

# North of Central America Situation

June 2020

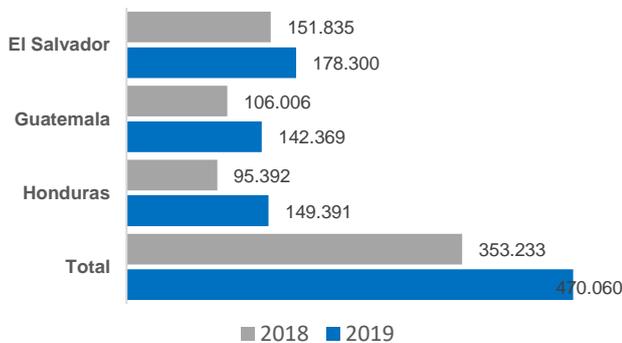
Around **470,000** refugees and asylum-seekers from the North of Central America in the world and **318,590** internally displaced people in Honduras and El Salvador.

NCA has seen an exponential increase of COVID-19 cases and deaths since the start of the pandemic, while two tropical storms affected more than 500,000 persons, including seven communities affected by forced displacement and violence.

UNHCR and partners continue to assist persons of concern and support governments in the overall response, including through CBI, technical assistance, equipment, medical and biosafety supplies.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### By country of origin

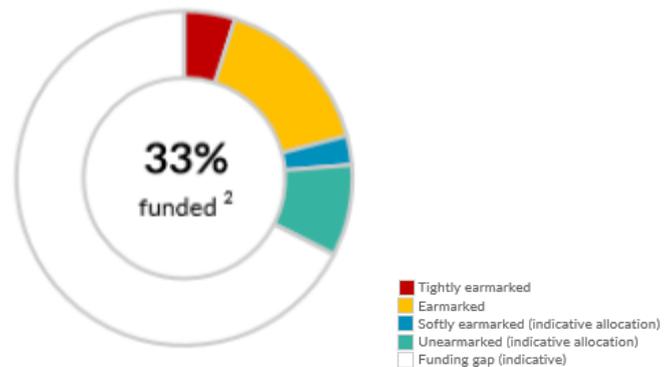


Source: Based on data provided by governments to UNHCR as of Dec-19. Figures for 2019 are partial and preliminary and can be subject to changes

## FUNDING (AS OF 1 JULY 2020)

**US\$ 113.6 M**

requested for the NCA situation<sup>1</sup>



- The financial requirements of the North of Central America Situation include requirements in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.
- \$76,669,297 gap in funding represents 67% of the financial requirements.

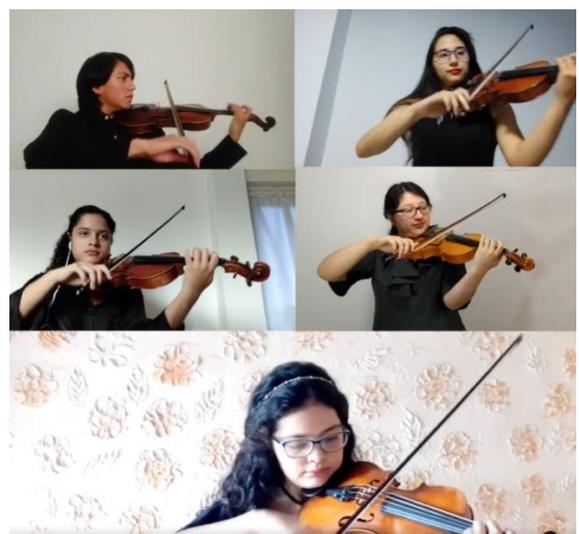
## CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic and the hurricane season have worsened many challenges in NCA, particularly for people in need of protection. Across the NCA, gang violence, gender-based violence and human rights abuses continue unabated, while restrictions imposed to mitigate the spread of the pandemic have limited possibilities to seek protection from persecution for those in need. Due to the increase in infections, vulnerability among displaced populations has worsened since the majority of them are part of the informal economy.

More widely, the World Bank predicts a shrink by 3.6% of the economy this year in Central America, while ECLAC foresees that 20 million and 7 million people will fall into poverty and extreme poverty, respectively. Remittances to the region, a vital lifeline for many, are expected to fall by 20% over the course of the year. All these will inevitably compound 'push' factors and impact the ability of countries to ensure the social and economic inclusion of forcibly displaced people once restrictions are lifted.

UNHCR continues to provide support to governments and people of concern in collaboration with partners to mitigate the negative effects of COVID-19. With the expansion of cash-based interventions, the UN Refugee Agency is addressing the most pressing immediate needs, while maintaining protection and advocacy interventions at all levels.

UNHCR continues to provide secretariat assistance the MIRPS, which provides a strong state led approach to manage forced displacement, and furthers actions to leverage support for MIRPS. This includes providing the necessary technical assistance to enhance actions through the Support Platform, currently led by Spain.



In commemoration of World Refugee Day, UNHCR and partners in the region continue carrying out different virtual activities with the participation of refugees, asylum seekers IDPs, and government entities. In Honduras, UNHCR coordinated a rap-orchestra presentation. ©UNHCR

## UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works with over 70 partners in the region and supports states to implement their national plans under the Regional Comprehensive Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). The MIRPS is a pioneering application of the Global Compact on Refugees in Central America and Mexico. [See more information.](#)

### Main Activities

Alongside governments, partner organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, development actors and UN Agencies, UNHCR undertakes protection and solutions activities, including:



#### Advocacy and Coordination

The RedLac Group issued a [snapshot report](#) on extortion as a factor prompting people to flee within and across borders in the NCA and Mexico. The MIRPS Presidency is implementing its priorities on seeking bilateral cooperation on asylum capacity and creating an expert group on internal displacement.



#### Safe reception and admission

In Costa Rica, UNHCR delivered a workshop to enhance the capacity of local police in the identification of persons with international protection needs. In Honduras, hygiene kits and biosecurity equipment were provided to the National Migration Institute to support the 255 people in transit stranded in Tegucigalpa and Choluteca. In San Pedro Sula, UNHCR established a referral system of deportees with protection needs with the Permanent Committee of Contingencies (COPECO) and other authorities. In Guatemala, in Atescatempa, Asuncion Mita and Jalpatagua municipalities, local authorities and health centers support the identification of people in need of international protection and liaise with UNHCR for any potential asylum claims.



#### Providing safe spaces and shelter

In Guatemala, 96 RHUs, 200 foldable beds, 200 mattresses and 100 packs of diapers were donated to CONRED (Civil Protection) in support of the government response to COVID-19. In Panama, authorities received the 48 RHUs, which were transferred to Darien Province, and were provided training on their correct assembly. In Mexico, PPE items continue to be distributed to 89 shelters including masks, medical gowns, feet protection, surgical caps and pairs of gloves. In El Salvador, 20 NGOs participated in a session on the Regional Safe Spaces Network to implement harmonized case management for children and SGBV survivors. In Costa Rica, asylum seekers have access to quarantine station near the border of Peñas Blancas to observe the 14-day isolation period, where they receive food assistance, and hygiene and cleaning kits.



#### Community-based protection interventions

In Belize, the Community Based Protection Network is being expanded to the south of the country to assist asylum seekers in their claims at the Refugees Department. In Honduras, a psychosocial support programme was launched in collaboration with the Municipal Community Art Psychologist Team to be implemented in two high-risk urban areas of the Rivera Hernández Sector in San Pedro Sula. In El Salvador, UNHCR provided 2,412 hygiene kits to municipalities to support communities affected by both COVID-19 and impact of the storms.



#### Durable solutions and livelihoods

In Belize, asylum seekers taking English as a Second Language resumed classes in June, while a homework assistance programme is benefiting 120 students. In Costa Rica, 210 refugees and asylum seekers received prepaid cards for cash assistance purposes; virtual training to increase employability of refugees and asylum seekers continued in June with 314 persons of concern completing core training on soft skills, legal empowerment and financial education, and 163 completing short courses or vocational training. In Mexico, of 88 refugees enrolled in Carlos Slim Foundation and ICET Nuevo León online vocational training courses during COVID-19, 25 refugees received their certificate during the second week of June.



#### Campaigns against xenophobia

In Honduras, a joint UNHCR-IOM public information campaign was released at the national level. The initiative “[Incluir Es Protegermos](#)” is a call for non-discrimination and non-stigmatization of migrants, refugees, deportees and forcibly displaced persons during the COVID-19 emergency. In Panama, as part of the campaign [Somos Lo Mismo](#), UNHCR and the metro system handed out over 400 masks (packed with non-discrimination messages) at two major stations (Albrook and San Miguelito). In Costa Rica the platform [www.TodaAcciónCuenta.org](#) was launched in the framework of World Refugee Day to mobilize action in support of refugee and Costa Rican owned small businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19.



#### Working with partners

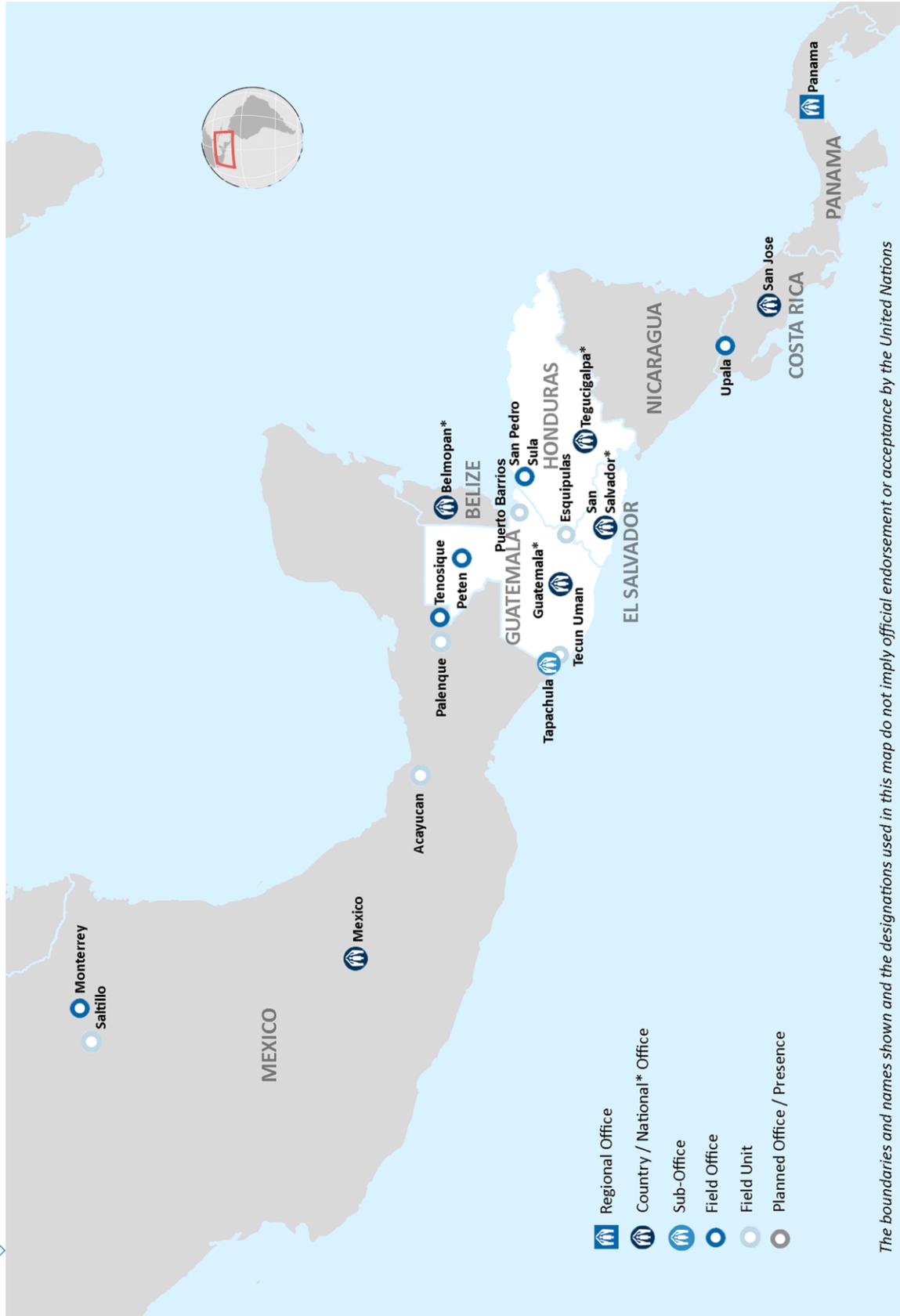
In Panama, the 2,400 resolutions processed during teleworking are being notified through partner NRC. An office space is available for NRC inside ONPAR facilities to provide counselling. In Costa Rica, Fundacion Mujer continues to support small businesses affected by COVID-19 with financial and technical assistance to adapt and thrive in the current context.

**Thanks to donors in 2020:** UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have provided generous and timely support to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation globally, and countries in Central America, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked funding: Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America

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**North of Central America Situation (NCA): UNHCR Presence, 2020**



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