UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

EL SALVADOR

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2025

Quarterly update

Children receive support at the Community Psychosocial Support Space in Las Margaritas, Soyapango. © UNHCR El Salvador

Our 2025 response in figures

33,996 people
received support through UNHCR's helpline, Support Spaces and mobile teams

1,123 individuals
helped with psychosocial support and mental health services

2,315 people
reached through activities to prevent violence against women and girls

256 people
participated in assessments to prioritize community needs and solutions

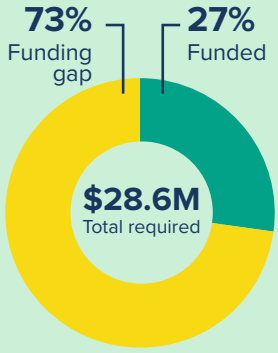
436 people
trained in skills for employment or self-employment, supported with vocational training or linked to decent job opportunities

466 civil society and national officers
with enhanced knowledge on Protection

231 people
registered with biometrics

Funding

27% of UNHCR's financial requirements for El Salvador received by 30 November 2025.



*These figures are regularly updated and reflect cumulative data for 2025.

Highlights

- In San Salvador, UNHCR and the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONAPINA) **inaugurated four Community Psychosocial Support Spaces in La Campanera, Las Margaritas, Tutunichapa I, and Tutunichapa II**; communities historically affected by violence and forced displacement. These spaces offer psychosocial support for children, adolescents and their families, as well as learning and recreational activities that promote wellbeing and peaceful coexistence. Over 70 residents in Las Margaritas community attended the inauguration.
- The UNHCR Representative joined the Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER) to commemorate **the second anniversary of the Comprehensive Care Protocol for asylum-seekers**, developed with UNHCR's support, and to participate in the presentation of CODER's 2025 achievements report. The event featured the participation of the Vice Minister of Diaspora and Human Mobility, representatives from national institutions involved in referral pathways, and highlighted the importance of inter-institutional coordination to strengthen responses for people seeking international protection.

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- UNHCR, in coordination with the Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER) and the Diplomatic Institute "Dr. José Gustavo Guerrero," organized a 20-hour International Protection Course to strengthen technical capacities to identify and assist refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and individuals with international protection. **Thirty-one representatives from government institutions and the academia enhanced their knowledge about refugee law, status determination, eligibility criteria, procedures, and institutional roles.** Facilitators of the course included UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, and UNDSS. The closing ceremony was attended by the UNHCR Representative, the Ambassador of Canada, and the Institute's Director.

UNHCR presented joint efforts to protect displaced families affected by natural disasters in the framework of National Disaster Risk Reduction Week. © UNHCR El Salvador | Jacqueline Henríquez

Protect

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▲ UNHCR and the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners (DGME) **renewed their Letter of Understanding to strengthen cooperation on the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers and returnees with protection needs.** Since 2018, this partnership has included technical training and specialized support to enhance identification and referral pathways. During the signing ceremony, presided over by UNHCR's Representative and DGME's Director, UNHCR delivered biometric equipment to enhance the registration of people with specific needs.

- In partnership with the Attorney General's Office (PGR), UNHCR supports access to legal and psychosocial services in remote and border areas affected by violence and forced displacement. **A mobile unit provided by UNHCR enhanced PGR's capacity to deliver these services closer to communities nationwide.** In October, both parties also renewed their Letter of Understanding, to expand coordinated efforts to assist individuals with specific needs.
- UNHCR, in coordination with the Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER), the Ombudsperson's Office (PDDH), and the Attorney General's Office (PGR), delivered a series of **seven workshops on international protection at six El Salvador border points with Guatemala and Honduras and the international airport.** These sessions reinforced institutional capacities to assist people seeking international protection. Participants included officials from institutions like FOSALUD, Customs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, municipal authorities, and the National Civil Police who enhanced their knowledge to identify and refer individuals with specific protection needs.

Respond

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◀ In commemoration of World Mental Health Day, UNHCR and partners **organized activities promoting emotional well-being and resilience among asylum-seekers, refugees, and displaced individuals.** At the Scalabrinian Missionaries' shelter in San Salvador participants engaged in a self-care and wellness session. In coordination with Doctors of the World and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), UNHCR held similar sessions in San Miguel and San Salvador, reaching 50 people and providing techniques for stress and emotion management.

- In San Salvador, UNHCR joined a service fair during the National Disaster Risk Reduction Week, organized by the General Directorate of Civil Protection. As lead of the Protection Sector and co-lead of the CCCM and Emergency Shelter Sectors, **UNHCR showcased joint collaboration with national authorities to protect displaced families affected by disasters.**

Communities once separated by violence gathered to participate in sports tournaments, transforming division into peace through the "JuegaxLaPaz" project.© UNHCR El Salvador

Empower

- Through the "JuegaXlaPaz" project funded by the Barça Foundation, UNHCR and partner World Vision promoted social cohesion in communities historically affected by violence and forced displacement. Representatives from national sports institutions, such as the National Sports Institute (INDES), municipalities, and the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion participated in sessions about the SportNet methodology, which promotes values like respect, teamwork, and a culture of peace. **Some 660 participants, including children, caregivers and residents from communities in San Salvador and Santa Ana engaged in inter-community sports tournaments** that promoted peaceful coexistence and violence prevention through sports.
- Under the Area-Based Approach initiative, led by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), UNHCR and the RCO carried out an **inter-sectoral mapping exercise in Las Margaritas with 40 community leaders and agencies** including IOM, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, and WFP. The exercise identified community needs and priorities, capacities, and solutions. The findings will inform community planning and the design of potential responses.
- UNHCR and World Vision facilitated **workshops and planning sessions in communities such as 10 de Octubre, Tutunichapa I, Distrito Italia, Los Lirios, La Campanera, and 22 de Abril** to strengthen participation and help communities develop work plans to lead their own solutions. These sessions focused on mental health needs, roles and responsibilities of local committees, project proposals, and mobilizing support for community-led initiatives.
- Some **270 Judicial Facilitators from Chalatenango, San Salvador, San Miguel and Usulután enhanced their knowledge about displacement and referral pathways** through UNHCR workshops. Participants learned about access to rights and services, and referral pathways for individuals with specific needs. Doctors of the World and CONABUSQUEDA joined these sessions to promote services for people affected by violence and displacement.
- In coordination with CONAPINA, ISDEMU, and World Vision, UNHCR delivered **workshops on legal frameworks for the rights and protection of children and adolescents** for community leaders from six prioritized communities in San Salvador and Santa Ana. These sessions strengthened knowledge of referral pathways and addressed risks identified during participatory assessments.

Solve

The Director of INCAF and UNHCR Representative during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding to promote opportunities for displaced people. © UNHCR El Salvador | Jacqueline Henríquez

- UNHCR and the National Institute for Training (INCAF) signed a **Memorandum of Understanding aimed at promoting access to skills certification, as well as technical and vocational training, for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and returnees with protection needs.** Under this instrument, both parties seek to enhance job placement opportunities in sectors such as tourism, customer service, construction, and technology, and to strengthen collaboration on skills certification processes and labour market studies that incorporate data on forcibly displaced populations.
- In strategic partnership with the ALDEA Project, the Ministry of Economy's employment and skills development initiative, UNHCR and partners **referred 128 displaced and at-risk individuals, including naturalised refugees,** from San Salvador, San Miguel, Santa Ana, and Sonsonate to state-led employability and entrepreneurship training programmes to broaden their livelihood opportunities.

Highlights in 2025

Protection and Asylum System

- Over 220 civil servants from CODER, DGME, PGR, and other national institutions strengthened their knowledge about refugee law, identification of protection needs, and case management through training sessions by UNHCR.
- National authorities extended the validity of asylum-seeker's provisional personal identification document from one to six months, facilitating their integration and access to opportunities.
- UNHCR joined the Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER) to mark the second anniversary of the Comprehensive Care Protocol for asylum-seekers.

Regional and Inter-Agency Coordination

- El Salvador, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participated in technical team meetings on employment, livelihoods, internal displacement, and case processing, as well as the MIRPS plenary session led by Costa Rica and Colombia. The meeting also included the handover of the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency to El Salvador for 2026.

Participatory Assessments

- Through participatory assessments in 11 prioritized communities, including La Campanera, Las Margaritas, Distrito Italia, 10 de Octubre, Los Lirios, and Tutunichapa, UNHCR helped residents identify their needs, priorities and capabilities. The findings will inform community action plans and UNHCR's programming.

Community-Based Protection and Area-Based Approach

- Under leadership of the Resident Coordinator's Office, UNHCR advanced the area-based approach initiative in communities historically affected by violence and displacement. Though the "Revive tu Espacio" initiative, UNHCR revamped public spaces in La Campanera, Soyapango.
- The Global Shelter Cluster selected El Salvador for a multi-country project to expand area-based approaches, building on the successful 2024 pilot in La Campanera.
- The Regional Director of the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO), Roberto Valent, along UN agencies and national authorities, visited La Campanera community and recognized the progress of the area-based approach as a replicable model for other communities.

Sports for Social Cohesion

- Some 1,700 children, caregivers and residents engaged in violence prevention efforts through sports under the "JuegaXlaPaz" project, funded by the Barça Foundation.
- In alliance with the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion, the street soccer tournament promoted peaceful coexistence and brought together over 1,000 children and youth nationwide.

Durable Solutions and Livelihoods

- The UNHCR "Súper Pilas" and My First Job programmes promoted vocational training, entrepreneurship, and job placement opportunities for forcibly displaced individuals and those at risk of displacement.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Yanci and Amanda are judicial facilitators in Valle Verde, Apopa, who support their communities, particularly forcibly displaced people, by promoting dialogue, peaceful coexistence, and referral pathways
© UNHCR El Salvador | Jacqueline Henríquez

Women leaders promoting peace within communities

"Working together allows us to reach more families, listen to their needs, and promote dialogue to prevent conflicts from escalating," said Yanci.

For many years, the Valle Verde community in Apopa, was affected by violence and stigma associated with gang presence. Invisible boundaries imposed by unlawful groups disrupted daily life in the community, limiting mobility, participation, access to basic services and opportunities. These dynamics undermined community participation and contributed to distrust and disengagement among community members.

In this context, strengthening community-level mechanisms for dialogue, mediation, and promoting access to services became essential for conflict prevention and the protection of people in situations of vulnerability.

Since 2022, UNHCR and the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ) have worked jointly to provide specialized training for judicial facilitators in mediation, peaceful conflict resolution, protection, case management, and the prevention of violence against women and girls. Through this partnership, UNHCR has expanded its community outreach by supporting timely identification and referral pathways and ensuring that information on rights and services reaches those who need it most.

In Valle Verde, judicial facilitators Yanci and Amanda embody this community-based approach through their dedicated voluntary service. Deeply committed to the well-being of their neighbors, they serve as a trusted bridge between the community and institutions, supporting families through dialogue, conciliation, and guidance on where to seek assistance, particularly for those forcibly displaced.

"I feel motivated to share what I learn with my community, because it helps people coexist peacefully and look out for each other," said Amanda.

Yanci and Amanda continue to strengthen their leadership skills, demonstrating how local commitment and service can foster more resilient and cohesive communities.

In 2025, more than 700 judicial facilitators and magistrate courts across the country strengthened their voluntary work with enhanced knowledge and tools to promote peaceful conflict resolution in their communities.

In 2025, UNHCR is appealing for USD 28.6 million to provide protection, responses, empowerment and solutions to refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons in El Salvador.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support in 2025 of:

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