

# North of Central America Situation

2017 Mid-Year Update

The North of Central America suffers high levels of **violence** stemming from gangs and other organized criminal groups.

This insecurity is compelling an increasing number of persons – often entire families – to **flee** their homes, within their countries or to nearby countries.

All countries in the region are affected by these movements and a **regional response** is therefore of paramount importance.

## KEY INDICATORS

**215,000**

Refugees and asylum-seekers from the NCA at the beginning of the year. A **tenfold increase** over the last five years.

**174,000**

Internally displaced persons in 20 municipalities of Honduras between 2004 and 2014 due to **violence and crime**.

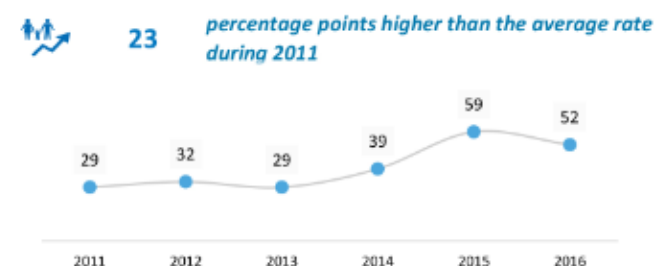
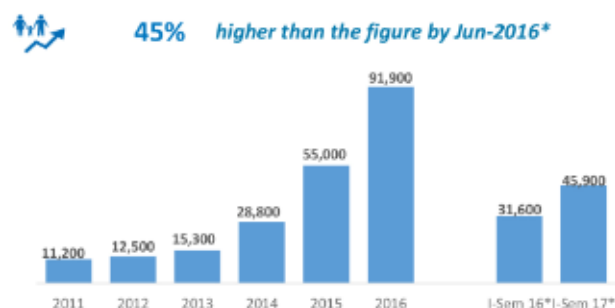
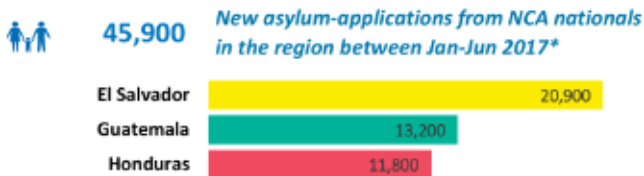
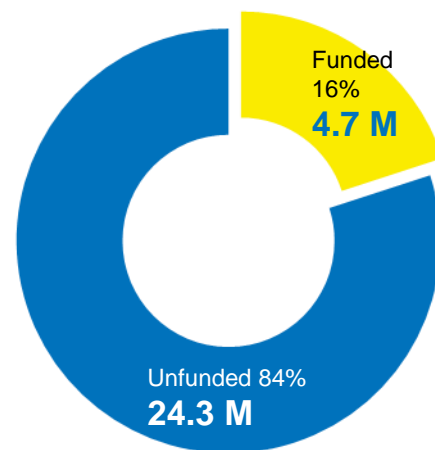
**77,969**

Deportees to the NCA countries from the USA and Mexico between Jan-Jul 2017, of which a significant proportion with **protection needs**.

## FUNDING

**USD 29 M**

requested for the NCA situation in 2017



## Progress at the regional level

### **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework**

North and Central America have experienced a large and complex movement of people due to violence, insecurity and other related factors. As a result, more refugees and others are in need of international protection across the region. All countries in the region are affected – as countries of origin, transit, asylum and/or return, and in some case as a mixture of these – and have a shared responsibility to respond.

This growing, forced displacement calls for stronger protection and solutions, as well as measures to address the root causes by promoting stability and fostering an environment for longer-term security, economic development and prosperity.

Building on previous regional and global efforts to find protection solutions to forced displacement, the Government of Honduras, the Organization of American States and UNHCR are organizing a regional conference on 26 and 27 October 2017 in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The meeting will draw participants from governments from across North and Central America, along with other interested countries, civil society, the private sector, regional actors, and development and humanitarian organizations.

The goal is to adopt and implement the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (CRPSF), a regional application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The CRPSF seeks to galvanize new commitments and operationalize existing ones to address forced displacement from a regional perspective, incorporating countries of origin, destination and transit and working with a wide range of stakeholders to create a truly comprehensive and sustainable approach. Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama have so far confirmed participation in the CRPSF.

The CRPSF will include a national operational plan for each participating country, setting out the strategy it will pursue to strengthen protection, promote prevention and bring about solutions to forced displacement. Furthermore, the conference is expected to mobilize commitments from cooperating States, and other relevant regional and international actors, in support of these national plans.

## North of Central America (NCA) Situation:

UNHCR Presence, 2017



## Achievements (January – June 2017)



### PROTECTION

#### EL SALVADOR

##### Achievements and Impact

- The Government of El Salvador has accepted to participate in the regional discussions to address the situation in the North of Central America (NCA) through achieving a common understanding on the situation and promoting joint responses in the framework of the CRPSF.
- The Government submitted a draft Migration Law to the National Assembly. UNHCR has been providing technical support to the Commission on International Affairs of the National Assembly – at the request of the President of the Commission - for their revision of the draft law. The latest version of the draft law contains progress in several areas related to the protection of asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons, including the express recognition of the principle of non-penalization for irregular entry for refugees and stateless persons; the recognition of the right to work to asylum-seekers; and the reduction of the

waiting time for refugees and stateless persons in order to get access to permanent residency and naturalization.

- UNHCR has been strengthening the capacities of the child protection institutions to provide protection to deported children with protection needs. The Office trained civil servants on the best interest procedures, including staff of the Attorney General's Office, the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONNA) and the National Institute for Children and Adolescents (ISNA). UNHCR also supported the dissemination at the local level of a child protection protocol for children deportees. This protocol is important because it defines standard operating procedures applying to all the reception centers for children, providing guidance on the role and responsibilities of the different State institutions intervening in the process.
- A Cooperation Agreement was signed with the Women Institute and with an NGO advocating for LGBTI rights (COMCAVIS TRANS) to strengthen their response capacity, especially in 3 main areas: a) emergency identification of cases requiring accompaniment, b) legal and humanitarian assistance, and c) development of a detailed registration system to document protection needs. The start of the project with COMCAVIS allows the extension of the protection network for LGTBI people living in El Salvador, since this population has been identified as being at high risk due to the hate crimes. This alliance seeks to strengthen the capacity of the civil society to identify cases of LGBTI persons with protection needs, refer them to competent entities, provide emergency humanitarian assistance and monitor the transit route to ensure safe conditions.
- UNHCR has been supporting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its efforts to strengthen their consular network as a frontline protection tool through workshops, visits to detention centers for deportees and along the migrant route.
- UNHCR, in coordination with partners, have identified and processed 80 cases (246 persons) in the framework of the Protection Transfer Agreement (PTA).
- UNHCR's implementing partners have provided emergency accommodation to 42 persons at the highest and most imminent risk in temporary safe locations. Emergency accommodation is used until a solution is found either with relatives or in a shelter/safe house. In this regard, partners CRISTOSAL and IDHUCA have supported 5 safe houses where 11 families of 48 persons have been provided with physical protection while awaiting their transfer outside of El Salvador within the PTA framework. One case has also been provided with shelter by UNHCR's partner Caritas.
- UNHCR and partners have provided humanitarian assistance and psychological support to 147 persons. A total of 28 cases have been assisted with cash and food vouchers.

- Two cases of deported persons with protection needs (both deported from the US) received protection and assistance at one of the shelters of UNHCR's partner Caritas. A third case with protection needs was also temporarily sheltered at a hotel through Caritas.
- One deported person with protection needs (transgender woman) has been readmitted to Mexican territory with UNHCR's support and subsequently recognized as a refugee.
- UNHCR has been supporting three child protection reception centers (CANAF) in the departments of Usulután, Santa Ana and San Miguel, providing equipment, enhanced visibility and technical assistance to improve the protection response for deported children with protection needs.
- UNHCR has supported one safe house for women survivors of SGBV managed by the Salvadorian Institute for Women (ISDEMU), which provides special services, such as physiological, physical, legal and humanitarian assistance to women victims of violence accompanied by their children.

## GUATEMALA

### Achievements and Impact

- In April 2017, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala forwarded an official letter to the High Commissioner for Refugees, in which the State of Guatemala expressed its commitment to develop, jointly with other countries, a regional application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. Later in April, Guatemala also agreed to host the Regional Protection Dialogue, as part of the preparations to the Second High-Level Roundtable.
- As part of this same process, Guatemala took significant steps in developing its chapter of the CRPSF. An Executive Committee comprised of the MFA, OAS, UNHCR and the Resident Coordinator was established, and Guatemala officially started the rounds of national consultations in May 2017.
- In Guatemala, a new Migration Code came into force in May 2017, providing the right to work to asylum-seekers and a more beneficiary migratory status to asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR is actively involved in the drafting of new regulations jointly with the Government. The UN Specialized Group on Migration, which is led by UNHCR, also designed an advocacy strategy and technical advisory opinions to support authorities in the transitional process.
- UNHCR continued to attend all technical and plenary meetings of the National Commission for Refugees (CONARE) in 2017. From January to June 2017, Guatemala registered 67 new asylum claims, mostly from El Salvador (52%) and Honduras (12%). So far, CONARE met 6 times and reviewed 24 asylum claims, out of which 83% resulted in refugee status. Abandonment rates are the lowest since 2002, currently standing at 19% - which points to Guatemala being considered by people of concern as a country of asylum instead of only a country of transit. The

strengthening of the National Safe Spaces Network and UNHCR's training to all partners may also have had an impact on the asylum system, as the eligibility officers report receiving more referrals from UNHCR's partners.

- For the occasion of the World Refugee Day, UNHCR and the Government of Guatemala presented a report on the 15th Anniversary of Guatemala's National Asylum System, which reviews the main trends in asylum claims, as well as the performance of the National Refugee Commission over the past 15 years. The main highlights include: a total of 719 asylum claims registered in Guatemala since 2002; since 2014, an increase of 206% in the number of new asylum claims, mostly submitted by Salvadorans; 3 months on average to complete the review of an asylum claim (first instance); 167 persons recognized as refugees in Guatemala since 2014; 99% eligibility rates for Salvadorians and 88% eligibility rates for Hondurans; recognition of LGBTI persons as refugees due to persecution for reasons of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- In April 2017, UNHCR signed two MoUs with Government agencies dealing with child protection issues in Guatemala, the General Attorney's Office and the Secretariat for Social Welfare, which set up the framework for strengthened cooperation on child protection initiatives in the country. Both MoUs have a strong component on capacity building for child protection authorities at central and departmental level, with a particular focus on strengthening identification and protection responses to children in transit and returned children with international protection needs, including the development of referral mechanisms to the asylum system.
- In Guatemala, the number of children in transit travelling with their families or unaccompanied increased by 745% in comparison to the previous year. Of all children in transit, 36% travelled unaccompanied. Moreover, of all persons identified by the National Safe Spaces Network as having fled their countries of origin due to violence perpetrated by criminal gangs, domestic violence and sexual and gender-based violence, 21% were children.
- This year so far, UNHCR Guatemala provided training on SGBV to 164 authorities on international standards, identification and referrals of survivors. Civil society partner organizations identified 9 cases of SGBV amongst asylum-seekers, refugees and persons in transit, all of which were referred to protection mechanisms.
- During the first half of the year, the National Safe Spaces Network in Guatemala was considerably expanded. The Network now includes 6 partner organizations who, with UNHCR's support, manage 7 physical safe spaces (including one exclusively for unaccompanied children) and 10 protection points, where people of concern in transit receive information on asylum, humanitarian assistance and referrals to protection mechanisms. In March 2017, UNHCR also supported the opening of the first safe space in the region exclusively dedicated to LGBTI

persons with international protection needs. A new safe house for people at heightened risk was also established. Kobo Toolbox, an innovative data collection mechanism, is fully rolled out and providing key analysis on displacement trends for people of concern in transit.

- UNHCR Guatemala expanded its field presence in Petén, Northern Guatemala, which allowed for increased protection by presence, border monitoring and delivery of assistance. Cross-border coordination was also strengthened amongst NCA countries, Belize and Mexico. Increased border monitoring and binational meetings between field offices from all countries enhanced information sharing and cross-border referrals of vulnerable cases.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Jointly with the UN Specialized Group on Migration, UNHCR is advocating for reforms to the new migration code, related to breaches of the principles of non refoulement and non-penalization for irregular entry.

### HONDURAS

#### Achievements and Impact

- In March 2017, the Government of Honduras formally confirmed its participation as a pilot country, and the first country of origin, in the regional application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and committed to undertaking a process of national consultations, working closely with the UNHCR National Office, to contribute to the development of the CRPSF. UNHCR has actively engaged with participating government institutions around the design and planning of a multi-tiered consultation process which is ongoing.
- UNHCR continues to work closely with the Government and provide technical assistance to the Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of IDPs (CIPPDV) on a draft law on forced displacement for Congress. The Office has signed an LoU with the Ministry of Human Rights, Justice, Governance and decentralization that includes technical assistance to the CIPPDV, financial support to guarantee human capacity in the functioning of the CIPPDV, effective coordination with the protection working group (PWG) to guarantee direct contact between the CIPPDV and IDPs at the field level, as well as the development of a contingency plan for massive displacements and deportations.
- With UNHCR's support, the CIPPDV has started its decentralization process in 3 municipalities of the country: San Pedro Sula, El Progreso and Tegucigalpa. Five training sessions have been developed at field level with members of the administrations in order to present the Commissions' objectives and work plan, improve the administration knowledge on forced displacement and emphasize roles and responsibilities in the response to IDPs. About 50 functionaries have been trained in forced displacement.



- UNHCR has been actively accompanying the Refugee Commission during the weekly sessions to review asylum requests (9 in the first semester). 3 of the 9 pending cases have so far been recognized as refugees.
- A work plan for 2017 between UNHCR and the National Institution of Migration (NIM) was approved. It includes capacity-building activities and the design of standard operating procedures to improve RSD processes. UNHCR and the NIM published the first participatory assessment conducted in 2016 with asylum seekers and refugees to identify existing gaps and protection needs as well as solutions. The process ensured significant participation of refugees and asylum seekers in the country and serves as an advocacy tool to strengthen the asylum system.
- As a result of the participatory assessment, UNHCR has supported the establishment of a Refugees and Asylum Seekers Committee, whose main objective is to ensure significant participation of this population in the decision-making process concerning international protection, and serves as a follow-up mechanism to monitor their local integration.
- 30 people of concern received humanitarian assistance through UNHCR's partner Centre for Research and Promotion of Rights (CIPRODEH).
- UNHCR has facilitated the gathering of Country of Origin Information for eligibility commissions visiting from Mexico and Canada. In order to improve reception conditions, UNHCR continues to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the development of unified guidelines for the identification of deportees with protection needs in the CAMRS (Centre for Attention of Returned Migrants).
- During the first half of 2017, youth have been consulted in 4 youth community centers by Save the Children in Tegucigalpa. Two risk-analysis sessions were also conducted with youngsters in San Pedro Sula within UNHCR's project with the Mennonite Social Action Center (CASM). They have also received vocational training, psychosocial support, humanitarian assistance and educative subsidies (20 beneficiaries).
- UNHCR has been accompanying staff of partner organizations to field visits and in their work at community level for coaching purposes and to ensure their practical familiarization with some key protection concepts concerning youth and child protection. A total of 20 staff members from partner Save the Children have been trained on youth and adolescent programming in order to initiate youth interventions, and 61 staff members of partner Casa Alianza have been trained on children's Best Interest Procedures through 2 workshops.
- More than 90 members of national and international NGOs, community-based organizations, local authorities and community structures have been trained on community-based child protection mechanisms through 2 workshops organized



jointly with the Government Directorate for Children, Adolescents and Families (DINAF).

- A Strategy on gender and SGBV has been design during the first semester of the year including: i) development of consultations with IDP women in high-risk areas to identify gaps and protection needs, ii) advocacy with the women Congress bench to seek support to the forced displacement law and improve inclusion of IDPs and gender-related issues in their proposals, iii) strengthening of women shelters at the national and regional levels, iv) inclusion of specific assistance and attention routes and protocols in governmental programs such as the “Ciudad Mujer” initiative to guarantee linkages with the CIPPDV, v) improvement of technical capacity in gender related issues with key counterparts in the government and civil society, vi) public events to improve public attitude.
- Two training sessions have taken place for partner *Calidad de Vida* in Tegucigalpa and a community-based consultation with women in high-risk areas has been conducted.
- In San Pedro Sula, UNHCR has been working with the Municipal Office for Women. Technical support has been provided in order to improve its services and to create linkages with the affected population.
- UNHCR has directly provided assistance to 294 IDPs in the first semester of the year. Some of them have been referred to the protection and assistance network for humanitarian evacuation, others for resettlement within the country and a third group has been guided on international protection and asylum procedures. 282 of them received humanitarian assistance.
- UNHCR led the response of the PWG to a collective displacement of 54 families (200 persons) threatened by a well-known gang. Humanitarian assistance as well as relocation alternatives were provided. Follow-up mechanisms to guarantee local integration are being established.
- Between January and June, a total of 80 deported persons from the US with protection needs were identified and assisted with partner NRC. Regarding children deported from Mexico, the DINAF has reported an increase of 11% compared to 2016. A quarter of them had been internally displaced before fleeing the country. UNHCR continues providing identification and assistance through partners.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Additional resources are needed to ensure monitoring and coordination with border authorities, which is crucial to guarantee access to the territory, and to strengthen UNHCR’s work with the NMI.
- While deported children with protection needs can be identified at the reception centre of *El Belen*, there is no transit and reception centre that can ensure the identification of IDP children. The *Centros de Paso* (drop-in centres), a network of

temporary alternative care throughout the country, is a unique opportunity to fill this gap. Resources are required to improve reception conditions.

- Due to an increasing hostile environment for youth and adolescents, UNHCR identified the need to develop a strategy promoting their participation in order to have a better understanding of their protection needs and possible solutions. This would imply more capacity building to partners in order to shift their perception of youth, support to community centres' activities, the organization of consultations with adolescent and youth and more support to community-based initiatives.
- Support to the local women organizations' network providing responses to SGBV is an identified priority and resources are required.

## BELIZE

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR carried out a capacity-building session for 12 Immigration Supervisors from a number of offices around Belize, including supervisors covering several border points, the airport, and headquarters.
- In coordination with Police and Immigration officials, and in conjunction with the Refugees Department, UNHCR is preparing to carry out a series of capacity-building endeavors to officials at all main border points in Belize, ensuring training to all levels of the staff that may come into contact with persons of concern. It is hoped that standard operating procedures and guidance on referrals of asylum-seekers to the Refugees Department will be promulgated, ensuring greater protection of persons of concern.
- In June, UNHCR conducted a cross-border mission with Guatemala to meet with officials on both sides of the border and to analyze the situation of persons of concern. Information on the Belizean asylum process was shared with the partners on the Guatemalan side of the border, with the intention of providing persons of concern with greater awareness of the process and their rights. UNHCR's forthcoming capacity building program at the border points will further support these endeavors to ensure access to territory and other rights.
- UNHCR carried out several visits to the Belize Central Prison to assess potential cases of detained asylum-seekers. In this context, an urgent case of a family facing deportation was identified and brought to the attention of the Belizean authorities. After the Refugees Department carried out an initial interview, the Government agreed that the persons were asylum-seekers (to be considered within 14 days of entry), they were given access to the process, released from detention, and reunited with their small child who had been in the Belize Government custody.
- The Refugees Department and the Refugee Eligibility Committee continue to review and process individuals' asylum cases and make final recommendations for recognition. As of the end of June 2017, the REC had recommended a total of 115 cases / 286 persons for refugee status after a substantive review on their merits.

- As of the end of June 2017, the recognition rate for total cases reviewed and decided by the Refugee Eligibility Committee was at 85%. The main countries of origin of the asylum-seekers were: El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.
- During the reporting period, UNHCR met with counterparts from the Ministry of Human Development – including the Human Services Department – and agreed that UNHCR, ideally with the participation of the Refugees Department, would carry out a series of trainings on refugee law and policy for the social workers of the Ministry. The trainings, which are expected to take place in all six districts of Belize, are slated to begin in late August and continue through the rest of 2017. The capacity building will reach over 70 social workers and supervisors of the Ministry, and will hopefully lead to the development of referral pathways for unaccompanied and separated children in Belizean custody to ensure that they have access to asylum processes and other relevant rights.
- UNHCR’s implementing partner continues to identify and refer SGBV cases for relevant assistance, and the office is to further engage with social service authorities and partners in the coming months to better identify and refer cases in need of particularized services or protection.
- UNHCR’s implementing partner participated in UNHCR’s NGO Consultations in Geneva in June; and UNHCR participated in the ANRLA meeting in Costa Rica in June. These activities are part of efforts to tie UNHCR and its implementing partner into larger networks of organizations working on refugee issues.
- UNHCR met with various civil society groups, including the Belizean Red Cross and other local groups, and is working to create greater linkages and collaboration with new partners in the country.
- The cross-border mission of UNHCR’s relevant office in the border between Belize and Guatemala helped to better identify gaps in protection in the border region, as well as opportunities for improving access to rights and services to persons of concern.

#### **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- Several challenges remain in terms of Belize’s legal framework, the most critical of which is a strict 14-day deadline for asylum applications, which prohibits some persons of concern from accessing the asylum system.
- Belize has yet to officially recognize any refugees, despite nearly 300 persons having been recommended for asylum by the Refugee Eligibility Committee after a substantive review of their cases. UNHCR continues to work with the authorities and hopes to receive word of the first recognitions in the near future.
- There is currently no clear referral pathway to the asylum system for children of concern who are in the custody of Belizean authorities. Children generally come into this situation in a few different ways, most commonly as unaccompanied minors who are alone in Belize or because their parents or other adult guardians

are detained on immigration charges and the minors are put into custody of the State. The trainings intend to help build capacity and eventually lead to a referral pathway to ensure children of concern are appropriately referred for consideration of refugee status.

- There is insufficient availability of psychosocial care available for persons of concern who are survivors of SGBV.
- The lack of legal work authorization for asylum-seekers continues to make persons of concern in Belize vulnerable to exploitation, particularly women and children.

## COSTA RICA

### Achievements and Impact

- In June, Costa Rica's Vice-president called for a high-rank meeting that included ministers and vice-ministers to express the government's willingness to develop a National Chapter of the CRRF. In order to move forward, the VP appointed a CRRF Executive Team with members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy and Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion.
- UNHCR organized a two-day RSD procedures refresher workshop with special focus on decision narrative techniques. The workshop had an attendance of 26 persons including adjudicators and the newly-appointed judges and their legal advisors.
- Within the MoU between UNHCR and the University of La Salle, UNHCR organized a planning meeting with the University Rector, the Dean of the Law Faculty and other relevant university authorities and professors, as well as with UNHCR's legal partner HIAS, to come up with an agreement on establishing legal clinics to complement UNHCR/HIAS legal assistance and aid in areas of effective access to rights.
- Within the framework of the Safe Spaces Network, UNHCR conducted a series of preliminary sessions with partners HIAS, CENDEROS and RET, which showed great enthusiasm to participate in the aid network that is envisaged to strengthening their SGBV case management capacities.
- Within the framework of the MoU with the Judiciary, UNHCR held a work meeting with the Director of National Commission for the Improvement of the Administration of Justice in order to define the content and other specifics of the refugee and statelessness tool kit for their community legal advisors.
- Within the MoU between UNHCR and the University of La Salle, the Post-Graduate Studies on International Refugee Law began during the period of reference. With an attendance of 34 students, the third cohort of the post-graduate course is aimed at government officials – Administrative Migration Tribunal, Migration Authority, and the Office of the Ombudsperson, Supreme Electoral Tribunal, Corp

Diplomatic, UNICEF, the Costa Rican Red Cross, as well as Academia officials and members of the legal community.

- Within the framework of the QAI, UNHCR agreed to a request of the Refugee Unit and the Administrative Migration Tribunal to collaborate with the Administration implementing the Reduction Project, in order to prevent that the positive outcomes of the project get reverted, given that the Refugee Unit finalized 2016 with no pending backlogs, and all cases before the Administrative Migration Tribunal were submitted with recommendations for the Judges to hand down their final decisions. This is particularly relevant considering that the tendency of asylum claims continued on the rise, closing 2016 with 4,460 claims, a 102% increase when compared with 2015, and a 222% increase when compared with 2014.
- Recognition rates of asylum seekers from the NCA are at 30% (First Instance) and 39% (Second Instance).
- UNHCR began conversations with relevant authorities, including the Planning Office of the Migration Authority, the Refugee Unit and the Administrative Migration Tribunal Legal Officer, to advance venues for introducing a harmonized data collection system between the two RSD instances. The proposal includes the rolling out of proGres v4 as a unique registration system for UNHCR and its partners, including the Government.
- UNHCR participated as a panel member in two specialized courses that were co-organized with IOM on migration of children. UNHCR facilitated a module on Child Protection and Asylum Perspective, including international and national protection, BID/BIA, and best practices at national and regional levels. The workshops benefited some 50 governmental officials, including the Ministry of Education, the National Children Protection Institute, and the National Women's Institute, and laid the basis for further coordination and cooperation among those involved in child protection.
- UNHCR conducted a series of meetings with the National Child Protection Institute (in its Spanish acronym PANI) to advance rights and entitlements of asylum seeker and refugee children and to follow up on cases that were submitted before the institution. As a result, it was agreed that close cooperation both at local and central levels are needed, which is envisaged to materialise through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding and a work plan for 2017, including the revision and update of the relevant protocols.
- UNHCR conducted a border monitoring mission to Peñas Blancas, Liberia and to the CATEM in Las Cruces. An SGBV prevention and response and child protection workshop, including a refresher session on International Refugee Law and Statelessness session were conducted for public officers from governmental and civil society institutions.

- UNHCR lectured at the Faculty of Psychology of the National University of Costa Rica on Refugee protection and SGBV prevention and response.
- UNHCR met with the National Women's Institute to come up with an effective road map of national intervention in a case involving a Haitian family and their children.
- Within the framework of the Multi-functional Team (MFT) on SGBV prevention and response a one-day meeting was organised together with the National Women's Institute. The objective of the meeting was to have a refresher session on SGBV prevention and response-related matters with the aim to further revise and harmonise existing protocols for SGBV interventions. The MFT-SGBV prevention and response is chaired by UNHCR and comprised of partner agencies HIAS, ACAI, CENDEROS, The Jesuit Migrants' Services, RET, and Fundación Mujer, as well as the National Women's Institute, the Office of the Ombudsperson, the National Commission against smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, and the Municipality of Limon.
- A meeting with civil society organisations dedicated to advance rights and entitlements of LGBTI persons was held to further coordinate interventions involving identification and case referrals of trans asylum seekers and refugees.
- UNHCR submitted their Confidential Comments for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in preparation for the Committee's 67th Session regarding the UPR of Costa Rica.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Given the ever-increasing number of asylum applications filed since 2016 vis-à-vis the adjudication bodies' processing capacity and the Government's hiring freeze policy, waiting times began to increase as well as pending backlogs.
- Currently the refugee's document costs US\$68 per person for first time issuance.

#### MEXICO

##### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR has worked to increase and strengthen legal assistance and representation available to asylum-seekers. Three regional workshops were held with 95 lawyers trained on international standards. Lawyers from the Instituto Federal de Defensoría Pública (Mexico's Federal Public Defenders Office) also took part in the trainings meaning specialised legal aid for asylum-seekers is now available across most of the country. A MoU was signed with Greenberg-Traurig law firm, which will now offer pro bono legal representation to asylum-seekers. This is the first law firm to specifically agree to represent asylum-seekers in Mexico.
- Collaboration with legal partners has continued in order to ensure that a higher number of PoCs receive legal assistance and representation. In 2017, UNHCR has so far financed 31 lawyers to work in NGOs and civil society shelters. This has



resulted in 2,171 persons receiving legal advice on how to access the asylum-procedure and 2,713 persons receiving individual legal assistance and legal representation for their asylum requests and appellate procedures. Additionally, three complaints were filed before the National Commission on Human Rights. Notably, the Alaide Foppa Legal Clinic of the Universidad Iberoamericana obtained a favourable decision in a Juicio de Amparo (Rights-based constitutional litigation), in which the court held that any detention of an asylum-seeker, which is not properly justified by the INM in accordance with standards established by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, will be considered to be arbitrary.

- UNHCR has continued to stress that detention of asylum-seekers must be an exception. UNHCR has worked with the INM, COMAR and our partner shelters to ensure that asylum-seekers benefit from the alternative to detention (ATD) programme and are not detained during their asylum procedure. In the first semester of 2017, 49 advocacy interventions were carried out to ensure that people of concern were released from detention. In the first semester of 2017, a total of 570 asylum-seekers were released to shelters. Despite the fact that the program is not based on an enforceable piece of legislation or legal document, the Mexican Government has assured UNHCR that it is a permanent program that will not be eliminated once the current administration leaves office at the end of 2018.
- Additionally, UNHCR has continued to collaborate with governmental authorities to strengthen their capacity to identify and properly assist persons in need of international protection at points of entry and checkpoints throughout Mexico. To that end, UNHCR provided trainings to 622 INM officers on international protection, their obligations to ensure persons have access to the asylum procedure and the importance of avoiding refoulement.
- In the first semester of 2017, 49.5% of the asylum-seekers from the NCA (1,340) were recognised as refugees (426) or received complementary protection (238) and 99.3% of the asylum-seekers from Venezuela (312) were recognised as refugees (310).
- In the first semester of 2017, of the total number of asylum-seekers from the NCA (3,762), 35.6% concluded their procedure (1,340) and of the total number of asylum-seekers from Venezuela (1,420), 22% concluded their procedure (312).
- In the first semester of 2017, 1 case of refoulement was recorded and re-admission achieved following intervention with the INM, with 2 cases prevented
- In relation to the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI), UNHCR has facilitated the drafting of an Eligibility Manual for COMAR adjudicators, which has now been finalised. This Manual addresses persisting gaps in due process and the interpretation of refugee law.
- A fact-finding mission for country-of-origin information took place in Honduras with COMAR and IRB of Canada.



- UNHCR has continued to focus its efforts on capacity-building activities and the provision of technical assistance to federal and local Child Protection Authorities (CPA) - in charge of conducting best interest determinations and providing legal representation - in states that receive the highest numbers of foreign children and adolescents in the country, namely Chiapas, Tabasco and Veracruz, in close collaboration with UNICEF and IOM. To that end, in the first semester of 2017, three interinstitutional workshops were conducted with UNICEF and IOM to strengthen the coordination of local authorities in the states of Chiapas (35), Oaxaca (22) and Tabasco (21), and one workshop on legal representation was jointly-held with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) for 35 CPA staff stationed across the country.
- UNHCR's partner ODI (Oficina de la Defensoría de los Derechos de la Infancia) also conducted an interinstitutional workshop on child cognitive and emotional development and the existing protection mechanisms for 29 local authorities and key actors in the state of Veracruz, and provided training for UNHCR field and UNOPS staff working directly with local CPAs in the states of Chiapas (Tapachula and Palenque), Tabasco (Villahermosa and Tenosique), Veracruz (Acayucan).
- In addition to funding UNOPS positions working directly with local CPAs in cases involving children of concern to UNHCR (providing assistance for over 400 children), the Office has supported the deployment of a consultant for legal representation who has been working directly with the National CPA since November 2016, providing legal assistance for 76 asylum-seeking and refugee children. UNHCR has also made 300 advocacy interventions on child protection issues to promote access to the asylum procedure and family reunification, and prevent child detention.
- 255 Best Interest Assessment procedures were conducted so to ensure identification of protection needs or access to the asylum procedure. 125 unaccompanied children had access to the asylum procedure.
- In the first semester of 2017, UNHCR identified and referred 199 survivors of SGBV to effective protection mechanisms, with 44 survivors referred to specialised services (medical, psychosocial, legal, emergency services). Furthermore, 91 government officials, UNHCR and partner staff were trained and 149 persons of concern informed on SGBV prevention and response.
- UNHCR created an SGBV working group with all migrant shelters in Mexico City, local and international civil society organizations, which has been meeting regularly. In the first semester of 2017, the SGBV working group conducted a total of 10 participatory assessments with 60 participants (girls, boys, adolescents, women, men and LGBTI) on SGBV, results will be disseminated in the second semester. An internal capacity-building program was created, with the members of the working group training the other organizations based on their expertise. The first series of training on SGBV basics has been implemented with individual

workshops in four shelters, Programa Casa Refugiados and Sin Fronteras. The second series on LGBTI delivered by the expert NGO Fundación Arcoiris is underway. The SGBV working group has also increased coordination with the local HIV Clinic (Clínica Condesa) resulting in a prioritized referral mechanism (including with COMAR), non-discrimination agreements, and a health fair with STI/HIV blood test detection.

- Standard operating procedures on SGBV were created and field staff were trained on their implementation. Mapping of SGBV response services were also conducted in all areas of responsibility of Field Offices.
- In Tapachula, together with partner Fray Matias, UNHCR facilitates SGBV support groups that meet twice a month for SGBV female survivors, LGBTI persons, children and adolescents, and men. The support groups have been very popular, and include the monthly participation of the local public health program (Jurisdicción Sanitaria) on sexual and reproductive health, and the municipal ministry for the empowerment of women on prevention of violence against children.
- In Tapachula, UNHCR is implementing a pilot project on the intersection of cash-based assistance for LGBTI persons and their protection needs. UNHCR together with partner “A Friendly Hand against AIDS (UMA)” provides individual case management to the most vulnerable LGBTI cases including psychosocial support and accompaniment to the HIV clinic. UMA also conducts bi-weekly outreach brigades on sexual and reproductive health with rapid HIV tests to People of concern including in Hotel San Agustin and UNHCR’s waiting room.
- In the first semester of 2017, UNHCR focused its efforts on ensuring access to the asylum procedure for persons with international protection needs, by carrying out at least 32 border-monitoring missions and, together with partners, 347 monitoring visits to 17 detention centres in 13 states across Mexico. More than 10,000 individuals inside and outside detention centres were provided with information on the Mexican refugee status determination procedure. Efforts to provide information to persons of concern also included the use of information materials in key locations. 50 TV screens were placed in shelters and key locations to broadcast information on the right to seek asylum and more than 30,000 copies of information materials were distributed. UNHCR also continued to improve reception conditions. 2,329 individuals were provided with material/psychosocial support and accommodation in UNHCR partner-shelters. During this first semester, more than 1,700 households (3,276 persons) received cash-based assistance through direct cash payments, an increase of 97% compared to the same period last year.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Even though access to legal representation has been increased thanks to a stronger collaboration with legal partners, it remains insufficient to cover demand throughout the country.
- Operational capacity of COMAR remains limited to process the number of claims received on a monthly basis. Out of the 6,835 claims received in 2017, as of 30th June, 4,006 applications remain pending. Much of this is due to absence of a functioning biometric registration system.
- Although the number of asylum applications submitted by unaccompanied children and adolescents (UAC) has risen in recent years – 125 applications submitted up to June 2017, compared to 63 in all of 2013–, it is still low compared to the number of UAC detained by immigration authorities – 6,690 children up to June 2017, 95% of them from northern Central America –, so further efforts are needed to promote the use by relevant authorities and civil society actors across the country of the Protocol for the identification of children in need of international protection, a tool developed by COMAR, UNHCR and UNICEF in 2016. A series of workshops will be conducted across the country in the second half of 2017 to that end.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with the National Child Protection Authority, is planning on conducting a series of workshops for key CPAs in the second half of 2017, to strengthen their capacities to prevent child detention, identify children in need of international protection, guarantee their access to the asylum system and promote their local integration.
- SGBV perpetrated against asylum-seekers and refugees, particularly women and LGBTI persons, remains an important challenge, particularly along migratory routes and in the Southern Border States.
- Plans for the second half of the year include the infrastructure improvement of shelters in Chiapas, Coahuila and Veracruz in order to create 252 additional spaces for persons of concern. Limited funding will prevent the completion of all these projects, which are necessary considering the increasing number of asylum-seekers.
- UNHCR estimates that by the end of 2017, the number of asylum-seekers could reach almost 20,000, based on the average monthly increase of 7.8% in asylum applications, which has been constant since January 2015. According to trends, 50% of the population will seek cash-based assistance but UNHCR will not be in a position to support the new arrivals considering current financial constraints.

## PANAMA

### **Achievements and Impact**

- Panama committed to participate in the CRPSF process and launched consultations at the national level.

- Within the CRPSF process, a total of 12 focus group discussions were held with 113 people of concern, among which adolescents, youth, women, men and elderly in Panamá City and Colon municipalities (asylum seekers, refugees and refugees with permanent residency).
- In the framework of the Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI), UNHCR and its governmental partner ONPAR carried out a revision of the more than 70 recommendations resulting from the four phases of the QAI in order to update the implementation status and to establish priorities for the rest of the year.
- UNHCR is actively participating in the process of drafting a protocol between ONPAR and SENNIAF, the child protection national institution, in order to ensure proper identification and referral of cases among both institutions and the establishment of joint best interest procedures.
- UNHCR facilitated a two-day workshop on International Refugee Law to delegates from the regional offices of the Ombudspersons and the specialized units.
- During the first half of 2017, UNHCR's local partners have provided different types of assistance to people of concern. NRC legally assisted 132 new asylum seekers, the Red Cross provided humanitarian assistance to 935 People of concern and 112 persons were hosted by the Pastoral de Movilidad Humana, in the "Hogar Luisa" – a temporary shelter for newly arrived asylum seekers.

## UNITED STATES

### **Achievements and Impact**

- UNHCR convened civil society partners to discuss the current situation related to UNHCR's persons of concern, with a special focus on quality of asylum determinations for individuals fleeing the NCA.
- UNHCR hosted webinar trainings for more than 600 U.S.-based lawyers interested in working pro bono on asylum cases, focusing on children's claims and gang-related claims. UNHCR hopes that these training will continue to increase the scope and quality of legal representation for asylum-seekers, especially those fleeing the NCA.
- UNHCR launched a series of webpages dedicated to providing key information to persons of concern who contact UNHCR for support. This includes how to seek asylum in the United States, information on country of origin conditions, pro bono resources, and other information. With more than 3,000 people expected to reach out to UNHCR in Washington this year, many of them from the NCA, this online resource will provide a valuable tool for sharing information.
- UNHCR finalized an informational video, highlighting the stories of unaccompanied children who have fled the NCA in search of protection in the U.S. This video is broadly available for use by partners and stakeholders to raise awareness of the reasons for these children and adolescents' flight and the challenges they face.

- UNHCR participated in the meeting on Prosperity and Security in the Northern Triangle of Central America, held in Miami, Florida. Co-hosted by the United States and Mexico, the meeting brought together a range of government, regional and private sector actors to discuss mechanisms for addressing root causes leading to flight from the NCA region. UNHCR participated as observers, and while the focus of the meeting was not on protection, many of the themes discussed and relationships established will have a direct impact on UNHCR's persons of concern.
- UNHCR protection staff supported U.S. government's participation in the annual meeting of the Regional Quadripartite Capacity-Building Initiative (RACBI) held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The convening brought together government partners from the United States, Canada and Mexico with UNHCR staff from the three countries. The purpose was to review the valuable accomplishments of the RACBI over the past year, and to chart a plan of action for the next year. The convening also focused on case management in the Canadian asylum system, with a particular focus on registration and processing and backlog management. Over the last few years, the RACBI has made important contributions to increasing asylum capacity in Mexico, complementing UNHCR's work in the country.
- The total number of people taken into immigration custody at or near the U.S. southern border was 140,050 through June 2017, of which 13,412 were unaccompanied children, many from the NCA. While the monthly border custody numbers rose slightly over the second quarter of 2017, overall numbers remain significantly below the same period in years prior. Nonetheless, the percentage of those claiming fear when taken into custody at or near the border increased to 21% by the end of second quarter 2017, which is slightly higher than the percentage at the end of 2016 (18%).
- Based on the data received from the U.S. government to date, through the end of June 2017, the United States has received over 33,862 asylum applications from citizens of the NCA (14,615 from El Salvador, 11,158 from Guatemala and 8,089 from Honduras), and there were 155,449 NCA asylum cases pending. Note that this data reflects affirmative applications for January through June 2017, but only reflects defensive applications for January through March 2017. As such, the final number of applications through the second quarter of 2017 will increase.



## COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

### HONDURAS

#### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR keeps improving its presence in high-risk areas in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Interventions focus on: i) the strengthening of social networks and

organizational processes, ii) the identification of existing gaps and protection needs, iii) the improvement of protection strategies and self-protection mechanisms, iv) the strategic approach to the Government and key allies.

- A total of 58 teachers from high-risk areas in Tegucigalpa have been trained in psychosocial first aid to improve protection mechanisms at the community level. A risk assessment has been conducted and a work plan to improve protection mechanisms has been developed. A total of 47 community leaders in San Pedro Sula have participated in risk-analysis sessions.
- A network of psychologists and experts in psychosocial support has been established in coordination with Doctors Without Borders. This network includes staff from all UNHCR's implementing partners and counterparts in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and other highly-affected municipalities.
- In San Pedro Sula, 3 risk-analysis sessions with teachers, youngsters and community leaders have been carried out in order to improve community-based protection mechanisms, effective interlocution with authorities and prevention of forced displacement.

#### **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- Direct presence from UNHCR staff in high-risk areas has been limited due to lack of human and operational resources.

### **BELIZE**

#### **Achievements and Impact**

- Community projects implemented during 2016 continue to progress. The health center constructed by UNHCR and partner Help for Progress in Armenia village is now regularly staffed by personnel from the Ministry of Health; and a police officer has been assigned to the police station UNHCR constructed in the village. Moreover, the cooperative that has been working on the greenhouse project in Valley of Peace will begin to sell produce directly at a new market day in Belmopan that will take place on weekends.
- UNHCR and its implementing partner Help for Progress carried out participatory assessments with various focus groups (including children, youth, women and men) in two different locations of the country. As a result, new community projects are currently being put in place that would help ensure greater resiliency of refugee hosting communities. The result will be that persons living in these refugee-hosting areas will indeed be able to fully take advantage of the opportunities.

#### **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- Once Belize begins to officially recognize refugees, UNHCR shall be able to more fully incorporate solutions into programming activities. In the meantime, UNHCR is

working to assist People of concern and the communities hosting them to build resilience in the meantime.

## COSTA RICA

### Achievements and Impact

- The Migration Authority, together with UNHCR, produced “Costa Rica, my new home”, a book that includes 11 stories about refugees in Costa Rica. It aims to raise awareness about the contributions of refugees who have been living in Costa Rica for a long-time. Its production has been funded by the Migration Social Trust Fund and UNHCR. The launch of the book will take place during the second semester of 2017.
- UNHCR adopted a participatory approach aimed at building a common understanding of the main issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers. This approach includes focal groups, case studies and strengthening of community-based groups to support self-reliance and advocacy in favour of refugees. In addition, a participatory-based research pilot has been developed. A virtual survey has been launched that measures access to State service by people of concern.

## MEXICO

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR supported the creation of open spaces for cultural activities for people of concern, through the collaboration with the Cultural Center of Tenosique (DECR), part of the Municipality of Tenosique, and the dissemination of information on the activities of the DECR.



### DURABLE SOLUTIONS

## EL SALVADOR

### Achievements and Impact

- After one year of implementation of the Protection Transfer Agreement (PTA), the experience has shown the existence of high-risk cases which do not want to or cannot be processed in the PTA. UNHCR, together with its partner organizations



CRISTOSAL and IDHUCA, are developing protection alternatives that can provide a durable solution to high-risk cases for which the PTA is not a viable option. The alternative mechanisms that are being developed as pilots for a few cases in 2017 are internal relocation and humanitarian evacuation. Guidelines are being developed and agreed between UNHCR and partners for those cases.

## GUATEMALA

### Achievements and Impact

- The PTA started in Guatemala in 2017. UNHCR partnered with a consortium of NGOs working with persons at heightened risk to identify and refer cases. During the reporting period, UNHCR worked on designing the project, training partner organizations and developing standard operating procedures for identification and referrals.
- The new Migration Code in Guatemala opens avenues for significant progresses in the local integration of refugees: asylum seekers are now allowed to legally work in the country and the refugee ID card will be issued by the same authority responsible for issuing national ID cards. Therefore, it is expected that, with an identity document in a format more similar to the national one, refugees will experience less challenges in accessing the labor market and other public services, as well as opening bank accounts. Moreover, the new migration code provides that nationals of Central America are entitled to apply for permanent residency in Guatemala after only one year of temporary residence. Considering that 94% of refugees in Guatemala are from El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, this new provision will provide them with a more beneficiary and stable status, enhancing local integration in the country of asylum.
- In Guatemala, 8 refugees were granted permanent residency during the reporting period.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The number of recognized refugees in Guatemala more than doubled in only two years, which demands a more robust response from UNHCR as well as support to partner organizations. Furthermore, in the particular context of Central America, restrictive migration policies from Northern countries and high levels of violence along transit routes in Mexico are also turning Guatemala into an option as a safe asylum country for many persons fleeing persecution. The increasing numbers of deportations from Mexico and the US, coupled with militarization of the Southern Mexican border with Guatemala, requires UNHCR to step up its efforts to strengthen the asylum system in Guatemala, with a strong focus on local solutions. Additional resources are required to strengthen durable solutions for refugees in the country.

## HONDURAS

### Achievements and Impact

- The UNHCR-Caritas information system for assistance to IDPs was validated with all 23 prioritized parishes at the national level. This system allows the identification and registration of causes, profiles, expulsion/reception areas, assistance provided, as well as land and housing abandoned during the displacement. This tool will be used by these parishes during the second semester of 2017, allowing UNHCR and partners to have analytical reports on a monthly basis.
- Along with this registration system, UNHCR has advanced in the development of a tool for the identification and mapping of abandoned land and housing in coordination with all 56 parishes in the country.
- The identification of legal gaps, land grabbing strategies and specific recommendations from the report on grabbed land and housing in the context of forced displacement was presented to all parties involved in the process during the first semester.
- A Letter of Understanding has been developed with the Municipalities Association in Honduras (AMHON) to guarantee effective compliance of identified recommendations and to improve the municipal cadastral functionary's technical capacity regarding forced displacement and abandoned property. An additional agreement has been signed with a national NGO for the identification and registration of abandoned houses in urban areas in Tegucigalpa.
- Three naturalization processes of refugees of Haiti and El Salvador have taken place.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Information gathering at the national level is not completely feasible due to lack of resources, presence and coverage. The UNHCR-Caritas information system needs to be strengthened both technically and operationally to guarantee adequate monitoring, identification and response.

## BELIZE

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR has continued to advocate for work authorization for asylum-seekers so that livelihoods and other integration activities could begin in earnest, to prepare persons of concern for possible durable solutions from an early stage.

## COSTA RICA

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR has strengthened its relationship with the Government to ensure local integration of refugees and asylum seekers through an MoU with the National Welfare Ministry that allows people of concern to access national social assistance programmes, and an MoU with the Ministry of Labour that will guarantee access to technical and vocational training, as well as job placement schemes.
- An MoU with the Ministry of Education is in the process of being renewed, and it will aim at reducing barriers to access the public education system.
- 27 people of concern got their primary education certificates validated during the first semester of 2017.
- UNHCR launched “Vivir la Integración”, a quality seal to improve the programmes, actions, and voluntary commitments of private companies to create a better local environment for refugees and asylum seekers.
- The Graduation Model was incorporated in the operation as a methodology; a method was developed to identify the most vulnerable cases (families living in extreme poverty) and improve the monitoring process using innovative tools for data collection. New tools were developed for case identification and monitoring processes. The programme continued operating and for the first semester 2017, 38 families from NCA countries completed the Graduation approach.
- Within the livelihoods programme, 48 people of concern from the NCA countries participated in the job fairs developed by UNHCR and its partner agencies, out of which 17 were hired. As part of the livelihoods activities, 27 people of concern concluded short courses aimed to enhance their employability skills and job readiness. 5 people of concern received seed capital to strengthen their self-employment activities.
- During the first semester, UNHCR’s standard operating procedures on cash-based interventions were updated, which benefited 469 people of concern from the NCA countries. 975 received food items and 163 non-food items. 308 new people of concern from the NCA were assessed according to their vulnerability.
- A mental health approach is being adopted as part of UNHCR’s protection mandate. Efforts have been made to build a multi-layer system, strengthening age, gender and diversity as well as rights-based approaches, offering preventative, basic services and security, providing and coordinating clinical mental health professionals for those cases in need of specialized support. In the first semester of 2017, 30 people of concern from the NCA countries required psychological assistance, of which 17 were victims of SGBV.
- Regarding legal integration, two naturalization courses took place with a total of 8 people of concern from the NCA countries. The first promotion already presented the exams. UNHCR’s partner Jesuit Migrants Service provided a naturalization course for refugees living near the southern border of the country. One refugee received Costa Rican nationality.

## MEXICO

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR signed an agreement with the Ministry of Labour of Mexico City on World Refugee Day. In 2017, more than 50 refugees and asylum-seekers enrolled in the Ministry of Labour's job support centre; 36 were provided with unemployment insurance and 23 were granted scholarships while participating in cooking and language classes and will be supported to find employment. In addition, 103 individuals were provided with guidance on accessing the labour market. In terms of local integration, the office continued with the program to internally relocate refugees from the south of Mexico to the northern city of Saltillo, with 24 people internally relocated during the reporting period. All working-age individuals are currently working and school-age children are enrolled in school. The office continued to scale up its local integration activities and as a result 156 received life-skills training for livelihood purposes in Tapachula and 3 refugee young adults were admitted to university to pursue technical careers.
- In total, during the first semester of 2017, 316 people of concern benefitted from local integration initiatives.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- UNHCR, in coordination with ILO, undertook a Market Assessment and Value Chain Analysis to identify and design livelihood development programmes. The study is being used to design the livelihood interventions of the Office, which could have the potential to increase the employment opportunities and improve the living conditions of refugees and host communities. The study is limited to Chiapas and Mexico City and further funds are needed to study additional strategic locations where refugees could be locally integrated (e.g. Quintana Roo, Yucatan, Jalisco, Aguascalientes, Puebla).
- UNHCR selected a new partner to implement and scale-up its integration program in Saltillo, with plans to have a total of 100 participants by the end of 2017. However, additional funds are needed to reach this target and include other locations with local integration prospects.
- UNHCR has identified that it is necessary to scale up vocational training opportunities particularly for asylum seekers while they are awaiting the decision by the Mexican authority responsible for refugee status determination.

## PANAMA

### Achievements and Impact

- As regards local integration, UNHCR's partner the Panamanian Red Cross organized three workshops focused on women empowerment and the prevention of violence. Also, 23 people of concern have started vocational training aiming at facilitating their integration into the national labour market.

- UNHCR selected a new partner (HIAS) to strengthen its integration program in Panama.

## Financial Information

Agencies are very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the NCA Situation.

### Donors who have contributed to the operation:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| ■ United States<br>USD 1,069,926 | ■ Private Donors Spain<br>USD 1,590,248   |
| ■ Canada<br>USD 1,005,061        | ■ Private Donors Canada<br>USD 249,531    |
| ■ European Union<br>USD 412,400  | ■ Private Donors Mexico<br>USD 128,476    |
| ■ Spain<br>USD 279,330           | ■ Private Donors Switzerland<br>USD 2,780 |
|                                  | ■ Private Donors Brazil<br>USD 2,556      |

### Funding (in million USD)

A total of **USD 4.7 million** has been funded.  
The funding gap amounts to **USD 24.3 million**.

## External / Donors Relations

### **Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017**

United States of America (266 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | Priv Donors Spain (41 M) | Norway (41 M) | Japan (25 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (20 M) | Australia (19 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors USA (13 M) | Priv Donors Italy (13 M) | Germany (12 M) | Priv Donors Japan (10 M) | Italy (10 M)

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Algeria | Austria | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Chile | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Indonesia | Ireland | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Morocco | New Zealand | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Zambia | Private Donors

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