

# North of Central America Situation

August 2020

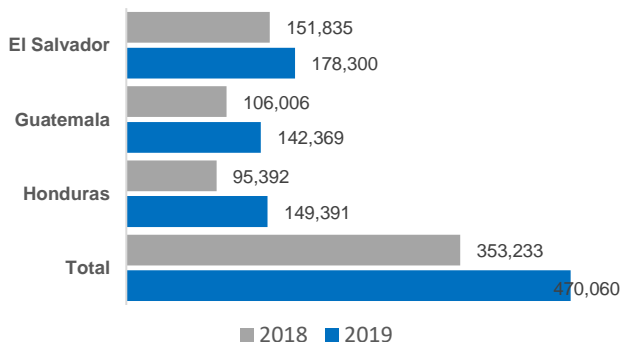
Around **470,000** refugees and asylum-seekers from the North of Central America in the world and **318,590** internally displaced people in Honduras and El Salvador.

NCA continues to report a high rate of daily infections, especially in Honduras where Dengue is also on the rise. Violence against minority groups, including indigenous and afrodescentant communities has been reported across the region.

A new tropical depression impacted NCA causing damages due to floods, landslides and river overflows. Most of the communities were recovering from tropical storm Amanda, the consequences of COVID19 and other issues related to violence.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### By country of origin



Source: Based on data provided by governments to UNHCR as of Dec-19. Figures for 2019 are partial and preliminary and can be subject to changes

## CONTEXT

Violence and insecurity continue unabated in northern of Central America. In El Salvador, although the number of homicides and missing persons reportedly fell in the first half of 2020 as compared to 2019, civil society organizations report the human rights situation has worsened during 2020, particularly violence against women and internet crimes. In addition, members of the LGBTI community continue to report discrimination and violence, heightening their vulnerability to internal forced displacement and extortion.

In 2020, Honduras registered 30 massacres that killed a total of 110 persons, 40% of which took place in the Central District (including Tegucigalpa and Comayagüela). According to the National Police, the increase in murders in the Central District is a result of the expansion of criminal activities (drug trafficking, extortions) of gangs and disputes over control of the territory. UNHCR has observed an increase in SGBV cases, with 30 registered in San Pedro Sula between 14 March and 12 August, 60% of whom among deportees.

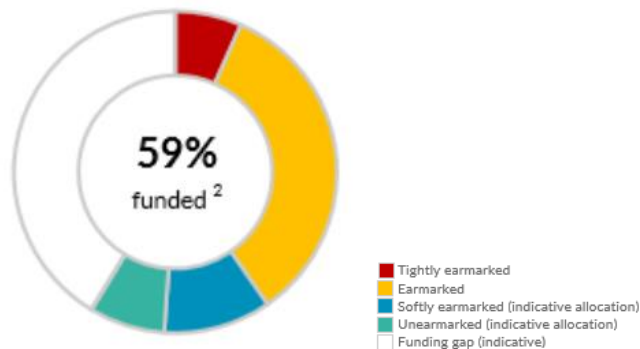
In Guatemala, the homicide rate, activities by gangs and other organized crime groups are reportedly increasing since the COVID-19 traffic light system was put in place. Several violent events have reportedly forced 40 indigenous families off their land after an armed group set fire to several of their residences, according to the information provided by a land rights group.

UNHCR and partners continue to provide assistance to persons of concern, and to advance on community-based interventions to ensure continuity of humanitarian access in prioritized high-risk communities affected by the increasing levels of violence.

## FUNDING (AS OF 1 SEPTEMBER 2020)

**US\$ 113.6 M**

requested for the NCA situation<sup>1</sup>



1. The financial requirements of the North of Central America Situation include requirements in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.  
2. \$46,925,397 gap in funding represents 41% of the financial requirements.



Con el apoyo de todas y todos, y siguiendo las medidas de seguridad, podemos prevenir el Coronavirus.

#IncluirEsProtegernos

Este es un mensaje de



The joint UNHCR-IOM campaign #IncluirEsProtegernos promotes respect and solidarity in the fight against COVID19. Highlighting that discrimination against refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and migrants puts everyone at risk, the campaign promotes inclusion of all people in national responses.

## UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works with over 70 partners in the region and supports states to implement their national plans under the Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). The MIRPS is a pioneering application of the Global Compact on Refugees in Central America and Mexico. A Plenary Meeting of MIRPS States took place and the Pro-tempore Presidency, currently held by El Salvador, reported on the implementation of the annual work plan. MIRPS countries presented their requests related to protection and strengthening of asylum systems to MIRPS Support Platform Presidency to receive bilateral cooperation.

## Main Activities

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



### Advocacy and Coordination

In Guatemala, UNHCR advances on the Temporary Care Arrangement programme to strengthen the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seeking children within the national child protection system through the review of protocols, the identification of families, and the follow-up on psychosocial support. In Panama, through partner HIAS, a participatory assessment was conducted with children and adolescents on safe spaces, education and COVID-19. Through the Protection Cluster in El Salvador, UNHCR led the design of a capacity-building programme for the Directorate of Attention to Victims and Forced Migration on international protection, forced displacement and humanitarian issues.



### Health

In Honduras, a psychological self-care session was held with more than 35 teachers, as a part of the process to develop protection networks for teachers at risk of displacement. In Guatemala, 47 social workers, psychologists and other frontline workers received a training session on logotherapy to improve mental health and psychosocial support services to asylum-seekers and refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNHCR and Fundaeco distributed 175 hygiene kits to a women's clinics located in border towns of Morales. In Costa Rica, 31 food kits, 18 cleaning kits were provided to 20 family groups. In Panama, 44 refugees and asylum seekers received psychosocial assistance. In Mexico, UNHCR distributed personal protective equipment to hospitals and health centres in Chiapas, Tabasco, Veracruz, Tijuana, Mexicali and Matamoros. 20 auxiliary ventilators have been delivered to hospitals in Tapachula, Mapastepec and Huixtla.



### Providing safe spaces and shelter

In Guatemala, refugee housing units at El Ceibo border and Izabal were installed to be used by the Ministry of Health to guarantee COVID-19 prevention measures and health protocols for persons in transit. In Mexico, UNHCR finalized the installation of 40 RHUs in 21 different locations (20 serving as health centres/isolation and observation spaces in hospitals and the rest as shelters). A new shelter in San Cristobal de las Casas (100 persons capacity) is under construction to become the largest one in the Central Corridor of Chiapas, an area that has increasingly been receiving more asylum-seekers. In El Salvador, the municipality of La Unión shared the technical specifications for the remodeling of a sports field in the Barrio Honduras community with UNHCR to strengthen peaceful coexistence, community interaction and youth protection.



### Community-based protection interventions

In El Salvador, several communities in Chalatenango, San Salvador and Usulután reinforced the identification and referrals of cases of forced displacement and the Local Network against Gender Violence in Santa Ana carried out actions aimed at the prevention, response and elimination of violence against women. In Honduras, 434 family assistance kits were distributed benefiting 2,170 vulnerable people with specific needs identified at high-risk communities of the Rivera Hernández sector in San Pedro Sula. 200 children and youth at risk of recruitment and violence have begun engaging in the *Community Art* community-based protection project, participating in folkloric dance, drama, plastic arts, and break dance workshops.



### Durable solutions and livelihoods

In Costa Rica, 308 refugees and asylum seekers participated in different online courses to increase their skillset and employability, including soft skills, business-related technical training and short courses on marketing or customer service. In Panama, 41 new entrepreneurs have joined the digital alphabetization programme and 30 have been referred to a labour insertion programme *Talento sin Fronteras*. In Guatemala, a TURI INTEGRA on-line training course was launched for 20 asylum-seekers and refugees and 48 people from the local community focusing on sales and entrepreneurship techniques, creativity, innovation and teamwork. 117 refugees and asylum seekers received CBI cards in Costa Rica, 102 in Panama and 92 in Guatemala.

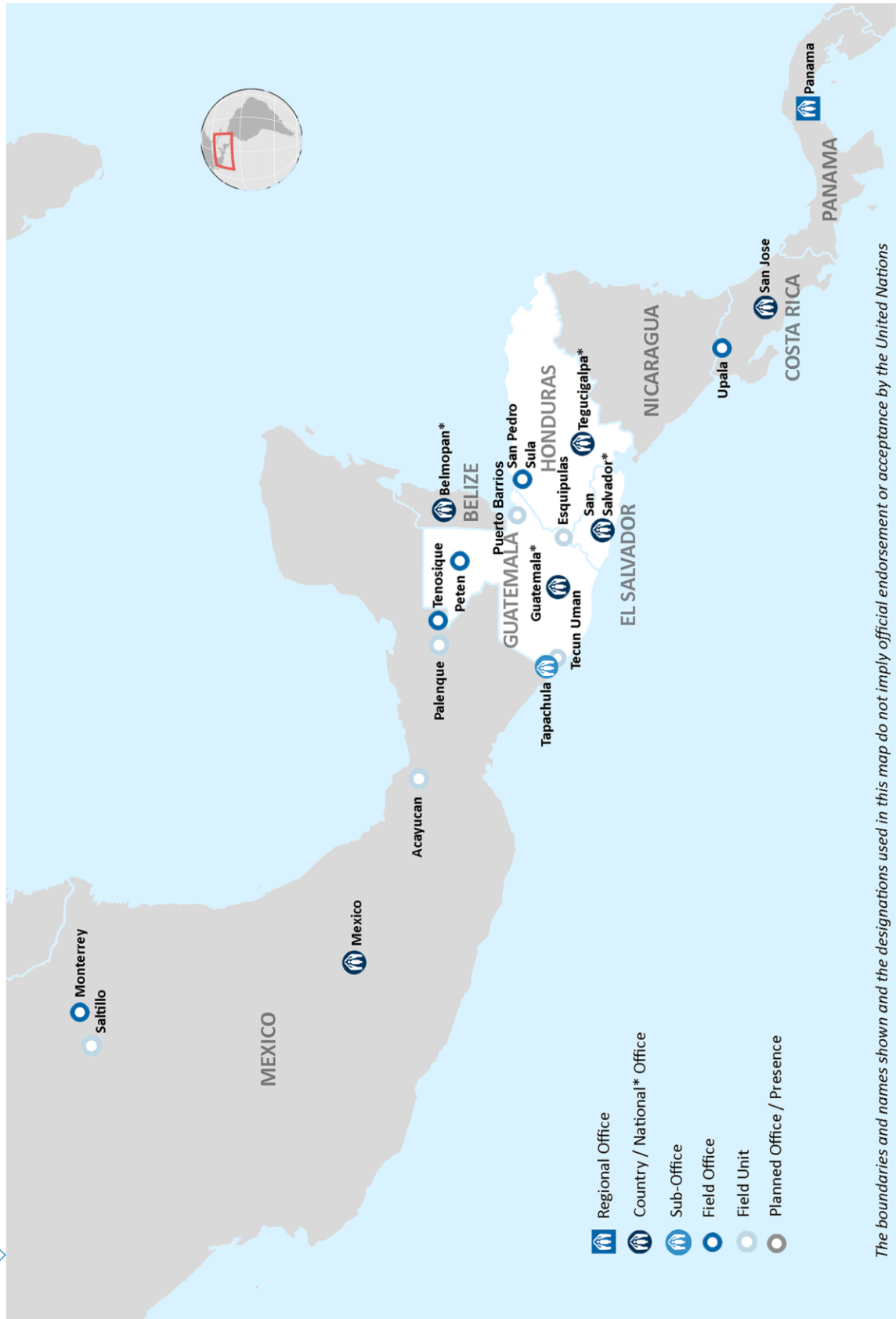


### Working with partners

In El Salvador, UNHCR is strengthening the Directorate for the Attention to Victims to guarantee the identification of protection needs at the airport after quarantine centres for deportees have been closed. In Honduras, during International Youth Day, UNHCR and partners carried out online activities with over 2,000 youth to discuss the role, responsibilities and actions that can be taken by youth in the country to address violence and forced displacement. In Belize, partner HRCB is broadcasting messages in order to keep the people of concern informed during the state of emergency.

**Thanks to donors in 2020:** UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have provided generous and timely support to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation globally, and countries in Central America, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked funding: Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Italy | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America, USA for UNHCR. And to our private donors: Australia | Italy | Japan | Korea, Republic of | Spain | Unilever (UK)  
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**North of Central America Situation (NCA): UNHCR Presence, 2020**



For more information visit: [Global CRRF Portal](https://www.unhcr.org/global-crrf-portal)