



FORCED DISPLACEMENT IN AND FROM EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS

October 2024

Honduras. Trifi (63), a respected Garifuna leader at the Youth Community Center of Alfonso Lacayo, is the heart and soul of this vibrant hub. With a deep connection to her community and an unwavering commitment to the youth, she tirelessly promotes activities that benefit everyone, particularly the children and the community at large. The Alfonso Lacayo Community, Riviera Hernández, Honduras, is a community where mainly Garifuna people live. © UNHCR/Santiago Escobar-Jaramillo

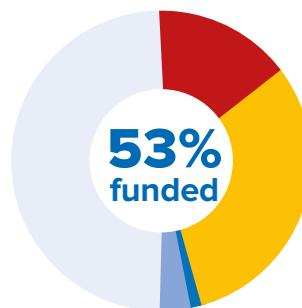
As of June 2024, there are over **778,800** refugees and asylum-seekers from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras worldwide, and 247,090 people are internally displaced in Honduras.

Violence and crime, together with food insecurity and lack of opportunities, are the main drivers of forced displacement in and from these countries. **Climate change** is increasingly a factor driving displacement.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS IN 2024

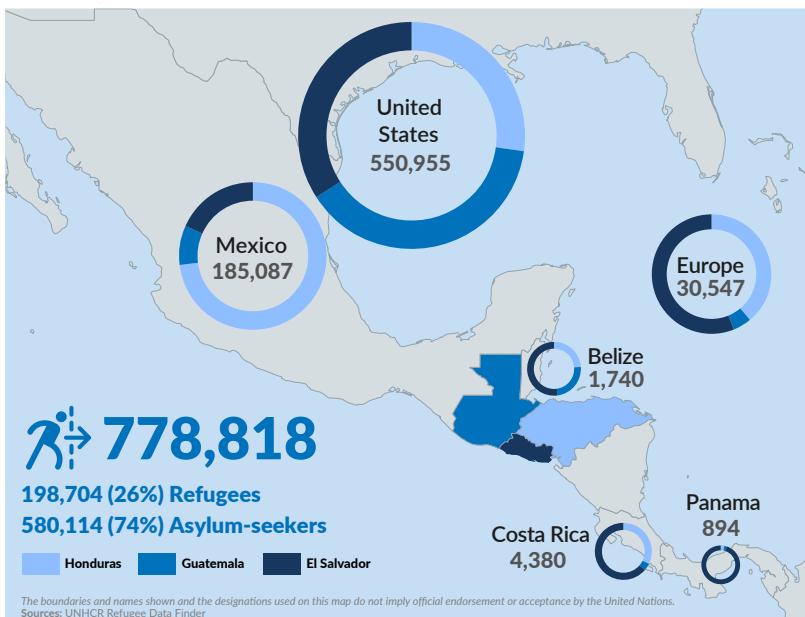
US\$ 254.9 M

Requested for **El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras Situation**

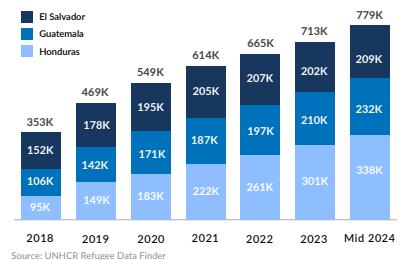


● THIGHTLY EARMARKED
● EARMARKED
● SOFTLY EARMARKED (Indicative Allocation)
● UNEARMARKED (Indicative Allocation)
● FUNDING GAP (Indicative)

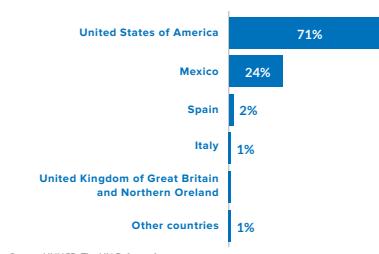
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS WORLDWIDE



ANNUAL TRENDS: REFUGEES AND ASYLUM - SEEKERS FROM EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA Y HONDURAS



MAIN COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM -SEEKERS FROM EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, AND HONDURAS



POPULATION FROM EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS IN CENTRAL AMERICA



OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

A significant number of people from **El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras** continue to be involved in complex human mobility dynamics, driven by a range of displacement triggers, including violence and insecurity, gender-based violence (such as forced unions), rising poverty, food insecurity, and the adverse impacts of climate change and disasters. Violence and insecurity, combined with other factors, continue to be defining elements forcing people to leave countries in Northern Central America. The United States of America remains the largest recipient of asylum applications worldwide with over 729,100 new claims lodged in the first half of 2024. In the United States, more than 1 in every 10 new applications were of nationals of Honduras (5%), Guatemala (4%), and El Salvador (2%) by mid-2024 representing a 54% increase compared to the same period 12 months earlier (81,100 applications in 2024, up from 52,700 in the first half of 2023).

In the same period, there were nearly 41,400 new asylum claims in Mexico, over 56% of them, or 23,100 applications, filed by nationals of Honduras (42%), El Salvador (8%) and Guatemala (6%). This represents a 5% decrease in applications compared to the first half of 2023.

UNHCR supports governments in the region to modernize their refugee status determination systems by promoting targeted investments in case management, digitization and differentiated processing modalities.

Honduras continues to experience high levels of violence. One of the impacts of violence is that by mid-2024, more than 247,000 people are internally displaced in the country. In 2024, over 32,000 Hondurans have been returned

so far, with many leaving the country again. Honduras also remains a main transit country for persons engaged in mixed movements across Central America. As of 31 August 2024, 290,902 people have entered irregularly; this is a 16% increase in comparison to the same period in 2023. Additionally, in 2024, there has been an increase in individuals seeking protection in Honduras with 104 new asylum applications so far from people from 11 different countries, which is an increase of 28% in comparison to the same period in 2023. UNHCR and its partners continue to work to support the diverse forcibly displaced populations with life-saving humanitarian assistance, as well as technical support to government institutions to build their capacity to prevent and respond to forced displacement.

Guatemala remains a significant hub for mixed movements, with over a million people passing through the country in 2023. Venezuelans make up the majority, slightly increasing from 49% in 2023 to 50% in the first quarter of 2024. According to the Mixed Movement Monitor 2024 Q1, 50% of respondents cited violence as the cause for their displacement, a 9% increase from 2023. Many individuals stay in Guatemala while they wait for remittances from relatives or engage in informal employment to continue their journey north. UNHCR and its partners, through mobile units like the PDH Mobile (Ombudsman's Office) and the five Centres for Assistance to Migrants and Refugees (CAPMIR), provide information and guidance on accessing asylum, protection services, housing, primary healthcare and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), legal assistance, and essential resources such as food, water, toilets, and internet connectivity. UNHCR and its partners

continue their lifesaving work of identifying individuals in need of protection and referring them to the appropriate mechanisms, including asylum in Guatemala. Additionally, UNHCR facilitates peacebuilding efforts to establish lasting and resilient solutions for refugees, asylum-seekers, and the communities that host them. UNHCR and partners engage with key government institutions to assist Guatemalans returned from the United States and Mexico (52,361 until July 2024, 288,373 in the last four years) with a particular focus on people facing protection needs.

El Salvador has experienced an increase in people of diverse origins transiting the territory northward since 2023. By September 2024, more than 70,000 people from Ecuador entered the country and some 200 people had sought asylum in El Salvador, mostly from Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. Progress in the security environment and the significant reduction in gang violence offer opportunities to address root causes and solutions to forced displacement. UNHCR continues working with national statistics authorities on the collection and analysis on data of IDPs that can support evidence-based responses and adjust interventions accordingly.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- UNHCR works with UN agencies, NGOs, government institutions, stakeholders, and over 100 partners, including local organizations and networks, within the framework of the **Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP)** in **El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras**. UNHCR's continuous advocacy and leading role in Protection sectors in the three countries, leading role in Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) in Guatemala and co-leading role in CCCM Shelter Sectors in El Salvador remains essential to ensure a protection-centred response and coordinated efforts among relevant stakeholders, including national and local governments, international organizations, civil society, community organizations, and displaced populations. Furthermore, UNHCR supports the efforts of Protection Cluster and Sectors in improving the analysis of protection risks and increasing visibility of the **needs** of forced displaced people in the region with data and analysis to support evidence-based decision making.
- Prioritisation of life-saving assistance goes hand in hand with efforts to find long-term solutions. To achieve that, UNHCR is fostering cooperation with a wide array of actors, such as **local authorities** and the **private sector**, which includes providing livelihood opportunities and promoting inclusion into national systems. In Honduras and El Salvador, as part of the efforts to

provide durable solutions for people forced to flee, UNHCR support local governments' efforts to recover housing, land and property that were dispossessed or abandoned due to violence and gang control and to supports state-led solutions.

- In Honduras, UNHCR has partnered with the Property Institute to adapt legal frameworks and public policies to ensure the legal and material protection of houses and land of displaced people through the creation of the Registry of Abandoned Property. Additionally, UNHCR Honduras is supporting the national information campaign "Your Registered Home, Your Secured Right" to promote the regularization and registration of property to protect Hondurans from dispossession of property, which is one of the top five causes of internal displacement.
- UNHCR, together with the Organization of American States, serves as Technical Secretariat for the **Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS)**, a regional application of the Global Compact on Refugees. Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama are members of the initiative which is supported by the **MIRPS Support Platform**. The Government of Belize holds the MIRPS Pro-tempore Presidency in 2024



Guatemala. From trauma to hope, Elisabet, a Honduran refugee is on her way to rewrite her story and make a positive impact on others. © UNHCR/Nicola Filippo Ross

and leads the [Regional Plan](#) to strengthen dialogue and cooperation to support MIRPS National Action Plans. MIRPS Support Platform and its [Strategy](#) has focused on highlighting the contributions of refugees and other displaced people bring to their communities, by facilitating the exchange of good practices for successful integration and other local solutions, with a particular emphasis on protection for the most vulnerable, including women and children. The MIRPS States held an in-person regional meeting in Panama on 4-5 September 2024 to improve the MIRPS results-based management and communications and finalized the MIRPS theory of change and revision of indicators, which speaks to their commitment in showing concrete results and progress.

● The adoption of the [Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection](#) in June 2022 highlighted the need for a better-coordinated and collaborative approach to address human mobility in the Americas. The [third Ministerial Meeting on the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection](#) was held in Guatemala on 7 May 2024. The meeting focused on developing joint regional strategies to address human mobility, with countries presenting their progress toward commitments. Key figures, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, participated in this meeting.

● UNHCR ensures forced displacement remains high on the agenda of the Central American Integration System, the Regional Conference on Migration, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, among other regional processes.

● In June 2023, the United States of America, with the governments of **Guatemala**, Colombia, and Costa Rica and Ecuador, announced the start of the **Safe Mobility Offices**. This ongoing initiative, with the support of UNHCR and IOM, facilitates access to protection and other regular pathways for people on the move to the United States of America and other partner countries (Spain, Canada, New Zealand).

● **Development actors** also play a key role in promoting inclusion. UNHCR strengthens strategic partnerships across the region with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Central American Development Bank (CABEI) and others to deepen cooperation in support of the inclusion of refugees, IDPs and stateless people in development programmes, and to analyse and address the root causes of forced displacement as an integral part of development projects. For instance, in El Salvador, UNHCR advanced in cooperation with the World Bank and the IDB to ensure the Government's inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in protection and solutions programmes under design.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

In [El Salvador](#), [My First Job programme](#), a joint initiative by UNHCR and the Ministry of Labour, promotes access to employment for youth forcibly displaced and at-risk of displacement. In 2023, 378 people participated in the soft-skills workshop for the labour market and 141 youth with no prior job experience signed a five-month apprenticeship contract and were enrolled in the [Salvadoran Social Security Institute \(ISSS\)](#). In 2023, 698 young people signed an employment contract. By June 2024, with 47 people newly enrolled in the programme, over 1,250 had received training since 2021.

In 2023, UNHCR launched in [Honduras](#) an innovative livelihood programme in collaboration with various organizations and 53 private sector companies to support the professional development of displaced youth through funded internships. This programme targeted 92 youths who were displaced or at risk of displacement, offering them valuable internship opportunities in various sectors for three months, complemented by financial support and close accompaniment. Notably, 49% of the participants secured employment post-internship, with others continuing their job search with support from the Secretariat of Labour and Social Security (SETRASS) and its *¡Sí Empleo!* platform. The programme is continuing in 2024, and by June 28 people had graduated, and 80 more are starting their internship in July. Furthermore, SETRASS and the National Institute for Professional Training (INFOP), with UNHCR support, received funds to expand the programme in 2024 under the MIRPS. The expansion includes training on soft skills delivered by INFOP, and the involvement of more private sector partners. The programme will support over 100 internally displaced people and refugees. The success of these initiatives aligns with UNHCR's commitment to enhancing the socio-economic inclusion of forcibly displaced people in Honduras.

UNHCR collaborated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of **Guatemala** as well as the private sector, to launch four guides that promote labour inclusion for people with disabilities, diverse populations (youth, Indigenous people, and those over 55), and individuals in human mobility (refugees, asylum-seekers, and returnees) with a gender focus (women, LGBTIQ+). UNHCR also developed a handbook for an inclusive contracting seal for Guatemala's private sector under the 2023-2025 Strategy for Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion and the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). A strategic alliance with Universidad del Valle de Guatemala launched an "enterprise branding" programme to support 15 refugee and asylum-seeker entrepreneurs in developing their corporate identity and marketing materials. In 2024, over 22 Guatemalan companies employed 42 refugees and asylum-seekers (59% women, 34% men, 7% LGBTIQ+). To recognize the efforts of private companies, the project "Support for the Generation of Livelihoods for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Guatemala," implemented by the World Vision Guatemala Foundation and UNHCR Guatemala, awarded companies in the departments of Guatemala, Jutiapa, Chiquimula, and San Marcos for promoting labour inclusion.

PROTECT

RESPOND

EMPOWER

SOLVE

PRIORITIES IN 2024

● **Safe and dignified reception conditions:** UNHCR works with governments and other stakeholders to enhance protection-sensitive entry systems, access to asylum and other protection-oriented arrangements. Furthermore, UNHCR seeks to stabilize populations in host communities along mixed movement routes, while also expanding regular pathways for admission and international protection in destination countries. UNHCR and partners support national and local government efforts to strengthened reception conditions at reception centres and working closely with government officials at border points and points of entry to ensure the provision of protection services, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and facilitate the identification and referral of cases to available protection mechanisms, including access to international protection.

● **National legal framework and public policies recognize and guarantee the rights of the people with and for whom UNHCR works:** UNHCR supports advances in regulatory frameworks including the implementation of laws affecting displaced people and advocacy for the approval of by-laws. The Office also seeks to increase partnerships and greater engagement from the Ombudspersons, public defenders, lawyers and bar associations, national human rights institutions, and civil society to prevent and address refoulement and for the review of asylum, internal displacement, and migration legislation and policies. UNHCR also aims at harmonizing procedures and ensuring compliance with refugee status determination, procedural standards, increasing efficiency, fairness, and integrity, and responding to the realities on the ground. Moreover, UNHCR supports efforts to ensure civil registry and documentation for people on the move and advocates for the prevention of statelessness and the protection of stateless people, so they are informed about and receive free specialized legal assistance related to statelessness procedures and access to rights.

● **Direct humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs:** In coordination with governments, UNHCR supports local authorities and provides protection and humanitarian assistance to people on the move, including information, counselling, legal assistance, medical first aid, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and delivery of core relief items.

● **Providing access to shelter and safe space networks:** UNHCR works with partners to ensure individuals in need of protection access shelters. Moreover, through inter-agency coordination, the network of shelters and safe spaces throughout the countries and in the region is reinforced, including to protect children, prevent gender-based violence and support LGBTIQ+ individuals.

● **Access to healthcare:** UNHCR supports the capacity of public health facilities to meet increasing demands. The Office also supports people with heightened need to access medical assistance and vaccinations.

● **Strengthen resilience and protection to the effects of climate change:** UNHCR supports climate action to mitigate, adapt, and respond to displacement related to climate change. Based on evidenced gathered in the field, UNHCR provides guidance to institutions and partners on the impact of climate change and disasters on forced displacement.

● **Empowering communities and achieving gender equality:** UNHCR engages directly with communities through consultative processes and volunteer networks on gender-based violence prevention, risk mitigation and response. UNHCR promotes the development and dissemination of protocols to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). UNHCR supports small scale community initiatives that promote community engagement, empowerment, and peaceful coexistence, and peaceful coexistence.

● **Include people with and for whom UNHCR works in national child protection and education systems:** Local child protection authorities, partners, civil society, and community-based organizations have reinforced capacities to prevent and address the needs and risks of displaced children in a coordinated manner. Refugee children have access to quality education and certification of studies and people supported by UNHCR receive cash assistance for connectivity, transportation, and school supplies.

● **Livelihoods and economic inclusion:** UNHCR supports livelihood initiatives and access to employment, including soft skills training and job certification, seed capital and entrepreneurship. UNHCR provides local integration support for refugees and asylum-seekers including job placement, access to vocational training, and financial and legal aid for attaining permanent residence and naturalization. Furthermore, returnees with protection needs who wish to remain in country are provided with reintegration support via access to a range of livelihood programmes and opportunities that digital technologies offer to facilitate access to labour markets.

● **Promoting durable solutions:** UNHCR identifies and refers individuals and households at high risk in need of resettlement. Governments and non-governmental organization partners provide services to facilitate integration, such as cultural orientation, language, and vocational training, as well as programmes to promote access to education and employment. With the UN Country Team and government partners, UNHCR is actively exploring solutions to displacement in El Salvador. In Honduras, UNHCR's collaboration with 23 Technical and Vocational Education and Training centres and State institutions led to the renewal of curricula and training equipment, directly enhancing the employment rates of people forcibly displaced and those at-risk of displacement. UNHCR works in close cooperation with UN Country Teams and local authorities to ensure that efforts towards the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless populations are embedded in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) and National Plans.

CLIMATE ACTION

In Central America's so-called 'Dry Corridor,' a stretch of increasingly parched mountainous farmland running from Guatemala to northern Costa Rica, climate risks include recurrent droughts, excessive rains, and severe flooding, all of which affect agricultural production in areas where people rely on farming to make a living. UNHCR addresses the impact of climate change on displacement in **Guatemala** through technical support to the roundtable on human mobility and climate change, led by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2024, UNHCR provided training sessions and conducted presentations at several conferences, emphasizing the connections between climate change, natural disasters, protection, and displacement, while proposing comprehensive solutions. UNHCR supports green communities including a programme to combat plastic pollution of the River Montagua in Quetzalito. UNHCR and Ak'Tenamit are implementing a project to empower youth and communities by enhancing their understanding of climate change. The project also provides tools for emergency response, coordinating actions with local and national emergency response institutions. Additionally, UNHCR provides support for educational initiatives of environmental protection for refugees and asylum-seekers that are included in opportunities for green employment identified by UNHCR such as park preservation.

In June 2024, heavy rains in **El Salvador** prompted landslides and floodings that left 4,200 people in shelters. Damage to 36% of essential crops also aggravated food insecurity. Forecasts of an intense hurricane season alert of potential new climatic episodes later in the year causing devastation and displacement. Along El Salvador's General Directorate of Civil Protection, UNHCR supports prioritized communities in emergency preparedness through the development of disaster prevention plans. UNHCR delivered over 3,200 items, including clothes, blankets, hygiene kits, diapers, and plastic sheeting, in coordination with national institutions and municipalities.

The rainy season in **Honduras**, lasting from June to November, is posing significant challenges in 2024. According to the State Secretariat for Risk Management and National Emergencies (COPECO), 21 storms already have caused widespread flooding, isolating communities and displacing many residents. These storms, combined with severe heat waves and over 2,000 forest fires earlier in the year, are posing challenges to food production. Although food insecurity has decreased by 10% between 2022 and 2024, millions of Hondurans continue to face daily struggles to access food. The impacts of climate change are likely to increase communal tensions over arable land, particularly given the insecurity of land tenure and ownership, especially for indigenous and Garifuna communities. In addition, Honduras is experiencing one of its worst years in terms of dengue outbreaks, with

over 120,000 reported cases and 140 deaths so far in 2024. In response, UNHCR collaborates with local risk management committees to develop contingency plans, with the Honduran Red Cross to preposition emergency items, and with the Humanitarian Network to ensure that mitigation and response activities are protection centred. Community-based protection (CBP) interventions seek to strengthen communities' capacities to prevent, mitigate and address immediate protection risks, including those of displacement due to violence and climate change. Regarding climate change, UNHCR works to strengthen their capacities to identify and respond to emergencies resulting from natural and environmental hazards, reinforce communication mechanisms, organizational capacities, response preparedness and resilience, including through socio-economic interventions.



El Salvador. Eneyda, a refugee from Honduras, with three of her children excited to receive Salvadoran citizenship. © UNHCR / Franklyn Ruiz

UNHCR is strengthening its operations to meet the humanitarian and protection needs exacerbated by the climate emergency, ranging from preparedness and response to disaster-related displacement to the implementation of environmentally friendly programmes that protect people and the environment, to enhancing the resilience of both displaced and host communities to climate shocks.

More information [here](#).

INNOVATION

UNHCR is committed to promoting innovation in **Guatemala**. Following the completion of A2SIT, the Guatemala Operation was selected in 2024 for an innovation project focusing on communication with communities in Izabal. Through a digital literacy workshop, which includes guidance on Safe Mobility guidance, 62 community leaders from six field offices will be trained to guide their communities on digital applications and protection solutions. After the training, leaders will receive smartphones to aid in delivering support and training materials. In 2025, these leaders will serve as community outreach volunteers, identifying and referring cases, and supporting Communication with Communities activities.

In partnership with the National Institute of Statistics (INE), UNHCR Guatemala has effectively incorporated concerns regarding forced displacement into INE's studies and censuses. Consequently, through involvement in the relevant committee of the National Survey on Living Conditions (ENCOVI), Guatemala now possesses data on internally displaced individuals. This marks a significant step forward in addressing forced displacement. The public presentation of this data will be jointly undertaken.

In **El Salvador**, UNHCR developed in 2023 a methodology based on cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) to boost information analysis gathered in community participatory assessments. In 2024, the assessment will advance innovation engaging more communities, which will lead the participatory local sessions on risks and needs with women, boys and girls, youth, men, elderly people and LGBTIQ+ people.

In **Honduras**, UNHCR and the Hague Institute for Innovation of Law launched a study on the gaps in access to justice experienced by internally displaced Hondurans. With a novel people-centred approach to understanding legal issues, informal dispute mechanisms and barriers to justice providers, the findings will serve to inform government and civil society actors how to design public policies and programmes to improve access to justice for Hondurans.

UNHCR's humanitarian response in the Americas is made possible thanks to the generous support of major donors who have contributed with unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations, and to donors who have generously contributed to operations responding to the El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras situation. As of 30 September, operations in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras are 53% funded, having required in 2024 \$254.9 million.

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