

Guatemala

April 2019

102,340

Refugees and asylum-seekers from Guatemala worldwide projected by end-2018, **1322%** higher than by end-2011.

644

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Guatemala by end-2018. **48%** are from El Salvador, **31%** from Nicaragua and **11%** from Honduras.

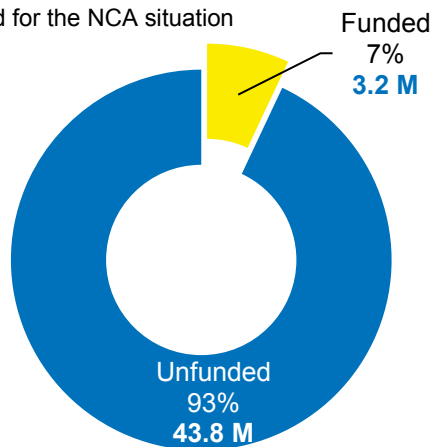
110,600

People on the move with possible protection needs transited through Guatemala during 2018. The National Safe Spaces Network assisted **41,000** of them in 2018.

FUNDING (AS OF 30 APRIL 2019)

US\$ 47 M

requested for the NCA situation



Context

- Since 2013, UNHCR has been supporting and assisting the Guatemalan government in ensuring that persons in need of international protection have access to asylum procedures. In 2016, a field office in Petén (FOPET) was opened to enhance UNHCR's protection reach. Since April 2019, a semi-permanent presence has been established in Esquipulas.
- UNHCR has significantly scaled up its operational capacity in Guatemala to ensure protection and solutions response for the North of Central America (NCA) situation, in close collaboration with the national protection network.
- The vast majority (89%) of refugees and asylum-seekers reaching Guatemala are from Central America (El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua).

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

12 National Staff
9 International Staff

Offices:

1 National Office located in Guatemala City
1 Field Office in Petén
1 Presence in Esquipulas



Working with Partners

- Guatemala is a country of origin, transit, return and asylum for refugees and migrants. Given the multi-causality of displacement in the NCA, and the increasing number of persons transiting through Guatemala to seek protection, ensuring a safe and dignified transit is a key priority for the operation.
- UNHCR works with 7 partners from civil society and faith-based organizations, which include specialized NGOs in child protection, sexual and gender base violence, human rights defenders and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI) population. Seven partners comprise Guatemala's National Safe Spaces network (NSS), which operates through 10 shelters (including one exclusively for unaccompanied minors) and 16 protection and information points, strategically placed along the migration routes to provide information on asylum and humanitarian assistance. In 2018, UNHCR started working with Tierra Nueva NGO in the department of Huehuetenango and Quetzaltenango to strengthen protection and assistance response in Guatemala.
- Under the United Nations Country Team, UNHCR is part of two inter-agency groups: the UN Specialized Group on Migration and the Protection Cluster. The Specialized Group on Migration coordinates strategies on humanitarian assistance to persons in transit; asylum seekers, refugees and returnees; and legal framework on the implementation of the new Migration Code. The Protection Cluster is led by UNHCR and coordinates assistance to persons affected by the "Volcano of Fire" eruption in 2018, as well as those transiting through Guatemala as part of the large mixed movements of persons known as "Caravans".

Main Activities

- Guatemala, as a member of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), is implementing its work plan for 2018-2020, which includes three main areas: (i) reception and admission; (ii) immediate and persistent needs; and (iii) enhance opportunities for durable solutions.
- In March 2019, UNHCR Guatemala conducted Participatory Assessments (PA) with refugees and asylum-seekers in Guatemala City, the Department of Petén, and with host communities in Petén. This was the first PA conducted in Guatemala since 2015, and the first one ever conducted with host communities.
- UNHCR Field Office Petén, in collaboration with partners, provided humanitarian assistance and protection services to approximately 21,000 persons, including refugees and migrants transiting in Petén and Izabal departments as part of the mixed population flows. Safe spaces capacity and field presence at key entry and transit hubs were reinforced through mobile teams and strengthening of the coordination with local institutions.
- To support and strengthen the asylum system in Guatemala, UNHCR provided the Guatemalan Migration Institute with a database to register asylum-seekers and refugees. This further contributes to enhance the collection and analysis of data which is now for the first time digitalized.
- To offer a protection alternatives to the traditional fast track return of unaccompanied children, UNHCR and partner Refugio de la Niñez (RdN) agreed with the Attorney's General Office (PGN) that unaccompanied children in need of international protection will be sheltered by RdN for up to five days to allow PGN to conduct a Best Interest Determination Procedure and determine whether the child should seek asylum, be reunified with a family member in a third country, or be voluntarily repatriated.
- Community based protection in Izabal and Petén was boosted with implementation of quick impact projects (QIPs) empowering communities to better protect and assist refugees and migrants in transit and provide benefit to the hosts. UNHCR's support, provided consistently with the MIRPS and in coordination with State institutions, enhanced with infrastructural rehabilitation three health facilities and the services they offer, two safe shelters respectively for SGBV survivors and unaccompanied and separated children, a migration border post, as well as constructed a pre-primary school in a border area, and provided sustainable solutions for access to safe water for more than 150.000 refugees, migrants and host communities.
- During large mixed movements of persons, UNHCR led the humanitarian response within the Protection Cluster. Between October 2018 and April 2019, the Protection Cluster assisted more than 30,000 persons crossing Guatemala with material assistance, information on asylum procedures, and access to services.
- As part of the Protection Transit Agreement programme, from January to April 2019, UNHCR Guatemala referred 38 cases/92 individuals at heightened risk to the Regional Office in Panama (ROPAN). During that timeframe, after clearance by ROPAN, 33 PTA case / 73 individuals were submitted for resettlement to the United States. Additionally, 4 cases/18 individuals were submitted for resettlement to Australia. In this same period, 20 cases/65 individuals were resettled.
- With regards to durable solutions, UNHCR developed a strategy to generate empathy from the private sector and promote the recognition of the documentation issued to refugees in order to facilitate local integration by improving their access to job opportunities. In addition, a local integration program was developed by UNHCR in Petén with government institutions to facilitate educational and job opportunities in the local tourism industry.

Donors

In 2019, UNHCR operations in Central America received earmarked funding from the United States of America, Canada, the European Union, Spain, the UN Peacebuilding Fund, and various private donors.

In 2019, UNHCR received unearmarked funding from:

Sweden 90.4 million | **Norway** 44.5 million | **Netherlands** 37.5 million | **United Kingdom** 31.7 million | **Germany** 26.7 million
| **Private donors Spain** 26.3 million | **Denmark** 24.4 million | **Switzerland** 15.1 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea**
10.4 million

For more information:

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