BELIZE FACTSHEET

APRIL-JUNE 2026

Key figures

2,195
refugees and asylum-seekers mainly from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

From April to June

74
asylum-seekers registered by the Refugees Department, primarily from Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.

626
mental health consultations were provided.

Situation

Belize registered 121 new asylum applications between January and June 2026, up from 66 in the same period in 2025. The increase was primarily driven by claims from Nicaraguan nationals.

The country is updating its refugee protection framework, building on existing safeguards and considering clearer pathways for longer-term inclusion. National consultations continued on **Belize's first Migration and Development Policy,** bringing together government institutions, the private sector, civil society, academia, international organizations and development partners to discuss data, security, foreign labor and integration.

At the regional level, Belize remained engaged in the MIRPS platform, sharing its national experience and contributing to regional responses to forced displacement. The country assumed the Presidency Pro Tempore of the Central American Integration System (**SICA**) for July-December 2026, and now leads several regional bodies, including the Commission of Migration Authorities, **the Educational and Cultural Coordination** and the **Central American Security Commission**. Together with the endorsement of the **National Digital Agenda 2026-2030,** these developments create opportunities to strengthen the asylum system, including through UNHCR's assistance to the Refugees Department in developing a modern digital asylum case management system.

Highlights

- Under the Japan-funded project 'Support to Strengthening the Asylum System and Protection for Refugees in Belize', the Refugees Department, with UNHCR support, carried out data-cleaning, digitization, and preparations for an enhanced case management system.
- UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM signed a joint workplan to strengthen protection and support systems for migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee populations, with a focus on children and families.
- UNHCR supported the Government's review of refugee legislation. In May and June, the Refugees Department convened two stakeholder consultations on proposed amendments to the Refugees Act, bringing together authorities, civil society, academia, UN agencies and international partners. The amendments ease access to permanent residency and naturalization, expand appeal opportunities and enable the issuance of machine-readable Convention Travel Documents.
- From April to June, UNHCR and partner Humana People to People, expanded community-based protection and legal assistance across Belize, Cayo, Stann Creek and Toledo districts, delivering more than 160 counselling sessions on access to asylum procedures, documentation and essential services. For World Refugee Day, UNHCR also organized a football competition and sports day at St. Michael School in the Las Flores host community, reaching more than 200 students and teachers to promote inclusion and awareness of refugee protection.

Operational overview

UNHCR Belize works to strengthen the national asylum system and improve access to protection, documentation, and durable solutions for refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and those at risk of statelessness. The operation provides legal assistance, counselling, and referrals, and supports people under its mandate in accessing rights and services, facilitating their integration. UNHCR works with the Refugees Department, the institution responsible for conducting Refugee Status Determination, and NGO partner Humana People to expand community outreach and enhance access to information for vulnerable groups. The Agency also works with UN agencies, local authorities, civil society, schools, host communities, and the private sector to strengthen referral pathways, support access to services and employment opportunities, and promote inclusion and awareness of refugee protection.

Second stakeholder consultation on amendments to the Refugees Act, with government, civil society and international partners.

UNHCR trained Humana People to People staff on biometric registration to strengthen protection and support capacities

Story: Henrry found a place where he belongs. Now he helps others find theirs.

Henrry was 16 when he arrived in Belize with his family, after fleeing insecurity in El Salvador. With limited English, no passport, and an uncertain future, he had to start over in a new country while his family sought protection.

With support from UNHCR and partners, Henrry enrolled in school, received uniforms and supplies, and slowly adapted to his new environment. Despite early challenges, he completed high school among the top students in his class. Education helped him rebuild his confidence and sense of belonging. He later became involved in IHope, a refugee women-led organization, supporting translation, coordination and awareness-raising. With UNHCR's advocacy support, he also received a scholarship to study environmental science at Galen University.

Today, Henrry works as a caseworker with Humana People to People Belize, a UNHCR partner, helping asylum-seekers navigate the same systems he once had to understand himself. His journey reflects how access to protection, education and community support can help refugees rebuild their lives and contribute to others. For the complete story, **click here.**

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