

IDPs in Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and Mexico

December 2023

Colombia. Ana is an Afro-descendant woman who was displaced, and found an opportunity in Bello Oriente, Medellín, to reconnect with nature and share the knowledge she acquired before being forced to flee her home. © UNHCR/Catalina Betancur Sánchez

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

By mid-2023, the Americas hosted 22.1 million people protected/assisted by UNHCR, surpassing the initial projections of 20.6 million stated in the [2023 Global Appeal](#). The magnitude and complexity of forced displacement has grown in the Americas over the last decade, as the root causes remain unaddressed and are aggravated by organized crime, violence and insecurity, lingering results of the pandemic and climate and disaster events.

Over 7,622,000 people remained internally displaced in Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, and Mexico by mid-2023. While scaling-up efforts to prevent the drivers of internal displacement and working with communities of origin and

host communities, UNHCR prioritizes its work to strengthen national responses, including to help ensure that internally displaced people (IDPs) access public services, legal support, and humanitarian assistance. UNHCR promotes a whole of society approach and the adoption of relevant legal and public policy frameworks on internal displacement and strengthens partnerships for collecting and analysing reliable data on issues of internal displacement. This is achieved through increased collaboration with the United Nations System, governments, civil society, community-based organizations and displaced populations, and other stakeholders.



COLOMBIA

By mid-2023, 6.9 million internally displaced people were reported in Colombia, according to [UNHCR's Mid-Year Trends Report](#), and are considered by the Government as eligible for assistance and reparation. More than 1 million of new IDPs were registered since the 2016 Peace Agreement, with a yearly average of 150,000 new IDPs per year. In 2022 the situation deteriorated further and more than 280,000 IDPs registered. Seizing the vacuum created by the demobilization of the FARC-EP, dissidents from the peace process and other non-State armed groups are actively competing for territorial and social dominance.

The departments on the Pacific Coast concentrate most emergencies due to confinement and forced displacement. In 2023, the regions most affected by large internal displacements are the departments of Nariño, Valle del Cauca, Chocó, Cauca, Norte de Santander, Antioquia, Bolívar, and Arauca. Half of IDPs find themselves in the department of Nariño. Indigenous populations and Afro-Colombians account for 75 per cent of people affected by large-group internal displacements, and for more than 85 per cent of the communities affected by confinement. Among those affected are children, LGBTIQ+ people, elderly people, and single parents with children. While IDPs are fleeing from violence within the country, those confined by non-State armed groups have limited mobility within their territory, leaving them exposed to protection risks and challenges in securing their subsistence.

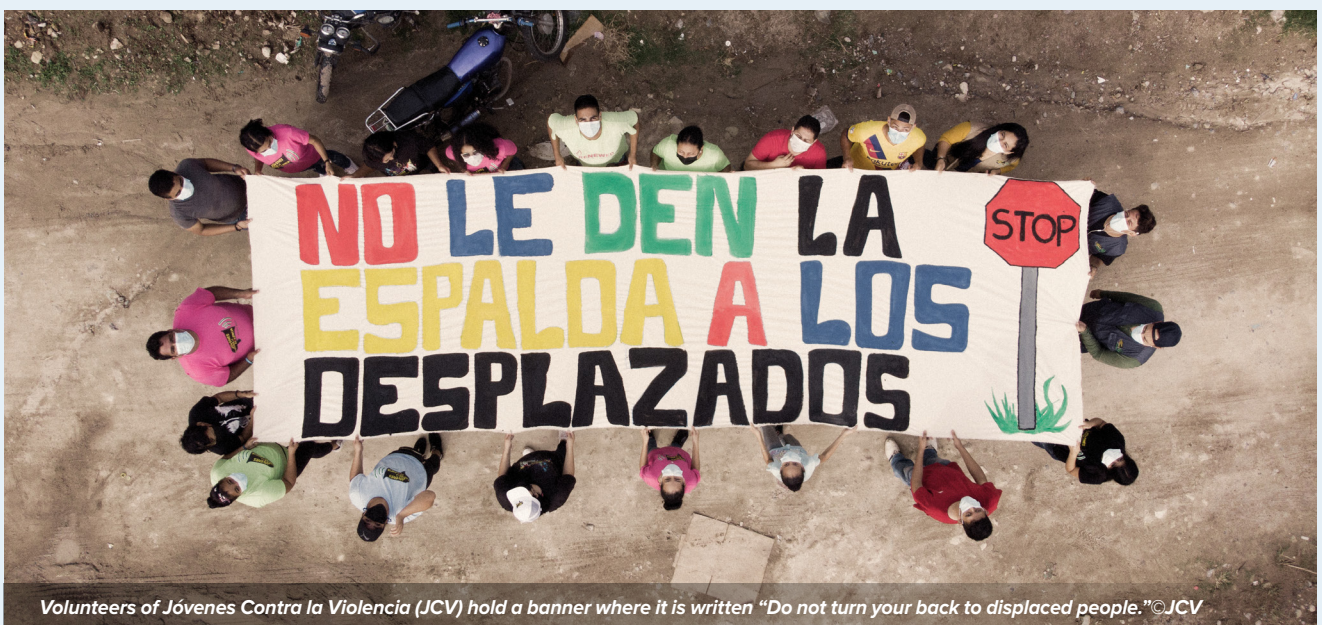
UNHCR is strengthening its emergency humanitarian response, advocating for durable solutions, and reinforcing the prevention and communities' self-protection mechanisms. In doing so, UNHCR complements the State in the protection of conflict-affected communities and supports returns, relocations, and legalizations of urban settlement, thereby contributing to the realization of solutions and the advancement of peace efforts.

HONDURAS

The [causes of internal displacement](#) in Honduras persist. Levels of violence and other forced displacement triggers in the country reached such a point in 2022 that led the Government to decree a State of Emergency. As causes persist, the population is facing heightened risks of forced displacement. More than [247,000 people](#) have been internally displaced in Honduras because of violence between 2004 and 2018, and this number is expected to be much higher. The causes that drive displacement in Honduras are: (i) social and [territorial control](#) by criminal or non-State armed groups; (ii) extortion; (iii) forced recruitment, use and association; (iv) the 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 and disasters.

In December 2022, the National Congress adopted a [new legislation](#) to address internal displacement, which also includes in its protection framework those [Honduran returnees](#) with international protection needs. Honduras' new law, in addition to creating an institutional framework through the National Response System to Forced Displacement, establishes prevention mechanisms to address challenges such as the forced recruitment and exploitation of children and youth by criminal organizations.

UNHCR supports the design of mechanisms to regulate the law and its implementation as quickly as possible. The work is carried out together with national institutions of human rights and the ombudsperson such as the Secretariat of Human



Volunteers of Jóvenes Contra la Violencia (JCV) hold a banner where it is written "Do not turn your back to displaced people." ©JCV

Rights (SEDH) and the National Commission for Human Rights (CONADEH). Furthermore, UNHCR works with the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Protection of Internally Displaced People (CIPPDV), the state body in charge of promoting the adoption of prevention, protection, and durable solutions measures, to follow up after the enforcement of the law and for the design of national response mechanisms in accordance with the principles of protection. Currently, UNHCR is accompanying multiple rounds of consultations with forcibly displaced people formulated to ensure their participation rights in the development process of public policies that affect them, as established in article 34 of the Law.

UNHCR is also working the National Institute of Statistics, as part of a project with JDC-World Bank, to include internal displacement questions in its Annual Household Survey to update data available on internal displacement and improve response capacity, basing it on evidence. Furthermore, UNHCR trained personnel of the Property Institute on the use of drones and donated material to strengthen its capacity to identify and prevent dispossession, usurpation and destruction of housing, land, and property. This process also included technical support to update and improve the national registry. All the efforts hereby mentioned are advancements towards the pledges made by Honduras under the [Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework](#) (MIRPS), which are also present in the Global Refugee Forum.

Additionally, UNHCR works with communities in the Central District, North, Northwest, and Southeast regions of Honduras to create protection mechanisms to prevent and respond to forced displacement, generate community activities, and reclaim urban spaces to promote safe spaces and peaceful coexistence. UNHCR also partners with various actors to raise awareness on the risks of forced displacement and set up prevention measures within communities that experience high levels of violence.

EL SALVADOR

UNHCR actively contributes to enhancing the protection of internally displaced people, people at risk of displacement, refugees, asylum-seekers, and returnees with protection needs in El Salvador. According to the profiling exercise published in 2018 by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, between 2006 and 2016, an estimated 71,500 people were internally displaced. As identified, the majority on internally displaced people belong to socio-economically vulnerable young families.

In the year 2023, the National Office for Statistic and Censuses, with the support of UNHCR, is spearheading a nationwide household survey to comprehensively update displacement statistics. This collaborative effort aims to provide a current and accurate understanding of the displacement situation in the country.

El Salvador approved the Special Law for the Care and Integral Protection of Victims of Violence in Conditions of Forced Displacement in 2020. In line with the legal framework, UNHCR works towards the enjoyment of rights of internally displaced people through the strengthening of the national regulations and public policies. UNHCR provides guidance and technical support to institutions and key stakeholders for the inclusion of internally displaced people in government programmes and initiatives.

The prevailing situation in the country has created avenues for progressing solutions to internal displacement caused by violence. Employing a comprehensive whole-of-society approach, UNHCR collaborates closely with communities, the Government, NGOs, the United Nations System, civil society, academia, faith-based organizations, the media, the private sector, and international development actors. Through these diverse partnerships, UNHCR strives to address the complex challenges of displacement with a view toward sustainable solutions and positive societal impact to boost solutions to forced displacement as a contribution to national development and to the consolidation of peace.



HAITI

The UN Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) estimates that 5.2 million Haitians need humanitarian assistance in 2023, including 1.9 million with protection needs. Gang violence has become increasingly pervasive in Port-au-Prince, where gangs now control 80 per cent of the metropolitan area, among other parts of the country, and is the main driver of internal displacement. According to the HRP, in the first half of 2023, nearly 155,000 individuals were internally displaced in the West, Centre and Artibonite Departments due to armed violence.

UNHCR currently has a limited presence in Haiti that focuses on reinforcing protection systems working with national authorities and local NGOs to respond to the needs of IDPs and build local protection capacity.

MEXICO

UNHCR supports the Mexican authorities and civil society to consolidate the legal and institutional framework on IDPs while also promoting protection and durable solutions at national level. UNHCR also seeks to strengthen its cooperation with authorities in data analysis, profiling exercises such as the one conducted in Chihuahua with more than 20 actors, and advocates for the inclusion of an IDP perspective in the government statistical efforts.

Since 2019, UNHCR has been actively engaged in five primary areas, comprising technical assistance for the legal and public policy framework; information management; capacity building; coordination with UN agencies and international stakeholders promoting operational responses.

Specifically, UNHCR has extended its technical assistance to the three branches of government concerning IDPs. Since 2020, the organization has played a crucial role in reviewing and formulating comments to different legislative proposals, as the draft General Law, that having gained approval from the Parliament, currently awaits deliberation in the Senate. At the local level, UNHCR has provided comments to the legislation and other public policy instruments in Chiapas, Chihuahua, Estado de Mexico, Michoacan, Oaxaca, Sinaloa and Baja California. UNHCR's involvement underscores its commitment to supporting and shaping the legal and policy framework to enhance the protection and well-being of displaced populations.

At the request of the Supreme Court of Justice, UNHCR and ICRC coordinated the Manual on Internal Displacement as an important tool to assist in the adjudication of cases before the Federal Judiciary. It has already been used in decisions protecting the rights of IDPs. With the MOI's Migration Policy, Registration and Identity of Persons Unit (UPMRIP), a Legal and Public Policy Review was developed to help design a response at the federal level while a specific law being approved. UNHCR is developing a guide to design registration and referral pathways for IDPs at the national level with UPMRIP.

UNHCR is actively fostering collaboration with the states of Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, Chiapas and Sinaloa, among others, to strengthen and harmonize their IDP policies. The objective is to enhance and harmonize their policies regarding internally displaced people and to operationalize instruments that establish effective pathways for response. The aim is to fortify the states' abilities to address the unique challenges posed by internal displacement, ensuring a more streamlined and effective approach to supporting affected populations. UNHCR is also assisting local authorities to respond to massive displacement events and working with communities affected to develop durable solutions plans. This includes communities affected by the adverse effects of climate change.

To build local capacity in Mexico, with government authorities and civil society, UNHCR, in coordination with other UN agencies (OHCHR, IOM), ICRC, JIPS and DRC, is implementing a course on internal displacing, that has already had three editions, of which 166 participants from various sectors of government, civil society, IDPs, academia and the private sector have been admitted so far.

TIMELY FUNDING

As of 31 October, UNHCR in the Americas is 41% funded, having required in 2023 **\$827.4 million** to respond to the needs of millions of refugees and others seeking safety and dignified lives, including IDP populations. UNHCR's humanitarian and longer-term response in the Americas is made possible thanks to the **generous support** of major donors who have contributed unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations, and to donors who have generously contributed directly to UNHCR operations in the Americas.

THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS IN 2023 (as of 31 October 2023)

Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Luxembourg | Norway | Netherlands | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe (CAF) | CERF | UN Children Fund | UN Joint Programmes | UN Peacebuilding Fund | UN Programme On HIV/AIDS | UNESCO |

AND TO OUR PRIVATE DONORS:

International Olympic Committee | LATAM Airlines Group SA | Latter-day Saints Charities | Private donors Argentina | Private donors Australia | Private donors Brazil | Private donors Germany | Private donors Italy | Private donors Japan | Private donors Luxembourg | Private donors Mexico | Private Republic of Korea | Private donors Spain | Private donors Sweden | Private donors USA | Private donors United Kingdom | Swedish Postcode Lottery

CONTACTS

CARLA CALVO, Senior Donor Relations Officer, Regional Bureau Americas
calvoc@unhcr.org

SALVADOR SANTIESTEBAN, Reporting Officer, Regional Bureau Americas
santiest@unhcr.org

Links Americas: **GLOBAL FOCUS** · **DATA PORTAL** · **TWITTER: @ACNURAMERICAS**