

Refugee Status Determination

EL SALVADOR

June 2021

Key Figures

COVID-19

74,141 confirmed cases
2,279 deaths by 8 June 2021
2,147,224 people vaccinated

As of December 2020, **52 refugees** were **recognized** in El Salvador mainly from Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, Syria, and Iraq; **56 asylum applications** were pending resolution, mostly from Venezuela, Nicaragua and Honduras.

FUNDING

40% of UNHCR's funding needs received by 1 June 2021



Situational Highlights

- El Salvador is a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. The refugee definition found in the 1951 Convention and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration are incorporated in “The Law for Determining Refugee Status”. This Law recognizes refugees’ right to enjoy a broad range of social and cultural rights recognized in international treaties, the Constitution, and national law. The Law includes a specific reference on the protection against refoulement for refugees.
- At the end of 2020, 56 people had asylum applications pending resolution while 52 refugees were registered. UNHCR continuously supports the efforts of both the Salvadoran government and civil society organizations to provide protection to people who are forced to leave their countries and find refuge in El Salvador.
- UNHCR promotes the institutional strengthening process for the Refugee Status Determination National Commission (CODER) in El Salvador, through the support of experts in international protection, the distribution of information on the rights of forcibly displaced persons and the renewal of the equipment used to receive, analyze and respond to asylum applications in the country.
- CODER is the commission of the Government of El Salvador in charge of recognizing the need for international protection of people who flee their countries due to persecution, violence and conflict. El Salvador received 17 new asylum applications (24 persons) in 2021. UNHCR provides assistance to people seeking asylum in El Salvador through its partner Cáritas. UNHCR and CODER collaborate on capacity building, provision of humanitarian assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees and dissemination at points of entry of information on the right to seek asylum and how to access asylum procedures.

UNHCR’s Response Protection

- The strengthening of CODER implies an increase of its operational capacity through the support of specialized personnel. Collaboration within the framework of a joint project between UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) directly assists CODER in the analysis and processing of asylum applications.

- With the aim to improve access to and the quality of status determination procedures, UNHCR in coordination with the General Directorate for Migration and Foreigners (DGME), the CODER, and partners Cáritas and IRC, carried out five visits in February and March to land borders Las Chinamas, La Hachadura, El Poy, El Amatillo and the international airport. UNHCR and CODER held briefing sessions with migration officials, border police and representatives of the Ministry of Health to introduce concepts of international protection, protection principles for refugees, along with explanations of the asylum procedures in El Salvador. Printed materials were also part of an information campaign on access to asylum and rights of asylum-seekers.



- At the request of the CODER, UNHCR reviewed the draft “Law for the Granting of International Protection” and provided comments based on standards which will be jointly studied and analyzed with the CODER in 2021. The draft Law on the Granting of International Protection outlines procedures to determine admission to asylum procedures and eligibility for refugee status. The draft law also includes procedures to determine statelessness.

Humanitarian Assistance

- UNHCR provides humanitarian assistance and legal counselling to asylum-seekers and refugees through partner Cáritas.
- In 2020, UNHCR provided CODER with 12 computers and laptops, desks, printers and filing cabinets to facilitate the effective processing of asylum applications. The renewal of the equipment will increase the quality of service provided to asylum-seekers and contribute to enhance the management of information.
- With the aim to provide technical assistance to the CODER (Sub commission), UNHCR participates as an observer in admissibility hearings. UNHCR provides feedback and recommendations to the members of the Sub commission (conformed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security) regarding standards on interview techniques. Furthermore, UNHCR is supporting the participation of four CODER officials in the 11th Virtual Course on International Refugee Law of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo, Italy.

Government and Inter-agency Coordination

- The MIRPS Support Platform organized on 8-9 April 2021 the first roundtable sessions on asylum systems with the MIRPS countries and UNHCR support. The Government of El Salvador participated in the topics related to the identification of international protection needs, case management and biometric registration, as well as the use of differentiated modalities in the treatment of cases. The Government expressed interest to continue strengthening the national legal framework for refugees and the technical capacity of the CODER.
- UNHCR Americas published a [press-release](#) on UNHCR promoting institutional strengthening process for the CODER in El Salvador, through the support of experts in international protection, the distribution of information on the rights of forcibly displaced people, and the renewal of the equipment used to receive, analyze and respond to asylum applications in the country.

Funding

UNHCR is appealing for USD 21.6 million to provide comprehensive solutions to forcibly displaced persons in El Salvador. The best way to support UNHCR’s appeal is through unearmarked contributions. Such flexible funding at global level will be key in allowing a timely response to the evolving needs wherever required.

UNHCR is thankful to the donors who provide funds to El Salvador:

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