

APPLYING THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

MIRPS Strategic Sectors

Protection



Jobs & Livelihoods



Social Protection



Education



Health



EL SALVADOR & SPAIN LED HIGH LEVEL SIDE EVENT DURING UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

Stronger international cooperation to address forced displacement in Central America urged

A high-level event on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on 23 September called for solidarity with people forced to flee Central America and for stronger international backing to address forced displacement in the region.

Some 900,000 people have been forced to flee violence and persecution in Central America. Among them are at least 790,000 people displaced within or from northern Central America, together with 100,000 people from Nicaragua, who required protection and solutions.

The situation has become even more dire since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on personal mobility to manage the impact on the pandemic has made a bad situation worse for many of the forcibly displaced, with reduced access to humanitarian services and a loss of limited livelihood opportunities.

Among the commitments made during the side event: Spain pledged to provide assistance in building asylum capacity; Canada offered support with resettlement programmes; and the European Union pledged additional support to development. The Inter-American Development Bank reconfirmed its focus on supporting both transit countries and countries of first displacement; while the United States reaffirmed its commitment to provide financial support to address the crisis.

Canada also expressed interest in holding the next presidency of the MIRPS Support Platform when Spain's tenure ends in June next year.

[Find out more.](#)



Upcoming events



7-8 Dec

III Annual MIRPS Meeting

MIRPS IN ACTION: IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

During the reporting period, the MIRPS countries have advanced in the implementation of their national action plans, adjusting activities and priorities to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, with the support of the Technical Secretariat (UNHCR-OAS), the National Technical Teams (NTT) conducted a comprehensive analysis of potential areas for key investment in their MIRPS commitments and identified opportunities for alliances and funding. The following section provides a general description of the advances of the countries during 2020 third trimester, as well as information on the revised priorities in the respective MIRPS countries.

MEXICO has advanced in the development of public policies for the protection of displaced persons, including the approval of a legislation that prohibits the detention of children and adolescents. Looking to the last months of 2020 and to 2021, Mexico has focused its planning in the national commitments related to protection, health and education, coordinating with government institutions and members of the UN Country Team. In terms of protection, interventions will aim to improve registration systems, efficiency in refugee status determination procedures, data management, interinstitutional coordination mechanisms and collaboration with civil society. Likewise, in support to the recent health reforms (INSABI), and in the COVID-19 context, an evaluation of the public health services in host communities in southern Mexico (mainly Chiapas and Tabasco) has begun to support the investment of resources and guarantee access to primary health attention and medicines for every person, regardless of their legal status in the country.

BELIZE has identified opportunities to expand English language courses for asylum seekers, as well as post-primary technical vocational education for asylum seekers and youth from the host communities. In parallel to the response to COVID-19, Belize is increasing the engagement from government authorities in neighborhoods and communities that host refugees. This is done through strengthening local governance to generate greater resilience and socio-cultural and economic inclusion.

HONDURAS is implementing a humanitarian assistance pilot project, covered in its entirety by the public funds, which provides seed money for production initiatives, assistance to mental and physical health, and strengthening of technical capacities. Looking to the remaining months of 2020 and towards 2021, and in line with the Nacional Durable Solutions Strategy, Honduras will seek to increase its coverage of access to labour insertion, education, livelihood programmes for refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and returnees with protection needs. The provision of services will be prioritized in communities in Cortés (San Pedro Sula), Francisco Morazán (Tegucigalpa) and El Paraíso (near the border with Nicaragua). Initial consultations have been conducted with UN Country Team members to consider the inclusion of this national MIRPS commitment in the next United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2022 – 2026.

PANAMA has provided legal support, mediation through Peace Judges, payment conciliation or financial support to cover the rent for asylum seekers and refugees who have lost their livelihoods during the pandemic and who are in vulnerable conditions. Furthermore, the State developed special measures such as the suspension of evictions to relief the pressure on persons of concern. The MIRPS technical team continues to dialogue with civil society to identify achievements, challenges and improvements in the implementation of the action plan. A total of 77 asylum seekers and refugees gradually resumed their engagement in livelihoods programmes, including the one facilitated with the support from City of Knowledge Foundation.

EL SALVADOR guarantees access to health services for victims of internal forced displacement and links them with existing protection mechanisms in the COVID-19 context. The endowment of the Las Rosas shelter for displaced persons is ongoing and preparations for the launch of a Specialized Unit for Attention of Internally Displaced Persons is underway. Information materials are being created related to the asylum process in El Salvador, psychological attention and legal aid for children and adolescents who are victims of violence in education centres.

GUATEMALA has advanced in the signature of Letters of Understanding and agreements with mayors to boost the “Cities of Solidarity” initiative. Looking forward to the rest of 2020 and 2021, inter-ministerial preparations are ongoing to create open shelters with specialized and trained teams to support persons in need of international protection. Additionally, the national capacities for the protection of children and adolescents will be strengthened, particularly at border areas. The Temporary Family Placement programme for the assistance of returnee and in-transit children and adolescents with protection needs is being planned. Other area of special attention is the labour inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers. In this line, initial planning sessions have been done with the National Employment Service, to implement public information campaigns on rights and services, considering the needs of persons of concern and the private sector.

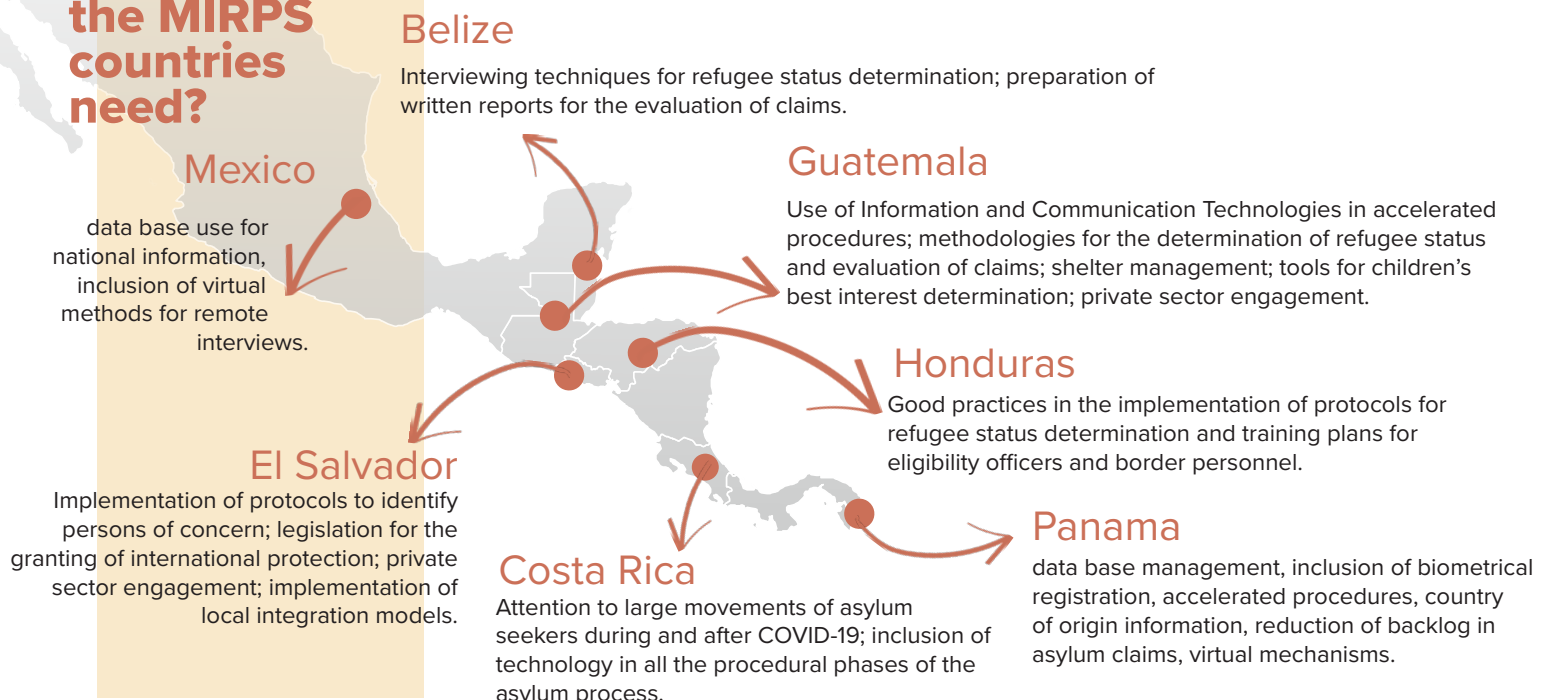
COSTA RICA continues to provide health services to 6,000 asylum seekers and refugees through the Costa Rican Social Security System. National authorities explore international cooperation opportunities to allow for the continuity of the project. Moreover, asylum seekers and refugees with valid documentation have access to IMAS programmes in equal conditions as nationals. As a result of an assessment done by the MINARE Executive Committee, it was agreed to recommend to the Executive Branch the extension of the MINARE (2018-2020) as the Costa Rican national chapter and for the mechanisms to be evaluated for an eventual institutionalization.

REGIONAL COORDINATION: PRIORITIES & PROGRESS OF THE PRO-TEMPORE PRESIDENCY FOR 2020

PROTECTION		DURABLE SOLUTIONS	
<p>Asylum systems Create partnerships with cooperating states to provide technical assistance, particularly to establish national registration systems</p>	<p>Internal displacement Creation of a Working Group to guide activities and actions for interested states on Internal Displacement established</p>	<p>Local governments Create partnerships to expand the number of Cities in Solidarity hosting displaced people</p> <p>21 alliances confirmed in the region.</p> <p>Costa Rica: San José, Escazú, Curridabat, Desamparados, Upala, Los Chiles, Montes de Ocas</p> <p>Guatemala: San Marcos, Huehuetenango, Quezaltenango, Esquipulas, Flores, San Benito, National Association of Municipalities</p> <p>Honduras: San Pedro Sula</p> <p>El Salvador: San Salvador, Santa Ana, Zacatecoluca, La Unión</p> <p>Mexico: Saltillo</p> <p>Panama: Panama City</p>	<p>Private sector Increase private sector partnerships to generate employment opportunities and facilitate integration within host communities</p> <p><i>Partnerships with finance, tourism, environmental sectors to promote durable solutions for displaced persons.</i></p> <p>The mapping of relevant actors is ongoing.</p>
<p>MIRPS countries seek bilateral cooperation to strengthen their national asylum systems</p>		<p>3 sessions on registration and information systems, budget planning and development.</p> <p>Follow up bilateral meetings between Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador with the expert panel.</p>	

The national technical teams have made progress on the evaluation of the commitments in their respective MIRPS national action plans and have identified areas where technical assistance is needed.

What do the MIRPS countries need?



With the support from



For more information contact Gavin David White, Regional Comprehensive Refugee Response Coordinator whiteg@unhcr.org