



## HIGHLIGHTS

**11,512**

New asylum applications submitted by Guatemalan citizens in North and Central America countries in 2016 (Jan-Jun). **48%** increase in comparison with same period 2015.

**94,942**

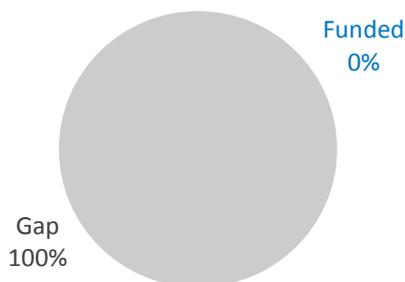
Guatemalans returned from United States and Mexico in 2016. **16%** were children and adolescents.

**20,800**

People with protection needs in transit through Guatemala, out of which the National Protection Network assisted **2,990** persons in 2016

## Funding – Regional Office Panama

**USD 13.9 million** requested



- UNHCR's Regional Office in Panama is implementing the Regional Protection and Solutions Strategy for the NTCA situation in close collaboration with partners.
- The Regional Office financially oversees UNHCR's operations in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, as well protection activities in Cuba, and Nicaragua.
- UNHCR plans to significantly scale up its operational capacity in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in order to better respond to complex protection and programmatic needs.

## UNHCR Presence

### Staff:

7 national staff and 5 international staff

### Offices:

- 1 National Office located in Guatemala City
- 1 Field Office in Peten

### UNHCR Guatemala: Presence as of November 2016



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

- Guatemala is a country of origin, transit, return and asylum to refugees, migrants and victims of trafficking. Given the multi-causality of displacement in the NTCA, and the increasing number of people who transit through Guatemala to seek protection, ensuring the safe and dignified transit of persons with international protection needs is a key priority to the operation.
- UNHCR works with 5 implementing partners from civil society and faith-based organizations, which include NGOs specialized in child protection and the LGBTI population. These partners conform Guatemala's National Protection Network, which operates through 5 shelters placed in strategic points along the route used by persons with specific protection needs in Guatemala.
- UNHCR works closely with the Government of Guatemala to strengthen the asylum system and the protection and assistance of persons in transit or returned with specific protection needs. In 2016, a Letter of Understanding was signed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and established the framework for further cooperation in capacity building to authorities and the implementation of innovative protection mechanisms. UNHCR provides technical assistance and training to authorities working on migration and involved in the identification of persons with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children.
- Under the United Nations Country Team, UNHCR leads two protection groups. The UN Specialized Group on Migration, led jointly with UNICEF, coordinates strategies and activities on two main axes: 1) humanitarian assistance to migrants, refugees, persons in transit and returnees; and 2) legal framework. The UN Sub-Group on Displaced Persons is also led by UNHCR, jointly with OHCHR, and is currently assessing the multiple causes of displacement in Guatemala through a series of studies with partner organizations.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

- During 2016, UNHCR made significant progress in strengthening the Protection Network to ensure the safe and dignified transit of thousands of persons with international protection needs who travel to and through Guatemala. Through its new Field Office in Petén and with the support of the National Protection Network, UNHCR and partners monitor border regions and identify, register and refer cases of persons with international protection needs that transit through the country.
- The roll out of innovative data collection tools (Kobo) and development of SOPs to consolidate referral mechanisms within the Network's focal points led to improvements in the identification, assistance and analysis of profiles and trends.
- UNHCR is setting up the basis for an expanded Safe Spaces Network to improve accessibility and quality of standardized services provided by different organizations, while ensuring the identification and referral of those with protection needs.
- UNHCR is also monitoring the asylum system in Guatemala. In 2016, UNHCR provided training and technical support to eligibility officers and members of the National Commission for Refugees, and attended all meetings in which asylum claims were reviewed. Since 2015, Guatemala granted protection to 137 refugees, mostly from El Salvador and Honduras. By the end of 2016, Guatemala hosted a refugee population of 300 persons of nine different nationalities, mainly from El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Refugees and asylum seekers receive assistance, including legal orientation and counselling, access to individual documentation and support towards local integration solutions.
- UNHCR supported the establishment of the first national shelter for UAC asylum-seekers and other children with specific protection needs, and is supporting its partner Refugio de la Ninez to develop, jointly with the Government, the first national network of foster families for UAC.
- UNHCR commissioned a study to the Rafael Landívar University to assess the different causes and dynamics of displacement within Guatemala. The results are expected to be finalized in the second quarter of 2017 and will be the basis for discussing possible frameworks for the prevention, protection and assistance of victims.
- More than 3,900 children in need of protection were supported by the ECHO-funded Children of Peace project, through scholarships, child friendly spaces at shelters and peace education.
- A total of 5 shelters and other transit spaces in strategic border points are being supported by UNHCR, most of which include child friendly spaces and are managed by staff trained on protection approaches sensitive to age, gender and diversity.
- With support from DFID and other donors, UNHCR was able to distribute approximately 5,000 NFIs to children and adults with specific protection needs identified in shelters and reception centers.

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