



ADDRESSING FORCED DISPLACEMENT: THE MIRPS IN BELIZE

Belize has continued to be a country of destination, predominantly for forcefully displaced persons seeking refuge from widespread violence and rights violations, perpetrated by organized criminal groups in the north of Central America. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a considerable contraction in economic activity, negatively impacting the tourism and agricultural sectors, negatively impacting public acceptance of refugees and increasing the vulnerability of various population groups including asylum-seekers and refugees.

To address the situation, Belize, who joined the MIRPS in 2017, has made progress in the implementation of its commitments to provide protection and solutions for the forcibly displaced. Equally, the support of the international community in the areas of protection, vocational training, and livelihoods is required to respond to unmet needs and integrate the thousands of persons seeking refuge in the country.

MIRPS IN BELIZE

MIRPS NATIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM

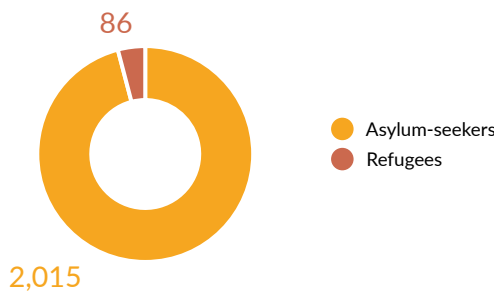
- Ministry of Immigration: Refugees Department
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Intl Cooperation Unit
- Ministry of Human Development
- Ministry of Economic Development
- Ministry of Home Affairs

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

- Help for Progress
- Human People to People Belize
- Human Rights Commission of Belize
- Belize Network of NGOs

FIGURES AT A GLANCE

PEOPLE OF CONCERN IN BELIZE



Source: UNHCR / Dec 2021

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

8 COMMITMENTS



PROTECTION
6 COMMITMENTS



JOBS & LIVELIHOODS
1 COMMITMENTS



EDUCATION
1 COMMITMENTS

Belize has been expanding its operational refugee response capacity to regional forced displacement through the adoption and implementation of 8 commitments in its National Action Plan for Protection and Solutions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Third national amnesty

Towards the end of 2021, the Government announced an amnesty for targeted undocumented persons who remain in Belize. At an early stage, the decision was taken to include persons with international protection needs, for whom the amnesty offers an alternative pathway to regularize their legal status in Belize.

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PROTECTION

Expanded asylum processing capacity

Having received support to expand its institutional operational capacity, the Government's Refugees Department is staffed with five additional refugee eligibility officers who received intensive technical training related to the reduction of the backlog of claims and improved modalities for the management of new asylum cases. Simultaneously, the departments' processes in data registration, storage, and analysis are being upgraded with new hardware and software for the department's Ministry of Immigration, while the Refugee Eligibility Committee has received in-depth technical training in the adjudication of asylum claims.

Increased uptake of vocational and entrepreneurship training services

Since early 2020, Belize remains focused on expanding technical vocational education services to young refugee and asylum-seeker students, together with national youth from host communities. In 2021, it mobilized resources to place a national focus on the growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), to provide new pathways for asylum-seekers and refugees to enroll in formal enterprise development initiatives managed by the Trade and Investment Development Service, the Small Business Development Centre and the Belize Training and Employment Centre.



EDUCATION

2

UPDATED COMMITMENTS

2022-2023

The MIRPS National Technical Team in Belize reviewed and updated its national action plan in 2022 to maintain the relevance and validity of the MIRPS and reflect the current challenges for addressing displacement.

Governmental institutions have identified strategic interventions that require urgent support for the implementation of the plan in the short term (2022-2023). These interventions would address critical needs for the protection of and solutions for displaced populations.

**ESTIMATED COST FOR STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS (2022-2023):
USD 500 K***

* This estimated cost only includes prioritized commitments that have been costed and can be implemented by governmental institutions in 2022 – 2023. It does not include activities by international organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders.

The full list of commitments are presented below by focus area:



PROTECTION

Strengthen legal protection mechanisms for forcibly displaced persons by optimizing the asylum system and promoting alternative pathways, as well as promoting activities focused on the prevention of statelessness.

- Ensure the **implementation of Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs)** to facilitate the comprehensive identification and referral of persons with international protection needs.
- Ensure that persons arriving at official border points, including at the international airport, are provided with **essential information on the right to claim asylum and related procedures**.
- **Promote understanding amongst the general population** of the right to asylum, and foster a climate of tolerance and mutual coexistence.
- Conduct a review of existing data availability, essential information needs, and potential digital tools and systems to integrate a **comprehensive approach to Registration and Identity Management**.
- Strengthen the timeliness, efficiency, and quality investigation and adjudication processes of the national asylum system.
- **Ensure the inclusion of up-to-date refugee and asylum-seeker population data** within national data, national development planning, and implementation processes.



EDUCATION

Promote access to rights for communities of forcibly displaced persons through the expansion of educational opportunities focused on basic and tertiary education.

- **Basic education: Ensure equitable access to primary and secondary education** for refugees and asylum seekers on an equal basis as nationals. **Tertiary education: Support investments within the national TVET system**, to ensure the delivery of demand-driven courses in key economic sectors associated with climate change, benefiting refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants, and Belizean youth.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

Promote access to the right to work for refugees through the development of a collaboration strategy with the private sector in the country's priority production areas.

- **Provide access to employment opportunities** in priority sectors of the economy to respond to the needs of the private sector and labour market.

THE MIRPS

The Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) is a regional contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees formed by the governments of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama to strengthen protection and promote solutions for forcibly displaced populations, addressing the underlying causes and promoting a stable environment that ensures security, economic development and prosperity.



www.mirps-platform.org/en



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