

MIRPS 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE COMPREHENSIVE
REGIONAL PROTECTION
AND SOLUTIONS FRAMEWORK



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CREDITS

We recognize the contributions of the MIRPS Pro-tempore Presidency Panama 2023, National Technical Teams of MIRPS countries and their partners for the development of this report.

PRODUCTION

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Acronyms

ACCORD: Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation

AECID: Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation

ANE: National Employment Agency of Costa Rica

CAI: Comprehensive Attention Centre of Guatemala

CAJP - OAS: Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs

CAM - OAS: Committee on Migration Issues

CARICOM: Caribbean Community

CCSS: Costa Rican Social Security Fund

CENTROESTAD: Central American Statistical Commission

CEPA: Autonomous Port Executive Commission of El Salvador

CIPPDEF: Inter-Institutional Commission for the Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons of Honduras

CISAME: Comprehensive Mental Health Care Centre of Mexico

CODER: Commission for Refugee Determination of El Salvador

COI: Country-of-Origin Information

CONAPINA: National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence of El Salvador

CONAPRED: National Council to Prevent Discrimination of Mexico

CONARES: National Commissions for Refugees

CONASAMA: National Commission on Mental Health and Addictions of Mexico

COPECO: Standing Committee on Contingencies of Honduras

CUNIZAB: University Centre of Izabal

CURP: Unique Population Registration Number of Mexico

CVRR: Commission on Restricted Visas and Refugees of Costa Rica

DGA: General Directorate of Customs of El Salvador

DGME: General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners of Costa Rica

DGME: General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners of El Salvador

DIGEEX: General Directorate of Extracurricular Education of Guatemala

DIPPDIV: Directorate for the Protection of Persons Internally Displaced by Violence in Honduras

DMM: Municipal Women's Directorate of Guatemala

DRER: Department for the Recognition of Refugee Status of Guatemala

DSI - OAS: Department of Social Inclusion

ETN: MIRPS National Technical Team

FID: Forced internal displacement

FOSALUD: Solidarity Fund for Health of El Salvador

FUR: Single Registration Form for Displaced Persons in Mexico

GAMI: Centre for the Attention of Migrants of El Salvador

GRF: Global Refugee Forum

HLSC: High Level Selection Committee of the MIRPS Fund

IACHR: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross

ILO: International Labour Organization

INA: National Institute of Apprenticeship of Costa Rica

INADEH: National Institute of Vocational Training and Training for Human Development of Panamá

INEA: National Institute for Adult Education of Mexico

INM: National Migration Institute of Honduras

INOP: Institute of Vocational Guidance of Honduras

INTECAP: Technical Institute for Training and Productivity of Guatemala

IOM: International Organization for Migration

IP: Property Institute of Honduras

ISDEMU: Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women

MEDUCA: Ministry of Education of Panama

MEP: Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica

MESENI: Special Follow-up Mechanism for Nicaragua

MIDEPLAN: Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica

MIGOBDT: Ministry of the Interior and Territorial Development of El Salvador

MINARE: Framework for Protection and Solutions for Response to the Situation of Refugees of Costa Rica

MINEDUCYT: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of El Salvador

MINGOB: Ministry of Government of Panama

MINTRAB: Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Guatemala

MIRPS: Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework

MITRADEL: Ministry of Labour and Labour Development of Panama

MJSP: Ministry of Justice and Public Safety of El Salvador

MRREE: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador

MTPS: Ministry of Labour and Social Security of El Salvador

MTSS: Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Costa Rica

OAS: Organization of American States

ONEC: National Statistics and Census Office of El Salvador

ONPAR: National Office for the Attention of Refugees of Panama

PADF: Pan-American Development Foundation

PEX: Electronic Platform of Work Permits for Foreigners in Guatemala

PGN: National General Attorney's Office of the Guatemala Nation

PNC: National Civil Police of El Salvador

RCM: Regional Conference on Migration

RENAPO: National Population Registry of Mexico

SACM: South American Conference on Migration

SEDH: Secretariat for Human Rights of Honduras

SEGOB: Ministry of the Interior of Mexico

SENAFRONT: National Border Service of Panama

SENNIAF: National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family of Panama

SETRASS: Ministry of Labour of Honduras

SICA: Central American Integration System

SIGES: Information System for Salvadoran Educational Management

SINNA: Nationality and Naturalisation System of Mexico

SIRE: Refugee Information System of Mexico

SNE: National Employment Service of Mexico

SNM: National Migration Service of Panama

SRECI: Directorate for the Protection of Honduran Migrants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

SSAA: Adolescent-Friendly Health Services of Panama

STSS: Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Honduras

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

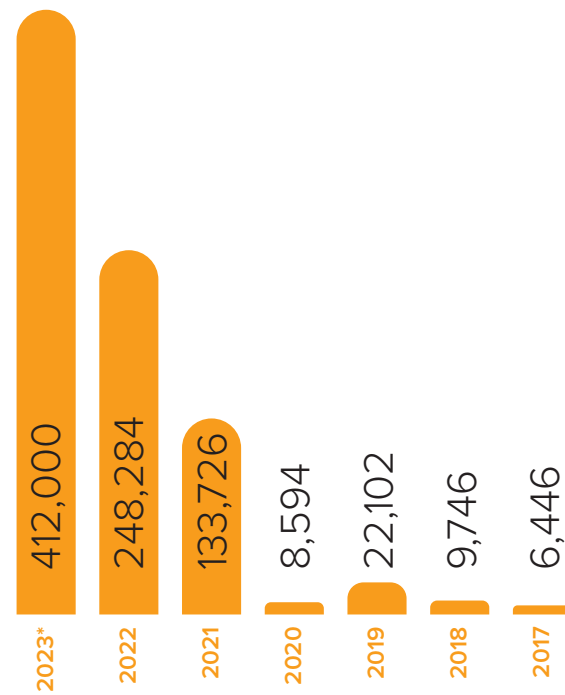
HLP: Housing, land and property



Regional context

Regional context

New arrivals to the subregion by year



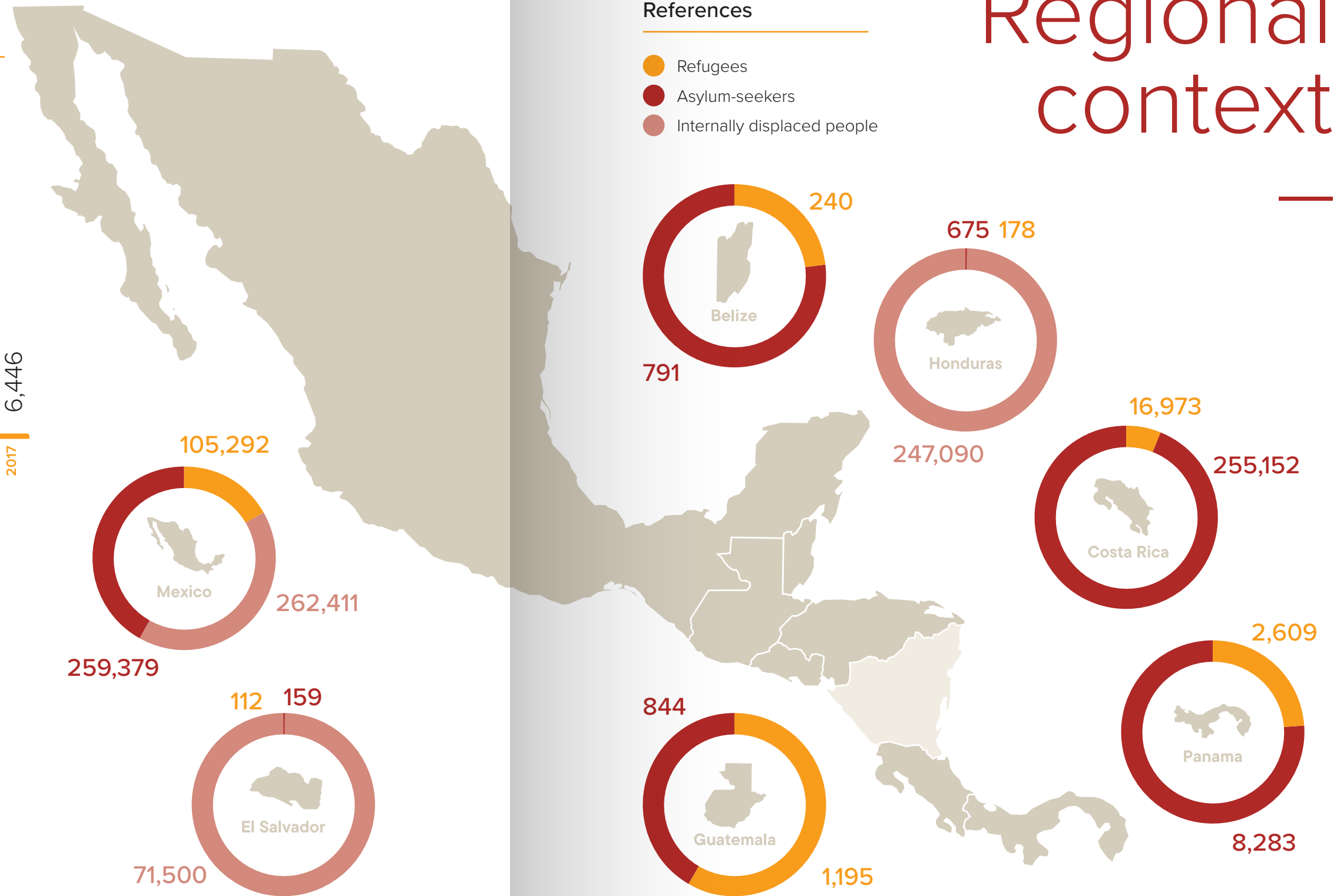
*As of September 30th, 2023.


Asylum applications in 2023

Costa Rica	20,948
Mexico	74,764
Guatemala	597
Panama	178
Honduras	71
Belize	0
El Salvador	112

References

- Refugees
- Asylum-seekers
- Internally displaced people





In 2023, the subregion continued to experience an unprecedented situation in terms of the magnitude and complexity of human mobility and displacement. By the end of June 2023, 1,855,300 million people were forcibly displaced within and from Central America and Mexico. Insecurity, violence, poverty and inequality, combined with economic stagnation, as well as the adverse effects of climate change and disasters, continued to disproportionately affect people living in insecure and more vulnerable environments, accelerating human mobility in the region. Likewise, the number of people involved in mixed movements in countries in the subregion reached high levels, putting a strain on reception and attention mechanisms in transit and destination countries.

The number of refugees and asylum-seekers in Central American countries and Mexico has increased year over year since the adoption of the San Pedro Sula Declaration, rising from 44,600 in 2017 to 592,000 by the end of June 2023. During the first half of 2023, some 96,700 new asylum applications were registered in the sub-region. Although Mexico has maintained its role as a transit country for people involved in mixed movements northward, the country has also established itself as a destination for people in need of international protection, hosting a total of more than 364,700

refugees and asylum-seekers by mid-2023, including more than 74,000 new asylum applications registered in 2023 (as of the end of June).

Costa Rica is home to 272,125 people in need of international protection, of which 16,973 are recognized refugees and 255,152 are asylum-seekers. This high number of people seeking international protection in Costa Rica has put additional pressure on the capacities of the national asylum system and essential services. This includes access to education and health care, particularly in the northern border region, where 90% of asylum-seekers come from Nicaragua. At the same time, communities on the country's southern border are increasingly affected by the arrival of people involved in mixed movements transiting the country in direction to the north.

In response to the significant increase of people who have crossed international borders seeking protection, the strengthened mechanisms of registration, documentation and case management contributed positively to mitigating the protection and exploitation risks to which displaced persons are exposed, while facilitating access to basic services and the labor market. In this regard, the MIRPS Regional Meeting on Reception and Admission held in Tapachula, Mexico between the National

Refugee Commissions of the seven MIRPS states supported the exchange of experiences in the application of digital registration tools and common approaches to simplify the refugee status determination process.

At the end of June 2023, more than 581,000 people were internally displaced in El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico. The actions of criminal organizations, extortion, land and property dispossession, forced recruitment, sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, violence against LGBTIQ+ people, along with the loss of livelihoods and access to basic social services, continue to be the main root causes. Additionally, the adverse effects of natural disasters, exacerbated by the impact of climate change and environmental degradation, are further catalysts for displacement.

State responses to this phenomenon have continued to focus on efforts to stabilize displaced and at-risk communities through the strengthening of legal frameworks and policies for prevention, response, and community protection. This has involved the expansion of the presence of local authorities and strengthening collaboration with international agencies, civil society and grassroots organizations in prioritized locations according to the availability of resources, to advance the prevention and protection response. Broader

national efforts continue to strengthen the work of national human rights institutions, gender-based violence prevention and child protection programs, as well as in the provision of temporary protection alternatives and, where possible, solutions through sustainable local integration.

On the other hand, by the end of September 2023, almost 409,000 people crossed the dangerous Darien route, which marks the border between Colombia and Panama, representing an increase of 170% compared to the number of arrivals in the Darien recorded in the same period of the previous year. In the month of August 2023, nearly 82,000 arrivals were recorded in the Darien, marking the highest number of arrivals in a single month in the region's history. Mixed movements involve the cross-border movement of people, usually irregularly, who travel using the same routes and means of transportation, but for different reasons. People traveling as part of mixed movements have different needs and profiles and may include asylum-seekers, refugees, trafficked persons, unaccompanied or separated children, stateless persons and migrants.

The increasing volume of people involved in mixed and irregular movements across the region brings with it serious protection risks and challenges, including incidents of violence, robbery, harassment, extortion and increased traffic accidents, which threaten the rights and integrity of people on the move. Despite the efforts of States and the collaboration of humanitarian partners, the availability of services for people on the move, such as shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, and food, remained limited to address existing needs.



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People from Venezuela continued to be the main population involved in mixed movements through the Darien, followed by people from Ecuador and Haiti. However, significant movement of people from Asian and African countries was also observed. More than fifty percent of Venezuelans in transit through the region began their journey in their country of origin, while the rest resided in other South American countries, but failed to integrate socioeconomically in a sustainable manner. Several factors contribute to their involvement in secondary movements, such as limited access to public services and livelihood opportunities, as well as exposure to situations of intimidation, threats or personal attacks, and widespread violence and insecurity. Although most people involved in mixed movements travel northward with the expectation of reaching the United States, many subsequently regularize their status in the subregion through access to asylum or other legal stay alternatives or return to previous host countries or to their countries of origin.

Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama conclude the sixth year of MIRPS by consolidating their collaboration aimed at enhancing key objectives for the region: strengthening the protection response and solutions for displaced persons, including the recognition and promotion of displacement skills and capacities; strengthening regional dialogue and cooperation to promote the implementation of common political commitments; and positioning the MIRPS at the highest national, regional and global levels as a viable regional coordination mechanism, renewing its call for sustained and deepened political, technical, financial and material support for greater protection and solutions for forcibly displaced persons.

As this year closes, participating States reaffirm their commitment to MIRPS and enthusiastically welcome further international collaboration from MIRPS Support Platform members, including the adoption of commitments under the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) that seek to contribute to the achievement of the common objectives set for the coming years.

The MIRPS in the region

Regional Plan 2023

In January 2023, the Republic of Panama assumed the Pro-tempore Presidency of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), with a comprehensive vision of seeking the best protection responses and best results for **refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, returnees and persons in need of international protection**. It presented and reached consensus with the Member States on the MIRPS 2023 Regional Action Plan, which, in addition to recognizing the efforts made by the previous presidencies, aimed at strengthening common dialogue and positioning the MIRPS at the highest national, regional and global levels.

The Pro-tempore Presidency constantly promoted the need for and importance of recognizing the MIRPS as an efficient mechanism with the capacity for regional articulation and execution.



In order to make the MIRPS more visible, the Pro-tempore Presidency convened a National Meeting with representatives of diplomatic missions, delegates of financial institutions and the Technical Secretariat, which are part of the MIRPS and the Support Platform.

- This meeting made visible the displacement realities faced by the region and the tension it implies for States. The dialogue between Panama as Presidency, and the Support Platform at the local level, reinforced the importance of shaping a collective working in support of the implementation of regional roadmaps, with concrete actions at the policy and initiative level, that strengthen the



protection and solutions responses at national and regional levels. Diplomatic representations from other countries such as Israel, England, Portugal, Libya and Morocco also participated and learned about the MIRPS, the commitments of the Central American region and Mexico and the need for cooperation required to face the challenges imposed by the commitment to improve opportunities for refugees, refugee status seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, returnees and persons in need of international protection.

Likewise, the Pro-tempore Presidency participated in other regional forums for dialogue, such as the Quito Process.

- The MIRPS Pro-Tempore Presidency participated in the “Technical Meeting of the Specialist Group of National Commissions for Refugees and other similar agencies”, organised in the context of the Quito Process. During the session, the Presidency highlighted the challenges and opportunities for national refugee/asylum systems in the MIRPS countries, while reflecting on the challenges of the regional situation, demographic trends, best practices, statistics, and profiles. During the meeting, countries restated their

commitment to strengthening asylum/refugee systems to respond to the increasing number of asylum-seekers, as well as the importance of uniting efforts to approach displacement in the region.

The Pro-tempore Presidency also participated at international forums, such as the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs.

- The PPT highlighted the benefits of the MIRPS Fund, a specific fund of voluntary contributions designed to support governmental responses to the situation of displacement in the region. The Presidency stressed the importance of the implementation of these funds in favor of the MIRPS, benefitting thousands of persons countries in the region. For instance, in Costa Rica, it will benefit more than 23,000 people seeking refugee status; likewise, El Salvador could benefit 60 families, which are composed of returnees in need of protection; Honduras will support approximately 100 internally displaced persons, mostly women; Guatemala will help its refugee claimants with labor issues; Mexico channeled these funds to help recognize refugee claimants, with emphasis on children and adolescents; finally, Panama channeled them to improve the conditions of 800 people, including children, adolescents and women.

The OAS Committee on Migration Issues (CAM) was another forum in which the Pro-tempore Presidency shared the commitments and efforts made through the MIRPS Regional Technical Teams and highlighted their results.



The Pro-tempore Presidency organized and convened, in Coordination with the Regional Technical Teams, a Regional Forum in Commemoration of the 2023 Refugee Day “Opportunities for the Integration of Refugees”.

- The Forum enabled a regional dialogue to recognise and confirm that when refugees are given opportunities, they can support themselves and their families, and make positive contributions to their host communities. In this virtuous circle, refugees and host communities empower each other, socially and financially.
- Based on the interventions of the MIRPS countries, the actions that generate opportunities for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless and returnees with protection needs, to be self-sufficient and for host communities to benefit from their talents and passions were highlighted. Emphasis was made on the articulated work

of National Employment Systems, which together with the private sector and civil society, connect talents with job opportunities. Moreover, the importance of building networks of municipalities, which provide public services and first-line care, was also highlighted. In turn, MABE, international Mexican company that designs, produces and distributes home appliances, representing the private sector, shared its experience in coordinating the private sector for the Local Integration Programme in Mexico, stating that the most important challenges to address together are: i) constant advocacy with the private sector regarding the skills that refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless and returnees with protection needs bring to their host communities; ii) support to refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless and returnees with protection needs to strengthen their skills in response to the needs of the employer sector of the host country.

The Presidency also cooperated with the MIRPS Learning Events, organized by the MIRPS Support Platform to facilitate the exchange of good practices between States. The Learning Events took place in El Salvador, Costa Rica and Colombia.

Furthermore, and with the objective of creating awareness on the difficult crisis faced by people crossing the Darien, the Pro-tempore Presidency presented in public and private Universities the documentary “Darien is not a route”. During the event, a dialogue took place to promote debate, discussions and critical thinking among the students.

Moreover, the Pro-tempore Presidency, identified as a challenge, the need for the elaboration and approval of the MIRPS Statutory Charter.

- With the objective of formalizing and regulating the functioning of the MIRPS, the Presidency consensually developed the MIRPS Statutory Charter, composed of a series of provisions related to regional and national structures, roles of the parties and scope of work. It also makes visible the mechanisms for dialogue with strategic stakeholders, such as the MIRPS Support Platform, Civil Society, the Private Sector, and Academia.

The review process was participatory, involving all member states, the Technical Secretariat and the Support Platform. It was approved by the Member States and ratified in November during the VI MIRPS Annual Meeting.

The Pro-tempore Presidency also formalized the usage of a banner to symbolize the MIRPS, when making the transition between Presidencies.

Throughout the year, the Presidency aimed at achieving concrete actions through a series of national and regional dialogues with Member States, to support the needs of the region as reflected in the MIRPS Regional Action Plan 2023. It is important to highlight the leadership and commitment of the Regional Technical Teams, which led to the achievement of results such as:



Strengthening processes aimed at comprehensive protection and care services for refugees, asylum-seekers and persons in need of protection

REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM ON RECEPTION, ADMISSION AND PROCESSING OF CASES

In coordination with the Government of Mexico as lead country. With the support of: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the OAS, Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), and UNHCR.

In 2023, Mexico led the Regional Technical Team on Case Reception, Admission, and Processing for the second year in a row. Throughout the year, the Group held a series of virtual sessions and a MIRPS Regional Meeting in Tapachula, Mexico, aimed at learning about the experiences of Member States, identifying good practices and recognizing the possibilities of implementing them in other states, with the objective of improving the systems for the reception, admission and processing of cases.

From the various discussions on registration systems, digital transformation, and differentiated modalities, the countries recognised the need to: (i) shorten processing times, for which it is necessary to increase and strengthen the capacities of officials; (ii) strengthen mechanisms and procedures for receiving protection requests at border points; (iii) decentralise the issuance of Temporary Stay Permits to avoid possible situations of vulnerability and irregularity during the submission of documentation; (iv) strengthen protocols for care and services based on population sector; and (v) aim to have documentation in as many languages as necessary.

They also emphasised the need to use a case management system that automates processes at each stage of the procedure, from the registration of a request to the resolution of the case, in order to develop the capacity and quality of more efficient and fair asylum/refugee systems.

Member States agreed that the implementation of differentiated modalities strengthens the efficiency of the eligibility processes for asylum-seekers by establishing profiles that allow for the processing of cases that meet a series of shared characteristics. The importance of strengthening the management of Country-of-Origin Information (COI) to accelerate the processing of cases of nationalities with higher rates of protection seekers was also highlighted. They further recommended the establishment of technical cooperation initiatives, such as sharing experiences, information, and investigation techniques, as well as experiences on COI reporting and field fact-finding missions.

The MIRPS countries finalized a mapping that integrates full information on reception, processing, and appeal stages of their asylum/refugee systems.

They also continued their Country-of-Origin Information training on countries with high numbers of seekers, such as Haiti and Nicaragua.



Strengthening national capacities to facilitate the integration of displaced persons, in coordination with local authorities and host communities

REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

In coordination with the Government of Honduras as lead country. With the support of the Government of Colombia, International Committee of the Red Cross, CENTROESTAD SICA, and UNDP.

The Government of Honduras led the Regional Technical Team on Internal Displacement, and together with the teams from El Salvador and Mexico, implemented an annual roadmap that prioritised the learning on prevention and community protection, early warning systems, coordination between national systems and local governments to address internal displacement, and durable solutions.

With the auspice of the Support Platform, and in coordination of the Pro-tempore Presidency, the Regional Technical Team conducted a learning visit to Colombia, a member of the Support Platform. This exchange enabled peer-to-peer learning on opportunities and methods to effectively implement their respective legal and public policy frameworks on internal displacement, as well as strategies to overcome recurrent obstacles.

The sessions and regional visit highlighted the importance of further development, awareness raising, and dissemination of information regarding internal displacement, as well as the importance of recognising and guaranteeing the rights of internally displaced persons, whose rights are undermined as a result of their displacement. Situations such as the loss of land

and housing, unemployment, health deterioration, and limited access to education are some of the situations that internally displaced persons face, and which require interinstitutional responses.

The Inter American Court of Human Rights has issued several case decisions highlighting the response to internal displacement as an ongoing obligation that affects various human rights. The Regional Team emphasises the need for additional mechanisms to achieve this mandate, such as adequate and effective care routes, mechanisms to address specific needs, and designation of clear and trained focal points.



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REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM ON LOCAL GOVERNANCE

In Coordination with the Government of Panama as lead country.

Local authorities play a leading role in promoting the reception, protection, and integration of displaced persons. Their effective engagement is essential to strengthen access to rights and services within their territory, given that they are in a position to generate rapid changes in local policies that can positively and immediately affect the lives of displaced persons. However, this response requires coordination and articulation from the local level with the national level and other strategic partners, in order to allow municipalities, particularly small municipalities and peripheral cities, to provide efficient responses with available human and financial resources.

The roadmap of the Local Governance's Regional Technical Team was focused on strengthening this critical development of partnerships and networks. Under the leadership of the Government of Panama, the 10 local governments of Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama, with Costa Rica as an observer, worked on learning collective construction methodologies in three priorities: i) strengthening the technical capacities of municipal staff responsible for the care of displaced persons; ii) adapting municipal spaces for the care, guidance, and protection of persons in need of protection; iii) coordinating access to healthcare, employment, and sports services.

The Team highlights the importance of establishing care structures that provide services through networks, by implementing coordinated work methodologies with all actors present at the local level. An important step taken by the Team has been the identification of these actors and the systematization of information in a map, which comprises geolocation data and available services in the municipality.

Each municipality has strengthened its local initiatives (as described in the country chapters within this report) and will continue to work on providing comprehensive services directly or through a strengthened referral system.



Sample service mapping developed in coordination with the Working Group on Local Governance and the MIRPS Civil Society Dialogue Mechanism.

Recognizing and promoting the capacities and competencies of displaced persons and those in a vulnerable situation, for their economic and social integration, with an emphasis on women, girls, boys, and adolescents

REGIONAL TECHNICAL TEAM ON JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

In coordination with the Government of Costa Rica as lead country.
With the support from: Government of Switzerland, ILO, and UNDP.

Under the leadership of Costa Rica, the Regional Technical Team on Jobs and Livelihoods worked to promote and advocate for progress on commitments related to labour market access and vocational training within the MIRPS national action plans.

Considering the challenges the region faces in implementing such commitments, the Regional Team's work during 2023 was expanded to include the participation of strategic partners, such as civil society and the private sector, whose contributions are essential for the achievement of national and regional objectives.



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Both in the virtual discussions and in the in-person regional meeting held in the city of San José, countries highlighted the importance of strengthening National Employment Systems and their work with the private sector, Vocational Training Institutes, and displaced persons themselves.

MIRPS countries have made significant progress in improving their digital labour platforms. The importance of improving the capacity to identify the skills and abilities of the displaced population was emphasised. Similarly, in a meeting with the private sector, several key issues were highlighted, including the need to advance competency certification processes and expand trainings offered to displaced persons in order to facilitate acquisition or improvement of skills that will allow for their social insertion in the labour market of the host country.

In the framework of joint work sessions, shared work plans were developed between governments, the private sector, and civil society, with concrete initiatives to make progress on the commitments, such as joint job fairs, awareness-raising sessions on hiring displaced persons and eliminating xenophobia, the creation of mobile information units, and fostering access to employment platforms, among others.

On the other hand, MIRPS countries have made progress on the implementation of the strategy for the recognition of labour competencies of persons on the move. This work will facilitate the establishment of the necessary political and technical conditions to guarantee the recognition of labour competencies of persons on the move in MIRPS countries, through: (i) strengthening existing labour competency evaluation and certification systems; (ii) establishing a model for the recognition of competency certifications between countries, via the standardisation and recognition of certifications in strategic areas or activities for the migrant, refugee, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless and returnees with international protection needs.





Strategic
positioning of
MIRPS in
the OAS

The progress made by MIRPS and its member states continues to position them in political arenas and forums of hemispheric relevance for the Organisation of American States. Additionally, technical advice from specialised OAS bodies has been made available to the members of this mechanism.

Firstly, similar to every year since the establishment of the MIRPS, the OAS Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs (CAJP) received a detailed update on the progress achieved, lessons learnt, and best practices of the seven MIRPS States, which highlighted the situation of displacement and trends of mixed movements in the region. Similarly, valuable interventions were made by the MIRPS Pro-Tempore Presidency 2022, which was led by Honduras; the Panama Pro-Tempore Presidency 2023; the MIRPS Support Platform Presidency 2022, led by Canada; the current Presidency of the

platform, led by the United States; and the MIRPS Technical Secretariat, formed by the OAS and UNHCR.

Likewise, the OAS Committee on Migration Issues (CAM) received the MIRPS Pro-Tempore Presidency 2023 during the annual thematic session that addressed the strengthening of regional cooperation to improve migration governance and international protection in the Americas. The session highlighted the MIRPS as a regional cooperation process with concrete actions regarding protection and durable solutions for displaced persons. The areas of collaboration with other regional processes such as the Regional Conference on Migrations (RCM), the South American Conference on Migration (SACM), the Los Angeles Declaration, initiatives in the Caribbean, among others, were also reviewed.



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Moreover, in the context of the first Cities Summit of the Americas in Denver, Colorado, the OAS, UNHCR, PADF, and IOM presented the report “Reception and Integration of Migrants and Refugees in the Cities of the Americas.” This report identifies best practices and challenges in the care of these populations in the region, and in the cities that are part of the MIRPS. In particular, the report recommends adapting responses and policies to local needs and priorities in order to provide a better response in terms of reception and integration of the displaced population; including displaced persons in already existing services in healthcare, education, social protection, and labour integration; promoting training focused on legislation and human rights; linking other national and local actors, such as civil society organisations, the private sector, and international organisations; among others. The municipalities of Tapachula and Tijuana, Mexico, participated in this presentation and mentioned good practices at the local level as well as some of the advances of the MIRPS Working Group on Local Governance.

Furthermore, during the 53rd Regular Session of the OAS General Assembly in June, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Americas renewed the mandates of the resolution on the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in the Americas, recognising the progress of the MIRPS, its Working Groups and the mobilisation of the Support Platform. In addition, new mandates related to the Second Global Refugee Forum were incorporated, reaffirming its commitment to the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, and the commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration in 2024. In this same context, OAS Member States, including the MIRPS States, approved the “Declaration

for the Protection and Integration of Migrant and Refugee Children in the Americas,” which recognises the progress made within the work of this regional mechanism. Through the Declaration, the OAS General Assembly declared its intention to strengthen regional cooperation measures that address the displacement of children and adolescents, which contribute to the consolidation of international protection frameworks, with a focus on responsibility-sharing, as well as to prevent and mitigate the structural causes of the displacement. It also recommended undertaking several key actions, including the design and implementation of mechanisms for the collection of disaggregated information and data on displaced children and adolescents; promoting preventive measures for the identification and management of their displacement; and promoting and protecting the enjoyment of their human rights by seeking to raise awareness among legislators, public servants, and judicial officials, underlining the importance of the principle of the best interests of the children.

At the same time, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), an autonomous body of the OAS, through the Special Follow-up Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) as well as the Rapporteur on the rights of persons on the move, provided technical advice to member countries of the Working Group on Strengthening Asylum Systems.

Finally, the OAS General Secretariat has been at the disposal of the Permanent Missions of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama in their initiatives to address displacement, and in particular, during the negotiation process of the Declaration of Panama City 2023, which was adopted during the Annual Meeting.

Having in mind the situation of more than one million displaced persons in Central America and Mexico, the OAS General Secretariat will continue working with MIRPS Member States,

the Support Platform, civil society organisations, the private sector, and academics to jointly continue to foster better living conditions for all displaced populations in Central America and Mexico.



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MIRPS Fund in Action

The MIRPS Fund is one of the key mechanisms for obtaining resources and coordinating the support required by MIRPS States, in addition to the existing mechanisms to address the displacement crisis in the region.

After the first contribution to the MIRPS Fund made by the Government of Spain in 2022, the entire operational framework of the Fund was put into effect with the participation of the MIRPS States themselves, and the first call for proposals was opened for each MIRPS country to submit its project proposals.

The High Level Selection Committee (HLSC) reviewed and analysed the proposals received, selecting six of them, which address various themes, such as: strengthening institutional capacities for better care and protection of persons seeking refugee status, refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees with protection needs; expanding access to humanitarian assistance and providing livelihoods and

self-reliance for these populations; strengthening mechanisms for the socio-economic integration of displaced populations; and strengthening the processes of recognition of the right to identity and documentation of displaced populations in their host communities; among others.

Throughout the year of 2023, the OAS Department of Social Inclusion (DSI), in charge of administration, financial management, and accountability of the Fund, has worked closely with the executing entities of each of the States, providing support and assistance to ensure the achievement of expected outcomes. As a result, implementation agreements were signed, which mark the starting point for the implementation of the initiatives on the ground, including:



COSTA RICA

The project “Strengthening the Identification and Referral of Persons Seeking Refugee Status and/or with Profiles of Special Vulnerability, by Improving the Platform of the Refugee Unit of Costa Rica” will be implemented by the Refugee Unit of the General Directorate of Migration and Aliens.



EL SALVADOR

The project “Linking Returnee Children and Adolescents in Need of Protection and their Families to Livelihoods in El Salvador” will be implemented by the National Council for Early Childhood, Childhood and Adolescence (CONAPINA).



GUATEMALA

The project “Facilitation of Labour Inclusion of the Population Seeking Refugee Status and Refugees in Guatemala” will be implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.



HONDURAS

The project “Strengthening the Response of the State of Honduras to Care for Internally Displaced Persons due to Violence” will be implemented by the Secretariat for Human Rights.



MEXICO

The project “Institutional Strengthening of Operational Capacity to Recognise the Identity of Persons Seeking Recognition of Refugee Status, with Particular Emphasis on Children and Adolescents in Mexico” will be implemented by the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance.



PANAMA

The project “Strengthening the Care, Integration and Protection of Refugees, Applicants of Refugee Status, and Host Communities in the Darien, in line with the MIRPS National Action Plan, and with Particular Emphasis on Children, Adolescents, and Women” will be implemented by the Ministry of Government.



These projects are aligned with the objectives of the MIRPS and the commitments reaffirmed in 2022, which will allow beneficiary States to advance in the implementation of actions defined in their national plans. They also include

a rights and inclusion-based perspective, that is at their core, as well as a focus on gender, age, and attention to the differentiated needs of some particularly vulnerable populations.

With the implementation of these initiatives during 2023 and 2024, more than 100,000 refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, and displaced persons are expected to benefit in Central America and Mexico.

The MIRPS Fund is open to receive new contributions, and to continue implementing initiatives and projects on the ground in MIRPS States.



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Alliances with strategic partners

Civil Society

In 2023, civil society participation took a more concrete form through the Dialogue Mechanism between Civil Society Organisations for the MIRPS. As the Pro-Tempore Presidency figure of the mechanism was approved for a one-year period, internal elections were held and the organisation *Diálogo Intercultural Mexicano A.C.* was chosen to assume the position for 2023. Under its leadership, several new tools were developed to ensure the functioning of the Mechanism, its impact, and the effective coordination with the MIRPS.

The Presidency submitted its objectives for the year in a work plan, aligned with those stated by the MIRPS Presidency. These included the creation of a network among the members of the Mechanism, which was carried out through the implementation of regular meetings and a homogeneous communication system. In addition, membership was expanded with an emphasis on Central American countries, and working groups were created comprising orga-

nisations with proven experience in their thematic areas. These groups allow for effective contributions to the national and regional work plans of the MIRPS countries. Finally, a common agenda was developed with the MIRPS. In this regard, civil society held meetings with the MIRPS as well as participated in working groups with the Technical Secretariat and in OAS workshops.

Based on the identification of the thematic areas of the mechanism's organisations, working groups were organised, with leadership and specific objectives:

In a successful collaboration, organisations from the countries in the group on Internal Displacement created a package of graphic products and social media material to generate a renewed attention to the issue. Moreover, the working group was able to take the first step in systematising available data on internal displacement from civil society organisations.

The working group on Local Governance promotes and strengthens the capacities of governmental actors at the local level to assist forcibly displaced persons. The participating organisations work with different target populations, which allow for a useful exchange of experiences and good practices that strengthen internal capacities. In addition, the group created a mapping of strategic actors which resulted in the creation of new partnerships with local governmental actors.

In the context of durable solutions, the group on Training and Livelihoods advocates for integration opportunities through education or job placement. In order to achieve a higher

level of coordination in the region, the participating organisations developed a report with the next steps to be taken for labour or educational integration in the different countries. Additionally, on the issue of labour integration, several sessions were held with the respective working group of the MIRPS. In these sessions, civil society provided first-hand technical support to governments in order to find solutions for the labour integration of displaced persons.

Finally, the working group on Process focuses on improving asylum systems and other legal processes to provide protection to forcibly displaced persons. The group produced a document outlining asylum-seeking pathways by country. In this way, they have been able to share experiences and best practices on the issue of legal assistance in all relevant processes.



Private Sector

The integration of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons and returnees with protection needs into their host communities is a complex process that involves the active participation and support of all sectors of society. The opportunity to work and earn a living is one of the most effective ways people can rebuild their lives with dignity and hope. The private sector is key to achieving this goal of creating a social impact and generating livelihoods for populations in the most vulnerable situations.

In order to deepen the involvement and awareness of the private sector of the situation of forced displacement faced by Central America and Mexico, the countries of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS), with the support of the MIRPS Support Platform and the Technical Secretariat, have strengthened dialogue and exchange with the business sector this 2023, promoting good practices for integrating people into regional labour markets.

In carrying out these tasks, the MIRPS countries have helped to increase awareness of regulations and practices for the adoption of public policies aimed at integrating displaced populations into the labour force. This has been done through dialogues between authorities and private enterprises, and by sharing good practices and inclusive policies with key regional players. MIRPS states have also worked together with the private sector to leverage the talents and skills of displaced persons through activities aimed at strengthening initiatives regarding vocational training, employment promotion and entrepreneurship at the local level, in order to enhance their self-reliance.

The private sector has been involved in many areas of MIRPS activities, including:

- MIRPS regional dialogue and cooperation spaces, specifically through the Working Group on Jobs and Livelihoods, participating in virtual sessions for the construction of joint national plans and in the Learning Event on “Comprehensive approaches to the economic inclusion of displaced persons: Enhancing resilience and valuing contributions to host communities,” which took place from 17 to 18 October in San Jose, Costa Rica. These exchanges have paved the way for coordination between governments and the private sector in order to identify opportunities and challenges in supporting the recruitment of displaced persons and the publication of vacancies on the public employment systems’ platforms of the MIRPS countries, as well as to explore opportunities for the regional involvement of the private sector in the MIRPS.
- Awareness-raising and exchange events between governments and the private sector in the region. In 2023, the MIRPS Technical Secretariat organised six events, with the participation of the private sector, on the situation of forced displacement in the region. These exchanges took place at various forums in Washington D.C. and MIRPS countries with strategic partners, including Chambers of Commerce, Corporate Social

Responsibility agencies, business associations and Rotary clubs in the United States, Central America, and Mexico. The events aimed to facilitate the exploration and proposal of collaborative opportunities for the benefit of displaced persons in the region, through the actions carried out as part of the MIRPS, as well as the projects undertaken by these organisations in the region. In particular, at the initiative of the Government of Canada, as a member of the MIRPS Support Platform, and with the support of the Technical Secretariat, a toolbox has been developed for organising working sessions with the private sector.

All these joint efforts involving the private sector have been carried out with an perspective of establishing a more permanent and structured mechanism for consultation, dialogue and cooperation, in order to strengthen interaction and exchange among strategic private sector players with the MIRPS countries, with the overall objective of responding to the forced displacement crisis in Central America and Mexico. The MIRPS Technical Secretariat will facilitate this mechanism, in line with its mandate to involve private sector players who can support efforts to achieve MIRPS goals.

Guided by the technical work of the MIRPS Working Groups, MIRPS states will continue explore ways to further strengthen dialogue with private sector partners in strategic areas, enhance coordination with the MIRPS Support Platform, and mobilise the private sector more effectively through cooperation agreements and specific commitments.

The MIRPS in action

NATIONAL PROGRESS



Belize

National Context

INDICATORS



119

Number of girls, boys, and adolescents of concern in vulnerable context

were supported with school supplies and school fees to enroll in the formal national education system facilitated by fellow implementing partner – Help for Progress.



189

Number of registered asylum-seekers

and refugees supported with technical, vocational, language, employability, and/or entrepreneurship training.



250

RSD interviews

conducted from October 2022 to August 2023.

Belize has been strengthening its refugee legal frameworks and policies, fostering regional cooperation, and promoting education and awareness, to ensure that welcoming refugees becomes an opportunity for growth, development, and social cohesion, and a force

for positive change and shared prosperity. Furthermore, by recognizing and harnessing the potential of forcibly displaced persons, asylum-seekers, and refugees, Belize has managed the current context to drive innovation, peaceful coexistence, and stimulate economic



“

It feels great being able to help others, especially because I remember coming to Belize and not understanding English.

”

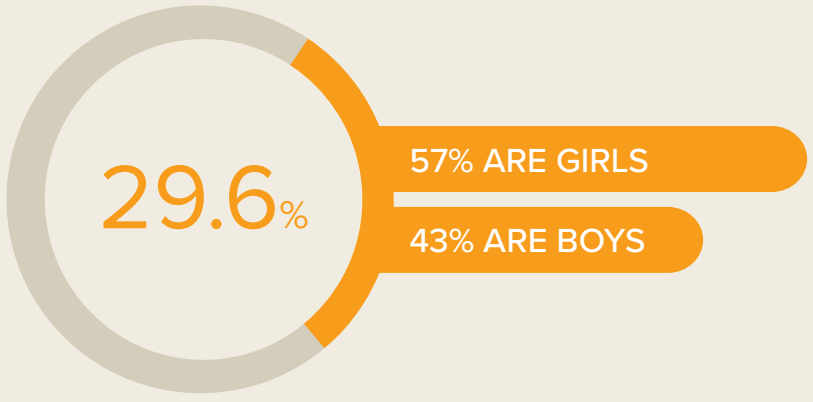
growth. In 2023, the Government of Belize has continued engaging with relevant stakeholders within the MIRPS framework to coordinate a local and regional response to strengthen the asylum process, ensure protection, and implement durable solutions for forcibly displaced people. This work has promoted initiatives to improve the mechanism for reception and admission, respond to humanitarian and protection needs, and promote local integration and peaceful co-existence. In 2022 and 2023, the Government of Belize, in partnership with UNHCR and ci-

vil society organizations, implemented mobile clinics program to assist in the registration of eligible asylum-seekers to the Amnesty in remote areas to ensure maximum outreach and support.

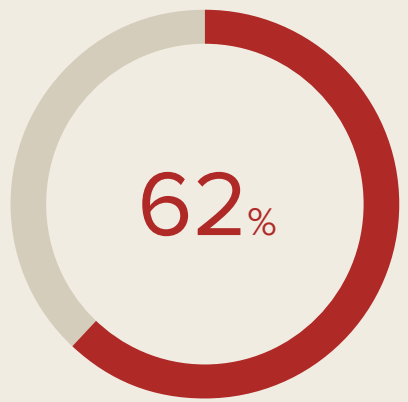
Belize is home to over 4,000 forcibly displaced persons, of whom 240 are recognized refugees and 791 asylum-seekers, of which 735 have applied for Amnesty. In 2023, 250 asylum-seekers' applications were resolved by the Refugees Eligibility Committee from October 2022 to September 2023.



49% of new asylum applicants in 2023 are women.



29.6% of the newly arrived asylum-seekers are children.



62% of 2023 newly arrived registered asylum claimants are single cases

Progress



PROTECTION

AMNESTY PROGRAM

In August 2022 the Government of Belize launched the Amnesty Program aiming to provide permanent residence with a pathway to citizenship to asylum-seekers and irregular migrants who reside in Belize. By the end of the registration process in March 2023, a total of 12,765 applications from migrants of 32 countries were received of which 735 applied under the asylum-seekers criteria, while the total number of the asylum-seekers applications exceeded 1,200 including those applying under other criteria such as having a child born in Belize and being married with a Belizean national.

2023 HAS BEEN THE SECOND YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BELIZE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT: STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE REFUGEES DEPARTMENT.

This project has been essential in strategic areas to support and develop the asylum system in Belize in reference to improving the mechanism for reception and admission, responding to humanitarian and protection needs, and implementing durable solutions for forcibly displaced people. This partnership has expanded the asylum processing capacity significantly reducing the backlog of claims, reducing the processing time, and improving modalities for the management of new asylum cases.

ADDRESSING STATELESSNESS

In August 2023 Belize commenced to engagements to securing support to address statelessness in the country; and to obtain guidance on the drafting of the necessary statelessness legislation from the Attorney General's Ministry.

During the past year, Belize has also made significant strides in the review of National Refugee Legislation, and concrete proposals have been developed to ensure a robust asylum system, being managed by internationally trained employees, utilizing a digitized and modern technological system to provide protection, and assistance to stateless persons, asylum-seekers, and refugees in Belize. The process is currently in the last stage to be approved by the Legislature.



EDUCATION

FORMAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS, AND VOCATIONAL AND ENTREPRENEUR BUSINESS TRAINING FOR ADULTS

The Education for Asylum-seekers and Refugees has been a priority for the Government of Belize, steadily increasing interventions since 2020 in two specific areas: formal education for children and adolescents, and vocational and entrepreneurship training for adults.

Within both interventions, 119 children benefited in 2023 with education assistance designed to cover needs such as school supplies and school fees to enrol in the formal national education system. Additionally, 240 adults received vocational education and skills training for the preparation of entrepreneurship projects.



HEALTH

In a joint effort to promote access to health care and local integration for refugee women, the Government of Belize, UNHCR, and Civil Society Organizations carried out two workshops on sexual and reproductive health, including the participation of 21 asylum-seekers, who also received health services.



JOB AND LIVELIHOODS

INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS AIMED AT IMPROVING THE LIFE CHOICES OF ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

including the provision of technical, vocational, language, and employability trainings, as well as support for entrepreneurship projects.

As part of progress in the local integration of forcibly displaced persons in the country, the acquisition of language skills is essential for successful integration into Belizean society. During 2023, the implementation of English as a Second Language program has continued improving the communication skills and employment prospects of the beneficiaries.

LIVELIHOOD PROJECTS IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

have been supported to provide technical and vocational training to asylum-seekers and refugees. These programs have included courses in areas such as carpentry, sewing, jewelry creation, and cosmetology. In addition, entrepreneurship has been promoted as an avenue for the self-sufficiency of asylum-seekers and refugees in Belize. Through business skills training programs, in-kind support, and mentoring, individuals and their families have been supported to start their own businesses in order to generate their own income and achieve self-reliance.

To give visibility to these programs, in the framework of International Refugee Day, the Government of Belize, through the Refugees Department, UNHCR, and local NGO's, facilitated the establishment of a Market Day with artisanal products made by refugees.

PROJECT "FOSTERING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF DISPLACED PERSONS IN SETTLEMENTS IN WESTERN BELIZE," MANAGED BY THE MINISTRY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND RISK

The project supported forcibly displaced persons in four settlements to promote economic integration in their host communities and participate in furthering their common resilience, socio-economic growth, and sustainable development.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, TECHNICAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT INITIATIVES IN REFERENCE TO SUSTAINABLE AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT PRACTICES,

Agro-ecological management, integrated pest management, and marketing and processing were carried out in communities where forcibly displaced populations live countrywide in several topics including coconut farming, backyard poultry production, bee-keeping, and new systems in live-stock management by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Enterprises.



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Conclusion

In June 2023, Belize commenced working on its first national Migration Policy, which will entail a Refugee Policy. Additionally, in August 2023 CARICOM, which Belize is a member of, announced the development of a Regional Policy on Migration and Forced Displacement to accelerate towards the Sustainable Development Goals of 2023. CARICOM identified policy

development in border governance, refugee protection, social and economic development, as well as other forms of migration. In 2024 Belize takes up the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) as well as the MIRPS Pro Tempore Presidency, this scenario presents a unique opportunity for Belize to promote a comprehensive network of coherent and adequate response to the regional context and work towards a more inclusive and equitable society.



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Asylum-seekers Help Others Apply for Amnesty in Belize

Mother and daughter, asylum-seekers, find strength in helping others apply for amnesty to the Belizean government, even after suffering the tragic loss of a family member and harassment by gangs.

By Aida Escobar in Bella Vista, Belize

“When I first heard about amnesty, I ran to the HUMANA resource centre to see how I could help others learn about this unique opportunity,” recalls Luz*. ‘HUMANA People to People’ was one of many NGOs that volunteered to help asylum-seekers and migrants apply for the Government of Belize’s Amnesty 2021 Programme.

At the end of 2021, the Government of Belize announced an amnesty programme that included asylum-seekers, offering them the opportunity of permanent residency.

Luz and her 18-year-old daughter came to Belize a few years ago in search of a new opportunity to rebuild their lives, after suffering the tragic loss of Luz’s son, who was murdered by gang violence.

After finding some stability in Belize, Luz and her daughter Ada* joined *Manos Unidas*, a volunteer group in Bella Vista that helps asylum-seekers in the community.

“I helped many people understand their right to asylum and took them to the Refugee Department to register,” Luz explains. “Now, I share information on how they can apply for amnesty.”

Luz and Ada have volunteered at more than 12 amnesty support events, helping other asylum-seekers fill out their amnesty application forms as well as sharing information about the process.

“It feels great being able to help others, especially because I remember coming to Belize and not understanding English,” recalls Luz’s daughter Ada*. “Now, I have filled out the applications of hundreds of asylum-seekers, in English.”

The Government of Belize is now processing all applications and plans to start issuing permanent residence cards to selected applicants by the end of the year. This includes more than 1,000 asylum-seekers.

“I am very grateful for this opportunity,” says Luz. “Even if I am granted permanent residency, I will always be here to serve others.”

*Names have been changed for protection reasons.





Costa Rica

National Context

INDICATORS

1 January to 30 September 2023



10 years

Average processing time from refugee claim filing to the decision taken on the refugee claim at first instance.



2,811 *

Number of refugees and asylum-seekers in poverty and extreme poverty.



28,828

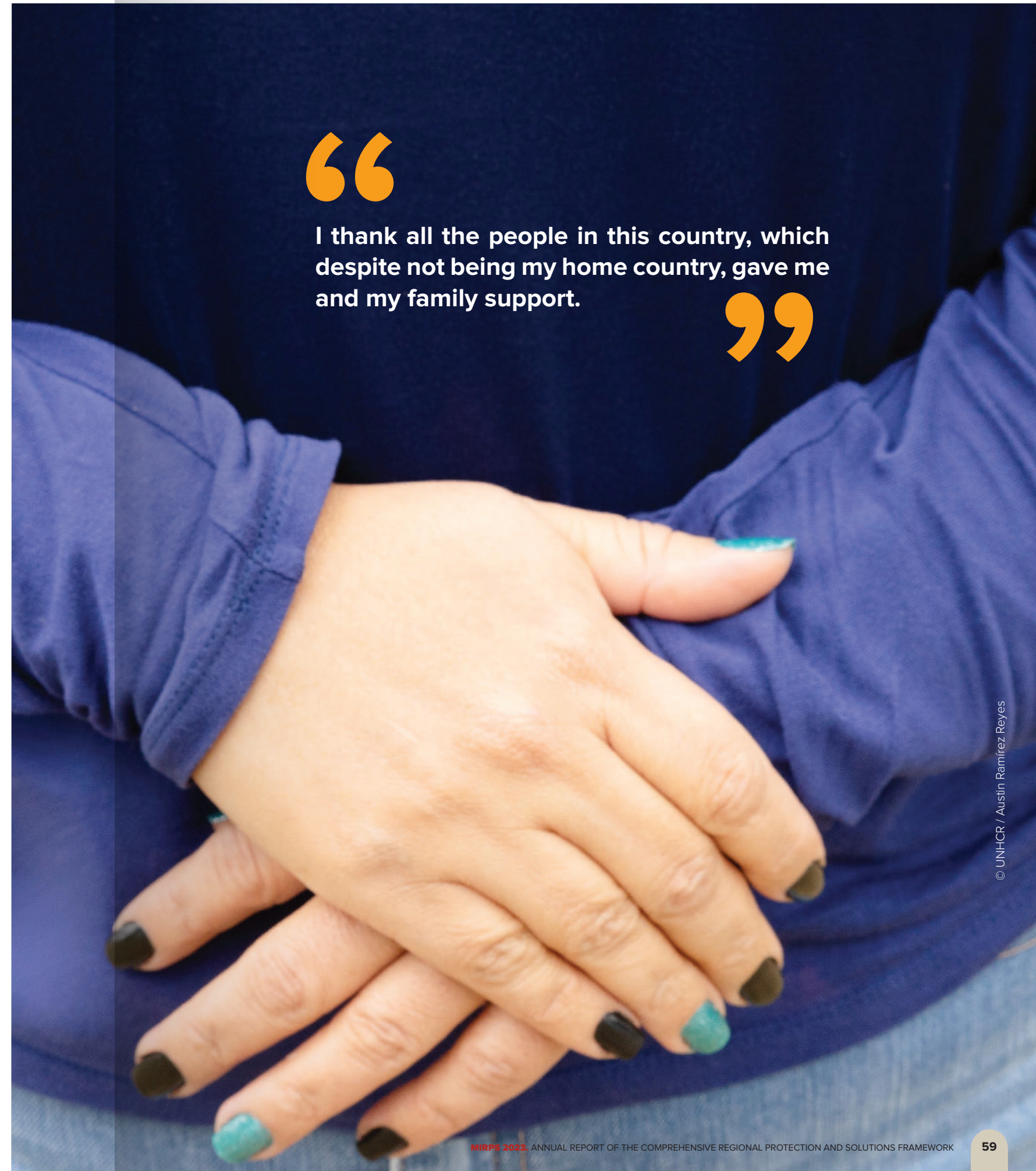
Number of asylum-seekers with legally recognised identity documents or credentials.

* This data refers only to persons identified as living in poverty or extreme poverty who have been granted a benefit from the Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social (Joint Institute for Social Assistance, IMAS, by its Spanish acronym), the governing body of poverty reduction programmes in the country, during the period of this report. These people are accounted for in the overall total of 6,661 refugees who have applied for any benefit from any public institution through the National System of Information and Unique Registry of Beneficiaries (SINIRUBE, by its Spanish acronym).

“

I thank all the people in this country, which despite not being my home country, gave me and my family support.

”



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1,234 **

Number of minor asylum-seekers or refugees

in poverty and extreme poverty benefiting from an education grant.

5.22%

Percentage of asylum-seekers and refugees

in relation to the national population.

**This data refers only to minors who are beneficiaries of an education grant from the IMAS during the period of this report. These people are accounted for in the overall total of 6,661 refugees who have applied for benefits through SINIRUBE.

Displacement and human mobility dynamics have intensified in Central America in 2023, reaching unprecedented levels. While it is true that human mobility has always been a constant in the region, never before has there been a displacement of this magnitude in terms of the number of people affected, the variety of profiles involved, and the challenges that it brings for national authorities.

This increase in regional displacement has brought significant challenges for Costa Rica, which, faithful to its historical commitment to protect and host people on the move, has been forced to redouble its efforts to respond to the situation, in accordance with international protection guidelines and through a human rights-centred approach. Given the context, the response must also include people who gain access to the refugee system, as well as those

who, despite being victims of persecution, choose only to transit through the country as they head further north.

According to official data from the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners (DGME), the country is currently hosting 272,125 people in need of international protection as of 29 September, of whom 255,152 are asylum-seekers (number of applications received since 2018; 191,000 are pending resolution) and 16,973 are people who have been granted refugee status. As of September, more than 320,000 people have already transited the country.

Since 2018, Costa Rica has been the main host country for Nicaraguans who have been forced to leave their country due to the socio-political crisis in their country. The sustained deterioration of the country's situation over the last five



108

Number of asylum-seekers

who were granted a work permit during the period of this report.

years has led to a constant stream of asylum claims, resulting in Costa Rica receiving the third highest number of asylum claims of all countries worldwide in 2022¹, with only the United States of America and Germany receiving more.

From late 2022 to 2023, a new dynamic has been added to the equation: an increase in the number of people in mixed movements who enter the country through the southern border and transit through the country on their way to the north of the continent, particularly to the United States. These movements bring together economic migrants and victims of persecution in need of international protection.

Although most of them continue on their journeys, they require support and humanitarian assistance to cover their basic needs while in the country, against a backdrop of public institutions with limited capacity to meet the growing demand for assistance. The DGME reports that 320,110 people coming from Panama have crossed the southern border as part of these mixed movements this year². This means that approximately 2,500-3,000 people are crossing the southern border every single day. Some estimates suggest that the total number could reach 500,000 people by the end of the year.

Both situations have made Costa Rica the point of convergence of two displacement movements in the region: one southwards of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica, and the other northwards of mostly Venezuelans to the United States. This has created a particular protection environment with a fragile balance that requires the support of the international community under the principle of shared responsibility.

The Government of the Republic, in line with its international commitments, is continuing its efforts to assist populations in need of international protection and people from mixed movements, from a humanitarian and human rights perspective. In the case of refugees and asylum-seekers, the country continues to coordinate efforts through its Framework for Protection and Solutions for Response to the Situation of Refugees (MINARE) and its participation in the MIRPS and international forums such as the Global Refugee Forum.

Regarding the response to people in mixed movements, the Government of the Republic organised a meeting with the Government of Panama to agree on a roadmap for the assistance of these individuals, culminating in a binational agreement that includes concrete actions to facilitate the safe and orderly transit of these people, as well as to avoid the risk of them becoming victims of trafficking.

1. See: The UNHCR's Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2022 Report. Click this link to view the report: <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022>.

2. The identified nationalities include 214,146 Venezuelans, 37,156 Ecuadorians, 21,255 Haitians, 16,294 people from China, 8,851 Colombians, 2,593 Chileans, 2,536 people from India, 2,413 people from Afghanistan, 2,144 Peruvians and 12,722 people of other nationalities. 274,242 of these people are adults and 45,868 are minors. Source: Government of Costa Rica.

Progress



PROTECTION

STRENGTHENING THE COMMISSION ON RESTRICTED VISAS AND REFUGEES (CVRR).

The CVRR is the body established by the General Migration Law that is responsible for determining the status of a refugee who submits an application for international protection to the DGME. In response to the steady increase in refugee claims, the capacity of this commission has been extended, with the addition of two legal advisors. These professionals are responsible for reviewing the files to inform the Commissioners who analyse the case and approve or deny refugee status. This additional legal staff support allows the CVRR to manage 480 decisions per month, helping to reduce the backlog. According to CVRR data, 4,325 resolutions have been processed from January to September 2023. If resolutions continue to be processed at the current average rate, the Commission may exceed the 5,365 known resolutions in 2022 by the end of the year.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

PROTECTING THE LABOUR RIGHTS OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS), through its National Inspection Directorate (DNI) has developed a specific inspection guide for addressing migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. This guide helps to respect the labour rights of this population based on their particularities. To date, 170 labour inspectors from the directorate have received four DNI-led training sessions on how to apply the guide. In July, the MTSS launched the new National Employment Agency (ANE) web-



site. This web platform provides free services on labour intermediation, training and the vocational training of people, linking human talent with companies as well as offering the possibility to opt for the education and training services provided by the National Institute of Apprenticeship (INA). To ensure that forcibly displaced persons and migrants have access to this service platform, the MTSS has provided training sessions to the various labour units (institutions that act as one-stop shops to assist people and companies on the services provided by the ANE, and offer advice on how to access ANE services) to support the registration of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants on this platform. Currently, labour agents/units have been trained and **4,772** people with foreign identity cards (including asylum-seekers and migrants) have been registered on the platform. (www.ane.cr)



HEALTHCARE

ESTABLISHMENT OF A COLLECTIVE HEALTHCARE AGREEMENT IN THE FORM OF TEMPORARY VOLUNTARY INSURANCE FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES TO GUARANTEE THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO HEALTHCARE AND FACILITATE THEIR INTEGRATION.

Since 2020, the Government of the Republic, through the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS), the country's public healthcare service provider, has signed an agreement with UNHCR to provide basic healthcare insurance to 6,000 asylum-seekers and refugees with a chronic health condition who cannot take out any other insurance plan. Since 2020, additional agreements have been signed to maintain this benefit. In 2023, **a fourth agreement was signed, extending this insurance to 6,000 people** from January to December. Given its impact, this initiative has been considered a good practice and has served as a reference for collective work with international cooperation. It was, therefore, used as a model example for the signing of a parallel agreement celebrated between the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), the Foundation of the University

of Costa Rica and the CCSS to insure 3,775 additional people for the period September 2023 to August 2024. This agreement was signed in September and is financially supported by the European Union, with funds being channelled through the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).



EDUCATION

SUPPORTING THE ASSISTANCE AND INTEGRATION OF THE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING POPULATION IN THE COSTA RICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM AN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION APPROACH.

The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) has made progress in its efforts to support the integration of minor refugees and asylum-seekers into the Costa Rican education system. According to MEP data for 2022, there are approximately 1,200,000 students, of whom 23,585 have a regular migration status, 2,234 are refugees or asylum-seekers³ and 38,870 have an irregular migration status. Even though the Costa Rican state ensures free access to the public education system, there are challenges that hinder the effective integration of these people into their educational environment. Some of these challenges include not knowing the enrolment processes for refugee students, xenophobic discourses and stigmatisation of forced displacement. To mitigate these challenges, the MEP has revised and updated the guidelines “Refugee Population in the Costa Rican Education System”, which seeks to promote the integration of this population into its educational community. This document provides the national and international regulatory framework that protects the right to education of this population, incorporates changes in the refugee and identity documentation application process, and presents good practices at the administrative, curricular and co-curricular levels for the integration of these people.

3. Official data from the 2022 census, *Plataforma del Saber* (Knowledge Platform), Ministry of Public Education.

Healing from Violence in a Safe Home

Alba* had no choice but to flee her home after surviving violence from her ex-husband, her in-laws, and her country’s government. In Costa Rica, she found protection and is now one of the 14,105 people recognised as refugees in the country. However, her search for a safe life began long before she integrated into her community in *San José*.

After having suffered sexual violence as a teenager, Alba found it difficult to find protection even within her family. “I told my mother what happened, but she didn’t believe me; she told me not to make up stories, and I felt so bad that I ran away from home.” As an adult, Alba faced new types of violence from her now ex-husband, at a time when the insecurity in her country was worsening and did not provide her with the protection she needed.

After fleeing her country and arriving in Costa Rica, Alba received legal assistance from an implementing partner of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, to seek asylum. She also received psychosocial support and assistance for survivors of gender-based violence at the Centre for Migrant Social Rights (CENDEROS).

“I thank all the people in this country, which despite not being my home country, gave me and my family support,” says Alba, who is now focused on rebuilding her life, ensuring that she and her family are safe.

“I want my family to be well. Both in health and economically, that they have a stable home to live in and that we do not lack food. My hope is to achieve one of my biggest dreams: to record and sing each of my compositions and to continue studying for a better future,” she says with enthusiasm.

*Names have been changed for protection reasons.



El Salvador

National Context

INDICATORS

As of September 2023.



2,491

Number of displaced persons or persons at risk of displacement

assisted in the “A tu Lado” (By your side) service spaces at the close of this report.



616

Number of people who have accessed the “Mi Primer Trabajo” (My First Job)

programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTPS) between 2021 and 2023.



20

Number of identity documents issued to asylum-seekers.



7 months

Maximum processing time from registration to the making of a decision on asylum in the first instance.



Number of decisions granting refugee status.



“

It’s a dream that opens doors to start my credit history, opt for a house, and so many other opportunities to come.

”

The safety measures implemented in recent years in El Salvador have marked a turning point in the country's history and have changed the dynamics of human mobility, not only for Salvadoran people crossing borders outside the country, but also for refugees arriving in El Salvador. In addition to this, other fundamental efforts in areas such as protection, healthcare, education, employment and livelihoods, among others, have improved the search for solutions to displacement within the framework of a human rights approach.

This has been strengthened through the transformation of legal and institutional frameworks, which have regulated the creation of public policies and other actions aimed at providing a comprehensive approach to the challenges and opportunities that result from human mobility.

Proof of this is the progress made in implementing the MIRPS National Action Plan with regard to support for internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum-seekers, and returnees in need of protection, as reflected in the present report. Given the country's changing context and efforts to provide support to the refugee population, it should be noted that El Salvador has experienced a sustained growth in the number of refugee applications in the last four years, from 2019 to 2023, which, in turn, has resulted in an increase in the number of people granted refugee status.

This evidences that refugees and asylum-seekers are finding international protection in El Salvador, hence the need to redouble efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national asylum system through legal reforms, the digitalisation of registries, and other measures that will pave the way for a more modern, faster and efficient system.



Progress



PROTECTION

COMPLETION OF TRAINING SESSIONS ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

for land border and “San Óscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez” International Airport officials, through the Commission for Refugee Determination. These sessions were conducted over five months, reaching 180 officials from various institutions, including: the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners (DGME), the General Directorate of Customs (DGA), the Autonomous Port Executive Commission (CEPA), the Solidarity Fund for Health (FOSALUD), and the National Civil Police (PNC).

START OF DATA COLLECTION ON THE PROFILING OF FORCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN THE LAST DECADE,

as part of the Multipurpose Household Survey 2023. This activity is being carried out by the National Statistics and Census Office (ONEC), in coordination with the Directorate for Attention to Victims, and the results will be available in 2024.

FINAL DEVELOPMENT STAGE OF CODER'S COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES PROTOCOL.

This Protocol, which involves multiple national institutions, as well as civil society organisations, will guide the new refugee system bill.

FURTHERING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SALVADORAN CONSULAR NETWORK

on international protection and the profiles of people in need of protection under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRREE). The so-called international protection module has also been implemented, through the Directorate for Attention to Victims, as a referral instrument for cases of returnees with protection needs, who are identified by the Migrant Attention Management (GAMI) of the General Directorate of Migration and Immigration (DGME).

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SUPPORT AREA, “A TU LADO” (BY YOUR SIDE), IN SAN VICENTE

in coordination with different institutions, including the Directorate for Attention to Victims of the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety (MJSP), to provide support to the displaced population. Likewise, as part of a national response from the Directorate of Shelters, led by the Ministry of Interior and Territorial Development (MIGOBDT), the technical capacity of the Sectoral Technical Shelter Teams has continued to be strengthened, with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of protecting the displaced population. This effort has been extended to the national level.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

THE “MI PRIMER TRABAJO” (MY FIRST JOB) PROGRAMME OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY (MTPS) HAS REACHED MORE THAN 616 BENEFICIARIES, WHETHER DISPLACED OR AT RISK OF DISPLACEMENT,

as of September 2023. This is a joint effort with the business sector, providing initial, formal paid work experience. The programme’s success rate is noteworthy, where 5.5 out of 10 beneficiaries are hired permanently by companies. Moreover, more than 306 displaced persons or persons at risk of displacement have been **certified for life and employment skills by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.**

SEVEN REFUGEES HAVE BEEN NATURALISED AS SALVADORANS,

as of September 2023, supported by the Government of El Salvador. Two of these people had sought Salvadoran nationality since the late 1970s.

LAUNCH OF THE “OPORTUNIDADES” (OPPORTUNITIES) NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM

of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, with the aim of promoting job offers through a virtual platform that employers and candidates can access. This system pre-identifies the displaced population. The Government also launched an **information campaign on the “Mi Primer Trabajo” programme** through digital channels to bring employment services closer to the displaced population. 800 people have been registered as potential candidates on the back of this campaign, which has also increased awareness of job placements for displaced persons or persons at risk within the private sector, in which 184 companies have collaborated.

THE SALVADORAN INSTITUTE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN (ISDEMU) IS MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING SERVICES THAT FOSTER THE INCLUSION AND AUTONOMY OF DISPLACED WOMEN OR WOMEN AT RISK OF DISPLACEMENT.

The Specialised Support Centres provide training in entrepreneurial skills and business design. Psychological and social support, legal advice and healthcare are also being offered through mechanisms such as: Women’s Protection Centres, System 126, among others.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD, CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE (CONAPINA) HAS PROVIDED SUPPORT TO MORE THAN 60 FAMILIES,

with seed funding for entrepreneurship, educational scholarships and food safety. This is achieved through the OAS - MIRPS Fund, as part of its strategy focused on sustainable solutions for returnee families with protection needs. It should be noted that the beneficiary families, and specifically children, receive comprehensive support for their protection and development.



EDUCATION

STRENGTHENING THE PROGRAMME ON FLEXIBLE EDUCATION MODALITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MINEDUCYT), including the displaced population or those at risk of displacement. A **guide and manual on providing support to displaced children, adolescents, young people and teachers or those at risk of forced internal displacement, as well as a protocol for action in cases of extortion and/or threats to teachers**, has been released in 2023. These instruments are vitally important to protect the student and teacher population and to ensure that children and adolescents continue in the education system.

PROGRESS IN THE FOLLOW-UP OF IDENTIFIED CASES OF DISPLACED STUDENTS THROUGH MINEDUCYT'S INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR SALVADORAN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (SIGES).



HEALTHCARE

EXTENSION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICES THROUGH SYSTEM 126 OF THE SALVADORAN INSTITUTE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN (ISDEMU) FOR FEMALE SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, DISPLACED WOMEN OR WOMEN AT RISK OF DISPLACEMENT.

This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, both within and outside the country. Similarly, a series of training sessions on psychological first aid has been held for the frontline staff of various institutions assisting displaced women, women at risk of displacement, and survivors of gender-based violence. Some of these institutions include the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women and the General Attorney's Office. This training includes the design of routes for the attention of specific cases of displaced persons.

TWO HUNDRED MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESOURCES PROVIDING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SUPPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH'S COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED NETWORK ARE BEING TRAINED THROUGH THE VIRTUAL COURSE ENTITLED ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT, RIGHTS AND HEALTH,

which will further the knowledge, improve the attitudes and enhance the technical skills of participating healthcare staff, so that they can assist families and people who are victims of violence and have been displaced by force, in order to provide services that are free of discrimination and revictimization, thereby complying with the Technical Guidelines for Comprehensive Healthcare for people affected by violence, and other related legislation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE, THROUGH THE COMPREHENSIVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE CENTRE (CIIE)

of the Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, as of September 2023. Users live in communities that have been affected by forced displacement and violence in the past. This support is part of the government's efforts to rebuild the social fabric.





A Refugee Family’s Resilience Shines through in El Salvador

By Alejandra Romo and Franklyn Ruiz

Eneyda celebrates with her family her naturalisation as a Salvadoran: “It’s a dream that opens doors to start my credit history, opt for a house, and so many other opportunities to come,” she says with joy.

On 20 June 2023, on World Refugee Day, Eneyda and her four children obtained Salvadoran nationality thanks to the support of the Vice-Ministry of Diaspora and Human Mobility, the Commission for Refugee Determination (CODER), and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

Fourteen years ago, they were forced to flee their country, leaving everything behind. When they arrived in El Salvador, the government recognised them as refugees and provided them with protection. However, despite cultural and linguistic similarities, they faced some challenges.

The search for employment and education was not easy. With the support of social organisations and caring individuals, they got jobs and support to enrol their children in school.

Eneyda found a purpose in helping other refugees through her work in an organisation. There she was able to show her talents, worked her way up, and progressed to a management position.

After a long road, the dreams of Eneyda’s children are beginning to blossom: one of her daughters aims to be a contemporary dancer, the other daughter wants to continue university, while her son works and studies painting. Eneyda has also found peace of mind in painting, reading, and singing.

Eneyda shares with excitement how acquiring nationality opens doors for her and her children, who have grown up in El Salvador. “I’m as Salvadoran as the famous pupusas (stuffed corn tortilla), though I don’t like loroco (typical edible flower),” she says with laughter.

UNHCR accompanies El Salvador’s efforts to ensure access to asylum and institutional strengthening of CODER, as a priority of El Salvador’s National Plan for the implementation of the MIRPS.

**Read more
about this story**





Guatemala

National Context

INDICATORS

As of September 2023

IGM



97

Persons
legally recognized as
refugees in 2023.



844

Asylum-seekers.



32

Training sessions
on Refuge and International Protection
issues for members of National Com-
missions for Refugees (CONARE).



5

Training sessions
on Refuge and International Protection issues for members of National Commissions for
Refugees (CONARE).

MUNICIPALITIES AND DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNMENTS



7

Agreements signed
with Municipalities and Departmental
Governments within the framework of
Cities of Solidarity.

1,076 Direct beneficiaries.

4,548 Indirect beneficiaries.



“

Learning digital tools was essential for the integration of people and when we opened the call, the most interested were the senior citizens. They never skip a class, and they are the most dedicated.

”

MINTRAB

 42

Work permits
granted to refugees.

 120

Refugees and asylum-seekers

trained to familiarise themselves with and use the PEX platform.

380

Work permits
granted to asylum-seekers.

 150

Officials

trained to use the PEX platform.

SBS

 2,771

Number of children and adolescents with protection needs

supported at *Casa Nuestras Raíces* (Our Roots Home) in Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango.

483

people received psychosocial support.

 73

Number of refugee and asylum-seeker children and adolescents

who received support at Casa Nuestras Raíces in Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango.

20

Adolescents and young people trained

as part of the *Servidor Cívico Social* (Social Civic Servant) project within the framework of the *Casa Joven Amatitlán* Model (data up to 31 August 2023).

Guatemala assumes an important role as a host country for an increasing number of people fleeing their countries to save their lives and in search of international protection. The institutions that make up the MIRPS National Technical Team (ETN) through the MIRPS National Action Plan, restated the country's national commitments, prioritising 10 in protection, 1 in education, 1 in healthcare and 5 in jobs and livelihoods. These commitments are linked to strategic actions and indicators that allow the institutions to quantitatively measure the progress made in support of asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees and persons in the context of human mobility with international protection needs.

Guatemala, through five municipalities and two departmental governments committed to the Cities of Solidarity initiative, which helps to coordinate efforts with the central government, provides support to vulnerable populations in the context of human mobility in need of international protection and welcomes refugees into the country.

In 2023, the National Technical Team and the municipalities of *Villa Nueva* and Guatemala City made an official visit to the municipalities of *San Benito and Flores*, department of *Petén*, which have joined the Cities of Solidarity initiative, with the aim of learning about good practices towards the refugee population, asylum-seekers and persons in the context of human mobility in need of international protection.

Some of these good practices are as follows:

- **Comprehensive Attention Centre (CAI)**, a programme that offers support to Guatemalan families in vulnerable situations or with limited economic resources. In order to respect the children's rights, the programme provides the necessary support for their physical and emotional development and the acquisition of values and habits that help ensure their optimal development in society. The CAI currently supports 41 children and adolescents from refugee families residing in the department of Petén.
- **San Benito Municipal Clinic**, has attended more than 212 refugees free of charge. The municipality itself pays for such medical services.
- **Municipal Women's Directorate in San Benito**, which has supported training sessions for vocational technical courses and income generation in 2023. Five female asylum-seekers and 2,600 local women have benefited directly from this initiative.

Progress



PROTECTION

The Ministry of Social Welfare (SBS), through the shelter **Casa Nuestras Raíces Guatemala**, has supported 1,252 children and adolescents from January to 31 August of this year, of whom 62 are children and adolescents in transit through Guatemala. **Casa Nuestras Raíces Quetzaltenango** has provided support to 1,592 children and adolescents, 11 of whom are foreigners in transit through the country. It should be noted that the teams of both shelters have provided information on the refugee process and collaborate with the National General Attorney's Office (PGN) on cases concerning asylum-seekers. Currently, there is one adolescent asylum-seeker. Primary healthcare and psychosocial support is provided to the entire supported population, as well as food, hygiene kits, and coats, as well as support to re-establish communication with their families. There are also recreational activities and workshops on human rights.

The Department for the Recognition of Refugee Status (DRER), with the support of the UNHCR, has developed an ongoing training agenda for the National Commission for Refugees and DRER staff. This training and feedback process has boosted the staff's technical and analytical capacity, enabling profiling and specialisation in the areas of refugee status, international protection, extension of refugee status, childhood, cessation and the Central and Latin American regional context.



EDUCATION

The Ministry of Education, through the **General Directorate of Extra-curricular Education (DIGEEX)**, within the framework of the Migration Code, promotes and brings about spaces for the educational inclusion of the refugee population and asylum-seekers, in the flexible programmes of primary education, basic and diversified secondary education, and vocational technical training. In 2023, 41 refugees from the department of Chiquimula received vocational technical training in cooking, electrics and acrylic nail treatments. Likewise, on a national level and as stated by law, all people have the right to be placed in a school regardless of their nationality.

With regard to the Cities of Solidarity initiative, the Municipality of Guatemala, through the **Mobile Workshop School**, has benefited 724 refugees, asylum-seekers and Guatemalans (2,896 indirectly), providing technical training in blacksmithing in different parts of the city, as well as offering job placement opportunities and vocational training.

The **Municipal Women's Directorate (DMM)** has 258 direct beneficiaries, including refugees, asylum-seekers and Guatemalan women, as well as 1,032 indirect beneficiaries.

The **Municipal Centre for Entrepreneurship**, which has benefited approximately 60 entrepreneurs and has indirectly benefited more than 450 people.



HEALTHCARE

CITIES OF SOLIDARITY IZABAL – RESPONSE TO EMERGENCY SITUATIONS “AMBULANCHA” (AMBULANCE BOAT):

the Municipality in Livingston has implemented the medical care model for the population located between Barreas Village on Sarstún River and the adjacent area between Izabal and Belize. The *ambulancha* facilitates access to healthcare and provides protection and medical services to

refugee and Guatemalan children. The **clinics of the University Centre of Izabal (CUNIZAB)** also prioritise mental healthcare and refer patients to the Municipality of Puerto Barrios.

SAN BENITO, PETÉN – SAN BENITO MUNICIPAL CLINIC:

supported 212 refugees, asylum-seekers and people in the context of human mobility (72 men and 140 women). This service is free of charge, since the Municipality includes the procurement of medicine, medical examinations and psychological support for all users in its budget.

The Municipality of Esquipulas, Chiquimula; Flores, Petén; Villa Nueva, Guatemala City, Guatemala; and the **Departmental Governments in Quetzaltenango and Huehuetenango** run local programmes focused on psychosocial healthcare for the general population, as well as for refugees, asylum-seekers and persons in the context of human mobility.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

In **Casa Joven Amatitlán** 67 girls, 62 boys, 128 adolescents and 226 parents and guardians have received **psychosocial healthcare** this year, from 1 January to 31 August. 125 girls, 115 boys, 228 adolescents and 238 parents and guardians have been supported through social work. Psychosocial support has also been provided to 20 Civic Servants in the neighbouring communities of *Casa Joven Amatitlán*, prioritising the prevention of violence, adolescent pregnancies and irregular migration.



JOB AND LIVELIHOODS

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MINTRAB), together with CentraRSE and with the support of the UNHCR, seeks to promote the employment of vulnerable populations through the implementation of 4 Inclusive Recruitment Guides, comprising the following population groups, which are divided into 4 strategic areas:

- 1.** Employment of people with disabilities;
- 2.** Diverse Population, comprised of young people, indigenous people and people over 55 years old;
- 3.** Population on the move; and
- 4.** Gender, for women and people from the LGBTQI+ community.

This is in addition to the Manual for the Inclusive Hiring Seal, which is aimed at the private sector within the framework of the Economic Integration and Livelihoods Strategy and the MIRPS. The **Electronic Platform for Work Permits for Foreigners (PEX)** has also been used more effectively, and the mobile application for this platform will be developed, thus modernising the work permit process. In October, the **“Tu Empleo” (Your Job) platform** will be relaunched so that refugees and asylum-seekers can further develop their skills through the Employment Guidance section of such platform. This will increase their chances of finding work, facilitating linkage and access to employment opportunities.

Within the framework of the **Cities of Solidarity** initiative, the Municipalities of **Guatemala, Villa Nueva and Esquipulas**, through their Local Economic Development Directorates or similar programmes, have supported job fairs, with the aim of boosting local economic growth and providing access to employment for the general population, refugees and asylum-seekers.



Digital Inclusion for Refugees, a Challenge in Guatemala

By Gabriela Guerrero and Ángela Hurtado

Miguel feels the same excitement of his first day at school every time he enters the classroom of the Technical Institute for Training and Productivity (INTECAP). The only difference is that this time he is 61 years old and is learning how to use digital tools in Guatemala.

He and 20 other asylum-seekers and refugees have taken on the challenge of entering a digital inclusion course since May 2023. Miguel knew very little about computers when he started his classes, but he already feels so comfortable that he helps his grandson with his homework and uses the tools to send messages to his classmates, many of whom are younger than him.

INTECAP is a partner of the MIRPS and has facilitated the training and certification of asylum-seekers and refugees in technical skills to facilitate their employability. The commitment has been to integrate all people regardless of their age, nationality, or legal status.

“Learning digital tools was essential for the integration of people and when we opened the call, the most interested were the senior citizens. They never skip a class, and they are the most dedicated,” says Carmen Buch of World Vision, an UNHCR partner, who accompanies refugees to generate livelihoods.

Hundreds of refugees have benefited from the training provided by INTECAP, an essential path to the labour market in Guatemala.

“Don’t be afraid to acquire new knowledge and skills. Today it’s the computer, tomorrow it’s another technology,” is Miguel’s message to encourage more refugees to get involved.



Honduras

National Context

INDICATORS Figures as of September 2023



184

Number of displaced persons or persons at risk of displacement supported by state protection mechanisms.



347

Number of returnees/ deportees in priority intervention municipalities who have accessed programmes that support conditions of safety and dignity.



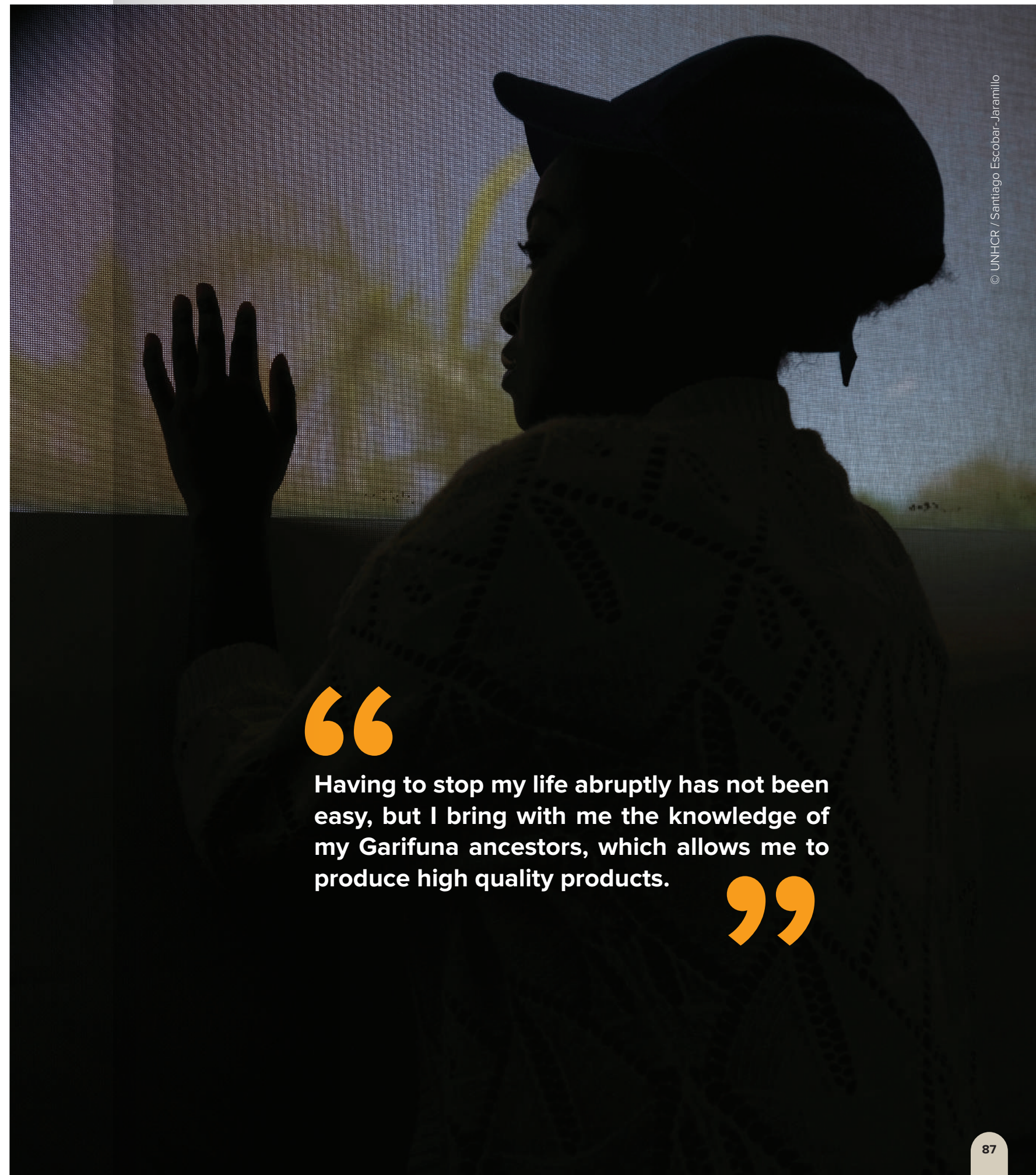
34

Number of suspected abandoned properties identified through community activities.



94

Number of persons in need of international protection who have been identified, supported and referred to in border/transit areas.



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“

Having to stop my life abruptly has not been easy, but I bring with me the knowledge of my Garifuna ancestors, which allows me to produce high quality products.

”

Progress



PROTECTION

Historically, Honduras has not only been a country of origin, but also a transit and destination country, playing a complex role in the context of human mobility. From 2015 to date, a total of 599,702 Hondurans have been returned, and from 2014 to date, 644 people have sought asylum in Honduras. The number of people crossing Honduras irregularly has increased significantly. The National Migration Institute (INM) has recorded unprecedented figures for these movements, with more than 340,611 people entering Honduras irregularly as of 30 September 2023, almost twice the total for 2022. These figures highlight a structural problem of inequality that drives out persons on the move.

In fact, this influx has exceeded the country's response capacity, exacerbating humanitarian needs. In early June, the Honduran Congress extended a migration amnesty until 1 January 2024, exempting migrants in transit who enter the country irregularly from paying a penalty. The National Migration Institute has advocated for the continuation of this amnesty, as it has helped to improve the protection situation of persons in mixed movements.

Meanwhile various sectors continue to be affected by violence-induced internal displacement. During the period 2004 to 2018, more than 247,000 people were internally displaced

in the country due to a number of factors, including: i) the control exercised by criminal or armed groups over territory and society; ii) extortion as a means of pressure; iii) forced recruitment, use, and involvement in illegal activities; iv) dispossession, usurpation and destruction of housing, land and property; v) gender-based violence; vi) political violence; vii) human rights violations; and viii) the effects of climate change. This impact is particularly noticeable in urban areas such as the Central District and *San Pedro Sula*.

To respond to this phenomenon, the Honduran State approved the **Law for the Prevention, Attention and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons** in December 2022, which came into force in April 2023. This legislation establishes a legal framework recognising the rights of victims of violence who have been forced to flee their homes, as well as formalises the State's primary responsibility for the prevention and protection of i) persons at risk; ii) internally displaced persons; and iii) returnees in need of protection.

ADOPTION OF THE LAW FOR THE PREVENTION, ATTENTION AND PROTECTION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS BY THE STATE OF HONDURAS IN MARCH 2023,

through Legislative Decree No. 154-2022, marking a milestone in the response to violence-induced internal displacement in the country. As part of the implementation process, Honduras held the first multisector National Dialogue within the framework of the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The government has also established and sworn in the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons (CIPPDEF), which is already fulfilling its assigned responsibilities, such as: i) having its first annual Work Plan; ii) disseminating contents of the Law to more than 20 public institutions; and iii) the methodological design of the consultation process with the displaced population and other key players in the creation and issuance of the Law's regulations.

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE-INDUCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT,

through the Secretariat for Human Rights (SEDH). **Municipal internal displacement response plans** have been developed with the municipal governments of the Central District, *San Pedro Sula*, *Choloma*, *Choluteca*, *El Progreso* and *Juticalpa*, training approximately 130 officials, and, in turn, furthering their knowledge of internal displacement, the national and local context, the national and international regulatory framework, and assistance routes for internally displaced persons.

PROTECTING HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY (HLP) RIGHTS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

The Property Institute (IP) and the SEDH are working together to establish the Registry of Abandoned Property created by the Displacement Act, defining the institutional framework and administrative procedures to guarantee its effective implementation. The IP is also making adjustments to the internal regulatory framework, for example to manuals and regulations on registration and cadastral processes so that they are more sensitive to the situation of conflict and violence, thus helping to prevent forced dispossession and protect abandoned property. Similarly, the SEDH, through the Directorate for the Protection of Persons Internally Displaced by Violence (DIPPDIV), identifies the housing, land and identifies the HLP rights that have been affected as a cause or consequence of the internal displacement of the persons that are under the protection mechanism led by this entity. Between 2022 and 2023, 34 HLP cases were identified, properties that await registration in order to be protected as established by law.

BETTER SUPPORT FOR RETURNEES IN NEED OF PROTECTION.

The Directorate for the Protection of Honduran Migrants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (SRECI) is reviewing and updating the protocol used to support this population. A **Reintegration Strategy for Returnees** is also undergoing the first phase of development. This strategy begins with the creation of four Municipal Offices for Reintegration and Support to Returnees (OMRAR) in the municipalities of San Pedro Sula, Yoro, Catacamas and the Central District. The aim of this initiative is to facilitate the reintegration process for returnees, providing them with alternatives to generate income, and reduce the risks associated with their situation.

INAUGURATION OF THE “FRANCISCO PAZ” CENTRE FOR IRREGULAR MIGRANTS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DANLÍ,

of the National Migration Institute (INM), with the support of the UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM and the Standing Committee on Contingencies (COPECO). This centre provides comprehensive and personalised support for people in mixed flows and for those in need of international protection. The second construction phase of the support centre in Ocotepeque is

already underway, as well as the bidding process for the centre in Choluteca. The purpose of all these support centres is to enhance and improve the efficiency of the processes for identifying and providing support to persons in need of international protection, while ensuring respect for the human rights of all persons transiting through Honduras.

THE INM HAS IMPLEMENTED ESSENTIAL MEASURES TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND ENSURE THE SAFETY

of these persons, through processes and procedures designed to identify immediate needs and, where necessary, to refer or coordinate in a timely manner with the competent authorities for cases of persons who require international protection, support in their voluntary return, or for those that show signs of gender-based violence, crimes related to irregular migration, trafficking in persons, or migrant smuggling.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT AND PROTECTION FOR VIOLENCE-INDUCED INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

of the Secretariat for Human Rights, through the DIPPDIV, granted measures to 639 people between 2021 and September 2023. By implementing the Programme, it has been possible to stabilise the socio-economic situation and recover the livelihoods of 32% of people, through seed funding, skills strengthening¹ and employability support, among other means. In addition, operational procedures have been updated to optimise the provision of protection measures to supported people. This programme is expected to reinforce and bolster its response and direct support capacity for the population.

1. Soft skills include interpersonal (people) skills, communicative skills, listening skills, time management skills and empathy, among others (<https://postgrado.ucsp.edu.pe/articulos/que-son-habilidades-blandas/>).

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME ON INTERNSHIPS FOR LEARNING AND LABOUR LINKAGES,

a joint initiative between the Vocational Training Institute (INFOP), UNHCR, civil society and community training centres, with the support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (STSS, by its Spanish acronym). The programme also actively involves the private sector. The main aim of this programme is to promote the employment of young people within the displaced population. It also seeks to raise the private sector's awareness of the internal displacement issue and to encourage their participation as part of an integrated approach to solutions for the displaced population.

PRESENTATION OF THE "SÍ EMPLEO" (YES TO EMPLOYMENT) PLATFORM OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SETRASS),

which facilitates access to job opportunities. It also runs training sessions for the internship programme, which will involve 90 young people at risk of displacement.



EDUCATION

ADVOCATING FOR THE INCLUSION OF ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN THE ACADEMIC, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL SPHERES.

To commemorate World Refugee Day, the INM, in partnership with the National Autonomous University of Honduras and UNHCR, held an inaugural event to bring together asylum-seekers and refugees with the country's university community. The event also raised awareness among various government institutions, international cooperation agencies, and civil society about the challenges faced by the refugee population by presenting a monologue that represented the real experience of a refugee woman in Honduras. The INM also presented the progress it has made within the MIRPS to the international cooperation agencies in attendance.

With Courage and Hope, Young Entrepreneur Rebuilds her Life in Honduras

By Danielle Álvarez

Jenny* is a young Garifuna entrepreneur who faced forced displacement due to threats. Before, she used to sell her handmade products on the streets, dreaming of the day she could open her own business. However, her life took an unexpected turn when she started receiving extortionist messages from criminal organisations that controlled her neighbourhood. Given this situation, Jenny made the difficult decision to leave her home and her studies in search of protection in another city in Honduras.

After finding refuge in a different part of the country with a close family member, Jenny had to start from scratch. That was when she decided to contact UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, for support. Through psychosocial assistance and cash-based interventions designed to help her rebuild her life, Jenny joined the entrepreneurship programme of the Secretariat for Human Rights. Thanks to this initiative, she received the seed funding that allowed her to accomplish her dream of relaunching her business.

"Having to stop my life abruptly has not been easy, but I bring with me the knowledge of my Garifuna ancestors, which allows me to produce high quality products," says Jenny with determination.

Over the past two years, the young entrepreneur received continuous support to expand and strengthen her business, finding ways to market her products in safer places. She also registered her brand, diversified her product offering, and took the leap from selling solely through social media to renting a space in a mall in *San Pedro Sula*.

Today, Jenny has not only managed to consolidate her business, but has also created jobs for other women who help her with sales at the mall and at the local producers' fair, supported by the Municipality of *San Pedro Sula*. "With this business, I can now also contribute financially to my family. Additionally, I am studying International Business to take my brand to all corners of my country," she says with a smile on her face.

"Ultimately, it's about giving and showing gratitude," Jenny reflects on her own experiences and highlights the idea that "if you have the resources to help, it's always important to do so."

*Name changed to protect the identity of the person.



Mexico

National Context

INDICATORS

Figures from January to 31 August 2023



34,107

Number of asylum-seekers and refugees

benefiting from the Local Integration Programme.



64,000

Number of people seeking refugee status

who have a temporary Unique Population Registration Number- CURP*.



1,629

Number of persons of concern

referred by the COMAR to public healthcare services.



1,711

Number of asylum-seeking children and adolescents

referred by the COMAR to child protection authorities.

*The CURP is an alphanumeric code used to register individually all persons residing in Mexico, both citizens and foreigners, as well as Mexicans residing in other countries. The CURP is included in identity documents and is used to carry out procedures and access public programmes and services.



“
My goal is to stay here forever. I really like this city, it’s very safe and quiet.
”

In recent years, Mexico has seen an increase in the number of people arriving in the country in need of international protection. While the highest-ever number of applications in Mexico was recorded in 2021 (129,768), this figure slightly decreased to 118,570 in 2022. As of August 2023, 99,881 applications have been received.

Mexico, through the Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE), has participated in the MIRPS since 2017, and has sought to implement a series of commitments for the design of protection models and solutions for persons in need of international protection. Strategies to support host communities have also been adopted. The commitments assumed in the MIRPS process are supplemented by a series of pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum 2019.

At the regional level, Mexico took the leadership in the MIRPS process by assuming the first Pro-Tempore Presidency in 2019. Mexico led the Group on Internal Displacement in 2021, and the Group on Strengthening Asylum Systems in 2022 and 2023. At the national level, Mexico established the Interinstitutional Roundtable on Refuge and Complementary Protection, chaired by the Undersecretariat of Human Rights, Population, and Migration of SEGOB, which provides a political forum to validate the proposals made by four MIRPS technical working groups focusing on access to education (chaired by the Ministry of Education), access to healthcare (Ministry of Health), employment (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare), as well as documentation and identity (National Population Registry, RENAPO). At the federal level, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR), supported by UNHCR, plays an important supporting role as a technical secretariat. Since 2020, the COMAR has been convening MIRPS working roundtables at the local level with the aim of creating a favourable environment for inclusion and integration in key urban settings.

Progress



COORDINATION

CONSOLIDATING THE INTERINSTITUTIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON REFUGE AND COMPLEMENTARY PROTECTION.

The MIRPS Interinstitutional Roundtable on Refuge and Complementary Protection and the thematic roundtables on healthcare, education, labour, and identification and documentation, established to promote public policies for the integration of refugees at the local level, have continued their efforts to coordinate with different authorities, strengthening coordination, including multilevel coordination, between authorities at the three levels of government, United Nations agencies and civil society organisations. As a result of the local roundtables, coordination has grown to reach a territorial scope of nine states in the northern, southern and central border regions of the country: Chiapas, Baja California, Nuevo León, Veracruz, Tabasco, Quintana Roo, Coahuila, Jalisco, Campeche, and two at the municipal level: Palenque, Chiapas; and Oluta, Veracruz. Follow-up work at the state and municipal levels has also been made possible by this coordination structure.

PUBLIC POLICY ON LOCAL INTEGRATION.

Following up on the commitments of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, the Mexican State, together with agencies from the three levels of government, began working on the development and implementation of a public policy aimed at the local integration of the population in need of international protection. The COMAR, in collaboration with SEGOB's General Directorate for Public Policy and Human Rights, carried out a mapping exercise that lays the foundations for the operation of the Programme in the southern states and Mexico City, where profiles are identified and relocated to *Guadalajara, Jalisco; Saltillo; Coahuila; and Monterrey, Nuevo León.*

IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF CASE REGISTRATION AND PROCESSING.

In 2022, COMAR began to implement the latest version of its Refugee Information System (SIRE). This version comprises features and applications that allow cases to be managed throughout the procedure in all areas of work (Registration, Protection, Assistance, Legal, and Statistical Information). In Mexico City, the new module called “COMAR DIGITAL” (Digital COMAR) enables online pre-registration, which has reduced waiting times and tripled registration and customer service capacity since its implementation.

As a result of this digital transformation of COMAR, archiving units have been consolidated at the national level, offering technological solutions for a decentralised file management system, facilitating access to information from the various offices, from the SIRE.

ISSUING POPULATION REGISTRY DOCUMENTS FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES.

The RENAPO has issued 338,000 CURPs to asylum-seekers since June 2018, facilitating their access to public programmes as well as their integration. The RENAPO has also installed registration modules that issue temporary CURPs.



PROTECTION

EXCHANGING BEST PRACTICES.

As the lead country of the MIRPS Working Group on Strengthening Asylum Systems, Mexico was visited by MIRPS countries at the “Regional Meeting on Digitalisation, Reception, and Differentiated Case Processing Modalities in Tapachula,” where a diverse range of experiences and procedures were discussed, including registry systems, digital transformation and interoperability of documentation systems, as well as learnings on methodologies to simplify and expedite the processing of applications for refugee status determination.

Mexico offered to organise bilateral exchanges in the form of “Twinning” where officials from two different countries may learn about best practices on case registration and management, as well as provide technical advice on the application of differentiated procedures, of temporary protection statutes and of the extended refugee definition under the Cartagena Declaration. It is also worth noting the proposal to create a Country-of-Origin (COI) Information Research Unit, or COI Unit, to unify and standardise the COI information produced by the National Commissions for Refugees (CONAREs). The mapping of refugee status determination case processing modalities in MIRPS countries was also finalised.

The Group agreed to present a joint pledge on strengthening asylum/refugee systems at the Global Refugee Forum.

IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF CASE PROCESSING.

The COMAR has strengthened case processing by expanding differentiated procedures in the various Representation Offices at the national level, through a faster profiling process for asylum-seekers in vulnerable situations. In 2023, this practice was extended to the COMAR Representation Offices in Mexico City, Palenque, Tapachula and Tenosique.

BACKLOG ATTENTION PLAN.

In 2023, the COMAR began implementing the National Backlog Attention Programme, with the aim of prioritising procedures initiated before 2020. As of September, more than 2,500 case records have been fully processed.

PREPARING COI INFORMATION PACKAGES.

The COMAR’s COI Unit has strengthened the creation of COI information packages in order to accelerate the eligibility analysis of refugee status determination procedures. In 2023, four information packages and analysis tools were created, as well as a catalogue of social groups in the Directorate of Protection and Return, to improve the efficiency of case analysis by conventionally defining and standardising the social groups used in the decisions of the Representation Offices.



INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

REPORT ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN MEXICO.

In July 2023, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons presented the Report on Mexico, following her visit in 2022. In this report, she examines the situation and presents various recommendations, which may represent a roadmap for work in this area. As of September 2023, many efforts and actions have been carried out in various areas of public administration since her visit.

BOOK PRESENTATIONS AND A TRAINING COURSE ON FORCED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN MEXICO.

In order to raise awareness and provide a frame of reference for this public issue, the COMAR, together with the General Directorate of Public Policy on Human Rights (DGPPDH), has presented the book “Internal Forced Displacement in Mexico: from recognition to challenges” in the Senate of the Republic, San Cristóbal de las Casas and at the Mora Institute. Paper copies have been distributed to public administration institutions, universities and civil society organisations, while the digital version has been widely disseminated. The COMAR has also given a training course on forced internal displacement to more than a thousand public servants from various agencies of the three levels of government and the 32 states.

PREPARING A DRAFT VERSION OF THE SINGLE REGISTRATION FORM FOR DISPLACED PERSONS.

This Single Registration Form (FUR) draft has received feedback from the SEGOB human rights groups, civil society organisations and UNHCR, and has been tested with forcibly internally displaced persons.

PILOT PROJECT FOR THE INCLUSION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS.

The Pilot Project has continued to expand among various local groups (*Michoacán, Guerrero, Chihuahua and Chiapas*) and was extended to four other cities in the country, in addition to *Querétaro: Aguascalientes, Monterrey, Saltillo and Guadalajara*.

CLOSING THE PROFILING EXERCISE IN CHIHUAHUA.

The Report was published and presented to the State Commission on Forced Internal Displacement on 19 July 2023. The COMAR, the Unit for Migration Policy, Registration, and Identity of Persons (UPMRIP), and UNHCR also provided support to the authorities in Sinaloa to help build the registration tool for internally displaced persons in Sinaloa, as well as a pilot exercise. Likewise, in Sinaloa, along with technical assistance from UNHCR and support from the COMAR and UPMRIP, consultation roundtables were set up with local authorities and internally displaced persons to facilitate the establishment of a regulation and an attention programme.

FORUM ON PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SETTINGS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT.

In May, the Morelia Municipal Institute for Women held a forum in *Morelia, Michoacán*. Technical training was provided to key government counterparts and NGOs on prevention and response to gender-based violence and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in contexts of internal displacement, with the aim of promoting a roadmap.

PROGRESS ON LEGAL FRAMEWORKS.

In the first half of 2023, the Government of Guerrero launched various efforts to review its current legislation regarding the forced internal displacement in effect since 2014, with the aim of updating it and generating other operational instruments. To this end, the UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and UNICEF have provided support and training.



EDUCATION

INCLUSION OF REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.

In line with the Global Compact on Refugees, the legal and regulatory framework in Mexico guarantees the inclusion of any child or adolescent into pre-school, primary, secondary and upper secondary education, regardless of their legal status or whether or not they have schooling documents. Following the launch of the radio campaign “All children to school. For the right to education of refugee children” in the last quarter of 2022, Mexico has continued to support their enrolment in public schools throughout the country, vis-a-vis the work of the Interinstitutional Roundtables on Refuge and Complementary Protection.

THE “EDUCATION WITHOUT BORDERS” PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ADULT EDUCATION (INEA) HAS HELPED 433 YOUNG AND ADULT REFUGEES OBTAIN THEIR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATES

in Mexico in 2023, allowing them to continue their studies and/or enter the labour market in Mexico.

LAUNCH OF THE APRENDE INEA PLATFORM

In 2023, the INEA launched its *Aprende INEA* platform, a free and open-access online service where anyone with a valid email address can access the educational content and study the modules at their own pace, without any deadlines for the completion of the various *Aprende INEA* levels. In addition to its online service, the INEA also offers in-person sessions in the various community squares across the country.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SERVICES.

Since the amendment of the General Health Law in 2019, Mexico has worked to strengthen its Health and Welfare System in order to guarantee the free provision of healthcare services and medicines

to people with no access to social security under the principles of universality, inequality reduction and improvement of public management. In 2023, a new amendment to the Healthcare Act has designated the Mexican Social Security Institute for Welfare (IMSS-BIENESTAR) as the public body responsible for guaranteeing the constitutional right to healthcare protection, through the provision of healthcare services at the various levels of care. In the area of mental health, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance has provided training to the clinical staff of the Comprehensive Mental Health Care Centre (CISAME) of the National Commission for Mental Health and Addictions (CONASAMA), through the “Permanent Forum: Gender, Mental Health and Addictions.”

ACTIONS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND XENOPHOBIA.

Since 2022, the National Council to Prevent Discrimination (CONAPRED), the COMAR, and the UNHCR have come together to organise the “Days for inclusion and non-discrimination,” which aim to implement a programme of institutional interventions and community activations against discrimination, racism and xenophobia in cities where there are persons on the move, refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons. Workshops were also held in Aguascalientes (March) and Mexico City (September).



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES.

The National Employment Service (SNE, by its Spanish acronym) has organised 265 job fairs in 2023, in different cities of the Mexican Republic, in which 9,245 companies, with more than 165,000 job offers for professions and trades, attended to recruit new job applicants, including asylum-seekers and refugees in Mexico. Through dedicated representatives from each company, these enterprises have opened job offers in sectors such as industry, trade and services, so that refugees may be informed of the vacancies, apply for the positions, and receive invitations to job interviews. By the end of 2023, the SNE plans to launch the Employment Microsite for persons in the context of mobility, with the support of the International Labour Organisation, the UNHCR and the European Union.

LABOUR INTEGRATION AND RELOCATION PROGRAMME.

From January to the first half of September 2023, the Local Integration Programme implemented by the UNHCR, in coordination with the Mexican authorities, has managed to relocate around 5456 refugees to 11 cities in central and northern Mexico in order to link them to formal job offers, providing them with support in their socio-economic and cultural integration in the country. More than 34,000 participants have been reached since the launch of this programme.

PUBLIC POLICY FOR INTEGRATION.

Following up on the commitments of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, the Mexican State, together with agencies from the three levels of government, began working on the development and implementation of a public policy aimed at the local integration of the population in need of international protection. The COMAR, in collaboration with SEGOB's General Directorate of Public Policy and Human Rights, carried out a mapping exercise that lays the foundations for the operation of the Programme in the southern states and Mexico City, where profiles are identified and initially relocated to Guadalajara, Jalisco.



NATURALISATION

ACCESS TO MEXICAN NATIONALITY.

Mexico has continued to facilitate the acquisition of Mexican nationality for refugees and persons with complementary protection. From January to August 2023, 796 refugees have entered the process through the Nationality and Naturalisation System (SINNA).

New Beginnings

By Brenda Aguirre. Excerpt from: Mexico's industrial heartland offers jobs and a new start for refugees, by Kristy Siegfried

A bus stops in a town in the centre of Mexico after a 19-hour journey. Its passengers get off exhausted, but many of them smile at the staff of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, who greet them warmly.

The refugees hope to find employment and stability for their families in Aguascalientes, one of 11 cities in Mexico where refugees from the south are resettled through the Local Integration Programme implemented by UNHCR in coordination with the Mexican authorities.

Since its launch in 2016, the project has helped more than 34,000 people get a fresh start in cities that offer safe living conditions, formal employment opportunities with social security, and access to education and healthcare services. Aguascalientes alone has received 3,000 refugees.

Nohemí* emotionally recalls when she and her daughter first arrived in the city. "They told me that Aguascalientes was safe, and I said: 'That's the place!'. Safety was my priority," she explains. They fled their home when gangs took over their neighbourhood after the hurricanes that hit their country.

"Due to floods, people went to shelters while gangs invaded their homes; that was how they took over the area where I lived." Even after leaving her job and moving to another neighbourhood, she still felt unsafe and feared for her daughter.

They arrived in Mexico to continue their journey to the United States but heard about the Local Integration Programme and decided to look for an opportunity in their host country instead. After arriving in Aguascalientes, Nohemí applied for a job in a pharmacy and was hired. This is her first formal job in Mexico, with social benefits, set hours, and a fixed salary.

"I never thought I would have a good quality of life in such a short time," she says. "My goal is to stay here forever. I really like this city, it's very safe and quiet," she says. "I want to visit my parents and my family, but I'm not going back to my country. If I have to die here, I will."

*Name changed for protection reasons.

Read more
about this story





Panama

National Context

INDICATORS

(as of September 2023)



124

Cards for asylum-seekers admitted for processing.



327

Proof of application for refugee status (new applications).



144

Renewals of recognised refugee cards.

1

Recognised stateless person's document.

46

Document as persons in the process of statelessness recognition.

9

Permanent residence card.



“

When you are a refugee, you feel fear, you don't know many people, and you have to integrate yourself in different activities. An internship helps us have access to an organisation and put our talents into practice.

”



2 months

Average processing time of applications for the granting of refugee status from reception to final decision

since 2023, new applications have been processed within two months on average.



28

Work permits

for asylum-seekers admitted for processing.

39

Renewals of work permits

for recognised refugees.

46

Indefinite work permits

for refugees who obtained permanent residence.

Historically, the Republic of Panama has been a transit and host country for thousands of people in need of international protection. As of September 2023, Panama has become home to 10,892 people in need of international protection, of whom 2,609 have been recognised as refugees; from January to September this year, 292 people, mainly from El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Colombia, have applied for refugee status; and in 2023, refugee status has been granted to 76 people, mostly from El Salvador, Venezuela, and Ukraine.

The number of people transiting through the national territory as part of mixed movements increased considerably in 2023, reaching a record number of 412,000 persons as of September, far exceeding the previous year's figures. Just like last year, Venezuelans continue to transit through Panama as part of mixed movements more than any other country of origin, with most intending to reach the United States. There has also been a significant increase in the number of people in need of international protection from Ecuador, China and Afghanistan.

In view of the above, the Ministry of Government (MINGOB) has taken the necessary steps to strengthen the presence of the National Office for the Attention of Refugees (ONPAR) in border areas, in order to assist people of mixed movements who are seeking asylum in Panama. These efforts led to missions on both of the country's land borders, in order to interview, assist and notify asylum-seekers and people who have been granted refugee status. Likewise, by the end of 2023, an ONPAR unit will be opened in the city of Metetí, province of Darién, to attend to people who enter through the border with Colombia and apply for refugee status in Panama, as well as to long-term refugees residing in the province.

Furthermore, outreach to refugees in hard-to-reach areas was strengthened, partly thanks to these border missions. Specifically, through the implementation of document renewal activities for people who have been granted refugee status, and data updating for the issuance of cards to asylum-seekers. This recently issued documentation has had a substantial impact on the welfare status of asylum-seeking families and who are residing in Chiriquí, the region prioritised for this action. This will allow them to identify themselves individually as asylum-seekers with the authorities, thus improving access to social protection services.

As for children, the Protocol for the Identification, Referral and Care of Children and Adolescents Seeking Refugee Status in Need of International Protection is a guide for interinstitutional coordination between the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family (SENNIAF) and ONPAR to protect their rights. This nationwide document applies to any minor in need of international protection, whether entering the country alone or accompanied.

In 2021, the SENNIAF adopted the document "Derecho a Voz" (Right to a Voice), which recognises the right of children and adolescents to express their opinion freely on all matters that may affect them and to be heard in their position as a refugee, in accordance with Article 12 of Law 15 of 6 November 1990 approving the Convention on Child Rights.

The following laws are also in effect: Law 5 of 26 October 1977 approving the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, and Executive Decree 5 of 16 January 2018, which implements it. This decree is based on family unity, best interests, non-refoulement and the prohibition of rejection at the border, as fundamental principles of international protection that apply to children and adolescents who are seeking refugee status.

Progress



PROTECTION

STRENGTHENING THE ASYLUM SYSTEM AND ACCESS TO THE PROCEDURE, THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS PRIORITY ACTIONS.

To this end, around 750 officials attended training sessions on international protection, procedures for granting refugee status and recognising statelessness, and country-of-origin information. Similarly, there have been close collaborations with the relevant authorities to avoid cases of refoulement and simplify procedures, with the overarching goal of establishing the necessary mechanisms to guarantee access to the territory and to the procedure for persons seeking refugee status from border points as part of mixed movements, as well as from airports. Along these lines, it is worth mentioning the enhanced coordination with the National Migration Service (SNM), which has improved access to international protection at airports and statistical analyses that facilitate the updating of protection responses.

NEWLY RECOGNISED REFUGEES.

Up to September 2023, 80 people have been granted refugee status following the six meetings held by the National Commissions for Refugees (CONARE).

DELIVERY OF DOCUMENTS TO 130 RECOGNISED REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS,

thanks to operations in border areas and hard-to-reach areas. Close collaboration with the SNM and the Civil Registry was also strengthened to facilitate processing of permanent residency applications for recognised refugees who have met the established requirements.



PROTECTING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.

The National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family leads the Protection Roundtable for the care and protection of children's rights in mixed movements in the province of Darién. The procedure identifies children and adolescents in need of international protection in a fast and effective way, assuming legal representation in such cases. This inter-institutional body is composed of the National Migration System (SNM), the SENAFRONT's Children and Adolescents Unit of the National Border Service, the Ministry of Health, the Children and Adolescents Court, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the SENNIAF, as an advisory and coordinating body in this area. The "Foster Families" programme is also being developed, with the objective of providing comprehensive, temporary and non-institutional care for children and adolescents seeking refugee status and recognised refugees, as a family cohabitation alternative. This programme is regulated by Law 46 of 17 July 2013.



INTERINSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION

STRENGTHENING THE MIRPS NATIONAL COORDINATION.

To facilitate the implementation of the MIRPS National Plan, a national team led by the Ministry of Government was created to analyse challenges and opportunities collectively, in order to promote joint actions to facilitate the inclusion and integration of persons of concern.

HIGH-LEVEL EVENTS.

With the aim of strengthening interinstitutional ties, raising awareness of the situation and needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, and looking for comprehensive solutions that favour their local and social integration through the consolidation of partnerships, high-level meetings and thematic forums were held. These meetings and forums were carried out with the highest national and international authorities from key ministries such as Government, Social Development, Labour and Labour Development, Health and Safety, as well as the diplomatic community accredited in Panama.

INCLUDING THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE.

Since the Ministry of Women was established under Law No. 375 of 8 March 2023, it has managed to strengthen its new operational structure and technical capacity. It has also assessed and reviewed public gender policies and its national plan to identify results and challenges in the prevention, detection, assessment, and eradication of all practices of discrimination and violence against women, including refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless women.

ESSENTIAL SERVICE CARE CENTRE FOR GIRLS, ADOLESCENTS AND WOMEN SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LA CHORRERA.

This centre opened in March, offering specialised services in legal orientation, psychosocial assistance and safety to ensure the protection of girls, adolescents and women, including refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless women who are survivors of gender-based violence.

DATA AND STATISTICS.

In the 2023 CENSUS questionnaire, the National Institute of Statistics and Census included questions on the absence of birth registration and statelessness in order to determine the size of the population at risk of statelessness. This information will serve as a basis for the creation of inclusive public policies to further strengthen birth registration, as well as the identification and referral of stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness.



STATELESSNESS

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE DECREE NO. 4 OF 2 MARCH 2023, WHICH INCLUDES THE ISSUANCE OF A WORK PERMIT FOR RECOGNISED STATELESS PERSONS.

Links between the SNM, SENAFRONT and the Civil Registry were strengthened with regard to the registration of the births of children born in Panama as part of mixed movements, in order to avoid cases of statelessness.

RELEASE OF THE STORY ON THE PREVENTION OF STATELESSNESS:

<https://mire.gob.pa/cuento-prevencion-de-la-apatrida/>. This publication, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aims to facilitate identification, reference and knowledge on how to handle cases of people at risk of statelessness in the country.



HEALTHCARE

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTHCARE.

The Ministry of Health has the constitutional responsibility to provide care to all persons living in the national territory, including migrants and refugees, guaranteeing respect for their human rights. Panama promotes mental health as a human right and guarantees its national coverage and identifies and comprehensively addresses suicidal risk behaviours as a public healthcare problem through an intersectoral and interinstitutional approach. With the “Technical Standard for mental healthcare for migrant and refugee populations in Panama,” this country is a pioneer in addressing relevant aspects of mental healthcare for this population, which is currently under regulation. Moreover, through the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) and the Pan American Health Organization, the service network primary healthcare staff that provide care to the migrant and refugee population have continued their training.

ACCESS TO ORAL HEALTHCARE.

The Oral Healthcare Department has designed strategies for promotion, prevention and care through the Oral Health School Programme, which starts from the age of 5 and continues up to adolescence. This programme is also offered to the migrant and refugee population.

ADOLESCENT HEALTHCARE SERVICES.

There are 130 modules of the Adolescent-Friendly Health Services (SSAA) in healthcare centres throughout the country, which help to reduce pregnancies, drug use and alcohol and tobacco consumption, as well as to promote healthy lifestyles from an early age. These modules can be used by all young migrants and refugees living in the country.

PROGRESS IN ADOPTING PUBLIC POLICIES.

In addition to this, Panama has supported and collaborated on the challenge posed by the Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage, adopting strategic lines of action in its National Healthcare Policy and the Strategic Guidelines 2016-2025, where all services are inclusive and cover the migrant and refugee population. Migrant and refugee communities have also been included in the strategies of national immunisation plans to increase vaccine coverage.

ESTABLISHING THE HEALTHCARE MODEL BASED ON THE STRATEGY FOR PRIMARY HEALTHCARE (APS).

This model focuses on individual, family, community and environmental healthcare needs and promotes the coordination of healthcare services in integrated networks. Its focus on territorial development and the coordination of services is essential to ensure that the population, including migrants and refugees, has access to fundamental rights such as healthcare.

CONTINUOUS TRAINING ON HUMAN MOBILITY FOR HEALTHCARE STAFF.

Awareness-raising and training programmes are being carried out in the 15 regions, including training on the migrant, refugee and stateless population, which has improved understanding of these concepts.

HEALTHCARE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

There have been close collaborations with two of the largest urban municipalities (San Miguelito and Chepo) to raise awareness among authorities and officials about the situation and vulnerabilities of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, especially on healthcare issues, supporting their access and care in the various healthcare centres in their respective territories.



JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

EXPANDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING POPULATION

to increase their self-sufficiency through access to formal employment, vocational training and income-generating opportunities. The National Commissions for Refugees (CONARE), through its President, the Vice-Minister of Government, has put forward the idea of approving a temporary work permit for asylum-seekers with the Ministry of Labour and Labour Development (MITRADEL). Discussions have also been held with MITRADEL on exempting the refugee population from the minimum foreigner employment quota (10%) and on integrating refugees and asylum-seekers admitted for processing in the internal database of MITRADEL to encourage their participation in job fairs and job banks.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT.

A roadmap to facilitate and inform the refugee population on how they can access the “*Empleos Panamá*” (Panama Jobs) website and how to apply for their work permit online is currently under construction. MITRADEL has suggested providing training sessions on the new Work Permits Law, as well as the recently approved decrees, to staff from both UNHCR, partner organisations, and ONPAR.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

Through the MIRPS Working Group on Jobs and Livelihoods, work in this area is managed with the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce has shown interest in supporting and participating in various awareness-raising activities with the private sector in order to support the recruitment of refugees and asylum-seekers admitted for processing.

ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES.

In order to allow recognised refugees to open bank accounts, a proposal was made to the Superintendency of Banks to create awareness-raising and training programmes, with the support of Microserfin, as a financial player that supports programmes aimed at refugees and asylum-seekers who have been admitted for processing.

THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR HAS PLACED REFUGEES AT THE CENTRE OF PUBLIC POLICIES TO IMPROVE EMPLOYABILITY.

Through Executive Decree 6 of 13 April 2023 governing labour migration in Panama, a Humanitarian Protection classification has been created, and within this classification, the following categories of work permits have been identified: refugees (both seekers admitted for processing, as well as those who are already recognised as refugees), stateless persons (for the first time, there is a work permit for this population), and those with protection needs due humanitarian reasons. All these categories are considered local labour for the purposes of the percentages established in the labour code and have the same protection as national workers within a company. This is a significant step forward, since it helps to improve the employability of refugees by not counting them as migrant workers, while also enabling greater mobility and opportunities when applying for a job. In addition to this decree, Executive Decree 7 of 13 July 2023 was also enacted, establishing the Temporary Protection Work Permit for irregular migrants in vulnerable situations. This is a two-year permit aimed at regularising and stabilising the irregular migrant population.



EDUCATION

ADVOCATING FOR EQUITABLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION BY STRENGTHENING NATIONAL SYSTEMS TO FOSTER INCLUSION, RESILIENCE AND THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HOST COMMUNITIES.

In order to gather information on the number of children and adolescents, as well as children of refugees and children of asylum-seekers, who are in schools in Panama City, there have been close collaborations and strategic meetings with the municipalities of San Miguelito and Chepo, together with the Vice-Governor of Panama. These meetings aim to coordinate efforts with the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) in their respective territories, in order to identify the population and determine its specific needs. The Ministry of Education is also carrying out other actions such as strengthening priority attention in educational centres; surveys sent to 124 educational centres with a significant number of migrant students; adaptability of skills tests for their immediate attention; and socio-emotional support to migrant students.

ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES.

Through civil society, information has been shared with the refugee population on the availability of courses, workshops and training provided by the National Institute of Vocational Training and Training for Human Development (INADEH), following the agreements reached in 2019 and updated in 2023, which allow the refugee population to access these academic offerings.



Refugee Finds Hope through Decent Work in Panama

By Melissa Pinel

Juan Carlos was only 6 years old when he had to flee Colombia. Violence had claimed the life of a family member and, although he was too young to remember, his family told him that they were receiving death threats and that staying in the country was not an option.

Seventeen years have passed since that day. During that time, Juan Carlos found refuge in Panama; and the opportunity to rebuild his life in a safe place. The first challenge came unexpectedly: in Colombia, he had learnt to write in block letters, while in his new school children had to write in cursive. But Juan Carlos couldn't understand how letters connect.

In Panama, he went from being a child in adaptation process to an adult looking for a job, which in the midst of the pandemic was not easy. For a while he worked in informal jobs, until he found "*Talento Sin Fronteras*" (Talent without Borders), an employability programme for refugees developed by ManpowerGroup, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. This programme seeks to enhance the capacities and skills of refugees so that they can contribute to the development of the country through their dignified work.

With "*Talento Sin Fronteras*," Juan Carlos received workshops, including preparation for job interviews, and obtained an internship at Quality Leadership University. "When you are a refugee, you feel fear, you don't know many people, and you have to integrate yourself in different activities. An internship helps us have access to an organisation and put our talents into practice," says Juan Carlos.

What started as a three-month internship turned into a permanent job as a Graduate Assistant at the university, a position in which he continues to learn every day and from which his future in Panama looks brighter than ever.

MIRPS Support Platform

The United States served as Chair of the MIRPS Support Platform from September 2022 to December 2023. Since its launch at the First Global Refugee Forum in 2019, the MIRPS Support Platform (SP) has played a critical role in raising international attention and support, as well as coordinating funding and technical assistance to advance MIRPS national and regional action plans.

Support Platform members include Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the European Union, France, Spain, Switzerland, Uruguay, the United States, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI). In the framework of the Troika Model of Leadership, introduced in 2022 to formalize the engagement of the Chair-in-Office, Past Chair, and Future Chair, Canada continued to engage and provide support throughout the U.S. term as chair.



The United States Chair Strategy for 2022-2023 is based on the theme, “The Benefits of Successful Integration - Valuing the Contributions Forcibly Displaced People Bring to Host Communities,” seeking to draw attention to the needs of displaced people and their host communities, promote social cohesion, and exchange good practices for successful integration and other local solutions, with a particular emphasis on protection for the most vulnerable, including women and children. Aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees, this strategy was set out in three objectives: 1) MIRPS Support Platform governance and accountability mechanisms are reinforced; 2) Refugees and internally displaced persons in MIRPS countries benefit from private sector, multilateral development bank, and civil society collaboration to support successful local solutions, and 3) MIRPS countries have increased capacity and resources to facilitate successful local solutions, including the specific integration needs of children and adolescents.

MIRPS INVENTORY OF GOOD PRACTICES

In 2023, the United States led the development of the Inventory of Good Practices on Integration, with inputs from MIRPS States and MIRPS Support Platform Members. The inventory documents existing services and programs with a dual purpose in mind: First, to serve as a resource for information exchange among MIRPS States and other stakeholders, and second, to help identify where gaps may exist and further support is needed. Documented good practices will continue to be published on the MIRPS website on a rolling basis to serve as a public resource.

MIRPS LEARNING EVENTS

The Inventory of Good Practices on Integration served as a basis for the development of MIRPS Learning Events, as MIRPS National Technical Teams participated in a prioritization exercise to identify the documented practices of most interest for further information exchange during 2023. As a result, the first “MIRPS Learning Event on Access to Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services for Displaced Families as Key Aspects of Integration” was held in San Salvador, El Salvador on 26-27 September 2023. This event included field-based learning organized by the Government of El Salvador, featuring a series of practices related to mental health, psychosocial support, and specialized attention to the needs of women and children. This field-based learning included visits to an “*A tu Lado*” support space; *Ciudad Mujer*, including presentation of “*Sin Fronteras*” and Plataforma 126, an initiative supported by the IADB to provide support through digital platforms in response to gender-based violence; and an Urban Center for Wellbeing and Opportunities (CUBO), supported by the European Union. Canada shared expertise and reflections from implementation of its pilot program, ‘Enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of refugee children and their families,’ highlighting the details of the program’s design, methodology, and lessons learned.



Recognizing the importance of ensuring that forcibly displaced populations can access related national services and programs, and acknowledging the different needs and vulnerabilities that are specific to these populations, including age, gender and diversity considerations, MIRPS States discussed opportunities to incorporate related commitments to the MIRPS National Action Plans and add related indicators to MIRPS reporting mechanisms in 2024.

A second MIRPS Learning Event, “Comprehensive approaches to the economic inclusion of displaced persons: enhancing resilience and valuing contributions to host communities” took place in San José, Costa Rica on 17-18 October. The Government of Costa Rica, also in its capacity as lead country of the MIRPS Working Group on Jobs and Livelihoods, presented on

its national employment strategy, supported by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the European Union, including critical partnerships, such as with Fundación Mujer, and collaboration with the private sector. Through the Swiss Embassy in Costa Rica, Switzerland shared with MIRPS States its “Pre-vocational apprenticeship training” (INVOL), a program designed to sustainably improve the long-term integration of recognized refugees and persons temporarily admitted to the labor market.

MIRPS States also presented on their relevant good practices on economic integration, and participated in one-on-one exchanges between MIRPS States, MIRPS Support Platform Members, and representatives of civil society and private sector to identify opportunities and

action points for bilateral and regional cooperation. The event concluded with a collective analysis of opportunities for updating MIRPS National Action Plans and MIRPS indicators to concretely reflect advancements in the economic inclusion of displaced persons, including refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and returnees with protection needs.

On 24-27 October, the Government of Colombia, as a Member of the MIRPS Support Platform, co-hosted the third MIRPS Learning Event, “Advancing protection and durable solutions for internally displaced persons in MIRPS countries” with the participation of El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico as members of the MIRPS Working Group on Internal Displacement. This event facilitated technical exchanges on normative frameworks for the prevention, support, and protection of internally displaced persons, and inter-institutional governance and coordination structures for protection, humanitarian

assistance and local integration. This event also showcased good practices on the participation of internally displaced persons and local communities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of related policies, plans, and programs, and engagement with civil society. This exchange will also inform the work plan of the MIRPS Working Group on Internal Displacement in 2024.

‘GOOD PRACTICE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS’

The United States established a mechanism for supporting opportunities for MIRPS States to implement practices from the Learning Events. Each MIRPS State has been invited to develop a proposal for a “Good Practice Implementation Project” in 2024, to be linked to their respective MIRPS National Action Plan and supported by the United States Chair through UNHCR for implementation in 2024.



THE MIRPS FUND

With support from Spain's pioneering contribution to the MIRPS Fund, administered by the OAS Department of Social Inclusion, six MIRPS States' projects were finalized for implementation in 2023 and 2024.¹

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Following up on the recommendation in Canada's Chair Report 2021-2022 to strengthen and formalize private sector engagement to support MIRPS objectives, the MIRPS Support Platform created a framework for the MIRPS Business Network, to be rolled out in 2024. In July 2023, Canada led a MIRPS Support Platform Webinar, "Engaging the Private Sector in Solutions to Forced Displacement in Panama," which sought to increase businesses' understanding of the situation of forced displacement and outline ways to support integration.²

MIRPS VI ANNUAL MEETING HIGH-LEVEL SOLIDARITY SEGMENT AND THE GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

Building on the momentum of the MIRPS Solidarity Events in 2021 and 2022, the MIRPS VI Annual Meeting will include a High-Level Solidarity Segment, led by the United States as Chair of the MIRPS Support Platform. This will be an opportunity for the Members of the Support Platform and other relevant actors to share their concrete commitments and financial, political, technical, and material support related to protection and solutions for forcibly displaced persons in Central America and Mexico.

In preparation for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) 2023, to take place in Geneva on 13-15 December 2023, the MIRPS Support Platform facilitated pledge matching and cultivation in support of MIRPS Pledges. A GRF side event will showcase MIRPS States' concrete pledges and related support from MIRPS Support Platform members -- including a range of commitments to strengthen asylum systems, socio-economic integration, inclusion of displaced persons in national statistics, and responses to displacement at the local level.

1. See further information on the MIRPS Fund in the section, 'MIRPS Fund in Action.'

2. See further information on MIRPS private sector engagement in the section "Alliances with Strategic Partners."



