UNHCR ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

Mixed Movements Monitoring
Honduras
February 2024

Refugee family on the move received basic medical care and other humanitarian assistance at a shelter supported by UNHCR.

UNHCR/Lucía Martínez

Highlights of the month

49,357

*refugees and migrants entered, registered and transited through Honduras in February 2024 according to the National Migration Institute (INM), **which is an increase of 146% in comparison to the same month in 2023.***

*In comparison to January 2024, in February the number of **Ecuadorians increased by 88%, Colombians by 63%, Venezuelans by 57% and Cubans by 29%, while Haitians decreased by 9%.***

*At least **33%** of individuals in mixed movements interviewed by UNHCR and its partners reported having **international protection needs** because they had to flee their country of origin due to violence or persecution.*

***40%** of the people reported having suffered some form of **mistreatment or abuse** during their journey from their country of origin or last residence to Honduras. **11%** stated that they suffered mistreatment or abuse in Honduras.*

*The **main needs** reported by refugees and migrants on the move are **food, water, clothing and footwear, medical assistance and medicines** as well as information on **their rights.***

Official Data

Total Irregular Entries 2023:

545,043

Total Irregular Entries January and February 2024:

87,852

Total number of different nationalities who entered Honduras irregularly in 2024:

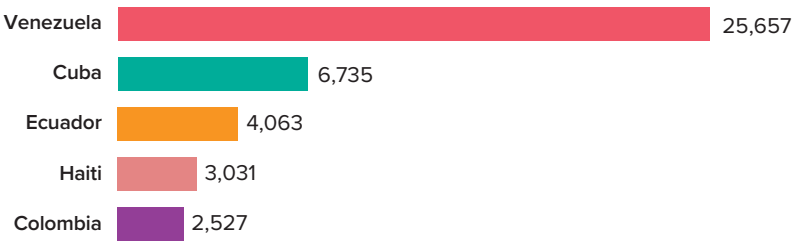
89

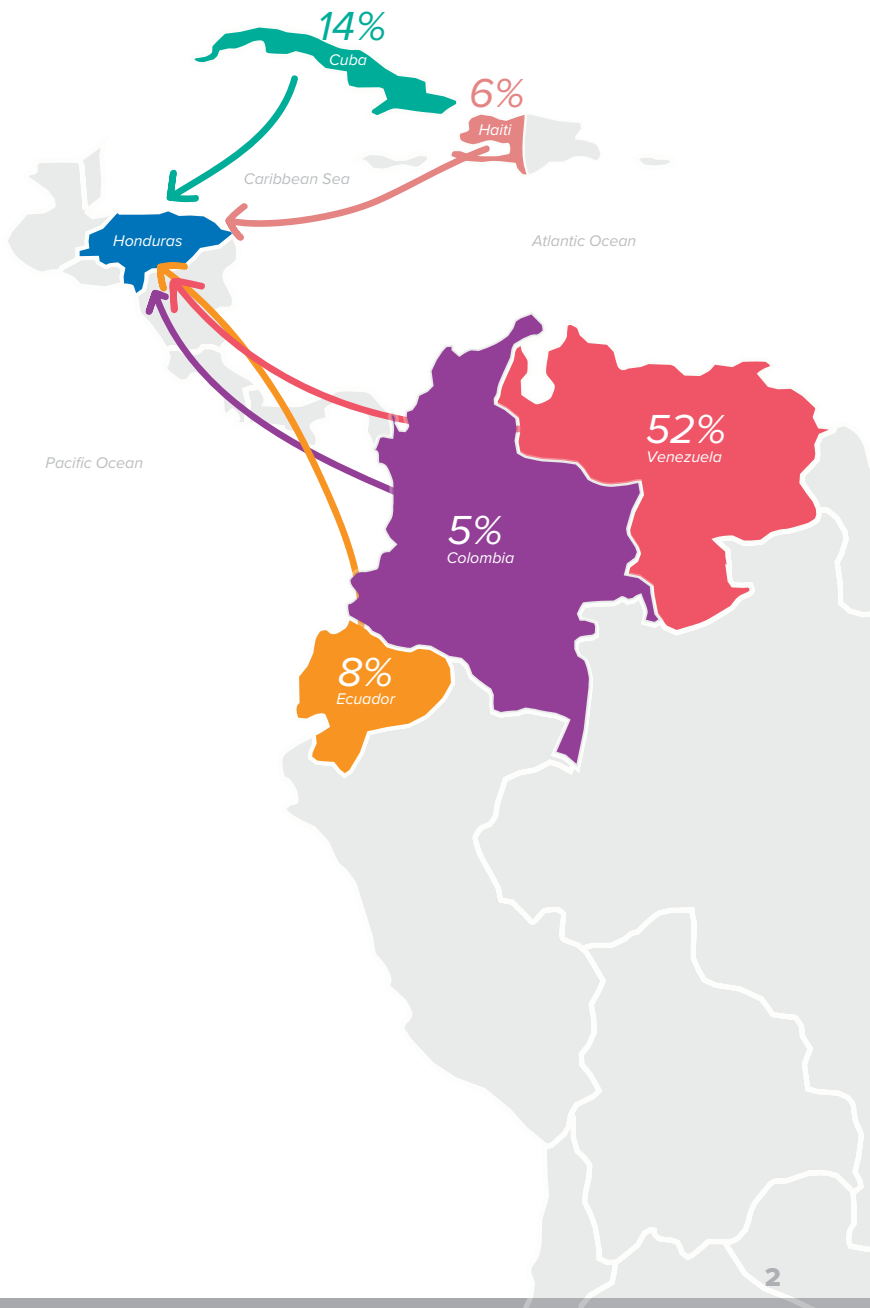
Irregular Entries February 2024:

37% Women | **63%** Men | **76%** Adults | **24%** Children

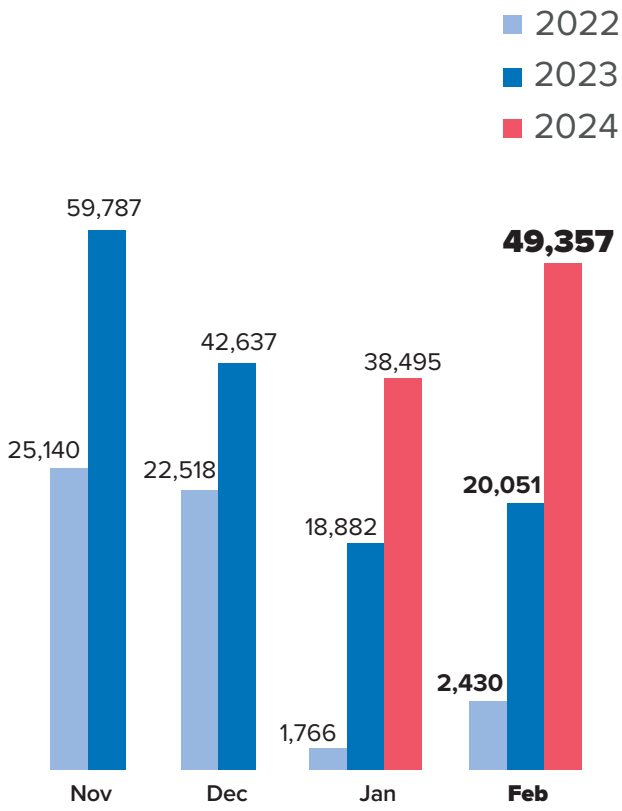
Nationalities:

*These **5 nationalities represent 85%** of all refugees and migrants who entered Honduras irregularly in February 2024.*





Irregular entries November - February:



Mixed Movements Protection Monitoring Results

*UNHCR, the UN Agency for Refugees 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

176 Persons interviewed

Interviewed Individuals by Sex:

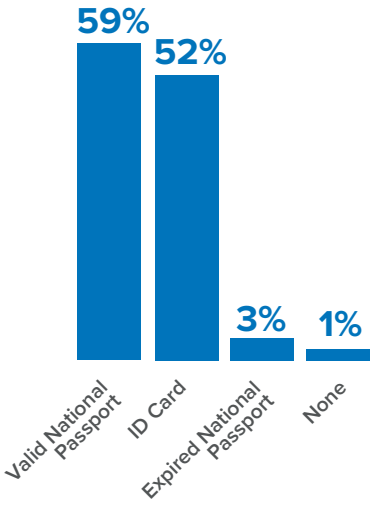
40% Women

60% Men

Average age:

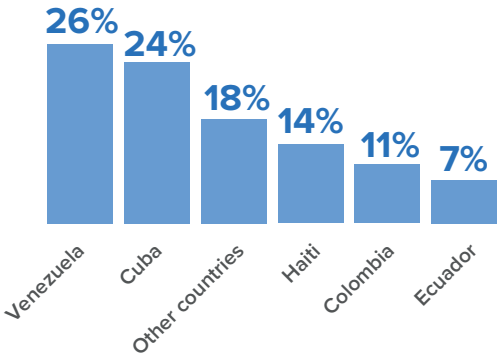
33 years

Documents Carried



Nationality

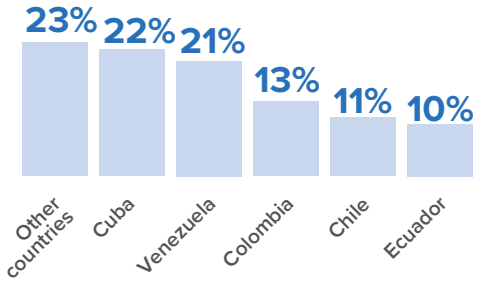
Other countries include Afghanistan, Angola, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Guinea, Jordan, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Yemen.



Country of residence in the past year

Other countries include Afghanistan, Angola, Brazil, Central African Republic, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Jordan, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

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.



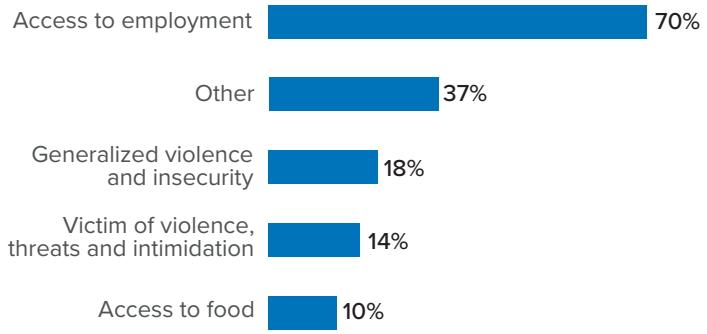
21% of the interviewees lived outside of their country of origin and mainly resided in Chile (49%), Brazil (12%), Ecuador (11%), Colombia (11%), Peru (11%), Guyana (2%), Panama (2%), and Egypt (2%).

Refugees and migrants in transit through the country highlight the solidarity and the empathy they have found in Honduras.

UNHCR/Lucía Martínez

Push factors

Reasons for leaving country of origin

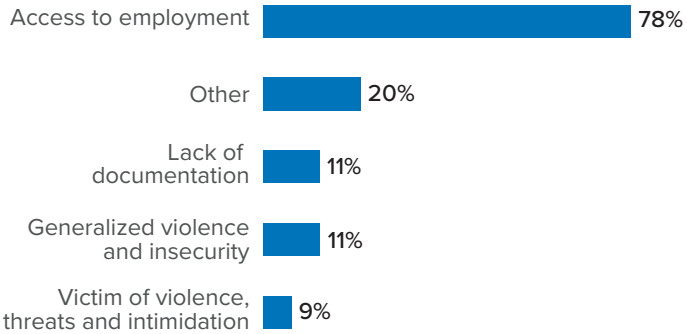


Other reasons include political persecution, political instability and armed conflict.

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)



Other reasons include to search for a safer country to live, to reach the United States and to improve their economic situation.

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

82%

of the interviewed individuals **left their country** of origin/residence **less than four weeks ago.**

100%

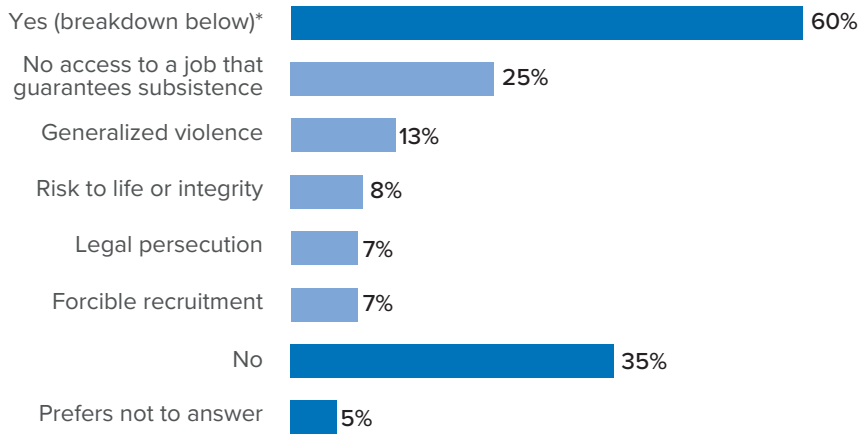
reported an intention to **stay in Honduras for less than a month** (usually, less than a week) to continue their journey to their destination.

100%

of the interviewed individuals reported the United States as their intended final destination.

Risks of return

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



The majority of respondents reported limited access to employment as the main reason for leaving their country of origin (see page 4).

At the same time a significant percentage of people indicated that they would encounter risks if they had to return to their country, including generalized violence, life risk, legal persecution, and forcible recruitment. 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.

"It is difficult to think about returning to my country when my land has been taken over by criminal organizations. We do it for our children," said Pedro, who was in transit through Honduras in February.

UNHCR/Lucía Martínez

Did you experience any mistreatment or abuse during the journey?

40% answered **yes**

Of these persons, 69% reported theft and 37% fraud.

Some persons indicated various forms of mistreatment.

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

11% answered **yes**

Of these persons, 84% reported theft and 21% fraud.

Some persons indicated various forms of mistreatment, with incidents occurring mainly in the southeast border.

Protection Concerns

15% of the interviewed individuals reported traveling with somebody with specific protection needs, including:

1% Survivors of violence in their group (sexual, physical, or psychological)

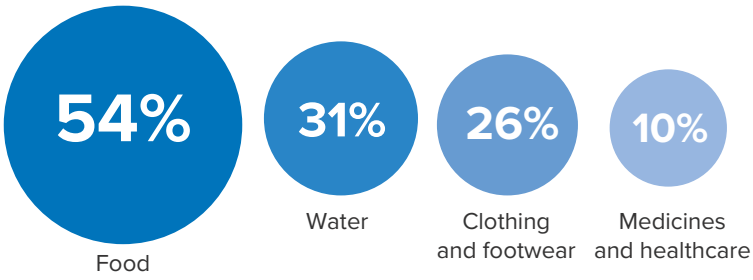
3% Single parent traveling with children

1% Critical or chronic medical condition

2% Elderly persons

8% Disability: physical (6%) and mental (2%)

Main needs



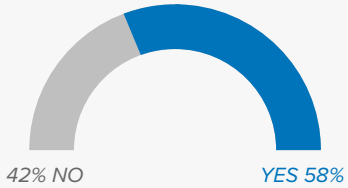
*Other main needs reported by persons on the move include: **information on protection and migratory alternatives, internet and telephone access, shelter, food and items for children, and legal assistance.***

Access to asylum and programs implemented by the United States Government.

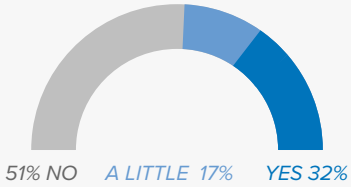
Have you previously applied for asylum?

The individuals previously applied in Costa Rica and Peru.

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

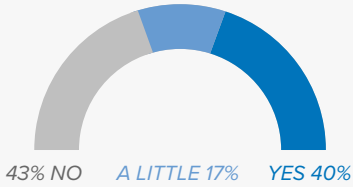


Are you aware of the United States Government's Parole Program?



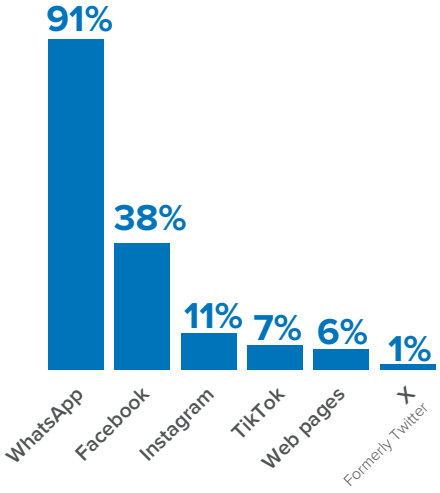
Only citizens of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Haiti and Cuba were asked this question, as the parole program only applies to these nationalities.

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

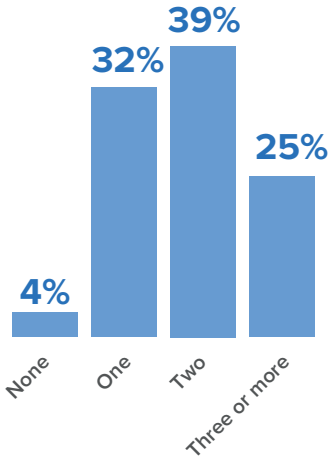


Access to information and food

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



How many meals did you eat yesterday?



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 Danlí and one in Ocotepeque) with Venezuelans to obtain more information on their profiles and needs. The main findings are:

1 Reasons for leaving the country of origin

Most of the participants expressed that the reason for initiating their journey was motivated by the current economic crisis and violence in their country of origin. Several people stated that they had received threats because of their political opinion. Several people also mentioned that they had left Venezuela a few years ago to live in Ecuador, Colombia or Peru. However, they subsequently decided to leave these countries and start their journey to the north of the continent for different reasons, including insecurity, for example, in the case of those who resided in Ecuador.

2 The route

All participants are travelling with their families and indicated that the route they took from Venezuela was by land, often on foot, crossing the Darien jungle from Colombia to Panama and then to Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras. The participants agreed that, despite being the riskiest, this route was the only alternative they had as they do not have the required documents or resources to travel by plane or pay for vehicle transport.

3 Access to food and basic services

Regarding food during the journey, most of the participants indicated that they had spent several days without eating, especially in the Darien. Some also mentioned that they suffered from illnesses due to the consumption of poor quality food and the fact that they had to drink water from rivers and other contaminated sources. People on the move also stressed that, although there are some humanitarian organizations providing assistance along the route, the services available are insufficient.

At the same time, several participants highlighted the solidarity of the host communities along the route, especially in Honduras, who offered them food.

4 Main needs

All participants indicated that their main needs are linked to the lack of financial resources for transport and food, especially food for children. They mention that they usually prioritise paying for transport over buying food. The other main needs identified are medical assistance (especially prenatal care) and more information about the available humanitarian services on the route, transport costs and migration policies of other countries (including Guatemala).

5 Protection incidents suffered during the journey

Most people on the move reported having suffered incidents such as armed assaults, scams, discrimination or have been victims of extortion, mainly in the Darien jungle as well as in border areas between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The crossing of the Darien has been described by several people as a traumatic experience due to the levels of violence suffered on the way, including seeing dead bodies. In addition, the participating women stated that they feel at constant risk of suffering sexual violence, as they have met several women who were raped in the Darien jungle. Some women also highlighted that in Danlí, Honduras, unknown men tried to take advantage of the vulnerable situation in which they are and offered them food in exchange for sex.

6 Country of destination

The majority of the people indicated that their country of final destination is the United States. A small number mentioned that they are heading towards Canada. The participants also stated that they are continuing their journey on foot and will request support from vehicles along the route to transport them.

Main findings of the interviews carried out with key informants

In addition to the individual interviews and the focal group discussions conducted with refugees and migrants on the move, UNHCR interviewed three humanitarian actors in Danlí, Choluteca and Ocotepeque, obtaining the following information:

1 Profiles

The key informants indicated that the main nationalities of people on the move are Venezuelan, Cuban, Ecuadorian, Haitian and Colombian. In addition, they reported the transit of smaller numbers of people from Asian and African countries (especially Guinea and Mauritania). While about half of the people in mixed movements are men (mainly with an average age between 25 and 35), the other half are women, girls and boys. According to the key informants, Venezuelans, Ecuadorians and Haitians tend to be the ones travelling in larger family groups. With regard to persons with disabilities, key informants indicated that they have identified several cases of persons whose disabilities were caused by accidents en route.

In terms of language, the majority of people in mixed movements speak Spanish, followed by English, Haitian Creole, French, Chinese and Hindi. Non-Spanish speakers often use online translators on their phones to communicate with local actors.

2 The route

In February, refugees and migrants on the move entered Honduras mainly through the borders of Las Manos (86% of the total number of people) and Trojes (10%) with Nicaragua and then travelled to the exit border with Guatemala at Agua Caliente. While Cubans and people from some African countries usually arrive by plane to Nicaragua, many of the other nationals walked across the Darien and then continued their journey by bus. A small number of Ecuadorians also arrive by plane to El Salvador and then enter Honduras through the El Poy border area.

Regarding transportation costs, key informants indicated that the cost of crossing Honduras from the Nicaraguan border to the Guatemala border ranges from 55 to 60 USD per person.

3 Protection incidents and risks

The key informants expressed that people in mixed movements informed them of protection incidents that occurred both outside and inside Honduras, including gender-based violence, extortion, robbery, charging of excessive prices (especially for transportation and food), and discrimination. In Honduras the sale of false transit permits and the lack of information on existing complaint mechanisms to report human rights violations were especially highlighted by the key informants. In addition, they have also observed women on the move who have been forced to carry out survival sex (mainly in the department of El Paraíso).

4 Main needs

Among the main needs reported are food (especially for children); drinking water; access to medical assistance and medicines; shelter as well as information on humanitarian assistance and protection services available along the route. The lack of adequate shelters in Tegucigalpa was particularly highlighted by several key informants.

5 Country of destination

With regard to the country of destination, key informants stated that most of the refugees and migrants on the move are heading towards the United States, while a small number of people mention Canada or Mexico as their final destination. When asked about the route they will use, people usually indicate that they will first go to Esquipulas in Guatemala and from there continue their journey towards Mexico.

Women in transit through Honduras reported having had less access to information than men. UNHCR and its partners have installed information booths in strategic locations along the route to minimize protection risks.

UNHCR/Lucía Martínez

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UNHCR Honduras

Data Sources: UNHCR Protection Monitoring, carried out between 1 and 9 February 2024.

Feedback:

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

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