

Guatemala

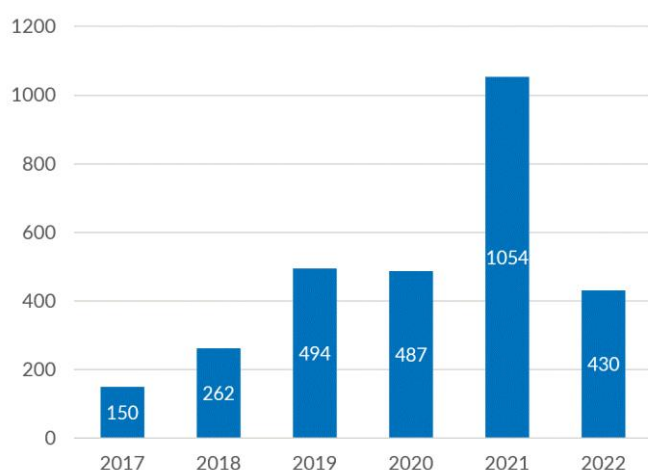
May 2022

In 2022, 430 new asylum applications have been filed (**80 of them in the month of May**), representing an **increase of 10%** in comparison to the same period in 2021. In total, there are currently **634 refugees and 1,410 asylum-seekers** residing in Guatemala.

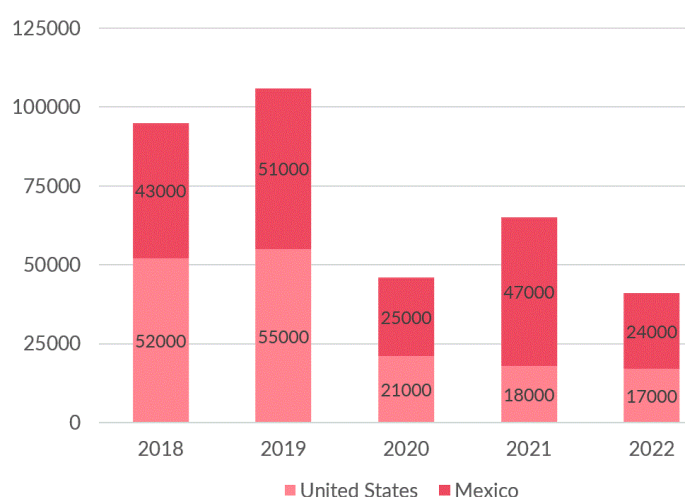
In the first five months of 2022, UNHCR's partners have provided information, legal counselling and humanitarian assistance to **more than 33,500 individuals of the mixed movements** across the country. In comparison, in the whole year of 2021, 53,300 persons were assisted.

The **number of Guatemalan returnees more than doubled** from 19,000 in the first five months of 2021 to 41,000 in the same period in 2022. In addition, **tens of thousands of Guatemalans remain at risk** in socially vulnerable communities.

Trend of asylum claims in Guatemala (2017 - 2022)



Trend of Guatemalans returned from Mexico and the United States



CLOWNS WITHOUT BORDERS ENTERTAIN GUATEMALAN AND REFUGEE CHILDREN

UNHCR believes in the importance of building strong human relationships based on empathy and trust. Therefore, the UN Refugee Agency paired up with the organization Clowns Without Borders to bring joy to Guatemalan and refugee kids in a tour full of happiness and laughs throughout the country.

In collaboration with local authorities and UNHCR's support, Clowns Without Borders performed shows for more than 600 host community and refugee children in the departments of Chiquimula, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Izabal, Jutiapa and Peten. Through these performances, messages were conveyed of peaceful coexistence, local integration and the importance of psychosocial rehabilitation.

- For more information and pictures have a look at the tweet of UNHCR's Representative in Guatemala



Clowns Without Borders providing a show to Guatemalan and refugee children in different parts of Guatemala. ©UNHCR/2022

Working with Partners

- UNHCR Guatemala has **partnership agreements with 13 non-governmental organizations**: Action Against Hunger, Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación, Guatemalan Red Cross, Ixqik, La Alianza, Lambda, Misioneros de San Carlos Scalabrinianos, Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, Pastoral de Movilidad Humana, Refugio de la Niñez, Save the Children, Tierra Nueva, World Vision. 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.
- Within the framework of the United Nations System, **UNHCR co-leads the Protection Cluster with UN Women** through which the UN agencies in the country coordinate their protection activities. In addition, UNHCR is a **member of the UN Specialized Working Group on Migration (GEMIG)** that supports the Guatemalan authorities in developing policies on migration and forced displacement. UNHCR also acts as a technical advisor in the **Multisectoral Cash Working Group** that consists of more than 30 organizations and State institutions.

Main Activities

Response to Basic Needs

- In 2022, **UNHCR provided over 600,000 USD in multipurpose cash grants and cash for livelihoods to 2,057 persons** (974 asylum-seekers and refugees, 994 Guatemalans in need of international protection who are part of the PTA program and 89 other Guatemalans at risk including returnees). The cash grants enable recipients to fulfil their basic needs, reduce protection risks and improve their livelihood opportunities.
- For UNHCR and its partners providing **mental health and psychosocial support** to refugees and Guatemalans at risk is an integral part of its work – particularly amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with its accompanying spikes in isolation, loss of livelihoods and uncertainty about the future.
 - **For more information READ** the web story of a Venezuelan and a Nicaraguan refugee who fled to Guatemala where they are being supported to alleviate and overcome their mental health illnesses
- The updated webpage help.unhcr.org that contains information on the refugee status determination process in Guatemala, services provided by UNHCR and its partners, maps, contact details as well as a feedback system for asylum-seekers and refugees, was visited by 3,900 persons in the first quarter of 2022 (an increase of 35% in comparison to the previous three months). 57% of the users were women.

Governance, Prevention and Protection

- In Izabal, UNHCR through its partner Refugio de la Niñez **strengthened the Human Rights Ombudsperson's Office's** ability to prevent and respond to human rights violations against refugees, migrants and host community members by providing the Office with a new mobile unit called "Proculancha". The boat, which adapts the "Procumóvil" model to sea, river and lake contexts, was inaugurated with the presence of the Human Rights Ombudsman, Jordán Rodas Andrade. The boat allows the Office to access remote communities located in the municipalities of El Estor, Livingston and Puerto Barrios.



Inauguration of the new "Proculancha" in Izabal by the Human Rights Ombudsman, UNHCR and its partner Refugio de la Niñez. ©Human Rights Ombudsperson's Office/2022

- In 2022, UNHCR has trained over 1,300 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 Guatemala City, a **refresher workshop was provided to the National Technical Team of the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS)**.
 - The Social Welfare Secretariat (SBS) with UNHCR's support is implementing a **Temporary Foster Families Program** in Alta Verapaz, Chiquimula, Huehuetenango, Peten and San Marcos for unaccompanied children on the move in need of international protection. SBS and UNHCR have been promoting the program to identify potential families interested in joining the program. To date, 63 workshops have been carried out with the participation of 1,300 persons, corresponding to 985 families.
 - In Huehuetenango UNHCR provided a new fully equipped all-terrain "UNIVET" mobile unit to the Office against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (SVET). At the same time, the standard UNIVET which had previously been operating in Huehuetenango, was launched in San Marcos. There are now seven "UNIVETs" that inform members of the host communities and people on the move about the services available for survivors of sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons. In 2022, over 60,000 persons have been informed and 1,250 government officials have been trained on the prevention of and response to gender-based violence in the seven departments of Alta Verapaz, Chiquimula, Guatemala, Huehuetenango, Peten, Quetzaltenango and San Marcos.
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- Launch of the "UNIVET" mobile unit in the department of San Marcos by the Governor, SVET's Anti-Exploitation Director and UNHCR's Head of Field Unit in Tecun Uman. ©UNHCR/Fredy Racancoj/2022
- To strengthen the child protection services provided by the Attorney General's Office to unaccompanied and separated children in need of international protection and Guatemalan children at risk, UNHCR donated 10 laptops to the institution's regional offices in the country.
 - With the objective to enhance binational coordination between UNHCR's Field Unit in Peten and UNHCR's National Office in Belmopan, Belize, a meeting was held to discuss the current protection situation along the Guatemalan – Belizean border, amid the ongoing amnesty exercise by the Government of Belize, which seeks to offer permanent residence status to migrants and asylum-seekers who meet certain criteria.

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

- In San Benito, Peten, UNHCR implemented a Quick Impact Project to strengthen the services provided by the Municipal Directorate for Women, Municipal Youth Office and the Crime Prevention Unit of the Police. The project seeks to support the actions of these institutions in the areas of education, peaceful coexistence and income generation for refugee women and youth, as well as for people of the host community. As part of the project, implemented in framework of UNHCR's City of Solidarity initiative (of which the Municipality of San Benito is part of), furniture, IT equipment and 600 kits for the elaboration of hygiene products were delivered.
- In Chiquimula and Jutiapa, UNHCR works with 81 community leaders of four different communities to contribute to their empowerment, strengthen already existing community protection networks and promote the prevention of gender-based violence.

Durable Solutions

- In 2022, UNHCR has supported 1,082 asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees with protection needs and other Guatemalans at risk with livelihood and economic inclusion activities. Of these, 115 persons have been

provided with CBI for livelihoods (seed capital to establish small businesses or carry out business internships) and 967 individuals have been trained to improve their employability or entrepreneurship skills. In addition, 345 asylum-seekers and refugees have been supported to obtain work permits.

○ **For more information READ** the newest web story on a Salvadoran refugee who set up her own business and supports Guatemalan women in achieving financial stability

- In Santo Tomas de Castilla, Izabal, a **Virtual Resource Centre at INTECAP** (one of the leading institutions in providing vocational trainings in Guatemala) was set up by UNHCR through its partner Refugio de la Niñez. The new Centre was equipped with 24 computers and internet access and facilitates refugees and members of the host communities access to INTECAP's online training programs. In the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed and due to UNHCR's advocacy efforts, INTECAP also confirmed that technical obstacles have been removed to grant refugees access to its programs.



■ In the framework of the **International Earth Day**, on 22 April, UNHCR Guatemala in collaboration with its partner FUNDAECO published a video on its Green Corps livelihood initiative that supports asylum-seekers and refugees to integrate locally while protecting the environment. Another added value is the potential healing power the initiative has for survivors of violence by working in contact with flora and fauna. **Click on the video on the left** to learn more about UNHCR's innovative Green Corps project.

■ With the objective to promote access to the labour market for refugees and asylum-seekers, **UNHCR supported three Job and Entrepreneurship Fairs in Guatemala City, Huehuetenango and Izabal**, organized by the Ministry of Labour in collaboration with the respective Municipalities.

- In Santa Elena, Peten, on Earth Day, refugees and members of the host community participated in a **"Clean-Up Day"** organized by FUNDAECO and the Municipality of Flores. In addition, at the CAPMiR at El Cinchado border with Honduras, **awareness raising activities on environmental protection** were carried out for 67 children.
- In Flores, Peten, a **Sports Day for 60 Guatemalan and refugee students was organized** by the Municipal Youth Secretariat to strengthen local integration and peaceful coexistence.

Guate's Wrap-up

Our impact last month

Would you like to receive the latest information on UNHCR's ongoing activities in Guatemala? [Click here to subscribe to the monthly newsletter.](#)

UNHCR's financial requirements for the Guatemala operation in 2022 (as of 7 June 2022)

Funded: 6.6 million USD (15%)

Unfunded: 35.9 million USD (85%)

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



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