UNHCR ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

Mixed Movements Monitoring
Honduras

December 2023

Highlights of the month

+545,000

More than 545,000 refugees and migrants entered, registered and transited through Honduras in 2023 according to the Honduran National Migration Institute (INM), which **is almost three times more than in 2022** and a **new record number.**

In December 2023, INM registered 42,637 refugees and migrants in transit, which is 89% more than in December 2022.

- In December 2023, the five **main nationalities** were Venezuela, Cuba, Guinea, Ecuador and Haiti.
- While in December compared to the previous month there was a reduction of Venezuelans, Cubans and Haitians, the number of **people from Sub-Saharan African countries increased by 11% and by 31% from Asian countries.**
- **51%** of all people in mixed movements in December **were women, girls and boys,** confirming the trend of an **increase** in women, girls and boys on the move in **recent months.**
- In December, **more than 93%** of the people on the move entered Honduras through the **department of El Paraíso,** while the remaining **7% entered through Choluteca.**

UNHCR/Gabriela Villeda

At least **39% of the persons** on the move interviewed by UNHCR and its partners stated to be **in need of international protection** as they were forced to leave their country of origin due to violence and persecution.

77% of the interviewed persons **left their country** of origin or last residence **less than four weeks ago.**

38% of the interviewed people reported having **suffered some form of mistreatment or abuse** during the journey since they left their country of origin or last residence. **16%** indicated that they experienced mistreatment or other forms of abuse **in Honduras.**

23% of those interviewed by UNHCR and its partners reported that in the group they are traveling with are people with **specific protection needs** including: breastfeeding or pregnant women, people with a disability or with critical or chronic illnesses, elderly persons, among other profiles.

The **main needs** reported by refugees and migrants on the move are **food, clothes and footwear, shelter, healthcare and medicines, and water.**

Only **21%** of the interviewed refugees and migrants were able to **eat all three meals** the day before the interview with UNHCR, **43%** had **two meals,** and **36%** had **one or none.**

Official Data

Total Irregular Entries 2022:

188,858

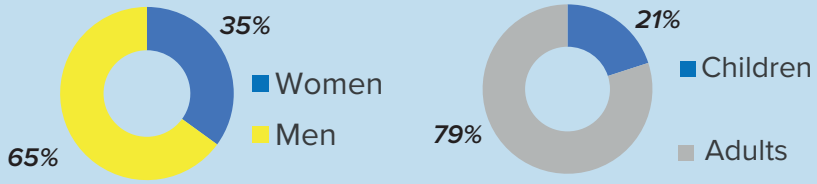
Total Irregular Entries Jan - Dec 2023:

545,043

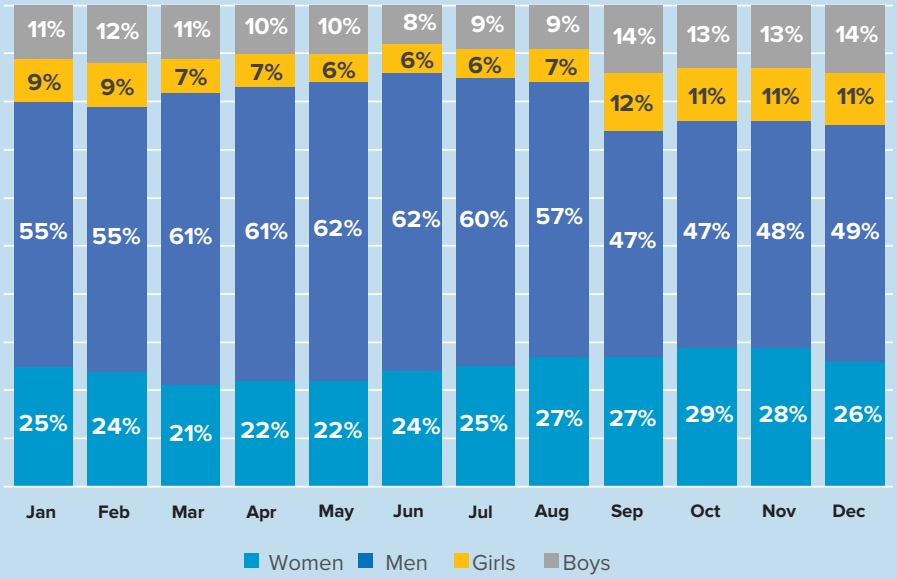
Total number of different nationalities who have entered Honduras irregularly in 2023:

117

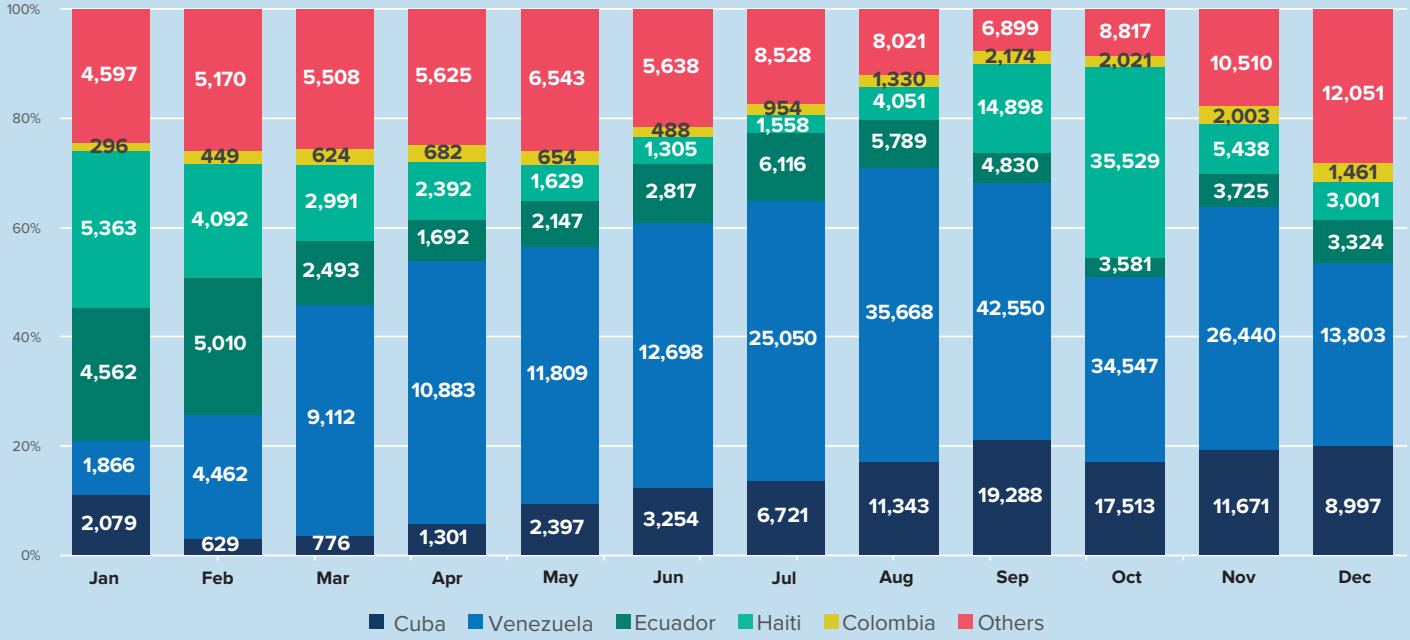
Irregular Entries Jan - Dec 2023:



Monthly irregular entries by age and gender in 2023:

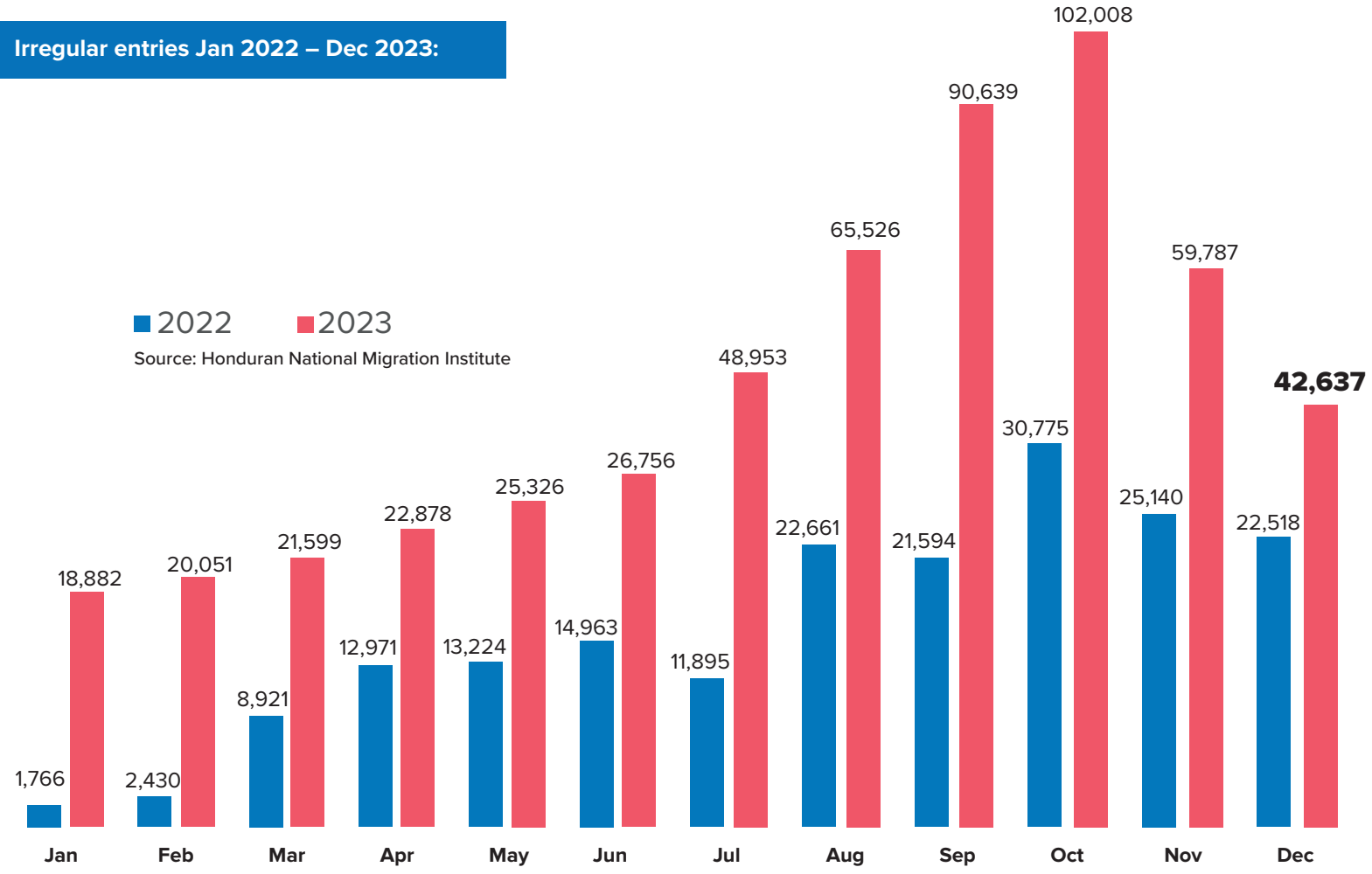


Monthly irregular entries by nationality in 2023:



Source: Honduran National Migration Institute

Irregular entries Jan 2022 – Dec 2023:



Girls use recreational spaces while their relatives process documents at the Interior Control Delegation managed by the National Institute of Migration at Pescadero.

UNHCR/Danielle Álvarez

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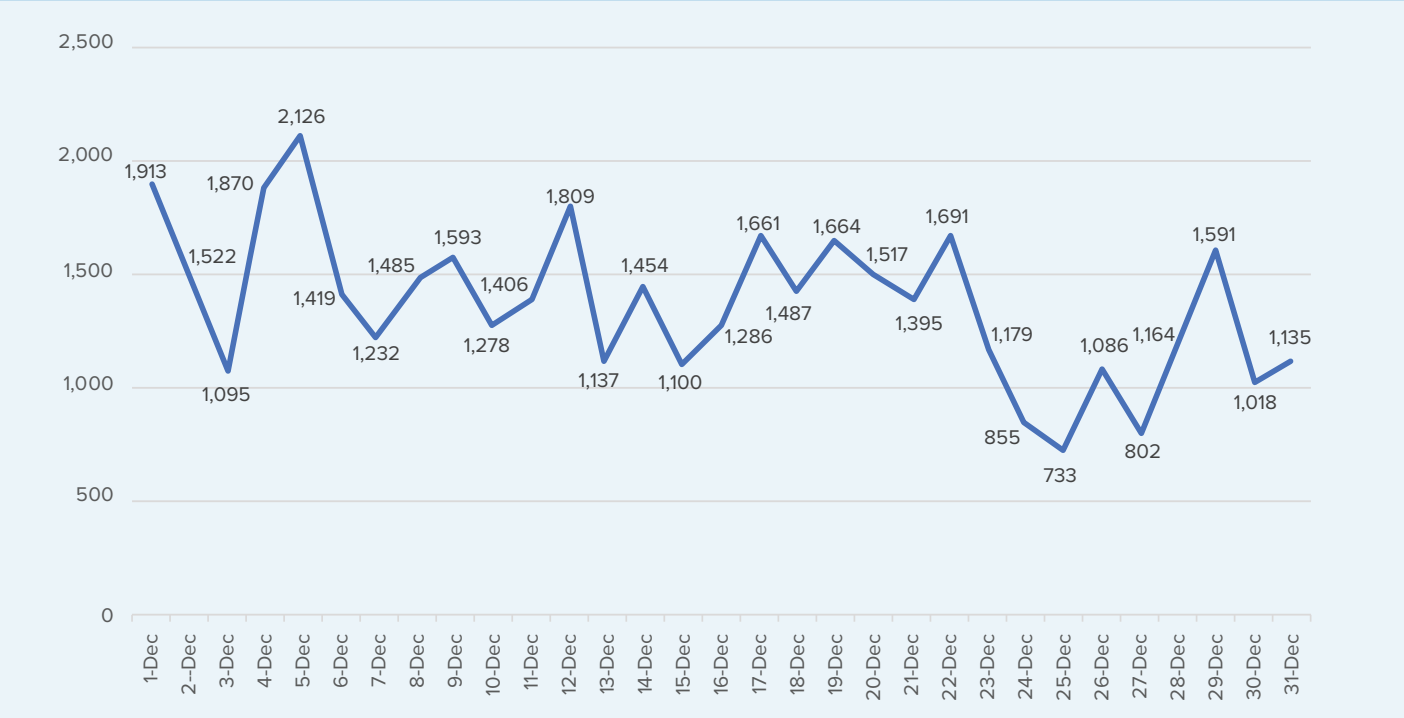
INM Daily Registry of Persons Entering Honduras Irregularly in December 2023



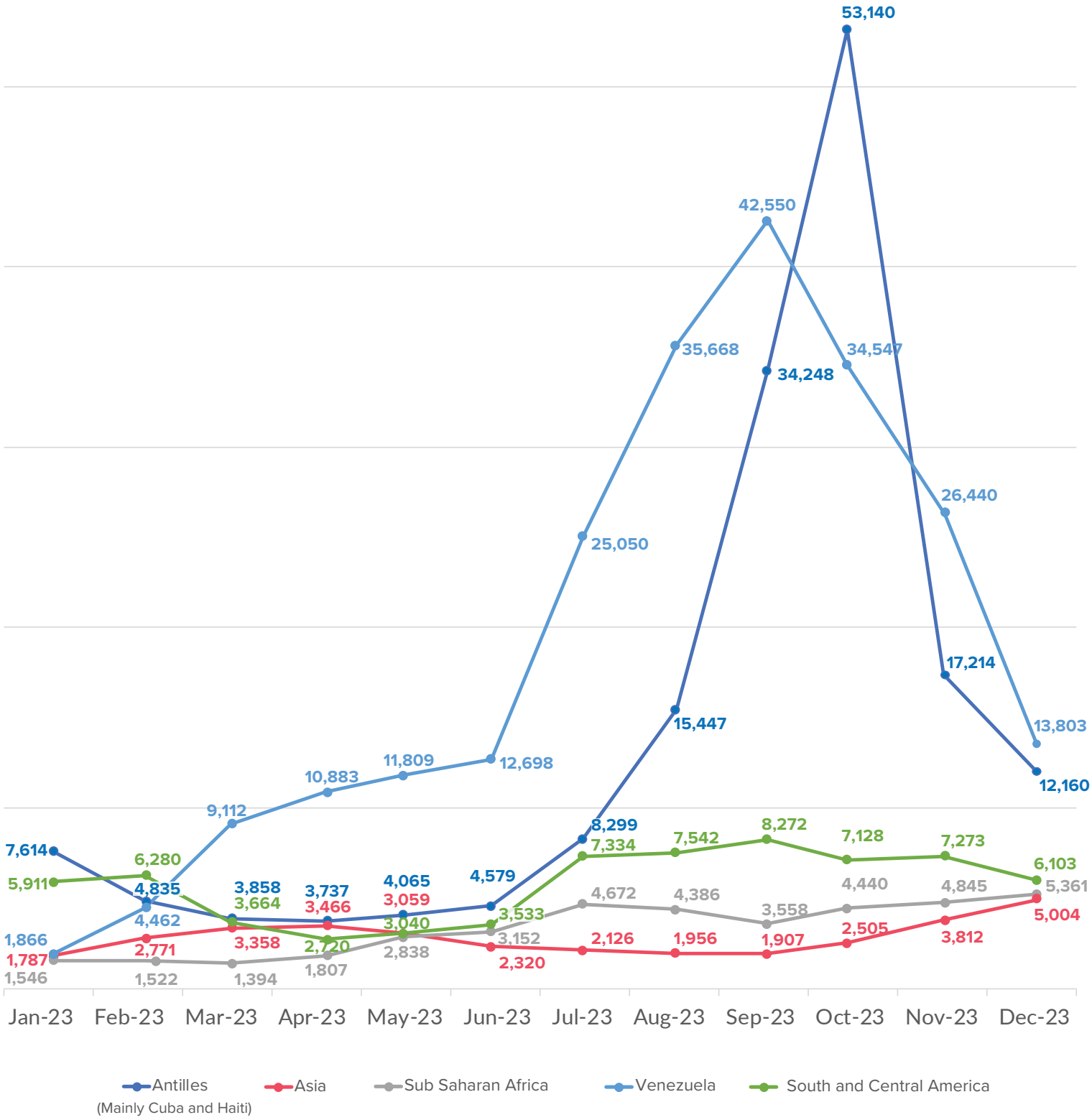
Source: Honduran National Migration Institute

Irregular arrivals of people in mixed movements happen through blind spots along the southeast border of Honduras, mainly through Danlí, Trojes and Choluteca. They can regularize their stay after registration with the National Migration Institute (INM) who grants them a five-day permit to transit the country, according to the amnesty approved in 2022, and renewed in June 2023 until 31 December 2023. The INM previously did not work on weekends, but as of June 2023 they expanded their work hours to include the weekend, resulting in a greater number of registrations. However, the flows of people have also continued to increase in the previous months, except in November and December which saw a decrease. Nevertheless, entries still remain higher in comparison to entries from the same month last year. **The number of persons in mixed movements transiting through Honduras are likely to be higher than reflected in this report, as not all those who enter the country irregularly register themselves with INM.**

At Las Manos border, people line up to access transportation services that will take them to cities like Danlí.

UNHCR/Danielle Álvarez

Monthly irregular arrivals between Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 by region of origin *(including Venezuela):*



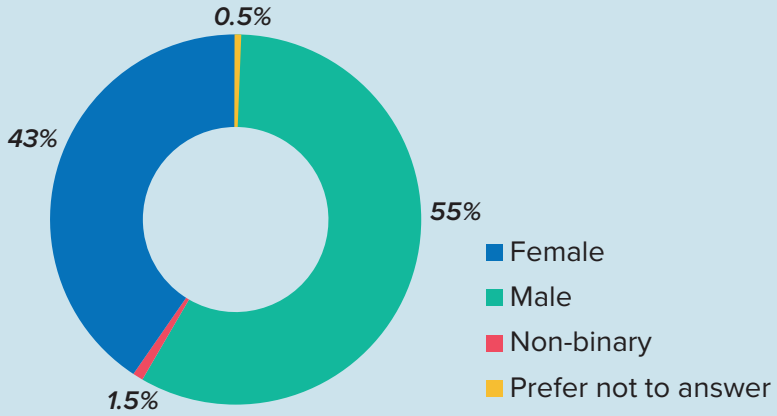
Source: Honduran National Migration Institute

Mixed Movements Protection Monitoring Results

*The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) collects monthly information on the **profiles, vulnerabilities and protection needs** of refugees and migrants who enter Honduras through the border with Nicaragua and transit through the country towards the border with Guatemala. The information is compiled through individual interviews conducted at the main hotspots throughout Honduras, with a focus on the entry and exit borders. The preliminary results presented here are indicative only and should not be interpreted as representative of the total population of refugees and migrants who are part of mixed movements.*

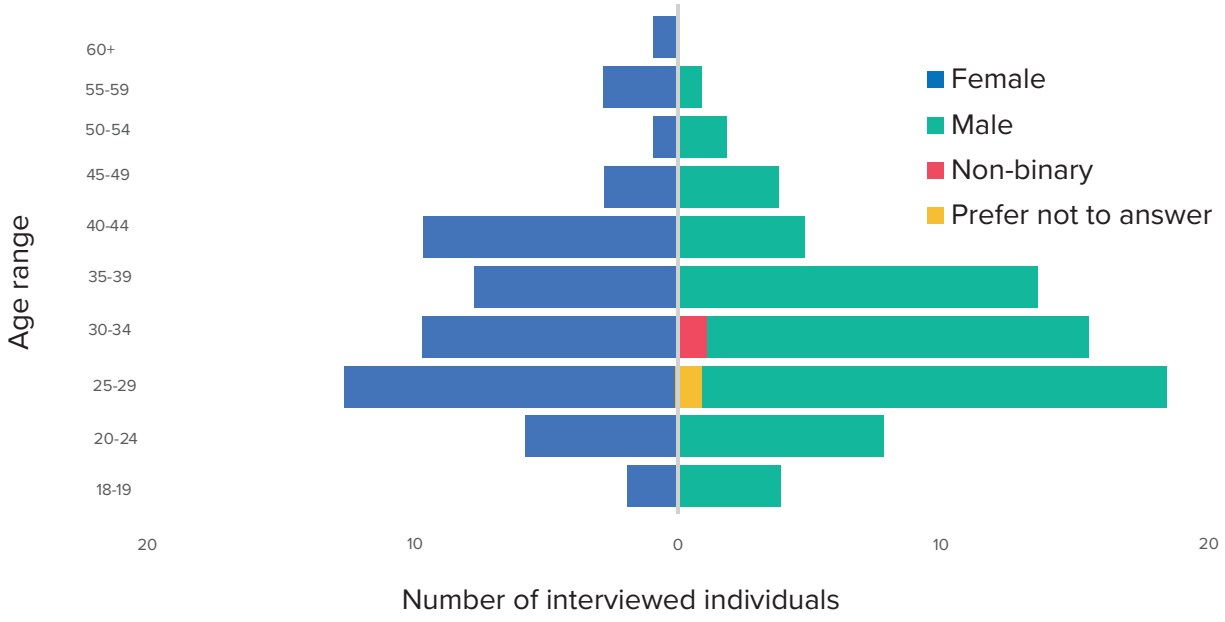
Interviewed Population Data

Interviewed Individuals by Sex

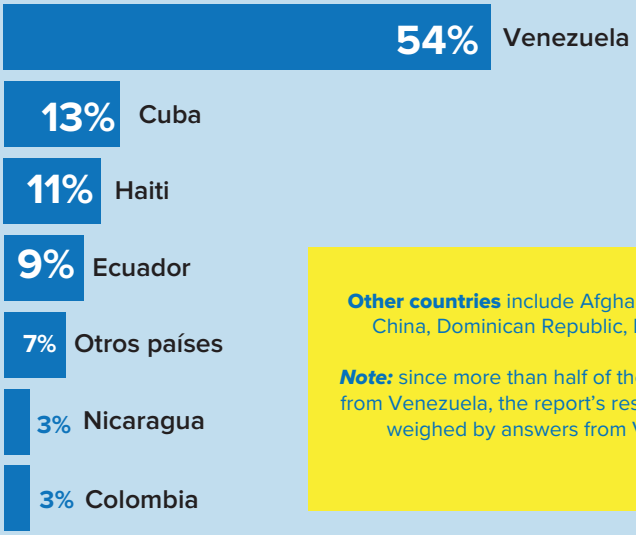


Average age: 33 years

Interviewed individuals by age range



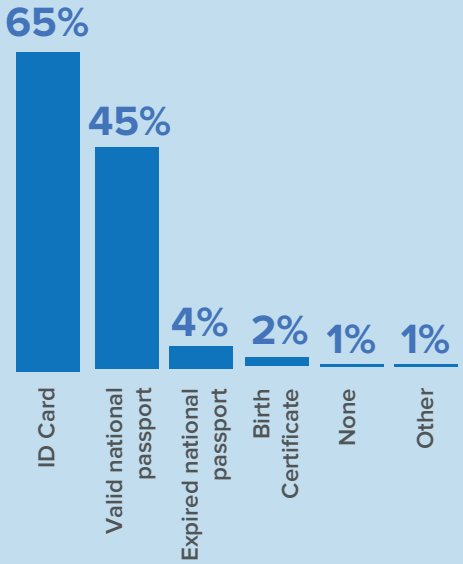
Nationality



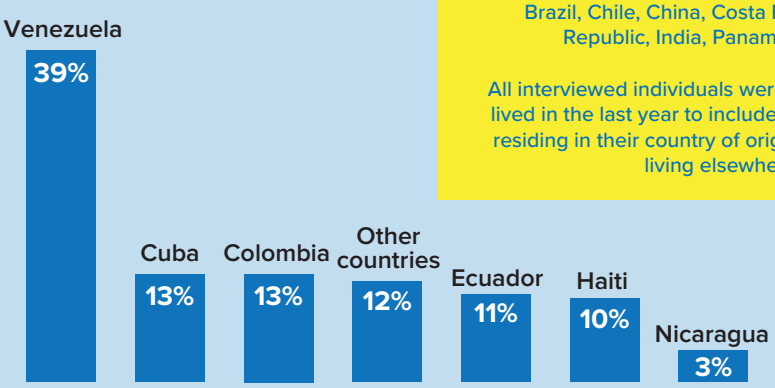
Other countries include Afghanistan, Argentina, China, Dominican Republic, India and Peru.

Note: since more than half of the respondents are from Venezuela, the report's results will be mostly weighed by answers from Venezuelans.

Documents Carried



Country of residence in the past year

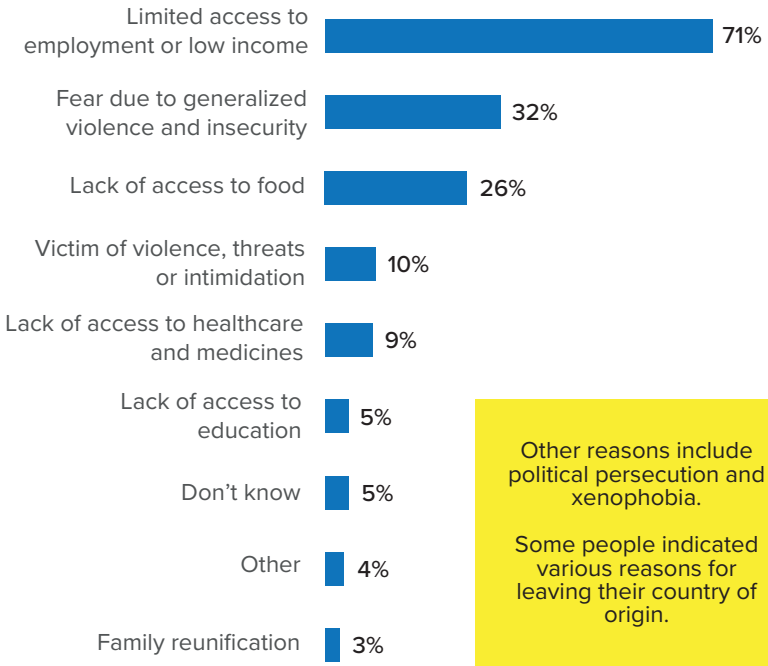


Other countries include Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, India, Panama and Perú.

All interviewed individuals were asked where they lived in the last year to include persons who were residing in their country of origin as well as those living elsewhere.

17% of the interviewees lived outside of their country of origin and mainly resided in Colombia (57%), Peru (9%), Ecuador (9%), Chile (9%), Costa Rica (4%), Panama (4%), Dominican Republic (4%) and Brazil (4%).

Reasons for leaving country of origin

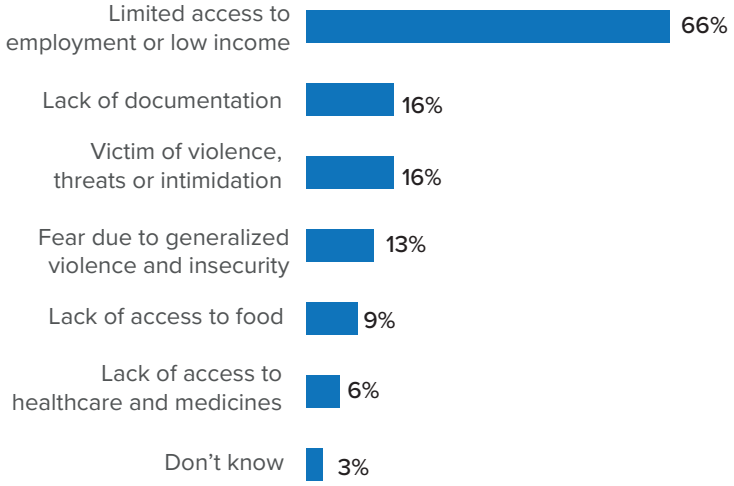


Other reasons include political persecution and xenophobia.

Some people indicated various reasons for leaving their country of origin.

Reasons for leaving country of habitual residence

(only includes those who were living outside their country of origin in the past year)



Some people indicated various reasons for leaving their country of residence.

A Venezuelan family in transit through Honduras praised the solidarity of the Honduran people, stating, "When they saw me carrying my son on my back, they organized themselves to give me a wheelchair for him."

UNHCR/Danielle Álvarez

77%

of the interviewed individuals left their country of origin/residence

Less than four weeks ago

97%

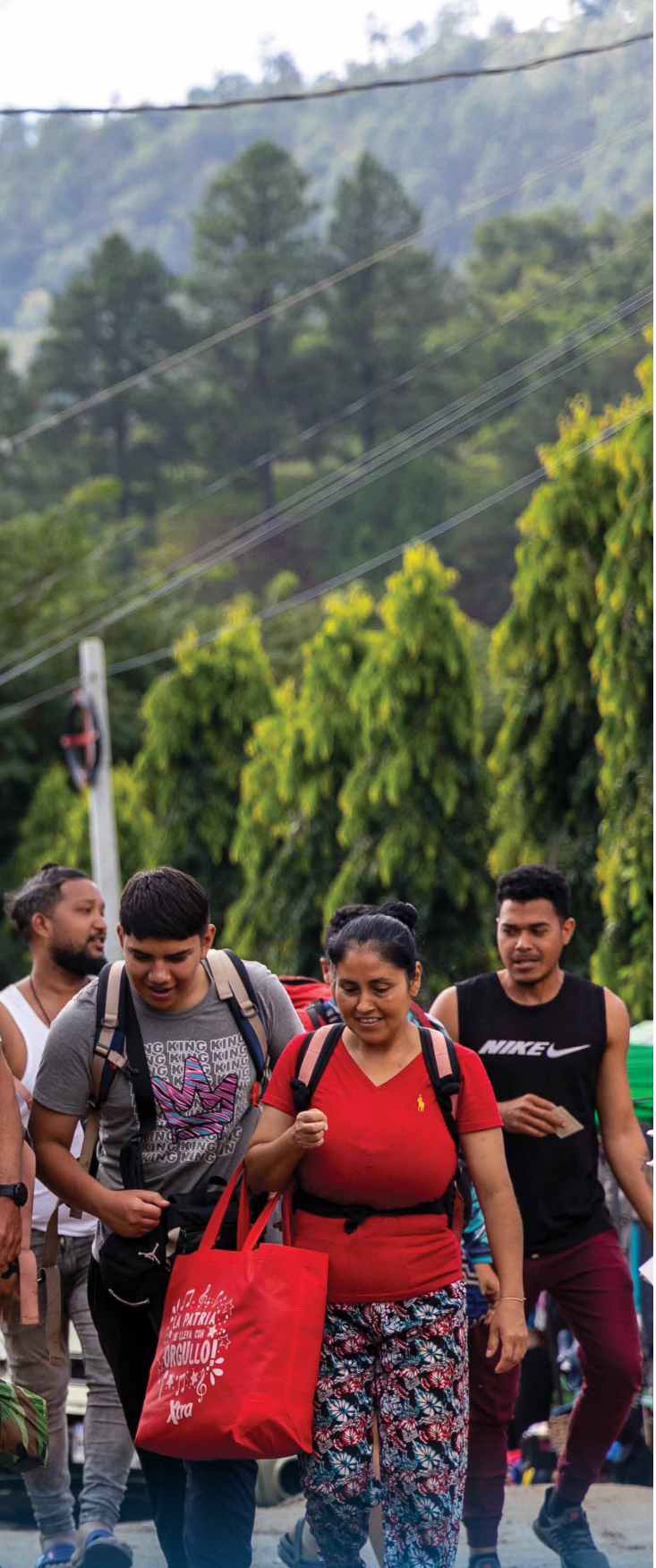
reported an intention to stay in Honduras

for less than a month

(usually, less than a week) to continue their journey to their destination.

92%

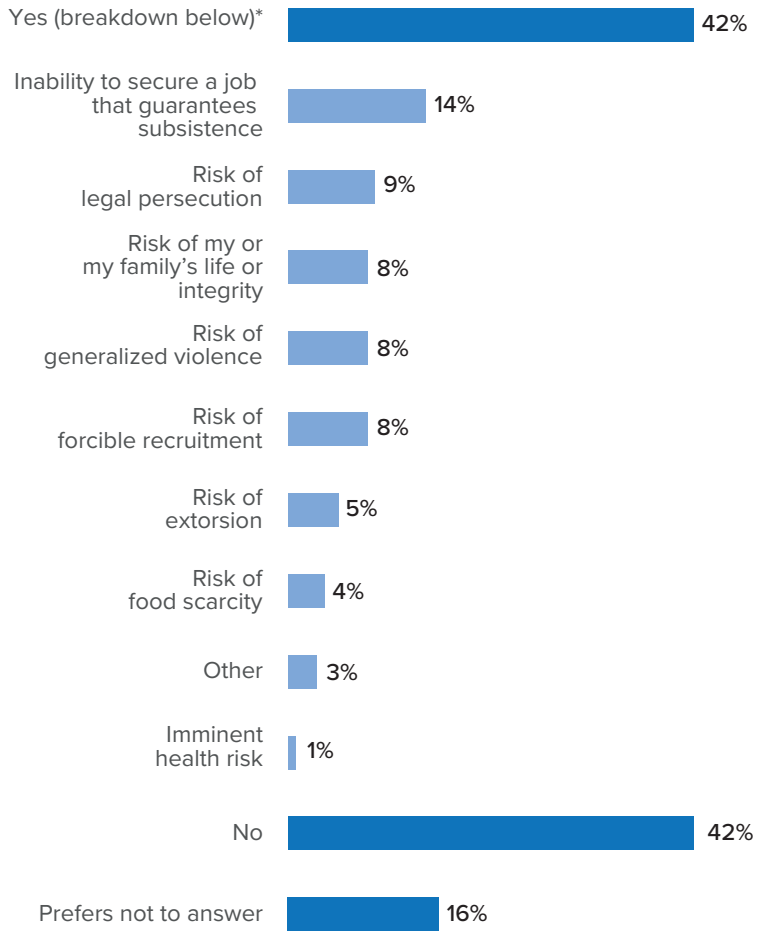
of the interviewed individuals reported the **United States as their intended final destination.** 5% indicated Canada and 3% indicated Honduras as their intended final destination.



During the mornings, hundreds of people line up at the Interior Control Delegations of the National Institute of Migration. There, they can process the necessary paperwork to continue their journey.

UNHCR/Danielle Álvarez

Would you encounter any risks if you had to return to your country of origin?



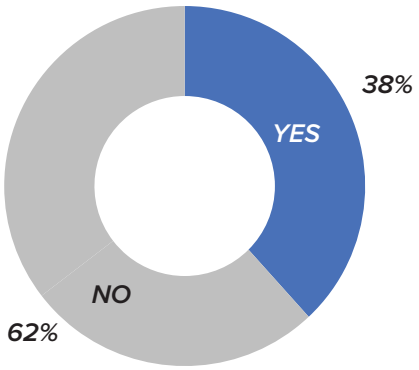
Some persons indicated that they would face several risks if they had to return to their country of origin.

The majority of respondents reported limited access to employment as the main reason for leaving their country of origin (see page 8).

At the same time a significant percentage of people indicated that they would encounter risks if they had to return to their country, including legal persecution, generalized violence, risks to their or their family's life or integrity, forcible recruitment and extorsion. In other words, even if people left their country for employment reasons, it does not mean that they would not face other risks if they had to return to their country of origin.

Another important factor to take into account is that people in mixed movements with protection needs tend to not disclose a lot of information about the reasons that forced them to flee their country of origin. Furthermore, a significant percentage (16%) preferred not to answer the previous question: ***Would you encounter any risks if you had to return to your country of origin?***

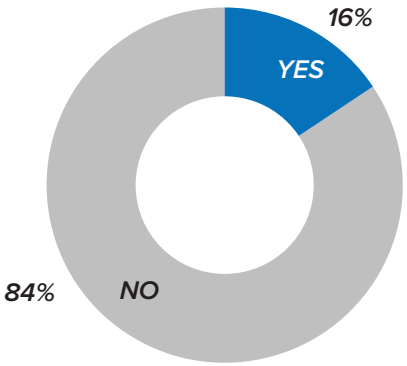
Did you experience any mistreatment or abuse during the journey?



Of the individuals that responded "yes", 46% reported being victims of theft and 42% of fraud. Additionally, 18% reported being victims of physical threat or intimidation.

Some persons indicated various forms of mistreatment.

Did you experience any mistreatment or other forms of abuse at the border or within Honduras?



Within Honduras, of the individuals that responded "yes", 48% reported being victims of theft and 29% of fraud. Additionally, 19% suffered physical assault.

Some persons indicated various forms of mistreatment, with incidents occurring around the country.

Protection Concerns

23% of the interviewed individuals reported traveling with somebody with specific protection needs, including:

2% of interviewed individuals reported traveling with a **survivor of violence in their group** (sexual, physical, or psychological).

5% of interviewed individuals reported traveling with **pregnant or/and lactating women.**

5% of interviewed individuals reported having a **single parent traveling with children in their group.**

2% of respondents reported traveling with someone with a **critical or chronic medical condition.**

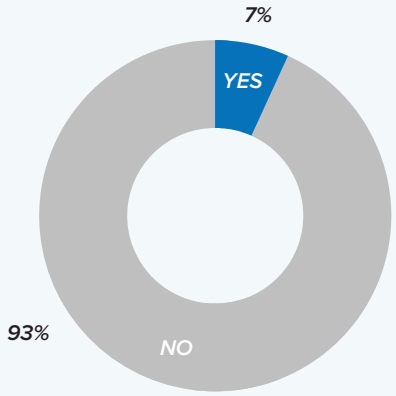
1% of the respondents reported traveling with **elderly persons.**

8% of interviewed individuals reported traveling with someone with a **disability: physical (5%), visual (2%) and mental (1%).**

Main Needs

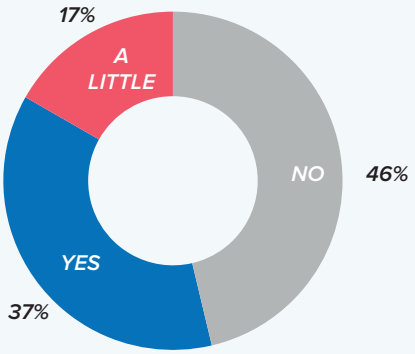
Other main needs reported by persons on the move include: **water, food and items for children, internet and telephone access, legal assistance,** and **information on protection and migratory alternatives.**

Have you previously applied for asylum?



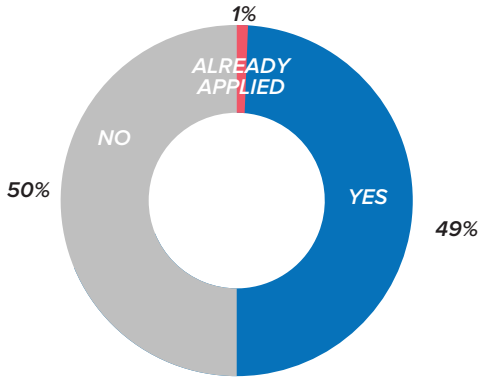
The individuals previously applied in Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras and Peru.

Are you aware of the United States Government's Parole Program?

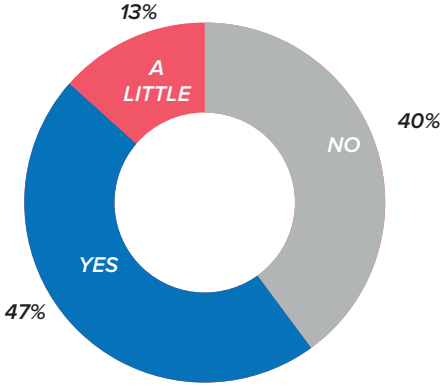


Only citizens of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Haiti and Cuba were asked this question, as the parole program only applies to these countries.

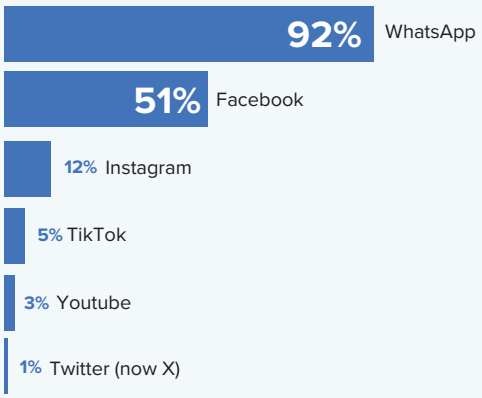
Have you been informed of the opportunity to seek asylum in Honduras?



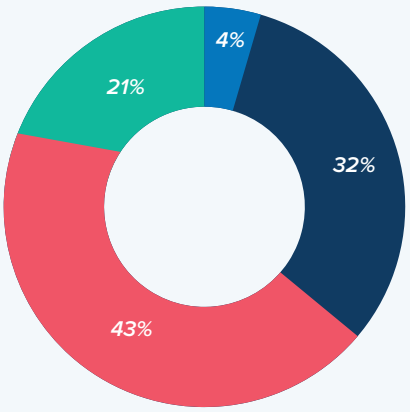
Do you know how the United States Government's CBP One application works?



Which communication platforms do you use to get information during the trip?



How many meals did you eat yesterday?



None One Two Three or more

Main findings of the focal group discussions with people on the move

With the objective to complement the information provided in the individual interviews (previous section), UNHCR organized two focal group discussions (one in Choluteca and one in Ocotepeque), mainly with Venezuelans, to obtain more information on their profiles and needs. The main findings are:

Reasons for leaving the country of origin

Some people mentioned that they were forced to flee their country of origin due to threats from organized crime groups or state authorities, while others indicated that they had left their country because of the economic situation.

The route

All persons who participated in the focal group discussions reported that they crossed the Darien jungle. While half of the people crossed without paying someone to guide them, the other half paid around 250 USD per person. From Panama they then continued the route overland, often by foot, until they reached Honduras.

Access to food and water

All people reported difficulties in accessing food on the route, stating that they sometimes only ate once or twice a day and mostly snacks. They also mentioned the challenge of accessing drinking water along the route, which was mostly donated to them by members of the host communities.

Main needs

With regard to the main needs, the participants highlighted the limited access to food, medical assistance and information on the available humanitarian services (including shelters) as well as general information on transiting and exiting Honduras safely to prevent illegal charges.

Country of destination

The majority of the participants indicated that their final destination country is the United States. A small number expressed their intention to reach Canada, where they believe there may be better opportunities for them.

Due to limited availability of shelters, families opt to rest in public spaces in towns they transit through.

UNHCR/Danielle Álvarez

Main findings of the interview carried out with a key informant

In addition to the individual interviews carried out with people in mixed movements and the focal group discussions, UNHCR interviewed a community actor in El Paraíso, located a few kilometres from Las Manos border with Nicaragua, through whom the following main findings were obtained:

1 Nationalities

The community member mentioned that most of the people entering and transiting through Honduras are Venezuelans. However, compared to previous months, there has been a downward trend in the total number of persons in mixed movements.

2 Risks and challenges

With regard to protection risks and challenges, people continue to report that they have suffered assaults, sexual assaults and discrimination along the route. Furthermore, they regularly state that they have faced difficulties in accessing health care, WASH facilities, food and water, mentioning that they had to drink from rivers or springs. Likewise, people in mixed movements are regularly charged excessive prices for products and services.

3 Main needs

According to the key informant, the main needs of refugees and migrants include **food and drinking water, medical assistance, more information on available humanitarian services** (especially shelters), and **personal hygiene products.**

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For up-to-date information on the situation of mixed movements in the Darien crossing that impacts flows in Honduras, please click here.

UNHCR Honduras
Data Sources: UNHCR Protection Monitoring, carried out between 4 and 15 December 2023.
Feedback: Sara Naama, Associate Information Management Officer
Email: naama@unhcr.org

UNHCR is grateful for the contributions of donor countries that contribute to the office in Honduras and to global programmes with flexible funding:

Also, we thank the contributions of our global private donors in Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America.