POVERTY
Lack of jobs, failing crops and extortion make it difficult for people to feed their families

- More than 500,000 people are internally displaced within El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras¹
- 77% of Salvadorans don’t trust local police²
- 59% of Guatemalans live in poverty³

VIOLENCE
Threats of violence force people to look for safety elsewhere

- More than 150,000 Central Americans sought asylum in the U.S. in 2018²
- 88% of Hondurans perceive their country as unsafe⁶
- 47 activists were killed in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador in 2019⁸

CORRUPTION
Corrupt officials take money away from schools, hospitals and infrastructure

- Hundreds of thousands of Central Americans have emigrated to Mexico, Spain or other countries
- Honduras’ homicide rate is 6.5x the global average⁵
- 70% of businesses in El Salvador report extortion by gangs⁴
- 77% of Salvadorans don’t trust local police²

ROOT CAUSES OF MIGRATION from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras

- Weak institutions: Since colonialism, foreign governments and wealthy elites have bribed and threatened government officials to benefit themselves
- Organized crime: U.S. demand for drugs drives cocaine trafficking
- Impunity: Weak or corrupt police and courts fail to keep people safe
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- Weak institutions: Since colonialism, foreign governments and wealthy elites have bribed and threatened government officials to benefit themselves
- Climate change: Extreme weather, worsened by climate change, affects farmers’ livelihoods
- Trade policy: Unfair trade policies make it difficult for small farmers and businesses to compete
- Extractive industries: International companies displace communities and pollute the air and water

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HELPING COMMUNITIES FLOURISH
Policy recommendations

Mennonite Central Committee works with people to provide alternatives to migration, supports people on the journey and helps people resettle into new homes. We support U.S. foreign policies that address the root causes of migration and contribute to transparency, flourishing and peace in Central America.

Most would choose to stay home under conditions of peace and dignity

- Transparency and accountability from elected officials
- Access to health care and education
- Trust in police and local leaders
- Safety in homes and communities
- Opportunities to work and start businesses

Address drug trafficking and organized crime by investing in drug prevention and treatment programs in the U.S.

Support community violence prevention programs to reduce the influence of gangs

Protect and support local civil society actors, journalists and activists

Help farmers adapt to climate change and reduce the U.S. contribution to climate change

Increase accountability in police and investigative bodies and promote judicial independence

Condition bilateral support on reduction of corruption and strengthening of public institutions

Ensure that mega-projects by international companies do not harm communities or the environment

Use trade relationships to promote adequate labor standards and environmental conditions

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1 https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-datal
2 Report “Central American Migration: Current Changes and Development Implications,” Inter-American Dialogue, November 2018
5 https://iudpas.unah.edu.hn/observatorio-de-la-violencia/boletines-del-observatorio-2/boletines-nacionales/ Source: University Institute for Democracy, Peace and Security (IUDPAS), National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH)
6 IUDPAS-UNAH “Citizen Perception of Insecurity and Victimization in Honduras” 2018 report
7 https://www.indexmundi.com/map/?v=58&n=cali-es