



More than 500,000 people are internally displaced within El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras¹

More than 150,000 Central Americans sought asylum in the U.S. in 2018²

Hundreds of thousands of Central Americans have emigrated to Mexico, Spain or other countries

88% of Hondurans perceive their country as unsafe⁶

77% of Salvadorans don't trust local police³

70% of businesses in El Salvador report extortion by gangs⁴

Honduras' homicide rate is **6.5x the global average**⁵

47 activists were killed in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador in 2019⁸

59% of Guatemalans live in poverty⁷

ROOT CAUSES OF MIGRATION

from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras

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

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

VIOLENCE
Threats of violence force people to look for safety elsewhere

Organized crime: U.S. demand for drugs drives cocaine trafficking

Extractive industries: International companies displace communities and pollute the air and water

Climate change: Extreme weather, worsened by climate change, affects farmers' livelihoods

Weak institutions: Since colonialism, foreign governments and wealthy elites have bribed and threatened government officials to benefit themselves

Impunity: Weak or corrupt police and courts fail to keep people safe

Gangs: Multinational gangs tearing apart Central American communities originated in the U.S.

Trade policy: Unfair trade policies make it difficult for small farmers and businesses to compete

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.

32 million people live in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador

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

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- 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**
- Ensure that mega-projects by international companies **do not harm communities or the environment**
- Condition bilateral support on **reduction of corruption** and **strengthening of public institutions**
- Use trade relationships to **promote adequate labor standards** and environmental conditions

1 <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data/>

2 Report "Central American Migration: Current Changes and Development Implications," Inter-American Dialogue, November 2018

3 Source: University Institute of Public Opinion (IUDOP), José Simeón Cañas Central American University (UCA) <http://www.uca.edu.sv/iudop/wp-content/uploads/BOLEVAL2019PPT.pdf>

4 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/30/el-salvador-gang-violence-ms13-nation-held-hostage-photography/>

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=69&r=ca&l=es>

8 https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/global_analysis_2019_web.pdf