



**RED
LAC**

Snapshot 19

PROTECTION CRISIS IN NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO AND PANAMA

Key data from March to June 2022

This nineteenth bulletin provides an update on the protection crisis in Northern Central America, Mexico, and Panama, consolidated by monitoring indicators such as criminal violence, barriers to access to rights, migration policies and protection needs. Various sources of governmental, non-governmental and media information were consulted, and this is the landscape for the second quarter of 2022.

PERVASIVE VIOLENCE



52
homicides

registered by the National Civil Police during the second quarter of 2022, assuming a decrease of 490.38% compared to the same period of 2021, which had a total of 307 cases.¹



No data on femicides for the second quarter of 2022.

Comparison: homicides from April to June 2022 vs April to June 2021

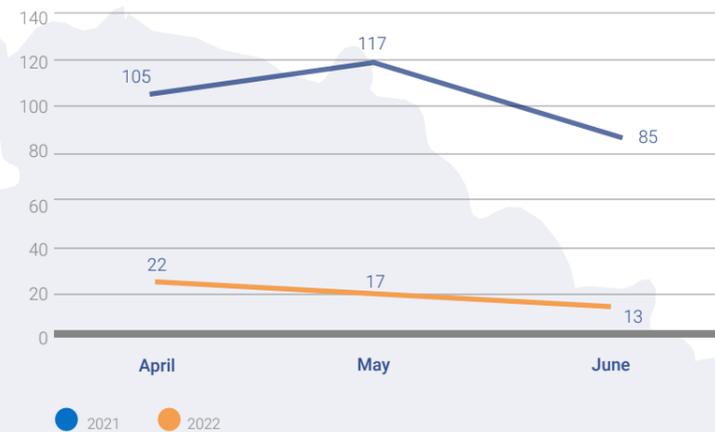


Chart prepared in-house based on statistics published by the National Civil Police and El Informante Newspaper.



577
reports of disappearances

in the first five months of 2022.²



3
active cases of disappearances of children and adolescents

registered by the "Disappeared Angel" alert during the second quarter of 2022.³

PROTECTION NEEDS



3,373

Salvadorans applied for asylum in Mexico⁴

(until the end of the second quarter of 2022). In the same period of 2021, the number of asylum applications was 5,953.⁷

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES



6,471
Salvadorans were deported

from Mexico and the United States between January and May 2022.

The total number of people deported in the first half of 2022 represents an increase of 254.2% compared to the same period of 2021, a year in which in total they were 1,827.⁵



63,1%	36,9%
Men	Women
53,7%	46,3%
Boys	Girls
(of the total number of children)	

The people deported in the second quarter of 2022 are mainly concentrated in the departments of San Salvador, San Miguel, and La Libertad.

El Salvador

An update on the protection crisis

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

PERVASIVE VIOLENCE

The second quarter of 2022 has had significant drops in homicidal violence figures. As of June 18, the National Civil Police (PNC) recorded 21 homicides, an approximate 430 violent deaths during 2022. This indicates 154 fewer homicides than between January and May 31, 2021. In the first days of June 2022 the PNC counted 18 homicides.⁶

In April, the Legislative Assembly approved a further extension of the emergency regime, which implies the suspension of four constitutional guarantees: freedom of association, the right to defence, the term of administrative detention and the inviolability of correspondence and telecommunications throughout the country.⁷

Faced with this situation, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) called on the government of El Salvador to ensure that actions to prevent and punish crimes and combat crime guarantee respect for human rights and dignity. The IACHR states that human rights organizations and the press have denounced detentions carried out illegally, arbitrarily and through the use of violence. It also reminded the State that victims and their families must be at the centre of measures of truth, justice, and reparation.⁸

Pervasive violence has also reached the most vulnerable sectors: between January 2021 and May 2022, at least 37 people from the LGTBIQ+ population were forcibly displaced by violence. The human rights NGO, Cristosal, reports that 26.3% of displacements occurred as a result of discrimination, ill-treatment, or threats because of their sexual orientation, while 16.9% were due to threats. The majority of these victims are people between 12 and 29 years of age with 43.2%, and between 30 and 39 years of age, with the same percentage.⁹

PROTECTION NEEDS

Children in a situation of human mobility

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) study named, *El Salvador: Migration, Remittances and Education*, "Migration of a household member decreases the likelihood of girls and boys attending school." It notes that "this negative effect is particularly noticeable among girls and boys aged 13 to 17 years, and boys aged 4 to 17 years".¹⁰ On the other hand, "more children want to stay before migrating," says a report by Save the Children, based on interviews with 122 children and adolescents between 7 and 19 years of

age in the three countries of the Northern Triangle. According to the report, 43% of interviewees intend to "stay" in their communities, while 24% have a "clear intention" to migrate. In addition, 17% replied that they "did not know for sure" what decision they would make and 16% did not respond. Gender segregated, 56% of boys prefer to remain in their community, compared to 31% of girls.¹¹

Public health

Dengue has been a health problem that has been on the rise. Suspicious cases have increased by 304% per year, according to the latest MINSAL weekly epidemiological surveillance bulletin. A cumulative of 3,777 suspected cases of dengue are reported through April 16, or 2,843 more when compared to the same period in 2021.¹²

On the other hand, as of June 29, 2022, **66.6% of the Salvadoran population had received the complete vaccination scheme (4,319,779 million) and 71.2% had received a dose of the vaccine (4,319,779 million)** against Covid-19.¹³

Food security

These are the data of the Analysis of the Integrated Classification of Food Security in Phases (CIF, for its acronym in Spanish) projected until June and August 2022. The analysis has been carried out in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, in the trinational border association of municipalities of the Lempa River, MTFRL. The populations were analysed in Ocotepeque, Guajira, and C'horti'. The analysis indicates that 148 thousand of the 515 thousand inhabitants analysed, or 29%, requires urgent attention due to food insecurity in phase three, for the period of seasonal hunger from June and August.¹⁴

The recent update of the projections in the report confirms the assumptions identified in the 2021 analysis for this period of Seasonal Hunger, with the factors of greatest impact identified as: increase in prices of food, hydrocarbons, transport, and agricultural inputs required for production, as well as the impact due to the continuous effects of Covid-19. In the update of the analysis carried out in June 2022, for this period the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict that has affected the global political and economic context (Idem) is added to the situation.



An update on the protection crisis

Attack on journalists and human rights defenders

The Association of Journalists of El Salvador (APES, for its acronym in Spanish) and the Cristosal organization went to the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ, for its acronym in Spanish) to try to reverse a set of reforms that in their opinion “criminalizes” the press for reporting on gangs, this as a last resort before presenting themselves to international bodies.

Both organizations question the current Constitutional Chamber of the CSJ because they argue that it was irregularly appointed in May 2021 and in it are former lawyers of senior officials and former government advisers.¹⁵ In addition, in the context of the so-called “war” against gangs launched from late March and early April by the government of El Salvador, the Legislative Assembly approved penal reforms, which according to the organizations represent a “censorship” and “criminalize” journalistic work, putting at risk the exercise of freedom of expression.

Political landscape

The political landscape of El Salvador has great challenges related to the economic situation. In the productive sector, the Salvadoran Association of Industrialists (ASI, for its acronym in Spanish) projected that the country could experience a raw material supply crisis between the end of this year and the beginning of next year. El Salvador is experiencing an economic scenario that complicates the financial situation of companies and the productive sector in general.¹⁶ In 2001, the basic food basket was priced below US\$100 in the rural area and in the urban area it cost, on average, US\$125. In 2021, the basic basket exceeded US\$200 in the urban area, and by March of this year it already has a price of US\$220. In other words, it increased by 76 % compared to what it cost in 2001. The minimum wage is US\$365 for the service and industry sector. That is, the food basket consumes more than half of the minimum wage.

Likewise, the production of staple grains this year will have a reduction of 29.53%, according to the projections of the Salvadoran Chamber of Small and Medium Agricultural Producers (Campo). One of the staple grains with the greatest reduction by 2022 is maize, an essential product in Salvadoran food.¹⁷

Economic drop leads to greater precariousness of people’s quality of life and thus increases inequality gaps. According to ECLAC,¹⁸ the poverty rate, which stood at 26.4% in 2021, would rise to 27.4% this year, if this growth rate in the prices of the basic basket were maintained, and the poverty rate in El Salvador would increase by 1%. In a Global Outlook report, the World Bank states that El Salvador lowered its global growth forecast to 2.9%, 1.2% less than projected in January, when it stood at 4.1%.¹⁹ So the economy does not grow at the expected rate, worsening the living conditions of the population.



PERVASIVE VIOLENCE

850
homicides



were registered by the National Police Security Secretariat in the second quarter of 2022, representing an increase of 8.01% compared to the number of homicides reported in the same period of 2021 (787 cases).²⁰

Comparison: number of homicides from April to June 2021 vs April to June 2022

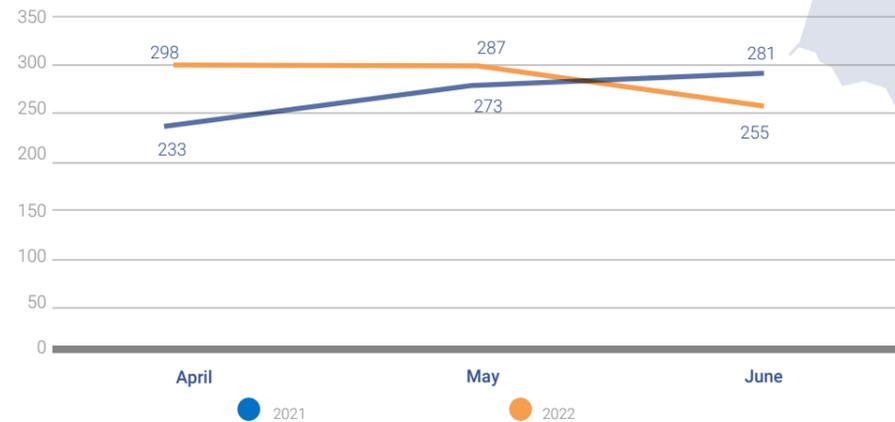


Chart prepared in-house based on statistics published by the Department of [Statistics of the National Police of Honduras](#).

82
femicides



registered between April and June 2022, increasing by 10.98% compared to the same period in 2021, in which 73 cases were recorded.²¹

Comparison: femicides from April to June 2022 vs femicides from April to June 2021

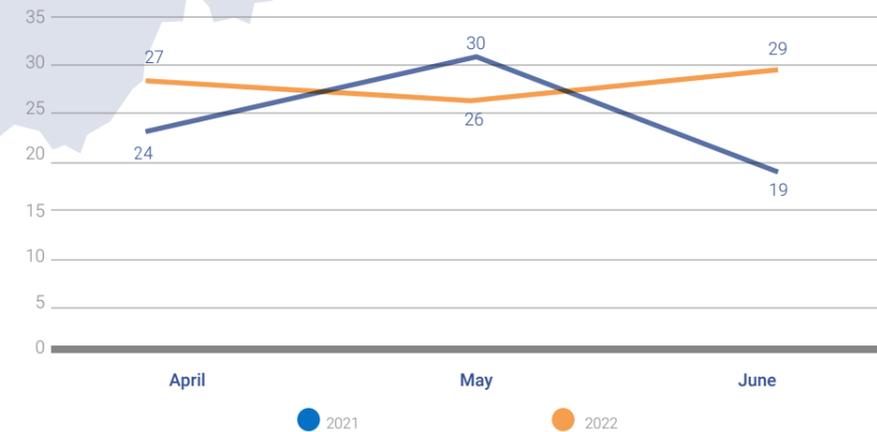


Chart prepared in-house based on official statistics from the [Centro de Derechos de Mujeres \(Women's Rights Centre\)](#).

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES



41,536
Hondurans
were deported

from January to May 2022

71,1% ↑

compared to the
same period in
2021²²

PROTECTION NEEDS



13,750
Hondurans applied
for asylum in Mexico
until June 2022,

an alarming figure in relation to 2020, which closed December with 15,374 asylum seekers, and with 2021 that closed December with 36,117 asylum seekers.

In the second quarter of 2022, Honduras continues to be the nationality with the highest number of asylum applications.

55,4%	78,4%	57%
The United States	Men	Women
44,1%	21,6%	43%
Mexico	Boys	Girls
	(of the total number of children)	

Honduras

An update on the protection crisis

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

PERVASIVE VIOLENCE

Homicidal violence remains one of the most serious problems in Honduras because its tendency to increase has not ceased. The cumulative number of homicides for the first half of 2022 is 1,733, which compared to the same period of 2021 (1.631) represents an increase of 8.71%. In the first half of 2022, January has been the most violent month with 364 homicides and more than ten massacres are reported in the country. In the second quarter, April was the month that reported the most homicides, with 298 cases. Likewise, until the end of June 2022, 149 violent deaths of women are reported.²³

The most significant social determinants of violence are disputes between criminal gangs, problems of citizen coexistence, micro-trafficking, drug trafficking and extortion, as well as other aspects of the context, such as chronic food insecurity, the consequences of climate change and widespread unemployment aggravated by the economic consequences of Covid-19. With more than 10 murders a day and one woman dying violently every 30 hours, the country is not dropping its violent death statistics, despite security and defence investments.²⁴

On the other hand, with regard to Covid-19, as of June 2022, **54.2% of the population had received the complete vaccination scheme (5,368,598) and 63.5% had received a dose of the vaccine (6,293,459 million).**²⁵ At the end of June there was an upsurge of contagions. There were 426,879 cases and 10,905 deaths.

PROTECTION NEEDS

Attacks on journalists and human rights defenders

The second quarter of 2022 is marked by the murder of Ricardo Ávila, a social communicator for Metro Tv. This fact adds to the three murders of social communicators so far this year in Honduras. Added to those of 2021, a total of 96 journalists have been killed. One of the main problems in the face of homicidal violence against journalists is impunity²⁶. The National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH) indicated that impunity in the deaths of journalists exceeds 91%.

He also detailed that the Internal Forced Displacement Unit (UDFI) received, between 2016 and April 2022, about 67 cases of journalists (20 women and 47 men), of which 51 are at risk of displacement and at least 16 have already been victims of internal forced displacement, due - in 81% of cases - to threats, followed by attempted homicide, extortion, injuries, and family violence²⁷. The only office that exists in Honduras to investigate violence against journalists and protect this vulnerable sector is the Special Prosecutor's Office for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists, Social Communicators, and Justice Operators (FEPRODDHH). However, they have no legal competence to investigate homicide cases.

From 2018 to May 2022, there have been 64 complaints from 12 women and 52 men. The crimes reported are threats, disclosure of secrets, injury and damage, limitation and impediment of fundamental rights, abuse of authority, violation of the duties of officials, torture, violation of freedom of expression, theft, discrimination, and crimes against intellectual property.²⁸

Political landscape

At the economic level, Honduras closed the first half of 2022 with cumulative inflation of 6.57%, above the 1.83% it recorded in the same period of 2021, according to the Central Bank (BCH, for its acronym in Spanish). The variation in the Consumer Price Index in June was 1.32%, higher than the same month last year (0.28%), the issuer said in a report. The main increases would be in agricultural food and industrial origin and in fuels. Annual inflation (June 2021-June 2022) reached 10.22%, compared to 4.67% in June last year²⁹. This has led to some citizen protests that are also related to unemployment rates.

The increase in prices directly affects the population that tries to cope with day-to-day life with high levels of poverty and extreme poverty. However, the discontent of the population has focused on the job insecurity implied by the hourly employment law. The repeal of this law was made in April but would take effect two months later.³⁰



PERVASIVE VIOLENCE

17 homicides

per every 100 thousand inhabitants as of June 2022, an increase of 7% regarding the rate of June 2021.³¹

341 violent deaths of women

due to causes associated with criminal acts from January to June 2022, it showed an increase of 11% compared to the same period of the previous year.³²

7,587 complaints for extortion before the PNC

from January to June 2022 it showed an increase of 11% compared to the same period of the previous year.

2,629 Alba-Keneth alerts activated

of which 41% were deactivated. Number of Alba-Keneth Alerts activated and deactivated, January to June 2022.³³

990 Isabel-Claudina alerts activated

from January to June 2022. It showed a decrease of 6% compared to the same period of the previous year.

4,439 medical examinations for sexual offence

carried out by the National Institute of Forensic Sciences from January to June 2022, 91% of which were carried out on women and girls.³⁴

PROTECTION NEEDS

340 new asylum applications

submitted in Guatemala from January to May 2022, which means an increase of 10% compared to the same period in 2021.³⁵

634 refugees living in the country

1,410 asylum seekers living in the country (estimated that as of May 2022)³⁶

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

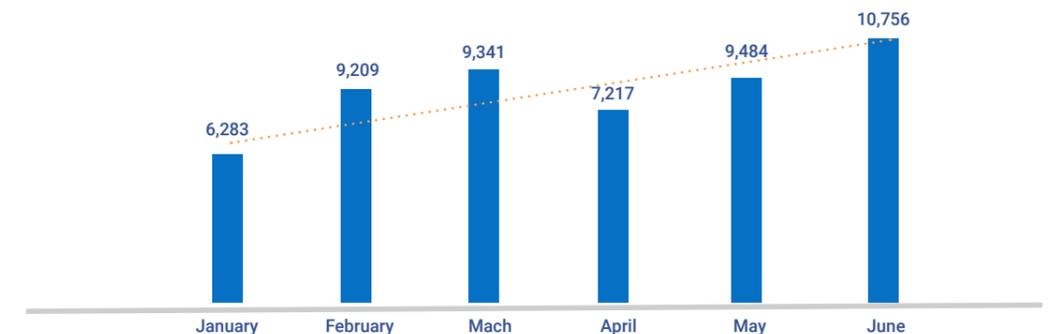
52,290 Guatemalans deported from January to June 2022

123% more than the same period of the previous year³⁷

39.1% The United States
60.9% Mexico

73.5% Men
26.5% Women
61.3% Boys
38.7% Girls (of the total number of children)

People deported, January to June 2022



Source: based on the Information Management Initiative for Human Mobility in the Northern Triangle, June 2022

Guatemala

An update on the protection crisis

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

PERVASIVE VIOLENCE

The upward trend in homicides has continued in the first half of the year, reaching figures similar to those of the prepandemic. From January to June 2022, the National Institute of Forensic Sciences performed 2,120 necropsies for deaths associated with criminal events (in 2019 they were 2,330). Of all necropsies in the first half of 2022, 84% were to men and 16% to women.

The increase in violent deaths of women since 2020 was 38%, while that of men was 6%, with figures that have remained similar since 2020.³⁸ Likewise, in the first half of 2022, there were 43,921 complaints to the Public Prosecutor's Office for violence against women, girls and boys. Of these, 65% were for violence against women, 10% for child abuse, 19% for sexual crimes and 1% for femicides and violent deaths of women.³⁹

For its part, the National Institute of Forensic Sciences reported from January to June 2022, 1,831 surveys of people for stab wounds and firearm wounds, 83% of these were carried out on men. In contrast, of the 1,649 expert reports for injuries consistent with ill-treatment, 73% were women. In addition, 573 surveys for injuries consistent with maltreatment were carried out on children under 19 years of age, 59% of whom were girls and adolescents.⁴⁰

In barrios or neighbourhoods with high rates of violence, people have been forced to generate their own security strategies such as neighbourhood surveillance, confinement and contracting of private security services, among others. This affects the economy, mental and physical health of families.⁴¹

PROTECTION NEEDS

In the Annual Report of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Guatemala is listed as one of the countries where serious human rights violations and attacks on democratic institutions are observed. The report refers to State actions that weaken judicial independence, democratic institutions, and human rights institutions. In addition, it mentions irregularities in the process of electing judges to the Constitutional Court, in the delay in the appointment of the High Courts by the Congress, the dismissal of the Special Prosecutor against Impunity, the criminalization of magistrates, judges and other justice operators, as well as threats to freedom of expression and the press, attacks on human rights defenders, vulnerability of migrants, inequality and discrimination against indigenous peoples, high levels of violence against women, the absence of a national system for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents and the prevalence of acts of violence against LGBTIQ+ persons.⁴²

Likewise, with the beginning of the rainy season in the country, more than one million people have been reported as of June 2022, 1,903 injured and 22 dead, of which 4,395 were evacuated. In addition, 134 roads, 9 bridges, 121 schools and 4 buildings were destroyed or damaged; 1,381 houses were moderately damaged and 337 were slightly damaged. It is important to note that 140 of the country's 340 municipalities are at high risk of flooding or landslides.⁴³

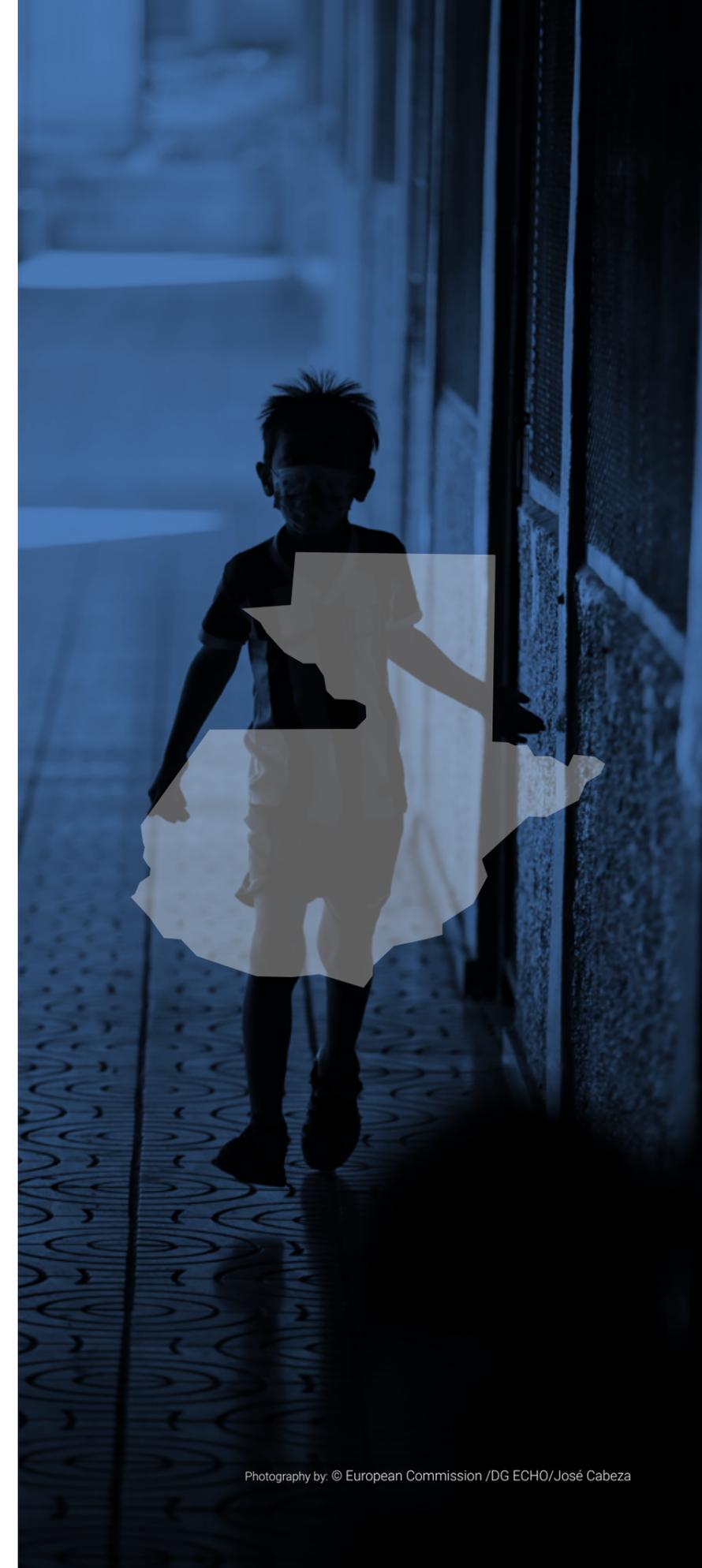
Additionally, we still have the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and storms Eta and Iota. In the specific case of children and adolescents, there has been an increase in acute malnutrition, school dropout, child labour, sexual abuse, adolescent pregnancies, and an increase in the number of unaccompanied adolescents in migration.

Likewise, the conflict in Ukraine has affected the dependence or commercial exchange between countries: 64% of the fertilizers that Guatemala imports come from Russia, China, and Belarus,⁴⁴ to which is added the increase in the price of fuel, being the highest in Central America.⁴⁵

In Guatemala, the basic food basket had a cost of US\$425 (approximately 3,234 GTQ) at the end of May, which represented an inflation of 5.82%, exceeding the range foreseen by the Monetary Board.⁴⁶ This scenario further reduces the purchasing power of households, placing Guatemala as the second most food-insecure country in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁴⁷ For the period from June to September 2022, 4.6 million Guatemalans are expected to be in a situation of crisis or emergency of acute food insecurity, especially in the departments with the greatest dependence on subsistence agriculture.⁴⁸

In relation to human mobility, despite migration restrictions, situations such as the tragedy of June 27 in Texas, United States, where 22 Guatemalans died.⁴⁹ Trafficking in persons has intensified and the routes and means of transport used represent increasing risks.⁵⁰ On the other hand, deportations from the United States increased by 635% compared to the period from January to May 2021. From January to April 2022, 40% of the 5,035 children deported were unaccompanied or separated.⁵¹

For its part, Guatemala continues with the policy of expulsion to the nearest border, and in the face of any indication of people on the move without the required documentation, security protocols are activated that involve armed agents, surveillance cameras and radio patrols, among others, to create security barriers that prevent passage.⁵²



PERVASIVE VIOLENCE

11,054 homicides recorded in the second quarter (an increase of 7% over the previous quarter).

247 femicides recorded in the second quarter (an increase of 7% over the previous quarter).

3,142 extortions recorded in the second quarter (an increase of 37% compared to the previous quarter).

6,824 records for crimes against personal freedom in the second quarter (22% increase over the previous quarter).

26,651 records of sexual and gender-based violence in the second quarter (an increase of 34% over the previous quarter).

PROTECTION NEEDS

762 internally displaced persons in the second quarter (an increase of 119 per cent over the previous quarter).

292 deaths and disappearances of migrants on migratory routes in the second quarter (an increase of 134% over the previous quarter).

83,241 services to migrants by Beta Groups in the second quarter (an increase of 19% compared to the previous quarter).

63,334 repatriation events of Mexican people in which support from federal programs was accepted in the second quarter (16% increase over the previous quarter).

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

In the United States
684,858 apprehensions of migrants on the southern border with Mexico in the second quarter (an increase of 26% over the previous quarter).

300,646 expulsions under Title 42 corresponding to 44% of the general arrests, an increase of 6% compared to the previous quarter.

384,212 admissions under Title 8 corresponding to 56% of the general arrests, an increase of 49% compared to the previous quarter.

In Mexico
76,729 repatriation events of Mexican people from the United States in the second quarter (an increase of 29% over the previous quarter).

29,068 applications for refugee status in Mexico in the second quarter (2% reduction compared to the previous quarter).

29,351 deportations of foreigners by immigration authority in the second quarter (an increase of 9% over the previous quarter).

94,932 submissions and referrals of foreigners to immigration authorities in the second quarter (22% increase compared to the previous quarter).

In the NCA
57,089 NCA returns from Mexico and the United States in the second quarter (9% increase over the previous quarter).

Mexico

An update on the protection crisis

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

PERVASIVE VIOLENCE

According to figures from the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (SESNSP, for its acronym in Spanish), during the first half of 2022, 183,789 victims of crimes such as homicides in all their forms, femicides, injuries, kidnappings, trafficking in minors, extortion, corruption of minors, trafficking in persons and victims of other crimes against society were recorded. This makes this period the most violent so far in the six-year term of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a record previously recorded in the second half of 2019, with 173,659 people victims of some crime.⁵³

Despite this, it is worth mentioning that the homicide rates during the first semester decreased. However, for Alejandro Hope, a security specialist, this decrease in homicides does not necessarily represent a real drop in numbers, nor does it mean a lower commission of these crimes in the country. While, in the case of femicides, these have been increasing when compared to June 2022, when 89 cases occurred, with those of previous years: 79 in 2019, 97 in 2020 and 86 in 2021.

The increase in crime incidence is also observed in kidnapping, with 401 cases in the first half of 2022 (in 2021 there were 389, 2020 had 544 and 2019, 859). As well as extortion, which for the first half of this year records 5,813 cases, which represents an increase compared to 4,460 in the first half of 2019, 4,143 in the same period of 2020 and 4,414 in 2021.

Stephanie Henaro, expert in geopolitics and security, said that as long as the federal security strategy remains unchanged, the figures will continue in the same trend: "We realize that the situation of insecurity in the country has not changed, the data confirm that the strategy is not working and also that impunity makes it possible to continue increasing the rates of violence because there are very few culprits behind bars, it is very cheap to interrupt a life in this country, and this also has to do with the porosity of our border with that of the United States, because between 70% and 80% of the crimes are committed with firearms, which mostly come from the border".⁵⁴

In this context, at least two episodes of massive internal displacement due to violence occurred in May. In the municipality of Ocosingo, Chiapas, 83 people from the towns of Emiliano Zapata and La Resistencia, including children, youth, women, men, and older adults, were forced to flee their homes, due to armed attacks by the Regional Organization of Coffee Growers of Ocosingo. Meanwhile, in the municipality of Valparaiso, Zacatecas, 100 families from various localities were forced to move for the third time due to clashes between criminal groups in the region.

Some of the internally displaced persons have moved to the United States either to cross undocumented or to seek asylum. For example, three displaced Tsotsile indigenous youths belonging to the ejido community of Puebla, municipality of Chenalhó, Chiapas, moved to this country due to the government's lack of attention to find a solution to their situation. Two of them managed to cross the desert, but one could not follow the walk and was later found dead in the Arizona desert. In another case, a 23-member family from the municipality of Aguililla, Michoacán, displaced after receiving death threats from one of the cartels operating in the entity, managed to obtain asylum in the United States, after 8 months of living in Tijuana, Baja California.⁵⁵

However, due to the violence prevailing in border cities in northern Mexico, the lives of thousands of Mexican and foreign people expelled under Title 8 and Title 42 continue to be at serious risk, in addition to those of thousands of people awaiting processing their asylum applications in the United States, including those under the MPP Program. For example, due to the multiple events of violence, the Mexican government sent hundreds of elements of the Army and National Guard to Tijuana, Baja California and Matamoros, Tamaulipas.⁵⁶

PROTECTION NEEDS

In the second quarter of the year, refugee applications in Mexico amounted to 29,068. Together with the 29,574 registered in the first quarter, there are a total of 58,642 applications up to mid-2022. Most of the applications were submitted in Tapachula, Chiapas and Mexico City by Hondurans, Cubans, Haitians, Venezuelans, and Nicaraguans.⁵⁷ According to these figures, the refugee system is on track to experience its second largest annual number of applicants this year.

Due to the lack of responses from the authorities of the National Migration Institute and the Mexican Refugee Aid Commission, migrants and persons in need of international protection have continued to seek alternatives to reach their respective destinations.⁵⁸ For example, in mid-June, a group of just over 350 people of 16 nationalities were located by Mexican authorities inside a cargo truck as they attempted to leave Tapachula, Chiapas.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, days earlier, a migrant caravan made up of approximately 7,000 people, most of them from Venezuela, left the border city of Tapachula, Chiapas, for the United States and the interior of Mexico.⁶⁰

The authorities' response continues to be one of control, detention, and deterrence of migratory flows. For example, in the case of the caravan of 7,000 people, the group fragmented after Mexican authorities offered their members Visitors Cards for Humanitarian Reasons, after which they continued their transit to northern Mexico in smaller groups.⁶¹ However, when advancing to border entities, authorities prevented them from boarding buses, despite having the relevant documentation to transit the country. Finally, a caravan planned for the end of June was suspended after authorities issued approximately 3,000 temporary transit permits.⁶²



An update on the protection crisis

During the second quarter of the year, 67,590 events of detention of foreigners by the Mexican immigration authorities were recorded, which, added to the 59,123 recorded in the first quarter, total 126,713 events from January to June 2022.

It is important to note that April and May were the months with the highest number of events and that between 43% and 47% corresponded not only to people from El Salvador, Guatemala or Honduras, as has traditionally been the case, but also to people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and other countries in South America.⁶³ Meanwhile, in the United States, the apprehensions of migrants and people in need of international protection on its border with Mexico continued to increase. From April to June 2022, the authorities reported 684,113 arrests, with May being the month with the highest figures, which amounted to 240,991;⁶⁴ the highest number in the last 3 years.⁶⁵

In this context, the death of migrants and people in need of international protection continue to increase, especially due to extreme temperatures in the desert, drowning in water bodies and falls from parts of the wall located at various points on the Mexico-United States border.

For example, in a context where the Border Patrol has been reported to be inadequately recording the deaths of migrants and persons in need of international protection, in the first half of May, six migrants lost their lives in the custody of Sector Del Rio agents. Subsequently, in the first week of June, three Nicaraguans lost their lives in the Rio Grande and, later, ten more people lost their lives in the El Paso irrigation canals. By the end of May, almost 20 Nicaraguans had lost their lives in the Rio Grande, while migrants also drowned in the Suchiate River that separates Mexico from Guatemala. However, the most relevant and tragic event took place at the end of June in San Antonio, Texas, where 53 migrants lost their lives as they ran out of air as they travelled crammed into a trailer.

Finally, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) decided to end the Critical Intervention Teams (CIT), a team within the institution that is said to have aimed to cover up and interfere in the processing of cases of abuse or other irregularities committed by Border Patrol agents against migrants and persons in need of international protection. On one occasion, one such team refused to prosecute the case of a Mexican person who died after being shot by Border Patrol agents in Arizona.⁶⁶

By the end of April, police in Mexico City evicted a camp of Triqui indigenous families displaced from Tierra Blanca Copala, Oaxaca, Mexico, since December 2020. According to the Secretary of Government of the City, the eviction responded to comments from the Human Rights Commission of Mexico City to improve health in the camp, as well as the safety of children. However, the families indicated that the eviction was carried out without prior notice, and, although the government stated that the place where the families were relocated had bedrooms equipped with cots, blankets, showers, bathrooms, a tent

for medical services and for the care of children, the families indicated that the space was a similar tent, with the disadvantage of being located in a distant colony not suitable for families and without Internet.

Subsequently, the families complained that the authorities did not allow them to leave the tent and marched towards the Inner Circuit where they were encapsulated by police. After 48 hours of detention, the families were released. At the same time, members of the Movement of Unification and Triqui Struggle (MULT, for its acronym in Spanish) blocked different points in Oaxaca and Mexico City to demand the safe return of families to Tierra Blanca. For its part, the Undersecretariat of Human Rights, Population and Migration of the Ministry of the Interior of Mexico received a commission of people from the Triqui community and agreed to continue the work to ensure their return. However, no agreement has yet been reached.⁶⁷

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

After extensive discussion in Washington, D.C., on April 1, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ended Title 42, a measure that would last until the end of May. Despite this, its application was increasingly extended and applied to people of more nationalities such as the Colombian. By early May, the chances of the end of this measure were slim, and by the end of the month, a Louisiana judge decided to maintain the application of Title 42. During the second quarter of the year, 296,679 people had been expelled under this Title.

In this context, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) decided to exclude Ukrainian individuals from the application of Title 42, allowing them to cross through ports of entry more easily. Given this decision, as well as the treatment that the Mexican authorities in Tijuana were providing to people of this nationality, civil society organizations denounced preferential and discriminatory treatment, including the case of people of Russian nationality fleeing the same war. In this context, according to CBP data, from February until the first week of April, about 10,000 Ukrainian people had applied for asylum in the United States, most of them in the border port between Tijuana, Baja California and San Diego, California.

On the other hand, in April, the Supreme Court rejected the Biden administration's request to repeal the Migration Protection Protocol Program, better known as "Stay in Mexico." However, after requesting a review of the decision, at the end of June, the Supreme Court gave the Biden administration the possibility to finalize its implementation. It should be mentioned that, between December 2021 and May 2022, 7,259 people were enrolled in this program, 60% Nicaraguans, 15% Cubans and 9% Colombians; in that last month of the 2,244 people enrolled, at least 65% (1,460) were returned to Mexico.⁶⁸

In addition, in May, the State Department announced the reinstatement, after being created in 2007 and suspended in 2017, of the Conditional Release for Cuban

An update on the protection crisis

Family Reunification (CFRP), a measure that allows U.S. citizens and permanent residents who meet certain conditions to apply for an entry permit for their relatives from Cuba,⁷⁰ and that since its creation benefited 20,000 Cuban people annually.⁷¹

For his part, Texas Governor Gregg Abbott continued to seek the detention of migrants through the use of the state police and the National Guard in the framework of Operation Lone Star; and by moving groups of migrants by bus to the U.S. capital; as well as imposing strict inspections on cargo transports to pressure the federal administration, which caused a commercial and product supply crisis that cost the U.S. economy around \$9 billion.

Finally, in June, the Summit of the Americas was held, which ended with the dissemination of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, in which undocumented migration is firmly rejected and four pillars are made explicit to address the migration and international protection crisis: 1) the stability and assistance of the communities of origin, 2) the creation of legal paths for migration, 3) human border management and 4) a coordinated response to emergencies.⁷²



BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

386

applications for
refugee status



According to the National Office for Refugee Care were registered between January and June 2022. This number of applications represents an increase of 53.2% compared to the same period of 2021.

Countries of origin

It is also worth highlighting the participation of people from 14 different countries of origin among these applications, highlighting the number of applications from people of Nicaraguan nationality (29%), Colombian nationality (26%), Venezuelan nationality (22%), Cuban nationality (12%) and Salvadoran nationality (4%).⁷⁴

Data from the National Office for the Attention of Refugees (ONPAR)

48,430



irregular migrants in transit
through the Darien in the first
half of 2022

of this population in a situation of human mobility were adults and 15 per cent were children and adolescents.⁷³

Countries of origin

Among the adult population 87.1% were men and 12.9% women. With regard to nationality, approximately 58% were Venezuelan, 8% Haitian, 5% Cuban, 3.3% Ecuadorian and 3.2% Senegalese.

Registrations by the National Migration Service

55,2%



435

435 applications for
refugee status have
not been admitted for
processing, as opposed
to only two applications
that were admitted for
processing.

48,8%



88%



17%



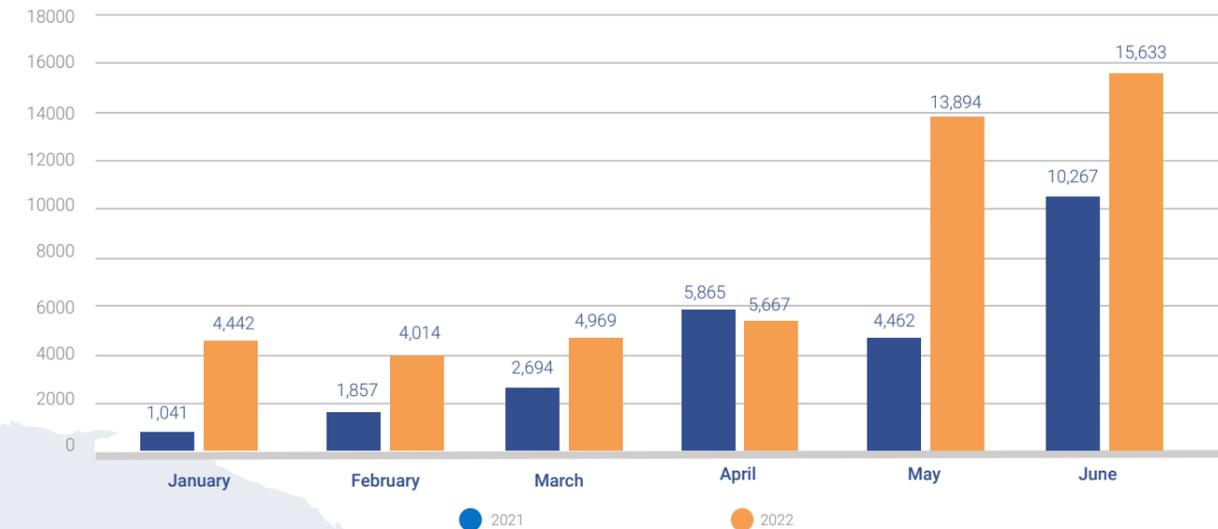
(of the total number of
children)

12%



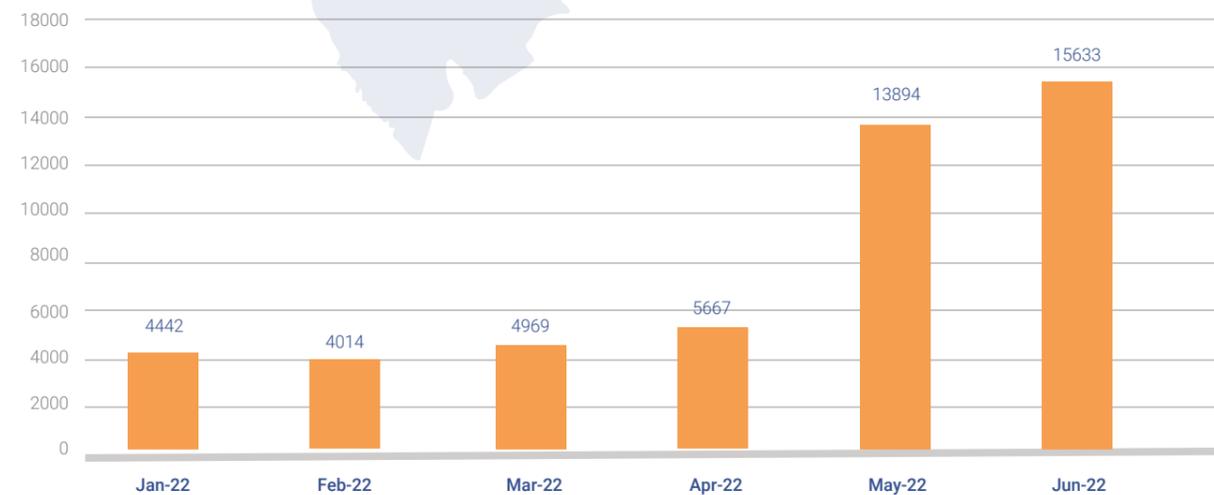
Total population in situation of human mobility through the Darien, 1st semester 2022 vs. 1st semester 2021

Graph prepared in-house based on the official statistics of the National Migration Service



Total population in situation of human mobility through the Darien January – June 2022

Graph prepared in-house based on the official statistics of the National Migration Service



Panama

NATIONAL ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION POLICIES

48,430 people in a situation of human mobility crossed the Darien border in the first half of 2022. The data represent an increase of 85% over the same period last year, when 26,216 people crossed this border point. This highlights the magnitude of the number of migrants of Venezuelan nationality (58% of the total of these mixed movements in 2022), whose flow, from October 2021 to date, has been increasing exponentially. Even considering the official data for this year, we observed that 42.8% of the total flow of migrants of Venezuelan nationality in the first semester has been concentrated exclusively in June. This is a clear indication of the validity and prevalence of this route for these migrants.⁷⁵

Keeping in mind the official figures available for 2022, specialists consider that this year the number of 133,000 migrants who entered the Darien border last year will be exceeded, a number that exceeded all historical records.⁷⁶

Information management on these mixed movements that cross the border between Colombia and Panama is one of the main challenges. In this sense, the Ombudsman's Offices of both countries have activated a binational alert to exchange unofficial figures on how many migrants leave Capurganá and how many finally reach the Darien. This would allow for a more rigorous analysis of the number of migrants who disappear and/or die at this border crossing, as well as identifying what other routes are being taken. In Colombia, a biometric registration is not carried out as Panama does, but they communicate the number of migrants based on the people who embark from Necoclí or Capurganá. However, it is a generic information, since there is no disaggregation by sex, age, and country of origin. It should also be remembered that this information management must be resumed and updated with the new migration authorities of the incoming government in Colombia.⁷⁷

On the other hand, different authorities such as the Ombudsman's Office, the Ministry of Security, the National Migration Service, the National Border Service, and the Ministry of Health have held meetings to articulate an inter-agency strategy that guarantees a safer land route for migrants crossing the Darien, especially for children and adolescents. Following this objective, a bilateral meeting is scheduled for next August between the Ombudsman's Office of Panama and that of Colombia together with Panamanian migration and health authorities to precisely emphasize the need to establish a less dangerous route for migrants.⁷⁸

Also noteworthy was the holding of the Ministerial Conference on Migration and Protection, convened by Panama, with the participation of foreign ministers, security ministers and directors of migration from more than 20 states in the region. This meeting laid the foundations for the organization of the Summit of the Americas held from 6 to 10 June in Los Angeles, where the "drivers of irregular migration were addressed by

An update on the protection crisis

adopting a declaration for migration and protection that outlines the shared principles for a coordinated response to migration and forced displacement".⁷⁹

One of the main agreements reached within the framework of this meeting was the consolidation of a new regional framework to address migratory flows at the continental level. In addition, three axes of work were defined:⁸⁰

- Stabilization of migrant-receiving communities and their recovery after the pandemic.
- Addressing root causes, including infrastructure development and basic needs, in countries of origin as a mechanism to discourage irregular migration flows.
- Co-responsibility in addressing the phenomenon among countries of origin, transit, and destination.

With regard to the incidence of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, the National Migration Service had recently established the Migrant Smuggling Affairs Unit to improve the institutional response to the fight against smuggling of migrants.⁸¹

In addition, the Office against Trafficking in Persons of the Ministry of Public Security reported that during the first four months of this year, 38 victims of trafficking in persons were treated by a team of social workers and psychologists. In 2022 there has been a change in the characterization of victims of human trafficking: generally, they are not migrants, as was the case before the pandemic, but people of Panamanian nationality, usually between the ages of 6 and 15.

These ³⁸ people were identified and rescued through "Luz de Esperanza Operation" (Light of Hope Operation) in the border area between Panama and Costa Rica. "Unfortunately, in some cases, parents or those who have custody and upbringing lend themselves to this crime, which constitutes an aggravation of the conduct established in the Law. The modus operandi of these organizations dedicated to human trafficking is the use of social networks with false information, to offer scholarships and employment places without the corresponding permits." In the last three years, ⁹⁵ people who have been victims of human trafficking have been rescued.⁸²



ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION OF THE POPULATION WITH HUMAN MOBILITY IN THE DARIEN

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has identified a number of gaps in the provision of basic protection services to migrants, demonstrating inadequate conditions for care according to international standards.⁸³ There is also concern about the conditions of the facilities of the Migration Reception Station (ERM) of San Vicente, despite the fact that the Ministry of Public Security reported that at the beginning of May the installation of a light modular system with capacity for 544 beds was started that seeks to expand and improve this ERM in San Vicente, located in Metetí, Darién.⁸⁴ “There is no general access to bedrooms, children and pregnant women sleep on the floor and hygienic conditions are poor. These conditions affect migrants in both their physical and mental health.” Among the main pathologies detected by MSF are skin diseases and pains in the body, diarrhea, respiratory infections and diseases in the digestive system.⁸⁵

This organization has also reiterated the need to improve reception conditions in the ERM of San Vicente, strengthen emergency medical care in Canaan Membrillo and establish a safe route that does not endanger the lives of migrants. Precisely, the Ombudsman, Eduardo Leblanc González, announced that he will soon visit, together with the staff of the Ministry of Health, the area of Canaan Membrillo on the Colombian-Panamanian border to verify that the right to health of migrants crossing this route is guaranteed.⁸⁶

On the other hand, MSF has also expressed concern about the lack of care suffered by women victims of sexual violence based on gender in the ERM of San Vicente, where medical complications have already been exacerbated and the time for effective preventive medical treatment may be insufficient. In recent weeks, there has been an increase in the number of victims of gender-based sexual violence who do not receive timely care within 72 hours of the assault. For this reason, Médecins Sans Frontières considers it essential that the Panamanian authorities implement a mechanism for the detection of these cases in Canaan Membrillo and that they make effective the protection mechanisms to prevent migrants from suffering different aggressions along the route.⁸⁷

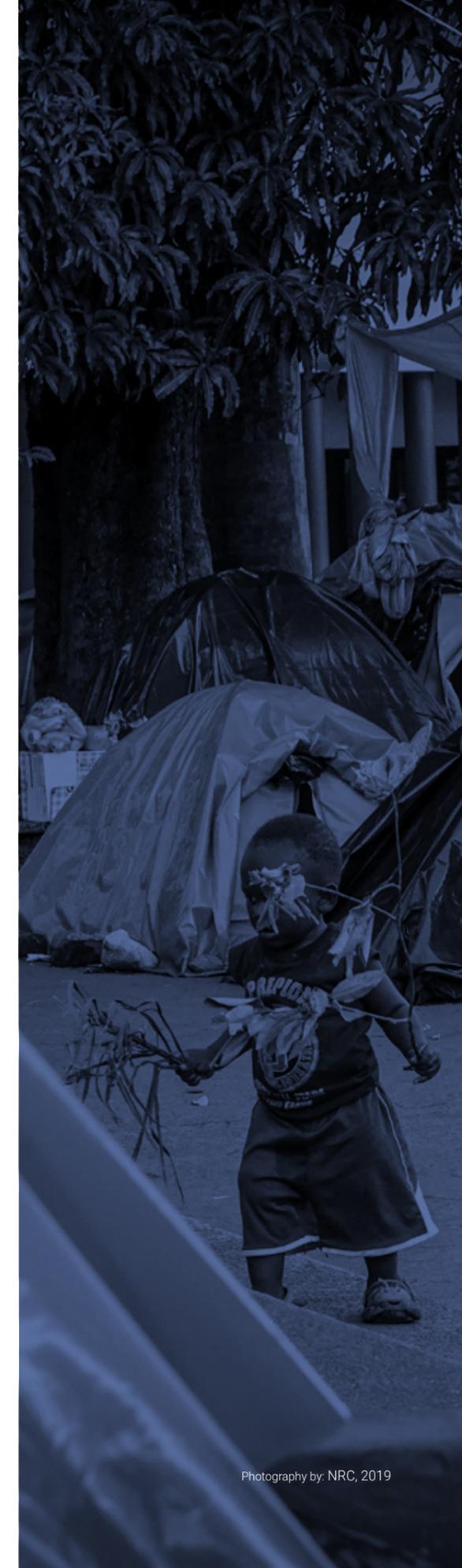
One of the main protection risks faced by the population in a situation of human mobility by the Darien is the high number of cases of sexual violence based on gender. It is essential not only to recognize the prevalence of these crimes, but also to provide protection services for victims and those who have witnessed them. If not addressed with the resources and attention it deserves, other human rights violations can deepen at this border point and elsewhere along the migration route to the United States. To do this, it is necessary to invest in a comprehensive health, legal and protection response along the entire migration route, including transit in Panama. In this regard, in the context of the concluding observations on Panama’s eighth periodic report prepared by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the main challenges in addressing gender-based sexual violence in the border areas of the country are identified, as well as the recommendations that should be implemented by the institutions:⁸⁹

Challenges in addressing sexual and gender-based violence against women in border areas

- High prevalence of sexual gender-based violence against migrant women, particularly women of African descent, especially those of Haitian origin. Women survivors encounter various obstacles in accessing justice and remedies, psychosocial and health care, and reparations.
- In order to receive psychosocial and economic assistance from the National Women’s Institute, they must first file a complaint with the Public Prosecutor’s Office.
- Testimonies have been collected on cases of re-victimization of migrant women who had filed complaints. In addition, the number of prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators of gender-based sexual violence against migrant women in transit through the Darien Gap continues to be low.

Recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

- Adopt an emergency plan to address and eliminate all forms of violence against migrant women in transit through the Darien Gap, based on a human rights approach, ensuring victim-oriented and gender-sensitive policies and measures to address the situation.
- Abolish the requirement to file a complaint with the Public Prosecutor’s Office in order for migrant women to access the National Women’s Institute’s assistance programs for survivors, including shelters for victims of gender-based violence.
- Strengthen cooperation and partnerships with the international community and civil society and women’s organizations to ensure that migrant women have access to all State services designed to provide redress for survivors of gender-based violence against women, including in the area of health care and psychosocial support.
- Implement protective measures to ensure the life and safety of women victims and witnesses of gender-based violence, including girls and family members, and increase the availability of shelters for high-risk victims of gender-based violence, allocating financial resources for this purpose.
- Guarantee women’s access to justice in the border area of the Darien Gap regardless of their status, intensifying its efforts to investigate and punish those responsible for rape and other types of violence, and establish a mechanism within the criminal justice system to address complaints related to gender-based violence against migrant women in transit, ensuring that protection measures are granted for witnesses and survivors.
- Collect data, disaggregated by sex, age and nationality, on migrant women and asylum seekers entering the State through the Darien Gap who have been victims of violence, including sexual violence, as well as information on the outcome of the investigation and prosecution of registered case.



An update on the protection crisis

As of May 2022, the daily traffic of people in a situation of human mobility increased from 300 to 500, a figure that increased in June when 1,000 people crossed this border point daily according to the National Migration Service.⁹⁰

In addition, more than 170 unaccompanied and separated children were registered during the first half of this year. On the other hand, in the last quarter there has been a diversification of migratory routes as a result of pressure from the public force to avoid landing on the coasts and smuggling of migrants. Currently, the routes are through the communities of Carreto, Anachucuna and Armila of the Guna Yala Region.⁹¹

During the month of July, there were several protests throughout the country that involved a blockade on the roads, leading to a shortage of goods and fuels, as well as intermittent water and energy services that also affected the Darien border region. In this regard, the humanitarian community expressed its concern about the overcrowding in the Migration Reception Stations located in the community of Canaan Membrillo, with a capacity of 100 people and where, as of July 20, 3,300 migrants were housed in difficult housing conditions and supply of food, hydration, and medicines.

Faced with this scenario, migrants chose to walk from the border with Colombia to the border with Costa Rica through the Pan American highway, despite the risks and delays involved. Although a humanitarian corridor was opened, where 6,900 migrants were evacuated by bus from two Migration Reception Stations (ERM) and an indigenous host community to the northern border with Costa Rica between July 15 and 20, humanitarian organizations reported that mixed movements continued to arrive across the Darien.⁹²

Likewise, the United Nations system in Panama called on the National Government, civil society organizations, trade unions, students, and other social actors to “seek consensus through actions that allow the joint identification of effective solutions that contribute to restoring calm in the face of protests, strikes and closures that occur throughout the country.”⁹³



Regional analysis

An update on the protection crisis

PERVASIVE VIOLENCE

During the first half of 2022, 400 homicides were recorded in El Salvador, representing a 38.5% reduction compared to the same period of the previous year.⁹⁴ Since the emergency regime was decreed on 26 March, the country has experienced a decrease in crimes, but has also received criticism for alleged human rights violations, as well as arbitrary acts. From the start of the emergency regime until 25 July, the Office of the Procurator for the Defence of Human Rights had received 2,679 complaints.⁹⁵ This apparent decrease in the number of homicides during the emergency regime is complex to corroborate, since not all the murders that occurred during this period are officially being recorded, since the government authorities no longer included the deaths of members of criminal structures and of inmates murdered in different prisons in the country in the daily homicide report.⁹⁶

As for femicides, during the first quarter of 2022 32 cases were recorded, which implies a decrease of 30.4% compared to the same period of the previous year.⁹⁷ The Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (ORMUSA, for its acronym in Spanish), in coordination with the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), recently began the cycle of workshops within the framework of the Specialized Training Process for areas of attention to users and specialized services of attention to violence against women in the Judiciary within the framework of the new specialized jurisdiction for a life free of violence and discrimination for women.⁹⁸

In Guatemala, levels of generalized violence have increased substantially. In the first half of 2022, 2,119 homicides were recorded, an increase of 9.9% compared to the first half of last year and 341 femicides, 15.5% more than in the first six months of 2021.⁹⁹ According to the Guatemalan Public Prosecutor's Office, violence against women is the most committed and reported crime in the country.¹⁰⁰

On the other hand, on July 8, 2022, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights issued a resolution ordering the State of Guatemala to take urgent measures to protect Miguel Ángel Gálvez, investigating judge in the Diario Militar case. Judge Gálvez has faced attacks and lawsuits from pro-military actors. In the 2012 ruling, the Court held the State of Guatemala responsible for multiple cases of illegal detention, torture, extrajudicial execution and enforced disappearance between 1983 and 1985, which are recorded in the military intelligence document known as the "Dossier de la Muerte" or "Diario Militar".¹⁰¹

In Honduras, according to the Online Police Statistical System, 1,773 homicides were recorded in the first half of 2022, with a daily average of 9.8 homicides. These figures represent a reduction of 13.89% compared to the 2,059 homicides reported in the same period last year.¹⁰²

Despite the fact that five months have passed since Xiomara Castro came to power, there is no defined public security policy. On the contrary, the promise of a campaign to demilitarize society departs from the actions that the government has taken by announcing the continuity of the Military Police of Public Order, the armed wing of Juan Orlando Hernández "JOH" during his regime.¹⁰³ In this same period, 149 femicides were reported, one less than those recorded in the first half of 2021.¹⁰⁴

For some women's organizations, one of the main challenges of the current government is to build a State that ensures the safety, integrity and health of girls, youth, and women. Likewise, it is necessary to create protocols for the care of victims and survivors of sexual violence, decriminalize emergency contraceptives and activate working commissions to ensure compliance with protocols that protect the human rights of Honduran women. In this spirit, the Comprehensive Law against Violence against Women was proposed, which seeks to punish unrecognized forms of violence and add sanctions to those already recognized by the Criminal Code, providing security for women, and strengthening the culture of reporting.¹⁰⁵

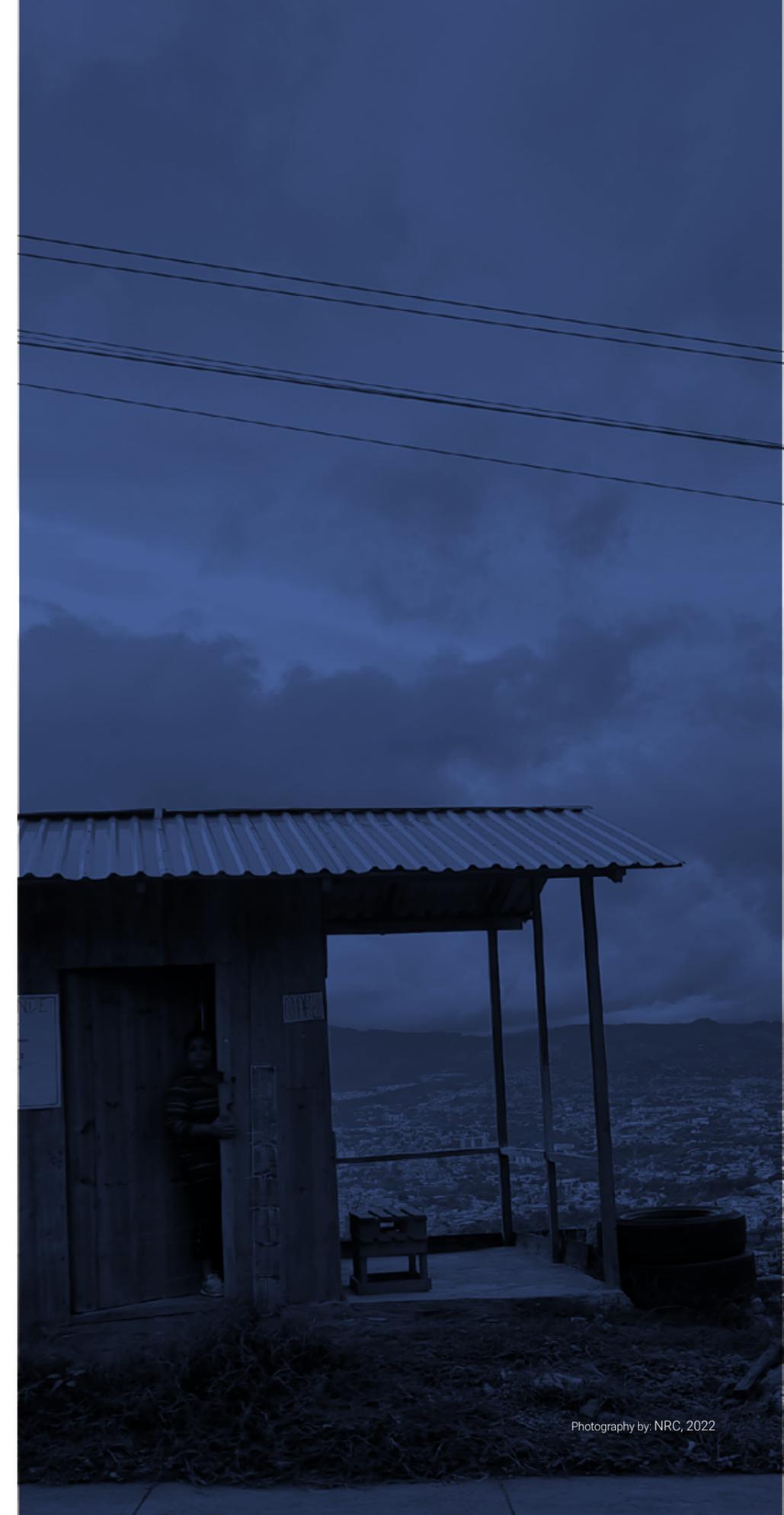
Finally, in Mexico, during the first half of 2022, 15,400 homicides were recorded, a reduction of 9.1% compared to the same period of the previous year with a daily average of 84 homicides. May was the most violent month of the year with 2,826 homicides. The states of Guanajuato, Michoacán, Baja California, Jalisco, Chihuahua, and Mexico together account for 49% of homicides in the country.¹⁰⁶

Since 2016, more than 2,000 homicides and femicides have been recorded on a monthly basis, without interruption. Likewise, 138,054 investigations for family and gender violence were initiated in the cumulative period from January to June 2022 at the national level, representing an increase of 5% compared to the same period of 2021. Also noteworthy is the increase in extortion. In the first half of this year, 5,813 victims were recorded nationwide, an increase of 45% compared to the same period in 2021.¹⁰⁷

PROTECTION NEEDS

Covid-19 in the region:

Northern Central American countries and Mexico have a low cumulative COVID-19 incidence rate compared to the regional average of 16.1 per 100,000 inhabitants. However, Panama ranks fifth on the continent with a higher cumulative incidence rate (21.1), only surpassed by Puerto Rico, Uruguay, the United States and Chile.¹⁰⁸



However, despite the fact that there is a low cumulative incidence in the countries analysed, the mortality rate due to Covid19 does exceed the regional average (1.67%), with the exception of Panama (0.90%). The worrying situation in Mexico stands out: it is the second country with the highest fatality rate in the region with 5.2%, surpassed only by Peru.¹⁰⁹

Food security

Inflation in El Salvador and Honduras has increased between 3.7% and 5.2% since January 2022, and is estimated to remain high until January 2023, limiting seasonal improvements, purchasing power and access to food for the poorest households that are still not recovering from the adverse economic and climate events of recent years. Also, as a consequence of the international scenario, fuel prices, especially diesel, are likely to remain high until January 2023. Therefore, inflation levels and food prices (staple grains, animal protein and vegetables) will remain above average.¹¹⁰

Between June and September 2022, poor households in both countries will have lower purchasing power compared to a high dependence on purchasing as a food source, progressively reaching the peak of the annual shortage season in early August. During this time, rural households, in most of the region, will present stress conditions (Phase 2, CIF). While they will be able to purchase basic food despite above-average prices, they will not have sufficient resources to cover their non-food needs. It should be remembered that in the case of the poorest in the East and the Dry Corridor of Honduras, these have been strongly impacted by climatic and economic events in previous years.

In Guatemala, the households of the Eastern and Western Dry Corridor and the northern areas affected by storms Eta and Iota began the time of scarcity prematurely, without savings, with debts and facing continuous increases in prices of basic food and transport. Income during the current shortage season is lower than normal due to a reduction in planting areas and, consequently, in agricultural employment, due to high fertiliser prices. Until September, these households will reduce the number of meals per day and the amount of food included in their diet. In addition, they will employ negative coping strategies, such as atypical migration or the sale of productive assets, so they will be classified in Crisis (Phase 3, CIF). Despite the fact that the Guatemalan markets will continue to be supplied with corn and beans, food, transportation, and fertilizer prices will remain above the average of the last five years and reporting monthly increases due to the continued influence of international factors.¹¹¹

Overview of Migration policies

Deportations from the United States and Mexico

89,186 people were deported to the countries of North Central America in the first five months of 2022, an increase of 98.5% compared to the same period last year. 57.8% of these people came from Mexico and 41.8% from the United States. As for the sociodemographic characterization of this deported population, 82.68% were adults and 17.32% were children and adolescents. Among the adult population, 75.8% were men and 24.2 per cent were women. Among the population under 18 years of age, 57.4% were boys and 42.6% were girls. It should be noted that the number of deportations for May this year has increased by 50% compared to January.¹¹²

Title 42

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined that the Covid-19 pandemic had remitted enough to render unnecessary the border policy called "Title 42," a 1940s provision activated by the Trump administration that allows U.S. health authorities to deny entry of people or goods into the United States "to prevent the spread of communicable diseases." It empowers the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection to expel irregular migrants as quickly as possible without granting the opportunity to apply for asylum.¹¹³

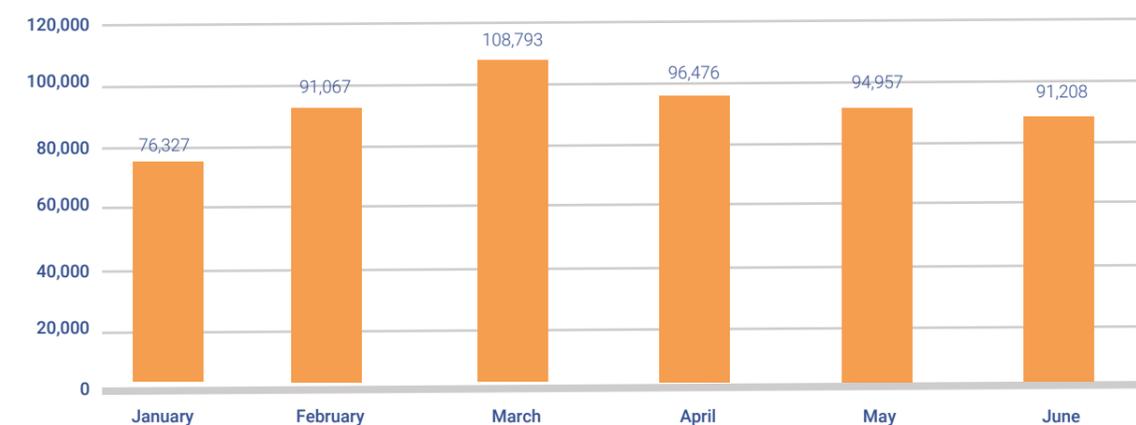
However, a district judge appointed by former President Donald Trump in Louisiana, ruled, on May 20, that the Biden government did not correctly end the emergency measure of the Centre for Disease Control, by not subjecting it to a process of public notification and comment to issue another ruling that ended this policy, which can now be in force until 2023 at least.¹¹⁴

As of May 23, 2022, the immigration courts had handled 23,590 cases, granting asylum to 48.4% of these applications. Title 42 also prevents other applications for asylum and returns many people to life-threatening risks.

The Washington Office for Latin American Affairs points out how Title 42 can represent a benefit for the non-asylum-seeking migrant population that is returned to Mexico. Should the Border Patrol catch them, they spend very little time in custody before being returned to the border line. "Even if they have been captured more than once, there is no penalty added. They are free to cross again, and many do. Up to 28% of the people captured by the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection

Monthly expulsions of migrant people coming from NCA countries and Mexico under Title 42 in the southern border of USA, January to June 2022

Graph prepared in-house based on the official statistics published by the [Customs and Border Patrol Office](#)



in April 2022 at the border had already been captured at least once since October. Title 42 provides a strong incentive to try again, and the number of “encounters” of a single adult reflects this.”¹¹⁵

Applications for asylum in Mexico

In the first half of 2022, 58,642 applications for refugee status were registered, representing an increase of 14.9% compared to the applications submitted in the same period last year. The main nationalities of asylum-seekers are Honduran (23.45%), Cuban (18.4%), Haitian (14%), Venezuelan (12.27%), Nicaraguan (7.87%), Salvadoran (5.75%), Guatemalan (3.71%), Brazilian (2.41%), Colombian (1.99%), Senegalese (1.68%)¹¹⁶

Professionals at the COMAR offices in Tapachula report receiving approximately 250 asylum seekers daily. They note this year an increase in the number of people of Venezuelan, Cuban and Nicaraguan nationality, as well as extracontinental asylum seekers, mostly from African countries.

The increase in the number of Venezuelan migrants arriving in Tapachula seems to be a consequence of the new visa requirements imposed on Venezuelan people by the Mexican government in January 2022, making air travel impossible for many migrants and, therefore, forcing more people to migrate by land through Central America and Mexico. In addition, more migrants of Cuban nationality are also arriving in Mexico, partly due to the elimination of the visa requirement for Cuban people by Nicaragua in November 2021, which allows them to fly to that country to continue their journey to the north. In the first four months of 2022, more migrants of Cuban nationality have requested asylum (8,445) than during all of 2021 (8,298), while 4,270 Venezuelan people requested protection in the same period, compared to 6,192 during all of 2021.¹¹⁷

Risks to the protection of persons in a situation of human mobility

From January to May 2022, Panamanian forensic authorities recorded at least eight deaths of migrants in the Darien jungle. It is difficult to disaggregate these data by nationality, sex, and age since many of the bodies are in an advanced state of decomposition or incomplete because the animals eat them. Migrants at this border crossing are sometimes dragged by the flood of rivers or suffer some sudden blow or illness during a multi-day walking journey. Although this figure is lower than the 51 deaths reported last year, they could increase in the coming months as the rainy season intensifies.¹¹⁸

According to the International Organization for Migration’s Missing Migrants Project, 176 migrants have disappeared on this migration route from 2014 to July 2022 (10 disappearances were recorded in 2022). The presence of hundreds of unidentified remains, due to the lack of official data, the inaccessibility of the sector, the limited presence of non-governmental actors and the lack of attention by the media, means that most of the deaths and disappearances of migrants in this area remain unidentified and unverified.¹¹⁹

On the other hand, on Monday, June 27, the deadliest case of smuggling of migrants in the recent history of the United States was recorded. When 53 migrants died from suffocation, dehydration, and overcrowding in an airless truck in Texas. The circumstances in which the 67 migrants were transported, overcrowded, without any control in the vehicle, without ventilation,

refrigeration, or windows, in addition to without water and at almost 40°C of temperature, is a symptom of the desperation to reach US territory in any way. 27 of the deceased migrants were Mexican, 14 Honduran, 7 Guatemalan and 2 from El Salvador.¹²⁰

To counter the militarization of the U.S. borders, large trucks emerge as a recurring method used by traffickers because the likelihood that they will be detected and inspected is very low. However, migrants transported by this means are exposed to multiple protection risks and are subjected to cruel conditions. It should be remembered that in the first half of 2022 it is estimated that 493 migrants have died on the different migratory routes of the American continent.¹²¹

The mobility restrictions enacted in response to the pandemic have not yet been modified, resulting in a “funnel effect” that has led migrants with limited options to take increasingly dangerous routes. Many deceased persons registered on these routes come from countries with a high number of asylum seekers. At least 136 migrants in transit of Venezuelan nationality have died in the last 18 months, in addition to 108 Cubans and 90 Haitians. However, the largest demographic in the available data on migrant deaths in the Americas is unidentified individuals. The countries of origin of nearly 500 people whose deaths have been recorded since 2021 are listed as “unknown”.¹²²

It should be remembered that organizations such as Human Rights Watch have pointed out that the new visa requirements that make it difficult for Venezuelans to travel by plane to Mexico and Central America have led to a significant increase in the number of Venezuelan migrants crossing the land border of the Darien Plug, surpassing Cubans and Haitians as the largest population crossing this point in 2022, and now represent more than a third of the total number of migrants who use this dangerous path.¹²³

In this sense, the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, signed on June 10 by the leaders of 20 countries of the region at the conclusion of the Summit of the Americas, commits their governments to expand the legal channels of migration, support the integration of immigrants, invest in migration management and coordinate responses to mass migration movements and displacement crises. Although the agreement is not binding, it represents an important step forward in the creation of a common language and a coherent set of ideas to manage, in a cooperative manner, migratory flows in the Americas, a region that has witnessed great human mobility in recent years.¹²⁴

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