

## DRC Mexico: A Brief History

DRC began operations in Mexico in July 2020 to address the humanitarian crisis affecting mixed migration flows arriving to and seeking to depart the country. Over the last two years, DRC's intervention in the country has focused on providing protection and assistance to refugees and migrants in Tapachula (the main point of arrival to the country, located in the state of Chiapas on the southern border of Mexico with Guatemala) and in Ciudad Juarez (located in the state of Chihuahua, along the northern border of Mexico with the U.S., where thousands of people have concentrated with the intention of crossing into the U.S.).

Since the start of its intervention in Mexico and prior to obtaining legal registration in the country, DRC has operated through an implementing partner - Jesuit Refugee Service Mexico (JRS).



Following legal registration in Mexico at the start of 2022, DRC will implement its humanitarian interventions through mixed modalities, including through its implementing partner and direct implementation.

Beginning in mid 2022, DRC will expand its humanitarian operation to address violence-induced internal displacement in two states: Sinaloa (Culiacan and Mazatlan) and Chihuahua.

## Humanitarian Programming: 2022-2023

DRC operates in Mexico to respond to two distinct crises: mixed migration and IDPs. Although these situations have different causes, they produce many of the same effects on Mexican IDPs and non-Mexican refugees and migrants. As of mid 2022, DRC's program in Mexico provides protection and assistance to refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs)

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, 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

**+131,000**  
**asylum-seekers**

were registered by the Mexican Refugee Aid Commission (COMAR) during 2021. 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**  
**El Salvador**  
**Nicaragua**  
**Guatemala**



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



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** → **131,448**  
 individuals in 2014                      persons in 2021



Many refugees and migrants entering Mexico seek to transit through the country and arrive at the northern border, with the intention of crossing into the U.S. However, with **U.S. asylum procedures at the border suspended for over two years in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic**, many persons intending to seek asylum in the U.S. 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.**

Exact figures concerning the number of IDPs in the Golden Triangle do not exist. Local human rights groups refer to the following estimates:

**42,000**                      **10,000-30,000**  
 IDPs in Sinaloa state                      IDPs in Chihuahua state



Many IDPs in this region are from **indigenous communities** and frequently do not speak 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

By the end of 2022, DRC will have the following organizational structure:

**39**

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 April 2022, DRC in Mexico can count on the following donors and grants:

| Donor   | Activities  | Targeted location/s  |
|---|---|--|
| ECHO<br>             | <b>Mixed migration flows:</b><br>Protection for refugees and migrants   | Tapachula<br>Ciudad Juarez                                     |
| UNHCR<br>            | <b>Internal displacement:</b><br>Protection - Emergency   | Culiacan & Mazatlan<br>Chihuahua                               |
| DANIDA EMERGENCY<br> | <b>Mixed Migration flows &amp; Internal displacement:</b> Protection for refugees migrants, emergency assistance for IDPs, MPCA for refugees, migrants and IDPs | Tapachula<br>Ciudad Juarez<br>Culiacan & Mazatlan<br>Chihuahua |

