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UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR - One year into Nicaragua crisis, more than 60,000 forced to flee their country

This is a summary of what was said by UNHCR spokesperson Liz Throssell – to whom quoted text may be attributed – at today's press briefing at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

16	April	2019		Español
https://www.acnur.org/noticias/briefing/2019/4/5cb5eb1c4/nicaragua-un-ano-despues-del-inicio-de-la-crisis-mas-de-60000-personas.html				Français
https://www.unhcr.org/fr/news/briefing/2019/4/5cb5a66ea/nicaragua-an-apres-debut-crise-60-000-personnes-d-fuir-pays.html				عربي
https://www.unhcr.org/ar/news/briefing/2019/4/5cb5c62d4.html				

A year into Nicaragua's political and social crisis, an estimated 62,000 people have fled to neighbouring countries, with the vast majority – some 55,500 – seeking refuge in Costa Rica.

Many, in what is overwhelmingly a refugee flow, have resorted to irregular crossings to avoid detection, often walking for hours through difficult terrain, exposed to heat, humidity and the risk of malaria. Initially, it was mainly adults crossing the border, but families, including young children, are also now fleeing.

According to the Costa Rican Migration Authority, as of March 2019, some 29,500 Nicaraguans had formally filed asylum applications. But with reception capacity overstretched, 26,000 others are waiting to have their claims formalized.

Among those seeking asylum are students, former public officials, opposition figures, journalists, doctors, human rights defenders and farmers. A significant number arrive in need of health care, psychological support, shelter and food assistance.

Both the UN Human Rights Office and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) have expressed concern over the deterioration of the situation in Nicaragua since April 2018, reporting serious human rights violations against those who participated in anti-government protests and those who helped them.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, commends Costa Rica's efforts to enable people to enter its territory and access its asylum procedure. These efforts are all the more commendable given the significant pressure on the asylum system and local communities.

UNHCR is supporting the Government to enhance reception conditions and reduce the time needed to process new arrivals. We have provided 30 additional case adjudicators, as well as premises, training and equipment, to increase the capacity of the Government’s Refugee Unit, both in the capital, San José, and at our office in Upala, near the border, which was opened in December 2018. UNHCR has also supported the deployment of partner staff to the border and in San José to facilitate a comprehensive response in coordination with State authorities.

Primary education is available to all children in Costa Rica, regardless of their legal situation, and we have helped primary schools along the northern border that have received Nicaraguan pupils, providing desks, chairs and school supplies.

Without a political solution to the crisis in Nicaragua, people are likely to continue to flee. Funds are urgently needed to strengthen UNHCR’s humanitarian response to allow asylum-seekers in dire need of assistance to access aid, instead of having to resort to informal jobs to pay for rents and food at rates beyond their reach.

UNHCR is developing, together with other UN partners, an inter-agency humanitarian response plan to support the Government in addressing the immediate needs of increasingly vulnerable asylum-seekers and host communities.

ecoi.net summary:

An estimated 62,000 people from Nicaragua have fled to neighbouring countries due to the political and social crisis; some 55,500 of them have sought refuge in Costa Rica



Countries:

Costa Rica, Nicaragua

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[UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees \(/en/source/11525.html\)](#)

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