




Bulletin 22

PROTECTION CRISIS IN NORTH CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO

**An Update on the Protection Crisis
January to October 2023**

This 22nd bulletin provides an update on the protection crisis in Northern Central America and Mexico. The information has been compiled through the monitoring of indicators of violence, barriers to access rights, asylum and migration policies, and protection needs. A diverse array of governmental, non-governmental, and media sources of information have been consulted, and this is the panorama they reveal from January to October 2023.

VIOLENCE

271 
Homicides

were recorded between January and October 2023.¹

42 
Femicides

Between January and October 2023, media monitoring carried out by the Violence Against Women Observatory, the same number recorded between January and October in the previous year. **Nearly half of the femicides that occurred in this bulletin's analysis period were committed by the women's partners or ex-partners.**²

194 
people were reported missing¹

According to the InfoSegura Regional Project of the United Nations Development Programme, in the first half of 2023, **a 28% increase over the same period of the previous year.**³

9 
Active cases of missing children and adolescent

The Missing Angel Alert - In the first half of 2023.⁴

PROTECTION NEEDS

5,545 
Salvadoran nationals sought asylum in Mexico⁵

between January and October 2023, **a 16% reduction** relative to the same period in 2022.

8,833 
Salvadoran nationals were returned

between January and September 2023 from Mexico and the United States.⁴

This number represents **a 24% decrease** compared to the same period in 2022.

77%
Male

23%
Female

54%
Boys

46%
Girls

(of the total number of children)

Those deported during this period mainly originated from the departments of **San Salvador, La Libertad, and San Miguel.**⁶

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE

The government requested that the Legislative Assembly approve the 20th renewal of the country's state of exception, which would extend it to mid-December 2023. Under these circumstances, the constitutional guarantees under Articles 12(2), 13(2), and 24 of the Salvadoran Constitution are suspended. These relate to the right to legal defense, the 15-day maximum length of administrative custody, and the inviolability of telecommunications and correspondence. The measures remain in force in spite of the repeated denunciations by human rights organizations and movements against arbitrary arrests, torture and deaths in custody, and sexual abuses perpetrated by elements of the Armed Forces.⁷

Civil society organizations report receiving more than 6,400 complaints of abuses and human rights violations against detainees and their family members since the state of exception took effect, as well as the death of 174 people held in state custody, none of whom were convicted of the crimes of which they were accused.⁸ The mass imprisonment of mainly men has had an impact on the lives of women and their families, increasing their burden of care and impairing their livelihood.

Furthermore, their concern for the condition and situation of their partners and/or spouses and an increase in the number of their visits to the detention centers has resulted in a loss of income in their informal sector employment. In many cases, the detainee, generally a man, represented the main or only economic support for the family unit. The prolongation of their detention has a major impact on the mental health and psychosocial support network of many communities. This context of social vulnerability facilitates the forceful recruitment of children into gangs: "Repression generates a lot of resentment in the community. It generates fear. It generates economic needs. All of these are the ingredients that gave rise to the gangs."⁹

PROTECTION NEEDS

Even though there is some progress in reducing the levels of violence, multiple factors lead people to continue to leave the country. According to official data, at the end of 2022, there were records of 58,637 Salvadoran refugees abroad, as well as 148,758 asylum seekers with pending applications. It should be noted that during this year, the National Office of Statistics and Censuses, with help from UNHCR, is implementing changes in the household survey throughout the country with the aim of collecting information and updating existing statistics on displacement.¹⁰

El Salvador

An Update on the Protection Crisis

Furthermore, a recent report by the Servicio Social Pasionista, the Human Rights Institute of the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas, and Fundación Cristosal documented 223 victims of forced internal displacement brought about by agents of the state between the beginning of the state of exception and June 2023. Of this population, 35% were over 60 years of age, while 22% were between the ages of 31 and 59; 18% between the ages of 0 and 12; 16% between the ages of 19 and 30; and 9% between the ages of 13 and 18. In addition, 476 cases of human rights violations were recorded over the same period.¹¹

The analysis of the 8,833 returnees during this period shows that 83% came from the United States and 17% from Mexico. Among the adult returning population, 75% reported economic factors as the main reason for emigrating, followed by family reunification (14%) and a lack of security (8%). With respect to the same period last year, economic causes increased by 10%, while security concerns dropped by 10%.¹²

Those deported during this period included 1,812 women, 615 boys and 517 girls. Of all the girls, adolescents and adult women who were deported, 80% were deported from the United States and 18% from Mexico. The number of girls, adolescents and adult women deported was 51% lower than in the same period in 2022, with a greater decrease observed in deportations from Mexico (-66%) than from the United States (-46%). In terms of the main reasons reported for migrating, although the factors are similar, the girls and adolescents who were deported placed greater importance on family reunification, with 21.7% citing it as one of their main reasons for leaving the country, as opposed to 16.3% of adult women deportees.¹³

In spite of the absence of statistics for the year 2023, the Center for Monitoring Aggression against Journalists recorded 136 complaints filed last year by journalists. Digital attacks, restrictions on journalistic activities, and stigmatizing declarations are the most commonly cited human rights violations.¹⁴

El Niño Phenomenon

Experts predict a 90% probability of El Niño intensifying between December 2023 and January 2024. Although the country is currently in the rainy season, precipitation levels in June of this year were 26% below normal. It is expected that the impacts of this phenomenon, combined with the existing poverty and violence (with 27% of the population under the poverty line and 58% of the rural population lacking access to drinking water) and reduced viability of rural livelihoods (for example, due to consecutive failed harvests) will likely lead many agricultural communities to move to urban centers or across the borders in search of food and water.¹⁵

This context will especially affect agricultural production and will place more households in a situation of food insecurity due to the changes in weather and the increased prices of grains. The World Food Programme (WFP) carried out a baseline survey of 400 beneficiaries as part of its Anticipatory Action Project. The goal of the survey was to evaluate the current situation of food insecurity, climate resilience capacity, households' access to climate information, and the risk of torrential rainfall during hurricane season. Among the main findings, it is noteworthy that 98% of respondents have no insurance that covers their productive activities, while 31% are unaware of the benefits that come with having insurance.¹⁶



VIOLENCE

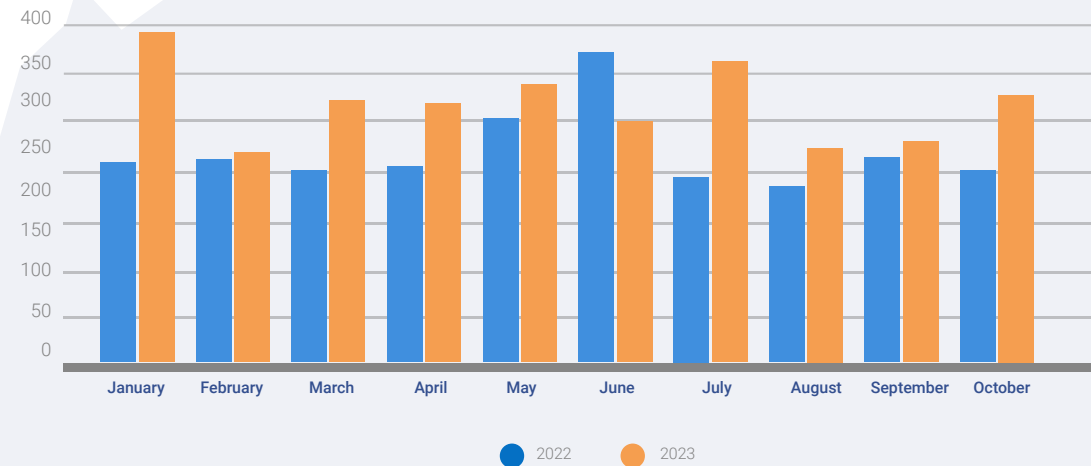
2,591
Homicides



were recorded between January and October 2023 by the Security Secretariat of the National Police, a 16% drop relative to the number of homicides reported in the same period of 2022 (3,105 cases).¹⁷

Graph prepared by the authors based on data from the [Police Statistics System \(SEPOL\)](#)

Comparison: number of homicides from January to October 2022 vs. January to October 2023



In spite of this decrease, Honduras experienced a resurgence in violence in the second quarter of 2023. While 733 homicides were recorded in the first quarter of the year, the figure grew to 925 in the second quarter. Rates of violence remain much higher than the average in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹³

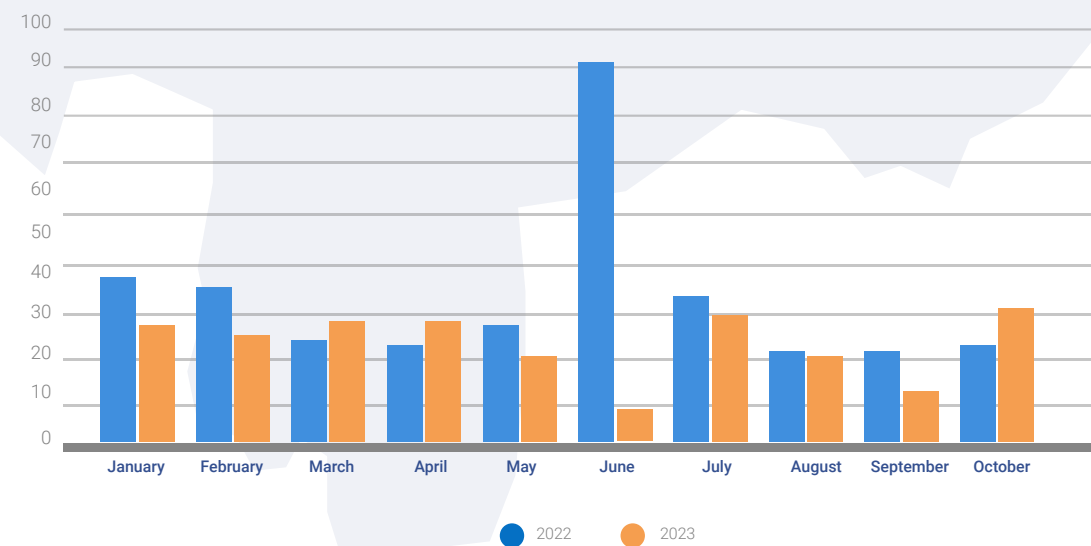
341
Femicides



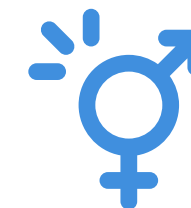
recorded between January and October 2023, the country saw a 39% increase over the same period in 2022, during which 246 cases were recorded.¹⁸

Graph prepared by the authors based on official statistics from the [Center for Women's Rights](#)

Comparison: number of femicides from January to October 2022 vs. January to October 2023



There was an increase in the number of multiple homicides during the reporting period. Between January and August, there were 32 recorded incidents that led to the loss of 170 lives, of which 96 were men, 70 women, and 4 victims with no information recorded.¹



Violent deaths of women and femicides continue to be one of the leading indicators of gender-based violence, which is intensifying in the country and is deepening in a context of emergencies.

¹Center for Women's Rights. Violence Against Women in Honduras – 2023. Information collected by monitoring print and online media at the national level. <https://derechosdelamujer.org/project/2023/>

PROTECTION NEEDS

In spite of the magnitude of the official figures, border monitoring carried out by members of the Southwest Border Local Response Team suggests that numerous factors make it possible to conclude that the undercounting in official figures persists (noting estimates of 40% above the official figures). These factors are associated with (i) the presence of trafficking networks that persuade people not to present themselves at INM delegations; (ii) the possible sale of false transit permits; (iii) lack of knowledge of administrative processes; and (iv) persons who do receive transit permits at INM delegations, but whose biometric data is not registered, or biometric data only being taken from a single family member (a contingency measure taken due to crowding at the delegations).



At the Las Manos crossing, one of the main points of entry into the country, an average of 300 people slept in the street without access to bathrooms, personal hygiene, waste management and other necessities due to the lack of transportation to Danlí at their usual arrival time of 6:00 p.m. An expansion or improvement is needed in dignified temporary housing, access to drinking water, food, and hygiene supplies, especially outside of normal working hours, at night, and on weekends and holidays.²¹

The Protection Cluster and the areas responsible for child protection and gender-based violence in Honduras identified five priority risks for protection:

- the impact of generalized violence
- forced displacement
- gender-based violence and the distinct impacts on women, girls, and the LGBTQI+ population.
- the distinct impacts on children and adolescents.
- violations of the rights of persons who belong to mixed movements.

442,619

irregular entries

between January and October 2023



80%
adults

These figures are more than double those recorded in all of 2022 (188,858). According to the most recent protection monitoring by UNHCR, the **three main reasons** reported by respondents for leaving their country of origin were: **limited access to economic opportunities (72%)**, **fear due to pervasive violence and lack of security (42%)**, and **lack of access to food (26%)**.²⁰

65%
Men

35%
Women

20%
Minors

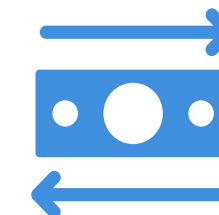
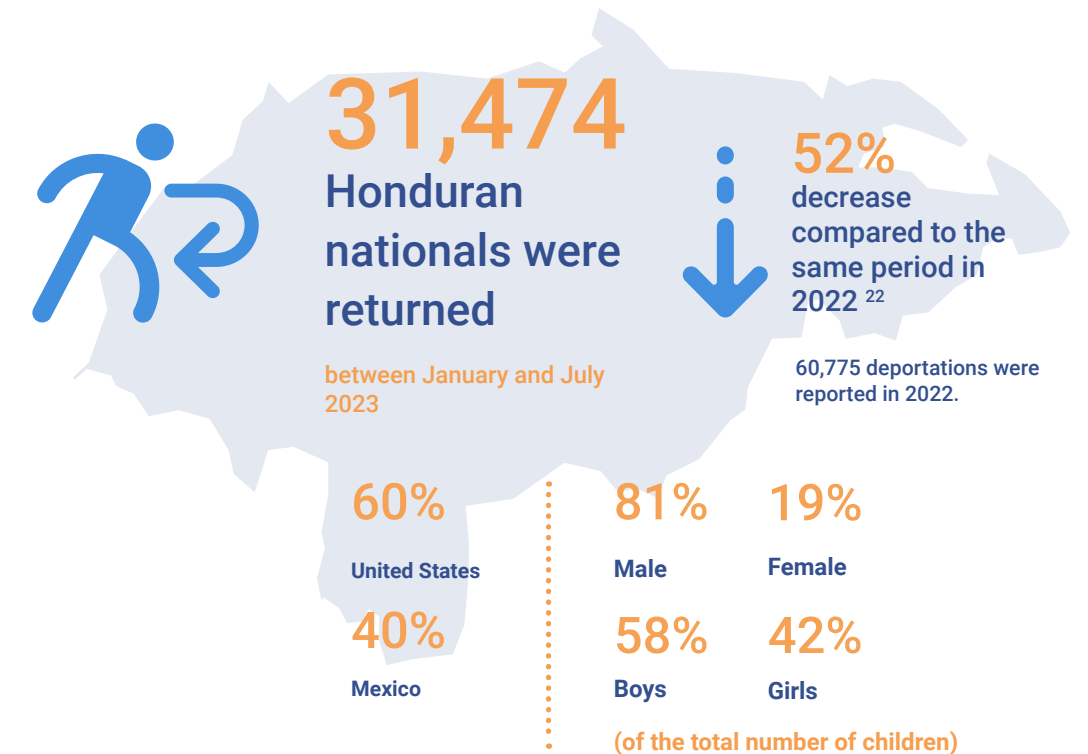
36,000

requests for asylum from Honduran nationals in Mexico

between January and October 2023

a **39% increase** compared with the same period in 2022. According to official figures, 249,972 migrants and refugees were part of the mixed movements that passed through Honduran territory between January and August 2023. This is three times the number reported for the same period in 2022 (88,831 people in mixed movements).¹⁹

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES



Parliament issued Legislative Decree 39-2023, which exempted persons in transit from paying the administrative sanction (US \$200) for entering the country at unauthorized border crossings. This decree is in force until January 1, 2024.

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE

The crime rate was the main reason used by the authorities to declare the state of exception on December 6, 2022, which was extended in recent weeks in terms of both its territorial coverage (now applying in 158 municipalities) as well as its application period (now set to end on January 1, 2024).²³

While this legislation has been effective at partially reducing the number of homicides, the involvement of the Military Police in public security matters, as well as the restriction of constitutional guarantees such as the suspension of the right to personal liberty, have enabled a context of increased human rights violations that could end up undermining social cohesion and democracy in the country.²⁴

It should be noted that children, adolescents and youth account for one in four deaths due to homicide. This population group has been directly affected by pervasive violence for several years, a trend that, far from improving, appears to be escalating. Homicides in which the victim is a minor were 16% higher between January and August 2023 relative to the same period in the previous year.²⁵

In the last ten years alone, 2,534 children and adolescents suffered a violent death in Honduras, according to the Secretariat of Security. The reasons for the high homicide rate among children and youth are numerous and interconnected: organized crime, forced recruitment, extortion payments, the drug trade, and contract killings. Organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization have highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to the prevention of youth violence, which includes the social determinants of violence such as gender inequality, social inequality, and low levels of social protection and social inclusion.²⁶

Along these lines, civil society organizations have urged the authorities to operationalize the National Council of the Comprehensive Guarantee System for the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Honduras (SIGADENAH), approved by Executive Decree PCM-020-2019 to provide an immediate response from the state apparatus in order to guarantee real, comprehensive protection of the rights of children and adolescents in the country. However, no directives have been issued to date to implement the strategic guidelines of this prevention policy.²⁷

Finally, there has been a disturbing 47% increase in the number of femicides during this analysis period relative to January-October 2022. It must be emphasized that 4,926 women were murdered in the last ten years (2012-2022), one of the highest rates of femicide in the region. The Public Prosecutor's Office has recorded an annual average of 2,500 to 3,000 sexual crimes against women every year, of which 65% are against minors and the aggressors are people close to them.²⁸

PROTECTION NEEDS

The practice of journalism has not been spared from human rights violations. At least 53 instances of aggression against journalists have been recorded between January and May of this year. This is particularly worrisome given the role of the press in strengthening democracy through the dissemination of information and the promotion of citizen participation in decision-making. Moreover, it should be noted that approximately 86 journalists and social communicators reported being at risk or having been the victim of forced displacement between 2016 and 2022, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, a fact that affects freedom of expression. The report notes that 85% of these complaints related to being the victim of threats, with 5% being homicide attempts, 5% about injuries, and 5% due to the death of a family member or friend.²⁹

The approval in the National Congress of the Law for the Prevention, Assistance, and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons of December 21, 2022, subsequently published in La Gaceta, the country's official gazette, represented a historic milestone for the country. The legislation is the first legal framework adopted by the Honduran state to respond to internal displacement caused by widespread violence in a context of organized crime. It is worth noting that, according to the Study on the Characterization of Internal Displacement due to Violence, 247,090 people were internally displaced in Honduras between 2004 and 2018.³⁰ The law sets out a series of comprehensive measures to prevent internal displacement through early warning systems, prevention and contingency plans, humanitarian assistance, and the protection of the rights affected, including the rights to education, housing, and abandoned or stolen land and property. It also provides seed capital and access to justice in order to achieve lasting solutions. This legal framework envisions the creation of the National System for Responding to Forced Displacement (SINARDEF), made up of three operating agencies:³¹

- a) The Inter-Institutional Commission for the Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons (CIPPDEF), as the highest decision-making, deliberation, and policymaking body in the System.
- b) The Directorate for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (DIPPDIV), the operational and coordination area for prevention and protection measures.
- c) The Municipal Units for the Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons (UMAPPDEF), local offices that work to enforce the law and respond in phases of emergencies.

Moving beyond the law's approval, its effective implementation will require a package of measures including the organization and strengthening of the institutional system that is responsible for applying the law and assigning sufficient resources.³²

Furthermore, the mixed movements passing through the country are on the rise. This trend has been notably pronounced in recent months among those transiting through the Choluteca department (accounting for 4% of all mixed movements in August and surging to 21% in October). The October figures, in addition to being 13% higher than the total from the previous month, constitute the highest monthly total ever recorded by the National Institute of Migration.³³



Honduras

An Update on the Protection Crisis

The proportional increase in the number of Haitians in these mixed movements is noteworthy (with an increase of 23% between July and October). This trend is partially explained by the existence of direct flights between Haiti and Nicaragua. The most recent protection monitoring published by UNHCR shows that up to 48% of those interviewed present protection needs. Furthermore, up to 19% of the people interviewed by UNHCR and its partners reported persons with specific protection needs within their travel group, including breastfeeding or pregnant women, persons with disabilities, persons with critical or chronic illnesses, seniors, and unaccompanied children, among others. The main needs indicated by refugees and migrants in transit are food, water, clothing and shoes, lodging, healthcare, and medicines. Many interviewees identified the Darién jungle as the most traumatic experience of their migratory route, as they had experienced robberies, kidnapping, and sexual violence. Many people reported people dying and others who became separated from their travel group and did not return.³⁴

Furthermore, the Southwest Border Local Response Team, a coordination space created by the country's humanitarian aid sector and co-led by UNHCR and Action Against Hunger, mentions that cases of extortion continue to occur, especially at land crossings.³⁷

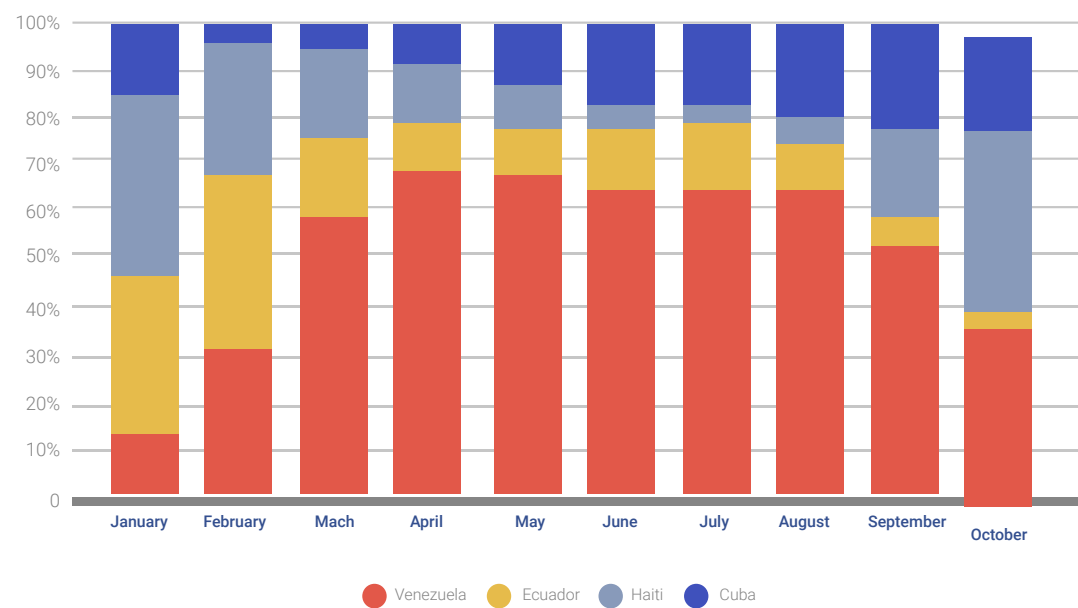
In Danlí, local organizations are operating at full capacity. Supplies meant to last a day sometimes run out in just a few hours. On weekends, when buses arrive continuously, there is less of a presence of humanitarian organizations, especially in the El Zarzal office of the National Institute of Migration (INM). As a consequence, people are more exposed to risks during these days. Certain individuals are known to charge fees of up to 10% to "help" withdraw remittances, a practice that is proliferating in and around El Zarzal due to the difficulties that people in transit face when accessing economic assistance sent by family members.³⁸

Additionally, both local authorities and community members have noted the challenges that arise due to the arrival of people after 6:00 p.m. to Las Manos, the main point of entry. At that hour, there is no transportation available to Danlí, meaning that late arrivals must sleep on the main road. In August, nearly 300 people were found to be obliged to sleep in the street each night, without access to bathrooms, water, personal hygiene, waste management, and other needs. The situation has resulted in a pollution alert that affects both host communities as well as persons in transit.³⁹

Non-Spanish speakers tend to report having suffered greater protection risks than those who do speak Spanish. The main incidents they suffer tend to be linked to scams or robberies linked to the inflated prices charged for food and transportation. While the expanded implementation of the migratory amnesty on the part of the Honduran government has resulted in a partial reduction of the protection risks faced by those in transit through the country, their situation of vulnerability has been perpetuated due to a lack of awareness of the mechanisms through which complaints of human rights violations can be filed.⁴⁰

Finally, the social reintegration of returnees is another of the main challenges faced by the authorities in managing migration. In the 2017-2022 period alone, Returned Migrant Assistance Centers (CAMRs) recorded 410,587 returnees, representing an average of 187 migrants arriving back to the country each day. This population was 21% female, with 70% of female returnees being minors. Once returnees arrive at CAMRs, they receive primary assistance including food, medical care, and transportation. Only 8% of the population passing through CAMRs request lodging, which can be provided for up to three days, according to internal regulations. With respect to medical and psychological assistance, only 50% receive primary medical care and 18% receive psychological assistance. Their stay in these centers is not characterized as a legal entry and exit from the country, but rather as a return/deportation. This characterization can exacerbate the social vulnerability of people who may be in the process of filing a refugee application. Having a statistical database that quantifies the number of deportees who make a subsequent attempt at taking the migration route would make it possible to determine the unmet needs in the country that lead to the decision to leave the country once again. It should be noted that one of the measures set out in the Governing Plan of Xiomara Castro's administration was the establishment of a specialized comprehensive assistance center for the social reintegration of deported women.⁴¹

Monthly irregular entries to Honduras, disaggregated by main nationalities - January to October 2023



Graph prepared by the authors based on data from the [Honduran National Institute of Migration](#)

Interviewees estimated that crossing the country, from the Nicaraguan border to the Guatemalan border, results in a cost of about US\$ 40-50.³⁵

Access to water, food, and basic services are some of the main difficulties reported by people in transit in Honduras. These difficulties lead them to reduce the number of times they eat each day, look for food in the trash, or beg for food in the streets from the local population. Other urgent needs reported by key informants in this protection monitoring include access to information, medicines, and legal advice in order to find out about their rights.³⁶



VIOLENCE



reported by the National Civil Police (PNC) between January and September 2023, 117 fewer cases than the same period in the previous year.⁴²



64 were reported by the PNC between January and September 2023, 64 fewer cases than the same period in the previous year.⁴³

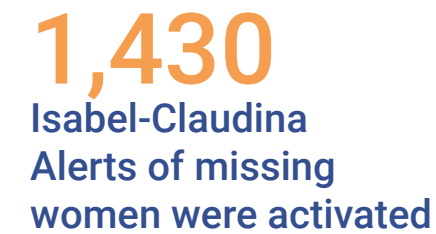


between January and September 2023

A 20.69% increase over the same period in the previous year.⁴⁴

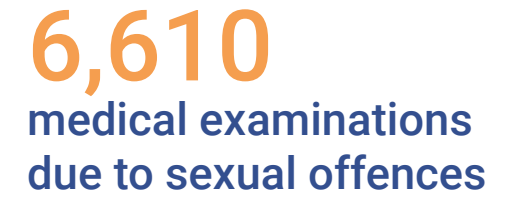


48% of which were deactivated⁴⁵



5.17% less than the same period in the previous year.

January to August 2023.⁴⁶



carried out by the National Institute of Forensic Sciences (INACIF) between January and October 2023, of which 90% were performed on women and girls.⁴⁷



were reported between January and August 2023.⁵³

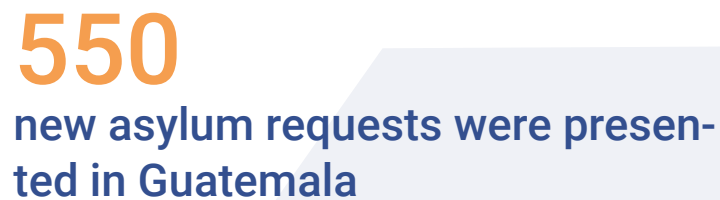
PROTECTION NEEDS



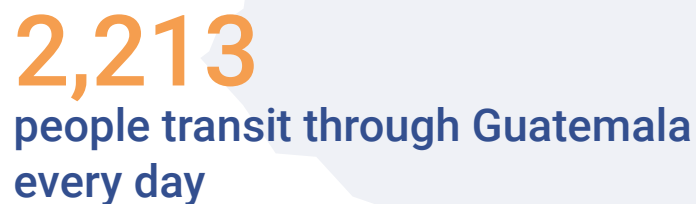
169,416 asylum seekers from Guatemala were reported in the first half of 2023, figures that were 6.48% and 1.51% higher than the same period in the previous year.⁴⁸



between January and October 2023. A 20% increase was observed relative to the same period in the previous year.⁴⁹



between January and June 2023, and the national migration authority approved 97 requests for refugee status.⁵⁰



and the main needs detected are water, sanitation and hygiene, food, healthcare and protection services (psychosocial assistance, medicines, and medical attention), and lodging.⁵¹ Among the mixed flows of people in the country, there have been reports of violent incidents, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women. In addition, there is a large number of migrants and displaced persons who sleep in the streets.⁵²

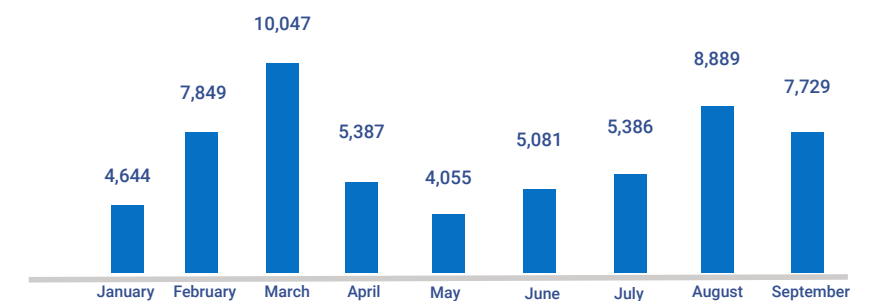
BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES



between January and September 2023



Persons deported, January-September 2023



Source: Based on the Northern Triangle Human Migration Management Information Initiative, September 2023

Guatemala

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE

In July 2023, the rate of crimes against persons was 32 reports per 100,000 inhabitants, a 15.7% drop compared to the same period in the previous year. During the same period, the National Civil Police reported a monthly average of 237 homicides and 238 injuries.⁵⁵ The departments with the highest homicide rates in the country are Escuintla, with 40 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, Izabal with 35, Guatemala with 33, Chiquimula with 31, and Zacapa with 30.⁵⁶

In recent years, there has been a downward trend in the country's homicide rate, which has fallen by 44.36% between 2016 and 2023. However, other crimes, such as extortion, continue to grow, with an increase of 177% in the number of reports observed between 2016 and 2023.⁵⁷ The departments with the highest extortion rates in 2023 are Guatemala, with 204 reports of extortion per 100,000 inhabitants, Sacatepéquez with 114, and Escuintla with 104.⁵⁸

The Public Prosecutor's Office has ceased publishing reports of incidents of violence and missing women in the Women's Observatory. According to the National Civil Police, there were 338 reports of violence against women between January and July, and the National Institute of Forensic Sciences reported 1,542 medical examinations due to injuries consistent with abuse and 4,244 medical examinations due to sexual offenses.

Of the 4,244 medical examinations carried out on women due to sexual offenses, 63% were performed on girls and adolescents under 19 years of age. During the same period, 1,429 pregnancies were reported in girls under 14 years old, highlighting the situation of vulnerability experienced by girls and adolescents in the country.

PROTECTION NEEDS

Guatemala is one of the nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean classified as being under high risk due to the climatic effects of El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO). The phenomenon is expected to cause below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures, which will remain until the end of 2023 in some cases. It is important to note that 1.4 million people were affected by heavy rain in the west of the country.⁵⁹

El Niño can affect agricultural production and exacerbate food insecurity, increase displacement and migration due to flooding and droughts, and raise the risk of contracting vector-borne diseases (over the course of the year, major outbreaks of dengue have been identified). As of October, the effect of droughts on harvests and food prices could still increase, with 600,000 families at risk of moving from a crisis level (IPC phase 3) of food insecurity to an emergency level (phase 4).⁶⁰

From August 2022 to August 2023, inflation in the country increased by 4.47% and in food by 6.52%. Therefore, the *Canasta Básica* basket of basic goods stood at GTQ 3,809, which was 10.27% higher relative to August 2022.⁶¹

According to the Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023, 74,000 people were internally displaced as a result of disasters. At the same time, the lack of systematic monitoring of internal displacement due to violence means that an estimate of the number of people experiencing displacement for this reason is not possible. Therefore, the five confirmed cases in 2022 do not reflect the magnitude of the phenomenon.⁶²



Guatemala

An Update on the Protection Crisis

Counting and characterizing the flows of refugees and migrants passing through the country in mixed movements is a challenge for the government as well as humanitarian organizations. However, various efforts have been carried out to assess the needs of this population. Monitoring of mixed flows carried out by UNHCR has shown that 68% of the people passing through the country and surveyed between January and March 2023 were men and 32% were women, while 84% were traveling in the company of family members or friends. Of the 20 nationalities represented in the survey, 53% were Hondurans and 30% Venezuelans. Respondents' main destination was the United States, with 97% mentioning that they did not plan to stay in Guatemala for more than one month.⁶³

In addition, it was shown that people on the migration route are exposed to risks of robberies, scams, and needing to pay bribes. Most noted difficulties accessing basic services such as food, water, lodging, and healthcare. In this survey, 19% of respondents mentioned having at least one specific protection need. The most common ones were single parents with minor children, pregnant or breastfeeding mothers, persons with a critical or chronic medical condition, and survivors of violence. Finally, 36% of the population surveyed may require international protection.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, monitoring carried out by the IOM between April and September reported a daily average of 2,213 people in transit. Shared lodging services, regularly provided by the Casas del Migrante, have exceeded their capacity, leading to an increased number of people sleeping in the street in border areas such as Esquipulas and Chiquimula, on the Honduran border, and Tecún Umán and San Marcos, on the Mexican border, as well as in the capital city in bus stations such as the Central de Autobuses del Norte (CENTRANORTE) and the Central de Mayoreo (CENMA).⁶⁵

Between January and July of this year, 37,509 adults were returned to the country, of which 75% were men and 25% were women. Of the 5,059 children and adolescents, 59% were male and 41% female, with 49% returning as unaccompanied or separated minors. Overall, 60% were apprehended in the United States.

In July, the country announced the launch of the Safe Mobility program, aimed at increasing the legal pathways for admission to the United States and other countries. In this program, interested parties can access a [virtual platform](#) to enter their personal data, which will allow them to be considered and receive information on legal pathways to enter the United States.⁵⁰

Country Context

Guatemala is a medium-high income country and the largest economy in Central America, which grew by 8% in 2021 and 4% in 2022. However, the country faces significant development challenges, with some of the highest rates of poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean. The World Bank has identified “a small and ineffective state, the lack of education and employment opportunities, and frequent natural disasters” as being some of the key factors that have contributed to the country's high poverty rates.⁶⁶

Furthermore, various actions in the country have caused a weakening of the rule of law and judicial independence, which have been pointed out on various occasions by UN experts.⁶⁷ In recent years, criminal prosecutions have been pursued against judges, prosecutors, journalists, and human rights defenders, many of whom have gone into exile while others are held in pre-trial detention.⁶⁸

The 2023 general elections have generated international concern from humanitarian and human rights organizations, as well as civil society at large, due to a series of actions targeting the country's democratic system by impugning the elections and carrying out actions to cancel the political party of the president-elect who received the majority of the votes cast. A variety of groups have stressed that the ongoing situation in the country represents a serious risk to the observance of the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.⁶⁹



VIOLENCIE



21,525

Homicides

between January and October 2023, **3.7% less** than the same period in the previous year⁷⁰



694

Feminicides

between January and October 2023, **14.22% less** than the same period in the previous year⁷¹



8,809

reports of extortion

between January and October 2023, a **1.19% increase** year over year⁷²



77,164

records of sexual violence

between January and October 2023, a **10% increase** year over year⁷³



5,551

reports of gender-based violence

in all types outside of family violence between January and October 2023, reflecting a **22% year-over-year increase**⁷⁴

PROTECTION NEEDS



26

events of internal displacement due to violence

with 7,710 people affected between January and June 2023, **6,271 more** than the same period in the previous year⁷⁵

513

deaths and disappearances of people in mobility

in the context of mixed movements between January and November 2023, a **22.39% reduction** year over year⁷⁶



283,234

instances of assistance to refugees and migrants Grupos Beta

between January and September 2023, a **28.4% increase** year over year⁷⁷

In the United States



1,254,022

apprehensions on the southern border with Mexico

1,254,022 apprehensions on the southern border with Mexico between January and July 2023, **12.21% less** than the same period in the previous year

895,995

people refused entry under Title 8 between January and July 2023, corresponding to **71%** of all apprehensions

358,027

expulsions under Title 42 between January and May 2023

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

In Mexico



172,500

events of Mexican nationals returned from the United States

between January and September 2023, **12.88% less** than the same period in the previous year⁷⁸

127,796

people requested refugee status in Mexico

between January and October 2023, a **29.49% increase** year over year⁷⁹

41,561

return events by the Mexican migration authority

between January and September 2023, a **57.12% decrease** year over year⁸⁰

353,929

foreign nationals appearing before the migration authorities

between January and July 2023⁸¹

In the countries of Northern Central America



80,480

people returned to northern Central America from Mexico and the United States

between January and July 2023, a **39% reduction** year over year⁸²

Mexico

An Update on the Protection Crisis

COUNTRY ANALYSIS

VIOLENCE

In August, intentional homicides increased 2.91% with respect to the previous month. Between January and August 2023, the five states with the highest homicide rate were Colima (62.26 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants), Morelos (38.95), Baja California (36.84), Zacatecas (31.53), and Chihuahua (30.26).⁸³ Furthermore, an average of two femicides are reported each day. Between January and August, the state of Mexico had the highest number of femicides, with 64, followed by León (50), Veracruz (38), Mexico City (37), and Oaxaca (33).⁸⁴

Between January and August 2023, a 63% increase was recorded in enforced disappearances, with a total of 3,120 cases reported. In comparison, 1,876 cases were recorded in the same period in 2022. According to the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center, Mexico has a forensic crisis with more than 52,000 unidentified bodies.⁸⁵ It is important to note that many family members of people who were forcibly disappeared are victims of intimidation, attacks, and even violent deaths, as in the case of two women human rights defenders looking for their family members, who were murdered this year.⁸⁶

Internal displacement due to violence continues to surge in the country, with approximately 7,710 victims of displacement in 26 events reported in the states of Chiapas, Chihuahua, Guerrero, Michoacán, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, and Zacatecas.⁸⁷ It should be noted that along the southern border with Guatemala, the violence generated by organized crime groups has intensified. In 12 communities in Comalapa, Chiapas, at least 3,000 people abandoned their homes due to murders, looting of houses, and threats of forcible recruitment of young people. In Santa Marta, Chenalhó, Chiapas, meanwhile, an attack on refugees resulted in the murder of seven people.⁸⁸

PROTECTION NEEDS

In Mexico, there has been an increase in the movement of people from countries in South America, especially Venezuela and Ecuador, who have joined the movement of people from Central American countries. It is estimated that up to 5,000 people arrive at Mexico's southern border each day, with a 28% year-over-year increase in asylum requests to date in 2023. Furthermore, a simultaneous nationwide increase has been observed in persons in a situation of mobility, with multiple groups of people stranded in various parts of the country at the same time with very basic needs such as shelter, food, and healthcare.⁸⁹

Due to the number of people attempting to enter the United States in an irregular manner, Mexican and US officials met to discuss the situation and agreed on 15 joint actions, including measures to take the pressure off the northern border (Ciudad Juárez, Piedras Negras, Tijuana, and Tamaulipas) by returning people in a situation of mobility and carrying out negotiations with the governments of Venezuela, Brazil, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Cuba to take in their compatriots. At the same meeting, it was also agreed to receive those expelled by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on the International Bridge in Ciudad Juárez and to establish monitoring points along the railway routes in order to persuade people not to use the freight train system to move towards the country's north.⁹⁰

Needs for lodging have mainly been fulfilled by religious and civil society organizations. However, these have been overwhelmed by the increase and constant flow of people who have come to or passed through Mexico in recent years. This situation has brought about a rapid surge in privately-run shelters that are not part of the humanitarian system, with significant gaps in conditions and international standards. For example, some shelters in Ciudad Juárez charge daily fees to access their services. Meanwhile, informal settlements have been observed with concentrations of refugees and migrants, especially in border areas, in which conditions are often unsanitary and unsafe. In other cases, people opt to pay for hotel rooms or private houses to stay with their families. These spaces charge higher prices (overcharging) and may offer sub-optimal conditions or be located in unsafe areas.⁹¹

Due to this situation, UNHCR issued a statement with an alert that the humanitarian situation on the border between Mexico and the United States is concerning and noting that "refugees and migrants (...) find themselves in cramped shelters, exposed to many risks." It also highlighted the need to provide the refugee and migrant population with legal assistance, medical care, food, and sufficient shelters and shelter equipment, as well as ensuring their safety.⁹²

It should be noted that the migration policies adopted by Mexico in response to demands from the United States to stop irregular migration could lead to the violation of the rights of persons in a situation of mobility. Endowing the National Guard with migration powers, the militarization of the borders, and the widespread use of administrative detention threaten the rights of the population in a situation of mobility. In 2023, a fire in a migration detention center in Ciudad Juárez claimed the lives of 40 people.⁹³



BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

In May 2023, the migration policy known as “Title 42,” implemented by the US government, ended. During the 38 months it was applied, 2.8 million people were returned.⁹⁴ Humanitarian organizations warned that the application of Title 42, which prohibited entry by the land borders of the United States to non-citizens in the interest of protecting public health due to Covid-19, also restricted access to asylum and international protection, a situation that violates the rights of persons in a situation of mobility.⁹⁵

With the end of Title 42, there has been a return to the provisions of Title 8, under which people who enter the country without authorization and have no legal basis to remain are expelled under an accelerated process and prohibited from entering the United States for 5 years; if they attempt to re-enter in an irregular manner, they face criminal charges.⁹⁶

The State Department and the Department of Homeland Security announced the additional measures under Title 8 to “humanely manage border through deterrence, enforcement, and diplomacy”.⁹⁷ These measures include:

- Opening Regional Processing Centers (RPCs) to expand lawful pathways for entry into the United States and guide individuals toward them. These centers were later called Safe Mobility Offices and are operating in Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Ecuador.
- Deploying additional troops to support monitoring and security activities on the borders.
- Dedicating more resources to manage increased encounters with CBP, which involves expanding detention capacity, increasing removal flights, and shifting agents and officers to high-priority regions along the southwest border.
- Expanding access to the CBP One app.
- Issuing new rules to encourage refugees and migrants to use lawful pathways. These rules include:
 - Expanded access to the CBP One app, to be presented at a point of entry to the United States.
 - New parole processes for family reunification.
 - Increasing the number of refugees from the Western Hemisphere who will benefit from access to resettlement.
- Increasing efforts to combat misinformation and disinformation..

This package of measures and regulations includes the imposition of new territorial access barriers, since it deems all persons arriving without a visa or detected after an irregular crossing as ineligible for asylum, except when **(a)** they have authorization to enter in accordance with a parole process, **(b)** they have a prior scheduled appointment through the CBP One app, or **(c)** their request for asylum in a third country through which they passed was rejected.⁹⁸

At the beginning of June, Mexico reached an agreement with the United States to receive up to 1,000 returnees per day from the United States. In the first few days, figures show that more than 2,400 people were received by agents of the National Institute of Migration (INM) and transported by plane and bus to Villahermosa, Tabasco, and Tapachula, Chiapas. In a statement from civil society organizations and networks, questions were raised about the Joint Humanitarian Plan on Migration signed with the government of the United States, since it is not known how the government of Mexico will implement it.⁹⁹

Regional Analysis

An Update on the Protection Crisis

VIOLENCE

A comprehensive analysis of the context of these countries that incorporates a perspective of human security and social wellbeing requires an approach that goes beyond official homicide figures. In spite of the significant reduction in homicides in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, other violent and closely interrelated dynamics such as enforced disappearance, human trafficking, femicide, and extortion continue to have a negative impact on people's conditions of life and safety.

El Salvador has experienced a reduction in homicides year over year, with 271 cases recorded between January and October. Honduras has recorded a 16% reduction in cases, while Guatemala has seen a 5.1% reduction and Mexico has had a drop of 3.7%. In spite of these improvements, the prevalence of femicide in the region continues to be concerning. El Salvador has reported 42 cases (unchanged year over year), while Honduras has recorded 341 cases, Guatemala 271 (64 fewer), and Mexico 694 (a 14% reduction).

The levels of violence recorded in Mexico are particularly noteworthy, as it stands out as the regional leader in the illicit human trafficking of migrants and has the third-highest crime rate of any country in the world, according to the [Global Organized Crime Index](#). The information available also reveals qualitative differences in the dynamics of illicit trafficking of migrants in different geographies. On the northeastern border, traffickers have closer links to transnational organized crime groups and drug cartels, while traffickers on the southern border are people from the local communities who live at strategic points on the migration routes. Villahermosa, Palenque, Tenosique, Comitán, and Tapachula are some of the southern cities that have felt the greatest impact of this phenomenon.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile, in spite of the year-over-year reduction in the number of missing persons, significant cross-cutting challenges persist that specifically affect mixed movements in Mexico. Along these lines, the Committee on Enforced Disappearance recently urged the Mexican state to adopt a series of changes to deal with disappearances more effectively in the context of human mobility.

In this regard, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances has recently urged the Mexican state to adopt a series of changes to more effectively address disappearances in the context of human mobility:¹⁰¹

- a) Revise the Guidelines of the Mechanism for Support Abroad in Search and Investigation in such a manner that it ensures the conceptual distinction between migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, as well as the identification of the different risks they face.
- b) Strengthen capacity building on matters relating to the Guidelines of the Mechanism for Support Abroad in Search and Investigation, the adapta-

tion of the Homologated Search Protocol for Missing and Unlocated Persons, and the General Guidelines for the issuance of humanitarian visas to the personnel of competent authorities.

- c) Encourage the availability and access to information relating to the operations of the Inter-Institutional Working Group on the Search for Foreign Migrants and the Search Table for Missing Migrants.
- d) Ensure that the Executive Commission for Victim Assistance or the state commissions for victim assistance provide support to the families of refugees and migrants in the search, investigation, and access to justice, and continue to provide free humanitarian visas for family members.

Furthermore, it has been noted that the measures adopted in El Salvador as part of the country's state of exception have led to a widespread reduction in homicides. However, the other forms of violence that still persist must also be addressed, including femicides and disappearances, as well as the need to ensure that security measures are implemented in a manner consistent with human rights, in such a way that guards against criminal proceedings without due guarantees; cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment; deaths while under the custody of the state; and any other potential situation of arbitrary treatment at the hands of the authorities.

The analysis of the measures put in place in El Salvador highlights the challenges for protection and guaranteeing human rights that must be dealt with, according to organizations. The fact that other countries are replicating this model, such as Honduras, represents a challenge for human rights guarantees in the region. In July 2023, OHCHR stated that while it is imperative to confront high levels of violence, the use of states of exception that authorize measures such as the participation of the military in public safety and in the command and control of prisons must be exceptional, time-limited, and restricted to what is strictly necessary according to the circumstances at hand. Otherwise, there is a risk of undermining the rule of law and peaceful coexistence under the pretext of reducing certain elements that contribute to violence.¹⁰³

Furthermore, the implementation of restrictive migration and asylum policies by some countries in the region, based on approaches that emphasize control and security, restrict the space for protecting refugees and migrants, increasing security risks and jeopardizing their access to and enjoyment of human rights. As OHCHR has mentioned, "migration governance measures that focus on security do not impede or reduce irregular migration, but rather often oblige migrants to undertake journeys that are more dangerous and precarious and, ultimately, that aggravate their vulnerable situation, violate their human rights, and perpetuate a cycle of exploitation and abuse against them".¹⁰⁴



PROTECTION NEEDS

The magnitude of the mixed migratory movements passing through the region has reached a new peak: in the second quarter of the year (April-June), 108,813 people crossed the Darién Gap, a 20% increase compared to the first quarter. The main countries of origin of migrants and those in need of protection are Venezuela, Haiti, Ecuador, and China. Meanwhile, on September 26, Costa Rican President Rodrigo Chaves declared a state of emergency in response to the 84,490 people who entered the country via the southern border.¹⁰⁶

The countries of northern Central America are no exceptions to this trend: the Honduras National Institute of Migration recorded a historic record of 71,262 people in transit in August, with a weekly average of 17,262 people. Meanwhile, in Guatemala, the IOM reported at least 37,929 people in transit in August.¹⁰⁷

Mexico is also facing a growing number of arrivals, as well as people in transit. Between January and September, COMAR is estimated to have registered 127,796 refugee applications, a 29.49% year-on-year increase. The COMAR office in Chiapas has received as many as 60% of all of the files submitted throughout the year.¹⁰⁸

TOP 10

Asylum seekers in Mexico by nationality

(January to September 2023)



The main needs of the population involved in mixed movements include water, sanitation and hygiene, food, healthcare and protection services (psychosocial assistance, medicines, and medical attention), and lodging. In a survey carried out by UNHCR in its monitoring of mixed movements between April and June 2023, it was shown that at least 26% of the population has at least one specific protection need, while 21% reports protection needs following an experience of physical, psychological, or sexual violence and/or abuse. The most common needs identified were those of single parents traveling with their children, who account for 37% of cases, a situation that also indicates a significant presence of children in transit.

It should be noted that there are significant ongoing circumstances in the region that generate international and national protection needs for various population groups that leave their countries to apply for refugee status abroad or remain in their countries due to forcible internal displacement. These circumstances include human rights violations, lack of security, political instability, and social tensions, which have been aggravated by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and natural and environmental disasters. The UNHCR report shows that 3 of 5 interviewees cited factors related to violence as being among the main reasons behind their decision to leave their country of origin, while 37% indicated that both violence and limited access to basic rights and services led to them leaving their country of origin.

With respect to the population of asylum seekers and refugees, it is observed that El Salvador and Honduras continue to be primarily countries of origin for people in search of international protection due to persistently high levels of violence, while Guatemala and Mexico have a significant flow in both directions, as countries that receive applications for asylum as well as countries of origin for asylum seekers.

Furthermore, there are persistent effects of climate change on protection needs. In July 2023, the El Niño phenomenon began to affect the Central American Dry Corridor, deepening problems of food insecurity and exacerbating poverty levels, especially in more vulnerable rural areas, which can lead to situations of mobility and/or displacement, as in previous years, if effective measures are not taken in response¹¹¹, and this situation adds new pressure on top of the impacts of hurricanes from previous years.

BALANCE OF MIGRATION POLICIES

The dynamics of human mobility in the region have been affected by the changes that have been made to countries' asylum and migration policies, especially those of the United States. The measures adopted by the United States to manage its borders and migration have had an impact on movements in Central America and Mexico as well as in South America. The changes recorded in these policies include measures related to the implementation of Title 8, the launch of new humanitarian admission and family reunification (parole) pathways, and changes in access to asylum.



Fin del título 42

The end of Title 42 on May 12, 2023, marked an inflection point in US migration policy. It was marked by the announcement and implementation of new measures to manage the borders and migration flows, which included the following:

- Increasing resources, including personnel, transportation, medical assistance, and support facilities for border operations.
- Increasing processing efficiency and capacity for applications with the CBO One app.
- Imposing consequences for illegal entry, including the application of expulsion and detention measures and the adoption of a new provision that limits access to asylum for those who cross the southwestern border or the adjacent coastal borders without authorization after traveling through another country and without (1) having availed themselves of an existing legal process, (2) having come to a point of entry at a time scheduled using the CBP One app, or (3) being denied asylum in a third country through which they traveled. These people are presumed to be ineligible for asylum unless they meet certain limited exceptions.
- The establishment of new admission programs for Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan nationals, which offer a new pathway for legal admission to the United States, along with consequences for those who do not take advantage of these pathways and cross the southwestern border without authorization.
- Reinforcing the capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the capacity to receive migrants at the border.
- Reinforcing measures against transnational criminal organizations and human traffickers who take advantage of vulnerable migrants for profit.

Even with the implementation of these provisions and control measures, mixed movements of people towards the US border persist. In 2023, the irregular movement of people through the Darién Gap reached record levels. In the transit points where migrant populations temporarily concentrate, the humanitarian infrastructure has been overwhelmed. In 2022, nearly 248,000 people made irregular crossings of the Darién Gap, while the number of recorded arrivals in Darién in 2023 increased to nearly 334,000 by the end of the month of August. Meanwhile, “Mexican officials recorded 140,671 migrants from South American countries in the first seven months of the year, compared with 102,106 from Central America, with record numbers coming from Venezuela and Ecuador.”¹¹²

The number of asylum requests has reached unprecedented numbers, and “Mexico is expected to receive a record 150,000 asylum applications in 2023, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. In 2022, Mexico processed 118,570 requests”.¹¹³ Against this background, the Mexican Commission for Assistance to Refugees (COMAR) faces challenges as well as personnel and budget limitations to confront this increase in the number of requests, in spite of support from UNHCR to respond to applications with expediency. Asylum seekers face a long wait before their application can be resolved without basic socioeconomic conditions and without the possibility of moving to a different state, as they run the risk of being detained and even deported.

Processes (parole) for Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan nationals

The US government has set up an entry process for people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela by providing temporary residence permits. To obtain them, applicants must have a “supporter,” which is a person who can provide them with economic support during their stay in the US; these people can also be representatives of law firms or other organizations or entities.

According to other measures announced, people belonging to these nationalities who cross the southern border of the United States irregularly between points of entry can be expelled. Furthermore, those who have made an irregular crossing of the Darién Gap are barred from accessing the process. These measures were enacted for Venezuelan nationals beginning on October 19, 2022, and Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Cuban nationals on January 9, 2023.¹¹⁴

TPS for the Venezuelan population

On September 20, 2023, the US government granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to nearly half a million Venezuelans, offering a temporary exemption from deportation and access to work permits for 18 months to those who entered the United States prior to July 31, 2023. Although this is a short-term measure, it is an important decision that will facilitate access to rights for the population, allowing them to move freely and access work. Civil society organizations have advocated for the Biden administration to continue expanding the temporary protection mechanism to asylum seekers from other nationalities, in addition to Venezuelans.¹¹⁵

Direct deportations to Venezuela

In October, the US restarted direct deportations of Venezuelan nationals with irregular migration status following the Maduro government’s agreement to receive the migrants, according to Biden administration officials.¹¹⁶ This measure took place in the context of conversations between the governments of both countries in spite of diplomatic relations being frozen since 2019. “This new decision to return Venezuelans is reprehensible, considering the risks that Venezuelans face in their own country and the international obligation the US has to guarantee that it is not returning people to a country where they would face probable danger or persecution (non-refoulement)”.¹¹⁷

Safe Mobility Offices

Under this program, eligible refugees and migrants will be considered for refugee and humanitarian admission programs and other legal pathways for admission to the United States or other countries that can offer these opportunities. The United States is establishing [Safe Mobility Offices](#) in certain countries in South and Central America, which will serve to direct refugees and migrants toward legal routes and help them to avoid the risks associated with migration. This process is supported by UNHCR, IOM, and other key partners. At this time, the Safe Mobility Program is open to:

- Cuban, Haitian, and Venezuelan nationals in Colombia and Ecuador (as well as Nicaraguan nationals in the latter country).
- Guatemalan nationals in Guatemala.
- Nicaraguan and Venezuelan nationals who were present in Costa Rica on or before June 12, 2023.¹¹⁸

Deportations

In Mexico and the United States, a slight downtick in the number of apprehensions and/or deportations has been observed in the first six months of 2023 relative to the same period in the previous year. The number of apprehensions has dropped by 12% in the United States, and the number of people turned back by the authorities in Mexico is down 57%. The number of Salvadorans returned decreased by 27%, while the number of Hondurans deported was 52% lower. It should be noted that these figures only include a few months following the implementation of Title 8 and, therefore, an uptick in the number of deportations is expected in the coming months.

In the first half of the year, this slight reduction could be due to the migration measures adopted by the United States, which have resulted in increased containment policies in other countries while also leading some people to pause their migration trajectory until they have a clearer understanding of the context. Given the number of measures in a short period, considerable uncertainty and anticipation has been building in the population, which often operates in a context of disinformation.

Regional migration summit

On October 22, a summit was held in Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico, with 12 Latin American presidents and chancellors with the aim of finding a comprehensive solution to migratory movements throughout the hemisphere. There, it was decided that a plan should be prepared on matters of development; greater promotion of intra-regional trade; the elimination of enforcement actions against some countries in the region; migration policies that respect the human right to migrate and are consistent with the regional context; requesting that destination countries expand regular, organized, and secure migration pathways; strengthening coordinated efforts among international organizations; and deepening south-south and triangular cooperation relationships, among others, which are expected to result in a high-level meeting on migration and development in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2024.¹¹⁹

PROTECTION RISKS

The increase in migration and forcible displacement in the region, accompanied by measures of securitization, restrictions on movement, and disproportionate migration control measures, has had a negative effect on people. Not only has it created a barrier for regularization and international protection, but it has also given rise to people taking irregular and clandestine pathways that are inhospitable and/or controlled by illegal actors, which has resulted in human rights violations such as disappearances, gender-based sexual violence, human trafficking, illicit trafficking of migrants, traffic accidents due to transit conditions, and forcible recruitment, among others.

In the specific case of the Darién Gap, the increased frequency of rainfall in Panama has caused river flows to increase, which can result in a larger number of dammed watercourses and drowning of refugees and migrants crossing the Darién Gap.¹²⁰ In addition, organizations have reported cases of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, throughout the routes¹²¹.

Given that national territories and borders are impossible to physically close, even with restrictive migration policies, measures against refugees and migrants create constantly shifting human trafficking routes with increasing danger and less state presence. These include maritime routes across the Caribbean, which have been observed in the final months of this year.¹²²

The IOM's Missing Migrants Project provides an insight into the risk of death and disappearance faced by migrants and refugees, identifying 385 cases of deaths and disappearances between January and June 2023, 176 of which occurred on the Mexico-US border, with 33 victims identified as minors. The leading causes of death were identified as vehicle accidents/deaths linked to dangerous transportation (147), drowning (101), accidental death (44), and violence (35). The actual magnitude of the risks experienced by refugees and migrants may be even more critical, given the significant levels of underreporting.¹⁰⁹

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