

Mexico Fact Sheet

February 2024



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

Introduction

Mexico is a transit and destination country for vulnerable refugees and migrants, especially from Central America, Venezuela, and Cuba. The influx of asylum seekers and transit migrants has created challenges for civil society organizations and first-responders.

Thousands of refugees and other forcibly displaced people make their way to Mexico's northern border from Latin America and beyond to seek asylum in the United States. This increase in migration has been driven by the effects of violence, armed conflict, climate change, and gender-based violence in the region. Migratory policies such as the Migration Protection Protocols (MPP), border closures, expulsions under Title 42, and the CBP One application are also altering migratory flows at the border.

Refugees, migrants, and internally displaced people living in Mexico's northern border cities, particularly women, girls, and LGBTQ+ refugees, face extremely high levels of violence, including kidnapping, human trafficking, and exploitation. Resources are limited, and humanitarian organizations are overwhelmed. Throughout the country, displaced people face challenges in accessing essential services, programs, and mechanisms to exercise their rights.

HIAS Programs and Focus

HIAS supports refugees to rebuild their lives and reunite with family members in safety and freedom. HIAS' response in Mexico helps refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants to obtain legal protection by pursuing their claims for asylum in the U.S. or by applying for legal protection in Mexico.

Legal Protection

Without legal status, refugees are forced to live on the margins of society without access to healthcare, education, dignified work, or safe shelter. HIAS offers Know Your Rights workshops and individual legal consultations to equip asylum seekers with information on accessing their legal rights in both the U.S. and Mexico. HIAS legal staff assesses all cases to provide direct legal representation in Mexico and, when appropriate, refer cases to partners on the U.S. side of the border for representation. HIAS partners with U.S.-based attorneys through our robust pro bono network to represent people seeking protection.



HIAS psychologists Laura Bautista and Paula García lead a workshop on mental health and psychological support for emergencies at the “Una Luz en el Camino” shelter in Tapachula, Mexico, on September 13, 2023. (Seila Montes for HIAS)



GBV Response

Our GBV programming helps forcibly displaced women, girls, and LGBTQ+ people access their rights.



CB-MHPSS Support

HIAS Mexico offers community-based mental health and psychosocial support through group and individual sessions.



Legal Protection

HIAS Mexico offers Know Your Rights workshops and individual legal consultations.

Community-Based Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (CB-MHPSS)

Refugees and forcibly displaced people face adversity and extreme stressors, including loss of loved ones, violence, and disruptions to daily life. HIAS' mental health programs train key community members to recognize acute emotional distress in children and adults, and to respond with empathy and respect. HIAS Mexico is currently one of the only service providers in Northern Mexico offering community-based protection interventions and mental health and psychosocial support. Staff provide specialized mental health counseling — both remote and in-person — and referrals for psychiatric care. HIAS Mexico also distributes hygiene kits to lessen the stress and anxiety many feel without access to basic hygiene items.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Response

HIAS' GBV services are driven by the needs and the voices of survivors. Our GBV programming helps forcibly displaced women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals pursue their potential, free from violence and gender-based discrimination. Asylum seekers and other vulnerable populations in Mexico have identified GBV as a prevalent form of abuse they have faced in their home country, on migration routes, or while waiting in Mexico to receive legal protection. HIAS offers survivor-centered services to help reduce the risk of GBV, including GBV case management, psychosocial support, and health services. In addition, capacity building is a key component of successful GBV programming in emergencies. HIAS recruits, trains, and deploys Mobile Protection Response teams with GBV response and MHPSS capacity. HIAS also organizes trainings for legal staff and partners on a survivor-centered approach to referrals, and trains shelter staff and service providers on referral mechanisms.

HIAS in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

HIAS advocates for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, other displaced populations, and local host communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. As part of a comprehensive regional response to meet the urgent needs of these populations, HIAS co-leads and participates in several coordination platforms and partnerships with a focus on protection, socioeconomic integration, MHPSS, food security, GBV, and CVA.

HIAS currently has programs in 11 countries in LAC (Aruba, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela) and partners with a wide range of government agencies, UN entities (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA, UNV/VVT), the private sector (Airbnb, TATA Consultancy Services, and Manpower), and other NGOs and consortia, including Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council and World Vision.

Contact

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