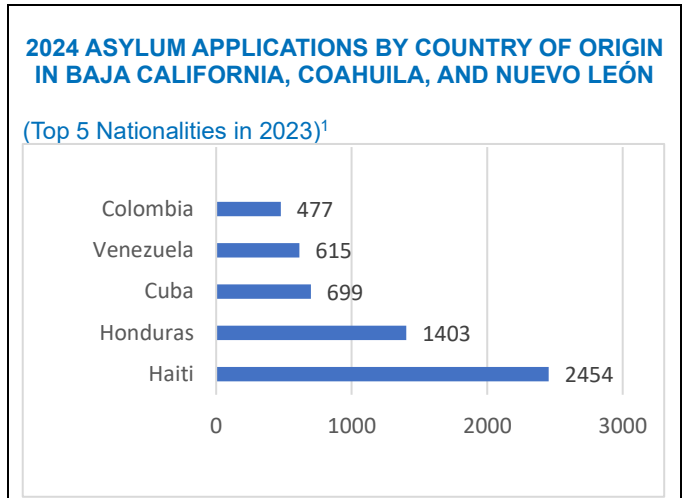


# Northern Mexico

The states along Mexico’s northern border have historically played a key role in hosting refugees and asylum-seekers on their way to the United States. However, recent years have also demonstrated a steady growth in the number of people considering Mexico as a country of destination. Many people seek opportunities in cities, such as Monterrey (Nuevo León), Saltillo (Coahuila), Tijuana (Baja California) and Torreón (Coahuila). Mexico’s northern states host tens of thousands of people in mixed movements and, in addition, a rising number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).



## UNHCR Presence in Northern Mexico



### UNHCR PARTNERS

- ALPAZ
- Asylum Access
- Casa Monarca
- CDMSALT
- COMAR
- DHIA
- FSM
- HIAS
- Ibero University
- IRC
- REDODEM
- STC
- Vía Educación

<sup>1</sup> Asylum claims in COMAR offices in Baja California, Coahuila de Zaragoza, Tijuana and Nuevo Leon in January and February 2024.

## Operational Context

In 2023, due to long waiting times for CBP One appointments and the increase of forced internal displacement, the northern states of Mexico received thousands of people who stayed for long periods of time in overstretched shelters and informal settlements. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reported 2.54 million encounters at the border, of which more than 2 million were between ports of entry, indicating irregular crossings. According to UNHCR's monitoring, an average of more than 25,000 persons per day were hosted in some 70 shelters along the northern border. The main nationalities were Mexicans, Hondurans, Guatemalans, Salvadorians, Nicaraguans, Cubans, Haitians, and Venezuelans.

UNHCR's main strategic priorities along the northern border are:

- **Protection counselling on asylum in both Mexico and the United States**
- **Prevention and response to Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)**
- **Child Protection**
- **Strengthening of reception conditions, including support to shelters**

## Key Priorities

### Protection counselling and information provision on asylum procedures

Through "Know your rights" workshops, UNHCR and partners provide information on the asylum procedures in Mexico and in the U.S. Information materials in different languages, including in creole, are distributed in shelters, community centers and governmental institutions. In addition to that, UNHCR and partner staff offer in-person protection counselling. Innovative communication channels, such as *Confía en El Jaguar* (Trust the Jaguar), an interactive Facebook page, also cater to the information needs.



**6,545 persons**

received protection counselling and workshops in 2023



**+35,000 queries**

were answered through the Help Desk team in 2023

### Support to shelters along the border

UNHCR supports the improvement of reception conditions in shelters, including through the provision of technical and material assistance (e.g. infrastructure projects or the donation of non-food items, such as fridges, computers, beds, mattresses, pillows, diapers, and dignity kits).



In 2023, almost **70 shelters** were supported with more than **550,000** core relief items.



**Seven infrastructure projects**

were implemented in **shelters** and **public spaces** in 2023.

**Legal assistance**

UNHCR and partners provide legal orientation to persons forced to flee staying in cities along the northern border, as well as in Saltillo and Monterrey. A robust network of lawyers, paralegals and public defenders assist refugees on cases related to refugee status, violations of due process and other rights within the framework of the refugee status recognition procedure, detention of asylum-seekers and refugees with documentation, and people in need of international protection at risk of refoulement.



**More than 262,000 people** benefited from legal assistance, including orientation, counselling, and representation in 2023.



**Almost 1,800 asylum-seekers** received legal representation for procedures in Northern Mexico in 2023.

**Protection assistance and attention to people with specific needs**

UNHCR provides capacity-building to civil society organizations and government counterparts to identify and enhance protection responses to population at risk of gender-based violence (GBV). UNHCR coordinates with local institutions and refers older people, persons with disabilities and children, among others, in need of specialised support to services.



More than **1,500 survivors of GBV** received quality, multi-sectoral responses from UNHCR's partners in 2023



Over **9,300 children** participated in psychosocial activities in 12 child-friendly safe spaces



Over **1,400 persons** with specific needs received services from our partners in 2023

**Local Integration**

UNHCR promotes and facilitates local integration for asylum-seekers and refugees in the North of Mexico. This includes enabling them to find employment and obtain the required documentation for their legal stay as well as promoting access to health and education services. The program is implemented in close partnership with authorities and the private sector and allows refugees to successfully integrate in Mexico and to contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of the country.



**More than 18,200 persons** been relocated to Monterrey, Saltillo, and Torreón as part of UNHCR's Local Integration Program.



**More than 140 private companies** partner with UNHCR to employ refugees in Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Nuevo León.



**Almost 60 refugee students** received scholarships to study at universities in the north of Mexico in 2023, **an additional 10 graduated.**

### Community-based protection and peaceful coexistence

UNHCR and partners promote community-based protection activities with a focus on establishing positive relations with host communities and strengthening refugee leadership. The peaceful coexistence initiatives implemented by UNHCR include restoration of parks and community centers, cultural activities, sports activities, and awareness campaigns.

## Needs



#### Shelters

Increased reception capacity at shelters. Need of resources to provide basic humanitarian assistance



**Strengthen institutional capacities**, including of COMAR and its presence in the northern region.



#### Information

provision on asylum in Mexico and the U.S., including the use of the CBP-One app and alternatives to asylum.



#### Risk monitoring and protection services

for GBV survivors, children at risk, and other persons with specific needs

## EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

### CONTACTS

**Regina De La Portilla – Senior External Relations Officer**

[delaport@unhcr.org](mailto:delaport@unhcr.org)

### LINKS

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[Mexico Global Focus](#)

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