

PILLAR 4: OPPORTUNITIES FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Protection Transfer Arrangement

December 2018



2,687

Persons in need of international protection identified by partners to be considered for the PTA between 2016-2018

1,006

Persons submitted to resettlement countries through the PTA

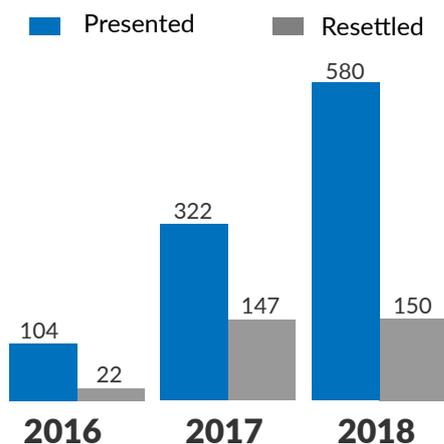
319

Persons resettled through the PTA

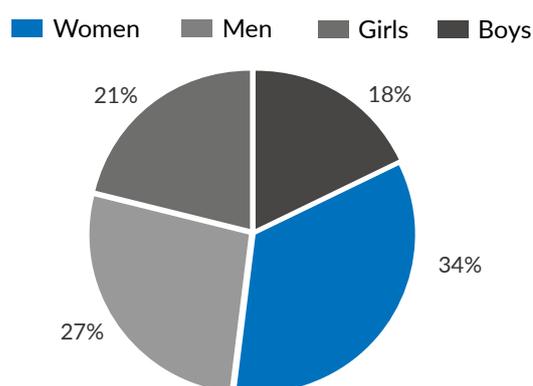
In recent years, the countries of Northern Central America -El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala- have seen a dramatic escalation in the acute violence of street gangs and organized criminal groups that is driving increased forced displacement both within and from these countries. The PTA represents an innovative life-saving mechanism that provides individuals, who are exposed to extreme risks in those three countries, with a safe and legal access to a resettlement country, via a country of transit. The programme is coordinated by UNHCR, IOM and the Republic of Costa Rica as transit country, as well as with the Governments of the three countries of origin and participating resettlement countries. It forms part of the Regional Protection and Solutions Framework adopted by the San Pedro Sula Declaration in October 2017.

UNHCR works with civil society partners to identify cases at high risk in the country of origin, who also provide humanitarian assistance to identified cases and, where needed, provisional protection in safe houses. UNHCR interviews eligible cases and prepares PTA case forms with an assessment of the individuals' protection needs, for submission to a resettlement country. Upon desk review by the resettlement country, agreed cases move to the transit country, with UNHCR and IOM ensuring a smooth transfer. UNHCR partners in the transit country receive the individuals and ensure access to protection and assistance until finalization of case processing by the resettlement country.

Persons presented and resettled through the PTA



Persons presented to the PTA



Major highlights and achievements

The PTA pilot started in El Salvador in July 2016. Since then, it has expanded, and become fully operational also in Guatemala and Honduras. By December 2018, of 1,006 persons presented, 319 people have been resettled through the programme, including 254 who found a durable solution in the United States of America, 30 in Australia, 24 in Uruguay and 11 in Canada. Brazil recently confirmed its interest in joining the programme, and Argentina reaffirmed

its commitment to providing protection and solutions for persons at heightened risk from the NCA countries.

All UNHCR partners that identify and assist PTA cases in the countries of origin have been duly staffed and trained. Standard Operating Procedures for assistance of high risk cases in countries of origin have been developed and agreed, including case management, security and anti-fraud procedures.

Main challenges

The PTA is both a protection tool, and a durable solution but it can currently only accommodate a small number of high risk cases with pre-defined profiles agreed by resettlement countries, despite growing needs. This increasing gap between needs and opportunities is a serious challenge.

The PTA is also a complex programme to run, with detailed procedures, different actors and multiple steps including security checks, gang vetting, interview process, documentation. This can cause delays, which due to the high risk nature of the cases poses protection challenges for UNHCR and its partners.

Sustainability through shared responsibility

The increased number of countries that have expressed commitment to participate in the PTA programme will positively benefit the continuation of the programme in the longer term, and fosters increased regional cooperation and responsibility sharing, in line with the MIRPS and the Global Compact on Refugees.

Next steps

Now that the PTA is operational in the three NCA countries, the goal is to increase evacuation capacity to at least 1000 individuals per year in total. This can be further increased, contingent upon availability of funds and resettlement places. UNHCR is seeking diversification in terms of receiving countries, profiles, and resources in order to stabilize and expand the PTA programme.



For more information visit: www.globalcrf.org.

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Special thanks to the major donors of regional and unrestricted funds for the MIRPS

UNHCR / Tito Herrera