UNHCR GUATEMALA AND OUR HEALTH RESPONSE IN 2024

Health Facility in Esquipulas ©UNHCR/

MARCH 2025

CONTEXT

Guatemala has a dynamic context of population flow as it is a country of origin, destination, and return for people with different profiles and protection needs, including survivors of physical, and/or sexual violence or abuse and mental and emotional abuse; single parents with minor children; pregnant or breastfeeding women; individuals with critical or chronic medical conditions; and people with disabilities requiring medical attention at various levels.

UNHCR Guatemala, in collaboration with our partners on the field, state institutions, and other key stakeholders, works to enhance access to healthcare for refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced Guatemalans, returnees, and their host communities. This is achieved through the provision of urgent triage medical services, as well as advocacy and support to ensure their inclusion in public healthcare systems or affordable private health services.

RESPONSE IN THE FIELD

1. Services provided at the Reception Center for Refugees and local populations (CAPMiR):

The CAPMiR centers, led by UNHCR and the Government of Guatemala, provide humanitarian assistance, urgent medical triage, mental health support, and legal assistance to individuals under UNHCR's mandate, as well as members of the host communities. This is achieved through partnerships with municipalities, civil society organizations, and other UN agencies. The centers are located in Esquipulas, Izabal, Huehuetenango, Peten, and Guatemala City.

Assistance provided through CAPMiR in 2024

- **25,882** individuals attended
- **71,982** assistance provided
- **17,401** individuals received urgent medical triage
- **16,122** individuals received mental health assistance
- **3,279** hygiene kits distributed
- **1,290** food kits distributed

Esquipulas Health Center ©UNHCR/ Gabriela G.

2. Community Health Promoters:

This joint project between UNHCR and our partner the Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) began in 2023 to strengthen and establish community protection networks through health promoters trained in basic health assistance, vector, and HIV prevention, disaster prevention, reinforcement of basic first aid knowledge, identification of health risk profiles and referrals, provision of mental health first aid, and referrals to comprehensive health services. Additionally, the promoters identify and refer cases of people with protection needs to the refugee status recognition system.

In 2024, 68 health promoters were located in prioritized communities of Tecun Uman, Coatepeque, Esquipulas, Peten, Izabal, and Guatemala City, strengthening the population's response capacity to emergencies and prevalent health needs. Each health promoter plays a key role within their communities, providing care and support to approximately 200 people per intervention point.

3. Advocacy with Strategic Actors:

In 2024, UNHCR Guatemala and the Association for the Wellbeing of the Family of Guatemala (APROFAM) agreed to provide affordable healthcare services to refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced Guatemalans, returnees, and host communities. APROFAM has also conducted health campaigns at the CAPMIR in Guatemala City.

A collaboration with the Moore Center, specializing in pediatric and adolescent surgeries, has facilitated free or low-cost care for refugees, asylum-seekers, Guatemalans at-risk, and the host community. Healthcare services at CAPMIRs are provided by the Guatemalan Red Cross, a UNHCR partner, and through agreements with the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS) for regular medical sessions. Additionally, mental health support is offered by civil society organizations, which provide mental health first aid.

Health Fair in CAPMiR Centra Sur ©UNHCR/ Victor S.

Activity in CAPMiR Centra Sur ©UNHCR/ Victor S.

UNHCR is grateful for the contributions of donor countries that contribute in the Americas and to global programmes with flexible funding:

Australian Aid · Belgium partner in developmen · In partnership with Canada · China Aid · German humanitarian assistance · Irish Aid · From the People of Japan · Luxembourg Aid & Development · Korea · Cooperación Española · Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC · UKaid · CERF · Internal Displacement Solutions Fund

Also, we thank the contributions of our global private donors in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, and Spain.

As of 31 May 2025

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