

## DRC Mexico: A Brief History

DRC began operations in Mexico in July 2020 in response to the humanitarian crisis affecting the increasing mixed migration flows in the country. DRC's intervention initially consisted of protection and assistance activities for recently arrived refugees and migrants in Tapachula, Chiapas - the main entry point to the country - through its local partner, the Jesuit Refugee Service Mexico (JRS). In 2021, DRC and JRS extended their activities to Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua at Mexico's northern border with the United States to address the humanitarian needs of refugees and migrants unable to cross from Mexico into the United States due to policy restrictions. In 2022, following registration as a local organization in Mexico, DRC established a field office in Tapachula from where it directly implements protection activities.



Also in 2022, DRC began to address the crisis of violence-induced internal displacement in Sinaloa and Chihuahua, both states that form part of the so-called Golden Triangle characterized by the presence and illicit activities of organized criminal groups. DRC established a field office in Culiacan, Sinaloa from which it conducts protection and assistance activities, as well as a field presence in Los Mochis, Sinaloa and a limited field presence in Chihuahua.

## Humanitarian Programming: 2022-2023

DRC's country operation in Mexico responds to two distinct crises: mixed migration flows and internal displacement. Although these two situations have different causes, they both produce humanitarian needs and protection risks for persons of concern. To date, DRC's program in Mexico provides protection and assistance to refugees, migrantes and internally displaced persons.

DRC's program in Mexico contemplates the following activities:

### Mixed migration flows in Tapachula and Ciudad Juarez



**Protection:** protection monitoring, individual assistance (health services, emergency accommodation, etc.) for the most vulnerable, information dissemination, legal counselling and assistance.



**Multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA):** cash assistance for helping refugees and migrants to meet their basic needs (food, shelter, hygiene items, etc.).

### IDPs in Sinaloa and Chihuahua



**Protection:** protection monitoring, individual assistance (health services, emergency accommodation, etc.) for the most vulnerable, information dissemination, Community-based protection, legal counselling and assistance.



**Emergency assistance:** distribution of hygiene and food kits, and emergency accommodation for the most vulnerable IDP households just after displacement.



**Multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA):** cash assistance for helping IDPs to meet their basic needs (food, shelter, hygiene items, etc.).

## Operational Contexts in Mexico

### Mixed migration flows

**+118,000**  
**asylum-seekers**

were registered by the Mexican Refugee Aid Commission (COMAR) during 2022. It is believed that the actual number of new arrivals to the country was much higher, as many were in transit to the United States and did not initiate the Mexican asylum process.



Most new arrivals to the southern border are nationals of:

**Honduras**  
**Cuba**  
**Haiti**  
**Venezuela**



**Nicaragua**  
**El Salvador**  
**Guatemala**



Most refugees and migrants arrive to Mexico after **fleeing widespread violence and persecution** in their countries of origin. **Poverty and economic marginalization** also affect migration to Mexico

The arrival of mixed migrants to Mexico has increased during the last years, as reflected in the number of people requesting asylum with the Mexican Refugee Aid Commission (COMAR):

**2,137** → **118,000**  
 individuals in 2014                      persons in 2022



Many refugees and migrants entering Mexico seek to transit through the country and arrive at the northern border, with the intention of seeking asylum in the U.S. However, **with border asylum procedures suspended since March 2020** under a public health rule known as Title 42, tens of thousands of intending asylum-seekers have been left stranded in Mexico.

Many refugees or migrants seek to establish themselves in Mexico, in an attempt to obtain effective protection and enjoy dignified living conditions. Others wait indefinitely for the possibility of accessing protection in the U.S.

### Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)



**Drug cartels have a strong presence in Mexico**, not only in the northern states from where they engage in smuggling to the U.S. but also in the interior of the country (Michoacan, Guerrero, Sinaloa, and Chihuahua, among other states) where drugs are produced and where contraband is smuggled.



DRC's intervention in Sinaloa and Chihuahua states, around the Tarahumara mountains (part of the so-called Gold Triangle) addresses the effects of violence caused by drug cartels and other criminal organizations engaged in **land grabbing, drug production and smuggling while fighting for control of gold and other types of mines as well as of the territory.**



Many IDPs in this region are from **indigenous communities** and frequently do not speaking Spanish, complicating the provision of assistance by state authorities and civil society organizations.

Mexico lacks a national legal framework to protect IDPs and has not adopted national-level response measures to-date. At the state level, however, there are opportunities to contribute to the development of local humanitarian response initiatives and to apply lessons learned from other contexts.



## DRC Organizational Structure in Mexico

On March 2023 DRC Mexico has the following organizational structure:

**36**

total staff members



DRC presence in Mexico is distributed in:



**Mexico City**  
**Tapachula (Chiapas)**  
**Culiacan (Sinaloa)**  
**Chihuahua (Chihuahua)**  
**Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua)**

## Current donors and grants

As of march 2023, DRC in Mexico can count on the following donors and grants:

Donor	Activities	Targeted location/s
 ECHO <small>Funded by European Union</small>	<b>Mixed migration flows:</b> Protection for refugees and migrants	Tapachula Ciudad Juarez
 UNHCR	<b>Internal displacement:</b> Protection	Culiacan & Chihuahua

