugio de la Niñez and the Municipality, who organized a **sewing course for 20 asylum-seeking women and women of the host community**, providing them with the knowledge and tools to diminish the negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their economic situation.



Women participants in the sewing course in San Benito, Peten. ©UNHCR/Angela Hurtado/2021

UNHCR’s financial requirements for the Guatemala operation in 2022

(as of 11 January 2022)

Funded: 2.7 million USD (6%)

Unfunded: 39.8 million USD (94%)

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