UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

October 2024

# Operational Update 34

# HONDURAS

## Population figures

### Internal displacement

**+247,000**

*people have been internally displaced in Honduras as a result of generalized violence between 2004 and 2018. Numbers could be higher in 2024, as triggers of internal displacement persist.*

### Mixed Movements

**340,731**

*refugees and migrants in mixed movements entered Honduras irregularly from 1 January to 31 October and registered with the National Migration Institute (INM), which represents a 23% decrease compared to the same period in 2023.*

### Asylum

**24,932**

*Honduran nationals sought asylum in Mexico from 1 January to 31 October 2024, continuing to rank as the first nationality of asylum requests to this country.*

### Return

**38,541**

*Hondurans were returned to the country in 2024 until 31 October.*

**121**

*people sought asylum in Honduras from 1 January to 31 October 2024 and are mainly from **Venezuela, Nicaragua, Colombia, Cuba, and El Salvador. 38%** of the applications were made by women and girls, 62% by men and boys. Compared to the same period in 2023, the asylum applications in Honduras have **increased by 39%.***

### Refuge

**195**

*recognised refugees are currently living in Honduras. Refugees are mainly from **Nicaragua, El Salvador and Venezuela. 27%** are women, **48%** are men, **12%** are girls, **13%** are boys.*

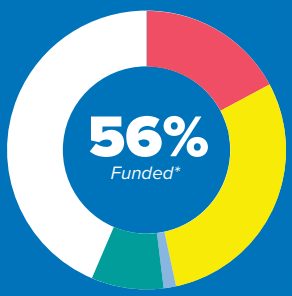
## Our response

**144,436 people**

*have been reached by October 2024 by UNHCR and its partners, mainly people in mixed movements and internally displaced individuals, but also asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees, and host community members, with services such as shelter, cash and voucher assistance, case management, protection monitoring, livelihoods activities, risk mitigation and through community-based protection activities.*

| Girls | Boys | Women | Men | LGBTQI+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15,800 | 15,779 | 55,533 | 57,153 | 171 |

## Funding




As of 31 October 2024

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

**UNHCR appealed for USD 30.8 million for its 2024 programme, of which only USD 17,3 million (56%) has been funded. USD 13,3 million is still needed to continue supporting people forcibly displaced, at risk of displacement, asylum-seekers, refugees, and persons in mixed movements.*

# Context

## Violence and extortion

**Widespread violence and criminal activity in Honduras have led to significant internal displacement, with many fleeing their homes.**

**The National Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras (CONADEH) underlined widespread violence as a significant trigger for internal displacement.**

It reports that around 1,000 people flee their homes every year due to violence and extortion. CONADEH identified **gang members and criminal groups as the primary perpetrators of violence.** Additionally, it highlighted that the main reasons for fleeing include threats with 57%, extortion with 14%, murder with 11%, attempted homicide with 6%, and the forced recruitment of children and adolescents with 3%.

This month, the family of a 14-year-old student who was killed in June was displaced after receiving threats from criminal groups. The family was **targeted after they demanded justice.**

The ongoing threats, extortion, and violence by criminal groups continue to displace families, highlighting the **urgent need for protection** and access to justice.

## Gender-based violence

Girls in Honduras face critical challenges, such as sexual violence, school dropout, and child labour, **limiting their opportunities.**

The urgent need to **protect and empower young girls** is crucial to ensuring a better future for them.

CONADEH reported that between 2019 and 2023, around 1,500 girls were either internally displaced or at risk of displacement due to extortion, violent killings, attempted murder, or forced recruitment. **Francisco Morazán hosts 50% of these cases,** followed by 25% in Cortés and 5% in Choluteca, regions where UNHCR actively engages in protection activities.

A considerable number of women reported incidents of gender-based violence along the route through the Darién jungle. While some women received psychological support during their journey, many only **accessed sexual and reproductive health services upon arriving in Honduras.**

**The vulnerability of women,** especially along the perilous route, underscores the **urgent need for comprehensive protection and support for people in mixed movements.**

## Human rights situation

CONADEH highlighted the need for measures to **combat human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and other violations of human rights** to safeguard refugees and people in mixed movements in Honduras.

Additionally, the detention of a human rights defender has highlighted the **ongoing threats and harassment faced by human rights defenders** across the country.

## Political and Legislative Challenges

In the lead up to the elections in 2025, the Government presented the **"Law to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Political Violence"** to civil society and international partners.

The aim of this law is to **protect women's political rights** and ensure their participation in a safe, and violence-free environment throughout the electoral process, where numerous incidents of political violence - affecting women in particular - are taking place.

In Colón, a **gun control law** has been repealed following requests from population. Despite the national police seizing approximately 663 firearms since 2012, land tenure conflicts and organized crime have been identified as reasons why many residents want to be able to carry guns.

# Context

## Environmental Challenges

**Heavy rainfall in October caused significant devastation,** resulting in seven fatalities and impacting over 25,000 people according to the State Secretariat for Risk Management and National Emergencies.

Honduras is tackling the **dengue outbreak** by administering 52,000 vaccines to children and youth aged 6 to 16, making it the first country in Central America to incorporate this vaccine into its national health system. This measure is vital to protect children and youth, a targeted demographic in need of health interventions during such outbreaks.

The heavy rainfall and dengue outbreak emphasize the **ongoing vulnerability of communities,** making timely health interventions and disaster response critical for safeguarding lives.

## Mixed Movements

**From January to October 2024, the National Migration Institute (INM) reported that 340,731 people in mixed movements had registered for a transit permit, representing a 23% decrease compared to the same period in 2023.**

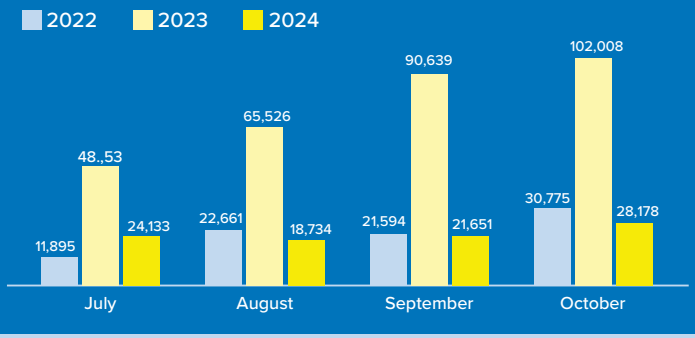
In October 2024, 28,178 people in mixed movements received transit permits by INM to cross Honduras, marking a **30% increase in comparison to September 2024.**

Nevertheless, according to UNHCR's border monitoring, it is estimated that the number of people in mixed movements who transited through Honduras in 2024 exceeds 440,000 people. The difference between the official INM data and UNHCR's figures is because not all persons who enter the country irregularly register with INM.

**99% of the people in mixed movements entered through El Paraíso department** - mainly at Las Manos border, followed by Trojes border. The remaining 1% entered Honduras through Choluteca department. El Paraíso saw a 31% increase, while Choluteca experienced a 20% decrease compared to September 2024.

People in **mixed movements have difficulties with travel costs,** which vary according to nationality; people from outside the continent tend to face higher costs than Latin Americans.

**Monthly irregular entries to 2022 - 2024**




**Nationalities:**
**68%** Venezuela | **13%** Cuba | **3%** Colombia | **3%** Haiti | **2%** Ecuador

**Demographic breakdown:**

**29%** Female | **42%** Male | **13%** Girls | **16%** Boys

**58% of all people in mixed movements in October were women, girls and boys, which is the highest percentage recorded i**n recent years.

In October, UNHCR recorded approximately **35,800 people in mixed movements** arriving at the western border of Agua Caliente, intending to cross into Guatemala.

Each month hundreds of people in mixed movements are pushed back from Guatemala to Agua Caliente border for having entered that country irregularly; at least 800 people were seen being returned in October. As many people in mixed movements engage smugglers due to lack of information, UNHCR is **promoting more information** about official bus routes to the border.

*For more information access here the newest report on mixed movements in english and spanish.*

## Context

### Asylum

Between January and October 2024, INM's Human Rights Unit registered 121 new asylum applications, mostly from Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, Colombians, Salvadorians and Cubans, **which is an increase of 39%** compared to the same period in 2023. 46% of the applications were filed in Tegucigalpa, 28% in Choluteca, 12% in Danlí, 5% at Agua Caliente border, among other locations.

### Returnees

**2,835 Hondurans nationals were returned** to the three Centres for Returned Migrants in Cortés. Compared to the September, the number decreased by 21%. Of them, 701 were women, 1,687 were men, 356 were accompanied children in family units, and 91 were unaccompanied children. UNHCR identified 62 people in need of protection, and 39 people who had been internally displaced. All cases were referred to partner Norwegian Refugee Council for humanitarian assistance and case management.

# RESPONSE

## PROTECT

**UNHCR is actively addressing the needs of forcibly displaced people in Honduras, such as access to protection services, water, and cross-border cooperation with local and international actors.**

In Ocotepeque, UNHCR prepared a collaborative project for drinking water access in Machuca, in partnership with the mayor of Santa Fe and UNICEF. Additionally, the **Bi-national Protection Network** meeting was held in Esquipulas, Guatemala, to strengthen the protection response at Agua Caliente.

In El Triunfo and Marcovia, UNHCR and the Secretariat of Childhood, Adolescence and Family trained 58 municipal officials on the **prevention of forced recruitment** of children and youth.

UNHCR trained **15 members from LGBTIQ+ organizations in Tegucigalpa on international protection,** the rights of people in mixed movements, and the current livelihood programmes available in the country for forcibly displaced people.

UNHCR shared with the Regional Bureau good practices regarding the implementation of the mixed movement monitoring tool in Honduras. These practices will be presented in November 2024 at the **United Nations World Data Forum** in Medellin, Colombia.

UNHCR, with INM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participated in a regional technical meeting of National Refugee Commissions in Panama City. This event, which was organized jointly by MIRPS and the Quito Process, served as a platform for addressing **asylum and international protection** issues in the region.

UNHCR and INM carried out a joint mixed movement protection monitoring mission to Valle and Choluteca departments. As part of the mission, 21 officials were trained on the **Honduran asylum system.**

UNHCR's work reflects its **multifaceted approach to addressing both the immediate and long-term needs** of forcibly displaced people and vulnerable populations through coordination, capacity building, and comprehensive protection strategies.

*Together with local actors in Machuca, Ocotepeque, UNHCR is addressing the needs of people in mixed movements through projects that provide access to basic services, such as water, minimizing protection risks.*

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# RESPOND

In October, UNHCR and its partners provided essential services to thousands of people in mixed movements in Honduras, including shelter, legal aid, healthcare, and support for vulnerable groups like women and children.

Caritas **provided shelter to over 2,100 people** in mixed movements in Danlí and Choluteca, representing a 10% increase compared to September. So far in 2024, Caritas has sheltered over 18,300 people, primarily from Venezuela and Colombia.

World Vision provided **international protection information to over 20,000 people** in mixed movements through its Mobile Information Services in El Paraíso, Choluteca, and Ocotepeque. They were informed on their rights, the right to seek asylum in Honduras, and the humanitarian services available in the country.

CONADEH's mobile unit — supported by UNHCR — provided **legal counselling to 472 people** in mixed movements at El Pescadero, El Paraíso.

Doctors of the World **attended to 2,447 people** at Las Manos and El Pescadero borders. In Ocotepeque, Doctors of the World attended to 1,393 people. People in mixed movements received individual medical attention, mental health assistance, and information on sexual and reproductive health.

Ocotepeque's **Migrant Shelter provided assistance to 380 people.** Of these 60% were from Venezuela, 30% from Honduras, and 10% from other nationalities. Out of the total 66% were on their way north and 34% were returning.

UNHCR **supported 9 individuals to apply for asylum,** 8 on the border with Nicaragua and 1 in Ocotepeque.

UNHCR supported the **inter-agency process** to define the role of the Mayor's Office of Danlí in responding to people in mixed movements. As a result, protection, health services, and water, sanitation, and hygiene, were identified as focus areas.

In Agua Caliente, UNHCR **donated 75 hygiene kits** to World Vision and to the Friendly Space for Women and Children (EAMI), to be distributed to women in mixed movements. Moreover, the EAMI assisted 13 adults and 10 children.

UNHCR provided **cash assistance to 1,634 people**: 1,297 people in the resettlement program, 126 internally displaced people and asylum seekers and refugees for local integration in the country, and 221 individuals for livelihoods initiatives, for a total of USD 187K delivered in cash assistance.

Through **collaborative efforts,** UNHCR and its partners are addressing the immediate needs of forcibly displaced people while strengthening protection mechanisms, ensuring access to services, and supporting sustainable solutions for vulnerable populations.

*In October, 99% of the people in mixed movements entered through El Paraíso department - mainly at Las Manos border. Thanks to UNHCR partner World Vision, they received information on international protection through the Mobile Information Service.*

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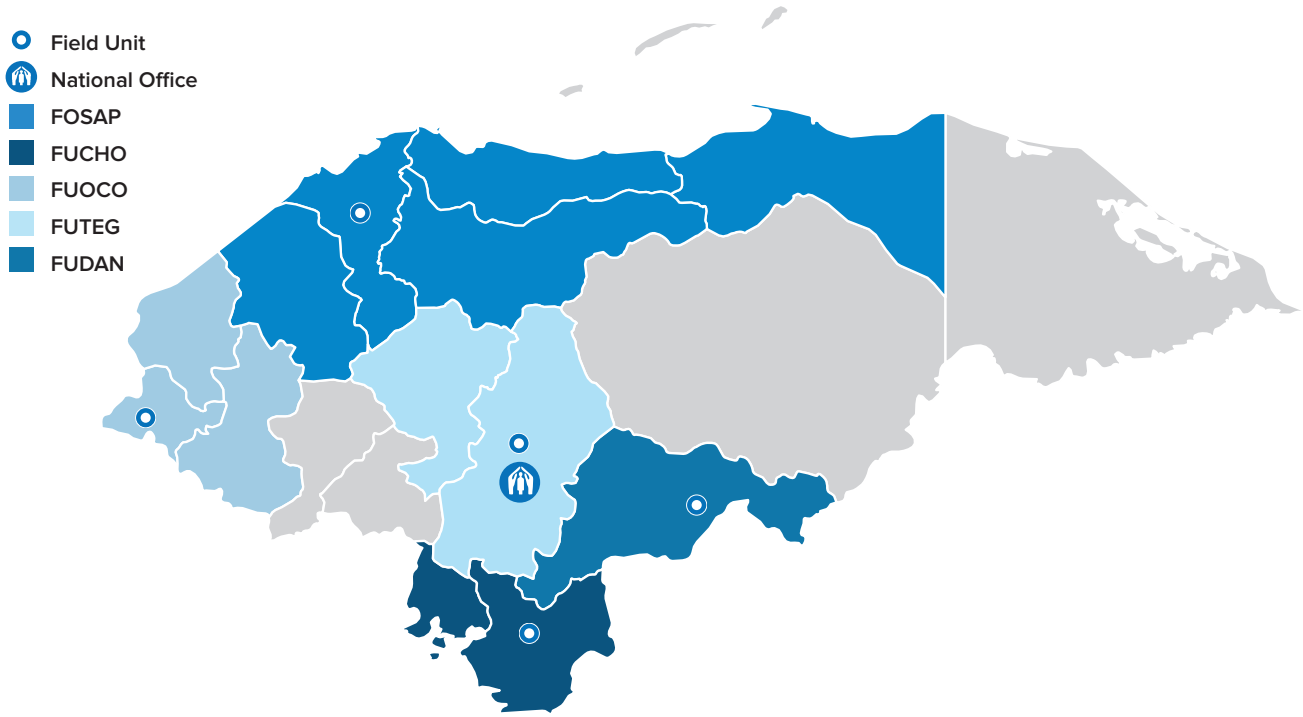
# EMPOWER

Throughout October, UNHCR developed activities aimed at strengthening protection mechanisms for forcibly displaced people and communities affected by generalized violence.




UNHCR and Doctors of the World conducted a capacity-building for eight officers from the Public Prosecutor's Office and 15 community volunteers in San Pedro Sula on the **prevention of gender-based violence** and the importance of a comprehensive response route for survivors.

In Choluteca, 24 community leaders completed the Gender Training Programme, developed with the Secretariat of Women's Affairs and Ciudad Mujer. In El Paraíso, Copán, UNHCR and the Municipal Women's Office trained 26 women on the **leadership role of women** in their communities.

In addition, UNHCR and the Gender Violence Sub-cluster **updated the gender-based violence response pathways** for people in mixed movements and internally displaced persons in Danlí and Trojes.

UNHCR conducted a workshop for over 25 government staff and shared with 425 children information on the **prevention of forced recruitment** and the protection of children.

UNHCR assisted in the repair of a water tank at a school in a high-risk community with limited access to city water in Tegucigalpa. UNHCR is also assisting in the construction of a perimeter fence at a school in the community of Brisas del Pedregal. These initiatives will **create a safer school environment** for girls and boys.

In El Paraíso, UNHCR and the Mayor's Office of Trojes, conducted a peaceful coexistence activity called "Trojes Protecting Together, Growing Strong". And in Choluteca, UNHCR donated microphones to the Cholula Triunfeña radio station to help broadcast programmes that **promote community protection, solidarity, and inclusion** for forcibly displaced people, stateless individuals, and returnees in need of protection.

In Tegucigalpa, UNHCR conducted a Positive Masculinities workshop with 30 boys from a community at high risk of forced recruitment to encourage the establishment of safe spaces. In addition, UNHCR, Save the Children and the National Sports Commission held sports activities for over 100 children and youth to **mitigate the risk of forced recruitment** and to promote local integration for refugees and asylum seekers.

Moreover, UNHCR delivered fumigation and safety equipment to six communities in the Central District to prevent dengue.

In San Pedro Sula, UNHCR and Children International held two community festivals to develop **soft skills for children and youth,** and seminars for 20 people from Rivera Hernández and 25 people from La Planeta and Chamelecón Sur to enhance their community resilience and protection from forced displacement. Furthermore, UNHCR continued with the community art programme in Cofradía and Chamelecón, engaging 84 people.

In Ocotepeque, UNHCR implemented a Digital Literacy strategy called Bibliomóvil. The initiative guided over 15 children in El Olvidito community on **preventing digital protection risks.**

On 22 October, UNHCR participated in the forum on Migration, Climate Change and Displacement, aimed at **analysing the socio-environmental context of Honduras and the impact of climate change** on displacement and the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

Furthermore, in El Paraíso, UNHCR with IOM and UNICEF, organized a seminar on self-care and **psychosocial first aid for 18 frontline humanitarian staff** who were trained to replicate this workshop with the other members of the Local Team of the Southeast Border.

These ongoing efforts highlight the importance of a multi-dimensional response to forced displacement and violence by **strengthening local protection systems, promoting community engagement, and ensuring access to essential services.**

## SOLVE

**UNHCR with their partners use a comprehensive approach to enhancing the livelihoods of internally displaced people, refugees, and asylum seekers in Honduras.**

In October, UNHCR and its partner Business Development Centre (CDE) supported 52 internally displaced people and refugees, with training and seed capital to **boost their enterprises** in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Choluteca, Ocotepeque and Intibucá.

25 people were supported with their studies in a six-month long certified training in graphic design. Up to date, the **job placement rate is 32% upon graduation.** CDE is providing support to the remaining graduates to identify job opportunities.

UNHCR, CDE, key governmental actors and the private sector **supported 69 young people with internships** for job placement program. Overall, in 2024, UNHCR engaged with 92 private companies.

UNHCR, CDE, the National Vocational Training Institute and Secretariat of Labour and Social Security conducted job fairs in Choluteca and in San Pedro Sula under the title "Economic Inclusion is key for protection and solutions for people forced to flee". 86 companies participated in the fair, offering over 600 job places. Over **1,000 people participated in the job fair,** undergoing interviews for available vacancies.

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and contributions from our private donors in

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*As of October 2024

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