



SNAPSHOT 15

PROTECTION CRISIS IN THE NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO AND PANAMA.

Key data April to June 2021

This fifteenth bulleting provides an update on the protection crisis in Northern Central America, Mexico, and Panama, consolidated through the monitoring of criminal violence indicators, barriers to access rights, migration policies and protection needs. Various governmental, non-governmental and media sources of information were consulted, and this is the outlook they show for the second quarter of 2021.


These quarterly bulletins incorporate an analysis of the protection crisis indicators' evolution from the beginning of the year to the date of their publication. At the request of the organizations that make up the Protection Group, this edition includes, exceptionally, an annex analysing the situation in Haiti due to its importance and impact on mixed migration cycles in the region.

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CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

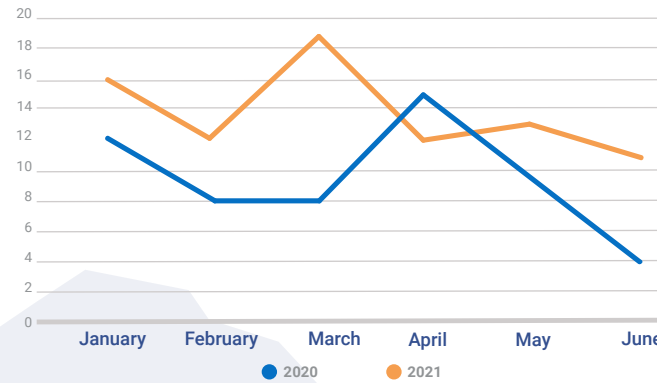
322 
Homicides

The National Civil Police registered during the second quarter of 2021, for a cumulative total of **658 homicides** in the first half of this year. These semi-annual figures represent an **increase of 10.4%** compared to the same period.ⁱ

36 
Femicides

Reported in the second quarter of 2021, for a cumulative total of **83 femicides** in the first half of this year. An **increase of 45%** compared to those reported in the same period of 2020.ⁱⁱ

Number of femicides compared between the first semester of 2020 and 2021



Graph prepared in-house based on data published by the Observatory of Violence against Women

415 
disappearances

in the first four months of 2021, an approximate **increase of 112%** compared to 2020 (**196 cases**). This trend has been maintained for almost three years since the bulletins monitor this indicator.


31 
active cases of missing children and adolescents

The "Disappeared Angel" alert registered during the second quarter of 2021.^{iv}


877 
cases of sexual violence

were recorded in the second quarter, an **increase of 110%** over the same period in 2020. During the first semester, **1,612 cases of sexual violence** were registered.ⁱⁱⁱ

PROTECTION NEEDS

2,26M 
had received the full vaccination schedule against covid-19
18% of the total population.

and **8%** had received one dose of the vaccine. Therefore, **26%** of the population was partially or fully protected against covid-19 (3.34 million).^v

167 
attacks on journalists were registered

most of the cases would imply the participation of state agents.ⁱⁱ

1,952 
Salvadorans requested refuge in Mexico

during the second quarter of 2021, for a **cumulative total of 3,745** throughout the first half of this year.^{vi}

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

1,196 
Salvadorans were deported

during the second quarter of 2021, (**2,163 people** in the first semester of 2021). This figure represents a **reduction of 71%** compared to the same period of the previous year.^{vii}

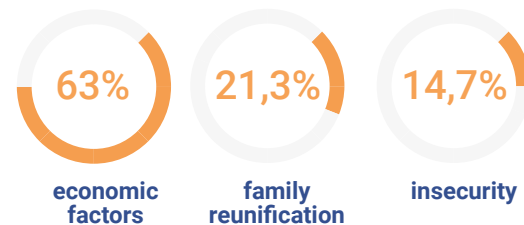
49%
United States

83% Men
17% Women

48%
Mexico

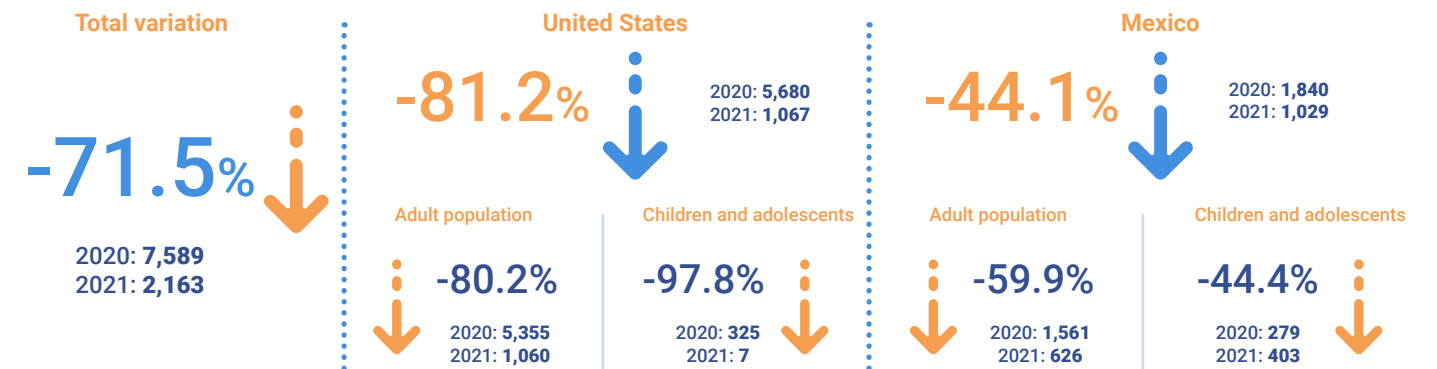
65% Boys
33% Girls
(of all children)

The main reasons reported for migrating were:



People deported in the first half of 2021 are mainly concentrated in the departments of San Salvador, San Miguel, and Usulután.^{vii}

Variation: January - July 2020 and January - June 2021.



El Salvador

An update on the protection crisis

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

The number of homicides in the first half of 2021 has increased by 10.4% compared to the same period of the previous year. Likewise, the daily average number of homicides has increased, ranging from 3.39 in 2020 to 3.72 in 2021^{viii}.

Regarding disappearances, the data continues to be alarming, since, as with homicides, the figures for reports of forced disappearance continue to increase in such a way that some non-governmental organizations indicate that disappearances are occurring with the same intensity as during the internal armed conflict.

On the other hand, femicides are not the only expression of gender based sexual violence. Other forms of violence against women stand out, such as crimes of sexual violence that registered 554 cases between April and May 2021. Faced with this issue, Civil Society Organizations have also spoken out, expressing the need to continue providing support and establish alliances with organizations, to accompany the complaint processes and access to justice and work for the eradication of this phenomenon. Along these lines, the Program for a Life without Violence of the Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (ORMUSA, for its acronym in Spanish) has been promoting support, awareness, and education actions to contribute to the disappearance of these expressions of violence against women.^{ix}

This same organization has stated that “in times of peace, disappearances should not exist” and they assure that “in the case of women, there is no peace. The conditions of submission, torture and disappearance are still present. Disappearing people and then appearing dead was a reality that we went through during the conflict, and it is a reality that we continue to go through now^x”.

PROTECTION NEEDS

Covid-19

As of June 29, 2021, El Salvador had 78,776 confirmed cases of Covid-19. The confirmed rate was 38.26 per hundred thousand inhabitants and there was evidence of 2,376 people who died from coronavirus.^{xi} Until July 1, 2021, 2,764,042 doses had been applied and 1,142,328 people had been vaccinated with the complete schedule.

^{xii}

Food Security

According to data from Analysis of the Integrated Classification of Food Security in Phases (CIF), presented in 2020, for the period July and August 2021, there would be 985K people in El Salvador in crisis or emergency conditions of acute food insecurity. However, the second projection of this year reported an increase in the figure for the same period: 1.04 million people. This analysis was carried out on 6.8 million people corresponding to the 14 departments of El Salvador.^{xiii}

Attack on journalists and human rights defenders

For the second quarter of 2021 (April to June), there is not much update on the subject. However, the Network of Human Rights Defenders has alerts for death threats, theft and cyberbullying on digital communication platforms.^{xiv}

Political landscape

On May 1, the new term of the Legislative Assembly began, and the new municipal authorities took office. This legislature (2021-2024) is characterized by a predominance of the governing party, which also achieved most of the local leaders. This characteristic has been evident since the installation of the new Legislative Assembly, which in the first session made decisions questioned by some sectors in relation to the judiciary power^{xv}, which were not submitted to debate and discussion.

Since then, and, with the same expeditious process, a series of measures and decisions in economic matters have been approved, such as, the approval of Bitcoin as legal tender in the country^{xvi} (expected to come into force in September) or the acquisition of more loans, which have been highly questioned by different sectors, including international financial institutions^{xvii}. Other measures adopted related to the dismantling of the institutions and mechanisms for access to public information, comptrollership and transparency have also generated controversy in the country^{xviii}.

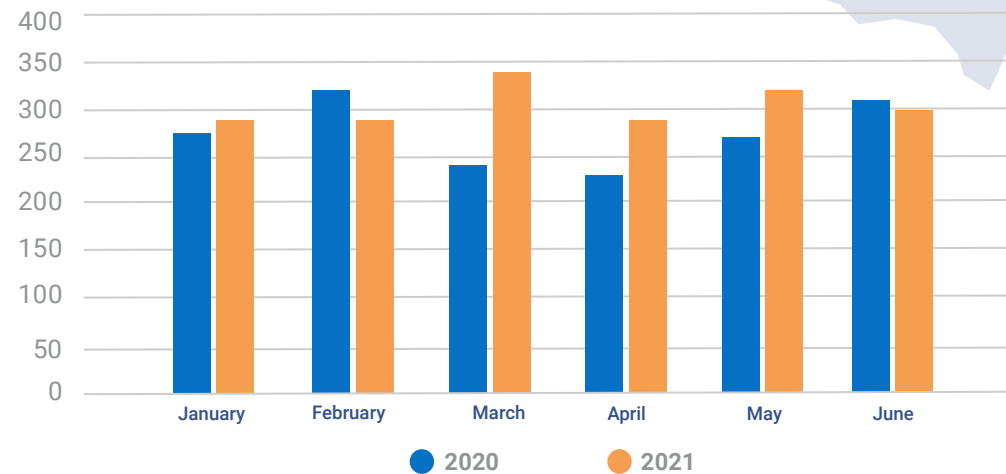
CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

997
Homicides



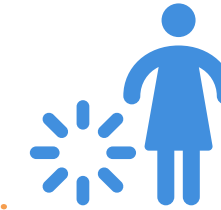
registered by the Ministry of Security of the National Police in the second quarter of 2021, an increase of 26% compared to the same period in 2020. In the first half of this year, the total accumulated number of homicides is 1,898.^{xix}

Comparison in number of homicides first semester 2021 vs first semester 2020



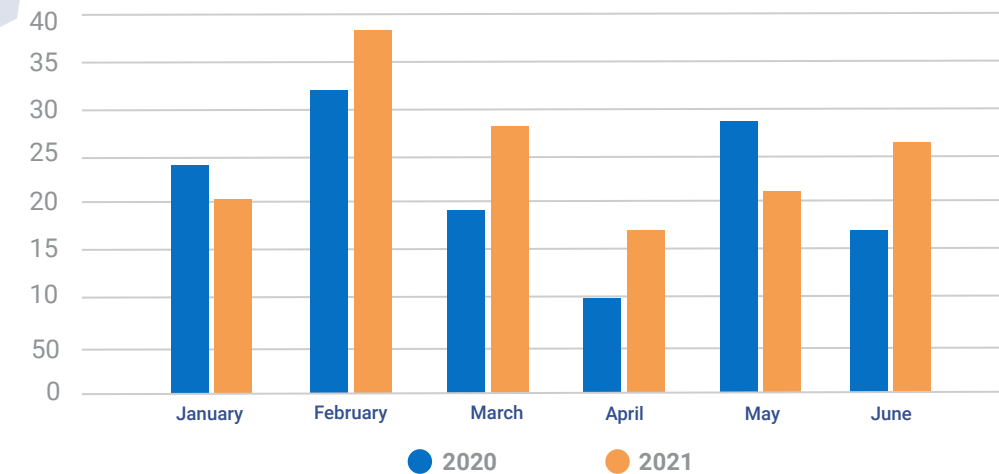
Graph prepared in-house based on the official statistics published by the National Police Security Secretariat

64
femicides



registered in the second quarter of 2021, an increase of 12% compared to the same period in 2020. In the first semester of this year, the total accumulated number of femicides is 150.^{xx}

Comparison in number of femicides first semester 2021 Vs first semester 2020



Graph prepared in-house based on the official statistics from the Centre for Women's Rights

PROTECTION NEEDS

0,59%



of the population had received the complete vaccination schedule against covid-19

7.9% had one dose (787,331 million). Therefore, 8.5% of the population was partially or fully protected against covid-19 (845,456).^{xi}

11,252



Hondurans requested refuge in Mexico

During the second quarter of 2021. A cumulative total of 22,826 people during the first semester of this year.^{xii}

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

14,895

Honduran people were deported^{xiii}



during the second quarter of 2021. A cumulative total of 27,296 people in the first semester of 2021.

17%

more than the same period of the previous year

9%
United States
90%
Mexico

90% Men
9% Women
70% Boys
30% Girls
(of all children)

Honduras

An update on the protection crisis

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

Of particular concern is the evolution of homicide figures from the first to the second quarter of 2021, where the number of cases has increased by 15%, ranging from 860 to 997 homicides. In addition, the number of homicides for the second quarter of 2021 adds up to a total of 994 cases, showing an increase of 226 more cases compared to the same period in 2020 (768 cases). A more in-depth analysis is required to understand this increase and highlight the problem to identify advocacy actions with a view to strengthening protection schemes for the most vulnerable population in the country.

Another of the most extreme and frequent manifestations of violence in Honduras are femicides, since in the second quarter of the year there were 9 more cases compared to the first. The absence of a law that addresses the political violence suffered by women makes it difficult to eradicate sexual violence based on gender. Civil society organizations maintain that sexual harassment and abuse within political parties are two of the main causes behind reports of sexual violence.^{xxiv}

Added to the context of generalized violence in the country are the disappearances of Honduran migrants. From January 2019 to February 22, 2021, 2,034 Hondurans are reported missing, of which 53.1% (1,292 cases) would be men and 46.9% women (1,142 cases).^{xxv}

PROTECTION NEEDS

Covid-19

According to the weekly Bulletin of the Standing Commission of Contingencies (COPECO) The basic indicators of the Covid-19 pandemic have remained high in June 2021 in relation to the beginning of April of the same year.

The Morbidity Rate shows an increase compared to the beginning of the second quarter (April) of 2021. While the Net Mortality Rate presented a peak in May and stabilized in June.

Vaccination coverage still does not show significant progress compared to other countries in the region, and it does not affect the epidemiological situation. However, vaccination has been progressing slowly, and at the close of this Bulletin a total of 1,705,994 doses applied have been reported (only 4% of this figure with the complete schedule).

Considering the speed and number of infections in Honduras, vaccination continues to represent a challenge for public health and a risk for a population that has not yet recovered from the natural emergencies of 2020 and that is exposed to the hurricane season of 2021 and the effects of violence and migration.

Attacks on journalists and human rights defenders

Regarding attacks and justice processes against Human Rights defenders, three recent events are worth highlighting, such as the verdicts in the Bertha Cáceres cases, where on July 6 the Supreme Court issued a court ruling declaring Roberto David Castillo guilty. And in the case of Vicky Hernández, where on June 28, 2021, 12 years after the coup, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights condemned the Honduran State for her death. On the other hand, the case of the four missing members of the Garifuna community remains unclear.

Political landscape

This second quarter of 2021 marks the 12th anniversary of the coup that marked a turning point in the recent political history of Honduras. Since then, the tension between the social movement and the government has intensified, which manifests itself on the one hand in more conflict and social protest, highlighting the mobilization against the Law on Special Development Zones ZEDE^{xxvi}, and, on the other hand, in an increase of attacks against defenders, among which is the murder of Berta Cáceres and the most recent disappearances of Garifuna defenders.

The upcoming general elections on November 28 add more instability to this complex context, exacerbated by the pandemic and the impact of hurricanes Eta and Iota in late 2020.



CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

16 Homicides

per 100,000 inhabitants as of June 2021, presented a decrease of 8.6% in relation to the June 2020 rate.^{xxvii}

307 Femicides

for causes associated with criminal acts from January to June 2021.^{xxviii}

2,917 Alba-Keneth Alerts activated

of which 42% were deactivated. Number of activated and deactivated Alba-Keneth Alerts, January to June 2021.^{xxix}

1,056 Isabel-Claudina Alerts activated

It showed an increase of 30% in relation to the same period of the previous year. Isabel-Claudina Alerts activated, January to June 2021.

5,652 complaints of sexual violence

Before the Public Ministry from January to June 2021.^{xxx}

4,004 medical examinations for sexual offenses

Conducted by the National Institute of Forensic Sciences from January to June 2021.^{xxxi}

PROTECTION NEEDS

Covid-19

788,440 People received the first dose of the covid-19 vaccine.^{xxxii}

160,438 Have a complete schedule of the covid-19 vaccine.^{xxxiii}

4 Judges of the Higher Risk Courts

Who have imprisoned senior government officials have been victims of persecution and harassment by unidentified armed persons.^{xxxiv}

393 Asylum applications

the Guatemalan Migration Institute received from January to May 2021.^{xxxv}

54% Men
42% Women
4% LGBTQI+

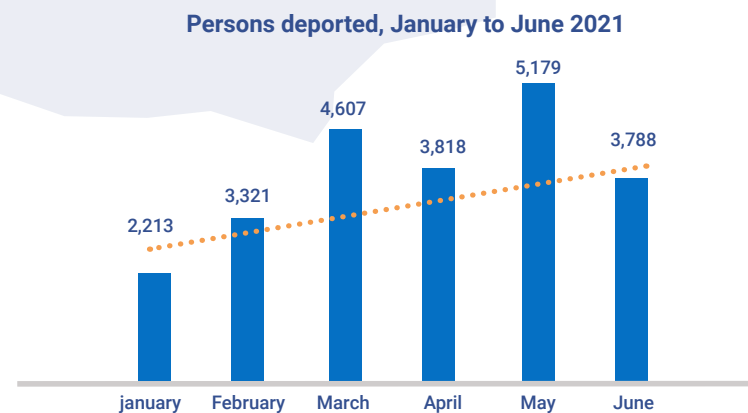
BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

19,138 Guatemalan people deported^{xxxvi}

5,5% less than the same period of the previous year

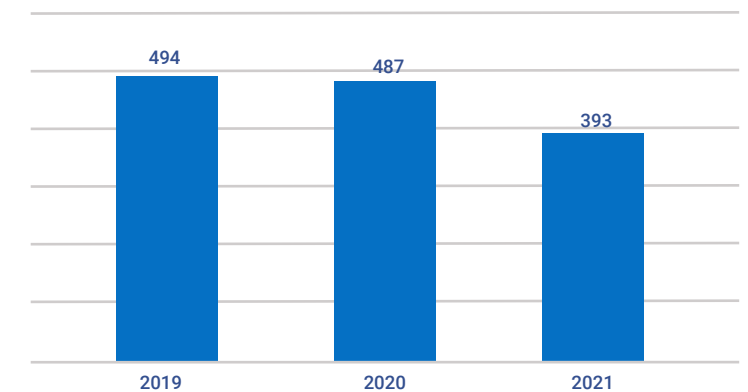
10% United States
90% Mexico

84% Men
16% Women
72% Boys
28% Girls



Source: based on Human Mobility Information Management Initiative in the Northern Triangle, June 2021.

Asylum applications in Guatemala, 2019 to May 2021



Source: based on Guatemalan Migration Institute, public information request: IGM-UIP 284-2021.

Guatemala

An update on the protection crisis

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

From January to June, the National Civil Police reported 1,355 homicides with an average of 219 cases per month, 87% of the victims were men and 13% women, in addition, 41% were in the age range of 21 to 30 years.^{xxxvii} There have been no major variations from one quarter to the next, with the number of homicides increasing in 14 cases.

It should be noted that homicide reports regularly reflect only the sex of the people, making gender identities invisible. However, the Observatory for Human Rights and Violence due to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity documented six Trans feminicides (violent deaths of trans women due to their gender identity) in 2020.^{xxxviii} Only from January to May 2021, 11 violent murders were registered against people from the LGBTIQ + community^{xxxix}, and in June 2021 the media reported the murder of two transgender women activists, one of them president of the organization Otrans Reinas de la Noche and the other a member of RedTrans.^{xl}

On the other hand, 5,941 complaints of extortion were reported from January to May, 11% more than the same period of the previous year.^{xii} Apparently, the reopening of the economy would be increasing this crime that has already developed new ways of operating and has among its new victims, taxi drivers or private vehicles, which have increased due to the lack of bus routes. Carriers must pay a fee for traffic on some streets,^{xiii} in a situation like that which has occurred for several years in the neighbouring countries of Honduras and El Salvador.

Sex crimes continue to affect mainly women. Of the 3,275 recognitions for sexual crimes carried out from January to May 2021, 91% were women, of the women evaluated, 76% were girls and adolescents under 19 years of age. From 10 to 14 years old, girls are in a situation of greater vulnerability to sexual violence since most of the evaluations that were reported are in this age range (47%).^{xliii} When comparing the number of clinical examinations for sexual crimes in girls aged 10 to 14 (1,076) with pregnancies in girls under 14 years of age (807 pregnancies reported by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance)^{xliiv} it could be inferred that approximately 75% of the rapes of girls result in pregnancy.

Although it is true that only 9% of the sex crimes recognitions from January to May 2021 were made to men, it is equally alarming that it is children under 14 who were the main victims in 58% of the cases. In addition, in 12% of the cases they were adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19, and in a high percentage the age of the victims was not reported (19%).^{xliv} In the reports of sexual crimes, the gender identity of the aggrieved people is not recorded, this situation makes the crimes and violence of the people in the LGBTIQ + community invisible.

PROTECTION NEEDS

Covid-19

Guatemala as of June 30 presented an accumulated 296,438 cases of Covid-19 with a mortality rate of 52.2 per 100 thousand inhabitants, in addition, with a historically deficient and collapsed health system, the country sees the situation of lack of protection that is affecting mainly the populations that have lived in contexts of vulnerability. Only 7.4% of the population over 18 years of age have received the first dose and 1.5% have the complete vaccination schedule.^{xlvi}

Guatemala has had a slow immunization process, despite having paid USD79 million 600 thousand, it has only received 1.87% of the purchase, that is, 150 thousand doses of the Sputnik V vaccine.^{xlvii} From the beginning, delays were observed to start negotiations for the purchase of vaccines, in addition a contract was signed that has been seriously questioned for using intermediaries for the purchase, since according to decree 1-2021 the doses must be purchased directly with the manufacturer, and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance in the contract exempted the intermediary supplier from all responsibility for delays in delivery.^{xlviii} On the other hand, the population does not have clear information about the vaccination process and the mechanisms to access immunization.^{xlix}

An update on the protection crisis

Given the continuous contradictions between government authorities to resolve the procurement of vaccines,ⁱ the crisis in the country is getting worse and, in this period, a red alert was declared in the hospital network, since positive diagnoses exceeded a thousand cases a day.ⁱⁱ

In addition, the number of paediatric patients admitted to intensive care units for Covid-19 has also increased. This situation especially affects all girls and boys since the diagnosis and early care of other conditions lag behind.ⁱⁱⁱ Once again, the inequality gaps in the country are noticeable, since the population that has economic resources has chosen to travel to the United States and Mexico to access immunization.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ It is important to note that currently Guatemalans have to wait up to 4 months to make the paperwork for their passport with the Guatemalan Migration Institute.^{liv}

Climate events

With the start of the rainy season, the country has already been seriously affected, according to the National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (CONRED, for its acronym in Spanish) as of June 2021, 587,852 people were affected, 1,484 people were stricken, 5,090 people were evacuated and 7 people died.^{lv} This panorama requires taking timely measures to mitigate the impact of extreme weather events, according to a survey by the International Organization for Migrations (IOM) in three of the municipalities most affected by Eta and Iota, 36% of the people surveyed are still in a situation of displacement.^{lvi}

Food insecurity

Until June 14, a cumulative 13,930 cases of acute malnutrition were reported, 521 more than in 2020; In addition, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance reported 12 deaths from acute malnutrition.^{lvii} Despite the increase in cases of malnutrition, the institutions part of the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONASA) have a budget of Q5.30 billion to reduce the impact of malnutrition in the country, of which they have only executed the 40%.

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

One of the first resolutions that the new magistracy of the Constitutional Court (CC) gave was to definitively deny the eight requests for protection from civil society organizations against the reforms to the NGO Law, which allows the Ministry of the Interior to cancel an organization without due process, on charges of disturbing public order. These reforms restrict various guarantees, such as freedom of association.^{lviii}

Guatemala is included in the development plan for North Central America, the strategy seeks to reduce irregular migration to the United States in the next five years.^{lix} Likewise, the United States stated that corruption significantly damages the economies of the countries, which is why the Engel List included 20 former Guatemalans, civil servants and politicians who participate in important acts of corruption.^{lx} On the other hand, an announcement made by the White House in Guatemala will implement the first of several centres in Central America for asylum seekers in the United States.^{lix}



BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

2,561

people who have been recognized as refugees



At the close of the first semester. The Ombudsman's Office has received complaints about the delay of the National Office for the Attention of Refugees (ONPAR) in the waiting times to know if an asylum application is admitted for processing. In previous years the estimated period was 5 years.

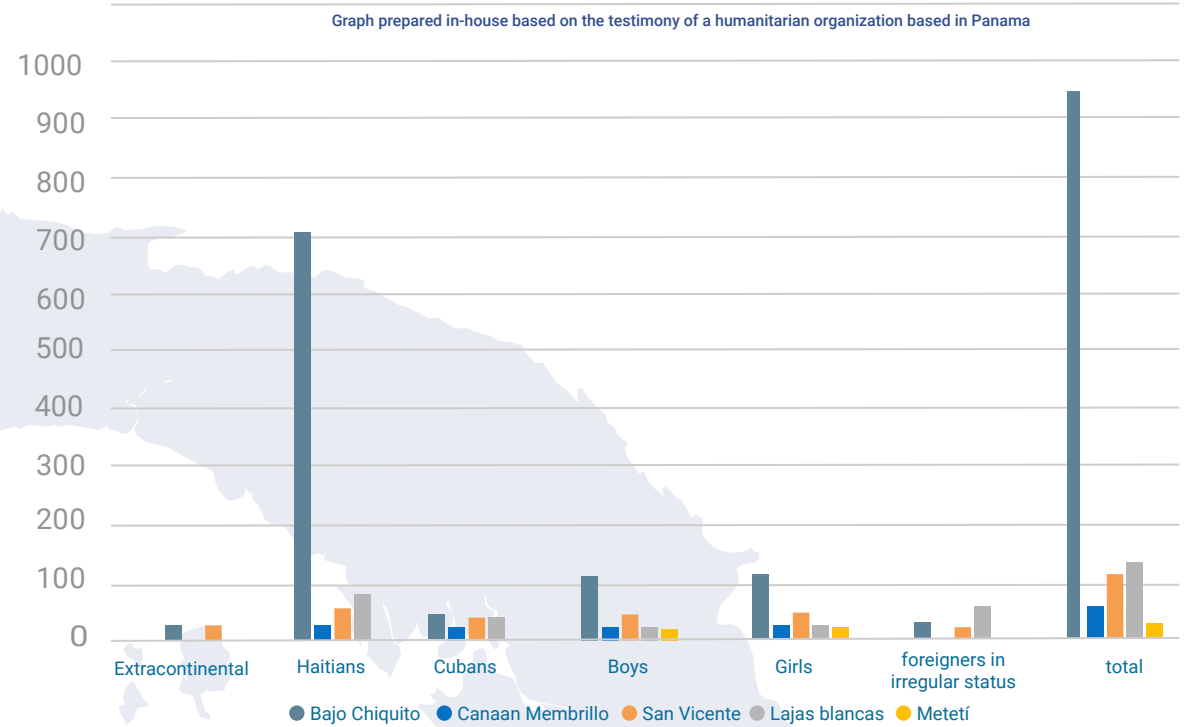
1,300

migrants are housed in the El Darién Immigration Reception Stations at the end of June 2021



74% in Bajo Chiquito, 12% in Lajas Blancas, 10% in San Vicente, 3% in Canaán Membrillo and 1% in Metetí. 60% of this migrant population is of Haitian nationality, 6% of Cuban nationality, 4% are extracontinental, and 5% are foreigners in an irregular situation (they do not apply to the parameters of the Controlled Flow Operation), 14% correspond to boys and 11% are girls. ^{ixixii}

Migrant population housed in the Darien Migratory Reception Stations by status and nationality in June 2021



21,423

migrants in an irregular situation in the second quarter of 2021.



22%



61%



61%



35%



16%

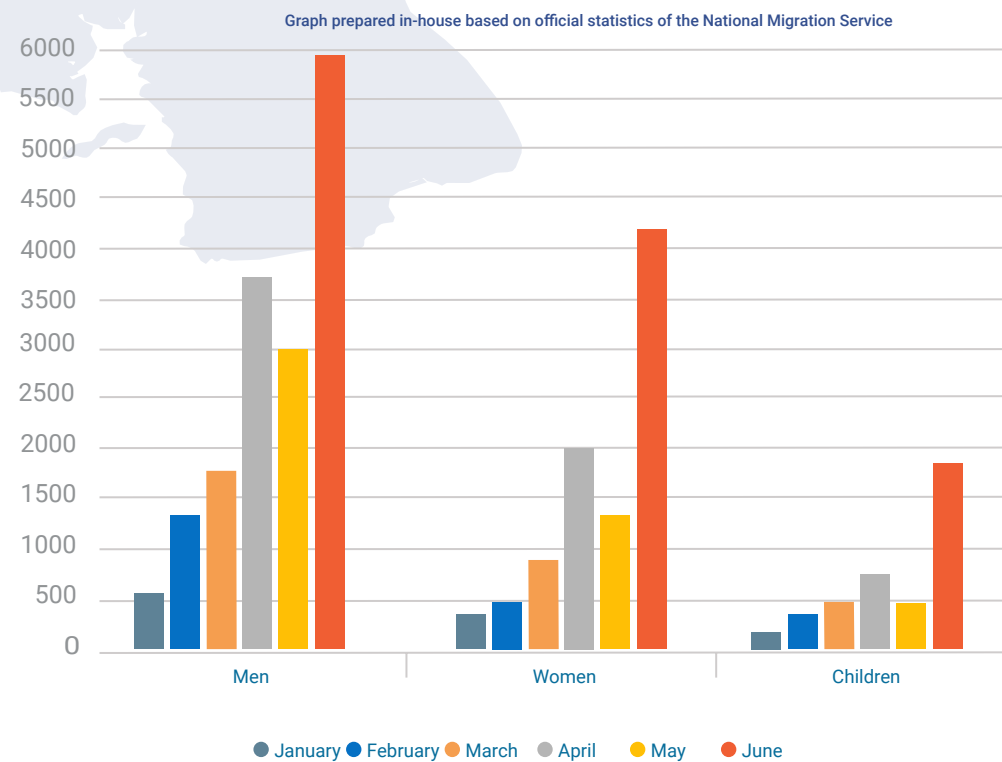


During the first semester of the year, 26,992 migrants entered the country irregularly

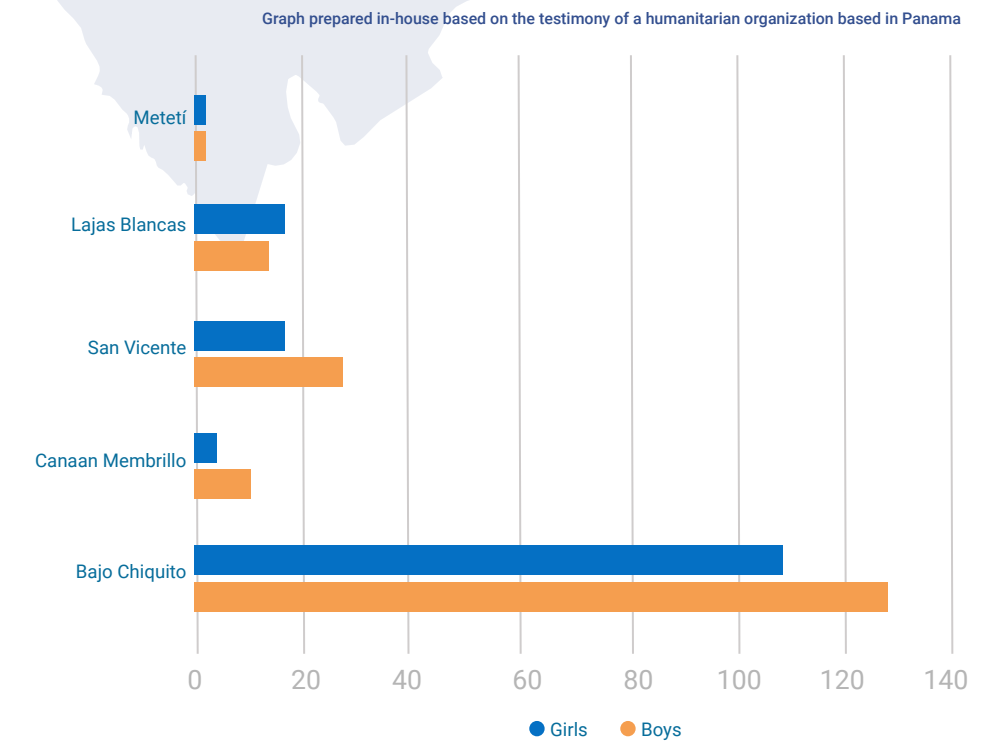
Countries of origin

Most of this population comes from the Antilles region: 61% from Haiti and 22% from Cuba, followed by other countries such as Bangladesh, Senegal, Venezuela, Nepal, Ghana, India, and Uzbekistan, among others. 984 people are housed in the camps of the National Border Service (SENAFRON, for its acronym in Spanish). However, there are no disaggregated statistics on this population. ^{ixii}

Transit of irregular migrants across the border with Colombia by status during the first half of 2021



Migrant children housed at the Migrant Reception Stations in Darien in June 2021



NATIONAL ANALYSIS

Covid-19

As of June 26, 399,877 accumulated cases are reported with a mortality rate of 150.1 per 100,000 inhabitants. 1,451,842 doses of vaccines have been administered, 79% corresponding to Pfizer and 21% to AstraZeneca. 27.6% of the population has been vaccinated with at least one dose, which is above the world average of 22.9%.^{lxiv}

On the other hand, the British Embassy and the Association of Embera Indigenous Women Craftsmen launched the *Awareness Campaign for mitigation, prevention, and reduction of the contagion of Covid-19* in the seven indigenous peoples of the country in order to provide responses to this vulnerable population. Within the framework of this campaign, complete scientific information was disseminated in the Guna, Wounaan, Emberá, Naso and Ngäbe Bugle languages through 17 radio spots and 24 videos on social networks to prevent, contain and mitigate Covid-19.^{lxv}

In recent months, the number of positive cases for Covid-19 has increased among the migrant population in an irregular situation that is housed in the Immigration Reception Stations, where there is a lack of food and medical supplies.

The Chepo Regional Hospital has treated 34 migrants positive for Covid-19 in the course of 2020 and the first semester of 2021. They often have complications in their symptoms and charts of pneumonia due to the journey they have travelled through El Darién.^{lxvi} In addition, there have been problems of coexistence in David, in the province of Chiriquí. The agglomeration of extra-continental migrants in parcel businesses and in public transport has generated reluctance among the local population due to fear of the spread of Covid-19.^{lxvii}

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

Since May 20, 2020, the country has temporarily closed its land, sea and river borders with Colombia in order to guarantee “the progress made by all Panamanians to control the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as border security and control of the migratory flow”.^{lxviii} The Ombudsman of Panama stressed the importance of establishing an information management system with the Colombian authorities to obtain disaggregated data on the migrant population that transits through Colombia and goes to Panama in order to optimally organize humanitarian aid at the Immigration Reception Stations and the National Border Service camps.^{lxix}

However, despite this closure of borders, an increase in the migratory flow through the Darién has been observed during the second quarter of 2021. The number of migrant men, women, and minors in an irregular situation across this border has increased by 104%, 330% and 192% respectively in the second quarter compared to the first quarter of this year.

The Human Mobility Group of Panama has analysed this context and has identified four driving factors that explain the growing migratory flow in transit through Panama:

- a) The structural crisis (economic, political, social and security) in countries of origin, especially Haiti, Venezuela, and Cuba, in addition to the extra-regional crises that encourage mobility.
- b) The perception of changes in the normative frameworks in the United States, which generate expectations of reception and protection for the migrant and refugee population.
- c) The adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the livelihoods of migrants in countries such as Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, or Colombia.
- d) The new measures for migratory regularization initiated in Chile in May 2021, as well as the increase in collective expulsions and the increase in events of xenophobia and discrimination.

Furthermore, **the number of migrants in an irregular situation from Cuba and Haiti has increased up to 10 times in the month of June compared to the first month of the year.** The current social, economic, political, and health situation in both countries suggests that the migratory flow of both nationalities through El Darién will increase exponentially in the coming months.

Thousands of people protested in Cuba over the shortage of medicines and food amid a third wave of infections with 19,320 positive cases of Covid-19 and an incidence of 329.5 cases per 100,000 inhabitants.^{lxx}

For its part, **the assassination of the president of Haiti has exacerbated the pre-existing conditions of violence and insecurity in the country** (For more information, consult the analysis annex in Haiti). Clashes between rival gangs have intensified during the month of June, especially in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince. Therefore, hundreds of homes have already been damaged and **approximately 19,000 people have been internally displaced.**^{lxxi}



An update on the protection crisis

At the end of July, up to 15,000 migrants were stranded in Necoclí, on the border between Colombia and Panama, hoping to continue their journey along the Darien route. According to the Ombudsman's Office in Panama, approximately 50% of these stranded migrants are of Haitian nationality. Considering the border closure, the pandemic situation and the local institutional difficulties in Necoclí, humanitarian organizations such as the Norwegian Refugee Council indicate that to attend the emergency, it is essential to implement a binational humanitarian response plan.^{lxxii}

ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION IN AN IRREGULAR SITUATION

The situation faced by migrant women is particularly worrisome: Doctors Without Borders was aware in its first fifteen days of work in Darién that there had been 12 sexual abuses in 72 hours. This organization is working with teams of doctors, nurses, logistics specialists and psychologists to improve the existing health infrastructures at the Lajas Blancas and San Vicente Migration Reception Stations and advocate for greater protection in the migration routes of El Darién by the Colombian and Panamanian authorities.^{lxxiii}

The right to education, a healthy environment and health are the main challenges experienced by the migrant population in transit in the communities of Bajo Chiquito, Cémaco, Lajas Blancas and the Comarca Emberá Wounaan. The Ombudsman's Office recommended the creation of a school where middle and high school grades are taught, the urgent construction of a landfill to handle waste in a healthy way through garbage cans and bags. And free transfers by land from Bajo Chiquito to the Lajas Blancas Immigration Reception Station.

Currently, the National Migration Service provides transfers by water at a cost of 25 dollars to the migrant population in an irregular situation in transit, a population that, in most cases, lacks income.

Finally, it was urged to provide the National Border Service and the National Migration Service with masks and thermometers for taking temperatures in order to prevent Covid-19.^{lxxiv}

From a health point of view, the country has taken an important step to guarantee comprehensive care for the migrant population in transit and resident in its territory thanks to the launch of the technical standard for mental health care for the migrant and refugee population in Panama. It represents the first Central American country to implement a standard aimed at addressing the mental health of this population profile. This tool is endowed with a human rights, gender, and life cycle approach with attention to the individual, family, and community levels.^{lxxv}

In terms of protection needs, the Human Mobility Group of Panama has identified four challenges to provide a timely response by the authorities:

1. The volume of the migratory flow is unpredictable, so the response from the institutions of the Panamanian state is variable and omits protection situations that merit coordinated interventions, such as the case of sexual violence against migrant women.
2. The context of the COVID-19 pandemic has diminished the capacities of health institutions to assist mixed flows and provide them with care once they have crossed the jungle without any institutional support or security, which exposes them to violent groups and networks of trafficking, sexual trafficking, and exploitation.
3. There has been an increase in events of sexual violence against adult women and adolescents, as well as greater diseases and deaths on the route, associated with the weather conditions of the rainy season and the limitations of health, food, and protection services to offer timely assistance.
4. The cases of unaccompanied and separated children, orphans who have lost their parents on the road, have increased, and mechanisms for family reunification have not been established.



VIOLENCIA CRIMINAL

11,271 **Homicides**
Registered out of a total of 22,159 during the first semester (51%).

251 **Femicides**
registered out of a total of 495 during the first semester (51%).

20,478 **Records of sexual and gender-based violence**
out of a total of 31,260 during the first semester (54%).

2,140 **Records for extortion**
out of a total of 4,136 during the first semester (52%).

5,891 **Records for crimes against personal liberty**
out of a total of 11,021 during the first semester (53%).^{xxv}

PROTECTION NEEDS

54.3 M **Doses against Covid-19**
Around 38 million people have 1 dose and approximately 21.6 million have the complete vaccination schedule.

89 **Deaths and disappearances of migrants**
occurred on migration routes out of a total of 190 during the first semester (47%).

51%
Mexico

49%
United States

83,068 **Assistances to migrants by Beta Groups**
out of a total of 163,357 during the first semester (51%).

54,799 **Repatriation events**
of Mexican people in which support from federal programs was accepted out of a total of 92,544 during the first semester (59%).

2,207 **Episodes of massive internal displacement in Mexico**
out of a total of 3,719 during the first semester (59%).

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

68,413 **Repatriations of Mexican persons from the United States**
out of a total of 109,533 during the first semester (62%).

14,596 **Applications for Refugee Status in Mexico**
out of a total of 29,132 during the first semester (50%).

48,002 **Presentations by foreigners to the immigration authority**
out of a total of 84,100 during the first semester (57%).

24,052 **Deportations of foreigners by immigration authority**
out of a total of 46,302 during the first semester (52%).

In Mexico
28,806 **returns to NCA from Mexico and the United States**
out of a total of 52,385 during the first semester (55%).

426,522 **Apprehensions of migrants on the southern border with Mexico**
out of a total of 732,621 during the first semester (58%).

306,279 **Expulsions due to Title 42 on the southern border with Mexico**
out of a total of 537,959 during the first semester (57%).

In the United States
 120,243 **Title 8 lack of admissions on the southern border with Mexico**
out of a total of 194,662 during the first semester (62%).

Mexico

An update on the protection crisis

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

Criminal violence in the country does not stop.^{lxxvii} According to the report^{lxxviii} of the first two months of the year 2021 of the Causa en Común organization, which analysed 535 journalistic reports, indicated the occurrence of 895 “atrocities” committed against 963 victims (27 notes did not specify the number). The entities with the most victims were Guanajuato with 120, Jalisco with 98, Chihuahua with 69, Zacatecas with 66 and Michoacán with 59. The “atrocities” refer to cases of torture, burning, clandestine graves, massacres, dismemberment, and destruction of corpses.

In this context, from September 2020 to June 5, 2021, one day before the largest electoral day in the history of Mexico, 91 candidates were assassinated and 910 attacks of different kinds were recorded, from threats and intimidation, to attacks, coups and kidnappings (other sources speak of 89 politicians and 35 candidates murdered^{lxxix}). Aggressions (910) increased 17.5% compared to the 774 recorded during the 2017-2018 electoral process.^{lxxx} Faced with this situation, a group of regional mechanisms and special rapporteurs urged the authorities to investigate the crimes in a transparent manner.

Likewise, on Saturday, June 19, organized crime groups murdered 14 people in the city of Reynosa, Tamaulipas, including construction workers, nurses, students, and families. While the authorities killed four alleged criminals. So far there are 13 people arrested for these events.^{lxxxi}

The Reynosa Massacre is an unprecedented event because it has been carried out against the civilian population in a city of around 600,000 inhabitants, adjacent to the United States and a transit point for migrants heading to this country.^{lxxxii}

On the other hand, according to the National Registry of Disappeared, Not Localized and Localized Persons, the entities of Coahuila, Durango, Nuevo León and Tamaulipas account for about 20% of the total number of disappeared persons in the country and in them, they have been carried out more than 230 search sessions.^{lxxxiii} And other similar efforts are being carried out in other entities of the country, such as the one implemented by the Altos Sur Collective “In search of you” in the Altos Sur region of Jalisco, where the disappearance of 633 people since 2010 has been recognized.^{lxxxvi}

Finally, in the Report “Military Power. The National Guard and the risks of the renewed military leadership”,^{lxxxv} The organization CentroProdh draws attention to the fact that most of the National Guard force and practically all its operational commands come from the Armed Forces and that the career

design has a predominantly military perspective with almost no training in human rights. Situation that is very worrying, considering that said corporation has been put in charge of citizen security tasks, including situations such as those previously exposed and the control of migratory flows.

PROTECTION NEEDS

The Government of Mexico applied 1,200 Pfizer vaccines against Covid-19 to migrants in a shelter in Tijuana, Baja California, thanks to the donation of a US firm.^{lxxxvi} While, at the end of June, in Caborca, Sonora, it also applied the single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine against Covid-19 to migrants at the Centro Comunitario de Ayuda a Migrantes.^{lxxxvii} However, given that these actions are specific and that there is no data available on the vaccines applied to migrants, organizations for the defence of human rights of migrants asked that they be included in the emerging vaccination plan with which they want to accelerate the reopening of the border with the United States.^{lxxxviii}

The situations of risk and vulnerability that migrants face continue to be present. For example, the National Guard’s Spokesperson reported the discovery of 61 cramped and dehydrated Central Americans who were traveling aboard a truck on the China-Nuevo León highway. Of which 28 were adults and 33 minors, of which one, of Salvadoran origin, was traveling unaccompanied.^{lxxxix} For its part, based on reports made by relatives, the Mexican Federation of Public Human Rights Organizations (FMOPDH) reported in its report that at least 2,000 migrants are missing in Mexico.^{xc}

In this context, civil society organizations called on the governments of the United States and Mexico to build regional migration policies focused on the protection of migrants and those in need of international protection, particularly of children and adolescents. Among the proposed actions are the following:

- Immediately end Title 42 expulsions and express deportations.
- Guarantee and expedite access to international protection procedures.
- Properly determine the best interests of children and adolescents applying for international protection.
- Refrain from confining unaccompanied children and adolescents in closed shelters.
- Allocate greater resources to the institutions responsible for guaranteeing the right to international protection.
- Guarantee access to justice for victims of aggressions, crimes, and human rights violations.
- Support the integration of returnees and refugees.



BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

The immigration policy of the United States continues to be marked by controversial actions and, according to some analysts, contradictory, including the international tour of Vice President Kamala Harris to Guatemala and Mexico,^{xcii} which some people highlighted as being “more of the same” in relation to the immigration policy that has traditionally characterized this country.^{xciii}

It also highlights the questioning that human rights organizations have made regarding the implementation of technologies for the recognition and storage of biometric data of migrants and asylum seekers, such as the mobile app called “CBP One” by Customs and Border Protection (CBP); particularly due to the risks it entails for people’s right to privacy.^{xciv} This concern was expressed when former President Donald Trump made^{xcv} a similar proposal in September 2020.^{xcvi}

On the other hand, it should be noted that the Biden administration approved the suspension of the rules based on which asylum could be denied to victims of domestic violence and gangs, situations that had previously been classified as invalid for requesting international protection.^{xcvii}

Likewise, while the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights applauded the decision of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to end the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP); it also urged the Government of this country to adopt a migration policy with a human rights approach.^{xcviii} For example, the continuation of expulsions under Title 42 of the statute of the United States Code that deals with public well-being and health, an action begun under the administration of Donald Trump in the context of a pandemic, on the basis of which migrants and asylum seekers are immediately returned under the pretext that they pose a risk to the public health of American citizens, should be stopped.^{xcix}

However, the United States Government made the decision to expand the Refugee Processing / Humanitarian Permits Program for Minors in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala (CAM)^c which provides children and adolescents with the opportunity to be considered for resettlement as refugees in the United States while they were in their native country.^{ci}

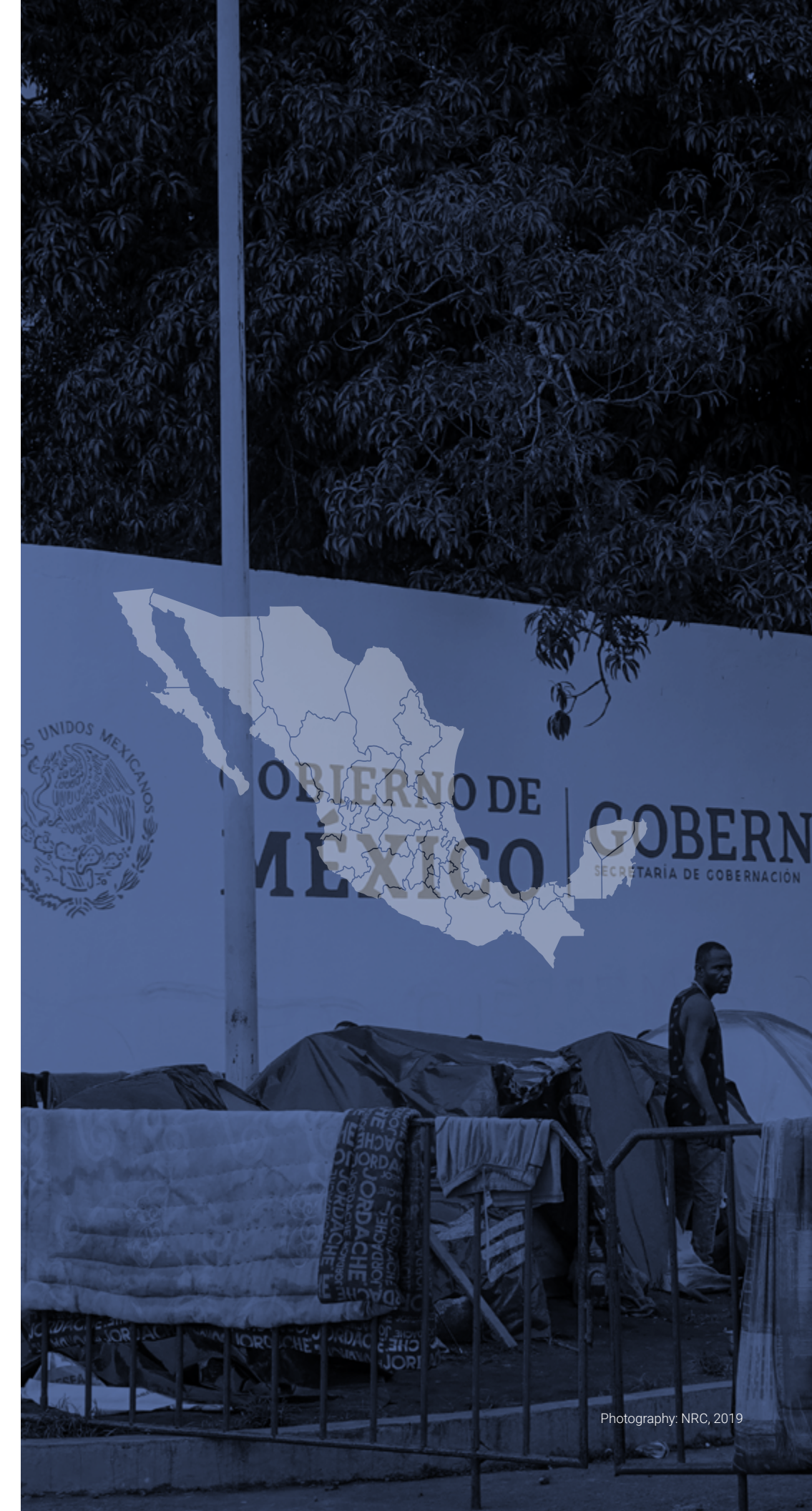
It also expanded the processing of asylum applications made under MPPs that had been closed or dismissed during the previous administration.^{cii} It is estimated that this last action allowed 23% of asylum seekers returned to Mexico to seek asylum in the United States and that around 52,000 more applicants continue to wait for a response.^{ciii}

In the case of Mexico, the number of arrests of migrants between May and June ranked second during the current federal administration (since December 2018), only surpassed by those reported in 2019 after the former president of the United States, Donald Trump, threatened to raise tariffs on various goods if the Government of Mexico did not contain the migratory flows heading to that country.^{civ} Until May 2021, the National Migration Institute (INM) has intercepted 75,508 foreigners, of which 69,806 are from Northern Central America, 92% of all events.^{cv} This trend is expected to continue during the year, probably exceeding the figures reported in 2019.^{cvi}

For its part, the 51,654 applications for refugee status registered by the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR) during the first semester of 2021 represent approximately 86% of the total applications received by said institution between 2013 and 2018. Of these requests, around 72% were made in Chiapas, 8% in Tabasco and the remaining 20% in other entities of the country. In this regard, it is important to highlight that 29,132 of these requests corresponded to people from Northern Central America, representing 56% of the total requests. In this context, it is important to mention the opening of COMAR offices in Tijuana, Baja California, a city located on the northern border of Mexico.^{cvii}

Finally, the publication of the new version of the Protocol of action for those who administer justice in cases involving migrants and persons subject to international protection by the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation, in an effort to promote the professionalization of those who are part of the Judicial Branch of the Federation and have the obligation to defend the most vulnerable people in society, regardless of their place of origin or nationality.^{cviii}

As well as the initiative of the Working Group on Migration Policy that aims to replace the term “migration stations” in the Migration Law with “Centers for the humanitarian protection of migrants”, under the understanding that a migration policy with a human rights perspective would have to reform the legal frameworks to eliminate the deprivation of liberty for immigration reasons. With the consequent modifications and allocation of resources for the operation of spaces and their proper functioning.^{cix}



Regional analysis

An update on the protection crisis

CRIMINAL VIOLENCE

Even though in recent years the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants in El Salvador has decreased notably, **levels of violence continue to be worrisome**. In mid-May, the buried remains of at least 40 people, the vast majority women and minors, were located in the municipality of Chalchuapa at the home of a former police officer accused of a double femicide.^{cx} In addition, only in the first half of 2021 there was a daily average of four homicides.^{cxii} Observing the data of the last decade, 59% of the population nationwide lived in municipalities that reported a rate of 40 homicides per ten thousand inhabitants: that is, **more than half of the population lived in areas considered very unsafe**.^{cxii}

Guatemala registered 1,607 homicides in the first five months of the year, representing a 23.4% increase in homicidal violence compared to the same period in 2020. The country is one of the fifteen most violent in the world. Not only is the number of cases alarming, but also the approach from the justice system: **up to 89% of homicides go unpunished**. The situation of women is also concerning. In 2021, 125 femicides have been committed, an increase of 28.57% compared to last year.

Femicides represent the crime with the highest incidence in the country.^{cxiii} As the incidence of recognitions for sexual crimes identified in the national analysis shows, **Gender-based sexual violence affects women throughout their life cycle, especially girls and adolescents. These events reflect the sexist violence that exists in the country**.^{cxiv}

Honduras registered 879 homicides in the second semester and 23 multiple homicides as of May. According to the National Observatory of Violence, violence fulfils a function of social fragmentation: young people with few economic resources are the main victims of violent events. **The country does not have a violence prevention strategy or criminal scientific investigation that allows finding out who are the people who commit this type of crime, aggravating the perception of fear, insecurity, and impunity among the population**.^{cxv}

In the first five months **Mexico** recorded 14,424 homicides. Only in the month of May there were 2,963 homicides, assuming an average of 95 homicides per day.

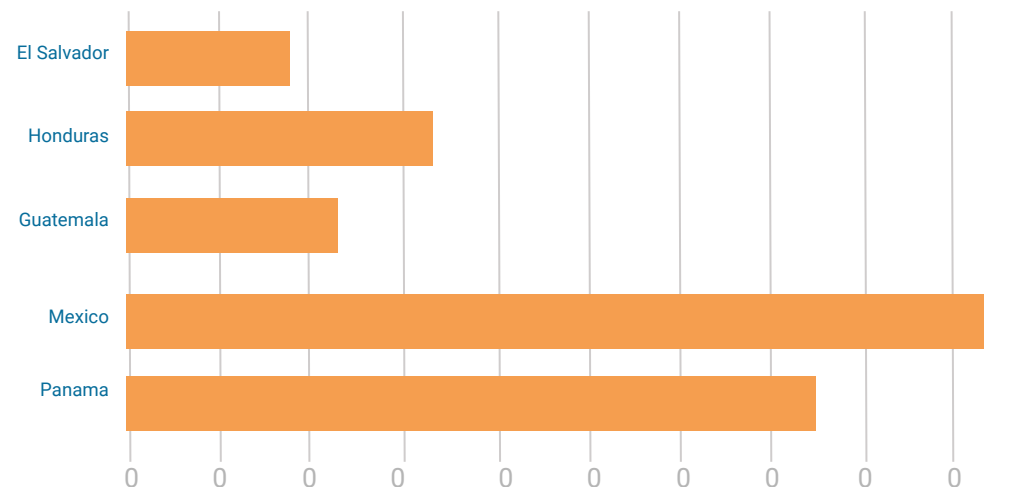
However, the number of homicides has decreased by 2.9% compared to the same period in 2020. On the other hand, the aggressions, threats, and intimidations that occurred in the framework of the legislative elections in June are very worrying for the maintenance of the rule of law and democratic participation. In this sense, **The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has stated that the occurrence of attacks against political actors, in addition to violations of the rights to life and integrity, also affects the electoral rights of voters and candidates**.^{cxvi}

PROTECTION NEEDS

Covid-19 in the region

The percentage of positivity for Covid-19 in Panama is 8.9% and a fatality rate of 1.6%. By the end of June, up to 23% of the population had received at least one dose of the vaccine.^{cxvii} Access to vaccination is far from homogeneous in the countries of the region. In the case of Honduras and Nicaragua, only 3% of their population has received at least one dose of the vaccine, in contrast to El Salvador where 17% have received the first dose of the vaccine. For its part, in Jalisco (Mexico), the government and UNHCR signed an agreement for refugees to be vaccinated against Covid-19, as well as to achieve the inclusion in health and education programs of people with international protection needs for violence, persecution and armed conflicts in their countries.^{cxviii}

COVID-19 mortality rate per 10,000 population in the countries of North Central America, Mexico and Panama.



Graph based on the COVID-19 Panama Situation Report published by the Pan American Health Organization on June 29, 2021.

In addition, human rights organizations have advocated for migrants to be included in the emerging vaccination plans. It is estimated that approximately 4,000 migrants are stranded in Baja California state cities such as Tijuana and Mexicali and more than a quarter have been living for months in a makeshift camp next to the El Chaparral border crossing.

So far, the Ministry of Health has scheduled sporadic visits to shelters, but there is no vaccination schedule or plan that includes this profile. Migrants who died from Covid-19 often had problems accessing healthcare. The duality of the country as a place of transit and destination should give priority to the medical care of this population.^{cxix}



An update on the protection crisis

It should be remembered that the social effects of the pandemic fall, fundamentally, on people in vulnerable situations where most of the migrants are located. In this sense, the United Nations special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants advocated, during the regional review of the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, because in this context the migration regularization processes are permanent, to end the deportation processes for humanitarian and public health reasons and to guarantee the access of this population to vaccination and educational services without exchanging information with immigration authorities so as not to interfere in the access and exercise of these rights. Likewise, the agglomeration of more than 8,000 migrants, most of them Haitians, stranded in the Colombian municipality of Necoclí, overcrowded, in precarious conditions, waiting to be able to cross the Darien, becomes an added risk factor that increases the complexity to manage the pandemic adequately.^{cxx}

Food security

The impacts of Eta and Iota continue to deteriorate the situation of subsistence agriculture. It is estimated that in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras up to 160,000 people will be in a situation of acute food insecurity for the period from June to August 2021. The high prices of transport to access markets, workplaces and basic services are an added barrier to mobility that hinders the recovery of the local economy. On the other hand, the reduction in household income due to the loss of jobs and the low profitability associated with informal trade is hindering the acquisition of food and, therefore, many families are beginning to activate new strategies for diversifying their livelihoods. Additionally, grain reserves are expected to be depleted before August 2021.^{cxxi}

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

The border situation between Mexico and the United States continues to be complex: in the first five months, 51,654 asylum applications were made in Mexico, exceeding the number registered throughout the course of 2020, where 12% of all new asylum applications presented at the global level were from people from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. These figures show the trend of Mexico as a host country and not only for migrant transit. However, it also highlights the incidence of the factors that lead to forced displacement in the countries of Northern Central America, which have not yet recovered from the social and economic consequences of Covid-19 and tropical storms Eta and Iota.^{cxxii}

In the framework of the summit of the countries in the Central American Integration System and the solidarity event with the MIRPS held recently, the gathered countries committed to strengthening efforts to address the causes that force millions of people to migrate from Central America. Spain announced

the aid of 6.3 million euros and the donation of 22.5 million doses of vaccines through the COVAX mechanism. In addition, the leaders of a dozen countries, banks and development organizations will contribute nearly \$110 million to a project to drive a green economic recovery, strengthen cooperation, and universalize Covid-19 vaccines.^{cxxiii-cxxiv}

For its part, during the month of June, the United States continued with its actions aimed at preventing irregular migration from Central America, within the framework of which the [visits by Vice President Kamala Harris to Guatemala and Mexico](#) took place. As a result of these spaces for dialogue, the Biden administration agreed to send national security officers to the northern and southern borders of Guatemala to train local officials and the establishment of a working group to investigate cases of corruption and prevent trafficking of migrants from Northern Central America and Mexico.^{cxxv}

In addition, the United States Department of Justice reversed two laws enacted by the previous government in order to restore the possibility of requesting asylum for women fleeing domestic violence and victims of gangs, two of the main reasons for which people from the North of Central America report fleeing their countries.

People whose asylum cases for these causes were denied have the possibility of filing a motion to reopen and even appeal the ruling, since the Supreme Court of Justice indicated that immigrants may lose the right to stay if they do not appeal the orders of unjust deportation.^{cxxvi}

On the other hand, although unaccompanied minors have ceased to be expelled under Title 42, the US border authorities continue to immediately return most unaccompanied Mexican children who enter the United States using as a pretext a Provision of anti-trafficking legislation regarding unaccompanied Mexican children from border countries.

Impact of Covid-19 on remittances

The reopening of some economic activities and greater flexibility in mobility are influencing a greater sending of remittances from the migrant population from Northern Central America residing in the United States. In the first five months, remittances sent to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have grown by over 40% compared to the same period last year.

Remittances represent, in addition to an important part of the Gross Domestic Product of these countries, a source of livelihood and protection for many families. Up to 37.5% of the Guatemalan population uses remittances as a survival strategy and in Honduras, the reception of remittances historically began with the emigration that arose because of Hurricane Mitch. In addition, it constitutes the main source of foreign currency in the country, above other exports such as coffee and maquila products.^{cxxvii}



PROTECTION RISKS FOR PEOPLE IN A SITUATION OF HUMAN MOBILITY

On June 9, more than 200 undocumented migrants from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Brazil and Mexico who were seeking to cross irregularly into the United States were found in two homes on the border of Ciudad Juárez, in northern Mexico, where they remained overcrowded, and up to 12 migrants have died during the year on the El Darién route, according to the Ministry of Public Security of Panama.^{cxxviii} Recently, the Panamanian Foreign Minister, Erika Moynes, requested support from the international community to manage and attend to the growing migratory flow through El Darién. It is estimated that in the last four years more than 46,500 migrants have crossed this route, of which 6,200 were children.^{cxxix}

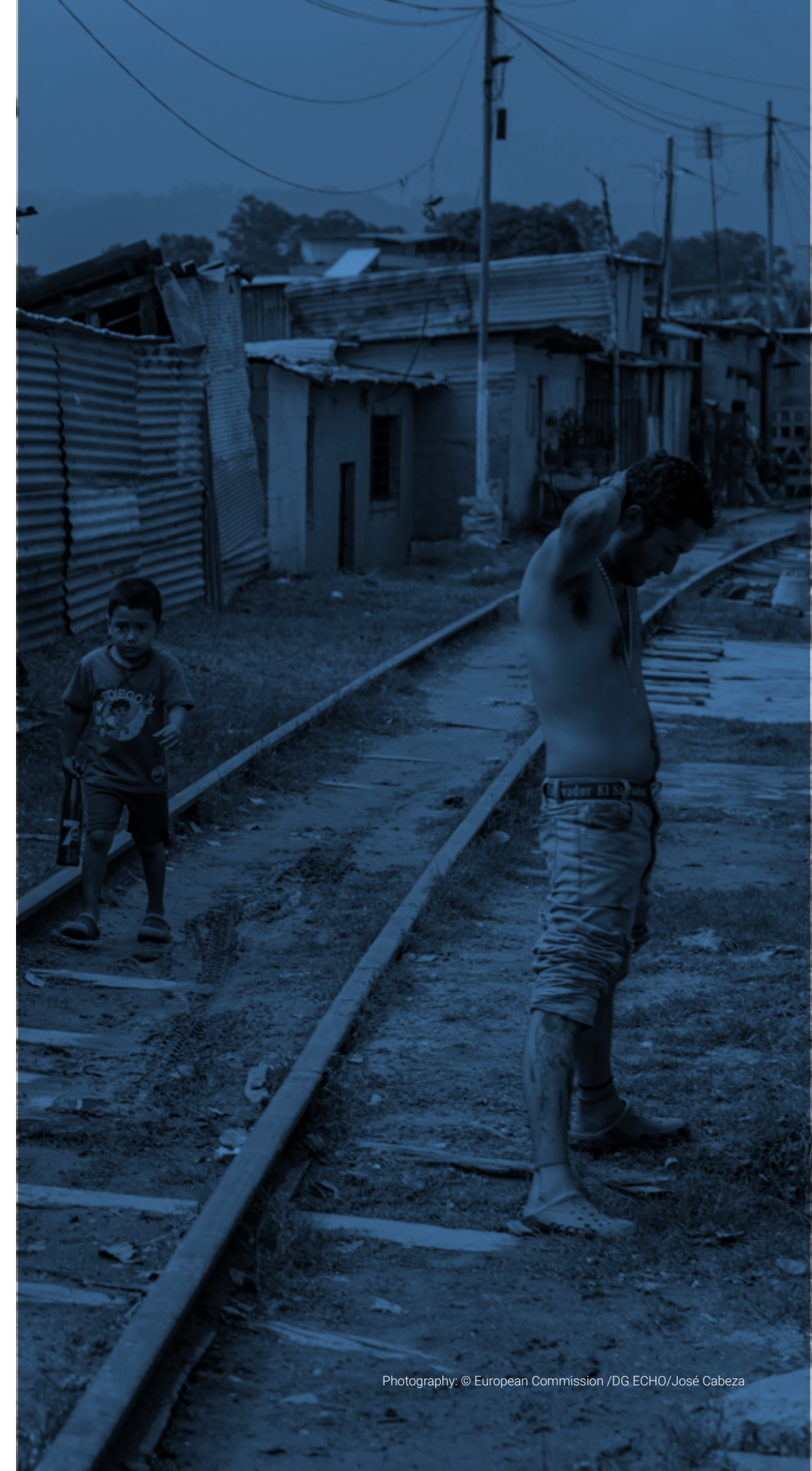
According to the deputy attorney for children, adolescents, and family of the Attorney General of the Republic of El Salvador, until May 288 unaccompanied returned children and adolescents were assisted, 90% of them returned from Mexico and the remaining 10% from the United States, Belize, and Spain.^{cxxx} For its part, the Ecclesial Network for the Protection and Monitoring of Human Mobility Pastoral has documented the situations of violence suffered by migrants in transit through Guatemala. Among the main violent acts manifested by those surveyed are extortion (37%), assault and robbery (23.9%), threats and intimidation (19.5%), abuse of authority (10.1%) and discrimination (7.8%).^{cxxxi}

These protection risks do not end at the border, but rather these and others of a different nature are also reproduced in Mexico. In a hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 32 civil society organizations highlighted the militarization that is taking place at the border and the systematic practice of hot returns to deter and criminalize migration, exacerbating the cases of illegitimate use of migration force against migrants. According to representatives of a humanitarian organization based in Honduras, people deported from Mexico report having suffered harassment and mistreatment by the Mexican authorities during their stay in detention centres.

On June 15, the people who were detained at the Siglo XXI Migration Station protested due to the lack of clarity in their asylum processes, reporting that they had been beaten and forced to lie down in the patio on their back with their hands behind their heads for around 9 hours. In addition, the systematic refusal by INAMI to facilitate the access of people with international protection needs to asylum procedures in Mexico and their systematic hot expulsion

across land borders and areas was noted, violating the principle of non-refoulement without adequate due process guarantees.^{cxxxii}

Finally, a follow-up of the recent socio-political events that occurred in Nicaragua, Cuba and Haiti is required to analyse their possible impact during the coming months on the mixed migratory flows that start in these countries and go to Mexico and the United States, passing through El Darién.^{cxxxiii}



CHARACTERIZATION OF THE HAITIAN MIGRATORY FLOW

The displacement of Haitian people is not a recent phenomenon but is the result of the confluence of the country's political instability, the levels of generalized violence and its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. The last decade has shown to what extent the country is exposed to climate change: in 2012 and 2016 there were cyclones, droughts in 2013 and 2014, and a new earthquake in 2018. In addition, Hurricane Mathew, which occurred in October 2016, affected 2.1 million people, causing a humanitarian crisis due to lack of food and an increase in cases of cholera.^{cxxxiv}

For some researchers, Haiti can be characterized as a fragile state due to its difficulties in providing public health, education, housing, and security services.^{cxxxv} The magnitude and persistence of the Haitian migratory flow in the Latin American region can be analysed taking into consideration the destination countries to which it has historically been directed and the socio-political events that have marked a turning point and triggered displacement.

Estimating the number of Haitian people displaced in the region is complex to calculate due to the variations in the migratory routes they take, as well as the disparity in the statistical configuration with which data on the migrant population are collected in the main destination countries of the migrant population. However, there are some trends that need to be noted.

Until mid-2020, it was estimated that 1,769,671 Haitians, that is, 16% of the country's population, were outside their territory: 49% of that Haitian migrant population was in the North of Central America, Mexico, South America, and Caribbean. Haitian migrants have historically made their way to the Dominican Republic and the United States and, in recent years, to Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Mexico, via Panama. 14,959 people of Haitian nationality applied for refugee status between 2019 and 2020 in Brazil, representing an average of 20% of the total number of registered refugee applications in the country.^{cxxxvi} In Chile, Haitian migration ranged from 1,600 people in 2012 to more than 185,000 in 2019, being the third migrant population with the largest presence in the country with 12.5%.^{cxxxvii} For its part, Mexico has not been oblivious to this context either: from 2013 to 2021 the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid registered 25,032 applications for refugee status of people from Haiti, with a notable increase of 7.243% from 2018 to 2019.^{cxxxviii}

Finally, in the last decade more than 140,000 migrants in an irregular situation have crossed the Darien border.^{cxxxix} In 2019, it was estimated that 43% of the migrant population in an irregular situation that crossed the Darien was Haitian and in the last quarter of 2021, they represented 61%.^{cxli} As of August 14, 640 Haitian migrants had mobilized through humanitarian corridors established by the municipal authorities of Cali from Valle del Cauca in the direction of Necoclí, Antioquia, in Colombia, to continue their route through the Darién, heading to the United States.

cxli

Countries with more than 5,000 Haitian migrants on their territory during 2020

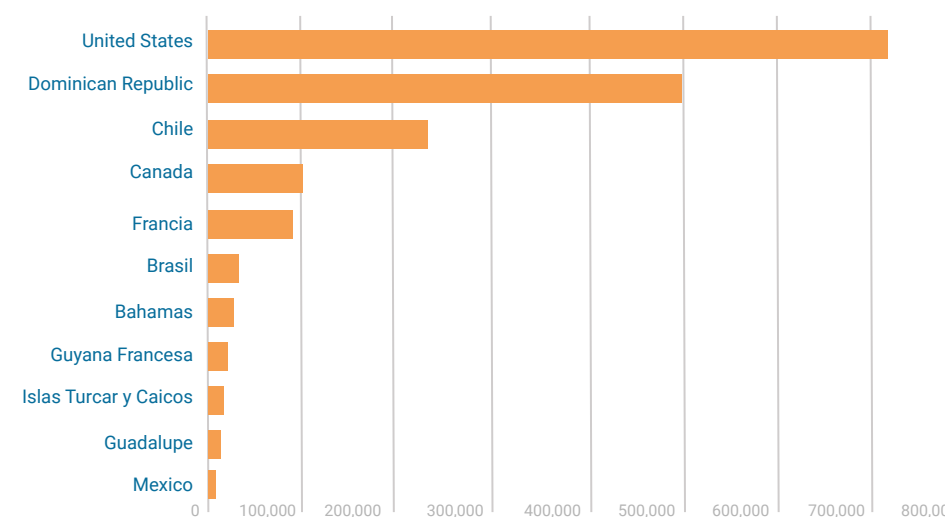


Chart based on UNDESA's International Migration 2020 Highlights report.

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

The publication on May 31, 2019, of a report by the Superior Court of Accounts where a company owned by former president Jovenel Moïse was linked to the alleged irregular handling of funds within the framework of Petrocaribe marked the beginning of mobilizations and protests in the streets, organized through social media with the hashtag #PetroCaribeChallenge to report corruption and demand the resignation of the government. This report reveals that between 2008 and 2016, 2 billion dollars were spent that were not adequately invested in improving the socioeconomic situation. Social organizations reported that seven people died during these incidents.^{cxlii}

At the beginning of 2021, President Jovenel Moïse announced an attempted coup against him and confirmed his intention to continue in office until February 2022. According to journalistic media, Moïse's reaction was the response to several weeks of violent demonstrations in different cities of the country to ask for his resignation on the grounds that his term had ended.^{cxliii} On July 7, 2021, President Moïse was found dead in his residence on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, after a group of heavily armed men stormed his home at dawn. His wife, Martine, was injured in the attack.

Controversy and socioeconomic unrest have worsened because of this assassination. The country's political instability persists despite the formation of a new government backed by the international community and led by neurosurgeon Ariel Henry. However, this new government is rejected by the opposition and civil society groups, considering that a consensus cabinet has not been formed.



There is considerable uncertainty regarding the immediate political future of the country: Presidential and legislative elections are scheduled in September and on February 7, 2022, Moïse's term of office will end, and a new president should take office. The absence of a minimum political consensus, the institutional weakness of the new government and the logistical and financial challenges faced by the electoral authorities make this electoral call very complex. **Some political scientists have pointed out the need to articulate a transitional government that confers stability to the country through political agreements between civil society and the political, economic, intellectual, and religious elites.** ^{cxliv}

The investigation process for the assassination of Moïse is not without controversy. A judge and two judicial officials who collected evidence indicated in interviews and in formal complaints to the prosecution that they received phone calls and visits from unknown persons who pressured them to modify the sworn statements of the witnesses. **Legal experts have questioned the due process of the investigation for the commission of systematic violations.** ^{cxlv}

COVID-19

The epidemiological situation has worsened in recent months. The number of positive cases for Covid-19 has quadrupled since May. **From January 3 to August 5, 20,326 positive cases for covid-19 were confirmed and 563 people had died.** ^{cxlvi}

Likewise, the emergency units of the hospitals are saturated caring for people affected by both Covid-19 and the criminal violence perpetrated by gangs in the country. Some hospitals are not even registering people who die in the country, since PCR tests are only administered by two laboratories and obtaining the results can take up to four days.

The incidence of criminal violence is one of the factors that is spreading the virus: the fear of suffering violence is leading many people to have reluctance to go to health centres for treatment, making the vaccination campaign difficult due to the complexity of accessing certain parts of the country, especially the Tiburon Peninsula, located in the south. **The overcrowding in emergency camps where internally displaced people are staying and the lack of hygiene supplies can also contribute to the spread of Covid-19.** ^{cxlvii}

Until July 14, Haiti was the only country in Latin America and the Caribbean that did not have a single dose of covid-19 vaccines. The same day **500,000 doses were received from the United States through the COVAX mechanism.** Susceptibility and lack of confidence about vaccines will be one of the main challenges to implement the vaccination campaign. **According to a perception study carried out by the University of Haiti and supported by UNICEF, only 22% of Haitians would agree to be vaccinated.**

CURRENT SITUATION: PROTECTION NEEDS AND HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

In Haiti

At present, a context is taking place where threats, sexual violence, injuries and homicides, and the deterioration of houses through looting and fires are proliferating. ^{cxlviii} Nevertheless, **This virulence is not new, it has developed gradually: the Centre for the Monitoring of Displacement registered 7,900 new displacements due to violence and 13,000 new displacements due to disasters in 2020 and 13,600 people were displaced from the capital of Haiti in June 2021.** ^{cxlix} In early July it was estimated that **up to 14,700 people had been internally displaced: 36% found refuge in shelters enabled by the emergency and 9,000 people sought refuge with host families.** ^{cl}

High levels of criminal violence are compounding the difficulties for organizations to provide humanitarian aid, reaching out to negotiate with criminal groups access to the most affected areas to deliver humanitarian assistance under a focus on preventing harm to humanitarian personnel themselves and to people in need of protection. **The confluence of the health crisis derived from Covid-19 with social and political instability has hampered access to essential services for people trapped in conflict zones.** ^{cli}

The deterioration of living conditions does not exclusively affect certain areas of the country. **The Panorama of Humanitarian Needs has estimated that up to 4.4 million people, 39% of the total population, will need humanitarian aid in 2021:** ^{clii}

Government institutions and humanitarian organizations have worked together to formulate a relocation strategy for internally displaced persons. This plan requests \$3.6 million to provide an urgent relocation from the second week of August for three months to the 1,166 displaced families currently housed in the Carrefour sports centre, Saint Yves church and Delmas 103.

In addition, humanitarian organizations are facilitating the provision of minimal basic services such as food, access to water and sanitation, health, and family protection services. Cases requiring protection have been relocated to safer spaces.

In terms of **protection**, there has been an escalation of tension in the temporary shelters where the internally displaced population remains, increasing the risks of cases of sexual violence based on gender. Between July 14 and August 6, there have been four rapes and one attempted rape of a 12-month-old baby by another minor.

Likewise, five cases of physical violence were reported in the shelter set up in Carrefour and in the Delmas 103 centre. Humanitarian organizations have advocated implementing actions that mitigate the exposure and risk of suffering sexual violence based on gender due to the overcrowding of shelters, the lack of privacy in toilets, the absence of community protection mechanisms, the absence of lighting and the lack of a referral system in the centres where internally displaced persons are housed. ^{cliii}

Secondly, **approximately 5,000 internally displaced people are at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV; 15,000 internally displaced people require family planning services and 3,000 treatments for sexually transmitted diseases.** ^{cliv}

UNICEF reported 1.9 million children in need of humanitarian assistance, and it is estimated that 638,000 children and adolescents are affected by internal forced displacement (IDPs). ^{clv}

For its part, the International Organization for Migration has collected some data of interest on the population housed in the different shelters, identifying sociodemographic differences. In the Carrefour Sports Centre, Delmas 103 and San Yves church 6 out of 10 internally displaced persons are women or girls. In Delmas 103, more than half of the internally displaced (52%) suffer from some type of disability. This centre faces specific problems to meet the needs of people with disabilities. ^{clvi}

The combination of criminal violence, political instability and the spread of Covid-19 are factors that aggravate the humanitarian situation in the short and medium term, adding new protection risks:

The provision of health services is a logistical and human challenge: 35% of health workers in the Carrefour/Martissant areas cannot go to their centres due to the prevailing violence. The Doctors Without Borders centre in this area was attacked on June 26, an action that led to the suspension of its activities in this area. In addition, two people from humanitarian organizations were robbed and one was killed on May 25. ^{clvii}

In the areas most affected by the violence, roads are blocked, and security challenges have interrupted or reduced the shipment of food and medicine ^{clviii}.

4, 4 million people are in a situation of food insecurity because of the increase in food prices and the loss of harvests due to the incidence of storms and floods. ^{clixviii} **The levels of violence have led to the closure of educational centres that provided nutrition programs to 55,000 students.**

PROTECTION SITUATION OF HAITIANS IN MEXICO

Generally speaking, there are at least **three points within Mexico that concentrate Haitian people** that have arrived in the country, at least since 2016, when a significant flow took place that was caused by the 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew in 2016, which increased in subsequent years. The main intention of said flow was to reach the United States, but ended up settling in Tijuana, Baja California, a border city in the north of Mexico, due to the inability of entering that country. ^{clx}

During their transit, those who made up this flow had to face the same **risks** than other migrants intending to reach the United States, like **robberies, extortion, discrimination, kidnapping**, among others.

Later, most of these people **continued to face problems** once they began and ended their settlement process in El cañón del alacrán, a place on the outskirts of the city where they could settle, even if it was **in extremely precarious conditions**, ^{clxi} and who later became known as **Little Haiti or Haitijuana**. ^{clxii} Despite serious limitations and starting with at least 300 people who were granted refugee status, **people have managed to establish a school, while adults have been able to integrate into the labour sector, mainly maquilas, of the locality.** ^{clxiii}

The other place is **Tapachula, Chiapas**, a border city in the south of Mexico where the highest number of applications for refugee status is presented in Mexico. People are usually found in this place at least during the time in which they receive the resolution of their request. In this sense, throughout the year you can see considerable groups of people from Haiti, although as COMAR has pointed out, especially **from the restrictions due to Covid-19 and the assassination of its president, said number has increased considerably.** ^{clxiv} For example, **According to the Citizen Committee in Defence of the Naturalized and Afro-Mexicans (CCDNAM, for its acronym in Spanish) there are up to 11 thousand Haitians in this city.** ^{clxvxi}

In this city, both those who are detained by the INM and those who are awaiting the resolution of their request face **significant risks and vulnerabilities**, for instance, **overcrowding of immigration stations as in freedom**, either within shelters or in precarious hamlets that people can afford thanks to their own savings or shipments by relatives. It should be noted that during the Covid-19 pandemic, **many of these people ended up being homeless due to the closure of shelters, emptying of immigration stations and suspension of terms by COMAR.** In this sense, people also have significant needs for humanitarian care and access to decent housing, health, and education.

Finally, at least **until the beginning of 2021, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, a border city in northern Mexico, also received a considerable number of Haitians as part of the Title 42 expulsions** that the government is carrying out on its border with Mexico ^{clxvii}. Especially in this city, as in other border cities, people face considerable risks of being extorted, kidnapped, or robbed by organized crime groups and municipal authorities.



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