

at a glance

THE USE OF PROFILING IN
EL SALVADOR

2018

Why a profiling?

Internal migration is a common phenomenon in El Salvador. But while people have traditionally moved for economic and family reasons, in recent years **rising crime and violence have resulted in a growing number of people fleeing their homes in search of safety**. As a response, in September 2014 the Government of El Salvador approved the Safe El Salvador Plan (PESS), which outlined a set of priorities and actions for addressing displacement caused by violence as well as guaranteeing protection and access to justice for victims.

Recognising the lack of reliable data and information on people displaced by violence in the country, the Directorate for Victims' Assistance (DAV) of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP) requested a nationally representative profiling exercise, on behalf of the Government of El Salvador.

The exercise sought to paint a comprehensive picture of internal displacement caused by violence in the country, including the magnitude, causes and impact of displacement. The profiling results were intended to help **inform the design and implementation of institutional responses** for assisting and protecting displaced populations.

This (profiling exercise) has the potential to be an essential resource, providing a necessary evidence base for all stakeholders and helping the government to plan, design and implement adequate institutional responses to offer protection, assistance and durable solutions to internally displaced persons.

Cecilia Jimenez-Damary,
Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs

What difference did the profiling make?

Internal displacement made visible

The profiling results provided the **first official information** on the dimensions, characteristics and impacts of internal displacement due to violence in El Salvador. It provided relevant actors, including from the UN country team, with a much needed **evidence base for advocating** on behalf of displaced people and designing programs for their assistance and protection.

State institutions have taken important steps to support victims of violence by setting up programmes and services in municipalities most affected, particularly in the areas of legal guidance, access to justice and psychosocial support. The **results of the profiling exercise helped to tailor these interventions** more carefully to the needs of IDPs.

Better targeted and tailored responses

The report also set the stage for a variety of other institutional responses to victims of internal displacement, for example :

Foundation for wider institutional responses

- › A **roadmap for inter-institutional coordination** launched on the same day as the profiling report to enable comprehensive joint responses by different government bodies ;
- › A **supreme court decision**¹ in July 2018, informed by the profiling report, officially recognising internal displacement in the country and requiring the government to design legislation and policies for the protection and assistance to victims of internal displacement.

Increased use of results thanks to local ownership

The leadership of the Directorate for Victims' Assistance as well as collaboration with different government institutions, local partners, UNHCR and JIPS was **instrumental to the government's first public acknowledgement** of internal displacement in the country.

1 See http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2018/178.asp

Despite all the challenges we had during this long process, both at the technical level – to profile a truly ‘hidden’ population within a context of generalised violence – and at the political level, the final product is an important contribution towards the prevention, protection and search for solutions to internal displacement in the country.

Ivan Cardona,
Senior Information Management Officer,
UNHCR Central America Region

How was the process shaped?

The profiling partners adopted a **collaborative approach with strong governmental leadership**. The exercise was led by the Directorate for Victims' Assistance of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, in coordination with the Secretariat of Governance and Communications (SEGOB), and carried out in collaboration with several institutions and organisations. UNHCR provided technical and operational support to the design and implementation of the study. The European Commission, through its Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Operations (ECHO), provided financial support for data collection activities.

Two additional partners played a critical role in the profiling :

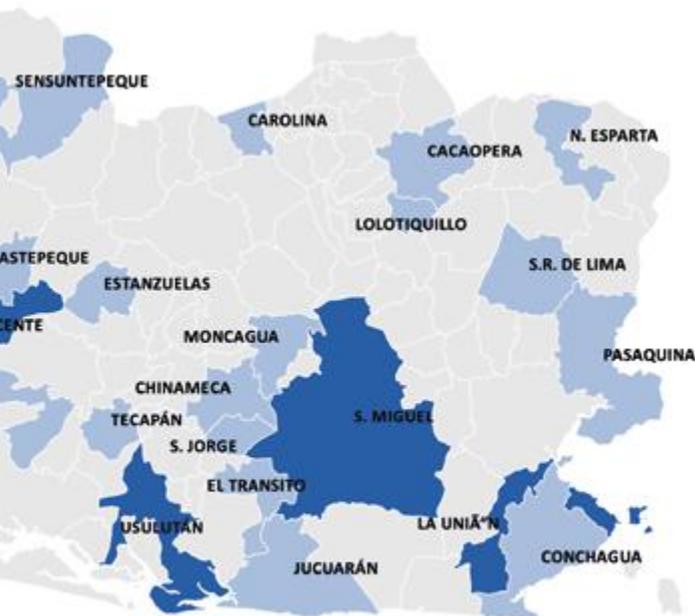
- › The **El Salvador Program of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO)**² implemented the **qualitative components** of the profiling exercise, including a series of workshops with local stakeholders and in-depth interviews on the impacts of displacement.
- › The **General Directorate of Statistics and Census (DIGESTYC)**³ led the **quantitative components** by administering a household questionnaire to a nationally representative sample of households.

² See <http://studyargentina.com/latin-american-faculty-social-sciences-flacso.html>

³ See <http://www.digestyc.gob.sv/>

JIPS contributed neutral **technical support throughout the process both on-site and remotely**. This included providing expertise gained from designing profiling methodologies in the region, convening and facilitating workshops to enable collaboration among the partners, and supporting the processing and analysis of the data.

- › **Review of secondary information and qualitative mapping**, including the compilation and analysis of demographic and migration data as well as the intensity of violence at the municipal level.
- › **Enumeration** (list) of families in a sample of census segments; 41,650 families were identified through stratified sampling and, as a result, an estimated 466 families were found to have at least one member who had been internally displaced by violence between 2006 and 2016.
- › **Survey responses of 431 displaced families** and an additional 254 comparison families (i.e. who did not experience displacement but were included to enable comparison), with quantitative information about the impact of displacement on their current living conditions.
- › **In-depth interviews** with 27 displaced people and 20 individuals who had not been displaced, to obtain richer qualitative data and contextual information on the effects of displacement in people's lives.

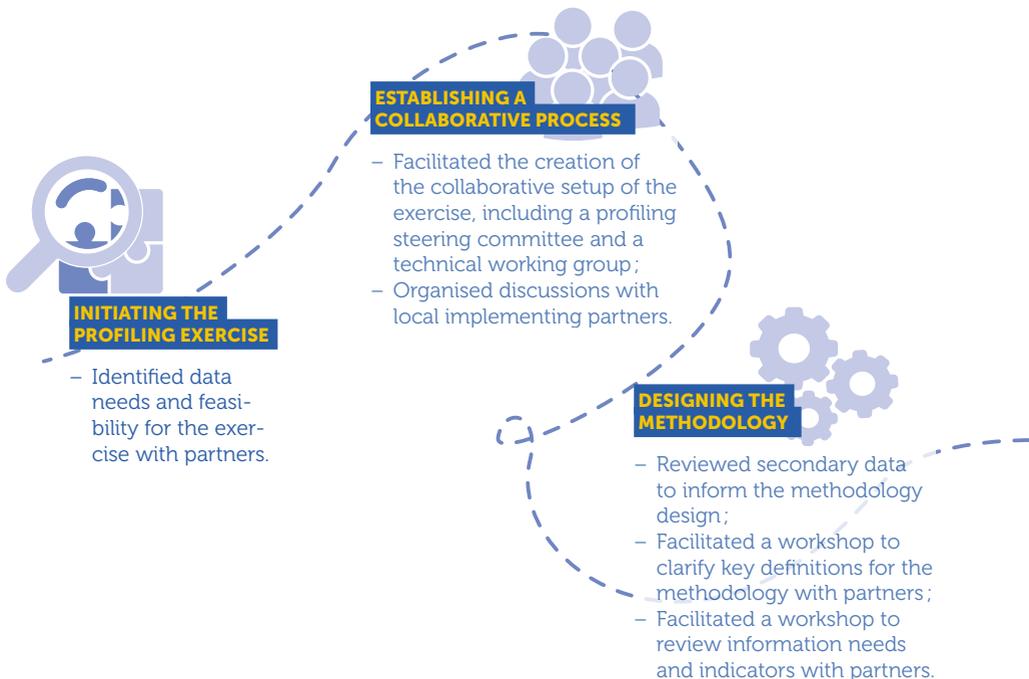


How did JIPS support?

JIPS supported the profiling exercise throughout by bringing in outside expertise to the design of the methodology and helping to bring partners together at key stages in the process during missions to San Salvador, El Salvador. When in-country, JIPS facilitated two workshops with government partners to generate clarity on the priority information to be collected and to validate the methodology, as well as to drive the data processing and initiate the analysis.

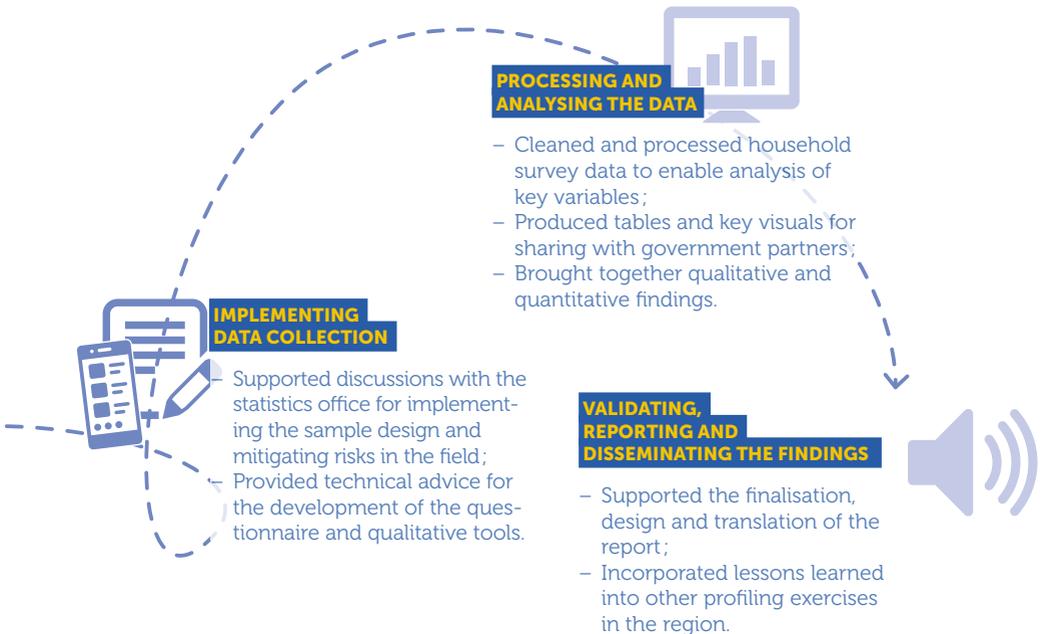
At a snapshot

From initiating to reporting and dissemination of the findings of the profiling exercise.



Profiling lessons learned:

- › Having a **mix of expertise within the Technical Working Group, especially in protection with information management**, was critical to enable a nuanced analysis of the highly sensitive data, including the descriptions people gave of the event(s) that triggered their displacement.
- › **Working with the national statistics office** brought needed authority and expertise to the enumeration and household survey components. It also helped to ensure that the data could be collected without risking the security of the enumerators.
- › The **qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews** provided useful information that helped to contextualise the results of the quantitative approaches, demonstrating the benefits of combining methods.
- › To tailor the profiling methodology to the context of El Salvador, it was useful to base the **definitions used in the study on both the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the country's own penal code**, showing that IDPs were victims of specific crimes within the country.



Because of the challenges in discussing internal displacement in El Salvador, JIPS brought critical outside expertise and a neutral, impartial stance that helped to build trust in the process. During their missions they brought partners together and helped them to collaborate throughout.

Elisa Carlaccini,
Head of Office, UNHCR El Salvador

What were the key findings?

Internal displacement caused by criminal violence happens abruptly, which leaves little space for planned decision-making. As the findings from the El Salvador profiling exercise indicate, the sudden abandonment of assets and opportunities for education and employment, the modification of social and family ties, and other factors produce a series of immediate impacts on affected individuals, families and communities, which ultimately expose them to a set of vulnerabilities that can profoundly affect their long term stability.

Incidence of internal displacement caused by violence

Looking at the total population of about 6,4 million, 1.1% of the families residing in El Salvador had at least one member who was forced to change their place of habitual residence within the country between 2006 and 2016 as a result or to avoid the effects of events of violence.

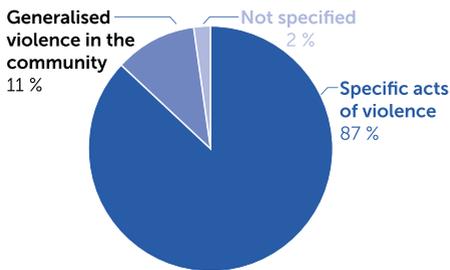
The municipalities where displacement originated from coincided in most cases with the **country's major population centres** (departmental capitals), as well as with those that recorded high levels of criminal violence.

A major share of violence-induced displacement (42%) is intra-municipal – **between districts of the same municipality** – in search of shelter in areas with higher perceived levels of security, mostly with relatives, and which allows for access to their sources of employment.

Causes of displacement

The information revealed that most displaced families were forced to flee as a result of direct acts of violence to a member of their family, as opposed to generalised violence in their communities.

Graph 1: Types of events that led people to move



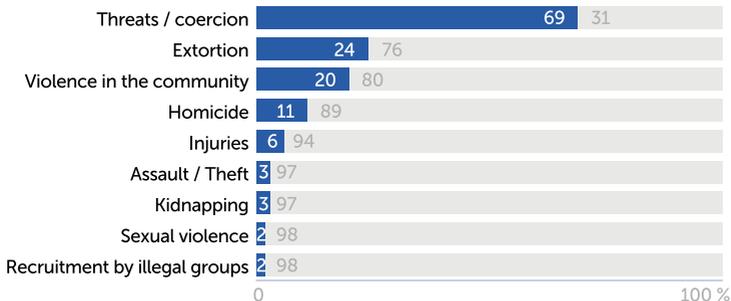
Threats or coercion against life, integrity or freedom (69%) were one of the most common acts of violence experienced by respondents (either as the sole cause of displacement or in conjunction with other factors, 34% and 35% respectively). This reflects the **multiple types of violence** caused by criminal groups in the country, which can affect the same person or family in different ways.

Extortion was reportedly the second main cause

of displacement (24%), reflecting both the economic impact of the phenomenon at individual and family level (often being prevented from freely carrying out their economic activities), as well as the risk and intimidations related to extortion itself.

Other events mentioned were homicides and personal injuries (11% and 6% of cases respectively). The fact that homicides were not among the most frequent causes that forced people to flee, despite being the most traumatic and identifiable consequence of violence, reinforces the expectation **that people flee as a preventive measure** to avoid risks against their life in the face of threats, intimidation or extortion.

Graph 2: Acts of violence that led people to move (in %)



Characteristics of displaced population

The profiling results show that the composition of the displaced population is similar to that of the comparison population in terms of sex, with a greater presence of women than men in both cases. Both groups show a **significant percentage of female household leadership** (40% of displaced population and 42% of comparison population) as compared with many other contexts globally.

Graph 3: Distribution of families
by gender of head of family



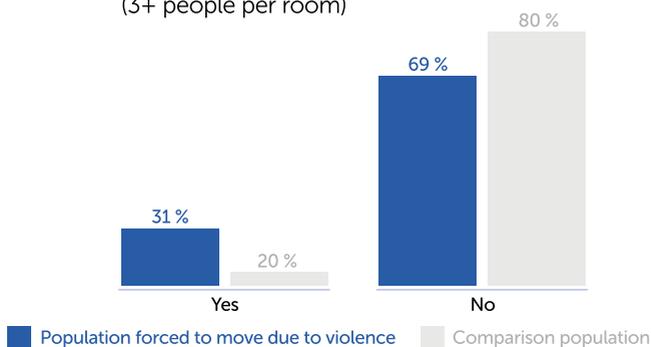
The average age of displaced people is 29.5 years, while the population in comparison families is slightly older (33.4 years). This difference is mainly due to the greater presence of adolescents (12 – 17 years) and young people (18 – 29 years) within the displaced population. This suggests a **higher level of risk of acts of violence for Salvadoran adolescents and youth**, which results in families with younger members being more likely to flee their homes.

Impact of forced displacement on affected people

The analysis of living conditions in the places of destination demonstrated specific vulnerabilities of the population forced to move due to violence. These namely included **limited access to owning property** (33%, in contrast to 70% for the comparison population).

The incidence of **overcrowding is also higher in families displaced by violence** (31% vs. 20%), associated in large part with the fact that a significant proportion of affected people seek shelter with relatives or acquaintances, or are forced to rent housing that does not guarantee adequate space for the family.

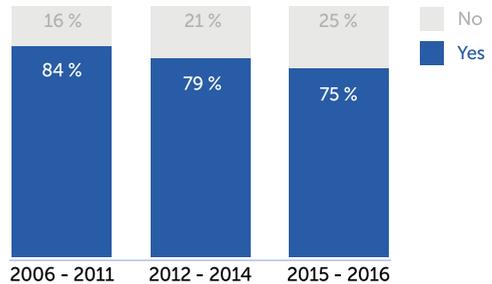
Graph 4: Families with overcrowding
(3+ people per room)



The findings furthermore indicate an immediate impact of displacement in terms of **emotional or psychological distress**, affecting 70% of the target population. Other prevalent impacts include the abandonment of properties in the places of origin (42%), the temporary or permanent separation of families (29%), the loss of sources of income (28%), and the interruption of education of minors (22%).

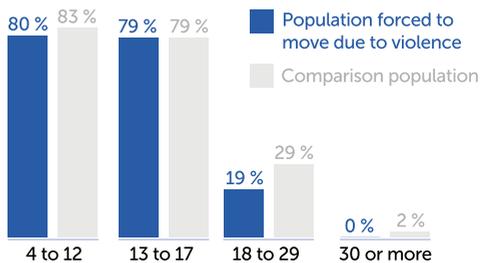
While overall no major differences could be observed in regards to access to education for youth aged 4 to 17, the study revealed an important gap when comparing school attendance with respect to the period when respondents were displaced. As shown in graph 5, children and adolescents' (4 to 17 years old) displaced between 2015 and 2016 had lower school attendance rates than those displaced between 2006 to 2011.

Graph 5:
School attendance by date of move due to violence (age 4 to 17)



This indicates that the immediate or **short-term impact of internal mobility due to violence could result in the interruption of education.** Similarly, although access to education centres seems to stabilise over time, children's educational setbacks can have medium and long-term effects, particularly for future job opportunities.

Graph 6:
School attendance by age group (age 4 or older)



JIPS' publications '**At a glance : the use of profiling**', or formerly 'Profiles at a Glance' look at the impact of the profiling exercises supported by JIPS. While providing an overview of the profiling methodology and findings, these publications bring attention to how the collaborative process was shaped and how JIPS concretely contributed.

Through our **At a glance** series we hope to spark an interest in both the specific impact of the exercise in a given context, and profiling of displacement situations in general.

For more on the impact of displacement profiling, please go to :

www.jips.org/profiling/uses-of-profiling/

For more on specific exercises, check out the below publications or visit our country pages :

www.jips.org/profiling/country-map/



The collaborative profiling exercise, conducted in El Salvador in 2016 – 2017, provided first official information on the dimensions, characteristics and impacts of internal displacement due to violence in the country. It also laid the foundation for comprehensive institutional responses, including a roadmap for inter-institutional cooperation and a Supreme Court decision officially recognising internal displacement in the country.

The exercise was led by the El Salvador's Directorate for Victims' Assistance of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, and carried out in collaboration with UNHCR and several local institutions including the national statistics office. JIPS provided technical support throughout the process, both on-site and remotely.



Credit: UNHCR – COMCAVIS TRANS



The **profiling report** from the El Salvador exercise is available in Spanish / English at:

www.jips.org/jips-publication/