

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

Insights from Migrants in Mexico



UC Berkeley Law
Human Rights Clinic

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The Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI)

The Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI) is Mexican organization that promotes and defends the rights of women in migration and their families in Mexico and the region by addressing systemic barriers through a multidisciplinary approach. IMUMI combines strategic litigation, research, advocacy, and communication to drive policy changes. This work is carried out by a specialized team of over 20 professionals across its different areas, including advocacy, communication, and the legal clinic that provides essential support to women migrants and their families.

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Human Rights Clinic

University of California, Berkeley School of Law

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	I
Introduction	1
Methodology	4
Understanding the Climate-Migration Nexus in Central America	6
Climate Change as Risk-Multiplier	6
How Does Climate Change Impact Migration?	6
The Climate-Violence Nexus	7
The Climate-Poverty Nexus	7
The Climate-Gender Nexus	8
Key Survey Findings	9
Demographics	9
Climate Events Before Migration	10
Climate Impacts	12
Economic Impacts	13
Destruction of Homes and Infrastructure	13
Health Impacts and Access to Basic Needs	14
Disparities in Impacts by Gender	14
Impacts by Countries of Origin	15
Government Aid in Response to Climate Impacts	16
Climate as Stated Reason for Migration	16
Other Drivers of Migration Reported	18
Violence.....	18
Discrimination	19
Poverty.....	20
Perceptions of Legal Pathways	20
Discussion	22
Climate Change and Structural Drivers of Migration in Central America	23
Environmental Degradation, Crop Failure, and Poverty	23
Land Inequality, Structural Discrimination, and Environmental Defense	24
Insecurity and Violence by State Actors and Organized Crime	25
Health Impacts of Climate Events	26
Gendered Impacts of Climate Change and Migration	27
State Inaction as a Contributing Factor to Displacement	27

Migrants’ Immigration Intentions and Perceptions	28
Implications for Mexico’s Law and Policy Responses	29
Protection Pathways in Mexico.....	29
A Migration Policy that Prioritizes Detention and Deportation Over Access to Protection.....	30
Improving Refugee Adjudication for Climate-Displaced Individuals.....	31
Improving Access to Humanitarian Statuses and Ensuring Local Integration.....	33
Improving Interview Processes to Detect and Analyze Climate-Related Displacement.....	34
Conclusion and Recommendations	36
Annex 1: Climate Conditions in Study Countries	42
Note on the “Dry Corridor” and Climate Conditions in Central America	42
El Salvador	44
Guatemala	46
Honduras	47
Nicaragua	49
Annex 2: International Protection for Climate-Related Claims	51
1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees	51
The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees	52
Complementary Protection	54
Acknowledgments	55
Endnotes	56

Executive Summary

A Salvadoran woman abandoned farming, following failing harvests, and set up a corner store to support her family; however, this made her a target for gang extortion, ultimately forcing her to flee her country. An Afro-Miskito man received death threats from organized crime for defending his home in an environmentally protected area, forcing him to flee northern Honduras. Rising food prices following hurricanes squeezed an indigenous Guatemalan woman's ability to earn a living selling produce. A Nicaraguan man was politically persecuted by the ruling party—but the destruction of the family home in a hurricane was also a factor. All of these stories related by survey respondents in this study demonstrate how the growing impacts of climate change contribute to force people to leave their homes.

This report, *Climate Change and Migration from Central America: Insights from Migrants in Mexico*, examines how climate-related harms intersect with and exacerbate violence, exclusion, discrimination, and weak state protection to drive migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Drawing on interviews, desk research, and surveys with people on the move in Mexico, the study shows that climate change rarely operates as a single cause of displacement. Instead, migrants consistently describe how environmental shocks—such as droughts that destroy crops, storms that damage homes and livelihoods, and deforestation and extreme heat that undermine health and economic stability—exacerbate existing insecurity and hardship.

These environmental pressures deepen poverty, disrupt access to food and water, and erode already fragile living conditions. In many cases, climate impacts interact with violence, persecution, and lack of economic opportunity, making migration necessary. Migrants' experiences reveal how climate harms contribute to a broader chain of risks that threaten subsistence, personal safety, and family stability.

This study centers Mexico as both a transit and destination country for Central American migrants impacted by these dynamics. The findings demonstrate that better understanding how climate change intensifies vulnerabilities to violence, insecurity, and loss of livelihood—and integrating that analysis into refugee and immigration representation and adjudication—can improve access to protection and to regular migration status under Mexico's existing legal framework. The report also offers specific recommendations to strengthen institutional responses to climate migration by the Mexican government and civil society actors.

Key Survey Findings

Conducted by the Berkeley Law Human Rights Clinic in partnership with the Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI), the study draws on a 2024 survey of 87 migrants in transit in Mexico; key informant interviews with civil society, international organizations, and Mexican officials; and desk research. Although the population surveyed is small and not representative, responses provide a snapshot of the lived experiences of people on the move and illuminate how climate harms compound other drivers of forced migration.

The responses indicate that:

- **Climate exposure is pervasive and multi-hazard.** More than 80% of respondents experienced at least one climate event in the five years before leaving; 55% faced four or more. The most reported events included hurricanes (64%), heatwaves (56%), and flooding (55%); landslides (45%), droughts (41%), changes to growing seasons (38%), and forest fires (37%) were also common. Exposure was highest among Honduran and Nicaraguan respondents.
- **Material impacts are severe—and translate into protection-relevant harms.** Among those affected by climate events, more than half reported lost jobs, lost crops, property damage, lost access to water or electricity, and infectious disease. Large majorities also reported lacking access to clean water (74%) and food (67%) as a result of climate impacts. All of these impacts increase risks to life and safety.
- **Climate impacts often coexist with persecution and violence.** When asked directly, more than half of respondents who had experienced climate events said environmental factors influenced their decision to leave their homes. However, a clear majority of all respondents said insecurity (66%), violence (62%), and unemployment (54%) were reasons for their migration. The data and narratives show climate harms deepening vulnerability to persecution and exploitation. In some cases, climate-related shocks precipitated loss of livelihood or displacement that, in turn, increased exposure to harm at the hands of gangs, state authorities, or others.
- **Gendered and intersectional impacts are pronounced.** Women reported higher rates of lost work, food and water disruptions, crop loss, and communication outages than men following climate events. Female heads of household also disproportionately assumed additional caregiving burdens and faced heightened risks of gender-based violence, which is directly relevant to persecution analysis. Indeed, fully 22% of all female respondents reported they were

fleeing gender-based violence. Indigenous and Afro-descendant respondents also described heightened exposure to hurricanes and flooding, land dispossession, and threats as environmental defenders.

- **Structural gaps in state response are common.** Only 25% of climate-affected respondents reported receiving any government aid; assistance was typically one-off food distributions, with little support for evacuation, rebuilding, or medical needs. Respondents frequently spontaneously cited corruption, favoritism, or discriminatory non-delivery of aid—state protection failures that increase displacement risk.

Findings Regarding Legal Protections Available in Mexico

Mexico's refugee law incorporates both the 1951 Convention definition of refugee—protecting individuals with a well-founded fear of persecution—and the broader Cartagena Declaration definition, which extends refugee status to people fleeing generalized violence, conflict, massive human rights violations, or serious disruptions to public order. It also provides complementary protection for those who face threats to life or risk of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment if returned. However, the following gaps between law, policy, and practice constrain access to protection:

- An overarching policy environment that prioritizes detention, deportation, and militarization of migration enforcement, which limits physical and legal access to protection;
- Chronic under-resourcing of Mexico's asylum agency (COMAR) amid rising caseloads limits institutional capacity to process cases quickly and issue careful, well-reasoned decisions;
- Humanitarian pathways managed by Mexico's migration agency (INM), such as the Humanitarian Visitor Card (TVRH) and short-term visas for people affected by disasters, are rarely granted in practice even though they are clearly intended to protect migrants affected by climate impacts.

Given these challenges, the study examines how better integrating analysis of climate's role in heightening exposure to persecution, massive violations of human rights, disturbances of public order, and risks to life and integrity can promote access to protection. Survey findings showed how climate shocks repeatedly pushed respondents into conditions that increase precarity, expose families to violence and insecurity, and threaten subsistence. Where the state contributes to these threats, or

cannot or will not provide effective protection from these dangers, these may form the basis of a protection claim. Annex II examines relevant law and jurisprudence in greater detail.

Both survey respondents and key informants showed how a single case might demonstrate eligibility for multiple forms of protection, for example, under the Cartagena definition and, subsidiarily, Complementary Protection. In these cases, Mexico must evaluate eligibility for, and grant, refugee status where warranted, before evaluating Complementary Protection.

Climate factors are often under-reported by migrants unless directly elicited by interviewers, a common challenge noted by key informants. Survey responses showed that migrants' narratives may emphasize economic or family reunification motives, even as they describe suffering significant climate harms. The study also examines how short intake interviews are likely insufficient to fully evaluate the role of climate-related drivers, particularly for the purpose of immigration representation and adjudication.

In response, advocates and adjudicators can use targeted questioning to surface climate-related drivers. The study also recommends ensuring that Country-of-Origin Information (COI) systematically includes climate-related data—particularly impacts on subsistence, public infrastructure, disease outbreaks, and government response capacity—to complement case evaluation. Annex I contains country snapshots that discuss how climate impacts intersect with conditions in each of the study countries.

Priority Recommendations

To ensure Mexico's protection system fully accounts for cross-border climate-related displacement, the study recommends:

Strengthen Legal Analysis

- COMAR should create clear institutional guidance to help ensure that climate-related harms are meaningfully considered in refugee and protection decisions.
- Internal guidelines, adjudicator training, and quality control of decisions should guarantee that refugee eligibility under the Cartagena definition is always analyzed before Complementary Protection and granted where warranted.

- Recognize climate-related impacts as relevant to analysis of “massive violations of human rights,” “serious disturbance of public order,” and complementary protection in internal guidelines and other policy documents.
- Integrate information about current climate impacts and consider including or seeking information about climate risks that are scientifically reasonably foreseeable into Country-of-Origin Information.

Improve Data Collection and Analysis

- Include climate-related harms in COMAR statistics on the bases of claims for international protection, both at initial registration and at final decision.
- Publish redacted case decisions involving analysis of climate factors.

Ensure Practical Access to Status

- INM should issue clear internal guidance for granting the TVRH and other humanitarian visas in climate-related cases and ensure regular and foreseeable application of the law.
- Guarantee timely issuance of CURPs (social security numbers) and non-discriminatory access to employment, healthcare, and social services to make local integration viable.

Cross-Cutting

- The Mexican state should resource COMAR adequately relative to caseload and stabilize funding for civil society and UN support.
- Adopt anti-racist, gender-responsive, and Indigenous-rights approaches across case assistance and adjudication to address differentiated impacts and risks.
- Improve research on climate-related displacement and ensure structured dialogue between COMAR, civil society, and UNHCR to iterate guidance and tools.

Introduction

Across Central America, the accelerating impacts of climate change are deepening long-standing social, political, and economic vulnerabilities.¹ In the Dry Corridor, an arid region spanning Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and neighboring countries, extreme drought and erratic rainfall have decimated essential crops such as corn, beans, and coffee. For many *campesino* and indigenous communities, this has led to food shortages and rising debt.

Along the coasts, rising sea levels and warming ocean temperatures threaten fishing livelihoods and local economies that depend on tourism. At the same time, stronger and more frequent hurricanes and tropical storms are destroying homes, roads, and farmland, especially in rural and marginalized areas. Together, these climate stressors deepen existing poverty, violence, land inequality, and weak public services, driving more people to displacement within their countries and across borders.

As climate impacts increasingly force people to move, civil society, international organizations, and governments have recognized the need for stronger legal and humanitarian responses. This study focuses on Mexico, which has seen a dramatic increase in both migration and asylum claims in recent years. In 2016, Mexico recorded about 186,000 migrant detentions and fewer than 9,000 asylum applications.² By 2024, detentions had risen to nearly one million, and asylum applications reached 79,000³ — down from a historic high of more than 140,000 in 2023.⁴ Even as migration patterns have shifted, Honduras remained the largest asylum seeking nationality in Mexico in 2024.⁵ These increasing demands place significant strain on Mexico's immigration and asylum systems, making effective access and high-quality, timely adjudication more important than ever. Better understanding how climate change contributes to displacement and integrating that analysis into refugee and immigration decisions can improve access to international protection and to regular migration status.

The Berkeley Law Human Rights Clinic undertook this study in partnership with the Institute for Women in Migration, A.C. (IMUMI) to strengthen an empirical understanding of how climate change contributes to migration in Central America. The report examines how worsening climate impacts intersect with and exacerbate long-standing social, economic, and security challenges in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua to shape migration decisions. These four countries have experienced high levels of migration in recent decades, driven by a potent mix of violence, inequality, corruption, and poverty. Recognizing how climate pressures intensify these dynamics is key to informing ongoing regional and global debates on legal protections for people forced to move. This study also centers the

perspectives of migrants themselves, exploring how they understand the role of climate-related conditions in their decision to move.

Drawing on interviews, desk research, and surveys of people on the move conducted in Mexico during 2024, the report highlights that climate change rarely operates as a single cause of displacement. Instead, migrants consistently describe how environmental shocks—such as droughts that destroy crops, storms that damage homes and livelihoods, and deforestation and extreme heat that undermine health and economic stability—exacerbate existing insecurity and hardship. These pressures deepen poverty, expose families to violence and exploitation by persecutors, and erode already fragile living conditions, making migration increasingly unavoidable. The findings underscore the close relationship between climate impacts, food insecurity, economic precarity, and threats to personal safety.

These dynamics have important implications for Mexico’s immigration and asylum systems. While Mexico has a strong legal framework for asylum and complementary protection, it faces serious challenges in effective access, institutional capacity, and consistent application of the laws. These challenges have intensified in a changing international funding environment and with growing caseloads. Better integrating analysis of how climate factors heighten exposure to persecution, massive violations of human rights, disturbances of public order, and risks to life and integrity is critical to ensuring protection in a changing climate. Advocates and adjudicators can strengthen legal analysis and argumentation of refugee claims, particularly through fuller use of the Cartagena Declaration refugee definition and Complementary Protection; integrate climate considerations into Country-of-Origin Information; and create clear institutional guidance and data to help ensure that climate-related harms are meaningfully considered in refugee and protection decisions.

In the pages that follow, Part II outlines the study methodology, including a note on the use of surveys as a method and conditions in Mexico in 2024, when this survey was carried out. Part III examines the relationship between climate change and migration in Central America, with particular attention to how climate pressures exacerbate existing violence and insecurity—a dynamic that remains underexplored in much of the literature. Part IV presents the survey findings. Part V analyzes those findings within broader regional conditions and discusses how advocates and adjudicators can apply these insights within Mexico’s asylum and protection systems. Part VI offers concluding reflections and recommendations.

Two annexes supplement the analysis. One provides an overview of country conditions in each of the four Central American countries, focusing on how climate impacts intersect with violence, corruption,

environmental degradation, and inequalities. The second examines how climate-related displacement can be incorporated into legal analysis of refugee status and complementary protection.

Methodology

This study seeks to better understand the lived experiences of migrants transiting through Mexico, many of whom have been displaced by the combined effects of climate-related disruptions, violence, and long-standing structural inequality in their home countries. The research draws on three complementary sources of information: (1) a survey of migrants in transit; (2) key informant interviews with civil society actors, international organizations, and government officials; and (3) desk research on climate migration, country conditions, and Mexico’s legal and policy frameworks.

Between July and December 2024, the Berkeley Human Rights Clinic and the Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI) administered a structured survey to 87 migrants in transit in Mexico. Surveys were conducted in civil society shelters and encampments that serve migrants, in a shifting immigration enforcement context that influenced who was accessible for participation. The survey consisted of yes/no and multiple-choice questions, and a few open-ended prompts. Topics included demographic information; experiences with climate-related events in home countries; other factors influencing migration decisions; and perceptions of asylum in Mexico and the United States. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the study.

Survey respondents reflected a range of national, gender, and age backgrounds. Forty-eight percent identified as Honduran, 25% as Salvadoran, 15% as Guatemalan, 11% as Nicaraguan; and 11% identified as Indigenous. Fifty-six percent identified as women, 43% as men, and 1% as transgender. All respondents were over age 18, with more than 70% between the ages of 25 and 44. Most respondents were reached in shelters (60%), while 40% were staying in encampments.

Most survey responses were quantitative and were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Short open-ended responses were coded by the Clinic team, and two survey questions—asking respondents to briefly explain why they left their country and allowing interviewers to record contextual notes—were analyzed qualitatively.

Several contextual factors shaped the composition of the survey sample. U.S. asylum policies in effect in 2024 requiring use of the CBP One app led to long wait times and the growth of encampments in the Mexico City.⁶ Enforcement practices also affected who could be reached. Central American migrants, in particular—unlike Venezuelans—, faced a higher risk of detention and deportation, limiting their visibility and freedom of movement. Although some respondents intended to settle in Mexico, more than three-

quarters expressed an intention to continue to the United States, most of them seeking CBP One appointments.

Although the survey sample is limited in size, it provides valuable firsthand insights from migrants in extended transit in Mexico—an understudied population situated at the intersection of shifting enforcement policies and multiple drivers of displacement. The data helps illuminate recurring patterns, priorities, and protection gaps relevant to legal analysis, advocacy, and future research on climate-related migration.

The decision to conduct surveys of migrants in transit was intentional. While recent studies of climate migration in Mesoamerica have been conducted at points along migration routes,⁷ communities of origin⁸ or destination countries,⁹ this study centers migrants at shelters and encampments. This approach captures a cross-section of people in transit at a different stage of decision-making. At the same time, the study does not claim to be representative of all migrants in transit or all Central American migrants.¹⁰ This reality may be reflected in various ways in the study data.¹¹

In addition to the survey, the Clinic conducted 14 semi-structured interviews between July 2024 and February 2025 with key informants, including legal service providers, humanitarian and research organizations in Mexico and Central America, and officials from the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Mexico. These interviews helped contextualize the survey findings, clarify enforcement and adjudication practices, and identify barriers to protection.

The study also draws on extensive desk research, including a review of existing literature on climate migration; country conditions in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua; and legal frameworks for asylum and humanitarian protection in Mexico.

Together, these methods provide a grounded picture of how climate-related events intersect with violence, insecurity, and legal and policy gaps to shape migration through Mexico. The findings aim to inform legal and advocacy efforts to expand protection for people displaced in a changed climate.

Understanding the Climate-Migration Nexus in Central America

Climate Change as Risk-Multiplier

Climate change is increasingly recognized as a “threat-multiplier” that is likely to exacerbate preexisting vulnerabilities and structural inequalities globally.¹² It impacts the enjoyment of human rights by increasing conditions of precarity and poverty, exacerbating conflicts, and impacting human health, development, and the rights of future generations.¹³ The impacts of climate change are more destructive in countries with weak infrastructure and institutions, more conflict, less inclusive economies, and contexts where national governments lack capacity or will to respond to the impacts of climate change.¹⁴

In Northern Central America and Nicaragua, factors including poor infrastructure, preexisting inequality and discrimination, environmental degradation, corruption, political persecution, and violence all affect climate resilience. For example, in all four countries, deficient water management exacerbates climate vulnerability, with disproportionate impacts on subsistence farmers, Indigenous and Afrodescendant communities, and the poor.¹⁵ Institutional weakness is often on display following natural disasters, where inadequate state response to humanitarian and rebuilding needs can leave individuals vulnerable to longer-term displacement and cross-border migration,¹⁶ particularly where these material impacts intersect with other risks, such as exposure to gang or state violence.¹⁷ Corruption is also a major driver of instability, as it weakens institutional capacity, erodes public trust, and often causes authorities to form symbiotic relationships with criminal networks, limiting access to state protection.¹⁸ Women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities face differentiated challenges. The dynamics summarized below are also addressed in additional detail with respect to the study countries in Annex I.

How Does Climate Change Impact Migration?

Migration is always multicausal.¹⁹ Migration caused by climate change occurs in the context of pre-existing migration dynamics, though it may also give rise to new dynamics.²⁰ For this reason, isolating the role of both slow-onset (e.g. drought, sea level rise, desertification) and rapid-onset (e.g. hurricanes,

tropical storms, flooding, wildfire) impacts of climate change in migration decisions is an empirical challenge.²¹

Research indicates that most people displaced by climate change are likely to move within their own countries, with projections estimating over 17 million internally displaced people in Latin America alone by 2050.²² Some number of people will also be displaced across international borders, although there is no current academic consensus on scale.²³

Few studies to date have attempted to assess factors that make cross-border migration in response to climate events more likely.²⁴ One recent study found that individuals make climate migration decisions in a stepwise, not linear, fashion, ultimately leading to “adaptive” (proactive, voluntary) or “distress” (desperate, after exhausting all other options) migration in the face of untenable conditions.²⁵ Other studies have attempted to theorize climate “tipping points” by identifying points at which adaptive responses to the impacts of climate change become necessary, where previously they were not; and later, where adaptive responses cease to have a beneficial effect, leaving migration as the only viable option.²⁶

The Climate-Violence Nexus

Research shows that climate change can fuel social conflict by intensifying competition over scarce resources like land and water²⁷ and deepening grievances when state responses are inadequate or perceived as discriminatory. Climate-linked displacement can also fuel tensions in communities receiving migrants.²⁸ Studies have also established increased risks of interpersonal violence, including gender-based violence, following natural disasters.²⁹

More research is needed on how climate change may contribute to violence in urban settings.³⁰ Such research will be relevant to Central America, where climate impacts are likely to accelerate ongoing trends, including circular rural-urban migration and permanent urbanization. These trends will further stretch demand for urban infrastructure, services, and housing, and will disproportionately impact the poor.³¹ More research is also needed on how climate change may aggravate preexisting situations of violence or conflict.

The Climate-Poverty Nexus

A recent multi-agency UN study found that “climate variability and extremes are one of the major drivers of recent food insecurity and malnutrition trends” in Latin America.³² In Northern Central America, an

estimated 2.2 million people have experienced crop losses due to climate change, pushing many into poverty or migration.³³

People living in poverty are more susceptible to the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change.³⁴ Poverty creates “obstacles to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights in conditions of true equality” and increases “exposure” to rights violations.³⁵ Climate change contributes to poverty-related insecurity, including access to basic rights like food, water, housing, and health, which drive people to migrate.³⁶ These impacts are exacerbated by government policy, including poor infrastructure and lack of a social safety net.³⁷ Natural disasters can also impact housing, availability of potable water, and compromise food safety, affecting quantity and quality of food and creating risks of malnutrition and other health consequences.³⁸

The Climate-Gender Nexus

Women and girls face greater risks of rights violations, including life, personal integrity and health, due to the adverse effects of climate change.³⁹ Studies have identified some key pathways that increase these inequities and risks. Women are more vulnerable to economic and climate shocks due to limited access to resources (including credit, finances, and land) and to decision-making power, and inequitable distribution of unpaid household and caregiving labor.⁴⁰ Climate change may increase women and girls’ vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence.⁴¹

During extreme climate events, women are disproportionately affected by taking on additional caregiving duties, while also being expected to directly intervene in food production and management of household tasks.⁴² These are factors that may limit women’s ability to migrate. Natural disasters have the greatest impact on the life expectancy of women and girls.⁴³ Natural disasters may also increase risk of gender-based violence.⁴⁴

Women may also be at greater risk of becoming “trapped” and unable to migrate due to lack of access to resources, traditional migration patterns (in which male household members leave first), as well as distribution of household and caregiving duties.⁴⁵

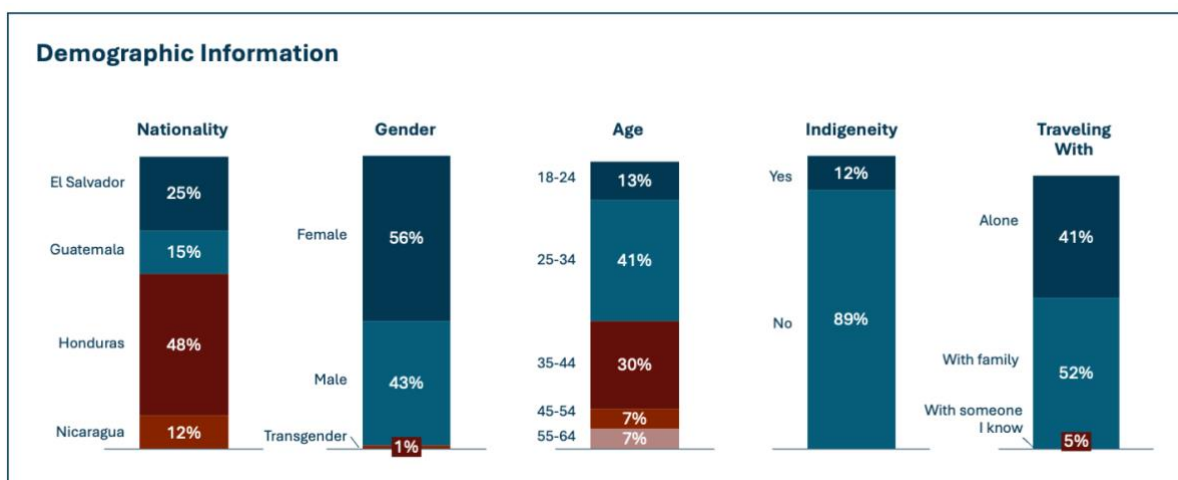
Key Survey Findings

The survey of people on the move in Mexico explored their experiences of climate events in the years immediately before migration and how those events intersected with other reasons for migration. The responses show how individuals understand climate harms—such as destroyed homes, failed crops, health impacts, and loss of work—to compound other factors including gang violence, political persecution, and discrimination, ultimately leaving them with few alternatives but to migrate.

Demographics

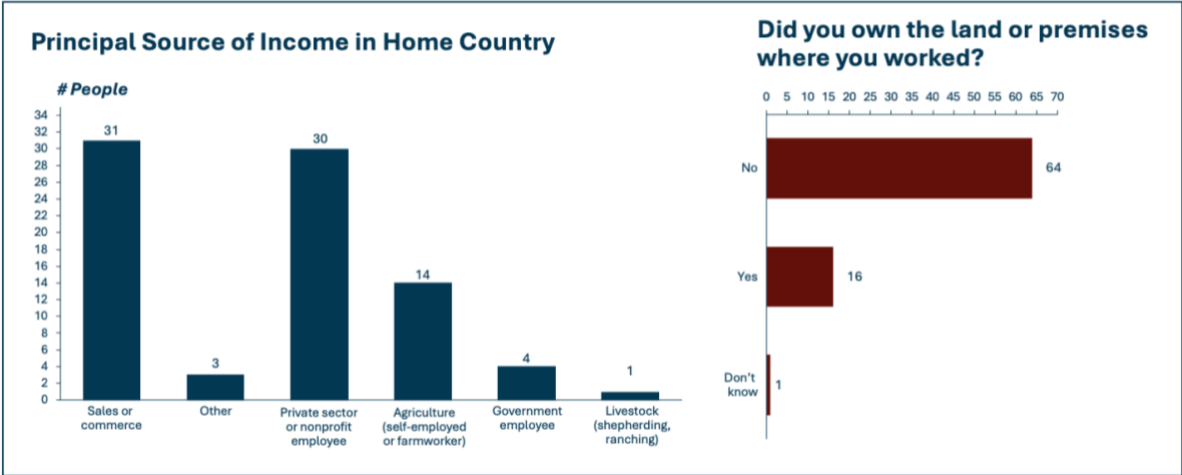
The survey reached a diverse group of respondents, including individuals from various age groups, nationalities, and economic backgrounds. Among the participants, 25% identified as Salvadoran, 15% as Guatemalan, 48% as Honduran, and 11% as Nicaraguan. Additionally, 11% of respondents identified as Indigenous (including Miskito, Quiché, and Nahua, as well as Garifuna and Nicaraguan Afro-descendant.) The overrepresentation of Honduran respondents in the survey is consistent with its spot as the top asylum-seeking nationality in Mexico in 2024.⁴⁶

Among participants, 56% of respondents identified as women, 43% as men, and 1% as transgender.⁴⁷ At the time this survey was conducted, most respondents were reached in shelters (60%), while 40% were staying in encampments.



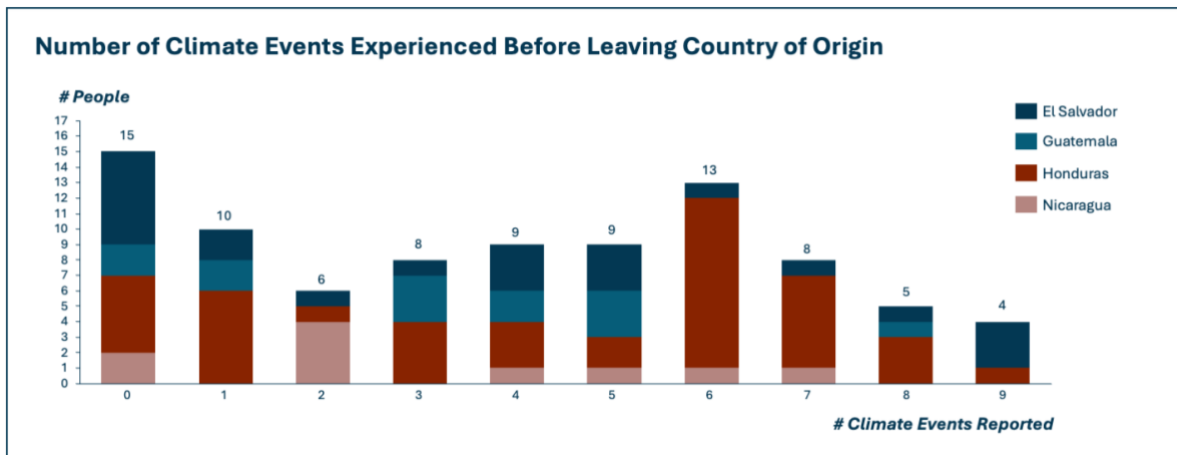
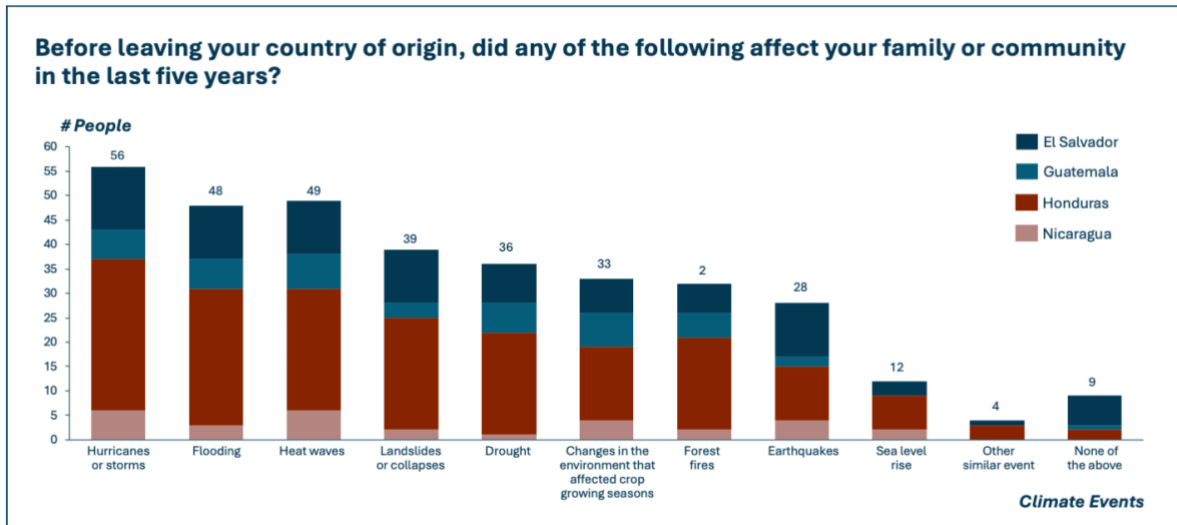
All respondents were over the age of 18; 71% were between ages 25-44. Nearly half (41%) were traveling with at least one child. Most respondents reported traveling with other people.

Most respondents (75%) were the main economic provider for their household or contributed alongside other family members.⁴⁸ About 36% reported they earned their income through sales or small business activities, followed by 34% who worked in the private sector, and 17% in farming or livestock. Other types of work were reported in smaller numbers. Most respondents (74%) did not own the land or the place where they worked.



Climate Events Before Migration

The survey shows that climate-related events, including extreme weather and environmental changes, have shaped the lives of many migrants in Mexico. A large majority (83%) of respondents said they had experienced at least one climate event in the five years before leaving their country.⁴⁹ Most reported being affected by hurricanes (64%), heatwaves (56%), and flooding (55%). Many also experienced landslides (45%), droughts (41%), shifting growing and harvest seasons (38%), forest fires (37%), and sea level rise (14%).



Most respondents experienced the impacts of multiple climate events. In fact, 55% of respondents reported experiencing four or more different climate events prior to migrating.

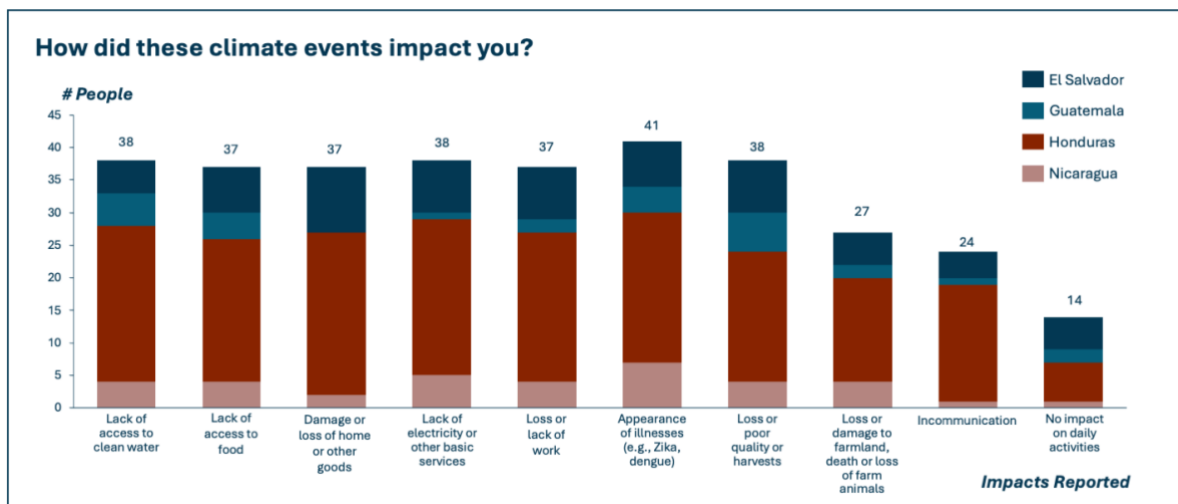
The climate impacts varied somewhat by nationality:

- Honduras: Ninety-five percent had experienced at least one climate event. Most were affected by hurricanes (73.8%), flooding (66.6%), heatwaves (59.5%), and landslides (54.7%).
- Nicaragua: All Nicaraguan respondents reported experiencing climate events, especially hurricanes and heatwaves (60% each).
- Guatemala: Ninety-two percent had experienced climate events; heatwaves and disrupted harvest seasons (54%) were most commonly reported.
- El Salvador: Seventy-two percent reported experiencing a climate-related event, most often hurricanes (59%), floods (50%), heatwaves (50%), and landslides (50%).

Men were more likely than women to report experiencing forest fires (43% vs. 33%), flooding (65% vs. 49%), and landslides (51% vs. 41%). Women, on the other hand, more often cited environmental changes that disrupted planting and harvest seasons (49% vs. 24%).

Among Indigenous respondents, 90% experienced a climate-related event, compared to 82% of non-Indigenous respondents. Many Indigenous participants came from highly climate-vulnerable regions such as the Caribbean coasts of Honduras and Nicaragua and the highlands of Guatemala and El Salvador. Their most reported experiences included flooding (80%), hurricanes (70%), and forest fires, heatwaves, and earthquakes (each 50%).

Climate Impacts⁵⁰



Respondents described multiple ways in which climate events disrupted their lives, often compounding existing hardship and pushing them toward migration. For example,

- A Guatemalan woman who fled due to violence and unemployment was also affected by heat waves and cold snaps, which made reliable agricultural work harder to secure. She had been employed at a banana plantation, but climate events caused disruptions to banana production which led to less available work: *“There’s not enough work every day,”* she explained, which made it difficult to support her children.
- One Honduran man said that his entire family had been forced to migrate due to river flooding and landslides. Although violence had been part of his decision to migrate, he also pointed to the

impacts of hurricanes and flash flooding, including gastrointestinal viruses caused by polluted water, as factors that pushed him to leave.

- One woman from La Paz, El Salvador, described how persistent drought that damaged harvests led her to set up a corner store to make money. However, the gangs started to demand a “war tax” (extortion) from the store that she was unable to pay because the business was not very profitable, and she had three kids to feed. Due to gang threats, she fled her country.

Economic Impacts

More than half of those affected by climate events lost their jobs (51%) or experienced crop failure (53%). Nearly 40% saw their land or animals damaged. These losses were particularly severe for those working in agriculture: 75% lost their jobs, and 83% experienced crop damage.

- A Honduran farmer shared that after years of drought damaged harvests, he lost his agricultural job and left the country. When asked why he left, he responded, “*No quality of life,*” citing unemployment and insecurity as reasons for leaving.
- Another farmer from Honduras who left “*to seek better opportunities*” explained that shifts in harvesting seasons made it impossible to sustain a livelihood.
- A single mother described how flooding and crop losses caused her to lose work in the fields in El Progreso, Honduras; she left her country due to hunger, lack of work—the effects of which were compounded for her as a single parent without formal education—and insecurity related to organized crime.

Destruction of Homes and Infrastructure

Climate events also damaged homes and basic infrastructure. More than half (51%) of respondents affected by climate events lost belongings or experienced property damage. More than half (53%) lost electricity or water services, and one third were cut off from communication with the outside world—29% of those for more than a month.

- One woman who fled San Pedro Sula, Honduras, said she and her family “*left our house, left everything*” after Hurricanes Eta and Iota. She cited extortion as a factor in her decision to flee.

- One Honduran woman from Ocotepeque described how “*too much rain and heat ‘burned’ the tomato, onion, cucumber harvest,*” how extreme drought sparked forest fires that caused severe smoke exposure, and how many homes in her town were destroyed by flooding following Hurricanes Eta and Iota. The walls and roof of her house collapsed due to flooding. Asked why she left his country, she said in part due to these impacts and in part “*other reasons due to gangs and threats against me.*”

Health Impacts and Access to Basic Needs

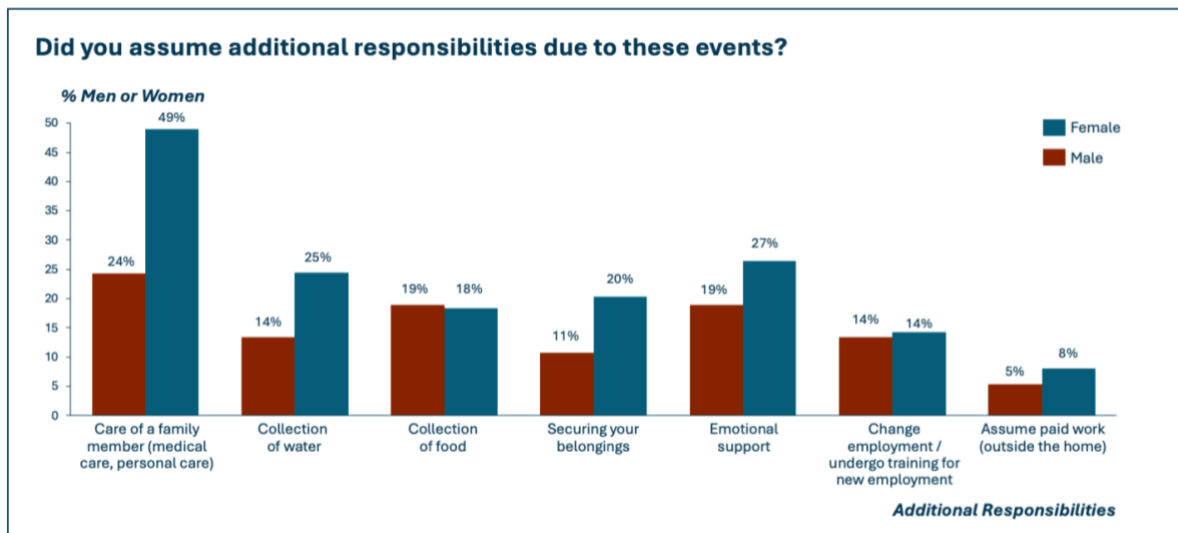
Impacts on respondents' health emerged as a major consequence of climate disasters. More than half of all respondents reported challenges in accessing necessities such as food (51%) and water (53%). Many also described increased exposure to illness: 57% specifically cited infectious disease as an impact, including Dengue (17 respondents), Zika, Chikungunya, typhoid, and malaria. Others described respiratory illnesses, asthma, and allergies linked to poor air quality. For example:

- A bartender from San Salvador, El Salvador explained that climate events had disrupted the harvests, driving up the price of food. In addition to this, his daughter contracted dengue, and caring for her forced him to change jobs. Faced with these challenges, he decided to migrate so that he could “*help the family.*”

Of the respondents who experienced climate impacts, 74% reported that they lacked access to clean water and 67% reported that they lacked access to food because of the impacts of climate events.

Disparities in Impacts by Gender

Across several different areas, women were more likely than men to report having experienced severe impacts from climate change, including lost work (58%), disrupted access to food (58%) and water (58%), crop loss/damage (55%), and incommunication with the outside world (e.g. following a storm) (40%).⁵¹



Women were also more likely than men to take on additional responsibilities as a result of climate events. Nearly half of all female respondents said they became caregivers for sick or elderly family members. Others reported taking on new roles: collecting water (25%), securing food (18%), providing emotional support (27%), and entering the workforce (8%).

These responsibilities were even greater for women who were the main providers for their households—71% reported taking on additional tasks, compared to 57% of men in the same role.

- A Nicaraguan woman who worked in a market described the difficulties of working in extreme heat, which caused her skin rashes and depression. Despite these challenges, she took on the role of offering emotional support to fellow vendors also struggling with the harsh conditions and described performing additional labor to try to keep up her peers’ spirits in the oppressive heat. At the same time, she became the primary caregiver for her grandmother after she contracted dengue.

Impacts by Countries of Origin

Respondents from Honduras and Nicaragua described some of the most severe impacts from climate events. Many reported disruptions to basic needs such as food, water, electricity, employment, and health. These accounts reflect not only the devastation caused by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020, but also broader patterns of weak and discriminatory government response and political persecution in the wake of these events.

- An Afro-Miskito man from Gracias a Dios, Honduras described how deforestation and land grabbing by organized crime groups pushed his family to flee. As an indigenous leader defending

the Río Plátano Biosphere, he received threats from organized crime and was ultimately forced to flee “*to reunify with family.*”

- A Miskito woman from Atlántida department, Honduras who lived off farming and fishing, fled after “*death threats to take away our land.*”
- A Nicaraguan former police officer said he left after facing political persecution for refusing to participate in ruling party events. But the destruction of his family’s home on the Caribbean coast by Hurricanes Eta and Iota was also a deciding factor.

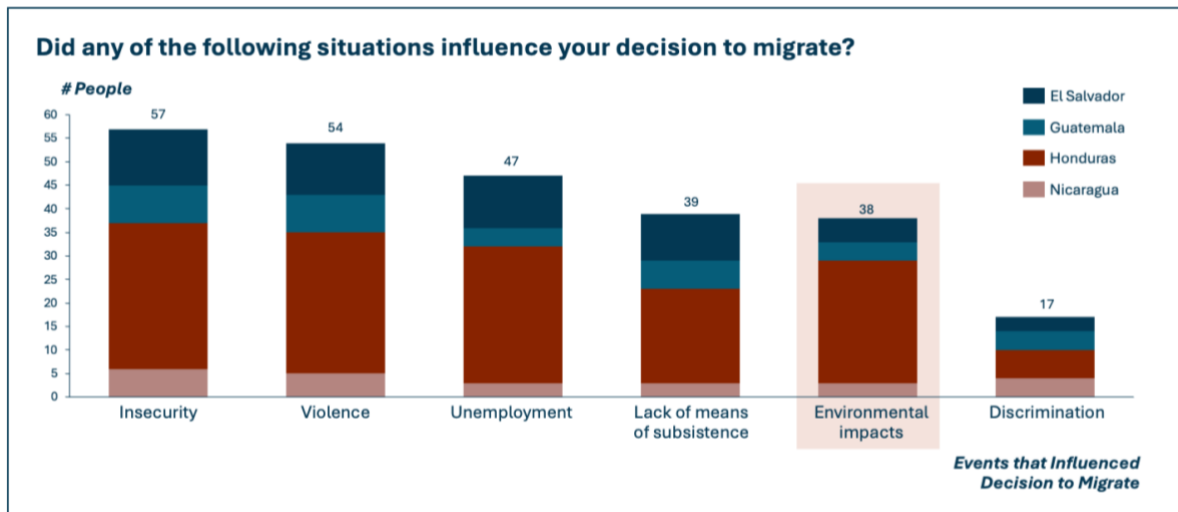
Government Aid in Response to Climate Impacts

Among those affected by climate events, only a quarter reported receiving any form of government aid. Food assistance—generally on a single occasion—was the most common, while support for rebuilding, evacuation, or medical needs was rare. Many respondents spontaneously expressed frustration with how aid was distributed, often citing corruption, favoritism, or lack of follow-through. For example:

- A man from Jutiapa, Guatemala said that drought “*makes the earth unwilling to produce,*” and the government failed to deliver promised aid. He eventually fled due to gang threats.
- A Salvadoran respondent noted that during extreme climate events, most aid was supplied by international organizations and non-profits—not government.
- A Nicaraguan woman who fled due to government corruption stated that following hurricanes, “*the health department offered support to ‘preferred’ people—there was no equal access.*”

Climate as Stated Reason for Migration

The survey was structured to inquire about the role of climate impacts in migration decisions. Overall, about half of respondents considered climate impacts to be a significant factor in their decision to migrate. When asked directly, nearly half of all respondents—and 60% of those who had experienced a climate event—said that environmental factors were part of their decision to migrate. However, when later asked to choose among multiple reasons for leaving, such as violence or lack of jobs, fewer cited environmental impacts (44% overall; 53% among those affected by climate events).⁵²



More Hondurans (62%) cited environmental impacts as a factor influencing their decision than any other nationality (no more than 30%).

The survey also invited respondents to answer a simple open-ended question: “In a few words, why did you leave your country?” The responses reflected a range of interrelated reasons for leaving, underscoring that migration is rarely the result of a single cause. Many cited climate-related factors alongside political persecution, economic hardship, or discrimination—illustrating how environmental stress can deepen existing vulnerabilities and shape the decision to migrate. For example:

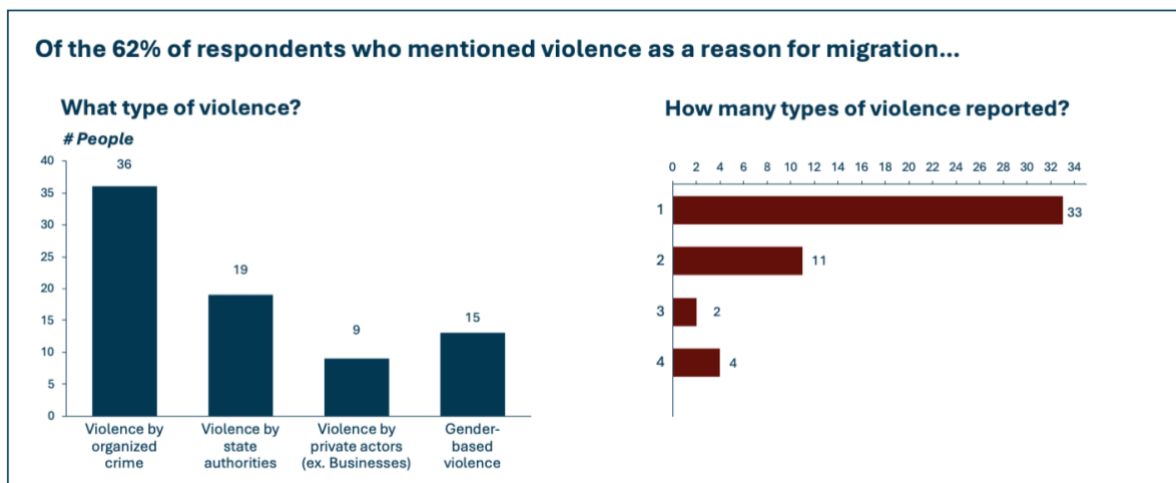
- A Nicaraguan man pointed to political discrimination—specifically, his opposition to the Sandinista party—and family reunification as primary reasons for fleeing. But he also described how climate disruptions had impacted his family’s livelihood harvesting citrus fruit: “*Now it doesn’t rain as it should, and when it does, it’s a deluge in a short time, making it impossible to plant or harvest.*” That economic instability forced him to seek other paid work, which exposed him to further political targeting in his new workplace.
- An Indigenous Quiché woman from Guatemala described a combination of unemployment, discrimination, and rising cost of living as drivers of her migration. Her family sold vegetables for income, but “*hurricanes affected the availability of vegetables to sell,*” causing financial stress that made it hard to make ends meet.
- A Honduran farmer cited unemployment as the reason he left. But he added that “*harvests decreased, and there were fewer grain-growing seasons,*” making steady work harder to find. Environmental shifts had steadily eroded his livelihood.

These personal accounts highlight how climate impacts often operate in the background, worsening job prospects, disrupting food systems, and intensifying vulnerabilities to persecution, until leaving becomes the only available option.

Other Drivers of Migration Reported

Respondents were also asked about other circumstances that influenced their decision to leave their homes. A clear majority of respondents indicated that insecurity (66%), violence (62%), and unemployment (54%) were factors influencing their decision to migrate. These were followed by lack of livelihoods (45%), environmental impacts (44%), family reunification (28%), and discrimination (20%). These responses highlight the continuing prevalence and relevance of these traditional drivers of migration, as well as the importance of evaluating individual cases and country of origin conditions holistically, considering the impacts of climate change in the context of other dynamics of violence and exclusion.

Violence



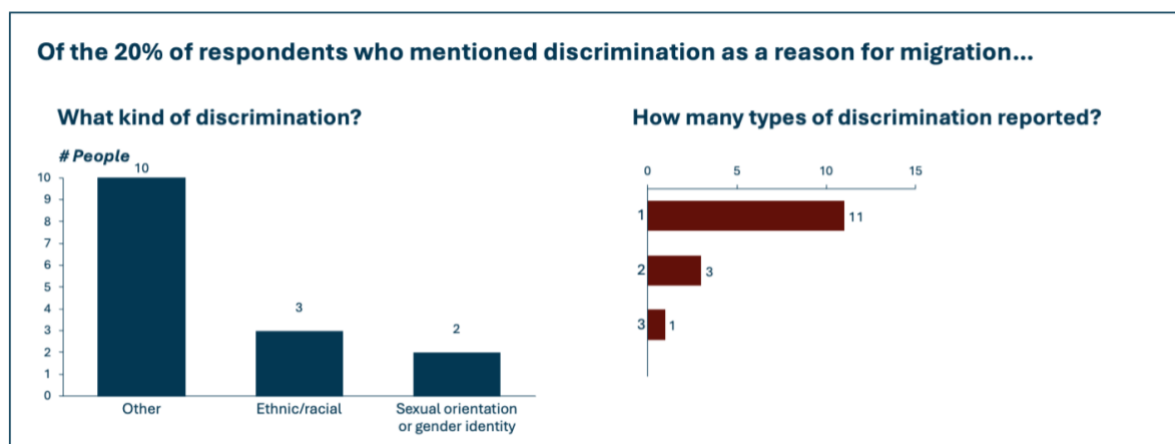
Of survey respondents who reported violence as a factor, two-thirds specified that they feared violence perpetrated by organized crime. Many respondents reported experiencing extreme violence at the hands of gangs, which directly influenced their decision to flee:

- In one case, a Honduran woman reported fleeing her country after being raped by a gang member and facing ongoing threats that put her children at risk.

- Another man stated that he was forced to leave Honduras after MS-13 murdered his mother and threatened his life.

Thirty-five percent of all survey respondents who reported violence were fleeing violence from state actors, including 60% of all Nicaraguan respondents. Separately, 34% of women who reported violence as a factor (and fully 22% of all women who responded to the survey) were fleeing gender-based violence.

Discrimination

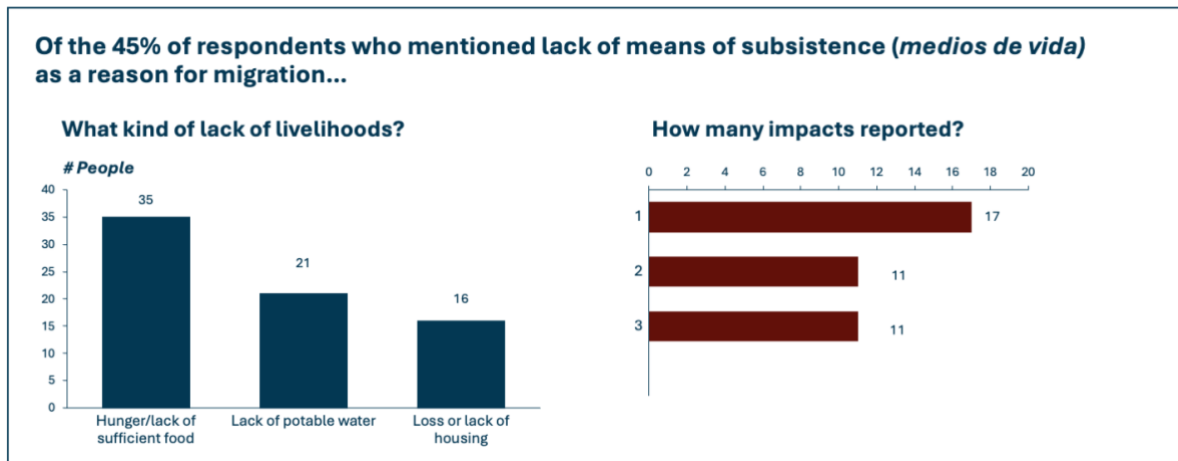


Twenty percent of all survey respondents reported discrimination as a cause of their migration. Of these, three individuals (including one indigenous Guatemalan woman) specified that they faced ethnic or racial discrimination, and two individuals (including one transgender Guatemalan individual) indicated discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

All other respondents reported experiencing “other” forms of discrimination. Within this category, three respondents (from El Salvador and Honduras) reported discrimination “*por pobre*,” or based on poverty or economic status. Four Nicaraguan respondents reported discrimination “*por opositor*,” or for not belonging to the Sandinista party, which the research team interprets as likely persecution on the basis of political opinion.

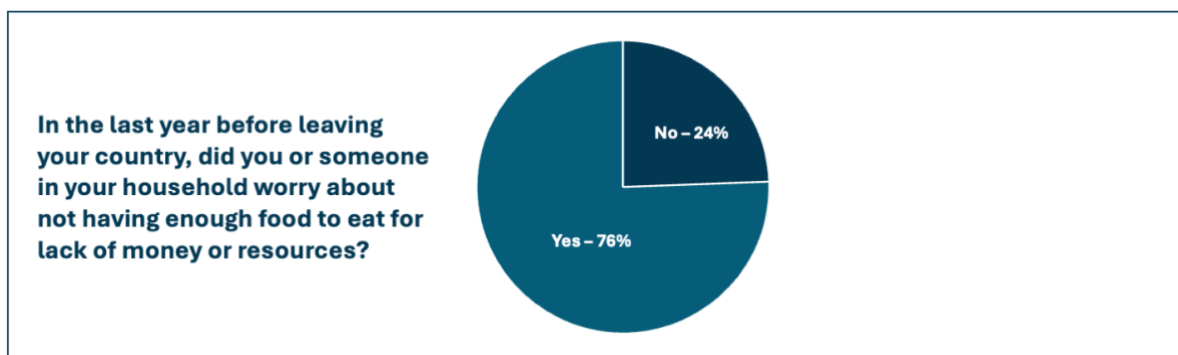
Other respondents who indicated discrimination described other forms of targeted persecution, including a Salvadoran man discriminated against “*for my tattoos*,” a Guatemalan man who said he had been targeted for assassination by the Barrio 18 gang; and another Guatemalan man who was targeted “*for refusing to work with drug traffickers*.” These responses likewise appear to be better characterized as likely persecution based on political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

Poverty



Of the nearly half of respondents who cited lack of means of subsistence as a factor influencing their decision to migrate, 90% of these specifically cited hunger and food insecurity. An additional 54% of these respondents specified lack of access to potable water. And 41% of these respondents indicated lack of housing as a factor.

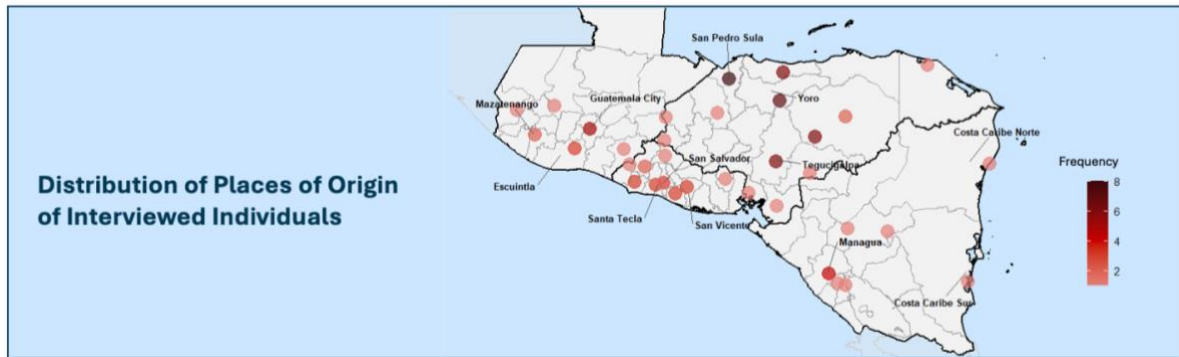
Notably, while only 45% of respondents identified lack of livelihoods as a driver of their decision to migrate, more than three-quarters of all survey respondents (including 88% of women and 59% of men) reported separately that they or someone in their household had worried about not having enough to eat in the year prior to leaving their home country, reflecting widespread food insecurity among respondents.



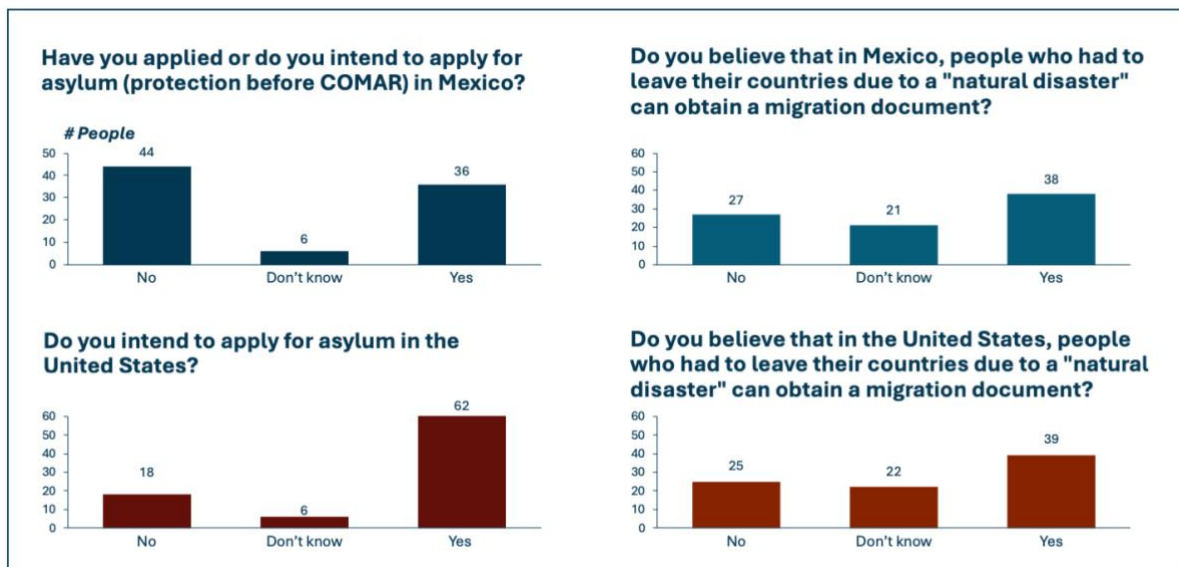
Perceptions of Legal Pathways

Respondents came from diverse places of origin, and one-third reported having lived somewhere other than their country of origin in the last five years. This included people displaced within Central America

(e.g. Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica), recent deportees from the US, and many who lived for some period in different parts of Mexico.



When surveyed in 2024, most respondents (71%) said they applied or planned to apply for asylum in the United States. A smaller number (41%) intended to seek asylum in Mexico.



Respondents were also asked whether they believed natural disasters could serve as a basis for obtaining immigration status. In Mexico, about a third (31%) believed there was no such pathway, while 24% were unsure. Just under half (44%) believed it was possible.⁵³ Responses were similar for the U.S., with 29% saying natural disasters are not grounds for status, 25% unsure, and 45% believing it was possible.

Discussion

The survey findings offer insight into the experiences of Central American migrants transiting through Mexico and help illuminate how climate-related harms interact with other drivers of displacement. Notably, 80 percent of respondents reported experiencing at least one significant climate event before migrating, and many identified those events as contributing to their decision to leave. At the same time, none described climate factors as the sole reason for migration. Instead, the findings underscore that migration is inherently multicausal.

Respondents consistently described how climate-related shocks—such as crop loss, environmental degradation, and health impacts—intensified preexisting conditions of violence, insecurity, discrimination, and economic precarity. Threats from both state and non-state actors, including organized crime, remained central to many migration decisions. These findings reinforce the continued relevance of refugee protection frameworks and attention to state violence in Central America. They also highlight how climate change increasingly intersects with violence, land inequality, and weak state responses to exacerbate displacement.

This section synthesizes survey data, desk research, and key informant interviews to examine how these overlapping drivers shaped respondents' journeys, situating individual accounts within structural patterns of inequality, insecurity, and environmental harm across the study countries. It also addresses migrants' perceptions of protection and their intentions as they navigate Mexico's immigration system.

The analysis also considers how these findings can inform Mexico's legal and policy responses. For adjudicators, advocates, civil society organizations, and international actors, the survey responses offer insight into how climate factors contribute to rights violations and exposure to harm—and how these dynamics might be more effectively recognized within existing protection frameworks. Finally, while the findings largely align with existing research on climate and migration, they also point to methodological challenges and areas where further study is needed.

Climate Change and Structural Drivers of Migration in Central America

Understanding climate-related migration from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua requires situating it within long-standing conditions of inequality, exclusion, violence, and weak rule of law. These countries have experienced high rates of migration over multiple generations, first driven by civil wars, military rule, and, in some cases, genocide, and more recently by persistent insecurity and economic hardship. Against this backdrop, the growing impacts of climate change do not operate in isolation; they intensify existing pressures that are already pushing people to leave their homes.

The survey findings are placed in the context of scientific research and reporting that examine how climate change intersects with environmental degradation and poverty; land inequality, structural discrimination, and struggles over environmental defense; violence by state actors and organized crime; health and access to healthcare; gendered vulnerabilities; and limited government capacity to respond to climate impacts. Together, these factors help explain how climate impacts compound other drivers of displacement across the region.

Environmental Degradation, Crop Failure, and Poverty

Survey respondents described how environmental changes are already affecting their livelihoods, as heat, drought, and storms lower crop yields, “burn” harvests, damage crop land, and affect cash crop viability, including bananas and citrus fruits. These accounts align with scientific research showing that droughts and rainfall variability in the Dry Corridor are already disrupting agricultural production,⁵⁴ including four of the region’s staple crops: maize, beans, coffee, and sugarcane.⁵⁵

One key reason that northern Central America and Nicaragua are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts, beyond geography, is the high proportion of people who depend on agriculture for survival.⁵⁶ Survey responses illustrated how both individuals who work their own land and those who perform wage agricultural labor are affected by lost work, linked to drought, storm damage, changing growing seasons, and other impacts. Several respondents explained that they had left agricultural work altogether in recent years, shifting to wage labor or self-employment as harvests declined.

Declining agricultural productivity contributes to falling incomes and rising food prices, which in turn affect entire communities. Inflation was cited by multiple survey respondents as a reason for migration,⁵⁷ with several describing how storms, heat waves, and other climate events drive up food prices, squeezing food sellers and shop owners, and deepening hardship even in urban areas.⁵⁸ A suite of impacts linked to

climate change, including rising sea levels and warming waters, is also reshaping traditional livelihoods such as fishing, placing coastal communities at heightened risk of displacement.⁵⁹

Out-migration from rural areas can further weaken communities by reducing the labor force, deepening poverty and increasing reliance on remittances.⁶⁰ The UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change has documented communities in Honduras's Dry Corridor where most residents have already emigrated, leaving only the elderly behind.⁶¹ Key informants emphasized that those who are able to migrate are often not the most vulnerable in their communities. Migration requires some financial resources to make the journey possible, while the poorest may become "trapped," unable even to relocate locally.⁶² Gender, disability, lack of social networks and other structural inequalities can also increase the risk of being trapped in place.⁶³

Land Inequality, Structural Discrimination, and Environmental Defense

Across Central America, longstanding systems of inequality and discrimination, particularly against indigenous and Afro-descendant groups, intensify vulnerabilities to climate harms. These communities often have fewer resources to absorb the material and financial consequences of climate events and face exclusion from government services and humanitarian aid. Insecure or absent land titles place families and communities at risk of displacement, while also limiting access to recovery programs, subsidies, and climate response initiatives.

Land tenure insecurity is deeply rooted in colonial histories of dispossession and ongoing marginalization. As climate impacts reduce crop yields, tenant farmers may struggle to pay rent on and invest in the quality of their land.⁶⁴ A failed crop can leave renters indebted, trapping them in a cycle of dependency and financial insecurity.⁶⁵ Weak infrastructure and limited state presence can further exacerbate conflict within and between communities and other actors over land and water resources.⁶⁶

Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and *campesino* communities also face threats from extractive industries and large-scale monoculture projects; frequently, state failure to protect land rights exacerbates these conflicts.⁶⁷ Land and environmental defenders are routinely targeted with violence across the study countries, and Latin America remains the most dangerous region in the world for this work.⁶⁸ The survey reached two indigenous respondents who reported fleeing due to efforts to push them off their land.

In all four study countries, environmental degradation and deforestation—frequently associated with land grabbing—both worsen climate impacts and fuel displacement.⁶⁹ The role of state policy, or state

omission, in fostering environmental degradation may be a dynamic that puts communities at risk of displacement and exacerbates the impacts of climate change. For example, in Central America, deforestation is largely driven by illegal logging, cattle ranching, drug trafficking, and land grabbing, often enabled by government inaction or corruption.⁷⁰ Research has documented how criminal networks convert public lands and Indigenous territories into large private holdings.⁷¹

Likewise, state policies that favor extractive industries, agribusiness, and megaprojects have contributed to pollution, deforestation, dispossession—especially of indigenous communities⁷²—, and biodiversity loss,⁷³ placing land and environmental defenders on the front lines of violence.⁷⁴ Reducing climate vulnerability therefore requires confronting corruption, organized crime, and exclusionary development models that displace families and communities who defend their lands, forests, and rivers from encroachment.

Insecurity and Violence by State Actors and Organized Crime

Survey respondents repeatedly described climate impacts alongside direct threats or acts of violence. In Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, these threats most often came from gangs and organized crime. In the case of Nicaragua, multiple respondents described political persecution by the Sandinista party apparatus in addition to climate-related harms.

Some respondents named climate and violence separately—for example, family homes destroyed by flooding during Hurricanes Eta and Iota in addition to extortion and persecution—which may be consistent with a reading that cumulative pressures made continued life in their communities untenable. However, these responses may also be consistent with a more direct, causal interaction: for example, in countries where post-disaster displacement and precarity created openings for criminal groups to reassert territorial control, targeting residents for extortion and violence.⁷⁵ In an interview, Mexico's Refugee Commission (COMAR) confirmed that it has recognized at least one refugee status claim from Honduras involving post-hurricane displacement that exposed the applicant to a situation of generalized violence.⁷⁶ Similarly, one Salvadoran respondent related that she left agricultural work due to decreased harvests to establish a corner store, but was later forced to flee her country due to gang extortion.

These dynamics of climate aggravating existing situations of violence remain largely absent from much of the academic literature on climate migration, which often focuses on climate as a driver of local conflict due to growing resource scarcity.⁷⁷ However, in Central America, climate impacts unfold amid chronic

insecurity, discrimination, corruption, state inaction, and weak rule of law— conditions that already have pushed hundreds of thousands to migrate just in the last decade.⁷⁸

The relationship between new climate shocks and preexisting dynamics of violence, insecurity, and exclusion is emergent in accounts from Central America, including from survey respondents, key informants, and other sources reviewed. Human rights bodies like Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) have documented how climate impacts increase vulnerability to violence by deepening poverty, exacerbating political instability, and limiting access to protection.⁷⁹ Following Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020, people displaced by flooding found themselves unable to return to their homes due to threats of violence from criminal groups, according to UNHCR and COMAR.⁸⁰ Communities identify that climate-related loss of livelihoods may be a factor pushing young people toward gang involvement and illicit activities.⁸¹ And across the region, phenomena like deforestation and extractive activities that cause environmental degradation both intensify the impacts of climate change⁸² and fuel conflict that drives individuals and communities from their homes.⁸³ This study underscores the need to examine climate change as a force that magnifies existing systems of violence and exclusion, driving migration.

Health Impacts of Climate Events

Respondents reported serious health consequences linked to climate events, including infectious disease, respiratory problems, and heat-related illnesses.

The most frequently cited impacts were dengue, zika, and gastrointestinal illnesses, often associated with standing and polluted water following storms. Vector-borne illnesses, such as malaria and dengue, have also surged in Central America due to deforestation, which creates breeding conditions for mosquitos.⁸⁴ Others described asthma and respiratory problems linked to widespread wildfires, particularly in rural areas of Honduras and Guatemala.⁸⁵

Weak healthcare infrastructure, poverty, and intensifying climate events compound existing health inequities. Already under-resourced health systems struggle to respond to rising food insecurity, water scarcity, and infectious diseases that emerge or worsen due to environmental degradation and/or natural disasters.⁸⁶ Poor health infrastructure is not just a fact of living in a low-income country: in both Guatemala and Honduras in recent years, justice institutions have prosecuted massive government fraud on state health agencies and in pandemic procurement that led to delays, illness, and death for citizens

who could not access healthcare as a result.⁸⁷ Indeed, two survey respondents cited inability to access healthcare for chronic conditions in their home countries as their principal reason for migration.

Displacement itself is the primary risk factor for communicable diseases during and after natural disasters.⁸⁸ Climate shocks can also interrupt care for long-term health needs, increase health inequities, and impact child development over years and decades.⁸⁹

Gendered Impacts of Climate Change and Migration

Survey responses indicate that women disproportionately absorb the social and care burdens of climate impacts. Women were far more likely to report caring for sick and elderly family members, collecting water and food, and providing emotional support following climate events. The disparity was especially pronounced among female heads of household. Women also more frequently reported lost work, food and water insecurity, crop damage, and isolation, though the limited sample prevents definitive conclusions about this result.

Existing research shows that climate change often deepens gender inequality by further reducing women's access to land, credit, training and decision-making power.⁹⁰ For example, in Guatemala, about 85 percent of titles to agricultural land are owned by men; when men migrate, women are often unable to access programs that provide payments for ecological services or post-disaster recovery assistance.⁹¹ This dynamic increases hardship for women and may be a factor that contributes to subsequent decisions to migrate.

Climate change also increases risks of sexual and gender-based violence. Increasing droughts and deforestation may require women and girls, traditionally responsible for gathering water, to travel longer distances, taking them out of school and exposing them to greater risks of violence.⁹² According to a key informant, in rural Guatemala, when husbands migrate due to the impacts of climate change on subsistence farming, wives may be perceived as “lacking men in their lives,” leaving them vulnerable to attacks.⁹³ Natural disasters may increase gender-based violence, as displacement and separation of family members, loss of family assets and income, and the chaos and lack of public safety in the early stages of a disaster all contribute to fewer protections and greater impunity for gender-based violence.⁹⁴

State Inaction as a Contributing Factor to Displacement

Effective government response following climate events, including hurricanes and storms but also slower-onset disasters like droughts, is critical to preventing displacement. Governments are obligated to

prevent displacement,⁹⁵ and failure to ensure adequate humanitarian aid and support for rebuilding is a key factor in displacement.⁹⁶ This is particularly the case in situations of fragility, where communities are already affected by insecurity, poverty, organized crime, corruption, and land grabbing, all of which drive people to flee the study countries and are exacerbated by the impacts of climate change.

Only a quarter of survey respondents who were affected by climate events reported receiving any form of government aid. Respondents most frequently identified having received food assistance, generally on a single occasion.⁹⁷ Meanwhile, respondents rarely reported having received any support for rebuilding, evacuation, reestablishing road access and/or telecommunications, or medical needs.

Many respondents spontaneously expressed frustration with how aid was distributed, citing corruption, favoritism, or lack of government follow-through. The impacts of systemic corruption, institutional weakness, and exclusion are frequently palpable following natural disasters. In many documented cases, disaster relief funds and international aid have been mismanaged or siphoned off by government officials, eroding public trust and leaving the most vulnerable communities without support.⁹⁸ Failure to ensure disaster aid may also be intentional: in Nicaragua in recent years, disaster aid has reportedly been withheld on the basis of political affiliation, a form of political persecution.⁹⁹

Migrants' Immigration Intentions and Perceptions

At the time of the survey, over 70% of respondents intended to seek asylum in the United States, primarily through the CBP One appointment system. Migrants often waited for weeks or months in Mexico City, at that time the furthest point south at which migrants could request a CBP One appointment.

About 30% of respondents believed natural disasters could provide a basis for legal status in both Mexico and the United States, while most were unsure or believed they could not. This lack of information is consistent with studies that indicate that migrants make migration decisions in a stepwise manner, based on the information available to them at different points on the route.¹⁰⁰ It is also consistent with the reality that most people transiting through Mexico have limited access to accurate information about immigration alternatives, despite important initiatives by civil society and international organizations to address this in recent years.

In practice, moreover, the answer in both countries is conditional. Temporary Protected Status in the U.S. depends on a discretionary and backward-looking designation,¹⁰¹ while humanitarian visas in Mexico

exist in law but are rarely implemented, as discussed below. Mexico’s refugee law framework also holds promise for responding to climate-related displacement, though it remains underutilized.

Implications for Mexico’s Law and Policy Responses

Survey respondents shared how climate impacts deepen poverty, heighten exposure to violence and persecution, and undermine access to basic rights, including health, housing, clean water, and food. These impacts often place migrants’ lives and personal integrity at risk, driving decisions to migrate. This raises a key question for Mexico’s immigration and asylum system: how can climate-related vulnerabilities be made visible, assessed, and legally recognized to ensure access to protection for those who need it?

Mexico operates a dual system of protection and migration control. The Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR) adjudicates asylum and complementary protection claims, while the National Migration Institute (INM) oversees immigration enforcement and humanitarian and temporary visas. Although Mexico’s legal framework provides comparatively broad avenues for protection, these pathways operate within a policy environment that prioritizes migration enforcement over access to rights.

This section examines how climate-related displacement fits within Mexico’s existing legal framework and policy context and outlines opportunities to strengthen protection based on survey findings and recommendations made by key informants. It first addresses refugee adjudication and structural barriers within the enforcement-focused migration system. It then turns to humanitarian and temporary pathways that can also provide legal status.

Protection Pathways in Mexico

Mexico’s immigration and refugee laws were reformed in 2011. Today, the refugee law fully incorporates the 1951 Convention definition¹⁰² and the expanded Cartagena Declaration definition,¹⁰³ alongside strong complementary and diplomatic asylum protections.¹⁰⁴ The Migration Law also establishes multiple humanitarian and temporary statuses that are facially relevant to people displaced by climate-related harms, discussed below.

Asylum claims in Mexico have grown exponentially in the past decade. Between 2016 and 2024, asylum applications rose from under 10,000 to roughly 80,000 per year, peaking above 140,000 in 2023.¹⁰⁵ Over

the same period, migrant detentions also increased substantially, reaching nearly one million in 2024.¹⁰⁶ Honduras remained the largest asylum-seeking nationality in 2024.¹⁰⁷ The growing demand on Mexico's immigration and asylum systems makes effective access to protection procedures and timely, high-quality adjudication, priorities.

While Mexico's legal framework creates pathways for migrants in need of international and humanitarian protections, a key challenge is that access and implementation are constrained by enforcement and limited institutional capacity.

A Migration Policy that Prioritizes Detention and Deportation Over Access to Protection

Even with strong laws in effect, access to protection is shaped by enforcement. Key informants described an overarching policy environment that prioritizes containment—seeking to limit movement within Mexico and prevent people from traveling northward—, detention, and deportation, often in alignment with U.S. border externalization strategies.¹⁰⁸ This environment constrains access to protection for all migrants, including those displaced by climate-related harms.

Fifteen years after the enactment of the Law on Refugees, advocates continue to raise serious concerns about COMAR's capacity to deliver timely, well-reasoned decisions¹⁰⁹ and about the practical accessibility of the process.¹¹⁰ COMAR has also been chronically underfunded, especially when compared with resources allocated to immigration enforcement, even as applications have increased dramatically.¹¹¹ Advocates in Mexico have won significant reforms to restrictive provisions of the migration laws, though they continue to fight for implementation,¹¹² and contest other laws.¹¹³ However, migrants seeking international protection and regular migration status in Mexico face many challenges that are not a product of defective laws, but weak or absent implementation that permits arbitrary enforcement.

Migration enforcement in Mexico is also increasingly militarized,¹¹⁴ and has become increasingly arbitrary in recent years, using methods and procedures not regulated by law, such as “busing” of migrants from north to south.¹¹⁵ The unstable international funding environment for COMAR, UNHCR, and civil society organizations will also affect protection for climate-displaced migrants in Mexico.¹¹⁶ This overarching policy favoring detention and deportation has been consistent over more than a decade of governance by parties of all political stripes in both Mexico and the US, and represents the backdrop against which apparent advances in the legal environment for migration and asylum-seeking in Mexico must be measured.

Improving Refugee Adjudication for Climate-Displaced Individuals

Within this challenging environment, key informants—including legal service providers, humanitarian groups, UNHCR, and COMAR officials—identified concrete steps to improve how existing standards are applied when climate harms intersect with violence, poverty, discrimination, and weak state protection.

In brief, COMAR and INM should strengthen data practices and implement measures that support consistent application of the law in both refugee and humanitarian decisions. They should also develop clear internal guidance—including training, precedential decisions where appropriate, and updated analytical tools—that helps adjudicators recognize how climate change can contribute to threats to life and integrity.

Identification and Registration of Cases

A recurring recommendation from civil society, international organizations, and governments is to improve the quality of data on climate-related displacement.¹¹⁷ Mexico is well-positioned to improve official statistics by capturing climate-related factors in the COMAR process. In its statistics on the bases of claims for international protection—both at initial registration and at final decision—COMAR should include climate-related harms as a factor assessed in the case.¹¹⁸

Given that a finding of this study—supported, among others, by the interviews with COMAR—is that it is difficult to evaluate climate as a factor or reason for migration without a detailed engagement with an individual’s story, COMAR should pay particular attention to discrepancies that are likely to arise in reported statistics at the registration stage (based on a five-minute interaction) and the resolution stage (following written proceedings and an oral interview). It should use that analysis to improve interviewing practices and adjudication tools, in dialogue with civil society and UNHCR.

Uses of Objective Country of Origin Information

A key point at which adjudicators can integrate analysis of climate factors is objective Country of Origin Information (COI). In asylum adjudication, an individual’s narrative of the factual bases of their international protection claim—the persecution suffered or feared—is considered alongside “objective country of origin information” to aid the adjudicator to place the individual’s story in a country context that can help to establish the credibility of the allegations, severity of risk, and other aspects of the claim.

In Mexico, COI is produced by the Foreign Ministry (*Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*) and supplemented by reports from COMAR’s internal COI unit on the most common asylum-seeking nationalities.¹¹⁹ Key informants suggested that COI reports should systematically include information on

climate-related conditions that affect the rights to life and integrity, such as storm impacts on housing and potable water, drought effects on subsistence farming and groundwater, disease outbreaks linked to floods, recorded sea level rise, and the adequacy of state response. This can help adjudicators evaluate both the seriousness of harm and the likelihood of future risk to fundamental rights that may entitle the individual to protection in Mexico.

Moreover, COMAR should consider obtaining expert scientific input regarding the climate impacts that are scientifically likely to worsen absent significant global or national-level mitigation or adaption measures (for example, regarding the advance of sea level rise, or changes in crop growing zones due to rising temperatures). This can inform assessments of “reasonable foreseeability” of climate-related threats to life and integrity.

Analysis of Refugee Claims Under the Cartagena Declaration and Complementary Protection

A growing body of work examines how refugee law can apply to climate-related displacement.¹²⁰ This section does not replicate that literature (see Annex II), but highlights how climate harms may be relevant to Mexico’s existing standards, including the 1951 refugee definition, the Cartagena definition,¹²¹ and Complementary Protection.¹²²

Climate factors may be especially relevant under the Cartagena refugee definition—where a person’s life safety, or freedom is threatened by generalized violence, massive human rights violations, or other circumstances that seriously disturb public order (among others)—and under Complementary Protection, where return would threaten life or expose a person to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Both survey respondents and key informants demonstrated how a single case might establish eligibility for multiple forms of protection. In practice, asylum adjudicators must assess whether climate-related harms—alone or in combination with violence and weak state protection—place an individual’s life or integrity at risk, and whether the state can and will provide effective protection from these dangers. A severe storm that destroys housing and disrupts access to clean water, sanitation, and food may contribute to—though it may not, on its own, be sufficient to constitute—“circumstances disturbing the public order.” In some cases, those same facts may also support a Complementary Protection claim based on threats to life or integrity. In these cases, Mexico must evaluate eligibility for and grant refugee status where warranted, before evaluating Complementary Protection.¹²³

In Mexico, the most meaningful practical difference between recognition as a refugee under the 1951 or Cartagena definition, and a grant of Complementary Protection, is that recognition as a refugee grants additional rights. Whereas recognition as a refugee entitles an individual to permanent residence and family reunification, a grant of Complementary Protection does not entitle the individual to seek family reunification.¹²⁴ Similarly, individuals recognized as refugees are exempt from some requirements for naturalization (e.g. apostilles), whereas those with Complementary Protection are not, making the naturalization process somewhat more cumbersome and costly. The Inter-American Court has determined that States are obligated “to grant international protection when the person qualifies for it, either under the criteria of the traditional definition or the expanded Cartagena definition.”¹²⁵ Where an asylum-seeker meets the Cartagena definition, COMAR should grant refugee status under this legal provision, rather than Complementary Protection.

At the same time, if Complementary Protection is to function as a meaningful tool for protection in climate-related cases, lawmakers and advocates should consider reforms that strengthen the rights attached to Complementary Protection, particularly family unity.

Improving Access to Humanitarian Statuses and Ensuring Local Integration

Not all people displaced—or in danger of displacement—by the impacts of climate change will be eligible for international protection. Moreover, there are compelling reasons to expand other pathways to legal status for climate displacement. From the viewpoint of states, these include procedural economy and an interest in reaping the economic, social, and other benefits of labor, educational, familial, and other migration. From the viewpoint of individuals, these include empowerment to relocate proactively well in advance of climate disasters, avoiding loss, damage, and danger, and the ability to plan ahead to pursue life plans and projects.

Mexico’s law currently establishes several categories of temporary protection for climate-related reasons, which could be better-employed to ensure access to migration status. INM should develop clear, affirmative internal guidelines to ensure regular and foreseeable adjudication of these statuses, and ensure that the law is enforced and applied.

Temporary Protections

Mexico’s Migration Law includes a temporary humanitarian status designed to respond to situations of heightened vulnerability, including climate-related harm. This status—a one-year, renewable protection

known as the *tarjeta de visitante por razones humanitarias* (TVRH)—permits works authorization and free movement within the country, though it does not provide a pathway to permanent residence.¹²⁶ It may be granted when a person’s vulnerability makes deportation difficult or impossible, including where their “life or integrity is at risk due to violence or natural disaster.”¹²⁷

In practice, however, this provision is rarely applied and lacks clear eligibility criteria, leading to arbitrary denials.¹²⁸ To operationalize this protection, INM should issue internal guidance (such as a *circular* or *lineamientos internos*) clarifying evidentiary standards and decision-making criteria for disaster- and climate-related cases.

Additional temporary entry options also exist under Mexico’s Migration Law Regulations but remain underused. These regulations authorize short-term entry visas—for up to 180 days—when a person’s life is in danger due to violence or natural disaster.¹²⁹ Yet this tool has been rarely deployed. Information obtained by IMUMI in 2024 indicates that between 2012 to 2023, only 143 visas were issued under all subsections of the relevant provision, with just eight granted to nationals of northern Central America.¹³⁰ This gap points to a concrete opportunity to expand lawful entry pathways in response to sudden-onset climate disasters.

Work Authorization and Access to Rights

Climate-related displacement will increasingly require durable solutions for people displaced across borders. Traditionally, these include voluntary return, local integration in country of destination, or resettlement in a third country.¹³¹ For local integration to function as a genuine and rights-compliant solution, states must ensure non-discriminatory access to core rights, including employment, social security, healthcare, education, and banking services.¹³² Equally important is the protection of family unity and the best interests of children, including through effective and accessible family reunification processes.¹³³ Without these safeguards, temporary or humanitarian statuses risk becoming precarious stopgaps rather than stable solutions. Strengthening access to rights is therefore essential to ensuring that migration pathways—whether refugee-based or humanitarian—offer meaningful protection for people displaced by climate-related harm.

Improving Interview Processes to Detect and Analyze Climate-Related Displacement

A recurring challenge in migration research is that the way questions are asked can shape the answers migrants give. This dilemma is captured in the saying, “*la dueña de la pregunta es la dueña de la*

respuesta” (“the master of the question is the master of the answer”). In practice, interviewers’ assumptions and priorities can condition how migrants tell their stories and may subtly suggest what kind of response is expected.¹³⁴ All key informants interviewed expressed that this is a particular problem in understanding climate migration, as lawyers, humanitarian workers, and researchers, accustomed to asking questions about violence designed to evaluate eligibility for refugee or other humanitarian status, fail to ask questions about climate, leaving the impacts of climate change on migration decisions “invisible.”¹³⁵ Several also mentioned that it is especially difficult to reliably elicit information about climate as a cause of migration within a brief, intake-type interaction.

This study demonstrates that asking targeted questions can elicit relevant information about the links between climate impacts and migration even during a brief conversation, but interviewers should always be attentive to question design and terminology. The survey instrument was designed to elicit information about the role that respondents perceive climate to play in their decision to migrate through multiple open-ended and closed questions. The disparities in responses to similar questions, though small, suggest that the phrasing of the question may influence the answer.¹³⁶ This was so even as the respondents’ own open-ended answers vividly described climate’s often slow role in worsening job prospects, disrupting food systems, destroying property, harming health, and intensifying individual vulnerabilities to persecution. This provides additional context to consider how respondents may assess and articulate their own migration stories differently, even over the course of a single interaction. Likewise, use of unfamiliar terminology can influence responses.¹³⁷

However, this study suggests that there is no substitute for detailed conversations to understand the causes of individuals’ journeys, including the role of climate impacts. The survey also showed that even respondents who articulated clear climate-related causes of migration, such as crop damage and failing harvests due to changing climate patterns and extreme weather, frequently explained to the survey team that they were “seeking better opportunities” or migrating “to help the family”—answers that might easily be misinterpreted as purely “economic” migration. The survey questions also could not reveal the narrative relationship between some reported events (e.g. having been impacted by a hurricane and having experienced persecution by organized crime). While targeted questions about climate can help to elicit relevant information, more detailed conversations to understand the specific role of climate in an individual’s migration story and move beyond apparent causes linked to poverty, economic necessity, and family reunification are necessary for immigration representation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This report has examined, through survey data, desk research, and key informant interviews, how the impacts of climate change are driving migration from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. The study found no cases, either in the survey population or in the literature, of people being driven to flee their countries solely due to the impacts of climate change. Rather, it showed that environmental conditions constantly intersected with and exacerbated other, generally preexisting, situations of violence, poverty, or discrimination.

Recognizing the role of climate as an additional factor that can drive cross-border migration offers great analytical power both in examining the forced nature of movement and the role of government action or inaction in placing life and limb at risk. The changing climate is placing additional stress on individuals, households, and communities who become food insecure, un- or underemployed, homeless, or unable to access potable water. Women, children, the elderly, and *campesino*, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities are differentially affected by these impacts. These privations can be life-threatening, especially where governments are unable or unwilling to act. Respondents explained how failing harvests, rising food prices, home destruction caused by hurricanes and floods, and other impacts contributed to their decision to migrate. Understanding how climate events can affect access to basic rights like food, water, housing, and health should impact assessments of the voluntariness of movement.

Respondents also outlined the role of violence and persecution in driving them to migrate, including persecution by gangs, organized crime, and the governing party in Nicaragua. For some, losing agricultural work led them to seek other work, leaving them more vulnerable to extortion. Others were directly threatened by organized crime for their resistance to land dispossession. Often, organized criminal groups depend on state inaction, or complicity, to carry out their activities. This study highlighted the links between drug trafficking, deforestation, and corruption in driving both environmental degradation and violence that force individuals and families to flee their homes. Similarly, organized crime groups may follow the maxim “never let a good crisis go to waste,” using the aftermath of natural disasters to increase territorial control. These dynamics demonstrate links between growing economic precarity and exposure to extreme violence, on one hand, and government failure to protect its population from these threats, on the other. The result is increasing risk of displacement.

These kinds of situated, contextualized analyses can improve representation and adjudication of international protection claims. In Mexico, there is enormous promise to improve the legal analysis of

refugee and complementary protection claims based on climate factors. Advocates and adjudicators should be attentive to how climate change and natural disasters contribute to refugee eligibility, particularly under the Cartagena definition. Creating additional internal guidance and training can improve equitable and foreseeable adjudication of both refugee status and humanitarian and other temporary statuses. This is so even as Mexico's broader policy environment that favors swift detention and deportation, and lack of robust procedural guarantees for asylum-seekers, limits access for protection-seekers.

There are many actions that Mexican institutions —principally COMAR and INM— as well as legal services organizations and UNHCR could take in the short and medium term to improve access to international protection and regular migration status for people displaced by the impacts of climate change. We make the following recommendations to actors in Mexico to address migration due to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation:

Improve study, data gathering and analysis of climate migration

To the Mexican government, international organizations, and civil society:

- Carry out studies to evaluate the effects of climate change and natural disasters as causes of migration. Collaborate with civil society and academia in countries of origin to better understand climate factors. Identify priority countries and/or regions for study (e.g. the “Dry Corridor;” coastal regions). Use these studies to formulate legislative and public policy responses, and to inform litigation and adjudication of individual cases.

To COMAR:

- Improve collection of statistics on climate drivers as an element of refugee claims, both at case registration and following case resolution. Develop criteria and guidelines for personnel to gather these statistics, publish them periodically, and periodically review implementation and findings, in collaboration with UNHCR and civil society, in order to continuously improve this exercise.
- Continue regular dialogue with civil society on climate migration, including through the UNHCR working group on climate migration.
- Expand proactive transparency by routinely publishing redacted versions of case resolutions, including on climate migration.

To UNHCR

- Create and fund a follow-up mechanism for the Chile Action Plan (2024-2034), ensuring participation of civil society. Ensure that this follow-up mechanism includes a specific working group or other spaces for dialogue on climate migration and protection.

Combat racism and xenophobia, and ensure an intersectional approach

To the Mexican government, international organizations, and civil society:

- Identify and develop initiatives for groups with differentiated needs or heightened vulnerabilities that subject them to the disproportionate impact of climate migration. These groups include Indigenous populations, Afro-descendant populations, women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and victims of gender and sexual violence.
- Adopt an anti-racist approach to addressing human mobility caused by the effects of climate change. Reframe existing national discourse and migration policies rooted in racist, xenophobic, or dehumanizing values and language.

Improve access to international protection for climate-displaced individuals

Incorporate information about the impacts of climate change into the asylum process

To the Mexican government:

- Recognize climate change as a cause of migration to and within Mexico, in order to create specialized laws and public policy to ensure access to services and protection.

To the Ministry of Foreign Relations (SRE):

- Create guidelines for collaboration with countries of origin to request contextual information that addresses the effects of climate change and natural disasters as causes of migration.

To SRE and COMAR:

- Incorporate information about climate disasters and the impacts of climate change in Country-of-Origin Information.

Improve agency capacity to analyze and apply existing law

To COMAR and INM:

- Further professionalize staff and provide training on the causal links between the effects of climate change and human mobility.
- Develop institutional guidelines and strengthen capacities so that staff are able to ask interview questions aimed at identifying displacement associated with the effects of climate change.

Consider the impacts of climate change when evaluating eligibility for refugee protection

To COMAR:

- Include the context of climate-related displacement in the protection analysis framework for determining refugee status.
- Ensure analysis of refugee eligibility consistent with international standards, including Inter-American jurisprudence, universal standards, and UNHCR guidance.
- Incorporate analysis of the impacts of climate change into the interpretation of the elements of the Cartagena Declaration refugee definition. Analyze the role of State action or omission in the face of impacts of climate change as contributing to circumstances that constitute “massive violations of human rights,” “circumstances seriously disturbing the public order,” or other subsections of the definition.
- Given the broad potential applicability of the Cartagena refugee definition to the climate context, ensure that adjudicator guidelines clearly mandate evaluation under Cartagena before evaluation of complementary protection, and grant refugee status under the Cartagena definition where analysis under this definition is met.

To civil society:

- Incorporate questions designed to inquire about the impacts of climate change in intake and case evaluation processes. Incorporate argumentation about the impacts of climate change into immigration representation. Consider the impacts of both slow- and sudden-onset climate events in developing legal arguments regarding eligibility for refugee status, complementary protection, and other immigration pathways.

Consider the impacts of climate change when evaluating eligibility for complementary protection

To COMAR:

- Include climate factors as circumstances that place life and integrity at risk in the evaluation of complementary protection claims. When evaluating a complementary protection claim, evaluate the right to a life with dignity and the right to freedom from torture broadly, in line with Inter-American and universal system jurisprudence.
- Affirm the applicability of the non-refoulement obligation to climate-displaced persons, where return to their country of origin exposes them to risks to their personal integrity and safety. Grant complementary protection to climate-displaced persons where the elements of the definition are met.

Improve access to other pathways to regular status

To INM:

- Develop internal guidelines that interpret the legal provisions for granting humanitarian statuses related to the adverse effects of natural disasters to ensure regular and foreseeable application of the law.
- Ensure that the humanitarian visitor card (TVRH) is routinely granted to individuals who meet the criteria established in law and regulation, including asylum-seekers and those impacted by natural disasters, and not discretionarily or arbitrarily denied.

To the Executive Branch:

- Incorporate immigration regularization for individuals displaced by the impacts of climate change into national public policy, such as the National Development Plan and other Interior Ministry (Secretaría de Gobernación, SEGOB) programs.

To the Legislative Branch

- Ensure adequate funding for COMAR to ensure effective access to asylum and timely, high-quality case resolution.

Annex 1: Climate Conditions in Study Countries

This annex surveys how climate conditions intersect with the existing social, political, and economic order in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua to drive migration from each country. It contextualizes the climate conditions of the Central American isthmus and the “Dry Corridor” that stretches across the region, before surveying each country. These summaries are intended to highlight some ways in which the impacts of climate change intersect in each national context with legacies (and current realities) of authoritarianism, corruption, generalized violence, poverty and inequality, anti-Indigenous and Afrodescendant discrimination, gender-based discrimination, and other dynamics that drive migration from each country and may be relevant to analysis of international protection needs.

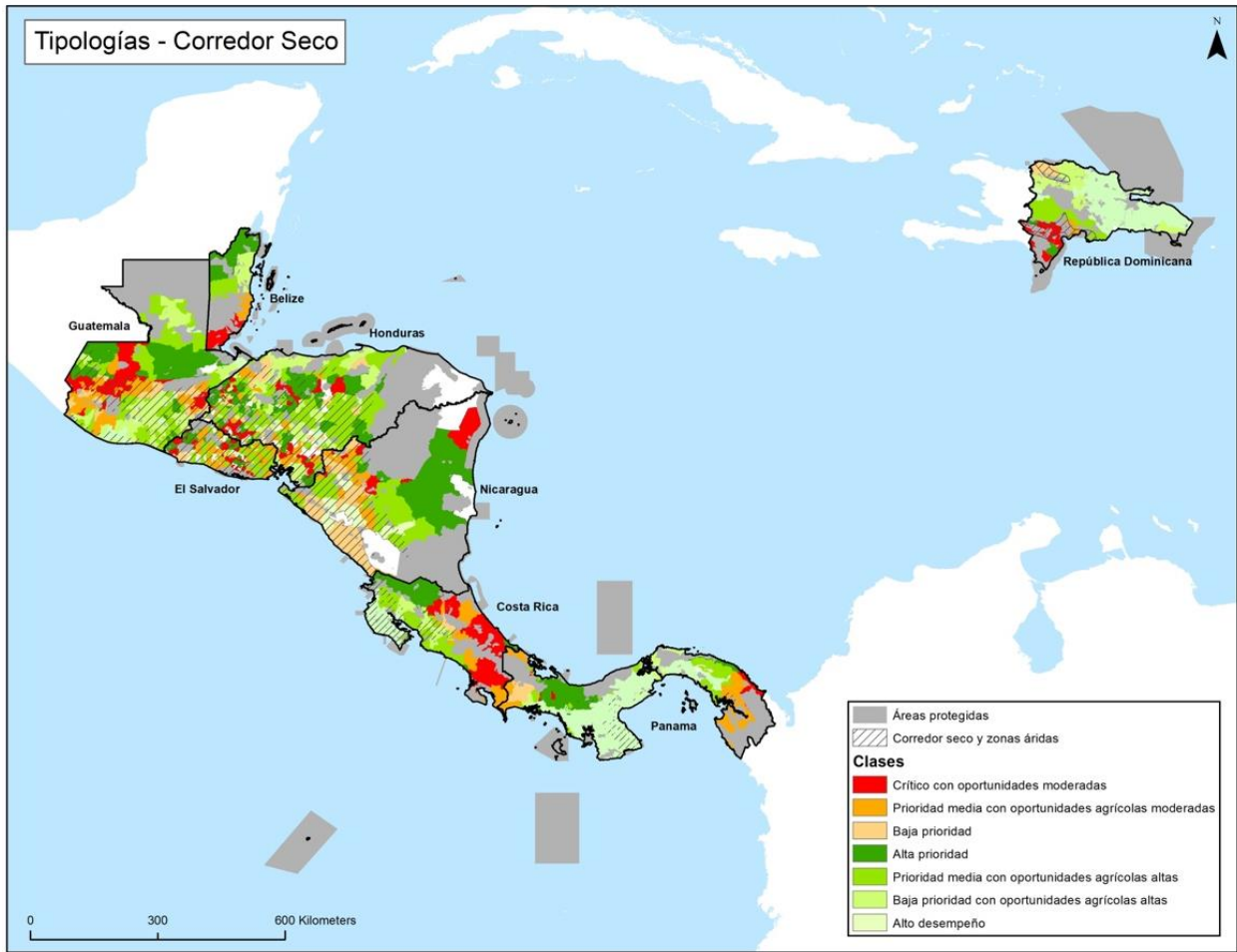
Note on the “Dry Corridor” and Climate Conditions in Central America

Central America, a mountainous region located along a tropical isthmus between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, is highly exposed to the effects of climate change. Increasingly intense hurricanes and storms, flooding, landslides, sea level rise, erratic rainfall patterns, drought, desertification, temperature extremes, and wildfires, as well as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, all pose risks to life and subsistence for residents of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.¹³⁸

The isthmus is vulnerable to destructive hurricanes and tropical storms. In 1998, Hurricane Mitch devastated Honduras and Nicaragua, causing at least 11,000 deaths and leaving millions homeless and displaced.¹³⁹ In 2020, back-to-back hurricanes Eta and Iota struck Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala, affecting over 7.5 million and displacing at least 1.5 million people.¹⁴⁰ Over half of all Hondurans were affected by floods that year.¹⁴¹

The area known as the “Dry Corridor,” which is home to over 10 million people—largely subsistence farmers—also extends across much of Central America.¹⁴² This region sees erratic rainfall and increasing drought, and is vulnerable to climate-related disasters due to both geography and “socioeconomic and institutional weaknesses.”¹⁴³ An estimated 500,000 people are projected to migrate annually from the Dry

Corridor by 2030 due to environmental factors, particularly land degradation and the collapse of agriculture.¹⁴⁴



Map of "Dry Corridor" areas. Source: FAO (2023).

In this region, hurricanes and tropical storms frequently flood agricultural lands, while desertification depletes the ability of soils to regenerate quickly enough to sustain subsistence farming.¹⁴⁵ Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns lead to shifts in growing seasons, disrupting agricultural cycles.¹⁴⁶ These impacts reduce land availability and quality.¹⁴⁷ Land damaged by flooding, desertification, and other impacts may decrease in value, intensifying land disputes and challenges to property rights.¹⁴⁸ Environmental pollution and soil degradation have led to massive reductions in crop yields in drought-affected areas of the Dry Corridor.¹⁴⁹ Even the most optimistic projections forecast 20 percent reductions in maize and bean crop yields by the end of this century.¹⁵⁰ Four of five staple crops harvested in this region—maize, coffee, beans, and sugarcane—are expected to experience reduced yields due to climate change.¹⁵¹ Farmers have adapted in some areas by planting new crops like yucca that are more drought-

tolerant, though this will represent an enormous cultural loss to communities that have planted corn and beans since time immemorial: in Maya and other Central American indigenous cosmovisions, the first humans were created from corn.¹⁵²

More than one million *campesino*, indigenous, and *jornalero* families in the Dry Corridor rely on subsistence farming.¹⁵³ About 80 percent of these communities live below the poverty line.¹⁵⁴ Reliance on rain-fed agriculture, lack of access to modern irrigation systems, and deficient state water management leaves rural groups particularly vulnerable to the changing climate.¹⁵⁵

While subsistence farmers represent 60% of all farmers in the region, they own just 6.5% of the growing surface, much of which is less fertile, subject to poor growing conditions, and low-yield due to a lack of irrigation.¹⁵⁶ Unequal access to high-quality agricultural land is rooted in colonial histories of forced displacement and dispossession of indigenous communities,¹⁵⁷ and inequality persists today.¹⁵⁸ As a result, *campesino* and indigenous communities are forced to cultivate in locations that are prone to soil erosion and degradation. For indigenous and traditional Afrodescendant communities who rely on communal lands and natural resources, land grabbing, environmental degradation, and poor legal protection of collective land rights all intersect with the impacts of climate change to threaten indigenous ways of life.¹⁵⁹

Communities in the Dry Corridor thus find themselves caught in a vicious cycle: climate change increases the need to migrate due to worsening land conditions, yet inhibits capacity to do so by draining the resources needed to migrate.¹⁶⁰

El Salvador

In El Salvador, government policies that sanction the overuse and exploitation of natural resources, and continuing state and organized crime violence under a state of exception in place since 2022, intersect with the impacts of climate change.

El Salvador, a small country of 6.4 million, has seen high rates of migration since its civil war (1979-1992).¹⁶¹ Today, an estimated 25 percent of all people born in El Salvador live abroad, the vast majority in the United States.¹⁶² In recent decades, increasing gang violence has been met largely with *mano dura* policies. In 2015, violence peaked with a murder rate of 103 per 100,000, the highest rate in the world in a country not at war.¹⁶³

This rate fell in subsequent years, but has declined markedly since 2019 under the government of Nayib Bukele. In 2020, his government engaged in truce negotiations with gang leaders;¹⁶⁴ then, in March 2022, it imposed a state of emergency, suspending constitutional guarantees and detaining over 80,000 people on suspicion of gang association in inhumane prison conditions—of whom at least 10 percent, according to Bukele himself, are innocent.¹⁶⁵ In 2023, the homicide rate reached an all-time low of 2.4 per 100,000.¹⁶⁶

President Bukele has pursued wholesale state reform, winning reelection in 2024 despite the constitutional ban on reelection, rewriting the constitution to allow fast-track amendment by the party-controlled legislature, packing high courts with loyal judges, firing the independent attorney general, and passing criminal law reforms that suspend due process.¹⁶⁷ During the state of emergency, El Salvador's prison population has risen to over 105,000, or about 1.7 percent of the population; arbitrary arrests, abuse of pretrial detention, severe overcrowding, torture, disappearances, and starvation conditions inside prisons are serious concerns.¹⁶⁸ While crime rates have dropped, citizens may continue to fear state-sponsored persecution under an increasingly authoritarian regime.

The president has also pursued an aggressive development and foreign investment agenda, buying up beachfront, building a new airport on environmentally fragile land, and launching a “Bitcoin city.”¹⁶⁹ People who are internally displaced, including by megaprojects, risk being considered “suspicious” newcomers (i.e. presumed gang members, gang affiliated or otherwise socially undesirable) by neighbors or the police, and detained.¹⁷⁰ Multiple Salvadoran survey respondents indicated that discrimination “*por pobre*” (“for being poor”) or “due to my tattoos” was a reason for migration, indicating continuing risks to people targeted for social cleansing.

In December 2024, the government reversed a 2017 ban on metals mining.¹⁷¹ Bukele's interest in mining is part of a broader effort to promote and secure international investment for industries including cryptocurrency, tourism, and fossil fuel exploration—plans that risk exacerbating forced displacement, social conflict, economic inequality, and land and water shortages.¹⁷² The government has aggressively criminalized high-profile anti-mining activists working to protect the Lempa River—the country's largest river and main water source—from pollution caused by open-pit mining.¹⁷³ The IACHR has denounced criminalization and murders of environmental defenders in the country who seek to protect water sources; contest logging, urbanization of water recharge areas, and pollution; and maintain community water management boards.¹⁷⁴

Despite President Bukele's high-profile investments in cryptocurrency and other industries, poverty in El Salvador has increased;¹⁷⁵ additional cuts to social services are likely to exacerbate this situation.¹⁷⁶ Increasing poverty creates additional pressure to migrate; more than 1 in 4 Salvadorans live in a household receiving remittances.¹⁷⁷

As climate variability affects agricultural yields and the cost of land and agricultural inputs rises, *campesinos* may decide to migrate internationally given limited economic opportunities in El Salvador's cities.¹⁷⁸ Most *campesinos*' plots average just 1.2 hectares, and are disproportionately affected by drought as only 1.4 percent of El Salvador's land is irrigated.¹⁷⁹ Land tenure insecurity has increased rapidly in some areas; in Ahuachapán Department, the number of farmers who rented land to grow crops nearly tripled from 2007 to 2017.¹⁸⁰ Water scarcity associated with drought is aggravated by extractive mining practices and agrochemicals, which consume water and contaminate the water supply.¹⁸¹

According to the World Bank, weather-related events and other hazards cause annual losses of around 2.5 percent of GDP.¹⁸² Insufficient government support following natural disasters can lead to displacement in the short, medium, and long term. One recent IDB paper finds that heat waves significantly decrease corn production and are strongly correlated with out-migration.¹⁸³ El Salvador has experienced three severe droughts in the past decade, in 2012, 2014-2015, and 2018. Droughts and rising temperatures "are driving incomes lower but pushing food insecurity and migration higher."¹⁸⁴

Guatemala

Guatemala's modern history has been marked by conflict, authoritarianism, and insecurity; today, climate change intersects with the impacts of extractive projects, organized crime, drug trafficking, and continued anti-indigenous discrimination to drive migration.

Following the 1954 CIA-backed military coup, armed resistance to the government led to civil war and genocide of some Maya indigenous communities (1960-1996).¹⁸⁵ Since that time and throughout the 2010s, high inequality and threats from organized crime have pushed individuals to flee, while a series of high-level corruption scandals revealed how systemic corruption deprives ordinary Guatemalans of an adequate standard of living, from decent healthcare to safe roads and infrastructure.¹⁸⁶ This led to backlash and a full-scale assault on anticorruption efforts in the country by economic and political elites; today, journalists, anti-corruption prosecutors, judges, and human rights defenders face criminal charges

and exile.¹⁸⁷ This persecution by other branches has continued even under the presidency of left-leaning Bernardo Arévalo.¹⁸⁸

While the 1996 Peace Accords marked the end of the civil war, many of its promises, including land reform, have never been implemented.¹⁸⁹ Guatemala's population is about 44 percent indigenous and has been systematically marginalized since the colonial era, restricting communities' access to land, resources, and political representation.¹⁹⁰ While one percent of Guatemalans own 40 percent of the nation's wealth, 59 percent live in poverty.¹⁹¹

Today, climate change disproportionately impacts indigenous and *campesino* rural populations as falling yields and the increasing threat of crop failure,¹⁹² coupled with insecure land tenure, short-term leasing, and the low agricultural minimum wage have compounded high rates of poverty and food insecurity.¹⁹³ Studies indicate that communities recognize “concentration of land for industrial agriculture and cattle ranching” as an important source of conflict, as “limited availability of land and insecure land tenure” increase social and economic stress.¹⁹⁴

Communities have received little state aid following climate disasters, including flooding caused by hurricanes Eta and Iota.¹⁹⁵ During the record 2024 fire season, communities depended on remittances where state firefighting services did not reach rural and indigenous communities.¹⁹⁶

Organized crime also affects both land tenure and security of communities. The expansion of drug trafficking in Petén and across northern Guatemala—much of which is protected national forest and indigenous land—has caused violent displacement and eviction of *campesinos* and indigenous communities and transfer of deforested lands to private ownership.¹⁹⁷ Across the country, communities are displaced “by extractive projects and monocultures,” and state failure to protect land rights facilitates conflict and violent displacement.¹⁹⁸ Large-scale agro-industrial, mining, energy, forestry, urban development, and tourism projects, are also a key driver of evictions and internal displacement of rural communities in Guatemala.¹⁹⁹

Honduras

Today, the impacts of climate change in Honduras increase precarity and intersect with phenomena like megaprojects, gang violence, and drug trafficking to contribute to force Hondurans to flee.

In the 1980s, the country experienced military dictatorship, *coups d'état*, and U.S. intervention.²⁰⁰ In 2009, a military coup led to years of political unrest and repression, as the government declared Honduras “open for business” and aggressively sought foreign investment, while communities that opposed extractive projects came under threat.²⁰¹ In 2012, homicide rates reached 90.4 per 100,000, the highest in the world, due to gang and other violence;²⁰² as of 2023, they had declined to 31 per 100,000.²⁰³

Former President Juan Orlando Hernández (2014-2022) was prosecuted for drug trafficking by the US upon leaving office, in proceedings that unveiled government complicity in drug trafficking and corruption.²⁰⁴ Corruption and institutional capture pose a fundamental challenge to Honduras’ ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change, as these “further divert resources and distort investments away from public services, foster inequalities, and ultimately limit the accumulation of human capital, pushing many to migrate.”²⁰⁵

Inequality increases the burden of insecurity on the poor and marginalized in Honduras.²⁰⁶ Honduras has high rates of sexual and gender-based violence;²⁰⁷ young people are particularly exposed to and at risk of violence.²⁰⁸ Hondurans also experience high rates of forced internal displacement due to “generalized violence.”²⁰⁹ However, internal relocation is often dangerous or not viable, as it “entails two major risks: higher vulnerability to new natural disasters and exposition to violence and criminality.”²¹⁰

In this context, climate impacts exacerbate both poverty and insecurity. Journalists have documented how climate change-induced hunger, flooding, and droughts displace Hondurans from rural areas to gang-controlled urban neighborhoods, where they face new insecurity.²¹¹ UNHCR has documented how people displaced by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020 encountered threats from organized crime in the neighborhoods they were displaced to, or were in some cases barred by organized crime from returning to their homes once the floodwaters receded.²¹²

Honduras faces serious climate risks yet has relatively less capacity or preparedness to address them.²¹³ After hurricanes Eta and Iota made landfall in November 2020,²¹⁴ aid distributed was reported to be insufficient and late in arriving.²¹⁵ Some impacted people received just 500 lempiras (around \$20) in government assistance.²¹⁶

On the coasts, fishing livelihoods are threatened by rising sea levels. In Tornabé, Atlántida, on the northern Caribbean coast, increasing water temperatures cause “coral bleaching” and declining fish populations.²¹⁷ Cedeño, on the southern Pacific coast, has seen the “high-tide mark . . . rise by more than one metre each year, flooding houses, restaurants and hotels, and pushing tourists away.”²¹⁸

The survey found that more Honduran respondents than any other nationality report that they are already moving due to climate impacts. Others have found the same. UNHCR itself now describes its work in Honduras as occurring “in a complex context of generalized violence, human rights violations, disasters, and the impacts of climate change, which are causing [] forced displacement . . .”²¹⁹ The UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change has documented communities in the Dry Corridor where 80% of the community has already emigrated.²²⁰

Mining, illegal logging, and other extractive activities also affect Honduras’ ability to adapt to climate change. The IACHR has found that many mining and water concessions have been granted without meeting environmental standards.²²¹ Extractive industries can also foment social conflict that may force individuals to migrate. Honduras is “one of the most dangerous countries in the world for environmental activism.”²²² Examples across the country abound, from the Bajo Aguán region²²³ to criminalization and violence against the Guapinol “water defenders” opposing mining in the Carlos Escaleras National Park²²⁴ to murders and enforced disappearances of Garifuna land defenders in Triunfo de la Cruz and elsewhere.²²⁵

Deforestation is another critical issue, as it exacerbates the effects of climate change.²²⁶ Government failure to act abets deforestation in regions like the Mosquitia.²²⁷ Deforestation can also be caused by the spread of drought-induced disease. Since 2014, the *gorgojo de pino*, or pine bark beetle, which reproduces much more rapidly in warming temperatures, has devastated Honduran forests.²²⁸ Global Forest Watch has estimated that humid primary forest land in Honduras has decreased by 22 percent, and other reports find that 25 percent of the Mosquitia forest has already been lost.²²⁹

Nicaragua

Against a context of dictatorship and political persecution, climate change exacerbates the challenges that Nicaraguans face and contributes to force migration. Since 2018, an escalating political crisis has forced hundreds of thousands to flee,²³⁰ as the Ortega-Murillo regime has used arbitrary detention, solitary confinement, and torture against political opponents.²³¹ From 2018 to 2022, more than 260,000 Nicaraguans—over 4 percent of the population—fled;²³² as of 2024, UNHCR counted nearly 380,000 Nicaraguan refugees and asylum-seekers worldwide.²³³

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America but one of the most sparsely populated, with large tropical forest reserves on the Caribbean coast. Hurricanes, drought, crop failure, and environmental

degradation caused by deforestation and mining all contribute to displacement.²³⁴ Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020 caused widespread destruction and displacement, particularly along the Atlantic coast and in the north.²³⁵ The Miskito indigenous community was particularly impacted.²³⁶ Poverty, aggravated by inflation, also drives displacement.²³⁷

Since 2014, droughts exacerbated by the El Niño weather effect have severely reduced crop yields and worsened food insecurity, particularly in rural areas.²³⁸ Both drought and water pollution from flooding impact water availability and quality, exacerbated by poor water storage and distribution infrastructure.²³⁹

Environmental degradation in Nicaragua is exacerbated by human activities including deforestation, mining,²⁴⁰ agribusiness,²⁴¹ and infrastructure projects such as hydroelectric dams. Deforestation is a significant challenge; Nicaragua is home to the second-largest rainforest in the Americas, but is losing forest cover at one of the fastest rates in the world.²⁴² Forests are cleared for large-scale agribusiness, cattle ranching, and small-scale farming, leaving vast areas of land vulnerable to erosion, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss.²⁴³

Nicaragua's weak land tenure system and poor enforcement of property rights foster land use and ownership disputes within and between communities and agribusiness. These disputes may increase as droughts and flooding diminish the availability of fertile land and devalue affected land.²⁴⁴ Land tenure disputes disproportionately affect indigenous communities like the Miskito of the Caribbean coast, who are threatened by mestizo settlers (*colonos*), extractive industries, and state projects.²⁴⁵ Since 2013, escalating violence including settler killings, kidnappings, and displacements of Miskito people has caused significant internal displacement.²⁴⁶

Government response to disasters has often been inadequate or unevenly distributed.²⁴⁷ After hurricanes Eta and Iota, "opposition" areas and indigenous communities were reportedly excluded from receiving disaster aid.²⁴⁸ Since 2018, the government has cancelled the legal status and expropriated the assets of more than 3,600 NGOs, including environmental advocacy groups²⁴⁹ and organizations that provided disaster relief, climate adaptation assistance, and healthcare services, undermining resilience and preparedness for future disasters.²⁵⁰ Environmental activists in Nicaragua also face significant risks and are often labeled enemies of the state, facing arrest, violence, or forced exile.²⁵¹

Annex 2: International Protection for Climate-Related Claims

This annex examines how climate impacts may be incorporated into analysis of international protection claims under the 1951 and Cartagena refugee definitions and complementary protection. As discussed in the main text of this report, this section does not aim to comprehensively review the lively scholarly and practitioner debate on this topic in recent years, but to provide basic orientation and citations for interested readers.²⁵²

1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, to which Mexico is a party, defines a refugee as a person who is outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and is unable or unwilling to return “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” and, in Mexico, on account of gender (“1951 definition”).²⁵³ While “persecution” is a legal term of art,²⁵⁴ it is generally seen to include harm, mistreatment, and/or discrimination.

Because this definition requires persecution by a specific (human) actor and a nexus to one of the protected grounds,²⁵⁵ it excludes many individuals displaced by climate-related events.²⁵⁶ However, it is clear that some climate-displaced people may be refugees under the 1951 definition.²⁵⁷ Moreover, as this study makes clear, many people affected by the impacts of climate change continue to flee Northern Central America and Nicaragua due to persecution on Refugee Convention grounds, including on the basis of political opinion, membership in a particular social group, and race or nationality.²⁵⁸

Advocates and adjudicators considering cases on 1951 Convention grounds should evaluate how climate events may cause or worsen persecution. Environmental degradation and climate-related events disproportionately affect poor and marginalized communities and can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities in these communities.²⁵⁹ Governments may also exploit environmental conditions to target certain groups; intentionally inflict environmental harm as a means of persecution;²⁶⁰ or contribute to circumstances that expose a protected group to persecution.

For example, when states withhold or distribute humanitarian aid in a discriminatory manner, on the basis of a protected ground such as political opinion—as has reportedly happened in Nicaragua—, this may amount to persecution.²⁶¹ Further, targeting of environmental defenders who resist mining, agroindustrial encroachment, or other extractive projects, as in the case of Honduran respondents who indicated they had faced death threats for defending their traditional lands, can constitute persecution on the basis of political opinion or social group, and in some cases on the basis of race.²⁶²

This study also highlighted examples of individuals and families who are internally displaced—by hurricanes, or by megaprojects that cause environmental degradation and affect access to clean water, food, and a healthy environment—and subsequently face discrimination and persecution in their destination community, whether from state or non-state actors. Where this persecution is on the basis of a protected ground, including actual or imputed membership in a particular social group, this may be a basis to seek refugee protection. While here, climate change does not directly cause persecution, it acts as an indirect driver and threat multiplier, disrupting communities and placing vulnerable populations in environments where persecution is much more likely to occur.

The existence of an “internal flight alternative” (i.e., the possibility that a person displaced by climate change could safely relocate to another part of their home country) should be carefully analyzed as it may be “neither relevant nor reasonable” in individual cases and in light of the progressive impacts of climate change.²⁶³ The Inter-American Court has found that “given the complexity of the phenomenon of internal displacement” and the “circumstances of special vulnerability and defenselessness” of internally displaced persons, “their situation can be understood *as a de facto condition of lack of protection*,” particularly for individuals from rural backgrounds and women heads of household.²⁶⁴

The Cartagena Declaration on Refugees

The 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, which Mexico has adopted as law,²⁶⁵ additionally defines as refugees “persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.”²⁶⁶ While COMAR generally first evaluates refugee claims under the 1951 refugee definition, since 2018 it has used simplified eligibility processes for some nationalities, including Honduras and El Salvador, where eligibility under the Cartagena definition is considered before eligibility under the 1951 Convention.²⁶⁷

The impacts of climate change may be relevant to consider under every part of the Cartagena definition including, for example, “generalized violence.”²⁶⁸ However, they may be particularly relevant to “other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order” and “massive violation of human rights.”²⁶⁹ UNHCR has issued guidance that climate-related disasters can constitute a serious disturbance to the public order when events combine with limited public capacity to address their impacts.²⁷⁰ Indeed, UNHCR indicates that it has provided COMAR with guidance on the relevance of this subsection “to ‘natural’ and ecological disasters” since at least 2017.²⁷¹

Both UNHCR and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights have offered guidance regarding the interpretation of the Cartagena definition consistent with international refugee and human rights law, respectively. Thus, “massive violations of human rights” may include violations of both civil and political, as well as economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights.²⁷²

Mexico has applied the “massive violations” subsection to Venezuelan claimants since at least 2016 in light of the massive crisis of access to food and to health, including medicine, in that country.²⁷³ Where climate-related disasters cause crises of access to adequate food, clean water, decent housing, healthcare, or a healthy environment that otherwise meet the above definition of “massive violations,” and the government has proved unable or unwilling to address the situation—or indeed actively perpetuates it—these may be considered as bases for granting refugee protection.²⁷⁴

Recent Inter-American Court law also addresses state obligations to prevent and remedy violations of the right to health and a healthy environment that occur “on a large scale and in accordance with a specific policy.” In *Community of La Oroya vs. Peru*, the Court found that the state was aware, but took no action to address, pervasive air, water, and soil pollution, and consequent health impacts, in the small mining town.²⁷⁵ Rather, the state treated the town as a “sacrifice zone,” which the Court defines as “areas where environmental pollution is so severe that it constitutes a *systematic violation* of the human rights of its residents.”²⁷⁶ Environmental degradation may, under certain circumstances, reflect a specific (state or non-state actor) policy resulting in massive violations of the human rights of those affected.

State ability and willingness to effectively protect the lives, safety, and freedom of individuals displaced by the impacts of climate change, including by acting to mitigate risks and provide humanitarian aid, should be evaluated against Inter-American Court standards requiring “reinforced due diligence” to prevent displacement by “protect[ing] income sources, food and water security, [and] adequate housing.”²⁷⁷ States must also act to mitigate risks through affirmative policy to address pervasive phenomena including heat waves, drought, and flooding.²⁷⁸ Similarly, as UNHCR has noted, “following a

disaster, the State must be able to demonstrate its willingness to address the impact of the disaster and to mobilize aid and assistance to stabilize the situation as soon as possible.”²⁷⁹

Complementary Protection

“Complementary protection” is a subsidiary legal status granted to individuals who do not qualify as refugees, but who are nonetheless entitled to international protection under the principle of *non-refoulement*—a fundamental tenet of international refugee and human rights law that prohibits removal, expulsion, or deportation of an individual to a country where they face a real risk of human rights violations, including violations of the right to life and to humane treatment.²⁸⁰ In Mexico, Complementary Protection is granted to foreigners who do not qualify as refugees but who cannot be returned to their country as doing so would “threaten their life or put them in danger of being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.”²⁸¹ Mexico must interpret this definition in light of its treaty-based and customary international law obligations.²⁸²

Both the UN Human Rights Committee and the Inter-American Court have interpreted the right to life broadly, emphasizing that it includes an obligation to “safeguard the right of access to the conditions that ensure a decent life,” especially in light of the threat of climate change.²⁸³ International bodies have interpreted *non-refoulement* consistent with an expansive notion of right to life and dignity.²⁸⁴ The Inter-American Court considers that “conditions required for a decent life include access to, and the quality of, water, food and health” and “environmental protection.”²⁸⁵ For these reasons, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has considered that individuals fleeing climate-related human rights violations may be eligible for complementary protection.²⁸⁶

States must also uphold the prohibition on torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment (CIDT).²⁸⁷ The Inter-American, universal (UN), and European systems have also found that extreme deprivation upon return to a country—including homelessness, lack of access to essential healthcare, lack of food, water, basic services, exposure to severe violence, and destitution—may constitute CIDT, triggering non-refoulement obligations.²⁸⁸ As climate change increasingly drives such conditions, advocates and adjudicators should carefully evaluate whether complementary protection is warranted.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Climate extremes are becoming more frequent and intense across Latin America and the Caribbean, including more frequent droughts, floods, and severe storms, alongside rising average temperatures and more extreme heat events. FAO ET AL., LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION 2024: BUILDING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE VARIABILITY AND EXTREMES FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION 53–60 (2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/latin-america-and-caribbean-regional-overview-food-security-and-nutrition-2024-building-resilience-climate-variability-and-extremes-food-security-and-nutrition> [hereinafter FAO et al., *LAC Food Security 2024*]. Central America is especially exposed to the effects of climate change. LINA ADIL ET AL., GERMANWATCH, CLIMATE RISK INDEX 2026 (2025), https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/CRI_26_full_report.pdf (Honduras and Nicaragua ranked among top 10 countries most affected by climate events globally from 1995-2024).
- ² In 2016, Mexico received a total of 8,796 asylum applications. The top three nationalities, representing 8,060 applications, were from Honduras (4,129), El Salvador (3,494) and Guatemala (437). SEGOB (UNIDAD DE POLÍTICA MIGRATORIA) [MIGRATION POLICY UNIT] & COMAR, BOLETÍN ESTADÍSTICO DE SOLICITANTES DE REFUGIO EN MÉXICO [STATISTICAL BULLETIN OF REFUGEE APPLICANTS IN MEXICO] 2016 10 (2018), https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/413015/COMAR_2016.pdf. During that same year, Mexico detained 186,216 migrants, of which 150,035 were from those three countries. SEGOB (UNIDAD DE POLÍTICA MIGRATORIA) [MIGRATION POLICY UNIT], BOLETINES ESTADÍSTICOS 2016, *Personas en situación migratoria irregular (antes, extranjeros presentados y devueltos)* [People in an irregular migratory situation (formerly, foreigners presented and returned)], tbl. 3.1.1, <http://www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/es/PoliticaMigratoria/CuadrosBOLETIN?Anual=2016&Secc=3> (last visited Nov. 6, 2025) [hereinafter SEGOB, BOLETINES ESTADÍSTICOS 2016].
- ³ In 2024, Mexico received 78,975 asylum applications; 72 percent of these came from Honduras, Cuba, and Haiti. Juan Manuel Blanco & Pedro Pablo Cortés, *Las peticiones de asilo en México caen casi a la mitad en 2024 pese a la migración récord*, [Asylum applications in Mexico fall by almost half in 2024 despite record migration] SWISSINFO.CH (Jan. 11, 2025), <https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/las-peticiones-de-asilo-en-m%C3%A9xico-caen-casi-a-la-mitad-en-2024-pese-a-la-migraci%C3%B3n-r%C3%A9cord/88707744>.
- ⁴ Asylum claims reached a historic high of 140,725 in 2023, more than half of which were presented by Honduran and Haitian asylum-seekers, with Cuba a distant third. *Border Oversight—Asylum Requests in Mexico by Nationality*, WASH. OFF. ON LATIN AM., <https://borderoversight.org/2024/12/05/asylum-requests-in-mexico-by-nationality> (last updated Dec. 5, 2024).
- ⁵ Blanco & Cortés, *supra* note 3. This occurred even as the face of migration in Mexico has changed in the last ten years: whereas in 2016, nationals of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador represented over 80 percent of all migrant detentions, in 2024, these nationalities represented just over a quarter of detentions, as numbers of people on the move from South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia have increased markedly. SEGOB (UNIDAD DE POLÍTICA MIGRATORIA), BOLETINES ESTADÍSTICOS 2024, *Personas en situación migratoria irregular (antes, extranjeros presentados y devueltos)*, [People in an irregular migratory situation (formerly, foreigners presented and returned)] tbl. 3.1.1, <http://www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/es/PoliticaMigratoria/CuadrosBOLETIN?Anual=2024&Secc=3> (last visited Nov. 6, 2025) [hereinafter SEGOB, BOLETINES ESTADÍSTICOS 2024] (In 2024, Mexico detained 925,085 migrants. Of these, 258,118 were from all Central American countries, whereas 483,294 were from South America. Mexico also detained more than 90,000 migrants from the Caribbean, and approximately 45,000 from both the Asian and the African continents).
- ⁶ In 2023, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) promulgated the “Circumvention of Lawful Pathways” final rule. *Circumvention of Lawful Pathways*, 88 Fed. Reg. 31451 (May 16, 2023), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/05/16/2023-10146/circumvention-of-lawful-pathways>. This regulation established a presumption of ineligibility for asylum for noncitizens who entered the United States at the southern border without authorization after transiting through a third country, unless they had availed themselves of a lawful pathway, scheduled an appointment using the CBP One app, or applied for and were denied asylum in a transit country. While the rule provided for certain exemptions, these were extremely limited and applied only in narrow circumstances. As a practical matter, securing a CBP One appointment was the only viable means of seeking asylum in the US for most people at the southern border. See, e.g., *Fact Sheet: CBP One: An Overview*, AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL (Mar. 24, 2025), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/cbp-one-overview/>. Average wait times for CBP One appointments continued to increase during 2024, reaching up to 11 months. STEPHANIE LEUTERT & CAITLYN YATES, ROBERT STRAUSS CTR. FOR INT’L SEC. & LAW, ASYLUM PROCESSING AT THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER 4 (2024), <https://www.strausscenter.org/publications/asylum-processing-at-the-u-s-mexico-border-november-2024/>. While Mexico City had previously opened temporary shelters for migrant caravans in 2018-2019, informal encampments had not previously been seen on this scale in the city. Mariana Martínez Barba & Caterina Morbiato, *US border policy spurred migrant camps hundreds of miles away in Mexico’s capital*, ASSOC. PRESS (Sept. 1, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/mexico-migrants-asylum-cbp-app-camps-22b49fabf6e4d7d25d2873d0637544fe>; STEPHANIE LEUTERT, ROBERT STRAUSS CTR. FOR INT’L SEC. & LAW,

MIGRANT CARAVANS IN MEXICO (2020), https://www.strausscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/PRP-217_Migrant-Caravans-in-Mexico.pdf.

⁷ See, e.g., JULIA NEUSNER ET AL., U.S. COMM. FOR REFUGEES & IMMIGRANTS, CLIMATE OF COERCION: ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER DRIVERS OF CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT FROM CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO (2023), <https://reliefweb.int/report/united-states-america/climate-coercion-environmental-and-other-drivers-cross-border-displacement-central-america-and-mexico>; John Doering-White et al., *Humanitarian Aid and the Everyday Invisibility of Climate-Related Migration from Central America*, 17 CLIMATE & DEV. 1 (2024); Inter-Am. Comm'n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America and Mexico, in the Context of Human Mobility*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.158/23 ¶ 268–69 (July 28, 2023) [hereinafter Inter-Am. Comm'n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*] (citing a CHIRLA survey of people in transit in Tapachula in 2022–2023).

⁸ See, e.g., OBSERVATORIO LATINOAMERICANO SOBRE MOVILIDAD HUMANA, [LATIN AMERICAN OBSERVATORY ON HUMAN MOBILITY], CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO Y DESASTRES (MOVE-LAM) & RED SUDAMERICANA PARA LAS MIGRACIONES AMBIENTALES (RESAMA), CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO, DESASTRES Y DESPLAZAMIENTO EN EL NORTE DE CENTROAMÉRICA: ANÁLISIS DE CASOS EN EL SALVADOR Y HONDURAS [CLIMATE CHANGE, DISASTERS AND DISPLACEMENT IN NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA: CASE ANALYSIS IN EL SALVADOR Y HONDURAS] (2024), <https://www.refworld.org/es/ref/infotem/acad/2024/es/148699>; MAX SCHOENING, HUM RTS. WATCH, DESPERATE CHOICES IN GUATEMALA (2023), <https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2023/11/15/desperate-choices-in-guatemala>; NOHELIA PALOU-ZÚNIGA & JULIÁN HIGUERA-FLÓREZ, CONSULTATIVE GRP. FOR INT'L AGRIC. RSCH. (CGIAR), INTERSECTIONS OF CLIMATE, SECURITY AND HUMAN MOBILITY IN THE COMMUNITY OF CEDEÑO, MARCOVIA, DEPARTMENT OF CHOLUTECA, HONDURAS (2025), <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/bc4d51c4-53a0-4e14-a719-cac9a87ef338/content>.

⁹ See, e.g., INT'L REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROJECT (IRAP) ET AL., ENDURING CHANGE: A DATA REVIEW OF FIRSTHAND ACCOUNTS OF CLIMATE MOBILITY IMPACTS (Fall 2024), <https://refugeerights.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Climate-Data-Report-September-2024-1.pdf> (more than 3,000 respondents surveyed, including migrants in communities of destination and in transit).

¹⁰ The population that can access civil society shelters is vanishingly small, and likely different in both visible and invisible ways from those who do not access this shelter network. Similarly, individuals in encampments or caravans likely represent a disproportionately poor cross-section of people on the move, unable to pay for private accommodation. Compare RED DE DOCUMENTACIÓN DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES DEFENSORAS DE MIGRANTES (REDODEM), [DOCUMENTATION NETWORK OF MIGRANT DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS (REDODEM)], RESULTADOS DE ANÁLISIS SOBRE LA MOVILIDAD HUMANA EN MÉXICO DURANTE 2023 [RESULTS OF ANALYSIS ON HUMAN MOBILITY IN MEXICO DURING 2023], <https://redodem.org/2023-2/> (last visited Feb. 12, 2026) (the national migrant shelter network recorded 53,435 shelter admissions during 2023) with SEGOB (UNIDAD DE POLÍTICA MIGRATORIA), BOLETINES ESTADÍSTICOS 2023, *Personas en situación migratoria irregular (antes, extranjeros presentados y devueltos)* [People in an irregular migratory situation (formerly, foreigners presented and returned)], tbl. 3.1.1, <http://www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/es/PoliticaMigratoria/CuadrosBOLETIN?Anual=2023> (last visited Nov. 6, 2025) (Mexico detained 778,907 migrants in 2023).

¹¹ For example, the survey reached many respondents fleeing urban areas. Just 16 percent of respondents indicated that they had worked in agriculture. One possible explanation is an invisible selection bias among respondents reached at the survey sites. Multiple key informants suggested that subsistence farmers fleeing rural poverty may not generally travel along the most visible migration routes through central Mexico, an issue for consideration in future studies that seek to look specifically at this population. See, e.g., Interview with Ana Sánchez Bachman, PhD Candidate, Univ. of Binghamton, dated October 23, 2024; Interview with Gary Estrada, Director of Research at SARE Consultants, dated August 2, 2024; Interview with Marcos Domingo, Coordinador de Defensa de la Madre Tierra, [Coordinator for the Defense of Mother Earth] Pop Noj' (Guatemala), dated October 18, 2024.

¹² U.N. General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary General: Climate change and its possible security implications 2*, U.N. Doc. A/64/350 (Sept. 11, 2009). In contexts of fragility—that is, “the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system, and/or communities to manage, absorb, and mitigate those risks”—these threats are magnified. PETER LÄDERACH ET AL., CONSULTATIVE GRP. FOR INT'L AGRIC. RSCH. (CGIAR) CLIMATE SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DRY CORRIDOR 8, Position Paper No. 2021/2 (2021), <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/items/43faaac7-3ca4-4c54-896c-3cb4ff793f07> (citing Desai & Forsberg 2020); see also WORLD BANK GRP., WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2011: CONFLICT, SECURITY, AND DEVELOPMENT xvi (2011), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/25f2300c-f9d4-54de-8a56-30566e72003a> (defining “fragility” similarly).

¹³ See, e.g., Climate Emergency and Human Rights, Advisory Opinion 32/25, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. A) No. 32, ¶ 416 (May 29, 2025); Inter-Am. Comm'n. H.R., *Resolution on human mobility caused by climate change 3*, Res. 2/24, Doc. 252 (Dec. 26, 2024). Academic studies have described these effects as arising through a number of pathways, including: 1) local competition over resources; 2) extreme weather events and disasters; 3) sea-level rise and coastal degradation; 4) transboundary water management; 5) unintended effects of climate policies (“particularly in conflict-fragile contexts”); 6) volatile food prices and provision; and 7) livelihood insecurity and migration. Läderach et al., *supra* note 12, at 9 (citing Koren & Bagozzi 2016).

¹⁴ See, e.g., CTR. FOR HUM. RTS. & GLOBAL JUST. ET AL., THE TIME IS NOW: MEXICO MUST GRANT HAITIANS REFUGEE PROTECTIONS UNDER THE CARTAGENA 24 (2024), <https://chrgi.org/2024-04-gjc-report-time-is-now/>.

- ¹⁵ WORLD BANK GRP., HONDURAS COUNTRY CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT 46-47 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1596/39820> (discussing poor watershed management increasing water scarcity); SCHOENING, *supra* note 8 (discussing lack of irrigation intensifying the impact of drought on Indigenous subsistence communities); HERMAN ROSA CHAVEZ ET AL., CLIMATE SEC. EXPERT NETWORK, CLIMATE FRAGILITY RISK BRIEF: EL SALVADOR 30 (Mar. 2023), https://climate-diplomacy.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/Risk_Brief_El%20Salvador_24.02.15%20smaller%202-compressed.pdf (“Land and water mismanagement are deeply rooted in the history of El Salvador. Today, they exacerbate the country’s high vulnerability to climate change . . .”); WORLD BANK & INT’L FIN. CORP., NICARAGUA PAVING THE WAY TO FASTER GROWTH AND INCLUSION: SYSTEMATIC COUNTRY DIAGNOSTIC 119 (2017), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/71f8f03d-0b50-5b11-a548-2de2a8d10a28> [hereinafter World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*] (discussing need to invest in water management to address inequality and decrease vulnerability to climate change variability).
- ¹⁶ See U.N. Off. of Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR] ET AL., ADDRESSING DISASTER DISPLACEMENT IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION POLICY AND PRACTICE: A CHECKLIST 10 (2021), <https://www.undrr.org/publication/addressing-disaster-displacement-disaster-risk-reduction-policy-and-practice-checklist>.
- ¹⁷ María Rubí & Tim Gaynor, *Cambio climático, otro factor que provoca desplazamiento en Honduras* [Climate change, another factor causing displacement in Honduras], UNHCR (Nov. 9, 2021), <https://www.acnur.org/noticias/stories/cambio-climatico-otro-factor-que-provoca-desplazamiento-en-honduras>; Interview with Rubén Jiménez, Director of Protection and Return at COMAR, dated Sept. 18, 2024.
- ¹⁸ See, e.g., *Fact Sheet: the CICIG’s Legacy in Fighting Corruption in Guatemala*, WASH. OFF. ON LAT. AM. (Aug. 27, 2019), <https://www.wola.org/analysis/cicigs-legacy-fighting-corruption-guatemala/>; SARAH CHAYES, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INT’L PEACE, WHEN CORRUPTION IS THE OPERATING SYSTEM: THE CASE OF HONDURAS 57–59 (2017), <https://carnegeendowment.org/research/2017/05/when-corruption-is-the-operating-system-the-case-of-honduras?lang=en> [hereinafter WHEN CORRUPTION IS THE OPERATING SYSTEM: THE CASE OF HONDURAS].
- ¹⁹ *Climate Emergency and Human Rights*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 13, ¶ 417 (describing displacement caused by the interaction between climate change and “traditional causes” of displacement as a “palpable reality”); see also David Cantor, *Environment, Mobility, and International Law: A New Approach in the Americas*, 21 CHI. J. INT’L L. 263, 271 (2021) (“Certainly, empirical evidence of the multi-causal reality of movement suggests that the legal studies that adopt a mono-causal understanding of this [climate migration] nexus adopt a faulty premise.”).
- ²⁰ Läderach *et al.*, *supra* note 12, at 10. The Inter-American Court notes that the impacts of climate change, including “loss of fertile lands, droughts, unstable water cycles, crop loss, sea level rise or extreme temperature increases, which cause lack of food security, water scarcity or physical insecurity in a place of habitual residence, lack of employment or income, and alteration of ways of life” can drive migration. *Climate Emergency and Human Rights*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 13, ¶ 417.
- ²¹ Läderach *et al.*, *supra* note 12, at 10 (citing McLeman (2018)). Slow-onset disasters, such as droughts, sea level rise, or desertification may show “significant time lags” before migration increases, making climate’s role “harder to empirically verify but does not mean it is absent.” *Id.* See also OFF. U.N. HIGH COMM’R HUM. RTS., THE SLOW ONSET EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION FOR CROSS-BORDER MIGRANTS (2019), https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/D18050_OHCHR_slow-onset-of-Climate-Change_EN-web.pdf.
- ²² WORLD BANK GRP., WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2023: MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND SOCIETIES 78–79 (2023), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2023>; *Health, Wellbeing, and the Changing Structure of Communities, in CLIMATE CHANGE 2022: IMPACTS, ADAPTATION AND VULNERABILITY. CONTRIBUTION OF WORKING GROUP II TO THE SIXTH ASSESSMENT REPORT OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE 1041, 1080* (2022), <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/chapter-7/>; VIVIANE CLEMENT ET AL., WORLD BANK GRP., GROUNDSWELL PART II: ACTING ON INTERNAL CLIMATE MIGRATION xxii (2021), <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/837771631204427139/pdf/Groundswell-Part-II-Acting-on-Internal-Climate-Migration.pdf>.
- ²³ VIVIANE CLEMENT ET AL., *supra* note 22, at xxiii.
- ²⁴ One study highlighted family reunification, finding that cross-border migration is more likely when extreme weather events affect countries with strong preexisting diaspora networks. Parag Mahajan & Dean Yang, *Taken by Storm: Hurricanes, Migrant Networks, and US Immigration*, 12 AM. ECON. J.: APPLIED ECON. 250 (2020).
- ²⁵ The study also identified an intermediate option of “strategic” migration of individual household members to seek paid work to support the family. Brianna Castro, *Becoming a Climate Migrant: Climate Change and Sequential Migration Decision-Making*, SOC. PROBLEMS 1, 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spaf027> (“[C]limate migration is a sequential decision-making process embedded in social and economic conditions and pre-existing power structures and institutions.”).
- ²⁶ CGIAR identified that “[t]he tipping point at which migration occurs . . . [is] situated downstream from a number of other critical thresholds.” A third tipping point occurs “when the changed nature of the human-ecological relationship demands substantive changes in land use and/or livelihood strategies.” Läderach *et al.*, *supra* note 14, at 9–10 (citing Adger *et al.*, 2009). McLeman (2018) identifies further thresholds for migration: the first “when in situ adaptation is no longer possible” and migration the only viable option (due to “reduced access to arable land, water shortages, decreased agricultural yields, and an associated loss of

income and nutrition, thereby fundamentally undermining the viability of (rural) livelihoods”). This is mediated by social, political, economic, and cultural processes. The second, “when migration rates . . . become non-linear.” A third threshold occurs “when migration rates cease to be non-linear,” as migration eventually slows. *Id.* at 10.

²⁷ Farah Hegazi & Sandra C. Valencia, *Lessons on climate resilience and peacebuilding from Ethiopia and the Dry Corridor*, STOCKHOLM INT’L PEACE RSCH. INST., (Mar. 21, 2023), <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2023/lessons-climate-resilience-and-peacebuilding-ethiopia-and-dry-corridor>.

²⁸ Barry S. Levy et al., *Climate Change and Collective Violence*, 38 ANN. REV. PUB. HEALTH 241 (2017) (finding “increasing evidence . . . that climate change is causally associated with collective violence, generally in combination with other causal factors.”); see also Xiaolan Xie et al., *The impacts of climate change on violent conflict risk: a review of causal pathways*, 6 ENV’T RSCH. COMM’NS. 1, 6 (2024); TIM SWEIJS ET AL., HAGUE CTR. FOR STRATEGIC STUD., UNPACKING THE CLIMATE SECURITY NEXUS: SEVEN PATHOLOGIES LINKING CLIMATE CHANGE TO VIOLENT CONFLICT (2022), <https://hcss.nl/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Unpacking-the-Climate-Security-Nexus.pdf>.

²⁹ See, e.g., Naraya Carrasco et al., *Women’s and girls’ vulnerability to gender-based violence in the aftermath of disasters*, PREVENTIONWEB (May 26, 2023), <https://www.preventionweb.net/news/womens-and-girls-vulnerability-gender-based-violence-aftermath-disasters>. Vulnerability to violence post-disaster may be exacerbated by “increased life stressors, failure of law enforcement, exposure to high-risk environments, exacerbation of existing gender inequalities and unequal social norms.” Alyssa Mari Thurston et al., *Natural hazards, disasters and violence against women and girls: a global mixed-methods systematic review*, 6 BMJ GLOBAL HEALTH 1, 1 (May 6, 2021).

³⁰ For example, poor urban governance and infrastructure can increase vulnerability to climate change impacts, which can contribute to grievances and protest. Farah Hegazi, *Climate change and urban violence: A critical knowledge gap*, STOCKHOLM INT’L PEACE RSCH. INST. (June 19, 2024), <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2024/climate-change-and-urban-violence-critical-knowledge-gap>; see also Martina Sardo et al., *Exploring the water–food nexus reveals the interlinkages with urban human conflicts in Central America*, 1 NATURE WATER 348 (2023) (showing link between food and water scarcity and rates of urban conflict across Northern Central America).

³¹ Rapid urbanization poses challenges for cities, and may leave migrants in precarious positions, with access only to poor housing, limited public services, and employment in often unregulated and exploitative informal sectors. Läderach et al., *supra* note 14, at 10; see also Sardo et al., *supra* note 30.

³² FAO et al., *LAC Food Security 2024*, *supra* note 1, at 61.

³³ MÓNICA SALAZAR VIDES ET AL., WOODROW WILSON CTR., CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA’S NORTHERN TRIANGLE 9 (2024), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/Climate_Resilience_and_Democratic_Governance_in_Central_America_May_2024_0.pdf [hereinafter Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*].

³⁴ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., Res. 3/2021, *Climate Emergency: Scope of Inter-American Human Rights Obligations*, ¶ 18 (Dec. 31, 2021); Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., Res. 2/24 *supra* note 13, at 3.

³⁵ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Report on Poverty and Human Rights in the Americas*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.164, ¶¶ 89–91 (Sept. 7, 2017). On ESCER, see *Lhaka Honhat v. Argentina*, Merits, Reparations, and Costs, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. C) No. 147, ¶¶ 210–21 (Feb. 6, 2020).

³⁶ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶¶ 27, 287 (“the impact of the climate crisis has also resulted in the progressive deterioration of the food situation in large sectors of the population.”); UNDRR, *Central America drought, 2023 – Forensic analysis* (Sept. 17, 2024) (“Drought conditions in the Dry Corridor magnify food and water challenges, often leaving vulnerable people with little choice but to migrate.”).

³⁷ UNDRR, *Central America drought*, *supra* note 36 (“Providing and maintaining basic water and sanitation infrastructure as a public service can prevent drought disasters.”; “There are almost no safety nets in place . . . while people continue to reside in drought exposed areas.”); see also World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*, *supra* note 15, ch. 5, ¶¶ 21, 23 (Poverty “is exacerbated by the country’s exposition to . . . weather related shocks and natural hazards, and by the absence of an effective safety net.”).

³⁸ FAO et al., *LAC Food Security 2024*, *supra* note 1, at 61.

³⁹ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., Res. 2/24 *supra* note 13, ¶ 19. It has called on states to adopt differentiated measures to prevent violence against women and promote gender equality when implementing policies on migration and on climate change. *Id.*, ¶¶ 17, 19; Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Inter-American Principles on the Human Rights of all Migrants, Refugees, Stateless Persons, and Victims of Human Trafficking*, princ. 8, Res. No. 4/19 (Dec. 7, 2019).

⁴⁰ Women’s capacity to adapt to climate change largely depends “on their control of land and money; access to credit and safeguards; whether or not they are head of household; good health; personal mobility, and household rights.” DENISE CARACHURE ABARCA, INST. PARA LAS MUJERES EN LA MIGRACIÓN, A.C. (IMUMI) [INST. FOR WOMEN IN MIGRATION], DESPLAZAMIENTO POR RAZONES CLIMÁTICAS: UNA APROXIMACIÓN DESDE LOS DERECHOS DE LAS MUJERES [DISPLACEMENT FOR CLIMATE REASONS: A WOMEN’S RIGHTS APPROACH] 16 (2024), <https://imumi.org/nuestras-publicaciones/desplazamiento-por-razones-climaticas/> (author’s translation).

⁴¹ For example, droughts and deforestation may require women and girls to travel longer distances to gather water, taking them out of school and exposing them to greater risks of violence. IRISH CONSORTIUM ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND ITS INTERSECTION WITH CLIMATE CHANGE 5 (2022), <https://www.gbv.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ICGBV-Policy-Paper-Climate-Change-and-GBV.pdf>.

⁴² Sandra González, *El cambio climático desde una perspectiva de género* [Climate change from a gender perspective], CENTRE DE CULTURA CONTEMPORÀNIA DE BARCELONA (CCCBLAB) [BARCELONA CONTEMPORARY CULTURE CENTER] (Dec. 12, 2017), <https://lab.cccb.org/es/el-cambio-climatico-desde-una-perspectiva-de-genero/> (cited in CARACHURE, *supra* note 40, at 24). Across Central America, women do more than double the unpaid household labor that men do. See *Indicadores Destacados: Total Work Time*, CEPAL GENDER EQUALITY OBSERVATORY FOR LAC, <https://oig.cepal.org/en> (last visited June 10, 2025).

⁴³ Eric Neumayer & Thomas Plumper, *The Gendered Nature of Natural Disasters: The Impact of Catastrophic Events on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy, 1981-2002*, 97 ANNALS ASS'N. AM. GEOGRAPHERS 551 (2007). One study found that during natural disasters, women are fourteen times more likely to die. This figure is linked, among others, to higher rates of malnutrition and, perhaps, to economic capacity to evacuate. *El impacto de los desastres naturales en la brecha de género* [The impact of natural disasters on the gender gap], ONU-HABITAT (Feb. 20, 2019), <https://onu-habitat.org/index.php/el-impacto-de-los-desastres-naturales-en-la-brecha-de-genero> (cited in CARACHURE, *supra* note 40, at 24).

⁴⁴ Displacement and family separation, loss of family assets and income, and chaos and lack of public safety in the early stages of a disaster all contribute to fewer protections and greater impunity for gender-based violence. U.N. POPULATION FUND (UNFPA), GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND NATURAL DISASTERS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN 19–20 (n.d.), <https://lac.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA%20version%20ingles%201.pdf>.

⁴⁵ JULIÁN HIGUERA-FLOREZ & IGNACIO MADURGA-LÓPEZ, CGIAR FOCUS CLIMATE SECURITY, INTERSECTIONS OF CLIMATE, SECURITY AND HUMAN MOBILITY IN HONDURAS, 23–24 (2024), <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/items/da7373bf-6ed4-498f-9457-acb62a235c0b>.

⁴⁶ Blanco & Cortés, *supra* note 3.

⁴⁷ Some shelters where surveys were conducted only host women and families. The only respondent who self-identified as transgender was interviewed in a shelter setting; it is possible that other respondents may not have felt comfortable self-disclosing LGBTQI identity due to safety concerns.

⁴⁸ This statistic was calculated based on 84 respondents to this question.

⁴⁹ The survey also includes earthquakes; 32% of respondents reported experiencing an earthquake in the past five years. No respondents reported experiencing only earthquakes and no other climate events. Recent scientific studies indicate that climate change may influence the frequency and severity of earthquakes. See, e.g., Robert C. Jones, Jr., *Scientists study likely link between climate and earthquakes*, UNIV. OF MIAMI (Sept. 22, 2023), <https://news.miami.edu/stories/2023/09/scientists-study-likely-link-between-climate-and-earthquakes.html>; Evan Howell, *How Climate Change Could Trigger Earthquakes*, SCI. AM. (Dec. 23, 2024), <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-climate-change-could-trigger-earthquakes/>.

⁵⁰ Statistics here are calculated based on 72 responses that reported experiencing one or more climate impacts.

⁵¹ Statistics here are calculated based on 72 responses that reported experiencing one or more climate impacts.

⁵² Forty-three respondents stated that the self-reported events and impacts they experienced were a reason to migrate; later, 38 respondents stated that environmental impacts were a factor influencing their decision to migrate.

⁵³ This question asked specifically about “natural disasters” for clarity. The survey did not use the term “climate change” in any question, as discussed *infra* note 137 and accompanying text.

⁵⁴ *Helping farmers beat the climate crisis in Central America's Dry Corridor*, U.N. ENV'T PROGRAMME (UNEP) (June 16, 2023), <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/helping-farmers-beat-climate-crisis-central-americas-dry-corridor>.

⁵⁵ WORLD BANK GRP., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report*, *supra* note 15, at 6; Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 21.

⁵⁶ For example, Honduras' agricultural sector accounts for 73 percent of total exports and 30 percent of employment. Nearly half of jobs in Honduras are dependent on water resources. Honduras' economy—and poverty levels—will be increasingly affected by water scarcity and unpredictability, reduced water quality, and more frequent floods and droughts. WORLD BANK GRP., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report* *supra* note 15, at 6, 44.

⁵⁷ Vally Koubi, *Climate Change and Conflict*, 22 ANN. REV. POL. SCI. 343, 346–347 (2019).

⁵⁸ *Helping farmers beat the climate crisis*, *supra* note 54.

⁵⁹ Interview with UNHCR Mexico staff dated August 9, 2024; see, e.g., Fritz Pinnow, *Snapshots: How the climate crisis is hurting people in Honduras*, THE NEW HUMANITARIAN (Sept. 11, 2023), <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/video/2023/09/11/snapshots-how-climate-crisis-hurting-people-central-america> (describing how more extreme weather has forced fishermen on Honduras' Caribbean coast to rent bigger boats, imposing new costs).

⁶⁰ A recent IMF paper found that emigration across Latin America in the past 20 years resulted in a net negative economic impact on countries of origin, even after accounting for remittances. Alina Carare et al., *The Joint Effect of Emigration and Remittances on Economic Growth and Labor Force Participation in Latin America and the Caribbean* (IMF Working Paper No. 2024/175, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.5089/9798400284410.001>; ECON. COMM'N FOR LATIN AM. & THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC), *Atlas of Migration in Northern*

Central America, U.N. Doc. LC/PUB.2018/23 (Dec. 18, 2018), <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/44288-atlas-migration-northern-central-america>.

⁶¹ The SR referred specifically to Lajas Blancas, Nacaome Municipality, Valle Department, which has been devastated by the effects of prolonged drought, intensified by water use by industrial agriculture, and to Cedeño, a community on the Pacific coast threatened by sea level rise. Ian Fry (Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change), *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change on his visit to Honduras*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/56/46/ADD.1 (June 24, 2024), ¶¶ 17, 20.

⁶² Interview with Ana Sánchez Bachman, *supra* note 11; Interview with Gary Estrada, *supra* note 11. See also Caroline Zickgraf, *Where Are All the Climate Migrants? Explaining Immobility amid Environmental Change*, MIGRATION POL'Y INST. (Oct. 4, 2023), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/climate-change-trapped-populations> (“Even in its precarious forms, migration takes varying degrees of financial, human, and social capital.” Some “simply cannot ‘afford’ to migrate. . . [I]t is not always the poorest and most vulnerable who move.”); Higuera-Florez & Madurga-López, *supra* note 45 at 48.

⁶³ Zickgraf, *supra* note 62; Interview with Ana Sánchez Bachman, *supra* note 11; Higuera-Florez & Madurga-López, *supra* note 45, at 23–26. This also finds some support in economic studies. One study in Western Honduras found that “owning any amount of agricultural land, a vehicle, or a television, [or] having a finished roof, are all associated with a higher propensity to migrate,” as are “households that experienced a mild drought event in the previous [primary] agricultural season.” Francisco Ceballos et al., *External and Internal Migration Propensity Index (MPI) for Honduras: Out-of-sample Validation 9* (IFPRI Working Paper No. 168708, 2024), <https://ideas.repec.org/p/IFPRI/ifprwp/168708.html>.

⁶⁴ SANDRA C. VALENCIA, SIPRI, WFP’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVING THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DRY CORRIDOR: SPOTLIGHT ON CLIMATE CHANGE 16 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.55163/AEFI7913>; LEONARDO MEDINA ET AL., CGIAR FOCUS CLIMATE SECURITY, COMMUNITY VOICES ON CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY: GUATEMALA 29 (2023), <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c05336d3-c8c5-411d-885d-58d44fad8f5e/content> [hereinafter *CGIAR community voices: Guatemala*].

⁶⁵ WORLD BANK GRP., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report*, *supra* note 15, at 7; Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 79. In Ahuachapán Department, El Salvador, the number of farmers who rented land to grow crops nearly tripled from 2007 to 2019. *Id.* at 75.

⁶⁶ Valencia, *supra* note 64, at 16.

⁶⁷ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶ 162.

⁶⁸ GLOB. WITNESS, *Roots of resistance: Documenting the global struggles of defenders protecting land and environmental rights*, (2025), <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/land-and-environmental-defenders/roots-of-resistance/>.

⁶⁹ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶¶ 274–75; World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*, *supra* note 15, ch. 5, ¶ 17.

Deforestation exacerbates the effects of climate change because vast subtropical forests help lower temperatures, control erosion, and create natural irrigation systems that keep rainfall from eroding soil and strangling streams and rivers. Georgina Gustin, *Ravaged by Drought, a Honduran Village Faces a Choice: Pray for Rain or Migrate*, INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS (July 8, 2019), <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/08072019/climate-change-migration-honduras-drought-crop-failure-farming-deforestation-guatemala-trump/>. Drought-induced disease can also cause deforestation. Since 2014, the *gorgojo de pino*, or pine bark beetle, which reproduces much more rapidly in warming temperatures, has devastated Honduran forests. *Honduras afronta una epidemia de “gorgojo” si no invierte en prevención*, EFE: VERDE (Mar. 26, 2019), <https://efeverde.com/honduras-epidemia-gorgojo-prevencion/>. See also interview with Asylum Access Mexico staff, dated July 10, 2024.

⁷⁰ For example, deforestation in the Honduran Mosquitia region (Olancho Department) is driven by illegal logging, cattle ranching, drug trafficking, and land grabbing, as well as forest fires. Even protected areas continue to be deforested, evidencing lack of government action to protect them. Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 121.

⁷¹ One study “found that large scale sustained forest losses . . . from 2000–2019 corresponds with areas undergoing shifts in control towards large landowners, often related to narco trafficking.” Beth Tellman et al., *Narco trafficking and Land Control in Guatemala and Honduras*, 3 J. ILLICIT ECON. & DEV. 132, 132 (2021).

⁷² For example, large-scale agro-industrial, mining, energy, forestry, urban development, and tourism projects, are key drivers of evictions and internal displacement of rural, indigenous communities in Guatemala. Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶¶ 173, 254.

⁷³ For example, in the Honduran context, see Chayes, *supra* note 18; Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 19, 121, 124–25 (on cattle ranching and drug trafficking in Olancho). In Guatemala, see, e.g., Tellman et al., *supra* note 71, at 138–39 (on ranching and drug trafficking in Petén, Guatemala); NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL, *NOW WE HAVE NOTHING LEFT: A STUDY ON HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY OF DISPLACED INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN GUATEMALA* (2025), <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/now-we-have-nothing-left-a-study-on-hlp-of-displaced-indigenous-communities-in-guatemala> (on evictions of indigenous communities by extractive industries across Guatemala). In Nicaragua, see Peter N. Jones, *Nicaraguan Indigenous Groups Face Violent, Ongoing Settler Raids*, HARV. INT’L REV. (2021), <https://hir.harvard.edu/nicaraguan->

[indigenous-groups-face-violent-ongoing-settler-raids/](#) (on settler violence against Indigenous communities on the Caribbean coast). In El Salvador, see Mike Ludwig, *Champions of El Salvador's Historic Mining Ban Face Legal Persecution*, TRUTHOUT (2024), <https://truthout.org/articles/champions-of-el-salvadors-historic-mining-ban-face-legal-persecution/> (on persecution of anti-mining activists in El Salvador).

⁷⁴ Inter-Am. Comm'n H.R., *Northern Central America: Situation of Environmental Defenders*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.400/22 ¶¶ 77–85, 87–95, 96–99 (2022), https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2023/Norte_Centroamerica_MedioAmbiente_EN.pdf. See also GLOB. WITNESS, *Missing Voices: The Violent Erasure of Land and Environmental Defenders* 21–22 (2024), <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/land-and-environmental-defenders/missing-voices/>.

⁷⁵ Rubí & Gaynor, *supra* note 17.

⁷⁶ Interview with Rubén Jiménez, *supra* note 17.

⁷⁷ See, e.g., Valencia, *supra* note 64, at 24–25 (documenting intra-communal conflict in rural Honduras and Guatemala); Levy et al., *supra* note 28 (finding “increasing evidence . . . that climate change is causally associated with collective violence, generally in combination with other causal factors.”); see also Xie et al., *supra* note 28; Sweijs et al., *supra* note 28.

⁷⁸ See also Inter-Am. Comm'n H.R., Res. 2/24 *supra* note 13, at 3 (“Mobility of people or communities occurs as a result of the interaction of various factors that are amplified or intertwined with the impacts of climate change, such as violence, insecurity, inequality, or persecution.”) (author’s translation).

⁷⁹ Inter-Am. Comm'n H.R., Res. 2/24 *supra* note 13, ¶ 38 (“Climate events can also trigger situations that interact with factors such as violence, conflict, and others, amplifying pre-existing vulnerabilities and increasing risk of displacement.”) (author’s translation). See also Jona Huber et al., *Climate-related migration and the climate-security-migration nexus in the Central American Dry Corridor*, 176 CLIMATIC CHANGE 79, 4, 7, 14 (2023).

⁸⁰ Rubí & Gaynor, *supra* note 17.

⁸¹ Medina et al., *supra* note 64, at 30.

⁸² Stephanie Hellweg et al., *Environmental Impacts of Natural Resource Use*, in GLOBAL OUTLOOK 2019: NATURAL RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT 90 (U.N. Env’t. Programme & Int’l Res. Panel 2019), <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789280737417c009/read>.

⁸³ See, e.g., Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 79.

⁸⁴ Sophia Samantaroy, *Climate Change Now Responsible for Nearly One Fifth of Dengue Cases in the Americas and Asia*, HEALTH POL’Y WATCH (Jun. 12, 2024), <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/climate-change-now-responsible-for-nearly-one-fifth-of-dengue-cases-in-the-americas-and-asia/>.

⁸⁵ Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 121; Tellman et al., *supra* note 71 at 138; Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶ 162.

⁸⁶ Flavio Pinheiro Martins et al., *The Double Burden: Climate Change Challenges for Health Systems*, 18 ENVIRON. HEALTH INSIGHTS 1 (2024); CARACHURE, *supra* note 40, at 1–2.

⁸⁷ See, e.g., Alex Papadovassilakis, *And Impunity for All*, INSIGHT CRIME (Dec. 1, 2021) (on prosecution of fraud on the Guatemalan public health system), <https://insightcrime.org/investigations/igss-pisa-and-impunity-for-all/>; *Overpriced Purchases, Split Contracts, and Bribes Are Part of the Corruption Coma in Honduran Hospitals*, EXPEDIENTE PÚBLICO (July 29, 2020), <https://www.expedientepublico.org/compras-sobvaloradas-contratos-fraccionados-y-coimas-son-parte-del-coma-por-la-corrupcion-en-los-hospitales-hondurenos/>; *Honduras Briefing: Strong Action Needed on Corruption*, HUM. RTS. WATCH (Jun. 9, 2023), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/09/honduras-briefing-strong-action-needed-corruption>.

⁸⁸ Majid Ezzati et al., *Selected major risk factors and global and regional burden of disease*, 360 LANCET 1347 (2002); Watson et al., *Epidemics after natural disasters*, 13 EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES 1 (2007).

⁸⁹ World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*, *supra* note 15, ch. 5, ¶ 23 (“Exposure to climate shocks can have an impact on child development and perpetuate poverty across generations . . . children affected by Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua in 1998 were 8.7 percent more likely to be malnourished two years after the shock, and child labor was more prevalent as a result of the storm in rural areas of the country.”)

⁹⁰ Balgis Osman-Elasha, *Women...In The Shadow of Climate Change*, UN CHRON. (Aug. 1, 2009),

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/women-in-shadow-climate-change>; Huber et al., *supra* note 79, at 9. See also Gulnaz Anjum & Mudassar Aziz, *Climate Change and Gendered Vulnerability: A Systemic Review of Women’s Health*, 21 WOMEN’S HEALTH 1, 10, 13, 15 (2025); Higuera-Florez & Madurga-López, *supra* note 45 at 25–26.

⁹¹ Interview with Ana Sánchez Bachman, *supra* note 11; INT’L CTR. FOR RSCH. ON WOMEN (ICRW), *WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: WOMEN’S ENTERPRISES IN A CHANGING CLIMATE: BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES* (2020), <https://www.icrw.org/publications/womens-economic-empowerment-womens-enterprises-in-a-changing-climate-barriers-and-opportunities/>; FAO, *Small Family Farms Country Factsheet: Guatemala* (2018), <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1fae548a-5a22-41fd-a576-fe2aa1f77d34/content> [hereinafter FAO, *Small Family Farms Factsheet*].

⁹² Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence, *supra* note 41.

⁹³ Interview with Ana Sánchez Bachman, *supra* note 11.

⁹⁴ UNFPA, *supra* note 44, at 19–20.

⁹⁵ Climate Emergency and Human Rights, Advisory Opinion 32/25, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. A) No. 32, ¶ 422 (May 29, 2025) (“States are obligated to adopt measures to prevent, in line with the standard of enhanced due diligence, migration and forced displacement resulting directly and indirectly from disasters and other impacts of climate change. Therefore, the Court highlights the importance of designing and implementing appropriate measures . . . [such as] protection of income sources, food and water security, and adequate housing etc., [which] must be part of public policies related to progress toward sustainable development, mitigation goals and strategies and adaptation goals and plans.”).

⁹⁶ See U.N. OFF. OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION [UNDRR] ET AL., *supra* note 16.

⁹⁷ It is worth noting that some respondents seemed to confuse food aid that may have been received in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic with food aid that was disaster-related.

⁹⁸ See, e.g., Sarah Birch & Ferran Martínez i Coma, *Natural disasters and the limits of electoral clientelism: Evidence from Honduras*, 85 ELECTORAL STUDIES 1, 8 (2023).

⁹⁹ EFE/Confidential, *Ortega Plays Politics with Aid to Eta Victims*, HAVANA TIMES (Nov. 11, 2020), <https://havanatimes.org/news/ortega-plays-politics-with-aid-to-eta-victims/>; Julieta Pelcastre, *Nicaragua Boycotts Aid to Hurricane Victims*, DIÁLOGO AMÉRICAS (Jan. 12, 2021), <https://dialogo-amicas.com/articles/nicaragua-boycotts-aid-to-hurricane-victims/>.

¹⁰⁰ See, e.g., Czaika Mathias et al., *Migration Decision-Making and Its Key Dimensions*, 697 ANNALS OF THE AM. ACAD. POL. & SOC. SCI. 15 (2021).

¹⁰¹ Temporary Protected Status may be designated based on natural disasters, but the status is subject to Executive discretion, backward-looking in nature, and approved on a country-by-country basis. See, e.g., Jill H. Wilson, *Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure*, CONG. RSCH. SVC., Report No. RS20844 (last updated August 28, 2025), <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/RS20844.pdf>.

¹⁰² Mexico is Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. These define a refugee as a person who is outside their country of nationality or habitual residence and is unable or unwilling to return “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.” Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, July 28, 1951, 189 U.N.T.S. 137. Mexico’s law also includes “gender” as a ground of persecution. Ley Sobre Refugiados y Protección Complementaria [Law on Refugees and Complementary Protection], Diario Oficial de la Federación [DOF] [Official Gazette of the Federation] 27-01-2011, últimas reformas DOF 18-02-2022 (Mex.), art. 13.I [hereinafter “Law on Refugees (LRPCAP)”].

¹⁰³ The 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, which Mexico has adopted as law, additionally defines as refugees “persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.” Org. of Am. States, *Cartagena Declaration on Refugees*, Colloquium on the Int’l Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico and Panama § III(3), Nov. 22, 1984 [hereinafter “Cartagena Declaration”]; Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 13.II.

¹⁰⁴ In Mexico, Complementary Protection is granted to applicants who do not qualify as refugees, but who cannot be returned to their country as doing so would “threaten their life or put them in danger of being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.” Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 2, Section VII.

¹⁰⁵ In 2016, Mexico received 8,796 asylum applications. Fully 92 percent were from Honduras (4,129), El Salvador (3,494) and Guatemala (437). SEGOB & COMAR, *supra* note 2, at 10. Asylum claims reached a historic high of 140,725 in 2023; more than half were Honduran and Haitian asylum-seekers, with Cuba a distant third. Wash. Off. on Lat. Am., *supra* note 18.

¹⁰⁶ In 2016, Mexico detained 186,216 migrants, 81 percent from Northern Central America. SEGOB, Boletines Estadísticos 2016, *supra* note 2, at tbl. 3.1.1. In 2024, Mexico detained 925,085 migrants. Of these, 28 percent were from Central America, whereas 52 percent were from South America. In addition, 10 percent hailed from the Caribbean, 5 percent from the African continent and 5 percent from Asia. SEGOB Boletines Estadísticos 2024, *supra* note 5, at tbl. 3.1.1.

¹⁰⁷ Blanco & Cortés, *supra* note 3.

¹⁰⁸ See, e.g., Eduardo Torre Cantalapiedra et al., *El sistema de refugio mexicano: entre proteger y contener* [The Mexican refugee system: between protecting and containing], 33 FRONTERA NORTE (2021); Helen Kerwin, *The Mexican Asylum System in Regional Context*, 33 MD. J. INT’L L. 290, 292 (2018). Mexico has increasingly accepted U.S. border externalization policies over the past ten years. See, e.g., NAT’L IMMIGR. JUST. CTR. & FWD.US, *Moving the Border South: the United States’ Offshoring of Asylum Processing and Immigration Enforcement to Mexico and Central America*, in PUSHING BACK PROTECTION: HOW OFFSHORING AND EXTERNALIZATION IMPERIL THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM 1–15 (2021), https://immigrantjustice.org/sites/default/files/content-type/research-item/documents/2021-11/Offshoring%20Asylum%20Report_Chapter5%20%281%29.pdf. The exception, as of this writing, has been Mexico’s continued resistance to signing a formal Safe Third Country Agreement with the US government. IMUMI, MÉXICO NO ES UN TERCER PAÍS SEGURO 4–5 (2025), https://imumi.org/attachments/2025/Mexico_no_es_un_tercer_pais_seguro_febrero_2025.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ See RACHEL SCHMIDTKE, REFUGEES INT'L, UN NUEVO CAMINO A SEGUIR: REFUERZO DEL CONTEXTO DE PROTECCIÓN EN MÉXICO [A NEW PATH TO FOLLOW: STRENGTHENING THE PROTECTION FRAMEWORK IN MEXICO] (2020), <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/un-nuevo-camino-a-seguir-refuerzo-del-contexto-de-proteccion-en-mexico/>; Interview with Asylum Access Mexico staff, *supra* note 69; Interview with IMUMI staff dated July 12, 2024 in Mexico City, Mexico.

¹¹⁰ By way of example, during 2024, COMAR's Mexico City offices were shuttered for months as they were relocated from downtown Colonia Juárez to peripheral Iztapalapa, limiting physical access to asylum. Lilian Hernández Osorio, *Tras más de 10 semanas cerrada, reabren oficina de Comar en CDMX* [After being closed for more than 10 weeks, the Comar office in Mexico City reopens], LA JORNADA (Aug. 6, 2024), <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2024/08/06/politica/007n1pol>.

¹¹¹ Néstor Jiménez, *Insuficientes, los recursos de la Comar para atender pedidos de refugio, dice ex encargado* [Former official says Comar's resources are insufficient to handle asylum requests], LA JORNADA (Oct. 9, 2024), <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2024/10/09/politica/009n2pol>; Jacobo García, "A la Comar le falta presupuesto y alternativas migratorias para los haitianos" ["The Comar lacks budget and migration alternatives for Haitians"], EL PAÍS (Sept. 8, 2021), <https://elpais.com/mexico/2021-09-08/a-la-comar-le-falta-presupuesto-y-alternativas-migratorias-para-los-haitianos.html>.

¹¹² For example, legislative reform prohibiting detention of children, and judicial decisions prohibiting arbitrary revision of immigration status inside Mexican territory, limiting the permissible length of immigration detention, and obligating inclusion of immigration detainees in the National Detention Registry. Advocates continue to work to implement these decisions in practice. See, e.g., IMUMI ET AL., 11 EJES PARA UNA NUEVA POLÍTICA MIGRATORIA 2024-2030 [11 KEY POINTS FOR A NEW MIGRATION POLICY 2024-2030] 24, 28, 34 (2024), https://imumi.org/attachments/2024/Insumos_para_una_nueva_agenda_migratoria_y_de_asilo_en_Mexico_2024-2030.pdf; Beatriz Guillén, *Una sentencia obliga a México a crear un registro de detenciones de migrantes* [A court ruling compels Mexico to create a registry of migrant detentions], EL PAÍS (Dec. 1, 2024), <https://elpais.com/mexico/2024-12-02/una-sentencia-obliga-a-mexico-a-crear-un-registro-de-detenciones-de-migrantes.html>.

¹¹³ For example, contesting the requirement to present an asylum claim within 30 calendar days of entry to Mexican territory, and requiring Mexico to transparently and affirmatively regulate its migration enforcement agreements with the US. L.X. Carrancá Álvarez, *La inconventionalidad de los plazos en el acceso a los sistemas de asilo en México* [Time limits for accessing asylum systems in Mexico violate the American Convention], 32 JURIS DICTIO 16 (2023).

¹¹⁴ The National Guard, created in 2019, has been deployed to detain migrants, despite lacking a clear legal mandate to do so. See FUNDACIÓN PARA LA JUSTICIA Y EL ESTADO DEMOCRÁTICO DE DERECHO (FJEDD) ET AL. [FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE AND THE DEMOCRATIC RULE OF LAW ET AL.], BAJO LA BOTA: MILITARIZACIÓN DE LA POLÍTICA MIGRATORIA EN MÉXICO [UNDER THE BOOT: MILITARIZATION OF MIGRATION POLICY IN MEXICO] (2022), <https://bajolabota.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/informe-bajo-la-bota.pdf>.

¹¹⁵ For example, throughout 2024 and at the behest of the Biden administration, Mexico pursued an unofficial policy of "busing" migrants detained in the north to points further south, in a bid to exhaust their physical, mental, and financial resources before they could reach the US' southern border. These cases were not officially recorded as detentions or as deportations. Simon Romero & Paulina Villegas, *The Other Busing Program: Mexico Is Pushing Migrants Back South*, N.Y. TIMES (May 14, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/world/americas/mexico-migrants-busing-border.html>; *How Mexico is Helping Biden and Harris at the Border*, WASH. POST (Sept. 14, 2024), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/09/14/mexico-migrant-border-merry-go-round/>.

¹¹⁶ UNHCR has already significantly downsized its operations in Mexico and, as of this writing, it is unclear how great the impact on COMAR will ultimately be. Nadia Sanders, *Las "tijeras" de Trump y Sheinbaum colapsan el sistema de refugio* [Trump and Sheinbaum's "cuts" collapse the shelter system], FACTCHEQUEADO (Sept. 5, 2025), <https://factchequeado.com/teexplicamos/20250905/recortes-trump-sheinbaum-colapsan-refugio-mexico/>; "Ante la reducción del financiamiento, la sociedad civil ha asumido un rol protagónico en la respuesta humanitaria" [Faced with reduced funding, civil society has assumed a leading role in the humanitarian response], CIVICUS LENS (June 10, 2025), <https://lens.civicus.org/interview/ante-la-reduccion-del-financiamiento-la-sociedad-civil-ha-asumido-un-rol-protagonico-en-la-respuesta-humanitaria/>.

¹¹⁷ See, e.g., YASMIN MARTÍNEZ ET AL., ELEMENTOS PARA UNA ESTRATEGIA DE GESTIÓN MIGRATORIA: RESULTADOS DE LA REUNIÓN "MÉXICO ANTE EL FENÓMENO MIGRATORIO: HACIA UNA ESTRATEGIA DE GESTIÓN MIGRATORIA EN AMÉRICA DEL NORTE 2025" [ELEMENTS FOR A MIGRATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: RESULTS OF THE MEETING "MEXICO FACING THE MIGRATION PHENOMENON: TOWARDS A MIGRATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN NORTH AMERICA 2025"] 37 (2024)

¹¹⁸ This recommendation was made specifically by COMAR officials. See interview with Rubén Jiménez, *supra* note 17.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Rubén Jimenez, *supra* note 17; Interview with Jerusalén Enciso, Director of Country of Origin Information at COMAR, dated Sept. 23, 2024. Where written COI reports or materials do not provide sufficiently concrete guidance, COMAR may seek advice from outside experts, often academics, to better understand a country context.

¹²⁰ See, e.g., UNHCR, *Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters* (Oct. 1, 2020), <https://www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/2020/en/123356> [hereinafter UNHCR, *Legal considerations on climate change and disaster claims*]; CGRS ET AL., INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE DISPLACED ACROSS BORDERS IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTERS: A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT (2025)

<https://cgrs.uclawsf.edu/our-work/publications/international-protection-people-displaced-across-borders-context-climate>; Refugee Law Initiative, *Refugee Law Initiative Declaration on International Protection in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, 36 INT'L J. REFUGEE L. 169, 173 (2024); INT'L REFUGEE ASSISTANCE PROJECT ET AL., LEGAL ACTION AGENDA FOR CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT: UNITED STATES, LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN (2024), <https://refugeerights.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Climate-Legal-Action-Agenda-English.pdf>.

¹²¹ See Cartagena Declaration, *supra* note 103, pt. III, ¶ 3 (defining as persons whose “lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by . . . massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order”)

¹²² Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 2, Section VII (defining as persons whose return would “threaten their life or put them in danger of [] torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.”). In this report, Complementary Protection (capitalized) specifically refers to the figure as defined in Mexican law.

¹²³ This logical sequence is already built into the structure of Mexican law, as complementary protection is only for individuals not recognized as refugees. Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 2, sec. VII. However, the study team heard from multiple key informants that as of 2024, COMAR was evaluating complementary protection as a “most likely” legal pathway to address climate-related displacement. This section is oriented toward explaining why Mexico should ensure that internal guidelines, adjudicator training, and quality control of decisions guarantee that refugee eligibility under the Cartagena definition is always analyzed first and granted where warranted.

¹²⁴ Compare Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 44 (rights of refugees, including family reunification) with art. 48 (rights of complementary protection recipients, not including family reunification).

¹²⁵ Asylum as a Human Right, Advisory Opinion 23/18, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. A) ¶ 123 (“ . . . as appropriate, and benefit other members of the family with this recognition, in attention to the principle of family unity.”). See also *id.* at ¶ 132.

¹²⁶ ANNA JOSEPH ET AL., IMUMI, MEXICAN TARJETAS DE VISITANTE POR RAZONES HUMANITARIAS AND FIRM RESETTLEMENT: A PRACTICE ADVISORY FOR ADVOCATES 7 (2019), <https://imumi.org/attachments/2019/Mexican%20Tarjetas%20de%20Visitante%20por%20Razones%20Humanitarias%20and%20Firm%20Resettlement%20-%20A%20Practice%20Advisory%20for%20Advocates.pdf>.

¹²⁷ Reglamento de la Ley de Migración [Regulations of the Migration Law], art. 144(IV)(d), Diario Oficial de la Federación [Official Gazette of the Federation] 28-09-2012, últimas reformas [latest amendments] DOF 23-05-2014 (Mex.), https://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/regley/Reg_LMigra.pdf.

¹²⁸ CARACHURE, *supra* note 40, at 31. Indeed, while the law is clear that TVRH should be non-discretionarily granted to certain classes of migrants—including asylum-seekers whose COMAR claims are pending—in practice, access to the status is often arbitrarily denied. Throughout 2024, legal services organizations reported that across the board, INM refused to grant TVRH, despite a non-discretionary obligation to do so in cases meeting the law’s criteria. Eva Avilés, *Civil society organizations call for guaranteeing the effective access to human rights for people on the move*, CMDPDH (Jan. 30, 2024), <https://cmdpdh.org/2024/01/30/osc-llaman-a-garantizar-el-acceso-efectivo-de-derechos-humanos-de-personas-en-movilidad/>. The refusal to grant TVRH is not new: over the years, civil society organizations have documented extremely low overall grant rates; failure to grant the status to asylum-seekers released from detention; as well as apparently discretionary use of the status to address migrants traveling in caravans in 2018-2019. SCHMIDTKE, *supra* note.

¹²⁹ Reglamento de la Ley de Migración, *supra* note 127, art. 104(V).

¹³⁰ See also CARACHURE, *supra* note 40, at 31. Likewise, Reglamento de la Ley de Migración, *supra* note 127, art. 116 permits any Mexican citizen or temporary or permanent resident to request an entry visa for a family member who “(b) . . . is in a situation of risk to life or integrity due to duly accredited violence or natural disaster.”

¹³¹ MUN REFUGEE CHALLENGE, OFF. OF THE U.N. HIGH COMM’R FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR), *Finding Durable Solutions for Refugees* (2021), <https://www.unhcr.org/us/media/finding-durable-solutions-refugees-background-guide-challenge-topic-1>.

¹³² Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., Res. No. 4/19, *supra* note 39, princ. 12. In Mexico, these are guaranteed through access to a *Clave Único de Registro de Población* [Unique Population Registry Code] or CURP, analogous to a Social Security Number, which is issued with most kinds of regular (temporary or permanent) migration status.

¹³³ See, e.g., Exec. Comm. of the High Comm’r for Refugees, *Report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the Work of Its Seventy-fifth Session*, U.N. GAOR, 79th Sess., Supp. No. 12, at 4, ¶¶ (f)(iv), U.N. Doc. A/AC.96/1247 (Oct. 18, 2024) (recognizing that “family reunification, based on principles of family unity, as an important pathway to durable solutions” that “restore[s] refugees’ family unity and enjoyment of their right to family life.”).

¹³⁴ These interactions occur in the context of enormous power differentials between the asker and the migrant that for different reasons, including at least the positionality and identity of the researcher and the migrant’s need to access services, are likely to make migrants feel that they cannot or should not refuse or reframe the question being asked. That said, there are exceptions. The survey team recalled one Nicaraguan respondent who cut the survey short, refusing to answer the questions about climate events saying, “I already told you, I was a political prisoner for 12 years—that is why I left. No more questions.”

¹³⁵ Doering-White et al., *supra* note 7 (finding that questions that humanitarian workers ask of migrants in shelter settings influence the answers they give about climate as a cause of migration).

- ¹³⁶ For example, whereas asking about climate factors in isolation (“Were [reported climate impacts] a factor . . . ?”) resulted in more respondents emphasizing climate as a reason for migration, asking about climate factors in the context of other clear drivers of migration (“Did any of the following influence . . . ?”) may have prompted migrants to differently weigh the set of factors at play in their own lives when responding to the survey team. See *supra* Climate as Stated Reason for Migration.
- ¹³⁷ The research team carefully considered survey terminology and language accessibility. For example, the survey did not use the term “climate change,” based on advice from multiple key informants that migrants often do not understand this term (though, as the study demonstrates, they clearly identify and explain its manifestations and effects in drought, rains, heat waves, and other impacts). However, the significant disparity in responses to a question about livelihoods (*medios de vida*) (40% of all respondents reported hunger as a driver) versus a separate, direct question about food insecurity (76% reported hunger in the year before migrating) vividly highlights how the use of unclear and academic terminology can hinder understanding and may affect study results. See *supra* Climate as Stated Reason for Migration.
- ¹³⁸ NANSEN INITIATIVE, DISASTERS AND CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA: EMERGING NEEDS, NEW RESPONSES 9 (2023), https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11411/files/documents/2023-09/final_background_paper_central_america_en.pdf. The frequency of storms, temperature extremes, and other disasters in Mesoamerica has risen in recent years. Comparing 1990–2000 with 2013–2023, the number of storm-related disasters rose from 5.1 to 7.8 per year (a 52.6 percent increase). FAO et al., *LAC Food Security and Nutrition 2024*, *supra* note 1, at 59. On the relationship between earthquakes and climate change, see *supra* note 49.
- ¹³⁹ Luis Guillermo Solís, *Central America Is Still Recovering from Hurricane Mitch*, AMERICAS Q. (May 3, 2022), <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/central-america-is-still-recovering-from-hurricane-mitch/>.
- ¹⁴⁰ Eta and Iota caused damage to homes and healthcare facilities, destroyed more than 1,400 roads, and severely affected access to clean water and food. Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 10; see e.g., *Hurricanes Eta & Iota: Contaminated Water & Damage to Health Facilities Threaten Millions in Honduras*, PROJECT HOPE (Dec. 22, 2020), <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/hurricanes-eta-iota-contaminated-water-damage-health-facilities-threaten-millions>.
- ¹⁴¹ PAUL J. ANGELO, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN REL., CLIMATE CHANGE AND REGIONAL INSTABILITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA 4 (2022), <https://on.cfr.org/3PzgdMc>.
- ¹⁴² Nicholas Depsky & Diego Pons, *Meteorological Droughts are Projected to Worsen in Central America’s Dry Corridor Throughout the 21st Century*, 16 ENV’T. RSCH. LETTER 1 (2020).
- ¹⁴³ FAO et al., *LAC Food Security and Nutrition 2024*, *supra* note 1, at 65.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Id.*
- ¹⁴⁵ Interview with Gary Estrada, *supra* note 11.
- ¹⁴⁶ INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE [IPCC], CLIMATE CHANGE AND LAND: AN IPCC SPECIAL REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE, DESERTIFICATION, LAND DEGRADATION, SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT, FOOD SECURITY, AND GREENHOUSE GAS FLUXES IN TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS 41 (2019), <https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/11/SRCCL-Full-Report-Compiled-191128.pdf>.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Id.* at 262.
- ¹⁴⁸ World Bank Grp., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report* *supra* note 15, at 54.
- ¹⁴⁹ Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 54. In 2015, crop losses of 60 percent of maize and 90 percent of beans tied to El Niño left 461,000 people food insecure. ECLAC, *supra* note 60, at 23.
- ¹⁵⁰ FAO et al., *LAC Food Security and Nutrition 2024*, *supra* note 1, at 65; UNDRR, *Central America drought*, *supra* note 36.
- ¹⁵¹ World Bank Grp., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report* *supra* note 15, at 6; Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 18.
- ¹⁵² Interview with Centro de Desarrollo Humano (Honduras) staff, dated February 24, 2025.
- ¹⁵³ Many subsistence farmers depend heavily on seasonal migration for wages, engaging in a combination of individual agriculture, paid agricultural work, and fishing and foraging. All three of these streams can be impacted by climate shocks. Diego Pons, *Climate Extremes, Food Insecurity, and Migration in Central America*, MIGRATION POL’Y INST. (Feb. 18, 2021), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/climate-food-insecurity-migration-central-america-guatemala>; see also John Dixon, Aidan Gulliver & David Gibbon, *Latin America and the Caribbean*, in FARMING SYSTEMS AND POVERTY: IMPROVING FARMERS’ LIVELIHOODS IN A CHANGING WORLD 259 (FAO & World Bank, 2001). Seasonal cross-border migration, facilitated by the CA-4 regional mobility agreement, is historically rooted but has been increasingly disrupted as climate change places stress on important industries that draw foreign workers, including coffee and shrimping. Interview with Gary Estrada, *supra* note 11; *Building Bridges: Creating Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Central America*, U.N. PEACEBUILDING (Apr. 11, 2023), <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/building-bridges-creating-peaceful-and-inclusive-communities-central-america>.
- ¹⁵⁴ FAO, LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES: DRY CORRIDOR IN EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS (2021), <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb5228en> [hereinafter FAO, *Land of Opportunities*].
- ¹⁵⁵ World Bank Grp., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report* *supra* note 15, at 7, 44–46; Huber et al., *supra* note 79, at 79; SCHOENING, *supra* note 8. The costs of adaptation (e.g. introducing new irrigation systems) are substantial, and *campesinos*

often do not receive government support to address these costs. Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 18.

¹⁵⁶ ECLAC, CLIMATE CHANGE IN CENTRAL AMERICA: POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND PUBLIC POLICY OPTIONS, LC/MEX/L.1196/Rev.1 (2018), <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f94829da-5ba1-46e2-b6fc-c8d9deae57b6/content>.

¹⁵⁷ Patrick Costello, *Guatemala: Displacement, Return and the Peace Process*, WRITENET (Apr. 1, 1995), <https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/writenet/1995/en/29482>; FAO, *Land of Opportunities*, *supra* note 154. World Bank Grp., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report* *supra* note 15, at 54 (In Honduras, poverty, land tenure insecurity, the “tendency (often as a last resort) to live in high-risk areas, and restricted access to infrastructure, social safety nets, and decision-making spaces” leave indigenous communities vulnerable).

¹⁵⁸ Cecilia Niezen, *Farmers Struggle for Land in Guatemala*, OXFAM (Aug. 22, 2013), <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/stories/farmers-struggle-for-land-in-guatemala/>.

¹⁵⁹ U.N. DEP’T OF ECON. & SOC. AFFAIRS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ SUSTAINABILITY (Apr. 20, 2021), <https://social.desa.un.org/publications/challenges-and-opportunities-for-indigenous-peoples-sustainability>; FAO, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FAO: ALLIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE (2020), https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/faoweb/2020/Indigenous/FAO_Indigenous_peoples_narrative_MAY_2020_.pdf; *La defensa de tierras ancestrales: la lucha de los Garifunas en Honduras*, Off. Of the U.N. High Comm’r. H.R. (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.ohchr.org/es/stories/2025/02/defending-ancestral-lands-garifuna-struggle-honduras>.

¹⁶⁰ Zickgraf, *supra* note 62.

¹⁶¹ This war claimed the lives of more than 75,000 people and ended with Peace Accords signed in 1992.

¹⁶² Ana María Ibáñez et al., *Responses to Temperature Shocks: Labor Markets and Migration Decisions in El Salvador* (Inter-Am. Dev. Bank Working Paper Series No 01268, 2022) 9, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18235/0004237>.

¹⁶³ Homicide Rate in El Salvador from 2014 to 2024, STATISTA (Nov. 19, 2025), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/696152/homicide-rate-in-el-salvador/>; *El Salvador profile*, INSIGHT CRIME, <https://insightcrime.org/el-salvador-organized-crime-news/el-salvador/> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025).

¹⁶⁴ Carlos Martínez et al., *Bukele Has Been Negotiating with MS-13 for a Reduction in Homicides and Electoral Support*, EL FARO ENGLISH (Sept. 6, 2020), https://elfaro.net/en/202009/el_salvador/24785/Bukele-Spent-A-Year-Negotiating-with-MS-13-for-a-Reduction-in-Homicides-and-Electoral-Support.htm.

¹⁶⁵ Ana María Méndez Dardón & Geoff Thale, *State of Exception in El Salvador: From a Security Measure to a Government Policy*, WASH. OFF. ON LAT. AM. (Dec. 4, 2024), <https://www.wola.org/analysis/state-of-exception-el-salvador-from-security-measure-to-government-policy/>; *At least 261 people have died in El Salvador’s prisons under anti-gang crackdown, rights group says*, NBC NEWS (July 11, 2024), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/el-salvadors-prisons-deaths-anti-gang-crackdown-rcna161327>.

¹⁶⁶ *Homicide Rate in El Salvador*, *supra* note 163.

¹⁶⁷ Roman Gressier & José Luis Sanz, *Bukele Announces He Will Seek Reelection in 2024 despite Constitutional Ban*, EL FARO ENGLISH (Sept. 16, 2022), https://elfaro.net/en/202209/el_salvador/26381/Bukele-Announces-He-Will-Seek-reelection-in-2024-despite-Constitutional-Ban.htm; Roman Gressier, *With a Stroke of the Pen, Bukele Rewrites Constitution to Allow Changes at Will*, EL FARO ENGLISH (Jan. 30, 2025), https://elfaro.net/en/202209/el_salvador/26381/Bukele-Announces-He-Will-Seek-reelection-in-2024-despite-Constitutional-Ban.htm; Gabriel Labrador et al., *Jueces a la medida: la farsa de la depuración de Bukele [Judges handpicked: Bukele’s purge farce]*, REVISTA FACTUM (July 12, 2023), <https://www.revistafactum.com/jueces-a-la-medida/>; Alex Papadovassilakis & Seth Robbins, *Ousting of El Salvador’s Top Prosecutor Imperils Rule of Law*, INSIGHT CRIME (May 3, 2021), <https://insightcrime.org/news/ousting-el-salvador-top-prosecutor-imperils-rule-of-law/>; DUE PROCESS OF L. FOUND ET AL., DETENCIONES ARBITRARIAS EN EL MARCO DEL ESTADO DE EXCEPCIÓN EN EL SALVADOR [ARBITRARY DETENTIONS DURING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN EL SALVADOR] (2024), <https://dplf.org/en/2024/11/20/arbitrary-detentions-in-the-state-of-emergency-in-el-salvador/>.

¹⁶⁸ In comparison, the US has incarcerated about 0.7 percent of its population. CRISTOSAL, SILENCE IS NOT AN OPTION: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2024), <https://cristosal.org/EN/2024/07/10/silence-is-not-an-option-executive-summary/>; DPLF et al., DETENCIONES ARBITRARIAS, *supra* note 167; Alex Papadovassilakis, *Keeping a Lid on Prisons*, INSIGHT CRIME (Dec. 6, 2023), <https://insightcrime.org/investigations/el-salvador-keeping-lid-on-prisons/>.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Grupo de Monitoreo Independiente El Salvador (GMIES) staff, dated Oct. 18, 2024; Víctor Peña & Carlos Barrera, *Bukele’s Airport Project Brings Deforestation and Displacement*, EL FARO (Mar. 4, 2025), https://elfaro.net/en/202503/ef_photo/27767/bukele-s-airport-project-brings-deforestation-and-displacement; Juan Elman, *The ‘world’s coolest dictator’ dreams of a Bitcoin utopia. But there’s a price*, OPEN DEMOCRACY (Mar. 14, 2024), <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/5050/el-salvador-bukele-coolest-dictator-bitcoin-poverty/>.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with GMIES staff, *supra* note 169.

¹⁷¹ *El Salvador’s Congress approves ending ban on metals mining*, ASSOC. PRESS (Dec. 23, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/el-salvador-law-bukele-gold-mining-16864deac495dd5a3f2cf4d4fd17e06a7>. The new law will require the government to maintain at least a 51 percent stake in any mining project, but does not provide for independent oversight. Maxwell Radwin, *El Salvador*

reverses landmark mining ban, setting up clash with activists, MONGABAY (Jan. 13, 2025), <https://news.mongabay.com/2025/01/el-salvador-reverses-landmark-mining-ban-setting-up-clash-with-activists/>.

¹⁷² Nina Lakhani, *Exonerated Environmental Defenders to Face Murder Retrial in El Salvador*, THE GUARDIAN (Feb. 2, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/02/el-salvador-retrial-environmental-activists>.

¹⁷³ ALEJANDRO ARTIGA-PURCELL ET AL., STATE OF DECEPTION: FACT FINDING REPORT ON THE DETAINED EL SALVADOR WATER DEFENDERS, MINING, AND THE STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER THE BUKELE ADMINISTRATION 12–14 (Jan. 11, 2024), <https://justice-project.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/state-of-deception-2023-delegation-report-english.pdf>. As of early 2025, the attorney general’s office had secured retrial of the activists before a judge named by President Bukele, despite the first trial’s acquittal finding insufficient evidence that a crime had taken place, or that the activists were linked to it. Lakhani, *supra* note 173.

¹⁷⁴ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶ 155.

¹⁷⁵ GONZALO AGUILAR ET AL., WORLD BANK GRP., BACKGROUND NOTE 1: POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN EL SALVADOR: A SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT TRENDS 4 (2024), <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099120924111012731/pdf/P5006561d17203078181e610ce92cd53c2f.pdf>.

¹⁷⁶ Claudia Díaz-Combs, *In El Salvador, Workers Fight to Protect Public Services*, NACLA (Aug. 15, 2023), <https://nacla.org/el-salvador-workers-protect-public-services/>.

¹⁷⁷ Aguilar *et al.*, *supra* note 175, at 4.

¹⁷⁸ Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 86–87.

¹⁷⁹ Ibáñez *et al.*, *supra* note 162, at 11.

¹⁸⁰ Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 75.

¹⁸¹ *Id.* at 78–79.

¹⁸² OSCAR CALVO-GONZALEZ & J. HUMBERTO LOPEZ, WORLD BANK GRP., EL SALVADOR - SYSTEMATIC COUNTRY DIAGNOSTIC: BUILDING ON STRENGTHS FOR A NEW GENERATION 9 (2015), <https://documents.worldbank.org/pt/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/385371467998190389>.

¹⁸³ Ibáñez *et al.*, *supra* note 162.

¹⁸⁴ *Id.* at 11.

¹⁸⁵ The war left more than 200,000 dead or disappeared, of whom 83 percent were indigenous, and over one million people — mostly from rural, indigenous communities— displaced. See, e.g., Medina *et al.*, *supra* note 64, at 16. More than 90 percent of these deaths were attributed to state security forces. This brutal period in Guatemala’s history has since been recognized as genocide by a UN-sponsored truth commission and in domestic criminal prosecution. COMM’N FOR HIST. CLARIFICATION, GUATEMALA: MEMORY OF SILENCE 38–42, 86 (1999).

¹⁸⁶ One corruption scandal involving fraud on the Guatemalan public health system (IGSS) left dozens of dialysis patients dead. ALEX PAPADOVASSILAKIS, SOCIAL INSECURITY: THE CASE OF IGSS-PISA IN GUATEMALA, INSIGHT CRIME (2022), <https://insightcrime.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Social-Insecurity-The-Case-of-IGSS-Pisa-in-Guatemala-InSight-Crime.pdf>. See also *Guatemala’s Former President Gets 16 Years for Fraud, Conspiracy*, AL JAZEERA (Dec. 8, 2022), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/8/guatemala-former-president-gets-16-years-for-fraud-conspiracy>; Victoria Dittmar, *Guatemala Investigates Another Top Official of Pérez Molina Govt*, INSIGHT CRIME (July 20, 2017), <https://insightcrime.org/news/brief/guatemala-investigate-corruption-top-official-perez-molina-govt/>. On the political impact of these scandals, see also Jeff Abbott, *Guatemala’s Indigenous leaders take to the streets in nationwide protests*, AL JAZEERA (Oct. 11, 2023), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/11/guatemalas-indigenous-leaders-take-to-the-street-in-nationwide-protests>.

¹⁸⁷ Since 2019, the Attorney General’s Office (MP) under AG Consuelo Porras persecuted former staff of the International Commission against Corruption and Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), a UN-backed probe, and FECCI, the Attorney General’s special anti-impunity office. Steven Dudley *et al.*, *Guatemala President Announces End of CICIG’s Mandate*, INSIGHT CRIME (Aug. 31, 2018), <https://insightcrime.org/news/guatemala-president-announces-end-cicig-mandate/>; Cristian García & Andrés García, *Así pervirtió Consuelo Porras a la FECCI [This is how Consuelo Porras corrupted the FECCI]*, PRENSA COMUNITARIA (Jan. 13, 2024), <https://prensacomunitaria.org/2024/01/asi-pervirtio-consuelo-porras-a-la-fecci/>.

¹⁸⁸ *Guatemala: No Guarantees of Return for Human Rights Defenders and Justice Workers in Exile*, INT’L H.R. FEDERATION (July 22, 2024), <https://www.fidh.org/es/region/americas/guatemala/guatemala-sin-garantias-de-retorno-para-personas-defensoras-y>; see also *Guatemala: Attorney General Pursues Political Prosecutions*, HUM. RTS. WATCH (Dec. 18, 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/18/guatemala-attorney-general-pursues-political-prosecutions>.

¹⁸⁹ The most recent agrarian census, conducted in 2003, found nearly 78 percent of arable land concentrated in the hands of eight percent of landholders. ZANDER & DÜRR, LAND DEALS POL. INITIATIVE (LDPI), DYNAMICS IN LAND TENURE, LOCAL POWER AND THE PEASANT ECONOMY: THE CASE OF PETÉN, GUATEMALA (2011), <https://www.oicrf.org/documents/40950/43224/Dynamics+in+land+tenure+local+power+and+the+peasant+economy+the+case+of+Pettn+Guatemala.pdf>.

¹⁹⁰ *Guatemala Overview*, WORLD BANK GRP., <https://www.worldbank.org/ext/en/country/guatemala> (last visited May 2, 2025); *Guatemala Profile*, INSIGHT CRIME (Jan. 18, 2024), <https://insightcrime.org/guatemala-organized-crime-news/guatemala/>.

¹⁹¹ Medina *et al.*, *supra* note 64, at 16–17.

¹⁹² Including the increasing difficulty of coffee cultivation at certain elevations due to warming temperatures and the threat of *la roya*, or coffee leaf rust fungus that has devastated coffee crops over the past decade. See, e.g., Interview with Gary Estrada, *supra* note 11; Karissa Waddick, *Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture in Guatemala and Honduras*, 8 GLOB. MAJORITY E-JOURNAL 109, 116, 118 (2017); Felicity Lawrence, *Global Food Crisis: Climate Change Imperils Guatemala's Food Security*, THE GUARDIAN (May 31, 2011), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/may/31/global-food-crisis-guatemala-climate-change>.

¹⁹³ Medina *et al.*, *supra* note 64, at 28–29. Landless and land-poor *campesino* communities frequently survive with a combination of their own crop production, seasonal agricultural wage labor, and foraging. FAO, *Small Family Farms Factsheet*, *supra* note 91. KAYLY OBER & RACHEL SCHMIDTKE, REFUGEES INT'L, TWO YEARS AFTER ETA AND IOTA: DISPLACED AND FORGOTTEN IN GUATEMALA (2023), <https://d3jwam0i5codb7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/GuatemalaReport-February2023.pdf>.

¹⁹⁴ Medina *et al.*, *supra* note 64, at 29.

¹⁹⁵ Hurricanes Eta and Iota caused infrastructure-related losses of up to 0.56 percent of GDP and agriculture-related losses of close to 0.20 percent of the national GDP. Guatemala Overview, *supra* note 190.

¹⁹⁶ Jeff Abbott, *Central America Faces Intense Wildfire Season*, THE PROGRESSIVE (Apr. 20, 2024), <https://progressive.org/latest/central-america-faces-intense-wildfire-season-abbott-20240420/>.

¹⁹⁷ Tellman *et al.*, *supra* note 71, at 138.

¹⁹⁸ Inter-Am. Comm'n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶ 162.

¹⁹⁹ *Id.* ¶¶ 173, 254.

²⁰⁰ The US used Honduran bases as a staging ground for its Cold War interventions in the region. *Honduras profile – Timeline*, BBC NEWS (May 16, 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-18974519>. During this period, the country also became a key drug transshipment point between South America and the United States. Steven Dudley, *Honduras Elites and Organized Crime: Juan Ramón Matta Ballesteros*, INSIGHT CRIME (Apr. 9, 2016), <https://insightcrime.org/investigations/honduras-elites-organized-crime-juan-matta-ballesteros/>.

²⁰¹ Arturo Wallace, *10 años del golpe de Estado en Honduras: qué ha cambiado en el país (y qué no) a una década de la salida forzada del presidente Manuel Zelaya [10 years since the coup in Honduras: what has changed in the country (and what hasn't) a decade after the forced departure of President Manuel Zelaya]*, BBC NEWS MUNDO (June 28, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-48798825>; Nina Lakhani, *Honduras: 'Open for business' and dangerous for those who stand in the way*, MINNPOST (Jan. 27, 2014), <https://www.minnpost.com/global-post/2014/01/honduras-open-business-and-dangerous-those-who-stand-way/>.

²⁰² *Which Countries Have the World's Highest Murder Rates? Honduras Tops the List*, CNN WORLD (Apr. 11, 2014), <https://www.cnn.com/2014/04/10/world/un-world-murder-rates/index.html>. Regional gangs, including the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Barrio 18, have also consolidated presence in the country. *Special Report: Gangs in Honduras*, INSIGHT CRIME (Dec. 9, 2015), <https://insightcrime.org/investigations/special-report-gangs-in-honduras/>.

²⁰³ *Homicide Rate in Honduras from 2014 to 2024*, STATISTA (Mar. 12, 2026), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/984779/homicide-rate-honduras/>.

²⁰⁴ Press Release, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST., *Juan Orlando Hernández, Former President of Honduras, Sentenced to 45 Years in Prison for Conspiring to Distribute More Than 400 Tons of Cocaine and Related Firearms Offenses* (June 26, 2024),

<https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/juan-orlando-hernandez-former-president-honduras-sentenced-45-years-prison-conspiring>. President Xiomara Castro (2022–2026) also saw allegations of drug trafficking and corruption against her family.

Parker Asmann, *New Narco Video Scandal Spotlights Selective Justice in Honduras*, INSIGHT CRIME (May 29, 2025), <https://insightcrime.org/news/narco-video-scandal-selective-justice-honduras/>; *Honduras' President Is Asked to Resign After Corruption Scandal She Says Is a Plot to Oust Her*, AP NEWS (Sept. 4, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/xiomara-castro-coup-carlos-zelaya-honduras-corruption-60fc69e941f8b8ed55b770da530468bf>.

²⁰⁵ Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 103. See also generally Chayes, *supra* note 18.

²⁰⁶ Seventy-three percent of Hondurans live in poverty, 54 percent in extreme poverty; 84 percent of children live in poverty. Inter-Am. Comm'n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶ 39.

²⁰⁷ AUSTRIAN CTR. FOR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN & ASYLUM RSCH. & DOCUMENTATION (ACCORD), *HONDURAS: GANG-BASED VIOLENCE, CRIMINALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST SPECIFIC GROUPS 71* (2022), <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2083691/ACCORD-Honduras-Gang+Violence-December+2022.pdf>.

²⁰⁸ RACHEL DOTSON, *KIDS IN NEED OF DEFENSE, EVERYDAY LIFE IS FEAR: VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN HONDURAS* (2019), https://supportkind.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Honduras-report_11-26-19-FINAL.pdf.

²⁰⁹ Internal displacement is driven in large part by gang persecution, including extortion and homicide. According to UNHCR, more than 247,000 people were displaced in Honduras due to “generalized violence” between 2004 and 2018. UNHCR, *HONDURAS OPERATIONAL UPDATE 29 – MAY 2024* (June 28, 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/honduras/honduras-operational-update-29-may-2024>.

²¹⁰ Higuera-Florez & Madurga-López, *supra* note 45, at 29. People migrating from rural to urban areas are “especially vulnerable to the precarious living conditions of major cities such as Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.” *Id.* at ¶ 21.

²¹¹ Pinnow, *supra* note 59.

²¹² Rubí & Gaynor, *supra* note 17.

²¹³ For example, the Global Adaptation Index has ranked Honduras 113 out of 185 in its vulnerability to climate change, but 177 of 192 in its readiness/ability to deal with the effects of climate change. Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 100–01. Farmers and those residing in the Dry Corridor and Sula Valley are at the most risk from droughts and floods. WORLD BANK GRP., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report* *supra* note 15, at 7.

²¹⁴ These hurricanes critically impacted 3.9 million people and caused US \$2.1 billion in damage—about 9 percent of Honduras’ GDP. WORLD BANK GRP., *Honduras Country Climate and Development Report* *supra* note 15, at 6; Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 103; WORLD BANK GRP., HONDURAS: PATHS TOWARD BUILDING A RESILIENT SOCIETY 16–17 (2022), <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/517481645562029476/pdf/Honduras-Paths-Toward-Building-a-Resilient-Society-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic.pdf> [hereinafter HONDURAS RESILIENT SOCIETY].

²¹⁵ Birch & Martínez i Coma, *supra* note 98, at 8.

²¹⁶ Julia Neusner et al., *supra* note 7, at 4.

²¹⁷ Pinnow, *supra* note 59.

²¹⁸ *Id.*

²¹⁹ Américas: Honduras, UNHCR (last visited July 7, 2025) (author’s translation), <https://www.acnur.org/donde-trabajamos/pais/honduras>.

²²⁰ The SR referred specifically to Lajas Blancas, Nacaome Municipality, Valle Department, which has been devastated by the effects of prolonged drought, intensified by water use by industrial agriculture. He also noted that in Cedeño, “most of the community is elderly as the young people have migrated to seek better economic opportunities.” Fry, *supra* note 61, ¶¶ 17, 20.

²²¹ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, at ¶ 164.

²²² HONDURAS RESILIENT SOCIETY, *supra* note 214, at 33.

²²³ Yuliana Ramazzini & Roman Gressier, *Honduran Agrarian Reform Talks Continue with Elections in Full Swing*, EL FARO ENGLISH (June 2, 2025), <https://beta.elfaro.net/en/central-america-en/honduran-agrarian-reform-talks-continue-with-elections-in-full-swing>.

²²⁴ *Honduras: Further Information: Water Defenders Killed*, AMNESTY INT’L (June 19, 2023), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr37/6895/2023/en/>. Carlos Escaleras was himself an environmental activist murdered for his work. See Carlos Escaleras Mejía et al. v. Honduras, Judgement, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., (ser. C) No. 361 (Sept. 26, 2018).

²²⁵ See e.g. Press Release, Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *IACHR Condemns Murders of Rights Defenders in Honduras* (Feb. 14, 2023), https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2023/022.asp.

²²⁶ See *supra* note 69.

²²⁷ Deforestation in the Mosquitia region (Olancho Department) is driven by human activities like illegal logging, cattle ranching, drug trafficking, and land grabbing, as well as forest fires. Unfortunately, even protected areas continue to be deforested, evidencing lack of government action to protect them. Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 121.

²²⁸ *Id.* *Honduras afronta una epidemia de "gorgojo" si no invierte en prevención [Honduras faced a “beetle” epidemic if it does not invest in prevention]*, *supra* note 69. See also interview with Asylum Access Mexico staff, *supra* note 69.

²²⁹ Wilson Center, *Climate Resilience in Central America*, *supra* note 33, at 122.

²³⁰ Daniel Ortega of the Sandinista Party (FSLN) has been president since 2006. Since then, he has abolished presidential term limits, limited judicial and legislative independence and, in 2017, elevated his wife, Rosario Murillo, to the vice presidency. Beginning in April 2018, massive protests were met with excessive force, including by para-state groups, killing more than 300 protesters and filling prisons with arbitrarily arrested protesters and opposition leaders. The government has since tightened its hold on power, arresting and disqualifying opposition politicians and political dissidents in subsequent elections. Charles G. Ripley III, *Crisis Prompts Record Emigration from Nicaragua, Surpassing Cold War Era*, MIGRATION POL’Y INST. (Mar. 7, 2023), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/record-emigration-nicaragua-crisis>. Independent IACHR and UN expert panels have found that this violence against civilians constitutes crimes against humanity., Press release, Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *CIDH denounces the weakening of the rule of law in the face of serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity in Nicaragua* (Jan. 10, 2019), https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2019/006.asp; Press Release, U.N. Hum. Rts. Comm. [UNHRC], *Nicaragua: Crimes against humanity being committed against civilians for political reasons, investigation says* (Mar. 2, 2023), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/nicaragua-crimes-against-humanity-being-committed-against-civilians>.

²³¹ In 2022 and 2023, the regime also stripped leading opposition figures of their Nicaraguan nationality and banished them to the US. Megan Janetsky & Sonia Pérez D., *Stripped of citizenship, these Nicaraguans live in limbo scattered across the world*,

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Nov. 28, 2024), <https://apnews.com/article/nicaragua-daniel-ortega-stateless-citizenship-nationalities-costa-rica-b391e05eacd7dc3cf3968f5fb23987f1>.

²³² HUM. RTS. WATCH, WORLD REPORT 2024: NICARAGUA, EVENTS OF 2023 (2024), https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/01/World%20Report%202024%20LOWRES%20WEBSPREADS_0.pdf. This dwarfs the number of Nicaraguans who fled the country in the 1980s, when an estimated 46,000 Nicaraguans fled to Costa Rica due to the civil war (about 1 percent of Nicaragua's population). Meanwhile, the 1990 U.S. census recorded about 169,000 Nicaraguans residing in the U.S. Ripley III, *supra* note 230.

²³³ UNHCR, *Refugee Statistics Download*, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download> (last visited April 5, 2025) (counting 30,672 Nicaraguan refugees and 345,805 asylum-seekers worldwide in 2024). While most have fled to Costa Rica, an increasing number have migrated toward Mexico and the US. Ripley III, *supra* note 230.

²³⁴ Between 2008 and 2022, 41 disaster events in Nicaragua displaced 139,000 people due to floods and 438,000 people due to storms. *Nicaragua*, INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CTR. (IDMC) <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/nicaragua/> (last visited Feb. 19, 2026).

²³⁵ Angelo, *supra* note 141.

²³⁶ Yessenia Funes, *The Other Side of Disaster*, ATMOS (Apr. 11, 2022), <https://atmos.earth/art-and-culture/hurricane-eta-iota-climate-migration-miskito/>.

²³⁷ Ripley III, *supra* note 230.

²³⁸ Agricultural regions like León and Chinandega are especially affected. Angelo, *supra* note 141, at 7.

²³⁹ World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*, *supra* note 15, ¶ 97–98, ¶ 20, 21; ¶ 8, ¶ 26. One study found that inadequate sewers and drainage, insecure land tenure, socioeconomic challenges, and limited national-level climate assessments and planning left residents of the city of Estelí particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. CAROLINE MOSER ET AL., WORLD BANK GRP., PRO-POOR ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN URBAN CENTERS: CASE STUDIES OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE IN KENYA AND NICARAGUA 18–22 (2010), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/f1d583c0-cc69-5011-a51b-4463fde14ac2>.

²⁴⁰ Gold mining has increased in recent years, often leading to deforestation and toxic runoff that contaminates rivers and streams. World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*, *supra* note 15, at 98, ¶ 21; see also Yasica Sequeira-León et al., *Mercury Pollution in La Libertad, a Gold Mining Town in Central Nicaragua* 22 EPIDEMIOLOGY S291 (2011).

²⁴¹ The expansion of agribusiness, including palm oil and coffee, has led to widespread deforestation and soil degradation. World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*, *supra* note 15, at 119.

²⁴² Nicaragua's annual forest loss increased from 1.34% between 2010–2015 to 2.56% from 2015–2020. Meanwhile, restoration is very low. The top recipient of forestry permits fails to restore 80% of the areas that it clears. Sasha Chavkin et al., *Nicaragua's Forgotten Deforestation Crisis*, ORG. CRIME & CORRUPTION REP. PROJECT (OCCRP) (Nov. 1, 2021), <https://www.occrp.org/en/investigation/nicaraguas-forgotten-deforestation-crisis>.

²⁴³ World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*, *supra* note 15, at 96 ¶ 18, 99 ¶ 25.

²⁴⁴ *Id.* at 8, ¶ 26.

²⁴⁵ Laura Hobson Herlihy, *The New Colonization of Nicaragua's Caribbean Coast*, NACLA (Sept. 6, 2016), <https://nacla.org/2016-09-06-new-colonization-nicaraguas-caribbean-coast/>. These threats continue despite laws designed to protect indigenous rights. *Id.*

²⁴⁶ *Id.* See also Members of the Miskitu and Mayangna Indigenous Communities of the Northern Caribbean Coast Region of Nicaragua, Extension of Provisional Measures, Resolution, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. E), ¶ 11–13 (June 27, 2023).

²⁴⁷ HOSSEIN AYAZI & ELSADIG ELSHEIKH, OTHERING & BELONGING INST., CLIMATE REFUGEES: THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND RIGHTS DENIED (2019), https://belonging.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/climate_refugees.pdf. This problem is not new: mismanagement of disaster aid by the Somoza dictatorship helped fuel the FSLN, which eventually toppled the regime in 1979. World Bank, *Nicaragua Paving the Way*, *supra* note 15, at 4, ¶ 14.

²⁴⁸ EFE, *Oposición dice que Gobierno impide ayuda a damnificados por Eta en Nicaragua*, DIARIO LIBRE (Nov. 4, 2020), <https://www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/internacional/oposicion-dice-que-gobierno-impide-ayuda-a-damnificados-por-eta-en-nicaragua-BD22474342>. Likewise, the government sidelined humanitarian organizations and fired doctors who criticized its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Paula Dupraz-Dobias, *Nicaragua picks a bad time to sideline humanitarian groups*, NEW HUMANITARIAN (Sept. 2, 2020), <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/09/02/Nicaragua-conflict-political-unrest-poverty-coronavirus>.

²⁴⁹ U.S. DEP'T OF STATE, BUREAU OF ECON. ENERGY, & BUS AFFAIRS, 2024 INVESTMENT CLIMATE STATEMENTS: NICARAGUA (2024), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-investment-climate-statements/nicaragua/>.

²⁵⁰ Inter-Am. Comm'n H.R., *Poverty, Climate, Rights, and Migration in Central America*, *supra* note 7, ¶ 172.

²⁵¹ *Id.*; *Defensores ambientales en el exilio: una lucha que cruza fronteras*, [Environmental defenders in exile: a struggle that crosses borders] COLECTIVO NICARAGUA NUNCA MÁS [NICARAGUA NEVER AGAIN COLLECTIVE] (Nov. 14, 2024), <https://colectivodhnicaragua.org/defensores-ambientales-exilio-lucha-fronteras/>; Sara Van Note, *In Nicaragua, Forests and Indigenous Communities Face Threats*, UNDARK (Sept. 16, 2020), <https://undark.org/2020/09/16/nicaragua-deforestation/>; Laura

Furones & Francisca Stuardo, *As democracy continues to deteriorate in Nicaragua, Indigenous peoples pay the price*, GLOBAL WITNESS (Mar. 24, 2022), <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/land-and-environmental-defenders/as-democracy-continues-to-deteriorate-in-nicaragua-indigenous-peoples-pay-the-price/>.

²⁵² See *supra* note 120.

²⁵³ Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, July 28, 1951, 189 U.N.T.S. 137.; Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, Jan. 31, 1967, 606 U.N.T.S. 267.; Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 13.I.

²⁵⁴ UNHCR, *Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status and Guidelines on International Protection Under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, ¶ 51, HCR/1P/4/ENG./REV.4 (2019).

²⁵⁵ JANE McADAM, BROOKINGS INST., THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK OF CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED DISPLACEMENT 2 (Apr. 3, 2012), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/04032012_cc_paper_mcadamj.pdf.

²⁵⁶ Natural disasters are almost always indiscriminate in nature and lack the targeted intent that persecution has been interpreted to require under the Convention, and nature, of course, cannot “persecute.” JANE McADAM, *CLIMATE CHANGE, FORCED MIGRATION, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW* 44–46 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199587087.003.0003>.

²⁵⁷ UNHCR, *Legal considerations on climate change and disaster claims*, *supra* note 120; UNHRC, *Views Adopted by the Committee Under Article 5(4) of the Optional Protocol, Concerning Communication No. 2728/2016*, U.N. Doc.

CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016, ¶ 2.8 (Sept. 23, 2020) [hereinafter *Teitiota v. New Zealand*]; Refugee Law Initiative, *supra* note 120, at 173.

²⁵⁸ See also UNHCR, *Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from El Salvador*, U.N. Doc. HCR/EG/SLV/16/01 (Mar. 15, 2016); UNHCR, *Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of asylum-seekers from Guatemala*, U.N. Doc. HCR/EG/GTM/18/01 (Jan. 2018); UNHCR, *Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Asylum-Seekers from Honduras*, U.N. Doc. HCR/EG/HND/16/03 (July 27, 2016); UNHCR, *International Protection Considerations with Regard to People Fleeing Nicaragua*, U.N. Doc. HCR/PC/NIC/2023/01 (Jan. 2023).

²⁵⁹ E. Tendayi Achiume (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance), *Ecological crisis, climate justice and racial justice*, U.N. Doc. A/77/549 (Oct. 25, 2022).

²⁶⁰ For example, by intentionally redirecting flooding toward a minority group. See, e.g., HUM. RTS. WATCH, THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT ASSAULT ON THE MARSH ARABS 13–14 (2003), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2003/01/25/iraqi-government-assault-marsh-arabs>.

²⁶¹ See also, e.g., UNHCR, *Legal considerations on climate change and disaster claims*, *supra* note 120, ¶ 10.

²⁶² See also, e.g., CGRS ET AL., *supra* note 120.

²⁶³ UNHCR, *Legal considerations on climate change and disaster claims*, *supra* note 120, ¶ 12.

²⁶⁴ *Climate Emergency and Human Rights*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 13, ¶ 420 (emphasis added) (citing jurisprudence on internal displacement, including *Valle Jaramillo vs. Colombia* and *Massacre of the “Los Josefinos” Hamlet vs. Guatemala*).

²⁶⁵ Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 13.II. The Cartagena Declaration has been included in Mexico’s national law since 1990, at which time it was included in the General Population Law. MICHAEL REED-HURTADO, UNHCR: DIV. OF INT’L. PROTECTION, THE CARTAGENA DECLARATION ON REFUGEES AND THE PROTECTION OF PEOPLE FLEEING ARMED CONFLICT AND OTHER SITUATIONS OF VIOLENCE IN LATIN AMERICA 17 (2013), <https://www.refworld.org/reference/lprps/unhcr/2013/en/97247>.

²⁶⁶ Cartagena Declaration, *supra* note 103. The term “lives, safety, or freedom” should be broadly interpreted in line with human rights standards. See also *Pacheco Tineo Family vs. Bolivia*, Preliminary Objections, Merits, Reparations and Costs, Judgment, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. C) No. 272 ¶ 135 (Nov. 25, 2013); UNHCR, *Guidelines on International Protection No. 12: Claims for refugee status related to situations of armed conflict and violence under Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and the regional refugee definitions*, U.N. Doc. HCR/GIP/16/12, ¶ 83 (Dec. 2, 2016) [hereinafter *Guidelines No. 12*].

²⁶⁷ RACHEL SCHMIDTKE & DANIELA GUTIÉRREZ ESCOBEDO, REFUGEES INT’L, MEXICO’S USE OF DIFFERENTIATED ASYLUM PROCEDURES: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ASYLUM PROCESSING 4–5 (2021), <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/mexicos-use-of-differentiated- asylum-procedures-an-innovative-approach-to-asylum-processing/>. However, it is difficult to understand exactly what legal analysis COMAR is performing to determine refugee eligibility, as the available published information is hermetic. See, e.g., UNHCR et al., *México: Procedimientos simplificados*, BUENAS PRÁCTICAS: ASILO AMÉRICAS (last accessed July 7, 2025), <https://www.asiloamericas.org/mex-procedimientos-simplificados/>.

²⁶⁸ In interview, COMAR described a recognized “generalized violence” case, where the family was exposed to violence as a result of post-hurricane displacement in Honduras. Interview with Rubén Jiménez, *supra* note 17.

²⁶⁹ Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 13.II. The implementing regulations define the former as “[s]ituations that seriously disturb public peace in the applicant’s country of origin or habitual residence and that are the result of acts attributable to human beings,” and the latter as “[v]iolations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country of origin, on a large scale and in accordance with a specific policy.” Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 4.XI and 4.X. The Cartagena Declaration’s provisions should be given their “plain meaning” and “interpreted in an evolutionary way so that they remain relevant to situations not foreseeable when the Cartagena Declaration was drafted.” *Guidelines No. 12*, *supra* note 266, ¶ 70. See also UNHCR, *Legal considerations on climate change and disaster claims*, *supra* note 120, ¶ 14.

²⁷⁰ Critically, whether the disturbance “stems from human or other causes is not determinative.” UNHCR, *Legal considerations on climate change and disaster claims*, *supra* note 120, ¶ 15; see also UNHCR, Summary Conclusions on the interpretation of the extended refugee definition in the 1984 Cartagena Declaration, ¶ 24 (July 7, 2014), <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/53bd4d0c9.pdf>.

²⁷¹ SANJULA WEERASINGHE, UNHCR: DIV. OF INT’L PROTECTION, IN HARM’S WAY: INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF NEXUS DYNAMICS BETWEEN CONFLICT OR VIOLENCE AND DISASTER OR CLIMATE CHANGE 104 (2018), <https://www.unhcr.org/media/no-39-harms-way-international-protection-context-nexus-dynamics-between-conflict-or-violence>.

²⁷² *Guidelines No. 12*, *supra* note 266, ¶ 76; see also Int’l Conf. on Cent. Am. Refugees (CIREFCA), *Principios y criterios para la protección y asistencia a los refugiados, repatriados y desplazados en América Latina* [Principles and Criteria for the protection and assistance of refugees, returnees, and displaced persons in Latin America] ¶ 34 (Apr. 1989), <https://www.refworld.org/es/leg/resol/cirefca/1989/es/126572>. On the scope and content of the rights to health, adequate food, clean water, housing, a healthy environment, and other social rights, see e.g., Environment and Human Rights, Advisory Opinion OC-23/17, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. A) (Nov. 15, 2017); Indigenous Communities of the Lhaka Honhat (Our Land) Ass’n v. Argentina, Merits, Reparations and Costs, Judgment, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. C) No. 400 (Feb. 6, 2020).

²⁷³ FELIPE SÁNCHEZ NÁJERA, IBERO: OBSERVATORIO DE PROTECCIÓN INTERNACIONAL, SITUACIÓN DE SOLICITANTES DE ASILO DE ORIGEN VENEZOLANO [SITUATION OF VENEZUELAN ASYLUM SEEKERS] 11 (2018), <https://asiloenmexico.ibero.mx/informes/situacion-de-solicitantes-de-asilo-de-origen-venezolano/> (COMAR recognizes “massive violations” in light of food and health crisis in Venezuela; price controls on food and medicine; lack of medicines and crisis in national hospital system; and bankrupt national economy); FELIPE SÁNCHEZ NÁJERA, IBERO: OBSERVATORIO DE PROTECCIÓN INTERNACIONAL, LA DECLARACIÓN DE CARTAGENA EN MÉXICO 13 (2018), <https://programadh.ibero.mx/assets/documents/PDH-2018-DECLARACION-DE-CARTAGENA.pdf>. From 2011 to 2016, Venezuelan asylum-seekers in Mexico had a 98% recognition rate under the Cartagena Declaration. During this time, a remarkable 38 percent of all Venezuelans stated “economic reasons” as their principal motive for migrating to COMAR. Felipe Sánchez Nájera, & Feline Freier, *The Cartagena refugee definition and nationality-based discrimination in Mexican refugee status determination*, 60 INT’L MIGRATION 37, 45–46 (2022), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/imig.12910>.

²⁷⁴ When interpreting Mexico’s subsidiary definition requiring violations exist “in accordance with a specific policy,” refugee adjudicators should evaluate both whether State agents commit human rights violations, or whether they support, acquiesce to, or fail to exercise due diligence to prevent, or otherwise allow violations to happen, without adequate intervention. Likewise, UNHCR has considered, citing Inter-American jurisprudence, that “elements of planning and organization” by the perpetrator — whether a state or non-state actor— are relevant to assess the existence of “massive violations.” *Guidelines No. 12*, *supra* note 266, ¶ 76; see also CGRS ET AL., *supra* note 120, ¶ 119.

²⁷⁵ *Community of La Oroya v. Peru*, Preliminary Objections, Merits, Reparations, and Costs, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. C) No. 511, ¶ 179 (Nov. 27, 2023).

²⁷⁶ *Id.* at ¶ 180 (emphasis added).

²⁷⁷ *Climate Emergency and Human Rights*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 13, ¶ 422.

²⁷⁸ Including by “secur[ing] adequate water for consumption, sanitation, and crop irrigation during heatwaves and in particularly drought-affected zones;” effectively protecting “wetlands, mangroves, rivers or watersheds” essential to mitigating the impacts of droughts and flooding; and undertaking infrastructure projects to prevent flooding (author’s translation). *Climate Emergency and Human Rights*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 13, ¶ 401.

²⁷⁹ UNHCR, *Legal considerations on climate change and disaster claims*, *supra* note 120, ¶ 17.

²⁸⁰ Jane McAdam, *Complementary Protection*, in CATHRYN COSTELLO ET AL. (EDS), OXFORD HANDBOOK OF INT’L REFUGEE LAW (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1093/law/9780198848639.003.0037>; UNHCR, *UNHCR Note on the Principle of Non-Refoulement* (Nov. 1997), <https://www.refworld.org/policy/legalguidance/unhcr/1997/en/36258>; U.N. Comm. Against Torture, *General Comment No. 4 (2017) on the Implementation of Article 3 of the Convention in the Context of Article 22*, U.N. Doc. CAT/C/GC/4, at ¶ 9 (Sept. 4, 2018), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/catcgc4-general-comment-no-4-2017-implementation>; *Pacheco Tineo Family*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 266, at ¶ 151; *Djamel Ameziane v. United States*, Case 12.865, Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., Report No. 29/20, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.20, doc. 39 ¶ 256 (2020).

²⁸¹ Law on Refugees (LRPCAP) *supra* note 102, art. 2, Section VII.

²⁸² Including under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171 [hereinafter ICCPR]; Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Dec. 10, 1984, 1465 U.N.T.S. 86 [hereinafter CAT]; and American Convention on Human Rights, Nov. 22, 1969, 1144 U.N.T.S. 123 [hereinafter ACHR].

²⁸³ *Environment and Human Rights*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 274, ¶ 109; see also UNHRC, *General Comment No. 36 (2018) on Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the Right to Life*, ¶ 62, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/GC/36 (Sept. 3, 2019) (“implementation of the obligation to respect and ensure the right to life, and in particular life with dignity, depends, *inter alia*, on measures taken by States parties to preserve the environment and protect it against harm, pollution and climate change caused by public and private actors.”)

²⁸⁴ Rights and Guarantees of Children in the Context of Migration and/or in Need of International Protection, Advisory Opinion OC-21/14, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (ser. A), ¶ 229 (Aug. 19, 2014) (“[T]he expulsion or return of a person violates international obligations . . . [where this] would result in harming or a serious deterioration in the person’s health or, even, when it could lead to her or his death.”); *Mortlock v. United States*, Case 12.534, Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., Report No. 63/08, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.134, doc. 5 rev. ¶ 94 (2008); *Teitiota v. New Zealand*, *supra* note 257, ¶ 9.4.

²⁸⁵ *Environment and Human Rights*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 272, ¶ 109; see also *Climate Emergency and Human Rights*, Inter-Am. Ct. H.R., *supra* note 13, ¶ 400. The IACHR has similarly emphasized that “[t]he impacts of climate change that limit access to and use of land, water, and forests interfere with the enjoyment of human rights such as life.” Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., Res. 3/2021, *supra* note 34, at 9.

²⁸⁶ Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., Res. 2/24 *supra* note 13, ¶ 40 (“States should incorporate procedures to identify complementary protection needs . . . due to the impacts of climate change, including socio-environmental disasters.”). Similarly, UNHCR has stated that the adverse effects of climate change and disasters “can pose a serious threat to the enjoyment of the right to life,” through “increased scarcity of habitable land, limited access to potable water, and the lack of alternatives to subsistence livelihoods.” UNHCR, *Legal considerations on climate change and disaster claims*, *supra* note 120, ¶ 19.

²⁸⁷ ICCPR, *supra* note 282, art. 7; CAT, *supra* note 282, art. 3; ACHR, *supra* note 282, art. 5. UNHRC, *General Comment No. 20: Article 7 (Prohibition of Torture, or Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment)*, ¶ 10, U.N. Doc. U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/GC/20, (Mar. 10, 1992); CAT, *General Comment No. 4 (2017) on the implementation of article 3 of the Convention in the context of article 22*, ¶ 48, U.N. Doc. CAT/C/GC/4 (Feb. 9, 2018).

²⁸⁸ See, e.g., *Mortlock*, Inter-Am. Comm’n H.R., *supra* note 284, ¶ 94; *Sufi and Elmi v. United Kingdom*, App. Nos. 8319/07 & 11449/07, Judgment, ¶ 279 (June 28, 2011) (emphasizing that while socio-economic hardship does not automatically trigger non-refoulement protections, conditions of life-threatening deprivation in Somalia could amount to CIDT). The European Court and Human Rights Committee have decided several cases against European countries for third-country deportations under the Dublin Regulation. In these cases, the bodies give particular weight to petitioners’ vulnerability and risks to children when finding transfers in violation of *non-refoulement*. See, *inter alia*, *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece* [GC], App. No. 30696/09, ¶¶ 344–61 (Jan. 21, 2011); *Paposhvili v. Belgium* [GC], App. No. 41738/10, ¶ 183 (Dec. 13, 2016); U.N. Hum. Rts. Comm., *R.A.A. & Z. M. v. Denmark*, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/118/D/2608/2015* (Oct. 28, 2016); Hum. Rts. Comm., *O.A. v. Denmark*, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/121/D/2770/2016 (Nov. 7, 2017); Hum. Rts. Comm., *Warda Osman Jasin v. Denmark*, U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/114/D/2360/2014, (Sept. 25, 2015).