Protectionc Cluster
South-Eastern Border Team

Monthly Report

South-Eastern Border Local Team

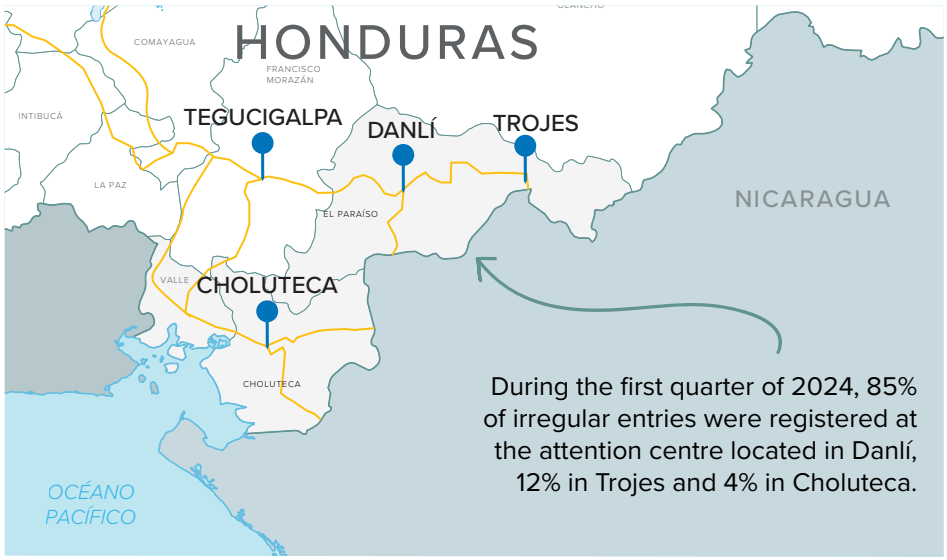
From 1 to 31 March 2024

Published on 17 April 2024

Refugees and migrants transiting in mixed movements enter through the Nicaragua-Honduras border, located in the southeast of the country.

Due to the dynamics of the flows, the organisations that make up the Humanitarian Network of Honduras have deployed a response that seeks to improve reception conditions.

These organisations make up the South-Eastern Border Local Team, a local coordination structure that produces these periodic reports with the purpose of informing on the scale of inflows, main humanitarian needs, response actions and persistent gaps.



The routes in the image are illustrative and do not reflect the routes taken by refugees and migrants in transit.

Key Figures

Entries registered by the National Migration Institute (INM)

133,518 people
From 1 January to 31 March 2024

120%
60,532 people from January to March 2023

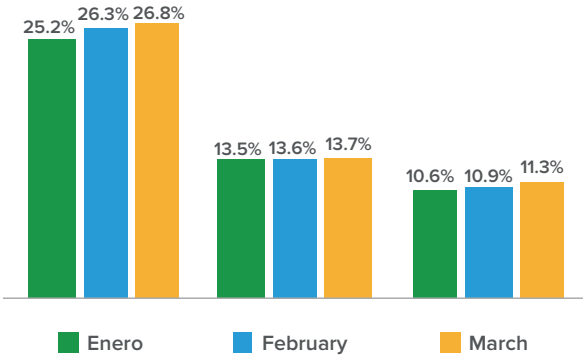
45,666 people
1 March to 31 March

111%
21,599 people in March 2023

These figures represent an **increase compared to the same periods in 2023.**

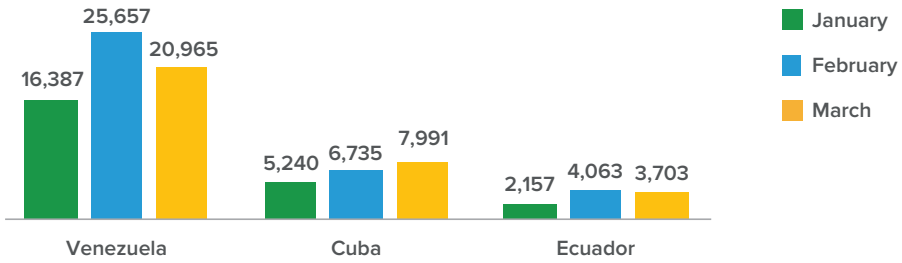
49% Men
26% Women
14% Boys
11% Girls

During the first three months of 2024, the percentage of women and children entering through the south-eastern border has been on an upward trend.



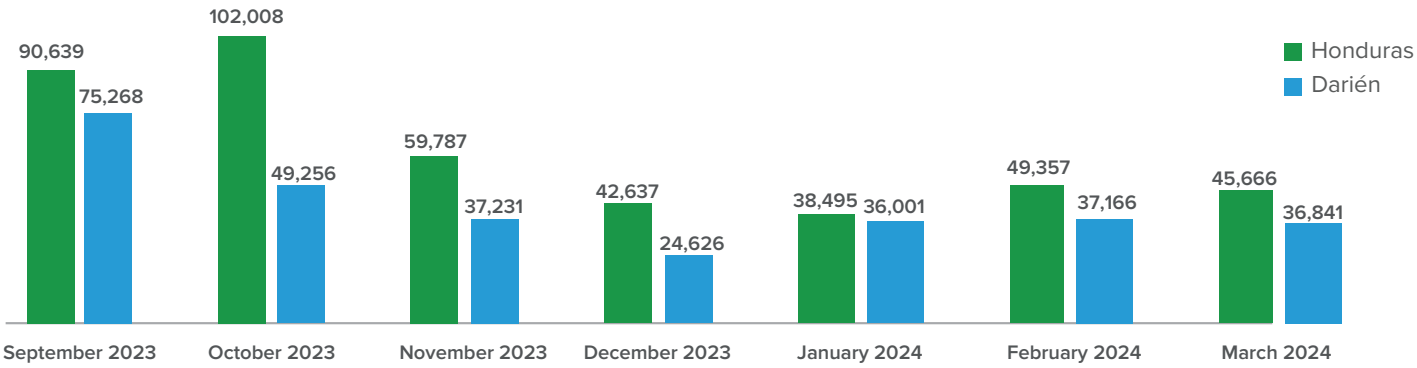
This increase comes at a time when there has also been an increase in the identification of cases of gender-based violence, specifically sexual violence, as well as negative coping mechanisms that particularly impact women and children.

Three Spanish-speaking nationalities account for 70% of total entries: Venezuela, Cuba and Ecuador. However, within the top 10 nationalities with the highest number of inflows, there are five non-Spanish-speaking nationalities: Haiti, China, Guinea, India and Mauritania.



Non-Spanish speakers **face greater risks of being co-opted by trafficking networks** that limit the ability to provide counselling, protection services and humanitarian assistance.

Since September 2023, Honduras has registered a higher inflow than Darien, according to official migration figures in both countries.



This trend is explained by air transit to Nicaragua, which allows people coming mainly from Haiti, Cuba, Guinea and other extra-continental nationalities to subsequently take the route through Honduras without passing through the Darién. Added to this is the maritime transit from Colombia to Nicaragua.

Official figures show the magnitude of the humanitarian challenges faced by Honduras in attending to the more than 1,500 people who come daily to the facilities set up by the national authorities to complete the migration process. The deployment of this inter-agency response improves the governance of migration, reduces protection risks, including trafficking and smuggling, facilitates access to humanitarian assistance and favours the identification of persons in need of protection.

Entries as estimated by Local Team monitoring exercises

+166,000 people
From 1 January to 31 March 2024.

+55,800 people
From 1 to 31 March 2024.

During 2023, the **average under-registration monitored by the Local Team was 40%**; this percentage has decreased significantly compared to the first quarter of 2024, during which period an under-registration of 20% is estimated. This situation could be explained by the measures taken by the NMI to expand its reception capacity, as well as by the fact that during the first quarter of the year there were fewer entries than during the last quarter of 2023.

The figures reported by the monitoring of the organisations that make up the Local Team show the number of people who do not carry out the procedures set out by the authorities. This is either due to a lack of knowledge of the administrative processes, or possible irregular access to transit permits, or the pressure generated by the trafficking networks so that people do not go to the national authorities, or other additional reasons. These people face greater protection risks by not having access to guidance, protection services and humanitarian assistance.

Main risks, responses and gaps

During March, three risks were identified as becoming more acute in the response to mixed movements on the south-eastern border.

Gender-based violence

Risk: Throughout the year there was an increase in the identification of cases of gender-based violence occurring along the route, with March being the month with the highest increase. The number of survivors of sexual violence was higher than in the whole of the previous year. According to Médecins Sans Frontières care data, 137 victims of sexual violence have been attended from January to March 2024. Of these cases, three have been identified within 72 hours and 125 (91%) have occurred in the Darién jungle.

Response: Thanks to CERF 2023 funds, as well as funding from other donors, organisations with a presence on the south-eastern border were able to strengthen their capacity to identify, refer and respond to cases of gender-based violence. HIAS, Médecins Sans Frontières, FOROSIDA, Médecins du Monde, IRC, CARE and the Southern Regional Women's Network have deployed a survivor-based emergency response. In addition, the Protection Cluster, the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR), under the coordination of UNHCR and UNFPA, consolidated a care pathway for survivors of GBV for the municipalities of Danlí and Choluteca. These referral routes provide responses for both local people and those in mixed movements.

Gap: Despite the improved response capacity of humanitarian actors, there is still a need to reinforce the activation of cross-sectoral routes. The challenge, additionally, is to maintain continuity in interventions that could be at risk due to the decrease in funding. According to the mapping of services of the Local Team and the GBV AoR, in June, the response capacity would be reduced due to the end of funding for some organisations.

Trafficking and forced labour

Risk: During the first quarter of 2024, the Local Team identified increased recurrence of negative coping mechanisms. Areas have been monitored in Danlí, Las Manos, El Pescadero and Trojes where people in mixed movements are more exposed to survival sex, low paid jobs, among others.

Response: The South-Eastern Border Local Team, through co-leadership, and in coordination with the Protection Cluster and the AdR GBV, prioritised dialogue with the Inter-institutional Commission Against Sexual and Commercial Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons in Honduras (CICEST) and the Secretariat of Women's Affairs to identify actions to reinforce their presence in the aforementioned areas, in order to strengthen their prevention and response capacity. In addition, joint missions were carried out to critical points to identify possible mitigation measures, in coordination with the competent authorities.

Gap: There is still a gap in the inter-institutional and comprehensive response to prevent and address trafficking, smuggling and forced labour. Additionally, considering the complexity of the structures that control trafficking and smuggling networks, it limits the capacity for advocacy, particularly of local actors, who are permanently exposed.

Obstacles to accessing humanitarian services

Risk: According to interviews with refugees and migrants, Honduras is identified as a safe country to access humanitarian assistance services. Improvements in reception conditions have allowed people in mixed movements to feel safer to access services provided in: (i) protection, including legal assistance and counselling, child-friendly spaces and safe spaces for women and LGTBIQ+ persons; (ii) information and re-establishment of family contacts; (iii) health, physical, mental and sexual and reproductive health; (iv) temporary

shelter; (v) water, sanitation and hygiene; (vi) emergency education.

Despite this, the magnitude of the flows, the level of vulnerability, the short length of stay and the impacts of trafficking and smuggling networks mean that obstacles still persist in access to humanitarian response. During the reporting period, an increase in cases of epilepsy, dehydration due to the high temperatures recorded during the first months of the year, people with chronic diseases such as hypertension who have suspended treatment and cases of children with acute malnutrition were identified. The most frequent pathologies continue to be gastrointestinal diseases and respiratory infections.

Response: Under the leadership of the health region, PAHO, MSF, MDM, ChildFund and the CHR are coordinating schedules and referral routes to strengthen response capacity. More than 15,000 health cases were treated during the reporting period.

Gap: The weak conditions of the health system in the border municipalities and the magnitude of the influx of people in need of assistance require the reinforcement of the response capacity to have the required personnel and supplies, covering each of the points where the population requires health care.

Highlights of the month

High-level missions

The South-Eastern Border Local Team coordinated the visit of the Resident Coordinator and the UNICEF Representative. These visits promote a higher level of visibility of the gaps in the response and allow for the strengthening of advocacy strategies on the most critical issues.

During the month of April, missions are scheduled for the Resident Coordinator together with the Director of the National Migration Institute, the Secretariat of Women's Affairs and CICEST.

Improvements to the Humanitarian Space in El Pescadero

The El Pescadero Committee led actions aimed at ensuring the best distribution of space for the organisations present to favour adequate, coordinated and complementary attention.

Rubbish collection day in El Pescadero. The organisations with a presence in El Pescadero carried out a rubbish collection day with the participation of people in mixed movements and the association of vendors in the area.

The Fundación Alivio al Sufrimiento (FAS) inaugurated the Casa Rafael Temporary Rest Centre located at the border of Las Manos. ChildFund and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) delivered medical supplies to strengthen the response capacity of the Office of International Health (OSI).

Improving the conditions of the host community. UNICEF, ADRA, the Red de Mujeres del Sur, the Honduran Red Cross and UNHCR made progress in implementing improvements to the water, sanitation, and hygiene system in the Las Manos community.

Further Information

Below you will find some of the products published by the organisations that make up the South-Eastern Border Local Team during the month of March.

UNCHR: Mixed Movements Monitoring Report

UNHCR and WFP: Regional Mixed Movements Monitoring Report

Consorcio Life: Situation Reports

Protection Cluster
South-Eastern Border Local Team

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Design: UNHCR/Lucía Martínez