

HIGH LEVEL EVENT

# Protection and Empowerment of Displaced Women and Girls from Central America and Mexico: Using the MIRPS framework to protect, assist and empower.



 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

*Canada as the current chair of the MIRPS Support Platform and Honduras as the Pro-Tempore Presidency of the MIRPS will host a high-level event to discuss the Protection and Empowerment of forcibly displaced women and girls in the North of Central America and Mexico.*

## BACKGROUND

In Central America and Mexico, the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS in its acronym in Spanish) has consolidated as a political and operational instrument to respond to critical humanitarian and protection needs, playing a central role in progress towards long-term solutions for displacement. The MIRPS countries (Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, México, and Panama) are working to respond to the needs of over 650,000 people forced to flee from countries in the Northern regions of Central America and Nicaragua, as well as to the needs of over 318,000 internally displaced persons within the region. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect of recent natural disasters have further impeded the region's ability to respond, increasing the vulnerability of those affected by displacement situations as well as host communities.

Forced displacement in the sub-region is multicausal and may occur due to particular socio-economic conditions, natural disasters, security conditions, governance, growing inequality, and more recently, Covid-19. Women and girls in particular experience high levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), gender inequality, and marginalization and exclusion. These factors further increase their risks of violence, exploitation, and abuse, while hindering their access to rights within their own communities and throughout displacement. Members of the LGBTI community also experience severe discrimination, violence and persecution.

In response to address the multi-causal nature of forced displacement in the sub- region, MIRPS countries have adopted commitments and developed national plans in the areas of protection, jobs and livelihoods, social protection, and health to improve the access to rights, services and solutions for women and girls forcibly displaced or at risk of displacement in the region. Honduras will hold the MIRPS Pro-Tempore Presidency from December 7th.

## THE MIRPS SUPPORT PLATFORM

In December 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched three regional Support Platforms under the Global Compact on Refugees, including the MIRPS Support Platform for Central America and Mexico. The Support Platforms are a flexible modality for the provision of international community support for the most protracted and complex refugee situations. The functions of the Support Platforms are to: (i) galvanize political commitment and advocacy for prevention, protection, response and solutions; (ii) mobilize financial, material and technical assistance, as well as enhance resettlement and complementary pathways; and (iii) facilitate coherent humanitarian and development responses.

## HIGH LEVEL SIDE EVENT

### CANADA – CHAIR FOR 2021-2022

On July 6, 2021, Canada assumed the chair of the Support Platform and established Protection and Empowerment of Women and Girls on the Move as the overarching theme in their 12-month work plan. Under the broader theme identified, Canada is organizing a high-level event entitled Displaced women and girls from Central America and Mexico: Using the MIRPS framework to protect, assist and empower.

The event will draw attention to the international protection needs of forcibly displaced women and girls, and the need to uphold the human rights of women and girls in vulnerable situations in Central America and Mexico, as well as the need to protect their human rights and promote their access to solutions through the promotion of gender inclusive societies and communities.

## OBJECTIVES

The event pursues the following objectives:

- **To give visibility to the situation of forced displacement** in Central America and Mexico, and specifically to the challenging situation faced by women and girls.
- **To show how MIRPS countries are working and committed to guarantee protection and solutions** to displaced women and girls or women at risk of displacement.
- **To mobilize the international community to expand the support base for these regional efforts**, aligned on commitments made by MIRPS' countries related to the empowerment and meaningful participation of women and girls, the enhancement of women and girls' access to registration, documentation and assistance, their equal access to economic opportunities, and the enhancement of protection responses. Commitments include efforts to strengthen access to specialized protection services, including the prevention and response to gender-based violence, access to justice, access to the formal labor market, and access to health and education.

## SEIZING THE TRENDS

To achieve the objectives and reach a broader audience the event will be held after the 2021 MIRPS Annual Meeting on the 30th of November and within the international campaign of “16 days of Activism against violence against women and girls” that runs every year from the 25th of November to 10th December.

**The MIRPS Annual Meeting** will be in-person and will count the participation of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the MIRPS countries (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Mexico) and will review progress and set priorities to address forced displacement in the region. Canada as the chair of the MIRPS Support platform is invited to participate at a high level.

**The 16 Days of Activism on Gender-Based Violence** is an annual international campaign that begins on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and concludes on December 10, Human Rights Day. Individuals and organizations globally use this as an organizing strategy to promote the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls- well in keeping with Canada's Chair theme.

## FORMAT OF THE EVENT

After opening remarks by Canada, Honduras and UNHCR, the event will take the format of a dynamic discussion with a round table with four panellists who are relevant actors of the Central American and Mexico response to the forcibly displaced with extensive experience and convening capacity.

The session will cover three themes, and at the beginning of each one, we will have the testimony of a refugee or displaced person for the region that will explain their experience to contextualize the conversation and provide a human face to situation to be discussed.

## THEMES TO BE ADRESSED

- **Gender-Based Violence as a Root Cause of Displacement in Central America and Mexico.** The intersectionality between forced displacement and gender in the region, including gender sensitive asylum systems, access to asylum, access to third country solutions, protection against gender and sexual gender-based violence in all phases of displacement, and the impacts of gender inequality in the inclusion and access to rights by women and girls displaced or at risk of displacement
- **Advancing Solutions for Displaced Women and girls:** Integration of gender equality and women empowerment into development activities to ensure sustainable solutions for women and girls, and for an effective and sustainable development outcome in the region.
- **Women's Empowerment - Networks Role on Preventing and Responding to Forced Displacement.** The role and importance of women led and LGBTQI grassroots movements and organizations on the promotion of gender equality and protection of women and girls on the move.

## TENTATIVE AGENDA

Date: December 7th 2021 -

Time: 10:00 - 11:30 Ottawa time

Duration: 1:30h

### Welcoming remarks:

- Canada - Chair of the MIRPS Support Platform
- Honduras - Pro-Tempore Presidency of the MIRPS
- UNHCR - MIRPS Support Platform Secretariat.

### Video

### Moderated Discussion:

- Gender-Based Violence as a Root Cause of Displacement
- Advancing Solutions for Displaced Women and Girls
- Women's Empowerment - Networks Role Preventing and Responding to Forced Displacement.

### Panelists:

- Civil Society Organization from Guatemala (TBD)
- UN WOMEN
- Civil Society Organization from Mexico(TBD)
- Development Actor

