

Guatemala

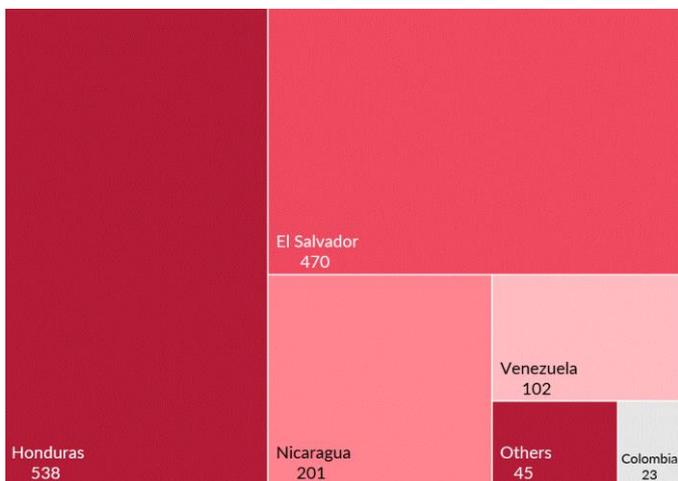
March 2022

In 2022, 286 new asylum applications have been filed (**126 of them in the month of March**), representing an **increase of 47%** in comparison to the same period in 2021. In total, there are currently **590 refugees and 1,379 asylum-seekers** residing in Guatemala.

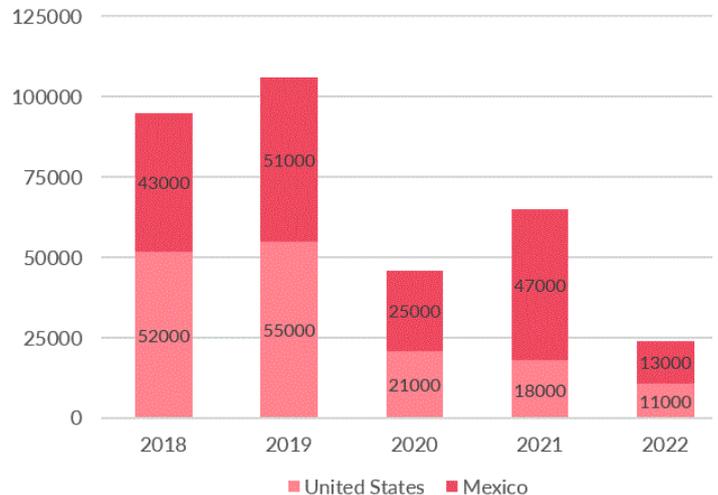
In the first three months of 2022, UNHCR's partners have provided information, legal counselling and humanitarian assistance to **more than 29,000 individuals of the mixed movements** across the country. In comparison, in the whole year of 2021, 53,300 persons were assisted.

The **number of Guatemalan returnees and deportees more than doubled** from 10,000 in the first quarter of 2021 to 24,000 in the same period in 2022. In addition, **tens of thousands of Guatemalans remain at risk** in socially vulnerable communities.

Country of origin of the currently 1,379 asylum-seekers in Guatemala



Trend of Guatemalans returned from Mexico and the United States



NEW FIELD UNIT IN HUEHUETENANGO

As part of UNHCR's strategy to further increase its field presence and support local governments and civil society organizations in creating protection mechanisms for refugees and Guatemalans at risk, a new Field Unit was opened in Huehuetenango. The department of Huehuetenango, due to its location on the Mexican border, is characterized by the transit of migrants and refugees, while at the same time registering high-out migration.

UNHCR now has five Field Units located in Esquipulas (Chiquimula), Huehuetenango, Puerto Barrios (Izabal), Santa Elena (Petén) and Tecun Uman (San Marcos). In addition, UNHCR has one Field Office and its Country Office in Guatemala City.

- For more information READ the press release about the opening of the new Field Unit in Huehuetenango



Inauguration of UNHCR's Field Unit in Huehuetenango with the presence of the Governor, Mayor, Bishop and Cardinal of Huehuetenango as well as UNHCR's Representative in Guatemala and the Head of the new Field Unit. ©Social Welfare Secretariat/2022

Working with Partners

- UNHCR has **partnership agreements with 13 non-governmental organizations**. In addition, UNHCR works closely with other civil society organizations as well as with UN Women, IOM, UNICEF and governmental institutions to protect people forced to flee because of conflict and persecution.

Main Activities

Response to Basic Needs

- In the first quarter of 2022, **UNHCR provided multipurpose cash grants and cash for livelihood to 1,281 persons** (777 asylum-seekers and refugees, 439 Guatemalans in need of international protection who are part of the PTA program and 65 other Guatemalans at risk including returnees). Over 278,000 USD have been distributed as part of the newly implemented cash distribution modality with Banrural, a leading bank in the country. The cash grants enable recipients to fulfil their basic needs, reduce protection risks and improve their livelihood opportunities.

- **UNHCR donated a mobile clinic to its partner Guatemalan Red Cross** to provide humanitarian assistance in the most remote border areas where refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants, returnees and Guatemalans at risk transit. The unit was acquired and adapted by the Guatemalan Red Cross with UNHCR's support and equipped with the necessary supplies to provide basic medical care, personalized psychosocial assistance and other services. The mobile clinic will be present



Inauguration of the new mobile clinic by the President of the Guatemalan Red Cross and UNHCR's Representative in Guatemala. ©Guatemalan Red Cross/2022

on a rotational basis in locations where the services are most needed.

- [READ UNHCR's press release on the new mobile clinic donated to the Guatemalan Red Cross](#)

- **20 cellphone charging stations are being installed** at strategic border entry and transit locations. Together with the creation of **Wi-Fi access points** that are currently in planning in the same locations, UNHCR ensures that people of the mixed movements who are in need of international protection can access information on their right to seek asylum in Guatemala and on the services provided by the organization and its partners.
- UNHCR's Field Office and five Field Units have been distributing Personal Protective Equipment against COVID (consisting of 200,000 masks, 50,000 soaps and 3,600 bottles of hand sanitizer gel) to asylum-seekers, refugees, persons of the mixed movements as well as to State institutions providing protection services to them.

Governance, Prevention and Protection

- UNHCR together with its partners have implemented a series of actions to strengthen child protection services provided by State and civil society actors in different parts of the country. In Santa Elena, Peten, a **Comprehensive Childcare Centre for refugee and host community children**, built by the Municipality of Flores and partner Refugio de la Niñez with UNHCR funds, was inaugurated. The Centre, which is managed by the Social Welfare Secretariat, not only benefits children but also their mothers by facilitating them access to the labour market as the lack of childcare facilities used to be one of the main obstacles.
 - [For more information READ UNHCR's newest thematic fact sheet on its child protection activities](#)

- In March, UNHCR trained over 600 persons from partner and community-based organizations as well as authorities on its mandate, international refugee law and referral pathways of identified cases with protection needs. In Peten, together with IOM and the Guatemalan Migration Institute, a workshop on “Migration in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic” was provided to different State institutions.
- In 2022, the six mobile units of the Office against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (SVET) supported by UNHCR, have informed over 20,000 people, among them migrants and refugees, about the services available for survivors of sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons. In addition, over 350 government officials were trained on the prevention of and response to gender-based violence.
- UNHCR donated 50 tablets to the Social Welfare Secretariat (SBS) to strengthen their protection services, specifically the extracurricular education programmes, provided in the five youth community centres located in municipalities next to Guatemala City (Amatitlan, Mixco, Palencia, Peronia and Villa Nueva). UNHCR together with SBS promotes education opportunities for young Guatemalans, asylum-seekers and refugees.
- On the initiative of the U.S. State Department’s Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), UNHCR together with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) and Justice in Motion is implementing the Family Reunification project “Together”. The regional project aims to identify and reunite certain families who were separated by the U.S. government between 2017 and 2020 on the U.S.-Mexican border. UNHCR, mainly through its Field Unit in Huehuetenango, is strongly supporting the dissemination of the programme through State institutions, community and faith-based organizations to reach the target population and ensure they have access to the family reunification mechanism.



En [juntos.gov](https://www.juntos.gov) te pueden ayudar de manera gratuita a reencontrarte con tus hijos si fueron separados forzadamente por el Gobierno de Estados Unidos en la frontera México – EE. UU., entre el 20 de enero de 2017 y el 20 de enero de 2021. **Entérate de cómo llamando a la organización KIND.**



ACNUR agradece al Departamento de Estado, Oficina de Población, Refugiados y Migración de los Estados Unidos, por el apoyo para la difusión de esta iniciativa.

Líneas de ayuda KIND

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Enhanced community-based protection in communities affected by or at risk of displacement

- In Jimeritos (a village located in Izabal on the border with Honduras), a remodelled community centre was inaugurated by community members, the Municipality of Puerto Barrios, CICAM (Centre for Research, Training and Support of Women) and UNHCR. The centre was constructed by UNHCR through its partners CICAM and UN Women with the support of the local community, who provided voluntary work and supplies. Due to its location on the border, the centre regularly hosts refugees and migrants and has also sheltered members of the host community during storms.

Durable Solutions

- In Guatemala City, in the framework of UNHCR’s City of Solidarity initiative (of which the Municipality of Guatemala is part of) and with the objective to strengthen local integration programs and create safe spaces for refugees and host community members, UNHCR through its partner Action Against Hunger equipped a municipal Day Care Centre for elderly people and two Municipal Libraries. Among the donations made to the libraries are: 400 children’s books, 20 computers, 10 tablets and furniture. The support provided to the centre for elderly persons includes 15 tablets, 10 computers, board games as well as sports equipment. The projects will benefit over 5,000 refugees and members of the host community.

- Together with the Ministry of Labour, the private sector and partner organizations, UNHCR is creating livelihood opportunities for and promoting the economic inclusion of refugees and Guatemalans at risk. In 2022, the **Ministry of Labour has issued 208 work permits** so far to asylum-seekers and refugees. In addition, **UNHCR has supported 443 persons** (295 asylum-seekers and refugees, 148 Guatemalans at risk) in designing their livelihood roadmaps and start trainings to improve their employability and entrepreneurship skills. Through the Association Lambda and other partners, specialized protection services are being provided to LGBTI individuals, including the provision of seed capital and managerial training programs. **Click on the video on the right to get to know the story of a Salvadoran transgender asylum-seeking woman** who is rebuilding her life in Guatemala and has set up her own business.



Activities implemented in the context of International Women's Day on 8 March 2022

- In **Huehuetenango**, UNHCR together with its partners World Vision and Action Against Hunger supported the **Equal Employment Opportunities Fair** organized by the Ministry of Labour and the Municipality's Office for Women Affairs.
- In **Coban, Alta Verapaz**, a charity race organized by the Association Ak'Yuum to collect funds for a shelter that assists survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), was supported with sports equipment.
- In **Morales, Izabal**, UNHCR's partner FUNDAECO coordinated an activity for 30 asylum-seekers and members of the host community, to raise awareness on gender equality and the different forms of GBV. In **Puerto Barrios, Izabal**, jointly with the Municipality a get-together of 20 female protection agents trained in 2021 was organized to discuss topics such as women's empowerment and leadership.
- In **San Benito, Peten**, an activity on the rights of women organized by the Public Prosecutor's Office for 32 prosecutors, was supported by UNHCR. At the Migrant and Refugee Resource Centre (MRC or CAPMiR in Spanish) in **Santa Elena, Peten**, an information day on the specific needs of women on the move took place where hygiene kits and information material was distributed to women who are part of the mixed movements.
- In **Esquipulas, Chiquimula**, a commemoration event with the participation of 60 refugee and host community women was held. Activities included awareness raising on their rights and the presentation of entrepreneurship initiatives managed by young women.
- In **San Marcos and Quetzaltenango**, UNHCR's partner Tierra Nueva together with Doctors Without Borders carried out workshops on sexual and reproductive health for 30 women.



UNHCR's financial requirements for the Guatemala operation in 2022 (as of 5 May 2022)

Funded: 5.1 million USD (12%)

Unfunded: 37.4 million USD (88%)

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support of:



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