

# Guatemala



## Quick facts

Number of IDPs	Undetermined
Percentage of total population	Undetermined
Start of current displacement situation	1980
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	1,500,000 (1983)
New displacement	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	116

The long conflict between government forces and insurgents grouped under the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity ended in 1996 and left between 500,000 and 1.5 million people internally displaced across Guatemala, many of them in the shanty towns of the capital, Guatemala City. 14 years after the end of the conflict, little was known about the number and situation of remaining IDPs, but the country's widespread poverty and the additional difficulties associated with forced displacement suggested that many people had been unable to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Drug cartel and gang violence has reportedly continued to cause displacement, but systematic figures have not been gathered. It is thought that people have been forced to flee from one poor urban neighbourhood to another. In Ciudad Quetzal, an impoverished neighbourhood of Guatemala City, it was reported that owners had abandoned their homes in 2010 to escape violence and threats from gangs. Community leaders in Villa Nueva near Guatemala City have estimated that five per cent of families there have had to re-settle after they failed to pay the illegal taxes imposed by those groups.

A growing number of Guatemalans have requested asylum in other countries in recent years, particularly in the United States, and according to UNHCR's latest available figures, some 9,000 asylum applications were pending globally in 2009.

Guatemala has been unable to build strong institutions and provide security for its citizens, and IDPs have not received any specific support. The country faces a growing threat from organised crime and corruption, and in 2010, the UN's International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, established in 2007 to help the country fight crime and corruption, had its mandate renewed by the UN General Assembly until 2013.

