

# Honduras Country Strategy Evaluation

## UNHCR Evaluation Office



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

## Evaluation Brief

**Purpose:** contribute to learning on the strategic relevance and effectiveness of UNHCR's interventions, assess the extent to which capacities, structures and processes are fit-for-purpose, and document lessons and recommendations to improve our work for and with forcibly displaced and stateless persons and host communities in Honduras.

**Evaluation type:** Country Strategy Evaluation

**Methods:** Documentary review, key informant interviews and group discussions, and observation

**Implemented:** 2023, by AVICENA Health & Social Projects

**Scope:** Country specific 2019-2022

**Commissioned by:** Evaluation Office

## Evaluation Context

Displacement in Honduras reflects the complex, multi-faceted nature of social, economic and climactic conditions in the region. Violence and extreme weather events are the main drivers of internal displacement. Threats, homicides, and mobility restrictions provoke internal movement (last assessed at 58,550 households<sup>1</sup>), and exposure to droughts, hurricanes and flooding cause further displacement. Transit through Honduras has been on the rise, with a total of 188,858 people entering irregularly in 2022, up from 17,590 the previous year<sup>2</sup>. The protection cluster attributes a direct relationship between the increase in people in transit in Honduras and the surge in migrants crossing the Darién jungle (Panama) in 2023<sup>3</sup>. Honduras is also a country of origin for many refugees and migrants. In the period of this evaluation, an estimated 60,000 people from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala migrated to the US in the form of "caravans"<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, Honduras has a small but growing number of asylum applications, mostly from Nicaragua.

<sup>1</sup> [Estudio de Caracterización del desplazamiento interno por violencia en Honduras 2004-2018](#), (pp.34), CIPPDV (2019).

<sup>2</sup> [National Institute of Migration](#), figures as of 28 April 2023.

UNHCR faces the challenge of responding to the immediate needs of these groups, building local capacity for sustained protection, and ensuring the visibility of all those affected within a context of recurrent crises.

## Key Findings

### **UNHCR's leadership increases the joint capacity to promote systemic and policy change.**

UNHCR has reinforced protection as a priority area on the institutional agenda at the central and local levels, positioning internal displacement and contributing to significant legal and public policy reforms, notably approval of the Law for the Prevention, Care and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (2023). UNHCR's advocacy, programmatic focus and partner/key institution engagement are decisive factors in providing a response to the protection needs of people on the move. Challenges persist in increasing capacity to implement the Law and pending reforms related to international protection and asylum.

### **UNHCR's work highlights the importance of a holistic view towards displacement.**

UNHCR has been adept at shifting its focus to internal displacement in an environment of generalized violence, and has adapted to a volatile political and humanitarian context. The evaluation shows that UNHCR has ensured a greater presence in key areas, made protection needs visible and positioned itself to protect and assist people in transit, at the border and returnees, through institutional accompaniment and interventions with partners. UNHCR-led first response mechanisms lend promise for scale-up and replicability. Actions have not always allowed for

<sup>3</sup> [Mixed movements in Honduras: Inflows of people in mixed movements across the South-Eastern Border](#), Protection Cluster South-Eastern Border Local Team, 1 January to 22 March 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Humanitarian Needs Overview: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, OCHA (2021).

adequate identification of vulnerabilities, however, and the evaluation identifies challenges in assisting people in transit and returnees. Inter-agency cooperation in mixed movements could not be sufficiently developed, leaving UNHCR in a “grey zone”.

**UNHCR’s expansion increases community-based protection and empowers communities. There is progress in other areas of protection and integration, but these may lack a comprehensive approach.**

UNHCR has been effective at strengthening protection by having a presence in areas at high risk of displacement and at border points, and at increasing community participation. Context-appropriate strategies facilitate community engagement and ownership, increasing the potential for sustainability and replication. UNHCR has not had a comprehensive and specific GBV strategy but has made progress in preventing and assisting some cases, both through its work on community protection, empowerment of women and girls and by institutional capacity building. Full implementation of an AGD approach has been challenging. Likewise for socio-economic integration, interventions are incipient and require stable, medium-term planning to increase effectiveness.

**Rapid growth and frequent change reflect ability to adapt, but may lead to imbalances and pressure. Similarly, short-term funding and the limited diversity of donors may increase risk.**

UNHCR’s growth in Honduras has enabled the operation to gain coverage and effectiveness. Growth has taken place in a short period, however, and increased the risk of imbalance and internal dysfunction. Costs have increased significantly, but the annual funding model hinders stability and progress in interventions that require a medium-term horizon.



## Recommended Actions

The evaluation recommends the following actions:

### At the Strategic level:

1. Continue to support the GoH to develop and implement normative frameworks and public services for protection in three areas: 1) implementation of the Law for the Prevention, Care and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, 2) promotion of a favourable institutional environment for protection, 3) strengthen reform of the national asylum and protection system.
2. Integrate a flexible approach in the next Multi-Year Plan to adjust UNHCR's response to the variability of regional mixed movements, national and regional policy changes and exposure to climate-related events.

### At the Operational level:

3. Contribute to development of a national protection mechanism with capacities at the local levels to analyse, communicate and respond to risks and the needs of victims of violence.
4. Focus UNHCR's role in a context of mixed movements in three key areas: 1) identifying and managing international protection cases, 2) strengthening the returnee case management system, 3) expanding assistance to vulnerable populations in transit and informal border points.
5. Update the community-based protection strategy based on previous experiences, defining engagement and disengagement criteria for targeted areas, precise objectives and links to livelihood interventions that foster social cohesion.
6. Strengthen prevention, mitigation and response to gender-based violence and increase application of an AGD approach.
7. Link the livelihoods strategy with state services and protection mechanisms for victims of violence.

### At the Organisational level:

8. Strengthen mobile monitoring and response mechanisms adapted to protection needs in border areas and with diverse population movements.
9. Diversify funding mechanisms and sources with the goal of reducing dependence on one donor.

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