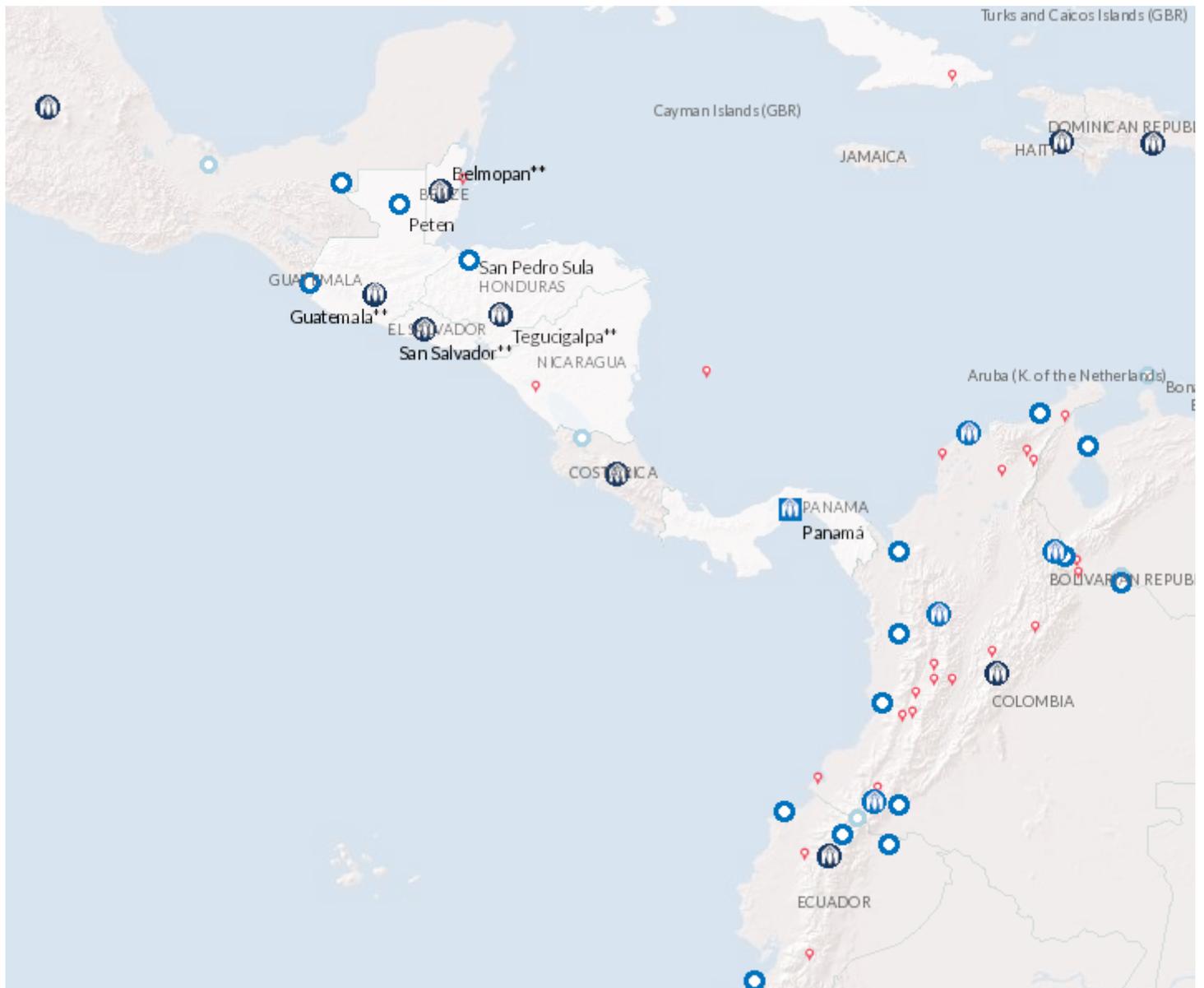


2019 Planning summary

14/2/2019

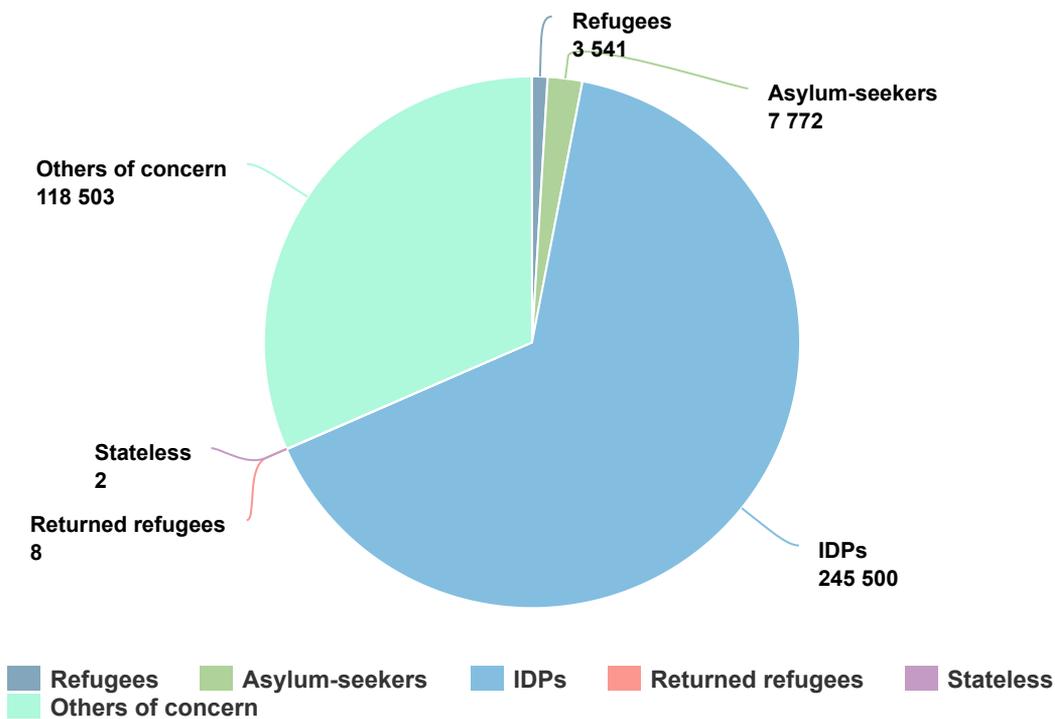
Operation: Panama Regional Office



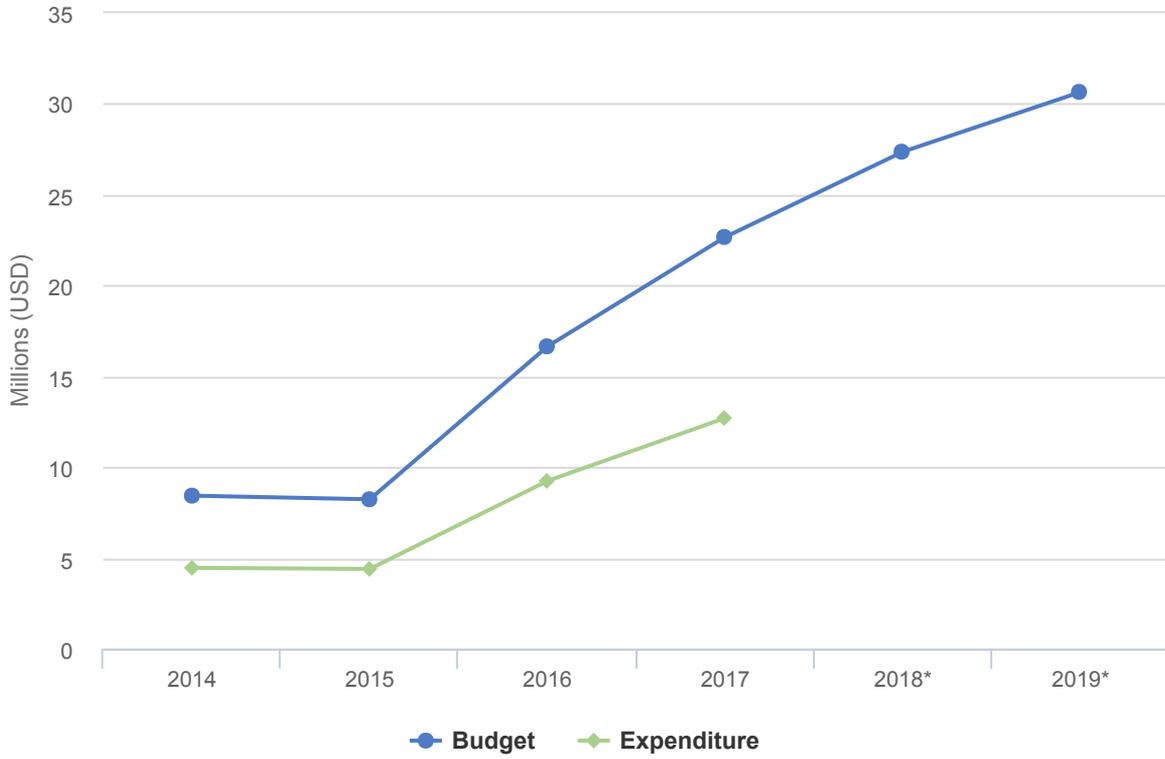
People of Concern

INCREASE IN
59% 2017

2017	375,326
2016	235,707
2015	214,190



Budgets and Expenditure for Panama Regional Office



Operational Environment

UNHCR's Regional Office in Panama ensures the overall coordination of the Regional Protection and Solutions Strategy for the North of Central America (NCA) situation and supports the implementation of the regional application of the CRRF. UNHCR now has fully-fledged national offices in Belize, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala and maintains a small presence in Cuba for protection activities. The Regional Office in Panama also has oversight over offices in Costa Rica and covers also Nicaragua where it has no operational presence.

The growing trend of forced displacement from and within El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras continues unabated, with almost 310,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from the NCA registered by mid-2018, an increase of 54 per cent compared to the same period last year and a tenfold increase over the past five years.

While displacement in and from the NCA is multifaceted and has multiple causes, violence and insecurity continues to be a major factor compelling people to move. Traditionally, people from the NCA countries seek international protection in Canada and the United States of America. However, in recent years, UNHCR has witnessed a significant increase in the number of asylum-seekers from the NCA in Belize, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama. Guatemala is also increasingly being perceived by people of concern as a country of asylum, not only of transit. The recent crises in Venezuela and Nicaragua have put additional pressure on national asylum systems in the hosting countries.

In 2019, UNHCR will continue to reinforce its protection responses in the region, strengthening asylum systems, reception conditions and immediate humanitarian assistance through cash-based interventions. At the same time, livelihood initiatives will be stepped up in asylum countries to support local integration and peaceful coexistence with host communities.

Data on internal displacement due to violence in the NCA remains fragmented, although El Salvador has recently released a study on the topic and Honduras is in the process of updating the 2014 profiling exercise.

In 2019, the CRRF approach will be rolled out further in the region, with a view to forge new alliances with regional development actors and the private-sector. The six participating States (Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama) will be supported to comply with their commitment to further consolidate existing regional collaboration by strengthening responsibility-sharing and enhancing protection of asylum-seekers, refugees and IDPs.

Key Priorities

In 2019, UNHCR will focus on:

- Building strong asylum systems in destination countries;
- Strengthening mechanisms that can respond to urgent protection risks faced by IDPs and other people affected by violence in countries of origin;
- Identifying and protecting deportees with protection needs;
- Finding durable solutions for people of concern, including local integration in destination countries, resettlement through the Protection Transfer Arrangement (PTA) programme, or cooperation with development actors to address root causes that will allow for voluntary return;
- Ensuring safe transit along the main migration routes by establishing protection networks and providing humanitarian assistance, with a special focus on the most vulnerable (women, children, LGBTI people).

Funding shortfalls for the regional protection response could result in greater displacement, increased risks for people of concern who have to flee, and who might be forced to take more insecure routes and become subject of exploitation, SGBV, trafficking, and forced recruitment.

