

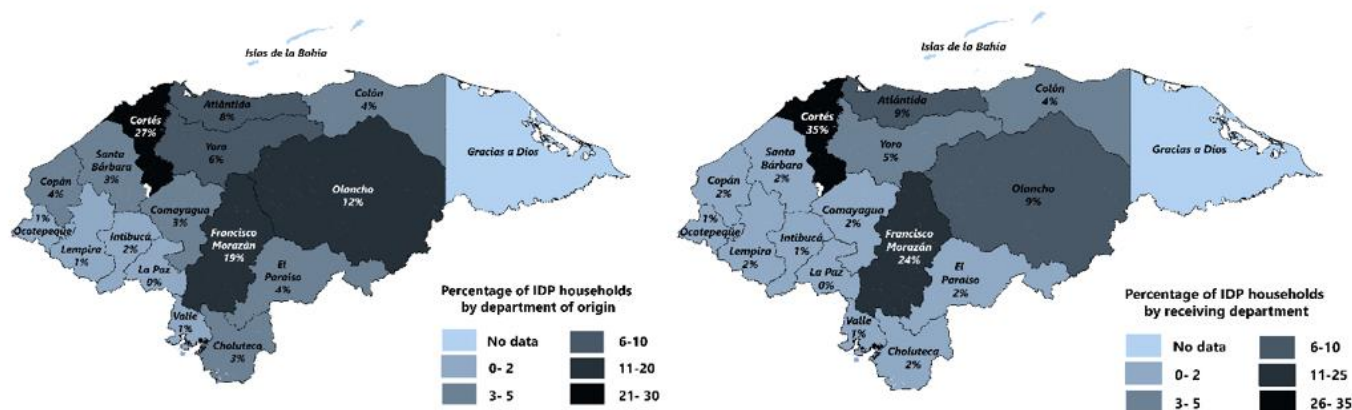
UNHCR's Response to Internal Displacement in Honduras

247,090 internally displaced people between 2004 and 2018 according to a profiling exercise led by the Government in 2018, leaving an estimated of **2.7 per cent of the Honduran population displaced**.

UNHCR established a **protection network** with implementing partners NRC, Doctors of the World and Caritas, and over 10 civil society organizations to identify, refer, and assist **3,075 IDPs in all departments of Honduras in 2021**.

80 per cent of funding needs received by 7 December 2021. UNHCR is appealing for **USD 26.7 million** to support vulnerable people in need of protection in Honduras.

Patterns of displacement and geographical distribution



Source: Internal displacement in Honduras 2004 – 2018

Operational Context

Honduras is characterized by a situation of protracted internal displacement caused mainly by organized crime. Despite the Government's official recognition of forced displacement in 2013, the persisting protection needs within high-risk communities and the weak governance capacity remain as the main challenges for an adequate response to human rights violations and widespread violence, mainly in urban settings.

Community consultations carried out by UNHCR in April 2021 revealed a perceived increase of violent incidents and a sense of hopelessness and distrust amongst community members in several departments in Honduras. Changes in the violence dynamics due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions have shown a reconfiguration of organized criminal groups and increase of extortion, forced recruitment and land and property dispossession. Communities in Cortés Department stressed major loss of income, assets, and community spaces due to hurricanes Eta/Iota, while elders and community leaders expressed unusual fear over crossing "[invisible borders](#)".

The Government of Honduras officially recognized the phenomenon of internal displacement by establishing the Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Displaced by Violence (CIPPDV), comprising several government agencies and civil society organizations, and led by the Human Rights Secretariat. In 2016, the CIPPDV began developing the draft bill on prevention, assistance and protection of persons internally displaced by violence, a collaborative process that also included two consultations with IDPs on the contents of the legislation. The bill was officially introduced to the National Congress in October 2020 and is currently pending for review and approval.

An Internal Displacement Profiling Study led by the Government in 2018 found that at least 247,090 people (2.7 per cent of the population of Honduras) were affected by internal displacement between 2014 and 2018; this implies that, in approximately 58,500 households, at least one of its members was internally displaced due to violence. Internal displacement is geographically concentrated in heavily populated areas with higher levels of economic development, as well as areas most affected by violence. Eighty-two per cent of displacements occurred in the departments of Cortés, Francisco Morazán, Olancho, Atlántida, the hardest hit by [climate change-related emergencies](#).



A group of young activists advocating for the adoption of the IDP bill.

UNHCR/Nicolo Filippo Rosso

UNHCR Response

UNHCR works directly and with partners and grassroots organizations in 24 high-risk urban and rural communities mainly in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and the North-western region to preserve and increase humanitarian space, monitor, and address protection needs, as well as foster social cohesion. The Office has also engaged with 41 leadership structures from 45 communities nationwide -including youth, adult, women, religious, LGBTI, people with disabilities and African descent community leaders- in remote community-based protection monitoring during the pandemic and Eta/Iota hurricanes.

Community-Based Protection initiatives in high-risk communities

- The Mayor of San Pedro Sula and UNHCR Representative signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 16 August 2021 to continue pursuing a strategic alliance for the strengthening of a **comprehensive local response for the prevention of internal forced displacement**, the protection of IDPs and/or persons at risk of displacement, and the development of durable solutions.
- Through low-cost, short-term and replicable urbanistic actions developed by joint alliances of local government and communities' structures, **Tactical Urbanism** offers an innovative solution to address root causes of forced displacement by recuperating and strengthening safe spaces in high-risk communities, enhancing communities' participation mechanisms and organizational processes. Sixteen community leaders, eight partners officials, and six municipal officials from San Pedro Sula are developing three pilot tactical urbanism quick impact interventions to be implemented by the end of 2021.
- Despite limited access in some communities due to increased violence and COVID-19, **1,400 adolescents participated in risk prevention programmes** focused on community-based mechanisms to promote protective environments and safe spaces. UNHCR has updated and/or carried out 11 community-based risks assessments conducted nationwide to strengthen the communities' capacity to identify risks and formulate solutions.
- UNHCR together with partner Save the Children trained 80 community leaders and 170 youths in skills for community protection and youth protection in eight **high-risk communities in Tegucigalpa**. To identify self-protection measures, UNHCR also trained 30 from the LGBTIQ community and 170 members from organizations working with people with disabilities. Both organizations provided **6,200 children** from schools located in high-risk areas with psycho-educational kits. They also improved six schools, a sports facility, and a community centre by means of rapid high impact projects (QIPs).
- UNHCR in San Pedro Sula jointly developed with the Municipality and partner Children International the formulation of an **Art and Culture for Social Inclusion Municipal Policy** to strengthen the comprehensive municipal response for the prevention of internal forced displacement, the protection of IDPs and/or persons at risk of displacement. UNHCR provided technical assistance to conduct four participatory assessments with 87 key stakeholders. In Tegucigalpa, UNHCR trained 120 youths in hip hop; breaking dance; rap, graffiti and photography workshops.
- The Office supports local engagement with the implementation of a **Community Art Programme**, reaching over 400 children and youth and benefitted indirectly to their families and communities. This initiative is a risk mitigation community-based intervention led by San Pedro Sula Municipality, implemented by UNHCR and partner Children International, that seeks to mitigate youth-related risks and promote the use of cultural safe spaces for social inclusion, dialogue and participation.
- UNHCR works with the Casa Visitación medical dispensary in **Choloma** to improve community-based protection mechanisms by strengthening basic health services and **empowering dispensary volunteers' teams' capacity** to identify, attend, and refer IDPs. During 2020, Casa Visitación was one of the few local medical dispensaries that maintained active services.

Supporting IDPs with secure tenure rights and/or property rights to housing and/or land

UNHCR continues supporting the institutional capacity of the **Property Institute**, the Government authority in charge of protecting abandoned or grabbed house land and property (HLP), to consolidate the protection of HLP strategy. Honduras' abandoned land and property registration was recognized as a [GP20 best practice](#). Following the Special Rapporteur's on the human rights of IDPs recommendation on creating a confidential system for the registration of abandoned homes and property as well as the Government's commitment to establish such a register by 2020, UNHCR supported the Government in building national capacities which resulted in:



- Building partnerships with relevant stakeholders such as the CIPPDV; Human Rights Secretariat; Property Institute; and Cadastral Committee to carry out policy review and training.
- Advancing the design of a protection route of abandoned land and property with the Property Institute and the Human Rights Secretariat, to include the protection of HLP in the latter's IDP assistance mechanism.
- Fostering an international exchange between the Cadastral Committee and Colombia's Land Restitution Unit to inform the development of Honduras' own legal and institutional frameworks.
- Identifying almost 100 abandoned land and property in urban areas facing high levels of displacement risk with the collaboration of community leaders partnered with Caritas and Centro de Desarrollo Humano. This was followed by a cross-checking against the Property Institute's own registry systems, documenting the identified properties with a registration form and introducing them in the institutional registration module designed by the Property Institute.
- Including the participation of persons at risk of displacement during the pilot exercise of the registration form, thus contributing to rebuilding the population's trust in public institutions and strengthening the overall protection environment.

Protection and assistance to individuals at high risk of persecution

UNHCR established an assistance network to provide protection services to IDPs and those at risk of displacement. UNHCR provided direct assistance to IDPs and those at risk of displacement through an assistance and protection partnership network integrated by implementing partners Norwegian Refugee Council, Doctors of the World and Caritas International, as well as over 10 civil society organizations through which the identification, referral, and assistance of IDPs is carried out throughout the country. The comprehensive response includes emergency shelter; humanitarian assistance; internal relocation; medical and psychosocial care; information; and legal guidance.

The Office addresses the limited State and other stakeholders' capacities to respond to those facing acute protection risks (internally displaced, and those at risk of displacement) through its individual case management strategy, offering protection alternatives that include internal relocation and protection transfer arrangements to resettlement countries. Cash assistance is another lifesaving tool to facilitate an internally fleeing alternative. Some 3,075 persons have been assisted with internal relocation, that includes transitional shelter at the initial stage and cash assistance for shelter and basic needs. The Office enhances the provision of legal counselling; psychosocial support; health; mental health; and other specific needs, as part of a complementary protection response to those referred to protection alternatives.

Institutional strengthening

Children and youth continue to be disproportionately impacted by violence not only due the heightened risk of forced recruitment and use but as victims of violent crimes. During 2021, 499 children lost their lives violently.

UNHCR works with the National Directorate of Children, Adolescence and Families (DINAF) in strengthening the Child Protection System for IDP children, children at risk and deportee children with protection risks. UNHCR supported the creation of an IDP Unit at the DINAF and has enhanced response capacity in border areas with staff and a mobile office.

As levels of inequality, gender-related risks and vulnerabilities increased, as of November 2021, 306 cases femicides were reported. UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Institute for Women (INAM) to address and respond to the differentiated impact of violence and displacement on women.

UNHCR supports the National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH) response to forced displacement. In 2016, UNHCR supported the creation of the Unit of Internal Forced Displacement (UDFI) and since then has strengthened UDFI's capacities to generate data on displacement trends and risk profiles to provide updated information to relevant actors involved in the design of

public policies and protection mechanisms. Since 2016, CONADEH has registered 4,711 cases of displacement or risk of displacement that have affected 11,015 persons nationwide. The National Commissioner issues annual and special reports to highlight protection concerns.

Partnerships

UNHCR teamed up with youth networks to call on the urgency to adopt the IDP protection bill.

The Office partnered with the Human Development Centre (CDH) and youth networks to design a campaign to advocate for the adoption of the IDP protection bill. Throughout the process, 45 young women and men (including LGBTIQ+ and indigenous people) of high-risk areas in Francisco Morazán, La Paz and Choluteca strengthened their knowledge, communication, and advocacy skills in the campaign “With one voice”. The participants organized regional campaign committees; carried out trainings, working sessions, regional forums with lawmakers, key local actors and influencers; and created a play on a case of property dispossession. The participants plan to carry out their advocacy activities until the bill is finally adopted. The draft bill for the prevention, assistance and protection of IDPs was formally introduced to the National Congress in October 2020, thanks to the joint advocacy efforts led by community-based organization [Jóvenes Contra la Violencia](#). The bill was designed in a participatory manner through consultations carried out with IDPs, relevant institutions, civil society organizations and humanitarian actors. Its contents are in line with the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement and include the recommendations put forth by the Special Rapporteur in his 2016 mission report. The bill will contribute to the establishment of a national IDP protection system, a public policy for the prevention of triggers of displacement, and protection measures for dispossessed land and property.



UNHCR sponsored the first national institutional mechanism to protect IDPs. The Office partnered with the Directorate for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons of Honduras’ Human Rights Secretariat (SEDH) to address immediate and ongoing protection needs of 116 IDPs and to enhance opportunities for durable solutions. UNHCR provided USD 16,335 and technical support to the pilot the Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Mechanism (MAHE) to build a robust response system within government entities. The programme comprises a comprehensive package of services delivered to IDPs that includes internal relocation; humanitarian assistance; emergency shelter; information and legal assistance; and medical and psychological care. It aims to establish the first unified IDP registration system, as well as an interinstitutional protection route, to facilitate IDPs access to education, health, livelihoods, and other social protection programmes.

MIRPS

Honduras adhered to the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) in 2017 and will assume the Pro

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