

HONDURAS

August 2023

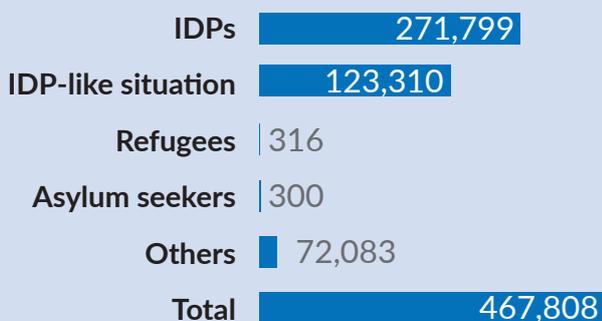
UNHCR's goal is to create a **safe protection environment** that ensures forcibly displaced people or at risk of displacement access to their rights, essential services, livelihood opportunities and durable solutions. UNHCR does so through **strengthening the legal framework**, as well as the presence and response of the State to forced displacement.

To achieve sustainable results in the **MIRPS** Regional Framework, UNHCR provided technical support to the government in its Pro-Tempore Presidency in 2022. In 2023, under the Presidency of Panama, UNHCR will continue to support Honduras in its efforts to contribute to the MIRPS.

By **August 2023**, UNHCR has assisted **41,013** people forced to flee or at risk of displacement with different types of assistance, including community protection, violence-related risk mitigation, case management, shelter, legal protection, among others.

THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

Honduras 2023



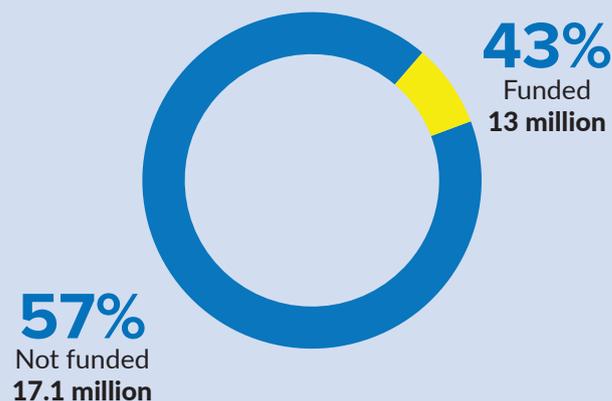
* Source: UNHCR planning figures (COMPASS) for 2023.

** The people we serve: includes people at risk of displacement or internally displaced, refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, people in mixed movements and other people in need of international protection, although figures are available for only part of this population.

FUNDS (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2023)

USD 30.1 million

requested for the Honduras' situation



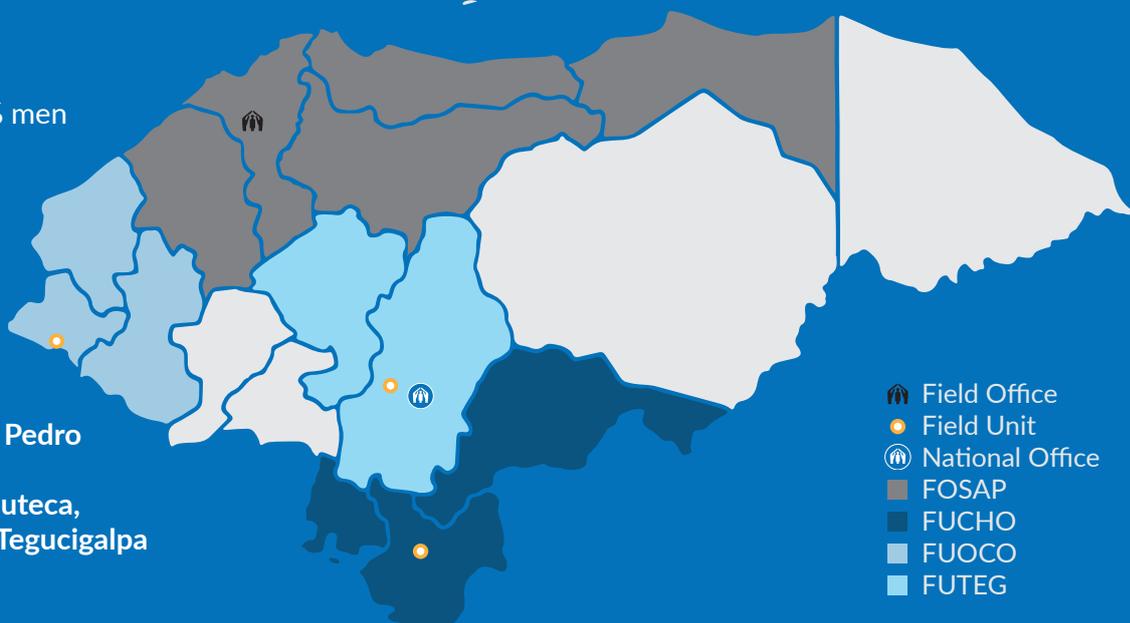
UNHCR PRESENCE

Personnel:

67 National staff
40 International staff
60% women and 40% men

Offices:

01 Country Office in Tegucigalpa
01 Field office in San Pedro Sula
03 Field units in Choluteca, Ocotepeque and Tegucigalpa



CONTEXT

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT



Forced displacement in Honduras keeps on affecting different sectors of the population. More than 247,000 people have been internally displaced in Honduras as a result of violence between 2004 and 2018. The causes that drive displacement in Honduras are (i) social and territorial control by criminal or armed groups, (ii) extortion, (iii) forced recruitment, use and association; (iv) the dispossession, usurpation and destruction of housing, land, and property; (v) gender-based violence; (vi) political violence; (vii) human rights violations, as well as (viii) the effects of climate change. It has been observed that these causes persist at present, especially in urban areas such as the Central District and San Pedro Sula.

In 2023, despite being under a decreed State of Exception since December 2022, violence continues to be a reality in Honduras. The Decree has been renewed six times and extended to 15 departments to respond to the increase in cases of crimes, including extortion. The Violence Observatory of the Autonomous University of Honduras (OV-UNAH) reports in the first semester of the year 26 massacres in the national territory, with a balance of 145 people murdered. This type of incident increased by 13% compared to 2022, according to the OV-UNAH. As violence is on the rise and this is the main forced displacement trigger, the number of displaced people could be significantly higher.

Aggravating the violence and crime context of Honduras, the country also faces climate change related impacts. After Eta and Iota hurricanes in 2020, Honduras faces yearly consequences of hurricanes, such as droughts and heavy rains simultaneously in different zones. The Civil Protection Honduran National Agency (COPECO) estimated more than 60,000 people affected in 2022, whereas in 2023 the institution raised a red alert to more than 140 municipalities in the second semester due to El Niño phenomenon, which is causing severe droughts in the dry corridor.

Due to the dire violence context, some Hondurans flee and seek asylum in other countries. UNHCR's Global Trends 2022 publication indicates that Honduras ranks eight in the list of countries with the highest number of new asylum applications in the world. The number of applications increased from 59,800 in 2021 to 79,700 in 2022. However, not all Hondurans who leave the country succeed in asking asylum and are returned. By July 2023, a total of 27,719 Hondurans were returned to the three Assistance Centres for Returned Migrants of the country located in the department of Cortés. Some of these people present protection needs, face discrimination and have other unmet needs.

To promote policies to prevent the problems present in Honduras, as well as for the protection of those forcibly displaced and seek durable solutions for them, Honduras passed a law for the prevention, care, and protection of forcibly displaced persons, which entered into force in April 2023. This legal framework recognises the rights of victims of violence who have been forced to flee and formalises the State's primary responsibility in prevent and protect (i) persons at risk; (ii) IDPs; (iii) returnees in need of protection. UNHCR supported in the process of advocacy and technical support to the Honduran State for the formulation of the law.

MIXED MOVEMENTS



Honduras is a transit country for thousands of people in mixed movements who cross it to northern countries. Despite UNHCR Honduras' focus on internal displacement, the exponential increase of mixed movements led the operation to attend priority needs of this population. According to official data from the National Institute of Migration (INM), in 2023 there have been already record numbers of mixed movements and more than 182,000 people entered Honduras irregularly until 30 July 2023, almost the same number as for the whole 2022. However, as not all persons who transit through the country register themselves at an INM delegation, UNHCR estimates that around 300,000 personas on the move have entered and transited Honduras in 2023. This inflow has exceeded the country's response capacity and exacerbated humanitarian needs.

Although there is a wide variety of nationalities that cross irregularly into Honduras, as of 30 July the majority are from Venezuela (41%), Ecuador (13%), Haiti (11%) and Cuba (9%). 60% are men, 23% are women and 17% are children and adolescents. To these figures are added a significant number of people, especially of Nicaraguan nationality, who enter the country regularly. UNHCR estimates that around 1,000 Nicaraguans transit currently each month through Honduras, mostly regularly on tourist visa and some irregularly. Due to the conditions in their countries of origin, a significant percentage of people could be in need of international protection and specific protection. The main needs reported to UNHCR by persons in mixed movements are economic resources, health attention, shelter, food, and clothing. In addition, there is a constant need for information on the right to seek asylum, safe spaces available along the route, the U.S. Parole Program as well as the CBP One App.

At the beginning of June, the Honduran Congress expanded until 1 January 2024 the migratory amnesty, which exempts persons on the move who enter the country irregularly from paying an administrative sanction of around 250 USD. INM, UNHCR as well as other UN Agencies have strongly advocated for the continuation of the amnesty as it has contributed to improve the protection situation of persons in mixed movements.

Finally, INM announced on 21 June that due to the high number of persons in mixed movements, they now also attend persons on Saturdays and Sundays from 7am to 5pm in their delegations in Trojes, Danlí and Choluteca, where five-day transit permits are being issued to persons on the move who enter the country irregularly.

ASYLUM AND REFUGE



According to INM Honduras, 80 asylum applications were presented up to July 2023. Of the 80, 38% are from Venezuela, 31% from Nicaragua, 14% from Cuba, 5% from El Salvador, 5% from Colombia, 4% from Ecuador, and the remaining from Peru, Guatemala, and Brazil. This is the first time in Honduras that the number of applications by Venezuelans exceeds those from Nicaraguans.

There are currently 104 asylum-seekers and 183 refugees residing in Honduras. It is estimated that many of the people in mixed movements are in need of international protection, but they have not presented an asylum request with the relevant authority.

RESPONSE

UNHCR Honduras works under a comprehensive approach for the protection of internally displaced people and those at risk of displacement as a result of violence, as well as people in mixed movements, asylum seekers and refugees. Actions are carried out under four areas of desirable impact for structural change:

PROTECT

Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement benefit from a comprehensive protection mechanism.

REPEND

Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement meet their basic needs in a safe environment.

EMPOWER

Displaced communities and communities at risk of displacement can mitigate the differentiated impact of violence.

SOLVE

Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement have access to solutions that contribute to breaking the cycle of violence and forced displacement.



PROTECT

Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement benefit from a comprehensive protection mechanism.

To guarantee the rights of people forced to flee and at risk of displacement are recognised and guaranteed through the national legal framework and public policies, as well as to guarantee persons in need of international protection and mixed movements have access to the territory under conditions of dignified reception, fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures and facilitated documentation, UNHCR and partners develop the following actions in Honduras:

LEGAL FRAMEWORK | Following the entry into force of the IDP Law, UNHCR is supporting the design of mechanisms to regulate the law and its implementation as quickly as possible, together with national institutions of human rights and ombudsperson such as the Secretariat of Human Rights (SEDH) and the National Commissioner for Human Rights (Conadeh). Furthermore, UNHCR is working with the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Protection of Internally Displaced People (CIPPDV), the state body in charge of promoting the adoption of prevention, protection, and durable solutions measures, to follow up after the enforcement of the law for the protection of the displaced population and for the design of a national response mechanisms in accordance with the principles of protection.

UNHCR also provides training and capacity building for public officials on different protection topics to ensure the government has the technical capacity to ensure access to territory, non-refoulement and access to the asylum system for asylum seekers and refugees. Furthermore, UNHCR also provides technical advice and advocacy for legal, judicial, administrative and policy processes so relevant government institutions have the capacities to formulate and implement public policies in accordance with international standards for internally displaced persons. UNHCR also recruits staff for the government to support state protection mechanisms.

RECEPTION CONDITIONS | UNHCR together with the Humanitarian Network of Honduras works for Government and civil society to have improved reception and response capacities for mixed movements, returnees and others in need of international protection, applying an age, gender and diversity approach. UNHCR carries out weekly monitoring missions in the hotspots of people in mixed movements to identify those in need of international protection, risks on the route and general needs of this population. Additionally, UNHCR provides temporary collective shelter with infrastructure or material support.

UNHCR has produced information material on international protection and worked to strengthen the case management system and registration of persons. In this sense, UNHCR implements monthly High Frequency Surveys. The latest report from July 2023 showed that: 1) 44% have been informed about the right to seek asylum in Honduras, which emphasises the need to continue capacity development and information materials on asylum. 2) The main needs reported are cash, food, children's items, shelter, legal assistance, and health care. 3) 61% of the Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans are aware of the U.S. Parole Programme, but 16% carry a valid passport (one of the eligibility criteria). 4) 19% indicated to be at risk of generalised violence if returned to their country of origin, 15% would risk of legal persecution, for 13% their or their family's life or integrity would be at risk, 6% would be at risk of forced recruitment and 4% of suffering extortion.

ACCESS TO THE ASYLUM SYSTEM | UNHCR supports the INM in identifying people with international protection needs, in ensuring they have access to the asylum system and strengthening the local capacity to carry on relevant procedures in cases that people require resettlement.

RESPOND
Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement meet their basic needs in a safe environment.

To ensure people UNHCR serves have clear and effective responses to protect their lives, safety, security, liberty and integrity and access to humanitarian assistance, UNHCR and partners develop actions such as (i) registration of people forced to flee and at risk of displacement to support case management; (ii) distribution of cash-based assistance, non-food and basic relief items; (iii) provision of health and essential services, legal information and general orientation on the asylum system and documentation; (iv) collective temporal shelter solutions and (v) sensitisation and information for humanitarian organisations, development actors, governmental institutions and private sector through partnership and coordinated operations. Some examples include:

REGIONAL FRAMEWORK MIRPS | As part of its displacement response efforts, Honduras participated in the creation of the Comprehensive Regional Framework for Protection and Solutions (MIRPS) in 2017. Through this framework, the Government of Honduras with support of UNHCR is taking the necessary steps to ensure that the needs of the population forced to flee or at risk of displacement are included in the institutional annual operational plans of 2024.

On the other hand, conversations have been held with the academia (FLACSO and the National University of Honduras) to consolidate a pledge in support of the commitments made by the Government of Honduras in its national MIRPS plan and the Global Refugee Forum. Finally, the active participation of MIRPS in institutions such as the Secretary of Labour has allowed for dialogues with officials to address access to work for the refugee population in public policies.

PROTECTION CLUSTER | UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster at the national level and co-leads the Southern Border and Sula Valley Local Response Teams. The cluster is made up of 32 organisations that include eight Agencies of the United Nations System, seven national and 15 international non-governmental organisations and two organisations of the Red Cross movement. Considering needs identified in 2023, the cluster is prioritising this year i) promoting the centrality of protection in the humanitarian response, as a result of the context of internal displacement, including the preparation of a Flood Contingency Plan by the Humanitarian Country Team, and the preparation of reports on protection and mixed movements; (ii) coordinating the response to refugees and migrants entering and transiting the country to improve reception conditions.

In face of the unprecedented numbers of people in mixed movements transiting Honduras in 2023, UNHCR also leads three local protection cluster teams in the south-east, north-western and north areas of the country. 144,000 people were assisted with humanitarian assistance as of July 2023 by the Local Response Group for the Southern Border, co-led by Action Against Hunger, in coordination with all humanitarian actors that have a presence on the southern border to provide humanitarian response to mixed movements in Danlí and Trojes.

In relation to climate-related disaster, considering the drought alert raised by COPECO, this Agency developed a tool to be applied in each municipality to understand the type of response that is needed. UNHCR is advocating for and ensuring the inclusion of IDP criteria in this response plan for the identification of persons forced to flee in the country.



ATTENTION TO CASES OF DISPLACEMENT | In response to forced displacement cases in different parts of the country, UNHCR together with local institutions and partners provide humanitarian assistance to the most urgent cases. Furthermore, UNHCR supports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its presence in the Returned Migrant Care Centres (CAMR), to ensure identification of protection cases for returnees in need. By July 2023, UNHCR has managed almost 300 cases of returnees with protection needs that arrived in the two CAMRs, as well as in the Care Centre for Children and Migrant Families (CANFM), located in San Pedro Sula.

INFORMATION SERVICES | People forced to flee are faced with several protection risks in their journey. To ensure they have clear and effective response, UNHCR provides services in the main hotspots of people in mixed movements in Honduras, namely the entry points along the south-east border, transit areas near the capital Tegucigalpa, and exit points along the north and northwest areas.

These services are provided mainly through Mobile Information Service (SIM), which is implemented with UNHCR's partner World Vision. In the south-eastern border of Honduras, UNHCR provided information to persons in mixed movements entering the country. Furthermore, to cover exit flows of people in mixed movements in the north-western area, UNHCR established a SIM in the Machuca border point with Guatemala on 24 July 2023. Apart from information services, persons also received internet to facilitate communication with relatives. By July 2023, more than 45,000 people benefited from information on international protection, the asylum system in Honduras, and related services available in the country. UNHCR also provides information in other places, such as border checkpoint, shelters and strategic points to mitigate protection risks.

RECEPTION CONDITIONS | To provide a comprehensive and humane response to people in mixed movements, UNHCR contributed to the construction of care centres for refugees and migrants led by the INM in Danlí, inaugurated on 13 January 2023. Since its opening until July 2023, 24,595 refugees and migrants were hosted in the centre, 46% were men, 27% women, 14% boys and 13% girls. Venezuela (65%), Ecuador (13%), Haiti (9%) and Colombia (6%) were the most represented nationalities.

Similarly, to strengthen reception mechanisms in Honduras, UNHCR supports shelters in Choluteca, Danlí, Tegucigalpa, Trojes, and Ocotepeque with endowments to improve infrastructure and items such as mattresses, sheets, and others, providing emergency shelter and food to people in mixed movements in vulnerable situations.

Furthermore, UNHCR opened a maternal and child friendly space at the Agua Caliente border with Guatemala for pregnant and lactating women, as well as women travelling with children, who are specially affected by the critical transit conditions people in mixed movements face.




EMPOWER
Displaced communities and communities at risk of displacement can mitigate the differentiated impact of violence.

To make sure communities and people at risk have community self-protection strategies and access to inclusive and effective participation mechanisms, victims of gender-based violence and those at-risk can access protection services and that children and youth have a protection system to be safe where they live, UNHCR and partners develop actions such as (i) support to community centres and safe spaces to strengthen community structures; (ii) delivery of sensitisation and awareness sessions for communities; (iii) empowerment of community groups, advocates, leaders and similar to build their own protection routes, analysis and evaluation of risks, as well as risk mitigation strategies; (iv) conduction of participatory assessment to increase dialogue and awareness of protection risks; (v) peaceful coexistence projects and urban planning actions; (vi) GBV case management and response services such as protection routes and (vii) individual specialised attention, as well as child protection routes for case management.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION | Communities can be the source of prevention and mitigation of risks associated with the impact of violence when strengthened, providing a safe protective environment. UNHCR works with Honduran authorities to refer internal displacement cases for attention and follow-up, as well as provides technical support to build protection routes in high-risk areas prone to forced displacement. In addition, UNHCR works to strengthen organisational structures with programs focused on art, culture, sports, entrepreneurship, as well as health and education, and protection of goods at risk of abandonment.

In this sense, different programs are developed aimed at preventing forced displacement and its triggers, such as Sports for Protection, training for teachers and children in schools located in risky areas, community art and libraries, tactical urbanism, all to address forced recruitment and mobility restrictions and to promote social cohesion.

UNHCR now has a collaboration agreement with the Instituto Nacional de la Juventud (INJUVE) to strengthen joint efforts to mitigate the risks of forced displacement and for the implementation of the Law on Internal Displacement, emphasising the needs and risk faced by the country's youth.

Depending on the context and needs, UNHCR develops activities in the following areas of Honduras: Tegucigalpa, Ocotepeque, San Pedro Sula and Choluteca. The response includes (i) weekly sports activities as part of a project developed with the National Commissioner of Sports (CONDEPOR); (ii) game-based learning session on cybersecurity preventing forced recruitment, smuggling and other risks children face when using the internet; (iii) protection assessment with communities and building of protection response plans for the communities' self-protection; (iv) a community mobile library and digital literacy trainings to prevent digital protection risks amongst children and youth in rural communities and urban schools in border areas; (v) support to protection and training centres at high-risk communities to strengthen youth and community networks; (vi) development of urban planning analysis to recover public spaces, giving back to the community spaces for socialisation and prevention of forced recruitment of youth. In order to ensure early preparedness for climate-related disasters, early warning plans are prepared and delivered for communities at-risk.

SOLVE
Displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement have access to solutions that contribute to breaking the cycle of violence and forced displacement.

To foster structural and durable solutions to people forced to flee or at risk of displacement, UNHCR develops (i) resettlement programs; (ii) identification and referral of abandoned or dispossessed assets to competent authorities; (iii) supports people with access to certification in soft and vocational skills, trainings in self-employment, employability or financial inclusion through partners; (iv) improvements to certification and training services through construction or materials for the infrastructure used; and (v) sensitises them on livelihoods for people UNHCR serves.

RESETTLEMENT | UNHCR identifies, interviews, and refers cases for third country solutions to ensure that displaced persons and persons at risk of displacement have better access to resettlement mechanisms and complementary pathways.

HLP | Housing, land, and property protection is central for durable solutions to displacement, and UNHCR is working with the Government of Honduras through the Property Institute to improve the protection of properties abandoned or dispossessed by violence-generated displacement.

UNHCR, the Human Rights Secretariat (SEDH) and civil society organisations have developed mechanisms to identify abandoned properties, with data collection tools and a virtual module installed within the information systems of the land registry, managing to identify abandoned properties in different parts of the country. The Property Institute (IP) and the SEDH also coordinate the design of a route to protect abandoned land and property of internally displaced persons connected to the SEDH protection mechanism.

In addition, UNHCR donated equipment for the IP, such as drones, and supported the training of personnel to pilot them together with the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) with the aim of identifying these abandoned properties.

LIVELIHOODS | UNHCR works harmoniously and jointly with national and local authorities, NGOs, civil society, and the United Nations system to promote a comprehensive and long-term response to people who see their rights violated or who are unable to fully enjoy them. To ensure this becomes a durable and long-term solution, UNHCR works with the public and private sectors to ensure livelihoods for people at risk or internally displaced, through community entrepreneurship, seed capital and technical training centres. In 2023, UNHCR, with partners NRC and Human Development Centre (CDE), are providing seed capital for self-employment of families at risk of internal displacement, refugees or returnees. Furthermore, UNHCR distributed cash-based assistance to support people in their enrolment in adult education training, which will facilitate adults who earlier abandoned education due to difficult life situation to obtain school level diplomas. The participants of the program received this assistance to cover enrolment, tuition fees and their travel expenses.

UNHCR also equipped three training laboratories in community centres in high-risk areas of La Central and Rivera Hernández (San Pedro Sula) for the training of electricians, refrigerator maintenance and computers, and obtaining certification from the Vocational Training Institute (INFOP) for these courses. UNHCR cooperates with the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP) and the Honduran Foundation for Corporate Social Responsibility (FUNDHARSE) in vocational training and internships for individuals and support for social enterprises for communities.



PARTNERS



Socios operacionales e implementadores de ACNUR.

We thank the contributions of our donors

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