

El Salvador | 2025

FACTSHEET | JUNE 2025

"The psychological support I received allowed me to heal and regain hope. With UNHCR's support, I was able to start a small venture and begin rebuilding my life." *Lorena, 53, internally displaced.*
© UNHCR / Markel Redondo

UNHCR Works in El Salvador to provide life-saving assistance and strengthen responses for people internally displaced or at risk of displacement, refugees, asylum-seekers and returnees with protection needs.

Together with communities, organizations, the UN, the Government, development actors and the private sector, UNHCR works to promote solutions for those affected by displacement caused by decades of gang violence in communities.

UNHCR accompanies the Government's national efforts towards its commitments in the Global Refugee Forum and the National Plan of the Regional Protection and Solutions Framework MIRPS, and the Global Compact on Refugees.

TARGET POPULATION 2025

188,084 people

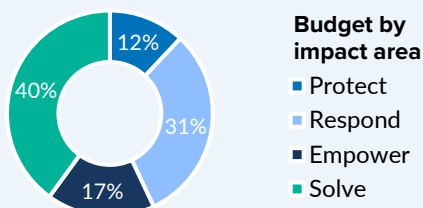
Estimations of population in need

Internally displaced people and from prioritized communities	86,971
Asylum-seekers	342
Refugees	174
Others of concern	100,597

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS IN 2025

USD 28.6 M

Budget for UNHCR's operation in El Salvador based on the needs of the population

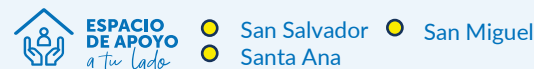


TERRITORIAL PRIORITIZATION



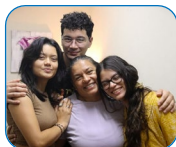
11 prioritized communities and groups

60 communities identified with needs



*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

PRIORITIZED ACTIVITIES



Ensuring access to asylum

Ensuring that people seeking international protection in El Salvador have access to specialized services, addressing their urgent needs and reducing their vulnerability.



Addressing urgent needs

Assisting communities already impacted by violence and displacement to prepare for and respond to disasters related to extreme weather events, ensuring access to shelter, food, and core relief items to reduce protection risks.



Providing essential services for vulnerable populations

Psychosocial support, mental health services, emergency shelter, and direct life-saving support to forcibly displaced people and those affected by historical violence to prevent increased vulnerability and protection risks.



Fostering integration and solutions in the country

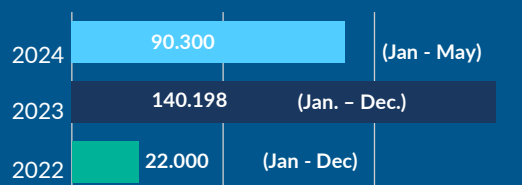
Support of livelihood opportunities for people forced to flee so they can integrate in their communities, and rebuild their lives.


Contexto

In 2025, global funding cuts to UNHCR have significantly impacted its work at the local level. In El Salvador, UNHCR's community presence has been drastically reduced: from an initial 60 prioritized communities, only 11 are currently being served. Additionally, individual case management has been limited, along with specialized interventions focused on children and violence against women and girls, and educational and employment support programs have been discontinued. Despite this context, UNHCR remains present in the country, assisting those in vulnerability.

- The historical background of violence in El Salvador is at the root causes of internal and cross-border displacement.
- Threats, extortion, violent crime, and forced recruitment caused over decades by gangs profoundly impacted the lives of people in El Salvador, affecting their well-being and mental health, weakening social cohesion, and limiting access to opportunities.
- The overall improvement of the current security environment offers opportunities to promote solutions to forced displacement.
- Various reasons, aggravated by the impacts of disasters related to extreme weather events and poverty, still drive the departure of people from the country.
- El Salvador is committed to further enhance the protection of refugees, people internally displaced by historical violence, returnees with protection needs, and stateless people.
- The country is signatory to the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol, and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.
- In 2020, El Salvador approved the Special Law for the Comprehensive Care and Protection of Persons in Condition of Internal Forced Displacement.
- El Salvador participates in the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) to address forced displacement in Central America and Mexico. The MIRPS National Response Plan maintains 43 commitments in protection, health, education and livelihoods to assist people forced to flee and promote durable solutions.
- In 2023, El Salvador committed at the II Global Refugee Forum to reform the asylum law, expand employment opportunities and livelihoods for displaced people, work to prevent and find solutions to forced displacement through the promotion of cultural, artistic and sports activities, and accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- In 2024, with the support of UNHCR, El Salvador actively participated in the Cartagena +40 process and signed the Chile Declaration and Plan of Action to strengthen a collective regional approach that promotes solutions for people forcibly displaced.


ENTRY TRENDS TO EL SALVADOR




 **500% increase** in the number of people in transit in 2023 compared to 2022.

- General Directorate for Migration and Foreigners.

ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN EL SALVADOR

 **272 personas** claimed asylum in El Salvador in 2024


 **28% increase** compared to 2023.


Main nationalities:

Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

-Refugee Data Finder, UNHCR.

ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES FROM EL SALVADOR IN THE WORLD

 **136,774** asylum-seekers by 2024

 **71,765** refugees by 2024

-Refugee Data Finder, UNHCR.


INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE IN EL SALVADOR

 **71,500** between 2006 and 2016.

-2018, Characterization Study of Internal Mobility due to Violence in El Salvador, Ministry of Justice and Public Security.

RETURNEES TO EL SALVADOR

 **15,003 people** from El Salvador returned in 2024

 **8.6%** expressed they left the country due to violence (interviewed between Jan. – April 2024)

-General Directorate for Migration and Foreigners.

Response

UNHCR's Strategy 2023-2026 in El Salvador is based on ongoing needs assessments and existing progress to protect, assist, empower and find solutions for people forced to flee and their communities. UNHCR seeks to actively engage, inform, and include people's views in decisions that affect their lives, acting as catalyst for greater equality and social cohesion.

IMPACT AREAS	OUTCOME AREAS
 PROTECT Attaining favorable protection environments Forcibly displaced people fully enjoy their rights and equal access to effective protection systems.	Status determination  Asylum-seekers have access to a fair and efficient refugee status determination procedure and have their asylum claims determined in a fair and timely manner.
	Protection policy and law  Rights of internally displaced people are recognized and guaranteed in the national legal framework and public policies.
 RESPOND Realizing rights in safe environments Forcibly displaced people meet their basic needs.	Violence against women and girls  Survivors of violence have adequate and timely access to specialized services, and communities are actively engaged in prevention and risk mitigation activities.
	Child protection  Forcibly displaced children are included in national child protection systems and have access to child friendly procedures and services, including best interest procedures.
	Well-being and basic needs  Displaced people Access efficient and effective national services and humanitarian responses.
 EMPOWER Empowering communities Forcibly displaced people are empowered, informed and are meaningful actors of their own protection and solutions.	Community engagement and women's empowerment  Strengthened community structures promote integration and effective participation for the enjoyment of their rights.
 SOLVE Securing solutions Forcibly displaced people find solutions to their situation and become self-reliant, while also contributing to the development and resilience of their communities.	Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods  Displaced people have access to decent/formal employment or self-employment and livelihood opportunities.
	Integration and other local solutions  Internally displaced people and refugees access programmes advancing solutions to displacement.
	Resettlement and complementary pathways  People at heightened risk are identified, referred, submitted, and processed for third country solutions through strengthened and efficient mechanisms.

Activities in 2025

Attaining favourable protection environments

- Accompaniment and support to the National Commission for Refugee Status Determination (CODER) in a Strategy to strengthen institutional capacities, including the streamlining of processes to increase efficiency.
- Technical support to key institutions and actors in the inclusion of internally displaced persons in government programmes, and to strengthen the legal framework.

Realizing rights in safe environments

- Assistance to displaced and at-risk people in UNHCR's "A tu Lado" spaces, in coordination with partner organizations and national actors.
- Provision of shelter, food, core relief items, relocation, and safe accommodation for people at heightened risk. Mental health services, including psychosocial support and psychological assistance, in coordination with the Directorate for the Reconstruction of Social Cohesion and specialized partners.
- Joint humanitarian analysis and responses as leader of the Protection Sector, co-leadership with the General Directorate for Civil Protection for the Shelter Sector, and with IOM for the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Sector.

Empowering communities

- Regular participatory assessments to include the perspectives, priorities, and needs of forcibly displaced people in community work plans and UNHCR's programmes.
- Support for community groups leading initiatives for peaceful coexistence, climate impact mitigation, and violence and displacement prevention.
- Strengthening compliance with protocols for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (PEAS), with accessible reporting mechanisms and improved accountability.
- Promotion of educational, cultural, and sports activities to foster safe environments for young people.

Securing solutions

- Referral mechanisms to vocational education and entrepreneurship initiatives to expand livelihood opportunities for refugees, displaced people, and those at risk of displacement.
- Collaboration with the Government, the Humanitarian Country Team, the private sector, and development actors to improve living conditions in historically stigmatized communities, with an approach that addresses poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and access to essential services.

Partnerships

- As part of the Humanitarian Country Team, leader of the Protection Sector and co-leader of the Emergency Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCCM) Sectors.
- Accompaniment to the Government in the implementation of the MIRPS National Plan and commitments of the Global Refugee Forum.
- Promotion with the private sector of formal employment opportunities for displaced people through apprenticeship.

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



For more information, please contact>
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