



WHY ARE PEOPLE FLEEING NOW?

- Although 2011 may have been the peak year for reported homicides in Honduras, the number of disappearances has risen significantly, suggesting that the homicide rate may not have actually gone down but rather that some victims' bodies are being hidden rather than displayed. El Salvador has similarly seen a rise in disappearances.
- While murder rates for adults have decreased slightly in the region, murder rates for children and youth have risen significantly. In Honduras the youth murder rate has surged over the first 5 months of 2014, rising from an average of 70 children and youth killed per a month in 2010-2013 to an average of 90 per month in 2014.
- There are no effective witness protection systems in these countries. Those who witness or are victims of a crime are often left no choice but to relocate or risk being targeted long before the case gets to trial, if it is even investigated at all.
- In Honduras, there are substantiated reports of police forming and participating in death squads and committing extra-judicial executions in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa; a recent investigation found that over 200 national police in Honduras were implicated in killings for hire, drug theft, and corruption.
- Impunity is widespread in the region. The conviction rate for murders in all three countries hovers at about 5%.

What are the push factors? What about pull factors in the United States?

- Even if violence was not continuing to worsen, a lag between the spike in violence and the largest numbers of children, families, and asylum-seekers fleeing is a typical pattern for displacement in conflict zones.
- People often try to relocate in-country when they're first threatened. But eventually people discover that no matter how many times they move within the country—to a new neighborhood or a new city—they aren't safe, and so many of them flee outside the region. This is very similar to patterns of internal and then external displacement that we see in other conflict zones around the world.



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- Similarly, people may not flee at the first horrific act of violence in their neighborhood, but after they've seen a classmate and a family member and a neighbor all murdered, and have seen the police fail to investigate all three—or worse, recognized the police as being in active collusion with the perpetrators—they come to understand that their government has been compromised and that it cannot or will not protect them.
- UNHCR reports that other stable countries in the region, such as Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, and Belize have reported that asylum requests from Honduran, Guatemalan, and Salvadorian nationals have risen 712% since 2008. These countries do not have the TVPRA of 2008 or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or other policies that some in the U.S. have incorrectly identified as “magnets” for Central American migration.
- If this migration were based solely on “pull factors,” more Nicaraguan children, living in the poorest country in the region, would be fleeing to the United States in numbers similar to Honduran, Salvadorian, and Guatemalan children. Instead, over 75% of children fleeing to the United States are fleeing Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

How should the U.S. respond?

- This is an emergency situation that requires an emergency response. A clean supplemental is the appropriate means to address the emergency funding.
- Protections for children are in place because providing safety for children is a recognized national priority and humanitarian imperative. We cannot turn our backs on vulnerable children and our American ideals simply because a large number of children need protection.
- Extremely vulnerable children must receive child appropriate services and care when they arrive at our borders seeking refuge, but that care should not come at the expense of other vulnerable populations of concern to whom the United States has pledged protection and support.
- Cuts to refugee services hurt refugees already here and the communities that welcome them, impeding their ability to obtain education, employment, and stability. Cuts to refugee funding hurt refugees abroad living in camps or other displacement situations



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who have already been approved for resettlement, passed security and medical checks, and are waiting to depart to begin their lives anew in the United States.

- We cannot enforce our way out of this crisis, and rolling back protections for vulnerable people will do nothing to address the violence that compels them to flee
- Due process is imperative and those eligible for refugee protections, or a related status, must be afforded their chance to have their case heard through an individualized assessment.
- We should not respond to this crisis by increasing the detention of children and families seeking protection or decreasing due process protections for migrants. Denying refugee and trafficked children fair and meaningful access to protection is in direct contradiction to our responsibility and global leadership for protecting the most vulnerable.
- The world is watching our response to this crisis. How can we ask partners in Turkey, Jordan, and elsewhere to continue to accept increasing numbers of vulnerable people while we restrict access to protection at ours? Other stable nations in Central America are receiving increasing numbers of vulnerable adults and children from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, and will follow our example.