

# El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras – Regional Response

APRIL 27, 2021

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<p><b>30.7</b> MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Total Population of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras</p> <p><i>UN – March 2021</i></p>	<p><b>10</b> MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Number of People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance</p> <p><i>UN – April 2021</i></p>	<p><b>7</b> MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Number of People Impacted by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Guatemala and Honduras</p> <p><i>UN – December 2020</i></p>	<p><b>5.5</b> MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Number of People in Urgent Need of Food Assistance</p> <p><i>FEWS NET – March 2021</i></p>	<p><b>833,000</b></p> <p>Estimated Number of Asylum Seekers, IDPs, and Refugees Displaced in the Region</p> <p><i>UNHCR – March 2021</i></p>
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- On April 26, Vice President Kamala D. Harris announced \$310 million in additional USG assistance to support people from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in these countries and within the region.
- Up to 5.5 million people require food assistance across El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras due to a confluence of factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple regional storms, and recurrent drought, according to FEWS NET.
- On April 6, USAID deployed a DART to respond to urgent humanitarian needs in the three countries.



<b>TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING</b> For the El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras Regional Response in FY 2021	USAID/BHA <sup>1</sup>	\$125,000,000
	State/PRM <sup>2</sup>	\$69,344,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$194,344,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)  
<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### Vice President Harris Announces \$194.3 Million in New USG Humanitarian Funding

On April 26, U.S. Vice President Kamala D. Harris announced \$310 million in additional U.S. Government (USG) assistance for programs to support people from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras within these countries and the region during a meeting with Guatemala President Alejandro Giammattei. This assistance includes approximately \$194.3 million in new USG humanitarian funding—\$125 million from USAID/BHA and \$69.3 million from State/PRM—to provide life-saving emergency food, health, livelihoods, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance to people affected by multiple compounding factors in the region; the assistance will be provided through international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and UN partners. Since 2017, the USG has provided more than \$593.1 million in humanitarian assistance to help people in need from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras within these countries and in the region.

### USAID/BHA Deploys DART to Lead Humanitarian Response Efforts

On April 6, USAID/BHA deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to respond to urgent humanitarian needs in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, as well as a Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team (RMT) to support the DART. The DART is leading the USG humanitarian response to mitigate the impact of recurrent drought, severe food insecurity, and the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including in communities still recovering from the back-to-back hurricanes in November 2020. Due to pre-existing factors compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian need in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras has risen by more than 30 percent since July 2020, with an estimated 10 million people currently in need of humanitarian assistance, according to the UN. The DART and RMT are working with State/PRM and its network of refugee coordinators across the region to coordinate a comprehensive USG response to humanitarian needs within the region.

### Up to 5.5 Million People Projected to Face Crisis Levels of Food Insecurity

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) projects that up to 500,000 people in El Salvador may experience Crisis—IPC 3—levels of acute food insecurity in the coming months as the adverse effects of tropical storms, previous years of poor rainfall, and COVID-19 pandemic-related increases in staple food costs and limitations on income-generating activities have exacerbated food insecurity in the country.<sup>3</sup>

In Guatemala, recurrent drought, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the passage of Hurricanes Eta and Iota in November 2020 compounded existing vulnerabilities among households in the country and further reduced livelihood opportunities. As a result, up to 2.5 million people in Guatemala will face Crisis levels of acute food insecurity in the coming months, according to FEWS NET.

In recent years, prolonged droughts, heavy rain, and flooding in Honduras—including from Hurricanes Eta and Iota—have negatively affected thousands of small-scale subsistence farmers and resulted in the loss of livelihoods in rural communities. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated mitigation measures further constrained household income sources and increased food prices during 2020 and into 2021, with up to 2.5 million people facing or projected to face Crisis levels of acute food insecurity in the coming months, FEWS NET reports.

<sup>3</sup> The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity.

## Protection Concerns Rise Amid Increased Displacement and Other Factors

There are an estimated 833,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and asylum seekers from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras; of those, approximately 312,000 are internally displaced in Honduras and El Salvador as of March 2021, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports. Causes of displacement within the region include violence—including gender-based violence (GBV)—perpetrated by transnational criminal gangs, which are compounded by poverty; corruption; recurrent natural disasters; and limited access to education, livelihood opportunities, and social services. In some communities, children and youth face an extremely high risk of forced recruitment by gangs and other child protection violations. The impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated already chronic violence and poverty in areas of northern Central America. Psychological pressure and isolation due to the pandemic have resulted in increased domestic and sexual violence, as gang-related violence persists, according to UNHCR. Additionally, COVID-19-related border closures and domestic movement restrictions throughout El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have limited the ability of asylum seekers, IDPs, migrants, and refugees to escape insecurity, increasing protection risks for women; children; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) people, UNHCR reports.

## WFP, ICRC Leadership Visit Central America in Response to Increased Needs

UN World Food Program (WFP) Executive Director David Beasley travelled to Guatemala and Honduras in mid-April to meet with WFP staff, beneficiaries, and government officials amidst worsening food insecurity in the region. During his visit, Executive Director Beasley highlighted sustainable livelihoods, strengthened resilience, and self-reliant communities as WFP priorities in Central America; Beasley also stressed the urgent need for emergency food assistance in the region.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) vice president Gillies Carbonnier and ICRC regional director for the Americas Sophie Orr travelled to El Salvador and Honduras in mid-April to discuss the humanitarian situation with local authorities, meet with ICRC beneficiaries, and stress the need for legal reforms to help address violence-driven forced displacement. Ongoing violence in El Salvador and Honduras is leading to serious humanitarian consequences, including restricted access to health and education services, disappearances, homicides, and increased internal displacement and migration, according to ICRC. Carbonnier called on the Honduran National Congress to enact the pending bill for the protection of persons internally displaced by violence during the current legislative session.

### KEY FIGURES



**172,000**

People supported  
monthly through USG  
emergency food  
assistance

## U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### FOOD SECURITY

To address acute food insecurity in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras that has been exacerbated by the triple shocks of COVID-19-related income restrictions, sequential droughts, and recent hurricane damage, USAID/BHA supports the delivery of cash assistance for food to improve economic resilience and prevent and address malnutrition among food-insecure households during the lean season, which is projected to last through August, according to FEWS NET. USAID/BHA is building upon years of strategic emergency food assistance to address increased needs within the three countries in a manner that enhances food consumption patterns and

increases dietary diversity, while building resilience for vulnerable agricultural communities.



**4,500**

People supported  
monthly  
with USG-funded  
protection activities

## PROTECTION

With State/PRM support, UNHCR is working with the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to implement the governments' respective commitments under the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework—known in Spanish as MIRPS—to address forced displacement. These efforts include building government capacities to screen and process refugee claims and respond to protection concerns among IDPs and other at-risk communities. In addition, with State/PRM support UNHCR is working with the three countries on best practices for providing emergency shelter, livelihoods support, and other assistance to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, including GBV survivors, LGBTQI+ individuals, and people with disabilities. UNHCR also leads the Protection Cluster in El Salvador, providing humanitarian leadership to 28 partner organizations on a coordinated response to forced displacement in the country.

Additionally, with State/PRM funding UNHCR is working with the Government of El Salvador to train staff on how to identify persons in need and make referrals for services provided by the protection sector. State/PRM also supports the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) efforts throughout the region to strengthen child welfare services for displaced and unaccompanied migrant children, and the International Committee of the Red Cross in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and the region to conduct protection activities such as family reunification and tracing of missing persons.

USAID/BHA's protection partners provide psychosocial support, learning and recreational opportunities, and case management and referral services for children and women at high risk of exploitation, GBV, and other abuse. In particular, USAID/BHA partners are targeting populations in Honduras that became increasingly vulnerable to GBV and child protection concerns due to displacement and other impacts of Hurricanes Eta and Iota.



**72,000**

People supported  
through USG  
agriculture assistance

## AGRICULTURE

USAID/BHA partners are supporting smallholder farmers and other agriculture-dependent households in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Humanitarian actors are providing critical agricultural assistance to farmers to ensure sufficient and timely inputs for upcoming planting seasons to mitigate declining food security in the region. Partners are working with rural households through the provision of often cost-prohibitive resources such as farming tools, fertilizer, livestock feed, poultry, seeds, and access to veterinary services.

USAID/BHA partners plan to complement the agricultural inputs by providing additional agricultural training to build resilience to future climate shocks, including through instruction on climate-smart farming practices

such as drip irrigation, diversification of crops, and soil management. In Honduras, families also receive training on how to increase egg production in chickens to provide nutritious food and generate additional income. USAID/BHA-funded agricultural programming strengthens livelihood opportunities and market access for rural households and helps to improve nutritional outcomes through increased availability of nutritious local foods.



**173**

Communities in Honduras' Dry Corridor supported with USG-funded ERMS activities

## **ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND MARKET SYSTEMS**

Building on years of regional support, USAID/BHA partners are supporting economic recovery and market systems (ERMS) to increase financial resilience and aid vulnerable households to mitigate the impact of future shocks. Activities include establishing savings and loans groups within communities and restarting and expanding income generating activities such as providing support to restock inventory for convenience stores and small grocery shops. Additionally in some communities, USAID/BHA partners are also holding financial literacy courses to promote savings and increased awareness of and access to financial services.

### **CONTEXT IN BRIEF**

- Consecutive years of drought have adversely affected thousands of subsistence farmers and exacerbated food insecurity in rural communities in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, particularly in the Dry Corridor. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, poor health infrastructure, high population density, and insufficient availability of water and sanitation services have challenged efforts to control spread of the disease, while the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic exacerbated existing health, food, nutrition, and protection needs, increasing the total population requiring humanitarian assistance across El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.
- Between September 2019 and June 2020, the Trump Administration halted USAID/BHA's humanitarian assistance programming in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. During the period of the freeze, up to 3 million people faced Crisis levels of food insecurity across the three countries. In June 2020, the White House authorized USAID/BHA to reengage with its partners in the region and restart food assistance programming to vulnerable populations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.
- The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season was the most active season ever recorded, with 30 named storms and 13 hurricanes, including six major hurricanes, according to the UN. In particular, Tropical Storm Amanda in El Salvador in May 2020 and Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Guatemala and Honduras in November 2020 resulted in widespread destruction and large numbers of people in need, further exacerbating vulnerabilities within the region.
- On February 26, 2021, U.S. Ambassador William W. Popp issued a disaster declaration for Guatemala; on March 8, 2021, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Colleen A. Hoey issued a disaster declaration for Honduras; and on March 15, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Brendan O'Brien issued a disaster declaration in El Salvador. All three disaster declarations were issued for FY 2021 in response to severe food insecurity resulting from the increased displacement due to criminal group activity, the compounding impact of natural disasters on agriculture and livelihoods, the COVID-19 pandemic, and recurrent drought.

## USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, AND HONDURAS REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FY 2021<sup>1</sup>

<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA , AND HONDURAS REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FY 2021<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$125,000,000</b>
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA , AND HONDURAS REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FY 2021<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>\$69,344,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, AND HONDURAS REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FYs 2017 to 2021<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$593,126,683</b>

<sup>1</sup> Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of April 26, 2021

<sup>2</sup> Vice President Harris's announcement on April 26, 2021, included a total of \$104,848,739 from State/PRM, not all of which is displayed in the above chart. It included \$25 million that was provided to State/PRM partners in prior fiscal years and is now being reallocated to address new priorities. It also included more than \$10.5 million in funding under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program in the Western Hemisphere that is not included as part of PRM's overseas assistance totals.

<sup>3</sup> Funding figure reflects all USG humanitarian assistance funding publicly announced, committed, or obligated for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras and the regional response from October 1, 2017 to April 26, 2021.

### PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)