



Comprehensive  
Regional  
Protection and  
Solutions  
Framework



# ADDRESSING FORCED DISPLACEMENT: **MIRPS IN COSTA RICA**



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# NATIONAL PLANS **OBJECTIVES**

- Improve **mechanisms for reception and admission**
- Respond to immediate and persistent **humanitarian and protection needs**
  - Support **host countries and communities**
  - Enhance **opportunities for durable solutions**

## FOCUS AREAS:



**PROTECTION**



**JOBS AND  
LIVELIHOODS**



**SOCIAL  
PROTECTION**



**EDUCATION**



**HEALTH**

## COMMITMENTS BY COUNTRY

**BELIZE • COSTA RICA • EL SALVADOR • GUATEMALA •  
HONDURAS • MEXICO • PANAMA**

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# MIRPS NATIONAL ACTION PLAN IN COSTA RICA

## 32 TOTAL COMMITMENTS

### FOCUS AREAS:



**PROTECTION**  
**11 COMMITMENTS**



**JOBS AND  
LIVELIHOODS**  
**4 COMMITMENTS**



**SOCIAL  
PROTECTION**  
**12 COMMITMENTS**



**EDUCATION**  
**5 COMMITMENTS**

Costa Rica stands on a long tradition of providing asylum and protection to refugees and asylum seekers. However, its national asylum system is under pressure as a result of displacement situations in the region, particularly Nicaragua. The country hosts approximately 100,891 persons in need of international protection, this figure represents 2% of Costa Rica total population. Out of that number 90,891 are asylum seekers (mostly Nicaraguans) and 9,801 refugees.

Through the implementation of its national chapter Costa Rica increased the overall recognition rate of refugees from 21% (2019) to 49% in 2020. Similarly, the Refugee Unit opened an office in the northern border to ensure access to the national asylum system. The access to state-run social services extended to include asylum seekers and refugees on an equal standing with nationals and provided medical insurance to 6,000 refugees and asylum seekers in high vulnerability.

Despite these efforts, the pandemic has aggravated the challenges to respond to this population, including extended claim processing times, loss of livelihoods, economic hardships, and xenophobia. In response to this scenario, the national technical team quantified and developed three concept notes on key sectors that include social assistance services, health services and the access to the national asylum system for refugees and asylum seekers.

## PROTECTION

- Presence at the border: Strengthen the agreement that exists between the DGME and UNHCR to maintain the current presence of personnel at border migration posts in Peñas Blancas, Los Chiles and Tablillas in the north, Paseo Canoas in the south; as well as extend it with at least one person in the ports of Golfito, Limón, Caldera and in both international airports.
- Regionalization of the Shelter Unit: Advance in the regionalization of the Shelter Unit in Upala, Liberia, Paso Canoas and Limón to decentralize the functions of this Unit.
- Strengthening CATEM: Ensure the allocation of funds for the maintenance of the infrastructure, equipment and administration of CATEM as a good regional practice as an alternative to administrative detention.
- Promote national or international public-public and/or public-private alliances for fundraising and response to the needs for legal assistance and sponsorship for applicants in procedures for determining refugee status.
- Project for the prevention of delays: Project for the prevention of delays: Increase the number of specialized officers in refugee matters, in at least 6 people for each of the instances.
- Strengthening the CVRR: Assign a full-time Specialized Legal Advisor to each Commissioner, by the respective Ministries in order to assist in the review of files received by the Unit of Shelter, and in the elaboration of draft resolutions of the CVRR.
- Modernization of the TAM: Establish the Migratory Administrative Court (TAM) with two specialized administrative sections: one for refugee matters and another in immigration.
- Documentation for refugee applicants: Submit the provisional identification document with DIMEX numbering and temporary work permit at the time of filing the application for the condition of refugee.
- Maintain no-cost documentation for the applicants for refugee status and reduce the cost of documentation for refugees.
- Guarantee the non-refoulement principle: Establish complementary protection or other mechanisms to guarantee the non-refoulement principle for people who do not meet the requirements to be recognized as refugees but should not be returned to their country of origin, because of reasonable risk of suffering harm.

- Adaptation of the RSD Procedures for people with disabilities: CONAPDIS will advise the DGME to develop a mechanism to assist asylum-seekers with cognitive, physical or sensory disabilities during the refugee status determination procedures.

## EDUCATION

- Flexible requirements for academic training: The INA will develop an alternative mechanism to check the academic requirements and / or the matching of technical skills of refugees who want to enter technical training courses. Likewise, it will carry out joint actions with the private sector for the promotion of learning internships and the certification of competencies through dual training opportunities.
- Provision of alternative evidence for the recognition of academic degrees: CONARE will incorporate the Consular Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the agreement of understanding with UNHCR for the provision of alternative evidence for the formalization of the application for recognition of academic degrees and professional degrees in country of origin in favour of refugees.
- Technological Literacy Project: The Ministry of Culture, IMAS and the Ministry of Science and Technology will promote the technological literacy of asylum-seekers and refugees through literacy activities of the National Library System (SINABI) and the National Strategy of Costa Rica Digital (access to equipment).
- Project for the recognition of the contributions of the population to the culture of the host communities: The Ministry of Culture and Youth will strengthen the information and training processes of the cultural advisors of the local governments that are carrying out activities with population of interest, to promote the recognition of refugees to the cultural dynamics of the host communities.
- Refugee children in the SINEM project: The National Music Education System (SINEM) will give free access to refugee minors to music education processes, including free access to musical instruments.





## JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

- Employment opportunities for LGBTI populations: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion, in coordination with the Costa Rican Chamber of Commerce and with the support of UNHCR, will develop a training and job placement program for refugees from LGBTI communities.
- Digital Consultation initiative for Work Permits: The DGME, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the support of UNHCR, will create a digital consultation mechanism that allows refugees to certify the validity of their work permit to potential employers.
- Intermediation for the inclusion for refugees in the labour market: (a) The Ministry of Labour and Social Security will provide effective access to labour intermediation programs such as [www.buscoempleo.go.cr](http://www.buscoempleo.go.cr), EMPLEATE Program, My First Job and PRO-NAE 4x4, in addition to the micro-enterprise support programs. (b) The National Labour Inspectorate will consider refugee persons in its procedures with the objective of ensuring that their labour rights and employer obligations are recognized on equal terms as nationals. (c) Informative actions will also be carried out on current legislation to improve the recognition of ID documents and reduce discrimination and xenophobia during recruitment and selection processes
- Project for the promotion of entrepreneurship: The Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce will include ventures led by refugees in the Entrepreneurs Registry and will encourage their participation in business meetings and other activities organized by the Ministry to strengthen micro and small businesses.



## SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Inclusion of a category of “refugee or asylum-seeker” in the Social Information Sheet: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion will instruct all institutions of the social sector and the National Registration System of Beneficiaries (SINIRUBE) to include the categories in their information sheets.
- Protocols for refugee assistance in the social sector: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion will provide technical support to all institutions in the social sector to establish protocols that allow the standardization of the assistance provided to refugees and asylum-seekers, and for the implementation of internal awareness processes that guarantee the application of these protocols at all levels within the institution.
- National programmes for the reduction of poverty: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion will include refugees and asylum-seekers in the poverty reduction programmes implemented by the Institute of Social Assistance.

- Protocol for the attention of refugee women: INAMU together with the DGME, PANI and UNHCR will develop a protocol for the assistance of women, adolescent mothers and victims of gender-based violence that allows the coordination and attention of refugees and asylum-seekers cases in Costa Rica; this will include women in Attention Centres.
- Protocol for the protection and attention of refugee children: The PANI, with support from UNHCR and DGME, will update the Protocol for the protection and attention of refugee children following international standards. The protocol shall include actions for the protection of unaccompanied or separated children and at risk of Statelessness.
- Fund for DNA testing: The PANI will develop a project for the creation of a fund for DNA testing for refugee families or asylum-seekers, to be used when in doubt of the filial link to prevent trafficking or other type of activities that affect children.
- Protocol for the elderly refugee population: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion in coordination with CONAPAM will manage the development of a specialized protocol for the attention of elderly refugee populations, allowing access to public services and the right to health.
- Protocol for the attention of refugees with problematic use of psychoactive substances: The IAFA will develop a protocol for the attention of refugee population in recovery centres for people with addiction and under the supervision of the Institute.
- Solidarity networks for refugees: The Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion, with the collaboration of UNHCR, will promote the participation of civil society in the attention of refugees through research and professional practice initiatives with public and private universities.
- Methodology for the quantification of the state's contribution to refugees: The Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), with technical support from the OECD, will develop a methodology for quantifying the state's contribution on refugees. Formulation, validation and implementation of a system of simultaneous generation of actual data on financial gaps to cover all the programmes available for refugees and asylum-seekers. Also, training for officers at institutional levels for the optimal use and analysis capacity that facilitates decision-making and the collection of resources in international cooperation.
- MINARE permanent team: The MINARE Technical Team will be a permanent mechanism for monitoring, evaluation and fundraising that ensures the sustainability of the MINARE's implementation. The team will be coordinated by the Ministry of Governance and Police through monthly meetings. UNHCR will participate as a technical secretariat.
- Temporary housing program: The Ministry of Housing and Human Settlements (MIVAH) will look for ways to incorporate asylum-seekers into their services in order to facilitate a housing solution, with an inclusive approach.