

Side event to the 2015 High Commissioner's Dialogue

# As deadly as conflict: criminal violence and its impact on displacement in Central America

Moderated by Ms. Renata Dubini, Director of UNHCR's Americas Bureau

**Speakers:**

**Ms. Mary Giovagnoli, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Immigration Policy,  
United States Department of Homeland Security**

**Dr. David Cantor, Director, Refugee Law Initiative, University of London**

**Ms. Eliana Rueda, Profiling Advisor, Joint IDP Profiling Service**



A displaced child in a safe house in Mexico - © UNHCR/Ricardo Ramirez Arriola

In the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras), violence by transnational organized criminal groups and gangs has forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes to find safety in other parts of their country or abroad. Extreme violence, including extortion, abuse and forced recruitment are common, particularly affecting children and youth, as well as women. As opposed to many traditional conflict situations, where parties have clear military and political objectives and are bound by international humanitarian law, widespread criminal violence is usually deployed to achieve economic gain and territorial and social control, with actors rarely responsive to calls for humanitarian access. As avenues for safe passage to seek asylum are limited in the region, those seeking to flee have found themselves increasingly victim to smugglers and traffickers, and are exposed to further abuse.

This side event will highlight the challenges facing States and the international community in preventing and responding to these new patterns of displacement, as well as mechanisms to provide protection to and solutions for affected individuals in countries of origin, transit and destination.

**Thursday, 17 December 2015  
13:30-14:45**

**Palais des Nations - Room XI**

*Refreshments will be available outside the meeting room.*

