

# UNHCR | Guatemala



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<b>3,064</b>	<b>100,684</b>	<b>175,700</b>	<b>415,500</b>	<b>2,9M</b>	<b>222,400</b>
refugees and asylum-seekers	Guatemalans at risk	people served in 2023	assistance in 2023	with protection needs	with shelter needs

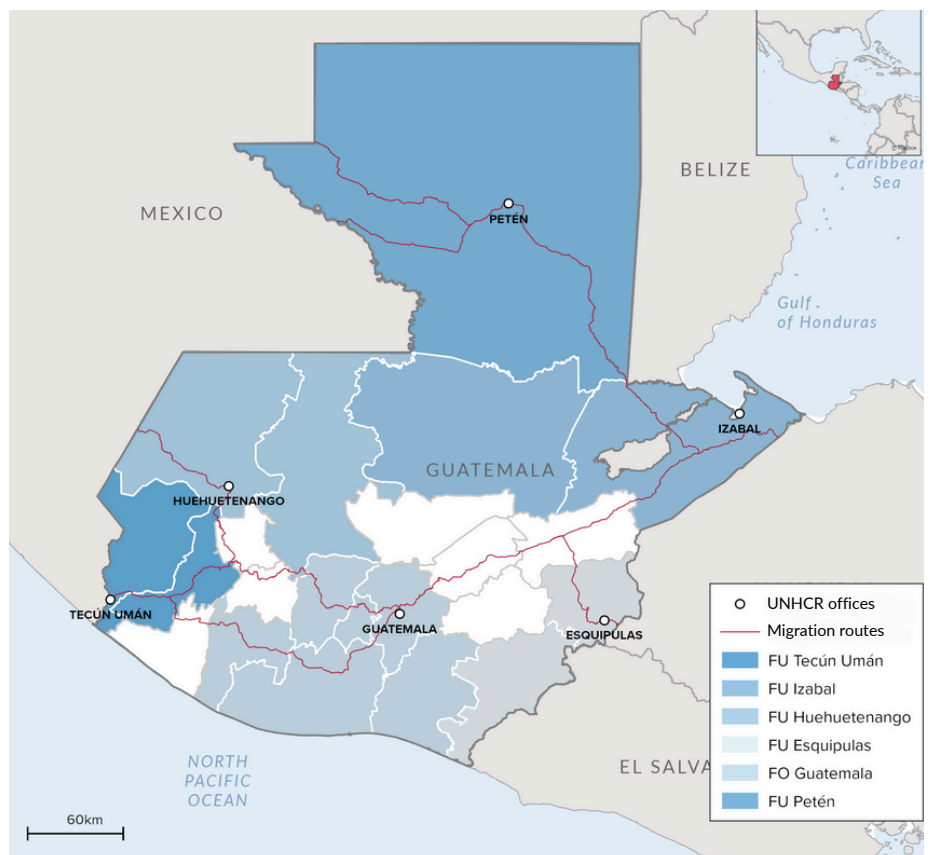
Source: Humanitarian Action Plan 2024

Guatemala has approximately 15 million inhabitants and is the largest economy in Central America. It is ethnically and culturally diverse, with Mayan, Xinca and Garifuna communities, with 25 languages spoken, 22 of which are Mayan. Poverty and inequality are prevalent throughout the country, disproportionality impacting indigenous communities.

Guatemala is a country of origin, destination, transit and return, with 2023 being the year with the highest number of people entering the country (more than 1,000,000), mainly Venezuelans and Hondurans. The majority of people in mixed movements are women, and violence is a common reason for fleeing.

The amount of time people in mixed movements have remained in Guatemala has increased as they work informally or await remittances to continue their travel. The number of refugee applicants reached a record 1,255 in 2023, bringing the total number of refugees and asylum seekers to 3,064.

UNHCR works with the authorities to fulfil its mandate in the country including the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), which was formed in 2017 and brings together 7 countries, including Guatemala, and seeks to promote a coordinated regional response to forced displacement.



## 4 YEARS OF REPRESENTATION

In the four years since UNHCR established formal representation in 2020, its relationship with institutions and donors has been strengthened and operational capacity has increased: in 2023, 175,747 people were assisted compared to 49,785 assisted in 2020.

UNHCR has 199 professionals in the country office and 7 field offices in Tecun Uman, Huehuetenango, Flores, Puerto Barrios, Esquipulas, and Guatemala City. The operation supports key state institutions with professionals (26 persons), such as the Department for the Recognition of Refugee Status, the Social Welfare Secretariat, Office of the Attorney General's Office, and Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman.

### AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION

- Access to information and documentation
- Legal protection
- Prevention of gender-based violence
- Community and women's empowerment
- Shelter
- Education
- Physical and mental health
- Socio-economic inclusion and livelihoods
- Resettlement and other solutions

### PARTNERS

We work with the following partner organisations:

- Guatemalan Red Cross
- Pastoral de Movilidad Humana
- Tierra Nueva
- Refugio de la Niñez
- World Vision
- La Alianza
- Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric of Guatemala
- Congregation of the Missionaries of St. Charles, Scalabrinians
- LAMBDA Association
- HIAS



UNHCR supported the Chiquimula Health Area by reinforcing the health system with spaces to attend to the refugee and local population.  
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## SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES



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UNHCR and the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH) launched the Mobile PDH project.

Seven units strengthen the local PDH delegations in Petén, Izabal, Chiquimula, Jutiapa, Alta Verapaz, Huehuetenango and San Marcos. These units provide information, orientation and receive complaints from people in transit throughout the country.



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The Centre for Attention to Migrants and Refugees (CAPMiR) serves as a key protection space to facilitate access to territory and shelter, provides humanitarian assistance, shares official information and identifies risks and protection needs. In 2023, 25,814 people were assisted at CAPMiRs in Guatemala, Esquipulas, Flores, Puerto Barrios and Huehuetenango.



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The Secretariat against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking (SVET) and UNHCR initiated a partnership in 2020 to strengthen SVET's response capacity and territorial reach, launching in 2021 the UNIVET project together with Children's Refuge to cover communities with high numbers of violence, refugee-hosting communities and important transit and return routes. Mobile units cover key departments through rapid response to sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation.



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Cities of Solidarity is an innovative initiative of UNHCR at the global level, which recognise municipalities and departments that have included and supported refugees in their territories.

The programme recognises the growing role that municipalities play in the social and economic integration of the refugee population in host communities and invites them to continue seeking solutions in coordination with UNHCR and other actors to promote the inclusion of this population in municipal programmes.

## MAIN RESULTS AND IMPACTS IN 2023



ACNUR, comprometido con el apoyo al derecho a acceder a la educación, apoya a organizaciones enfocadas a la niñez y juventud como Casa Joven en Amatitlán.  
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### Community participation

- **22,240** people participated in peaceful coexistence projects.
- **53** communities strengthened their leadership, enabling them to establish strong community protection mechanisms.
- A network of **65** community health promoters was established and was able to reach communities residing in remote areas.

### Durable solutions

- **410** refugees and **58** host community members participated in livelihoods programmes. For employability (42% of participants) a partnership has been established with more than **30** companies to create inclusive job opportunities in **19** industries (food services, hospitality, manufacturing, hotel, trade, etc.). These interventions strengthened capacity to meet basic needs.

### Partnerships

- A close relationship has been maintained with government and other state institutions, as well as embassies, bilateral agencies, embassies and international and UN cooperation agencies.

### Child protection

- **2,673** children, adolescents, parents and caregivers received individual child protection services.

### Gender-based violence

- **7,210** survivors of gender-based violence received gender-based violence response services.
- **2,082** persons participated in gender equality initiatives.

### Shelters

- **79,300** persons were assisted with temporary shelter, food, hygiene and basic care by a network of 15 shelters managed by 6 NGOs along human mobility routes and supported by UNHCR.

### Institutional strengthening

- **488** officials received training on the inclusion of people by and for whom we work, registration, and international protection, strengthening Guatemala's asylum system.



## NATIONAL PROTECTION NETWORK

- In 2016, UNHCR joined the Protection and Monitoring Network (PMN), which a year later was renamed the National Protection Network. UNHCR holds the technical secretariat.
- The Network Strategic Plan 2024-2028 aims strengthen the national protection response to persons in human mobility to guarantee fundamental rights.
- The Network has **17** shelters (safe spaces) in Guatemala, Jutiapa, Chiquimula, Izabal, Petén, Quiché, Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos and Chimaltenango; **15** are supported by UNHCR.
- The Network carries out workshops on data protection, international protection and humanitarian assistance to strengthen capacities, establishes alliances with various actors for the implementation of the strategic plan at the national and local levels, and develops guidelines for emergency action to be applied in contexts of human mobility.



### Members

- Pastoral de Movilidad Humana (PMH)
- Asociación Lambda
- Misioneros de San Carlos Scalabrinianos (Casa del Migrante)
- Refugio de la Niñez (RDN)
- Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG)
- Cruz Roja Guatemalteca (CRG)
- Tierra Nueva
- Save the Children
- Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación (FUNDAECO)
- Asociación de Mujeres Ixqik
- Asociación Generando Equidad, Liderazgo y Oportunidades (ASOGEN)
- Asociación Cristosal
- Acción Contra el Hambre (ACH)

## CLIMATE ACTION

- The global climate crisis is a human crisis that forces millions of people to move within and beyond the borders of their countries. In certain situations, people displaced in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters may be entitled to international protection under international law, which triggers UNHCR's mandate and leadership role. To this end, UNHCR Guatemala is finalising a strategy with concrete action points.
- UNHCR has participated in various spaces with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other UN agencies and in various forums and congresses to position UNHCR's work on climate change.



UNHCR supports local organisations such as Ak'tenamit on education and climate change issues © UNHCR/Victor Sanchez

## UNHCR GUATEMALA ON THE WEB



### Durable Solutions

Sandra fled her country leaving everything behind. When she arrived in Guatemala, she found support in the community and the tools to start a new life for herself and her family.




### Community empowerment

Amanda, Mauray, and Elsa are community protection workers in Livingston. UNHCR trained them in psychological support, self-care and prevention of gender-based violence.



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