

Regional Response to the Northern Triangle of Central America Situation



SUPPLEMENTARY APPEAL 2016

JUNE 2016



Cover photograph:

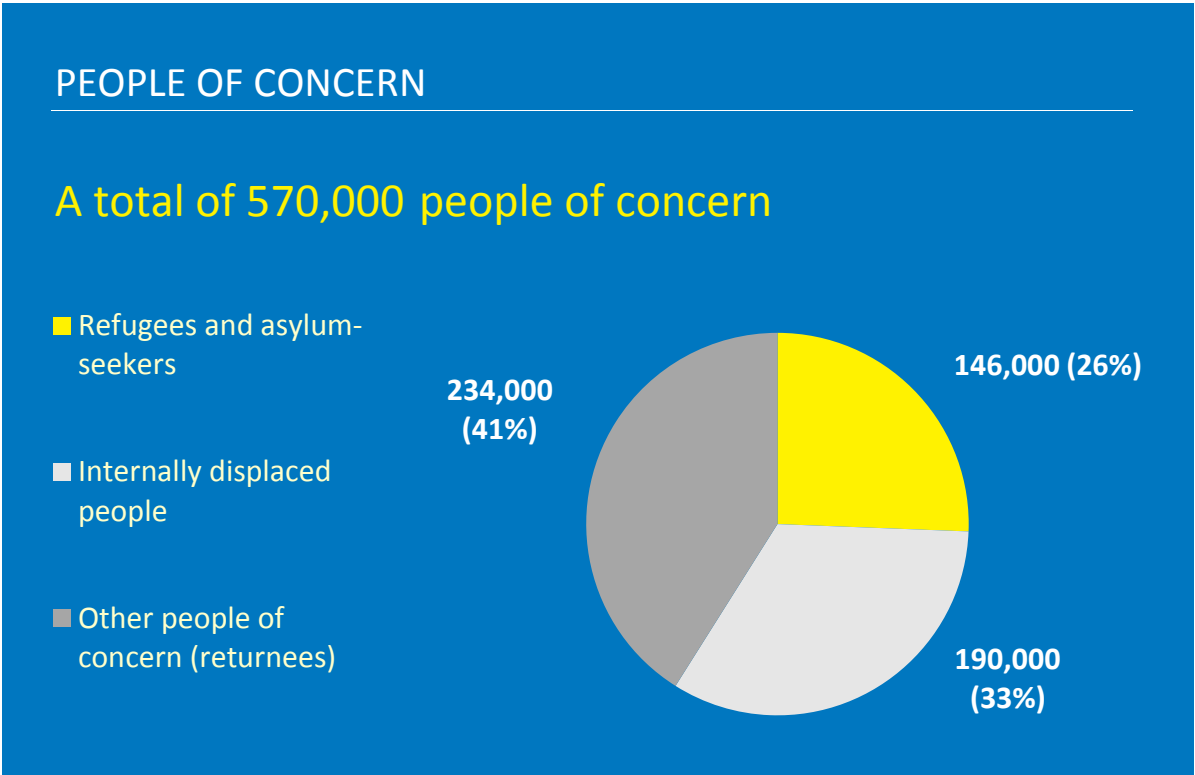
A man carries a boy on his shoulders during the long walk between Arriaga and Chahuites, Mexico that can take up to 15 hours.

UNHCR / Markel Redondo

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AT A GLANCE



This supplementary appeal does not cover activities for populations of concern to UNHCR in the United States of America and Canada. Overall figures are displayed above to illustrate regional displacement trends.

A total of **USD 23.7 million*** in financial requirements is needed for the Northern Triangle of Central America situation, including USD 18.1 million in additional requirements, for the period January-December 2016:

- USD 10.5 million for Mexico
- USD 10 million for the Panama Regional Office (including Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua)
- USD 1.3 million for Costa Rica
- USD 1.6 million for Belize
- USD 0.3 million for regional activities

**This total includes support costs (7 per cent)*

Map

Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) Situation:

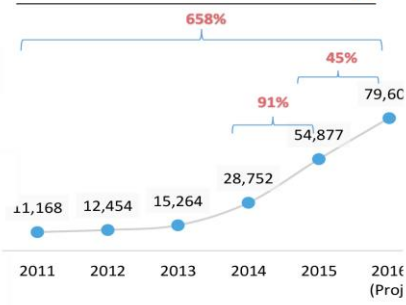
Key Population Figures and Trends in North and Central America



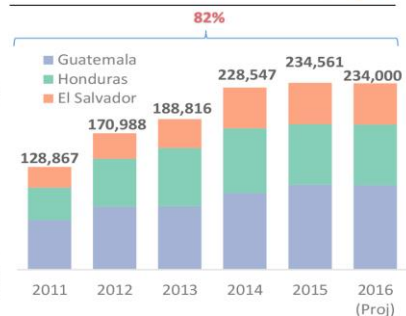
Population of Concern from NTCA Countries *

Refugees + asylum seekers (pending) (cumulative)	108,262	end-2015
	146,000	end-2016
IDPs in Honduras (Government estimate for 20 municipalities)	174,000	2004-2014
	190,000	2004-2016 (projected)
Returned population from USA & MEX to NTCA (mix-migration)	234,561	2015
	234,000	2016 (projected)

Annual Asylum Applications from NTCA Countries *

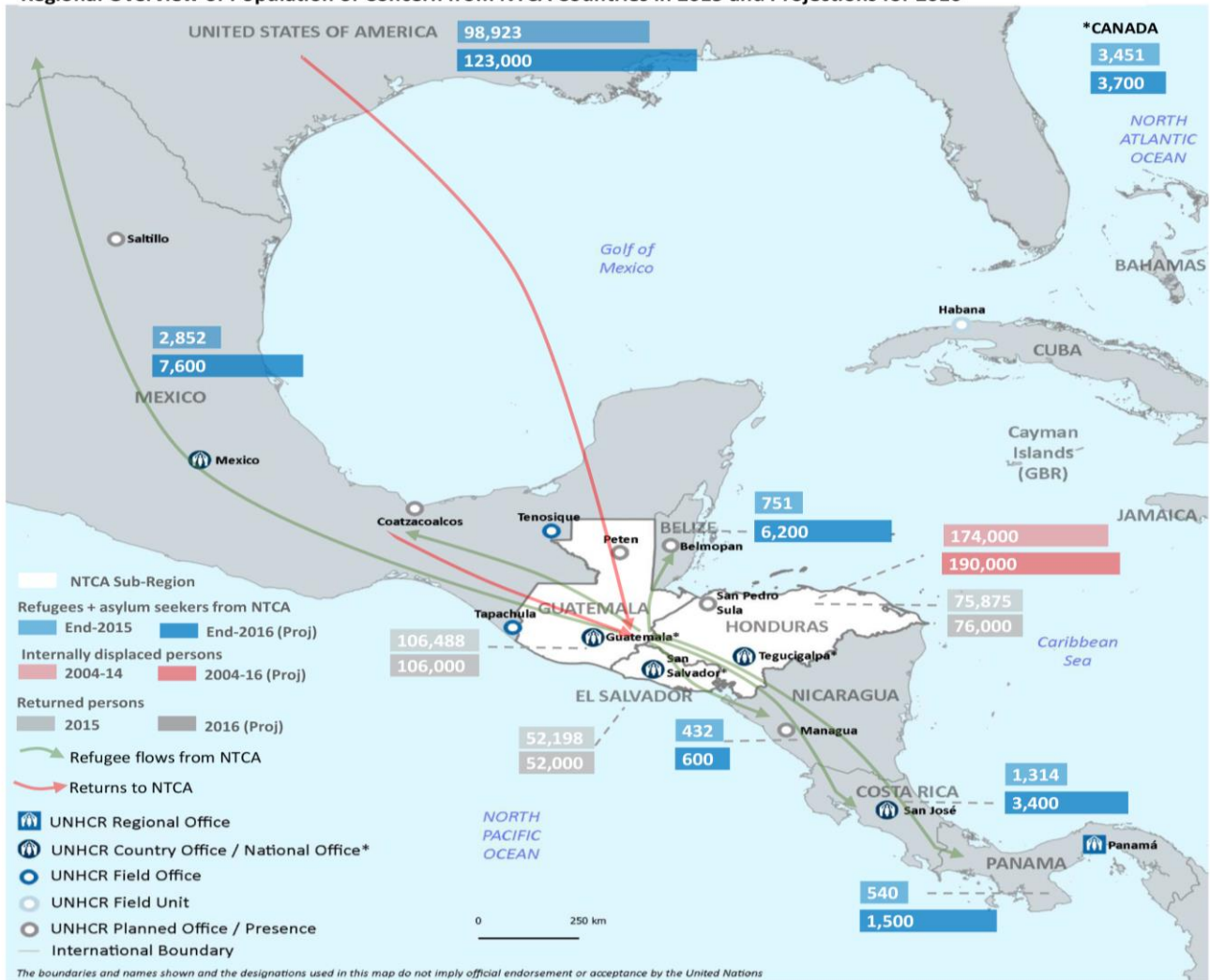


Annual Returns from USA and MEX to NTCA Countries *



* 2016 figures correspond to UNHCR projections. For refugees / asylum seekers, the estimates are based on new asylum claims observed during the first months of 2016. For IDPs in Honduras, the increase is based on average annual number of IDPs between 2004-14. For returned population, 2016 figures are assumed to be the same as in 2015, given the observed trends in returns from USA (increasing) and from Mexico (decreasing) during the first months of 2016.

Regional Overview of Population of Concern from NTCA Countries in 2015 and Projections for 2016*



Elaboration date: 3 June 2016 Sources: UNHCR / Governments / Migration Directorates / GADM Author: UNHCR-ROPAN Feedback: cardona@unhcr.org

Introduction

This supplementary appeal is presented as a follow-up of the Protection and Solutions Strategy for the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) launched in December 2015. It outlines UNHCR's protection and solutions interventions planned for 2016 to respond to additional and most urgent needs of refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees and internally displaced people from the NTCA in countries of origin, transit and asylum, encompassing Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama.

In recent years, NTCA countries – El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – have seen a dramatic escalation in violence by organized criminal groups. Current homicide rates are among the highest ever recorded in the region and are as deadly as many contemporary armed conflicts. Sexual violence is also prevalent, with the overwhelming majority of victims being girls between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Disappearances, forced recruitment into gangs, and the sexual exploitation of girls and women also form part of the pattern of violence. The extraordinary epidemic of violence is compelling a diverse range of people to flee their homes and to seek international protection, particularly in bordering and nearby countries.

In 2015, asylum applications from NTCA citizens reached 54,877 in the region, nearly double the number lodged in 2014 (28,752), while the number of recognized refugees reached 31,219 – a 41 per cent increase over 2014. The majority of the NTCA refugee population is in the United States of America, with a significant and increasing presence in Belize, Costa Rica and Mexico, as well as to a lesser but still significant extent in Nicaragua and Panama. Among those fleeing are growing numbers of women and girls and unaccompanied and separated children who are particularly vulnerable to sexual assault, human trafficking and other protection risks during displacement. The capacity of certain gangs and organized criminal groups in the NTCA to act transnationally generates a risk of continuing persecution for NTCA asylum-seekers and refugees. Protection risks are also high for certain refugees profiles, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, among others.

In 2015, more than 230,000 NTCA citizens were apprehended by authorities and returned¹ to their countries of origin, reportedly mainly from the United States and Mexico. This number has been in constant upward trend in the last five years, progressively resulting in a two-fold increase compared to the 2011 baseline. Many returnees who fled violence fear returning to their neighbourhoods and become internally displaced. Some returnees have been identified by gangs near reception centres and elsewhere in countries of origin, and have been killed shortly after return.

Forced internal displacement due to the violence in the NTCA also appears widespread, although data is fragmented. In Honduras, in just 20 out of some 300 municipalities, the Government identified 174,000 people displaced due to violence between 2004 and 2014, representing some 4 per cent of the population. Most internally displaced people (IDPs) are almost invisible victims of the

¹ These include people returned to their countries of origin either voluntarily or involuntarily, some of whom may have protection needs.

violence, lone individuals and families who leave their communities discreetly and keep a low profile to avoid drawing the attention of their persecutors.

The widespread protection risks for asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees and IDPs require an urgent, strategic and regional response in close coordination with all relevant stakeholders, and UNHCR appeals to its donors for urgent financial support to meet the needs of up to 570,000 people of concern.

Population data

		POPULATION OF CONCERN <i>by 31 December 2015</i>	PROJECTED POPULATION OF CONCERN <i>by 31 December 2016¹</i>
Mexico	NTCA refugees and asylum-seekers	2,852	7,600
Belize	NTCA refugees and asylum-seekers	751	6,200
Nicaragua	NTCA refugees and asylum-seekers	432	600
Costa Rica	NTCA refugees and asylum-seekers	1,314	3,400
Panama	NTCA refugees and asylum-seekers	540	1,500
Guatemala	Other people of concern ²	106,488	106,000
El Salvador	Other people of concern ²	52,198	52,000
Honduras	Internally displaced people	174,000	190,000
	Other people of concern ²	75,875	76,000
SUBTOTAL		414,450	443,300
Canada ³	NTCA refugees and asylum-seekers	3,451	3,700
United States of America ³	NTCA refugees and asylum-seekers	98,923	123,000
TOTAL³		516,824	570,000

¹ UNHCR projections. For refugees and asylum-seekers, the estimates are based on new asylum claims observed during the first months of 2016. For IDPs in Honduras, the increase is based on average annual number of IDPs from 2004 to 2014. For other people of concern (returned population), 2016 figures are assumed to be the same as in 2015, given the observed trends in returns from the United States (increasing) and from Mexico (decreasing) during the first months of 2016.

² Returned population from the United States and Mexico to NTCA countries.

³ This supplementary appeal does not cover activities for populations of concern in the United States and in Canada. Overall figures are displayed above to illustrate regional displacement trends.

Financial summary (USD)

UNHCR's budget for 2016 (as approved by the Executive Committee) related to the NTCA situation amounts to USD 5.5 million. The additional requirements presented in this appeal total USD 18.1 million, as shown in the centre column of the table below, including support costs (7 per cent).

OPERATION	EXCOM BUDGET excluding the NTCA situation	NTCA SITUATION			TOTAL REVISED REQUIREMENTS FOR 2016
		ExCom Budget related to the NTCA situation	Additional requirements	Total*	
Panama (including NTCA)	7,430,594	2,550,090	6,936,085	9,486,175	16,916,769
Mexico	2,328,867	2,999,159	7,037,811	10,036,970	12,365,837
Costa Rica	3,137,115	-	1,216,761	1,216,761	4,353,876
Belize	162,083	-	1,473,355	1,473,355	1,635,438
Regional and global activities	2,491,571	-	281,206	281,206	2,772,777
Subtotal	15,550,230	5,549,249	16,945,218	22,494,467	38,044,697
Support costs (7 per cent)			1,186,165	1,186,165	1,186,165
TOTAL	15,550,230	5,549,249	18,131,383	23,680,632	39,230,862

**This supplementary budget includes USD 4.9 million budget presented in the Protection and Solutions Strategy for the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) launched in December 2015.*

Overall strategy and coordination

A comprehensive response to this protection situation will require distinct but complementary actions at the national level in NTCA countries and in States of transit and asylum, reinforced by cooperation at the regional and international levels, including through the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the support of the wider UN system and the civil society.

UNHCR's Protection and Solutions Strategy for the NTCA situation is framed under the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action adopted in December 2014. It ensures that prevention, protection and solutions interventions are embedded within comprehensive efforts to address root causes of displacement, including through existing national and regional strategies and taking into account the magnitude and patterns of displacement and profiles of displaced people. There is particular focus on the specific needs of children, women, and LGBTI populations of concern. It aims at addressing the protection needs of populations of three main groups: a) asylum-seekers and refugees, including those in transit; b) returned people with specific needs and vulnerabilities; and c) internally displaced people.

In order to support protection of, and provide solutions to, asylum-seekers and refugees in countries of transit and asylum, UNHCR’s strategy focuses on the implementation of identification and referral mechanisms, adequate reception arrangements, alternatives to detention, and access to asylum procedures, as well as supporting local integration opportunities and targeted resettlement. UNHCR’s strategy aims to support authorities in countries of origin to reinforce existing prevention and national protection response mechanisms to mitigate the effects of internal displacement, including strengthening welfare institutions for children and women and Ombudsperson’s Offices. It also includes advocacy and awareness-raising activities on the evolving protection situation, support to capacity building of national institutions and the strengthening of protection responses to the needs of people of concern.

Enhancing regional cooperation and partnerships to implement responsibility-sharing arrangements to address the humanitarian impact of displacement is an essential component of the strategy. UNHCR seeks to strengthen the inter-agency response to displacement in the region and to continue to work closely with the United Nations Development Group in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDG LAC), alongside UN Resident Coordinators. UNHCR will continue to lead the existing inter-agency Protection Task Forces and Protection Groups in NTCA countries and Panama along with other international organizations, including UNICEF, UNFPA, OCHA, ICRC, IOM and international NGOs.



Sister Nelly runs the Jtatic Samuel Ruiz Shelter in southern Mexico. In 2015 the shelter hosted more than 9,600 migrants in need who arrived in Mexico. UNHCR / Sebastian Rich

PLANNED RESPONSE

NORTHERN TRIANGLE OF CENTRAL AMERICA

Existing response

Since the launch of the Protection and Solutions Strategy for the NTCA in December 2015, UNHCR has gradually scaled up its operational presence in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala to ensure at least a minimal operational structure. However, the existing human resources capacity is far from adequate and requires significant enhancement. UNHCR offices in these countries also strengthened collaboration with government counterparts, and expanded its protection partner networks. Notably, UNHCR's Protection and Solutions Strategy has been introduced and discussed with international and national stakeholders in the NTCA countries.

The challenges posed by extensive forced displacement are gradually being recognized by NTCA governments. Yet the lack of comprehensive data about where IDPs are located, about their needs and protection issues, has impeded the development of a protection response, and no NTCA government has yet created a population data system for IDPs. The main priority, therefore, is to produce a better estimate of the magnitude of displacement in order to deploy an appropriate response to existing protection needs. Measures to address the urgent protection risks faced by IDPs remain at a nascent stage of development. With the exception of Honduras, the countries in the region have not yet taken steps to adopt laws or policies specifically recognizing the rights of IDPs; to define policies for achieving solutions; to identify responsibilities and governance structures; or to allocate funding from national budgets to the issue.

UNHCR is assisting governments to establish appropriate reception conditions and mechanisms to identify the protection needs of people who have been voluntarily or involuntarily returned to their home countries. UNHCR-led protection working groups are being strengthened in the three NTCA countries to coordinate UN efforts as well as those of other international organizations. Nevertheless, current resources cannot meet the overwhelming protection needs in the region.

Strategy and coordination

UNHCR plans to significantly scale up its operational capacity in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in order to better respond to complex protection and programmatic needs; conduct profiling exercises for IDPs in El Salvador and Guatemala; and initiate a Protection Transfer Arrangement (PTA) pilot out of El Salvador. In Honduras, UNHCR will focus on building capacity of the recently established Inter-Institutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence. Strengthening inter-agency protection working groups and task forces where UNHCR works in

coordination with other UN agencies, including UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM, will be a priority in the three NTCA countries.

UNHCR’s national offices in the NTCA countries will offer support to develop national laws and/or policies to address protection needs in each country, based on humanitarian and development principles and an age, gender and diversity-sensitive approach. Operational field offices in critical locations will be established to meet the growing protection gaps of people in rural and border areas, particularly in Guatemala and Honduras.

REGIONAL OFFICE PANAMA

UNHCR’s Regional Office in Panama is implementing the Regional Protection and Solutions Strategy for the NTCA situation in close collaboration with partners. The Regional Office oversees UNHCR’s operations in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, as well as offices in Costa Rica and Mexico. It also covers protection activities in Cuba, and also in Nicaragua where UNHCR has not yet established an operational presence . It also leads the Regional Protection Working Group which supports the strategy and development of national protection networks in the NTCA countries. UNHCR’s Regional Office is also implementing advocacy actions relating to the increased needs in the region.

The main priority of the Office is to provide assistance to the operations in their heightened response to existing protection needs. In Panama, the Office will also support continued access to territory and quality RSD procedures to people in need of international protection, and strengthen an effective referral mechanism for those cases that need assistance.

Planned activities

Favourable protection environment	
Access to territory and risk of refoulement reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct border monitoring to identify vulnerable high-risk cases and offer appropriate protection response, particularly in Guatemala and Honduras.
Fair protection processes and documentation	
Access to, and quality of, status determination procedures improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the asylum system to ensure fair and efficient asylum refugee status determination procedures in the region.
Reception conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve and expand shelter infrastructure and transit centre conditions and provide assistance to the most vulnerable individuals and families in NTCA countries, particularly Guatemala. Provide individual support for people benefiting from the PTA programme in El Salvador.
Registration and profiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct profiling of the internal displacement situation in NTCA countries and strengthen protection responses in El Salvador and Guatemala.
Security from violence and exploitation	
Protection of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and implement child-safe spaces guaranteeing that girls and boys are safeguarded

from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in NTCA countries.

- Support Governments in their efforts to establish reception procedures, which include the identification of displaced children and adolescents with protection needs and the conduction of best interest assessments/determination in NTCA countries.
- Expand and strengthen local child protection systems to provide alternative care options for displaced children and families in NTCA countries.

Logistics and operations support

Operation management, coordination and support

- Reinforce the operational capacity of partners to enhance the implementation of activities in light of the growing needs in the region.

Financial requirements (USD)

To address the protection needs of the people of concern who have been displaced within and from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador as a result of the violence and insecurity, including asylum-seekers and refugees, returnees with protection needs and IDPs, UNHCR has established a supplementary budget for the Regional Office in Panama including additional requirements of USD 7.4 million, as shown in the table below.

	EXCOM BUDGET ExCom budget for the operation related to the situation (USD)	Additional REQUIREMENTS as of June 2016 (USD)	TOTAL as of June 2016 (USD)
Favourable protection environment			
Access to territory and refoulement risk reduced	-	148,820	148,820
Fair protection processes and documentation			
Status determination procedures	-	391,042	391,042
Reception conditions	1,031,195	2,547,975	3,579,170
Registration and profiling	1,518,895	1,558,708	3,077,603
Security from violence and exploitation			
Protection of children	-	1,144,770	1,144,770
Logistics and operations support			
Operation management, coordination and support	-	1,144,770	1,144,770
Subtotal	2,550,090	6,936,085	9,486,175
Support costs		485,526	485,526
Total	2,550,090	7,421,611	9,971,701

MEXICO

Existing response

The protection needs of the massive number of people from the NTCA who enter Mexico have generally been overlooked, in large part because they have often been viewed as migrants in transit. There have been insufficient efforts to inform people with international protection needs of their right to seek asylum and to ensure their access to refugee status determination procedures. As a result, less than 1 per cent of the estimated number of people from the NTCA who irregularly enter the country apply for asylum. This has a significant impact on protection because individuals who do not apply for asylum generally continue their journey north in very dangerous conditions. Many are detained and returned to their country of origin, but many are compelled to again try the same or similar route shortly after.

The situation is, however, evolving rapidly and an increasing number of individuals from the NTCA understand they can seek asylum in Mexico. Between 2013 and 2015 the number of asylum-seekers in Mexico increased by 162 per cent to 3,423 individuals, 89 per cent of whom were from the NTCA. The number of new asylum-seekers per month rose steadily during 2015 and further increased in the first quarter of 2016 to 1,467 people. As a result of the rising number of claimants, coupled with a decline in withdrawal of claims and a concurrent increase in the recognition rate to above 60 per cent thus far in 2016, the number of newly-recognized refugees is expected to increase fourfold between 2015 to 2016.

Based on the above, UNHCR is dramatically stepping-up mass information activities to raise awareness among potential asylum-seekers of their right to seek asylum. The Office has initiated discussions with its main government counterparts to further support the national asylum system as well as to significantly invest in improved reception arrangements and to enhance local integration. In support of Government efforts, the Office is currently discussing with the authorities on the possibility to expand refugee status determination (RSD) capacity and field presence, including through additional mobile interview teams of the Mexican Commission for Aid to Refugees (COMAR). UNHCR is also conducting border and detention monitoring activities and providing technical recommendations based on its findings, and is enhancing the capacity of civil society shelters and expanding cash-based assistance.

Strategy and coordination

UNHCR will seek to strengthen its support to COMAR, as required, to expand RSD capacity, including registration, quality of RSD decisions and field presence. Given the strain on the asylum system created by the increase in new arrivals, additional monitoring capacity, including through civil society protection networks, is required in border areas, migration detention centres and along the dangerous routes used by migrants and people of concern alike. In light of the dramatic increase in the number of new arrivals, far more is required to expand shelter space (including for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), families, single women and LGBTI), build the capacity

of staff and offer a comprehensive range of support, including psychological counselling, information on the asylum procedure and legal aid.

This will also facilitate efforts to promote the systematic use of alternatives to detention. Complementary cash assistance for those not in shelters will be stepped up as a strategy to further reduce the percentage of asylum applicants who abandon the procedure. UNHCR is currently developing its livelihoods and durable solutions strategy to strengthen partnerships with local governments and the private sector to respond to the massive increase in the number of refugees.

Planned activities

Favourable protection environment	
<p>Access to legal assistance and remedies</p> <p>Access to territory and risk of refoulement reduced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand legal aid services to a greater number of individuals and on a broader range of strategic concerns through a decentralized legal aid network that brings together over 10 organisations in at least 7 states. Create additional and build the capacity of existing community-based protection networks involving church and community leaders to ensure those in need of international protection receive adequate information on how to access the asylum procedure, in particular along Mexico’s southern border.
Fair protection processes and documentation	
<p>Access to and quality of status determination procedures improved</p> <p>Reception conditions improved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the asylum system to ensure fair and efficient asylum refugee status determination procedures. Increase capacity to ensure access to asylum and prevent potential refoulement through enhanced UNHCR detention and border monitoring and presence. Enhance the dissemination of information on how to access the asylum procedure through improved protection screening by migration authorities, information offices of municipal authorities and civil society protection networks. Increase the capacity of at least 20 civil society shelters to expand assistance (material and psychosocial) and livelihoods opportunities in safe environments to asylum-seekers and integration support to refugees, including families, UASCs, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).
Basic needs and essential services	
<p>Population has sufficient basic and domestic items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase cash-based interventions and vouchers by 150 per cent over the amount provided in the first half of 2016, thereby complementing the assistance provided by government and civil society shelters, including by bolstering field monitoring and interventions.

Community empowerment and self-reliance

Self-reliance and livelihoods improved

- Develop alliances with local governments and the private sector and provide access to self-reliance, vocational and technical training and ensure the inclusion of people of concern in the formal labour market or access to self-employment.

Financial requirements (USD)

To address the needs of the people of concern who have been displaced from NTCA countries as a result of violence and insecurity, UNHCR has established a supplementary budget for Mexico, including additional requirements of USD 7.5 million, as shown in the table below.

	EXCOM BUDGET ExCom budget for the operation related to the situation (USD)	Additional REQUIREMENTS as of June 2016 (USD)	TOTAL as of June 2016 (USD)
Favourable protection environment			
Access to legal assistance and remedies	283,168	250,611	533,779
Access to territory and refoulement risk reduced	614,918	1,283,687	1,898,605
Fair protection processes and documentation			
Reception conditions	1,404,378	1,737,572	3,141,950
Status determination procedures	321,293	1,236,349	1,557,642
Basic needs and essential services			
Basic and domestic items	121,793	1,253,056	1,374,849
Community empowerment and self-reliance			
Self-reliance and livelihoods	253,609	1,276,536	1,530,145
Subtotal	2,999,159	7,037,811	10,036,970
Support costs		492,647	492,647
Total	2,999,159	7,530,458	10,529,617

COSTA RICA

Existing response

Costa Rica is facing an unabated increase in asylum trends. New asylum applications from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have significantly increased in recent months; in 2015 there were around 2,200 asylum applications (72 per cent higher than in 2014) and more than 400 new applications were received in the month of January 2016 alone, suggesting the total number of asylum claims may double this year. Further to the successful implementation and consolidation of local integration programmes for refugees, UNHCR's 2016-2018 multi-year protection and solutions strategy in Costa Rica aims to ensure timely and fair RSD decisions and promote local integration for all refugees with a particular emphasis on the increasing Central American caseload. A solutions-based approach from the earliest stages of arrival in Costa Rica that includes asylum-seekers and refugees in available national protection and integration mechanisms is of paramount importance for UNHCR as a means of ensuring their legal status, livelihoods and access to rights.

Strategy and coordination

UNHCR will focus on the strengthening of its operational capacity in Costa Rica in order to ensure continued access to the territory and to quality RSD procedures from border points and timely referral of vulnerable cases, including SGBV survivors, UASC, and LGBTI individuals, among others, to service providers. The Office will support the progressive institutionalization of local integration programmes, fostering refugees' access to existing national plans on poverty reduction, development, employment, and entrepreneurship. In addition, the High-Level Roundtable "Call to Action: Protection Needs in the Northern Triangle of Central America," to be held in July 2016 and organized in Costa Rica, will ensure that sufficient visibility is given to the NTCA protection situation, raise awareness of the impacts of displacement on countries of origin, transit and asylum, and adopt a strategic regional response framework.

Planned activities

Favourable protection environment

Access to legal assistance and remedies

- Conduct 540 legal counselling appointments to incoming people of concern from the NTCA.
- Implement border monitoring activities to ensure effective access to refugee status determination procedures at border points, and timely referrals of vulnerable cases (SGVB, LGTBI, UASC, etc.) to corresponding service providers.

Access to territory and refoulement risk reduced

Fair protection processes and documentation

Refugee status determination

- Address current and critical backlogs that jeopardize the efficiency of the RSD system, by strengthening government capacities to reduce

	processing times of asylum claims, and decrease or eradicate current backlogs.
Security from violence and exploitation	
Prevention of and response to SGBV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a safe house for survivors of SGBV.
Basic needs and essential services	
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the memorandum of understanding with National Health Care Institution to provide six months of health care coverage to the most vulnerable people of concern.
Access to Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide cash grants for education packages for families in vulnerable situation.
Services for people with specific needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to basic reception conditions by providing shelter to the most vulnerable populations, including large families with large numbers of children, SGVB victims/survivors.
Community empowerment and self-reliance	
Self-reliance and livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement job integration strategies by strengthening alliances with private sector networks, and support self-employment opportunities for people of concern thorough the provision of training, and facilitation of access to financial services.
Leadership, coordination and partnership	
Coordination and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the organization and promotion, along with the Organization of American States and the Central American Integration System, a round table to foster the implementation of regional responses, building upon a common appreciation of the opportunities and challenges of this protection crisis.

Financial requirements (USD)

To address the needs of the people of concern who have fled from NTCA countries as a result of violence and insecurity, UNHCR has established a supplementary budget of USD 1.3 million for Costa Rica, as shown in the table below.

	EXCOM BUDGET ExCom budget for the operation related to the situation (USD)	Additional REQUIREMENTS as of June 2016 (USD)	TOTAL as of June 2016 (USD)
Favourable protection environment			
Access to legal assistance and remedies	-	32,056	32,056
Access to territory and refoulement risk reduced	-	78,729	78,729

Fair protection processes and documentation			
Status determination procedures	-	216,676	216,676
Security from violence and exploitation			
Prevention of and response to SGBV	-	124,761	124,761
Basic needs and essential services			
Access to Health	-	64,111	64,111
Access to Education	-	51,289	51,289
Services for people with specific needs	-	302,385	302,385
Community empowerment and self-reliance			
Self-reliance and livelihoods	-	218,532	218,532
Leadership, coordination and partnership			
Coordination and partnerships	-	128,223	128,223
Subtotal	-	1,216,761	1,216,761
Support costs		85,173	85,173
Total	-	1,301,934	1,301,934

BELIZE

Existing response

UNHCR established a presence in Belize in October 2015, following the reactivation of the asylum system in the country and in order to respond to the growing numbers of asylum-seekers, mostly from El Salvador. To date, the Office has focused on providing support to the Government of Belize to develop and strengthen its asylum system, including through technical advice to the Government on registration and RSD related issues, the installation of the proGres v.4 refugee database in July, enhancement of reception conditions for vulnerable families, promotion of self-reliance amongst host communities, and through awareness, training and capacity-building of stakeholders.

Strategy and coordination

A strengthened UNHCR presence in Belize is needed to support the Government in addressing the protection and assistance needs of growing numbers of asylum-seekers in the country and to ensure the sustainability of the response. To this end, UNHCR will scale up its operational activities in the country, in particular those aimed at revitalizing the asylum system in Belize and enhancing reception and absorption capacity for newly arriving refugees. This will include support for the newly established Department of Refugees, the provision of assistance to extremely vulnerable individuals

and support to communities hosting significant numbers of people of concern through community-based projects and livelihood interventions.

UNHCR will also support the establishment of the Protection Transfer Arrangement (PTA) upon agreement of the Government of Belize.

REGIONAL OFFICE WASHINGTON

UNHCR's Regional Office in Washington (ROW) oversees the United States of America (U.S.) and the Caribbean. The refugee dimension of the continuing influx from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala in the U.S. is now well-documented and validated by government data. In 2015, the U.S. alone received 49,600 new applications for asylum by nationals of the NTCA, which represents nearly a 50 per cent increase over the previous year. Many are women and children arriving unaccompanied, or in family units. Unaccompanied children are taken under the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services and are provided with care and specialised services. According to UNHCR, recognition rates for asylum-seekers from the Northern Triangle in the U.S. ranged from 53 – 63 per cent in 2015².

The increase in asylum-seekers has posed challenges for refugee reception and timely asylum adjudication. There also continue to be significant gaps in accessing legal representation for asylum-seekers. UNHCR has worked closely with the U.S. Government and civil society to respond and meet those challenges. Activities include border and detention center monitoring; development of a screening tool to identify children with international protection needs in government custody; support for the government's alternatives to detention initiatives; and training for refugee and asylum officers. Through a series of roundtables UNHCR is also engaging a range of stakeholders, including government and civil society, in a high-level dialogue on strengthening the U.S. asylum system. Beyond the domestic response, UNHCR is working with the U.S. Government to develop avenues for responsibility-sharing including alternative legal pathways to avoid dangerous onward movements.

Through this work, ROW is supporting the Regional Protection and Solutions Strategy for the NTCA situation in close collaboration with UNHCR offices in Mexico and Central America. ROW is also implementing advocacy actions relating to the increased needs in the region.

² UNHCR calculates the grant rate based on data received from the United States Government combining final decisions taken by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Executive Office for Immigration Review.

Planned activities

Fair protection processes and documentation

Refugee status determination

- Assist the Government in developing a comprehensive Asylum System including the registration and documentation of asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as the assessment of asylum claims by the Refugee Eligibility Committee in line with international standards.

Reception conditions

- Provide basic assistance to extremely vulnerable individuals arriving in Belize through Help for Progress,
- Support small scale infrastructure and livelihood interventions in host communities hosting large numbers of asylum-seekers arriving in Belize, as well as the beneficiaries of the PTA.

Financial requirements (USD)

To address the needs of the people of concern who have been displaced from NTCA countries, in particular from El Salvador, as a result of violence and insecurity, UNHCR has established a supplementary budget of USD 1.5 million for Belize, as shown in the table below.

	EXCOM BUDGET ExCom budget for the operation (USD)	Additional REQUIREMENTS as of June 2016 (USD)	TOTAL as of June 2016 (USD)
Fair protection processes and documentation			
Reception conditions	-	614,113	614,113
Status determination procedures	-	859,242	859,242
Subtotal		1,473,355	1,473,355
Support costs	-	103,135	103,135
Total	-	1,576,490	1,576,490

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Existing response

At present UNHCR has no capacity to support operations and governments in the region to ensure that people of concern are adequately identified and referred to the competent services provided by the authorities, civil society or UNHCR. The ability to comprehend the magnitude of internal displacement, and its main characteristics and dynamics, is key to devising proper responses. Access to protection, shelter, and documentation, as well the provision of basic needs assistance and solutions is essentially dependent on a robust identification and referral mechanism, in particular for those groups most at risk, such as unaccompanied children, women victims of SGBV and LGBTI individuals.

Strategy and coordination

The Regional Legal Unit in Costa Rica will coordinate the implementation of identification, registration and case management systems in the region, as well as the necessary actions to build the capacity of operations, Governments and civil society organizations, with particular emphasis on countries of origin (El Salvador and Honduras) and asylum (Belize, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama).

Biometric identification systems will be deployed; standard operating procedures for referring cases developed; profiling exercises for IDPs conducted. Smooth, fair and efficient case management systems will be supported in countries of origin and asylum.

Planned activities

Fair protection processes and documentation

Registration and profiling

- Support registration efforts undertaken by governments and civil society organizations, share information with people of concern and put in place standard operating procedures to improve registration exercises, focusing on the countries of the NTCA and the southern border of Mexico.

Financial requirements (USD)

To address the regional needs related to registration and case management of the operations of Central America, UNHCR has established a supplementary budget of USD 0.3 million for the Regional Legal Unit, as shown in the table below.

	EXCOM BUDGET ExCom budget for the operation (USD)	Additional REQUIREMENTS as of June 2016 (USD)	TOTAL as of June 2016 (USD)
Fair protection processes and documentation			
Registration and profiling	-	281,206	281,206
Subtotal	-	281,206	281,206
Support costs		19,684	19,684
Total	-	300,890	300,890

For more information and enquiries, please contact:

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