

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. Workshop on New Trends of Forced Displacement and Protection Needs in Central America

A workshop on “*New Trends of Displacement and Protection Needs in Central America*” was held - from October 29 to November 1 - in San Salvador. This activity was co-organised by SICA and UNHCR with the support of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO) and Brookings Institution. Sessions were delivered by experts from SICA, Brookings Institution, IOM, and UNHCR.



The training activity took place over four days and was attended by about 50 participants from State institutions and civil society organisations from Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Mexico, as well as by SICA, UN Agencies and other international organizations.



The workshop offered the opportunity to raise awareness on new forms of forced displacement in Central America due to the activities of transnational organised crime and other situations of violence, as well as to analyse protection frameworks applicable to displaced persons.

As a result of very fruitful debate, a set of recommendations was unanimously adopted. As observed by participants, the main challenge for the region is to put this humanitarian topic in the agenda of States and regional organisations as well as to develop concrete policies and programmes to prevent displacement and protect refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and other population in need of protection in Central America.



Links:

<http://www.nacionesunidas.org.sv/noticias/recomendaciones-del-taller-sobre-desplazamiento-forzado-y-necesidades-de-proteccion-en-centroamerica>

<http://www.sica.int/consulta/noticia.aspx?idn=81885&idm=1>

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/11/07-central-america-armed-conflict-displacement-ferris>

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

El Salvador

II. Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and the “Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos” (PDDH) in El Salvador

On October 31, the PDDH (Office of the Ombudsman) in El Salvador and the UNHCR Regional Representation Office for Central America, Cuba and Mexico signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This strategic alliance aims to develop the cooperation between both institutions to enhance the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless and other persons in need of international protection.



This strategic alliance should also contribute to raise awareness on new trends of forced displacement in the region in order to promote policies to prevent forced displacement and strengthen the protection of people displaced by transnational organized crime and other situations of violence in El Salvador.

Links:

<http://www.pddh.gob.sv/menupress/menunoti/530-pddh-y-acnur-firman-convenio-en-materia-de-proteccion-a-personas-refugiadas>

Documents attached: MoU PDDH El Salvador – ACNUR (Spanish version).

I. Decree establishing the Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence.

On November 5th, the President of the Republic of Honduras, Porfilio Lobo Soza, issued a decree establishing a permanent ***“Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence”***. The Commission aims at encouraging the monitoring and prevention of forced displacement, as well as promoting public policies for the protection of displacement victims.

The new institution - including nine ministries, four government programs and four civil society organizations - will gather once every month. Moreover, it will collaborate extensively with the UNHCR who, according to the decree, will play an advisory role. The Commission has been promoted by the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights as a result of the Framework Agreement on Forced Displacement signed with the UNHCR in August 2012.



The issuing of this important decree confirms the political will of Honduran authorities to raise awareness and address new patterns of forced displacement. Furthermore, it establishes a cooperation structure that will resist beyond the end of the actual legislature which, after the elections on November 24th, will come to an end on January 27th.

During the workshop organized on the same week, the Minister of Justice and Human Rights informed that they will convene as soon as possible the members of the Commission in order to work on procedural issues and develop an initial plan of action. In this initial phase, the Commission should focus on information gathering, advocacy and dissemination. Thereafter, it is expected that the Commission should play a pivotal role in the development of policies and programmes to prevent displacement and protect displaced persons, focusing on the most vulnerable categories of population affected by the activities of organized crime and other situations of violence.

Links:

<http://www.proceso.hn/2013/08/13/Ciencia+y+Tecnolog%C3%ADa/Gobierno.y.ACNUR/73337.html>

<http://www.tiempo.hn/portada/noticias/consejo-de-ministros-crean-comision-para-proteger-desplazados-por-delincuencia>

<http://www.latribuna.hn/2013/11/06/comision-atendera-a-personas-desplazadas-por-la-violencia/>

Documents attached: Decree establishing a permanent *“Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence”* (Draft version in Spanish).

II. Workshop on Forced Displacement and Protection Needs in Honduras

On November 6-7, 2013, following the adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers of Honduras of the decree establishing the Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence, a workshop on “Forced Displacement and Protection Needs in Honduras” was held in Tegucigalpa.



This activity is part of the Cooperation Agreement between the Secretariat of Justice and Human Rights of Honduras (SJDH) and UNHCR. The event counted with the collaboration of CIPRODEH and Brookings Institutions, and with the sponsorship of the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General (ECHO).

This workshop was attended by about 50 officials from government, civil society institutions and international organizations. The activity allowed sharing information on topics related to new forms of forced displacement in Central America - particularly in Honduras –, the legal and institutional protection frameworks, and also practical tools for prevention and protection.

As a result of this activity, participants adopted a Final Document with concrete recommendations to assess and address the needs of people affected by displacement. This set of recommendations should also help the Interinstitutional Commission to draw up a comprehensive action plan covering all phases of forced displacement, including prevention, protection and promotion of solutions.

Links:

<http://www.tiempo.hn/portada/noticias/segun-acnur-la-violencia-y-crimen-organizado-sigue-desplazando-hondurenos>

<http://www.proceso.hn/2013/11/06/Migrantes/Acnur.A.mil/77602.html>

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/11/08-honduras-violence-displacement-ferris>

Documents attached: Workshop on Forced Displacement and Protection Needs in Honduras –Joint Note- Final Recommendations- (Spanish version).