



RESCUE
COMMITTEE

IRC began to explore how it might tap its global child protection expertise and its experience resettling refugees in 21 cities across the U.S.ⁱⁱⁱ to help

on the way to school and on school premises, when riding on public transportation, and in the streets. Children reported feeling that there was no place in their community where they could be safe.

2. **Violence is spreading beyond urban communities.** Children fleeing violence are coming from increasingly diverse geographic areas as compared to prior years, pointing to the spread of gang presence and organized crime beyond major urban centers to urban outskirts, smaller towns and even rural areas.
3. **Children feel unprotected by local authorities who are seen as increasingly complicit in organized crime.** Children are increasingly reporting threats by local authorities and/or greater levels of mistrust in local police in their home communities, citing the infiltration of organized crime into local police and government structures. Children frequently report inaction by local authorities when they or their families report threats.
4. **Girls are increasingly targeted.** A significantly higher number of girls (in total and as a percentage of the whole) cited threats of forcible gang recruitment as the main reason for their flight. In the past, girls often expressed fears of sexual violence by gangs, including the threat of being forcibly recruited to] |æ c@ ! [|^ [~ æ%ã |~ã } å.+ Today, more girls

compassion. He must defend the principle of due process. Finally, he should explain that even children who ultimately may not qualify for asylum are *children first*, who have suffered great trauma and deserve understanding and care while they are in the U.S., regardless of the outcome of their immigration process. Change the message and the Administration will be better placed to mobilize the common sense and the compassionate support of the American public.

Although political and media attention has faded, this problem is not going away. Children in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador will continue to flee to this country so long as they are the target of violence in their own communities.

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