

# North of Central America Situation

As of July 2019

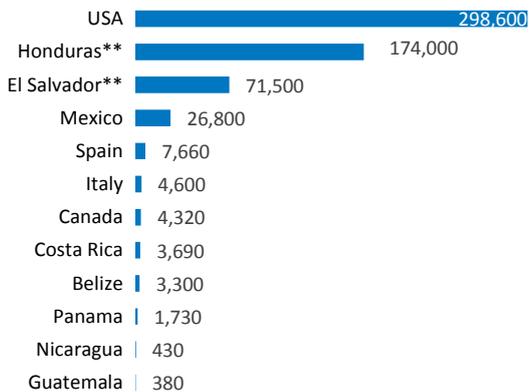
Around **353,000** refugees and asylum-seekers from the North of Central America (Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala) in the world projected by end-2018.

Between 2011 and 2018, the number of asylum claims **has grown by 970%**, with 123,000 during 2018, as compared to the 11,510 registered in 2011.

The complex situation in the region is compounded by internal displacement in Honduras and El Salvador, where at least **174,000** and **71,500** respectively have been **forced to flee by violence within their own countries**.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Host Countries



Source: Based on data provided by governments to UNHCR.

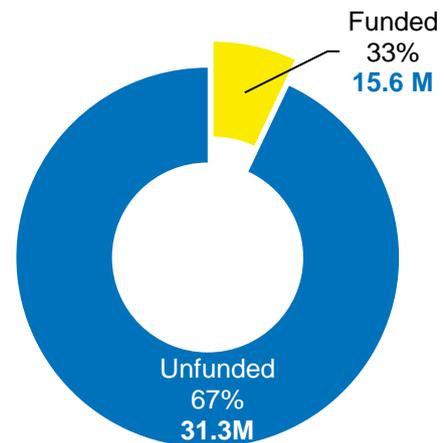
\* Projected data by end-2018 based on available data (up-to Dec for affirmative applications process and up-to Aug for defensive process).

\*\* IDPs

## FUNDING (AS OF 06 AUGUST 2019)

**US\$ 46.9 M**

requested for the NCA situation



## Overview

In the North of Central America (NCA) tens of thousands of people have been forced into displacement by a confluence of factors that have led to an escalating situation of chronic violence and insecurity. These factors range from the influence of organized crime such as drug cartels and urban gangs, to the limited national capacity States to provide protection.

UNHCR has expanded its presence and operational capacity in recent years to strengthen protection alternatives and encourage solutions for those affected, promote mechanisms to prevent and address situations of forced displacement and, together with other UN agencies, assist States to address the root causes of flight and promote a secure environment free from persecution, in line with their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) undertakings.

This has allowed UNHCR to increase the number of people of concern assisted in the region, moving from 13,200 people in 2015 to an estimated 140,000 people assisted in 2018. This has included refugees and asylum-seekers, IDPs, and people in transit with protection needs.

Most recently, people from NCA have resorted to travel in small groups in the hopes of reaching Mexico and the United States. They flee within mixed movements of refugees and migrants.



Panama City, Panama. UNHCR staff pilots the Protection Monitoring Tool with refugees and asylum seekers in different communities in Panama. ©UNHCR/Diana Diaz

# UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR has joined efforts with seven countries, over 70 partners and 10 supporting states to implement the Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), which is a pioneering application of the Global Compact on Refugees, bridging the gap between humanitarian and development actions to provide protection and solutions to those forced to flee across borders, and to address the root causes of displacement at countries of origin.

## Main Activities

Alongside host governments, partner organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, development actors and UN Agencies, UNHCR undertakes the following activities:



### Safe reception and admission

UNHCR has stepped up its presence in border areas across the region to improve reception conditions and respond to the basic needs of refugees and migrants, provide legal aid and counselling on access to refugee status and alternative forms of stay; and give technical assistance to relevant authorities to develop an effective coordination and prepare local response plans. UNHCR and partners in Guatemala and Panama are piloting the Protection Monitoring Tool (PMT) to gather reliable and up to date information on the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in both countries.



### Law Development

In El Salvador, the government tabled a bill addressing internal displacement. The draft bill is under discussion at the Commission on Legislation and Constitutional Affairs of the National Assembly. UNHCR is providing technical advice on international standards on protection of internally displaced persons in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.



### Providing safe spaces and shelter

Across the region, UNHCR works hand-in-hand with faith-based organizations and other partners to provide safe spaces, shelter and basic humanitarian assistance to persons in need of international protection. To date, more than 80 safe spaces and shelters are available to provide shelter and assistance to people on the move, and those with international protection needs. In Guatemala, new spaces for temporary shelters in Petén are being identified in case of large arrivals. In Belize, the Benque Refugee Resource Center was inaugurated. The Center aims to provide relevant information to asylum seekers on the asylum process in the country and can also provide emergency shelter when needed.



### Community-based protection interventions

Strengthening protection mechanisms in communities is key to ensuring refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons can find safety in the region. UNHCR and partners in Honduras and El Salvador are working with leaders and youth in high-risk communities to enhance their protection networks through trainings, workshops and working together to create safe spaces inside their communities.



### Durable solutions and livelihoods

Livelihood opportunities for refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons allow them to support themselves and their families, while helping their host communities thrive. In Guatemala and Panama, the private sector is taking a step towards enabling refugees to improve their self-reliance through vocational and soft-skills trainings and internship programmes. In Mexico, UNHCR is supporting a relocation, job placement and local integration project to allow refugees to become independent from assistance, find suitable jobs and ensure children are enrolled in school. In Belize, refugees and asylum seekers' local integration is promoted through English language courses.



### Campaigns against xenophobia

Discriminatory attitudes and social stigmatization of asylum seekers and refugees affects their access to rights, including work, education, health and housing; impeding local integration. In Costa Rica and Panama, UNHCR is implementing campaigns to tackle discrimination and promote peaceful coexistence. In Honduras, alongside partner ERIC-SJ, UNHCR is raising awareness on internal displacement.



### Working with partners

In the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees and its regional application known as MIRPS, UNHCR works in close coordination with the governments, civil society organizations, UN agencies, private sector and displaced, refugees and asylum-seeker communities. In July 2019, El Salvador formally adhered to the MIRPS and is now developing its National Plan, with UNHCR's support.

### Donors

In 2019, UNHCR operations in Central America received earmarked funding from the United States of America, Canada, the European Union, Spain, the UN Peacebuilding Fund, and various private donors.

**In 2019, UNHCR received unearmarked funding from:**

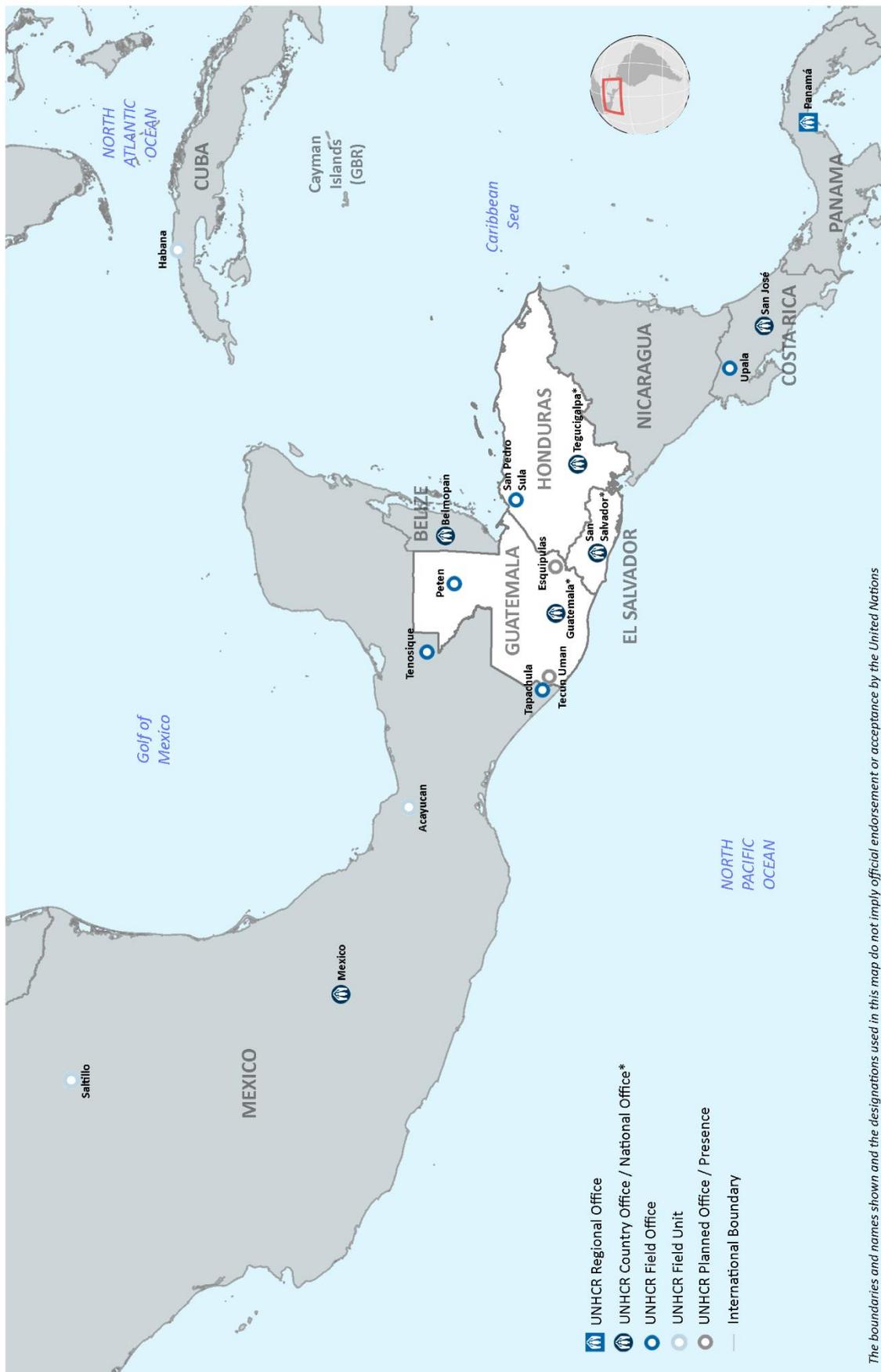
**Sweden** 90.4 million | **Norway** 44.5 million | **Netherlands** 37.5 million | **United Kingdom** 31.7 million | **Germany** 26.7 million | **Private donors** **Spain** 26.3 million | **Denmark** 24.4 million | **Switzerland** 15.1 million | **Private donors** **Republic of Korea** 10.4 million

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For more information visit: [Global CRRF Portal](#)

# North of Central America (NCA) Situation:

## UNHCR Presence



- UNHCR Regional Office
- UNHCR Country Office / National Office\*
- UNHCR Field Office
- UNHCR Field Unit
- UNHCR Planned Office / Presence
- International Boundary

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used in this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations*