

Displacement and Protection Needs in Central America

Project: Information gathering and advocacy for increased protection of refugees, asylum seekers and other displaced persons in Central America

Regional

I. Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and SICA

On April 7th, the Secretary General of the Central American Integration System (SICA), Mr. Hugo Martinez and the Regional Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for Central America, Cuba and Mexico, Mr. Fernando Protti signed a Memorandum of Understanding formalizing a strategic alliance to strengthen relations of cooperation and coordination between the General Secretariat of SICA and UNHCR.

Through this agreement, both institutions will work together to raise awareness on new displacement patterns in Central America and to implement regional initiatives to enhance the protection of refugees, asylum seekers and other people displaced by transnational organized crime and other situations of violence.

This strategic alliance identifies several areas of intervention, such as updating and harmonization of national legal frameworks of the member states of the system, the promotion of public policies, the dissemination of international refugee law, information gathering on new displacement trends and the reinforcement of networks with States and Civil Society to monitor and assist displaced people in need of protection.



Documents attached: Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and SICA (Spanish, Annex 1).

Media coverage: please refer to Annex 4.

II. Workshop on Protection Challenges in Central America

A workshop on “*New Trends of Displacement and Protection Needs in Central America*” was held - from March 18th, 20th and 21st - in San Salvador. This activity was co-organized by SICA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador and UNHCR with the financial support of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO).

Sessions were delivered by experts from governments, SICA, IOM and UNHCR on international displacement issues. The workshop also had the technical support from the Colombian Government and UNHCR.

The training activity took place over three days and was attended by about 60 participants from government institutions of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic, Honduras and Mexico, as well as by SICA, UN Agencies and other international organizations.



The workshop offered the opportunity to analyze protection frameworks applicable to displaced persons and share best practices for the protection of asylum seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP). It also contributed to identify key issues and concrete recommendations in view of the forthcoming sub-regional event to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration.

A document with a route map and final recommendations was adopted. Recommendations were organized in four main areas and included specific actions to guide their operationalization: a) Regional cooperation and integration processes and coordination mechanisms, b) Legal and institutional frameworks for the protection of refugees and internally displaced people), c) Protection needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, and d) Operational proposals for the identification, referral, protection and humanitarian support of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Documents attached: Workshop on Forced Displacement and Protection Needs in Central America -Final Recommendations and annexes-. (Spanish version, Annex 2).

Media coverage: please refer to Annex 4.

II. Research on Forced Displacement Trends and Protection Needs in Central America

On April 1st, a technical regional workshop was held in Tegucigalpa to analyse the results of research studies conducted in the region on current displacement dynamics generated by the activities of the transnational organized crime and other situations of violence in Central America.



The workshop was organized by UNHCR and facilitated by an expert of the Joint IDP Profiling Services (JIPS). The workshop gathered experts from Honduras (the UNAH, INE and the Scalabrinian Congregation), El Salvador (UCA), Mexico (CONAPO, SJM and the UAM). This gathering offered an excellent opportunity to share preliminary results of the studies, as well as to compare the conceptual frameworks, methodological approaches and information sources that they are adopting throughout their work in different studies in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico. This workshop is part of the regional project sponsored by ECHO in Central America: ***“Information gathering and advocacy to enhance the protection of refugees, asylum seekers and other displaced persons in Central America”***.

Honduras

1. Establishment of the Interinstitutional Commission on Forced Displacement (ICFD)

On March 31st, the President of the Republic Juan Orlando Hernandez, officially swore the Interinstitutional Commission on Forced Displacement (ICFD), which had been created by decree in November 2013.

The new Commission is composed by delegates from seven ministries, three state agencies and four organizations elected by the Civil Society (Centro de Investigación y Promoción de Derechos Humanos (CIPRODEH), the Scalabrinian Congregation, the Centro de Prevención, Tratamiento y Rehabilitación de Víctimas de Torturas (CPTRT) and the Asociación para una Vida Mejor de Personas Afectadas e Infectadas por el VIH/Sida (APUVIMEH)).



The Ministry of Human Rights, Justice, Governability and Decentralization (MHRJGD) will act as Executive Secretariat and UNHCR will have an advisory role. The main objective of the ICFD is to analyse current displacement trends due to transnational crime and other situations of violence in order to identify protection needs and promote public policies.

II. Analysis of Secondary Data on Migration and Organized Crime in Honduras

On April 2nd a workshop was held in Tegucigalpa to present and validate the “*Analysis of Secondary Data on Migration and Organized Crime in Honduras*”. This activity was co-organized by UNHCR and the Government of Honduras with the financial support of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO).

The main objective was to share the methodology and preliminary results of the statistical analysis of secondary data on migration and organized crime activity. The workshop was chaired by the Vice-minister of Justice and Human Rights and was attended by all members of the *Interinstitutional Commission on Forced Displacement (ICFD)*, as well as by representatives of national and international organisations. This activity was facilitated by experts from the National Institute of Statistics - INE (Maria Auxiliadora Lopez) and the Joint IDP Profiling Services – JIPS (Ivan Cardona).



The activity generated a widespread consensus on the priority to carry out a primary data collection exercise in areas affected by forced displacement. This survey should be coordinated by the *Interinstitutional Commission on Forced Displacement (ICFD)* ICFD with the technical support from the National Institute of Statistics (INE).

Documents attached: Workshop Report -Final Recommendations-. (Spanish version, Annex 3).

Media coverage: please refer to Annex 4.