

North of Central America Situation

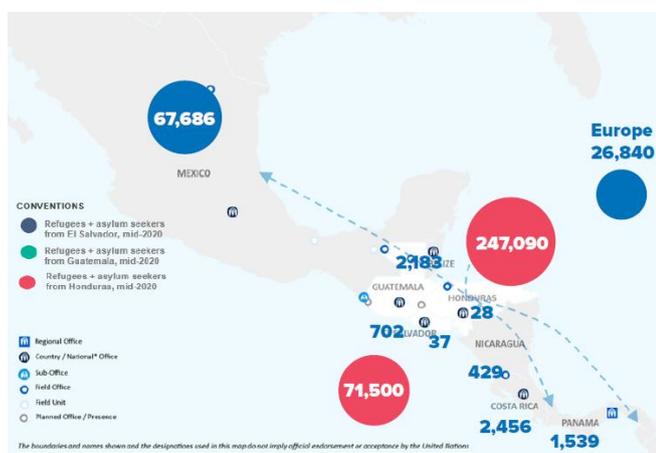
November - December 2020

Around **515,000** refugees and asylum-seekers from northern Central America in the world and **318,600** internally displaced people in Honduras and El Salvador are considered people of concern to UNHCR.

Tropical storms caused significant damages and affected 6 million persons in Central America, including 600,000 displaced people. Connections between food insecurity and violence reveals as one of the main drivers for people to flee.

Coordination with partners, UN agencies and authorities is ongoing to support the emergency response. UNHCR supports main areas affected by the storms where high protection risks have been identified.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF POPULATION OF CONCERN FROM NCA COUNTRIES

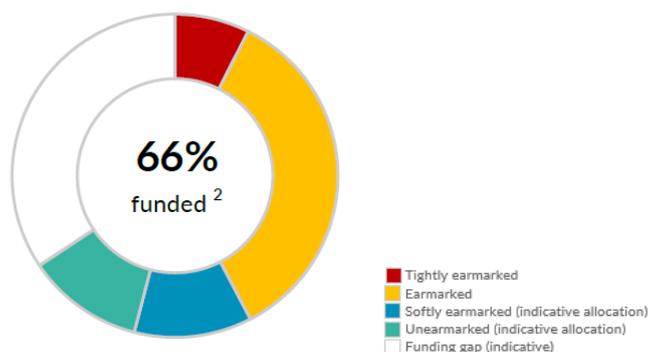


Source: Data provided by governments to UNHCR, Data for mid-2020 is preliminary and can be subject to changes.

FUNDING (AS OF 8 DECEMBER 2020)

US\$ 113.6 M

requested for the NCA situation¹



1. The financial requirements of the North of Central America Situation include requirements in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. 2. \$39,925,598 gap in funding represents 34% of the financial requirements.

CONTEXT

A complex inter-relation between Gang violence and domestic abuse, food insecurity, increasing poverty, and climate change, are likely to progressively increase forced displacement from NCA, already visible in the uptick of asylum claims in countries like Mexico.

In countries of origin, violence and insecurity for entire communities appears to be on the rise once again.

UNHCR and UNICEF issued the key findings report *Families on the Run* which draws from survey responses and in-depth interviews, documenting interrelated and compelling reasons behind the shift in forced displacement trends in northern Central America, from individuals— notably children —to entire family units fleeing.

The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic continues affecting people of concern. In El Salvador, poverty levels arose from 31 to 41 per cent and in Guatemala, labour informality is rising from 70 to 75 per cent. The number of refugees and asylum seekers requesting assistance increased across the region, mainly to cover basic needs such as rent, food and medicine.

UNHCR continues to provide support through hygiene kits, PPEs, food kits and provision of specialized protection services such as psychosocial support, health care and protection information.



In Guatemala, UNHCR is providing support to the response to hurricanes Eta and Iota.

UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works with over 70 partners in the region and supports states to implement their national plans under the Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). Nearly a year after the first Global Refugee Forum, MIRPS countries held the [third annual MIRPS meeting](#), the regional framework implementing the Global Compact on Refugees in Central America and Mexico. The two day event was an occasion to formally announce the next Pro-tempore Presidency of Guatemala for 2021, as well as the [San Salvador Declaration](#) which was adopted at the Ministerial segment of the meeting.

Main Activities

Alongside governments, partner organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, development actors and UN Agencies, UNHCR undertakes protection and solutions activities, including:



Advocacy and Coordination

In El Salvador, UNHCR supported local institutions with setting up referral pathways for victims of forced displacement. Training sessions were held for representatives from the Municipal Committees for the Prevention of Violence (Usulután, San Gotera, San Miguel, among others), to increase skills and knowledge on national legislation on internal displacement and protection mechanisms available to IDPs. In Honduras, UNHCR held training sessions on RSD analysis and assessments with human rights officers of the National Migration Institute and members of the Refugee Commission.



Health

In Guatemala, supplies and personal protection equipment were delivered to several health centres including the Centre for Comprehensive Maternal and Child Care of Asunción Mita, and the second largest hospital in the country. In Mexico, over 126 refugee health professionals have been identified to enter the public health system, 21 have been successfully supported in revalidating their diplomas and 16 have been employed by the public health system. In Belize, psycho-social support has been expanded in light of the high demand in relation to the pandemic and traumatic experiences in countries of origin. During the reporting period, at least 12 persons of concern received counselling via phone and in-person. Furthermore, women and girls in communities in the south and north of the country received psychosocial counselling, legal support and advice through our partner, as well as sexual and reproductive health services from state and civil society actors, with support from UNFPA.



Providing safe spaces and shelter

In Mexico, a new shelter was opened in Tapachula, with capacity for 300 persons, to assist refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as new installations in the Hermanos en el Camino Shelter in Ixtepec, Oaxaca. In Honduras, 100 RHU units were delivered in San Pedro Sula and 50 units in Tegucigalpa, to provide temporary shelter to people affected by tropical storms Eta and Iota. UNHCR and 16 partners delivered assistance to 3,668 persons in 20 prioritized shelters. In Guatemala and El Salvador, videos are being disseminated by authorities to shelter managers to strengthen their capacity on general protection and humanitarian principles in shelter settings. UNHCR in Guatemala met with coordinators of 15 emergency shelters in four municipalities in Izabal to support GBV prevention and response and to identify protection-related issues in emergency and shelter settings. In Belize, a community football field is being improved to provide safe spaces for all youth in the community, including persons of concern.



Community-based protection interventions

In Costa Rica, 50 volunteers (mostly refugees and asylum seekers) participated in a training on mental health, self-care, collective-care, and psychological first aid, to create a network that can provide community-level assistance. In El Salvador, 16 families participated in the Familia Activa programme in the Municipality of San Miguel to strengthen skills and knowledge in communities on the rights of IDPs, child protection, and prevention of SGBV. In Honduras, equipment was provided to the Youth Community Centre of La Central neighbourhood in San Pedro Sula where 80 youth will benefit from the trainings.



Durable solutions and livelihoods

In El Salvador, 30 entrepreneurship initiatives were selected as part of a joint livelihoods project for displaced persons and those at risk. In Belize, 652 individuals received CBI assistance to meet basic needs of food, rent, medicine, education, identity documentation, and/or psychosocial assistance. In Panama, around 189 families received CBI during the reporting period and 436 families have been enrolled in Guatemala in the CBI programme since its start in May. UNHCR in Mexico has covered a total of 18,968 beneficiaries through CBI programmes since the beginning of the COVID emergency. In Costa Rica, 37 refugee and asylum seeker community organizations and leaders participated in a workshop on leadership and assertive communication.



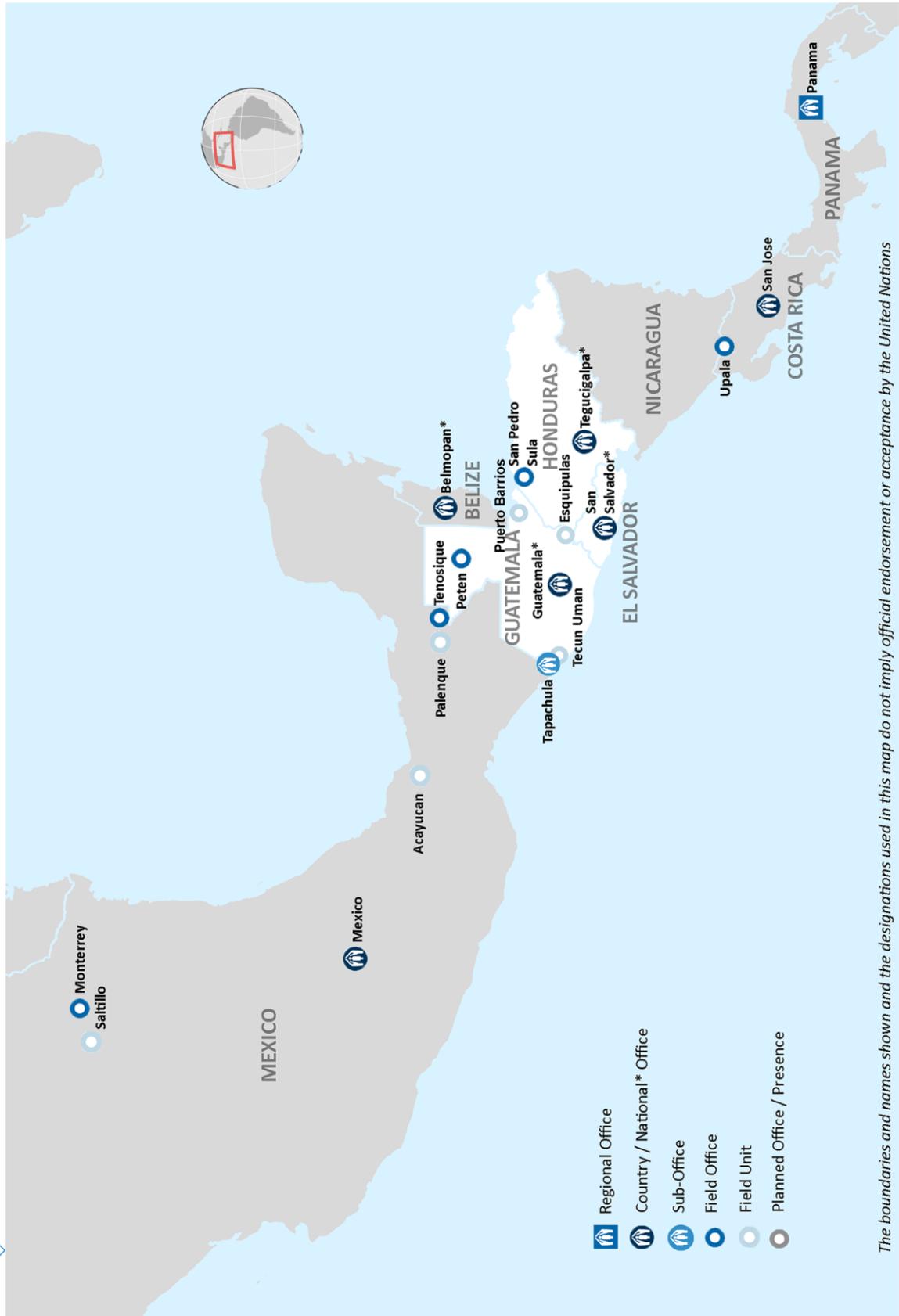
Campaigns and working with partners

UNHCR in Central America launched the *My face, their stories* campaign which invites people of influence and the general public to lend their face for those forced to flee Central America who cannot show their without being in further danger. In El Salvador, UNHCR and partners inaugurated a photo exhibition on the impact of forced displacement on members of the LGBTI community and participated in an online forum on forced displacement and migration of LGBTI people. In Mexico, 5,000 issues of a fanzine for asylum-seekers and refugees on the prevention and response to sexual abuse were distributed by UNHCR Field Offices. In Panama, representatives of national authorities and implementing partners, participated in a virtual panel which presented to 66 asylum seekers and refugees the services and programmes available to prevent and respond SGBV.

Thanks to donors in 2020: Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America. Pooled fund: COVID-19 MTF and to our private donors: Unilever, USA for UNHCR and private donors Australia – Germany – Italy – Japan – Lebanon – Mexico – Republic of Korea – Spain – Sweden – United Kingdom – United States of America

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North of Central America Situation (NCA): UNHCR Presence, 2020



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