

Flow monitoring of people on the move across the Americas

Locations of high transit and migrant presence in Costa Rica

Cantons: Alajuela, Alajuelita, Cartago, Desamparados, Escazú, Corredores, Heredia, Los Chiles, San Carlos, San José, Santa Ana, Santo Domingo, Tibás

Situation report: March, 2024



KEY FINDINGS

In order to characterize and understand the needs and migratory trends across the Americas in specific locations within Costa Rican territory, various tools from the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) were combined to create this report. These tools include Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR), Emergency Events Tracking (EET), and Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) from the Mobility Tracking and Flow Monitoring components, respectively¹. The results of this report present information collected from 1 – 31 March 2024.

FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY



36,106 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENTERED COSTA RICA FROM PANAMA IN MARCH 2024

Source: Projection from IOM Costa Rica, based on previously published monthly data².



35,614 PEOPLE MOBILIZED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THROUGHOUT COSTA RICA

Source: General Directorate of Migration in Costa Rica (DGME), 2024.

EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING IN MONITORED LOCATIONS



872 INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN MONITORED PUBLIC SITES
Average stay: 4 days

Source: DGME and estimation from IOM Costa Rica, based on key informants and direct observation.



1,178 INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN 3 MONITORED SHELTERS
Average stay: 6 days

FLOW MONITORING SURVEY: LOCATION OF HIGH TRANSIT AND MIGRANT PRESENCE (1,198 individuals surveyed and 1,841 family members)



43% WOMEN | 57% MEN
29% ACCOMPANIED MINORS



81% OF INDIVIDUALS TRAVEL IN GROUPS

Source: IOM, 2024



MAIN NEEDS*
Food and nutrition (46%)
Water (22%)
Income (15%)
Other (17%)

*More than one answer possible

¹ For more information, visit: www.dtm.iom.int

² Beginning August 30, 2023, there is no access to data on departures of migrants from the Temporary Migrant Reception Station (ETRM) in Los Planes de Gualaca, Chiriquí. This situation has been remedied with monthly estimates based on previously collected data.



Costa Rica, like other Central American countries, has been characterized as a migratory corridor that includes migrants crossing by land from the border between Colombia and Panama through the Darien region, with the northern countries of the continent as their destination. This flow is known as the Flow of People on the Move across the Americas³. According to data published by the Republic of Panama, in February 2024, 37,166 entries from Colombia were recorded: 49 per cent were adult men, 28 per cent were women, and 23 per cent were minors (12 per cent boys and 11 per cent girls). Sixty-seven per cent came from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 9 per cent from Ecuador, 7 per cent from Colombia, 5 per cent from Haiti, four per cent from the People's Republic of China, and another 8 per cent from more than 31 countries⁴.



During the first months of 2024, Costa Rica experienced a notable increase in the entry of people on the move across the Americas. According to estimations from IOM Costa Rica, the number of entries increased from 37,436 people in January to 41,326 in February, and then decreased to 36,106 in March 2024. This trend becomes more relevant when comparing the figures with previous years: 4,826 people were recorded in the first three months of 2021, 13,028 in 2022, 84,466 in 2023, and 114,868 in the first three months of 2024 (Figure 1). It is important to highlight that on March 1, 2024, an incident occurred at the San Vicente Temporary Migrant Reception Station, located in the Darien province of Panama. This caused the flow of migrants entering Costa Rica to slightly decrease during the first six days of March (daily average of 362 people), compared to the rest of the month (daily average of 1,338 people)⁵.

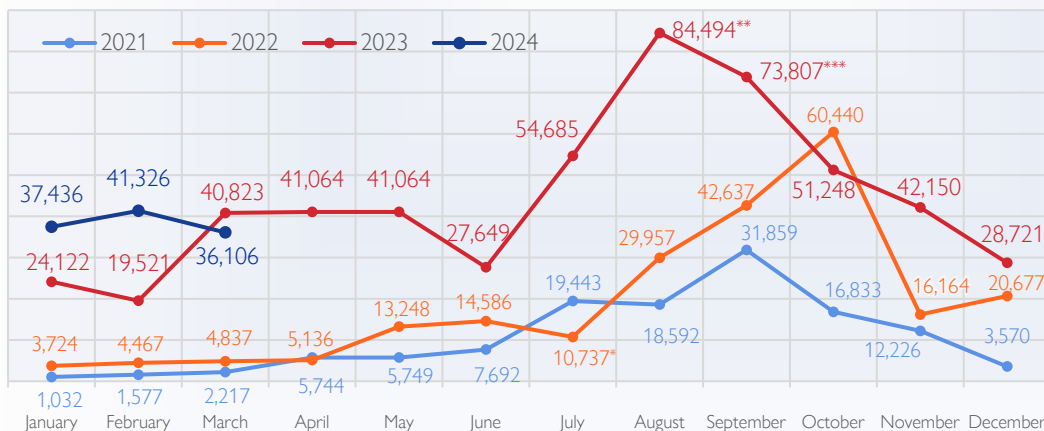


In March 2024, the Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería (DGME) registered 35,614 people (99% of the estimated total) using the direct transport route between the Estación Migratoria Sur (EMI Sur), in Paso Canoas, near the Costa Rica-Panama border, and Los Chiles, on the Costa Rica-Nicaragua border⁶.



In March 2024, the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME) recorded a total of 1,078 stranded migrant individuals at the Temporary Attention Center for Migrants (CATEM), located at the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur). This figure represents a 17 per cent increase compared to February 2024, when 922 stranded migrant individuals were counted at CATEM. The increase in the demand for services at CATEM highlights the need to strengthen the resources and care provided. Despite a 12 per cent reduction in the number of people using the direct route between EMI Sur and Los Chiles during March, there was a 17 per cent growth in the number of people stranded at CATEM. This contrast underscores the importance of improving response capacity and reception conditions at the shelter.

Figure 1. Estimated number of migrants entering Costa Rica, per month and year



114,868
Migrant individuals in
January and March 2024

529,348
Migrant individuals in 2023

226,610
Migrant individuals in 2022

126,512
Migrant individuals in 2021

³In July 2022, not all data was collected due to road closures in Panama. Source: Government of Panama, 2023.

^{**}Data for August 31, 2023, was not available, so a weekly moving average was used.

^{***}As of September 2023, data correspond to estimates with a confidence level of 95 %.

³For more information, visit: www.dtm.iom.int/costa-rica

⁴For more information, visit: www.migracion.gob.pa

⁵For more information, visit: cnnespanol.cnn.com/2024/03/04/migrantes-vandalismo-incendio-albergue-panama-orix/

⁶For more information, visit: www.migracion.go.cr

At the request of key informants (KIs), starting in October 2023, IOM Costa Rica calculates the potential entries of migrants into Costa Rica, considering historical data on the outflows of people from the Temporary Migrant Reception Station (ETRM) in Los Planes, Gualaca until August 30, 2023, and the inflows to Panama that are published on the website of the National Migration Service (SNM) of Panama⁷. In addition, since November 2023, the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME) of Costa Rica publishes a daily report of people mobilized by public transportation from the EMI Sur and the number of people who remain stranded in CATEM⁸.

During March 2024, 847 valid surveys were obtained (99 per cent response rate and 1 per cent non-response rate), collecting information on 2,028 migrants (847 surveyed and 1,181 family members). The Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) data collection method consists of in-person surveys conducted with migrants on the move across the Americas in Costa Rica, in the cantons of Corredores, San José, and Los Chiles. The surveys are applied voluntarily to adults who represent groups or travel alone, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the profile of migrants. In addition, the surveys are translated into Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.

The flow monitoring points are locations with high mobility and concentration of migrants, which allows differentiating between those stranded in shelters and those in transit sites. Ten per cent of the surveys were conducted with migrants stranded in CATEM (Corredores canton) and in two shelters in the San José canton, using a non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique, while the remaining 90 per cent were carried out with people in high migratory transit sites, such as the bus terminal at EMI Sur and the bus terminal in Los Chiles (see Map 1).

At the bus station at EMI Sur, a systematic random sampling was implemented, which is an objective way of selecting a sample as it avoids inconsistent selection biases and aims to reflect the characteristics of the migrant population that passed through this site. Because it is a mobile population and its size is unknown, a large population is assumed. Under the assumption of simple random sampling, the sample size is estimated to include at least 386 people, assuming a response rate close to 100 per cent (based on historical data at the site), a confidence level of 95 per cent, and a maximum margin of error of 5 per cent.

For surveys in shelters in San José, an effort is made to survey the largest possible number of people. For surveys in sites of high transit of migrants in Los Chiles and at EMI Sur, non-probabilistic sampling was implemented. Although the data collected at these sites cannot be extended to the entire population, efforts will be made to increase the reliability of the profiling by taking as a reference the figure of 386 monthly surveys. Non-probabilistic sampling was chosen due to the specific conditions of these sites, which may include the mobility and geographical dispersion of the migrant population, making random sampling unfeasible. This type of sampling allows for more flexible and rapid data collection in contexts where the application of probabilistic methods is not practical.

Parallel to the quantitative information presented, descriptive information on the migratory dynamics of the flow through Costa Rica was also obtained through the Emergency Tracking Tool (EET), which allows tracking sudden movements and providing recent updates through interviews with key informants, direct observation, and compilation of secondary sources. This section will be represented in the report by a blue box, the same as this section of the methodology.

LIMITATIONS

Although the Government of Costa Rica implements an official registry system for those who transit the EMI Sur-Los Chiles route and conducts a count at CATEM, the existence of migratory flows on unofficial routes far from these controls makes it impossible to completely record all entries into the country. Additional challenges are related to language and cultural barriers, temporary stays at monitoring points, geographical complexities, and irregular migration dynamics, including human trafficking networks. For example, individuals from the People's Republic of China, who represented 8 per cent of the entries to Panama in January 2024 and 4 per cent in February of the same year, are only represented in less than 1 per cent of the FMS surveys in the same period.

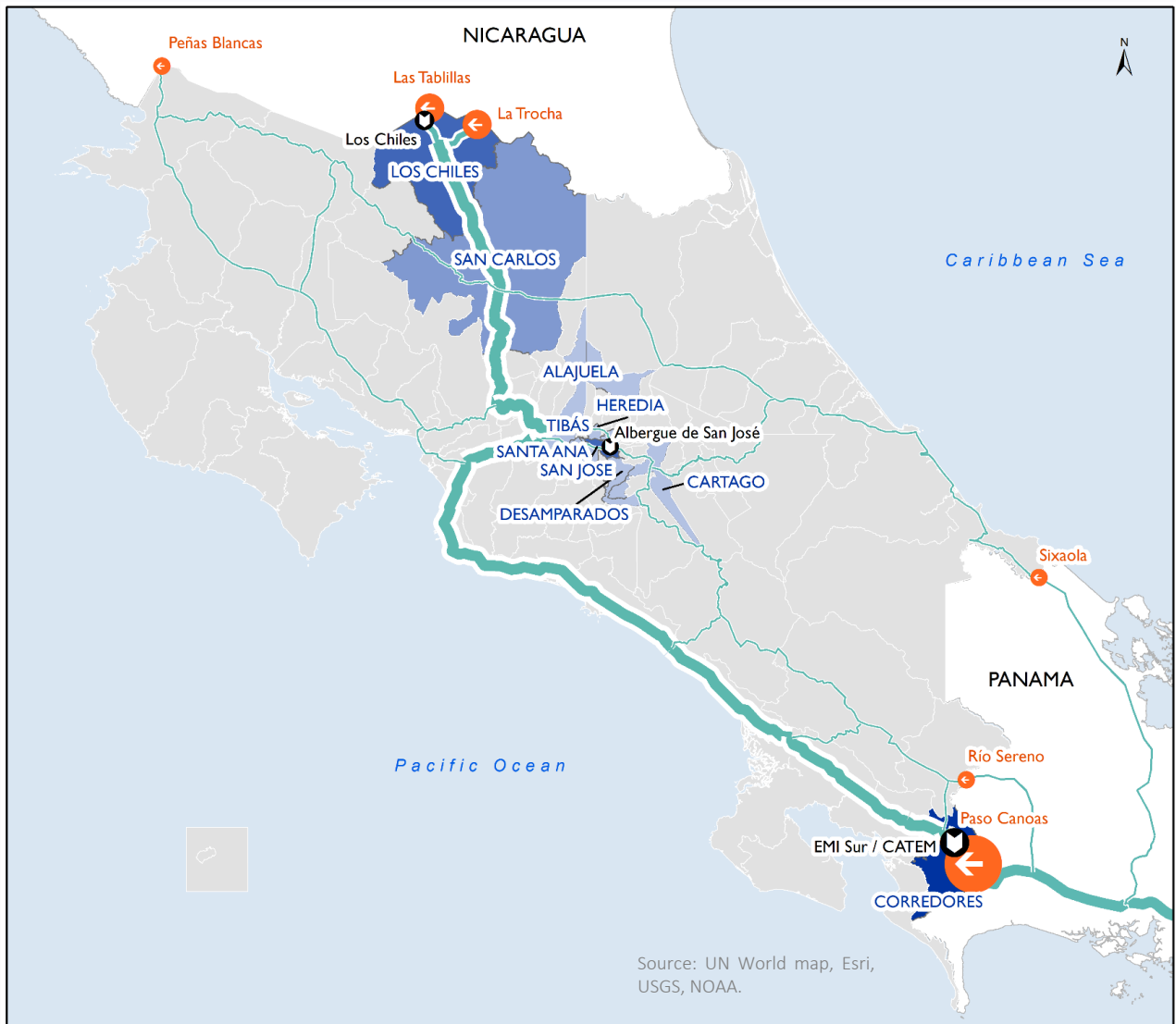
⁷ Para más información, visite: www.migracion.gob.pa

⁸ Para más información, visite: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx



TREND DISPLACEMENT IN COSTA RICA

Map 1 Sites of high presence and transit of migrants in mobility through the Americas, and their movement through Costa Rica. March 2024



Source: UN World map, Esri, USGS, NOAA.

Legend

Border Crossing

- 108
- 18,053 - 17,872
- 35,745

Total of Surveys

- 56
- 306
- 485

Route

- Direct route EMI Sur - Los Chiles
- Alternative route

Stranded people by canton

- | | |
|-----|-------|
| <38 | 367 |
| 201 | 1,078 |

Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The boundaries, names and designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. March 2024



36,106

Estimated number of individuals entering Costa Rica. March 2024



Estimated increase of 13 % compared to February 2024 (41,326)



35,614

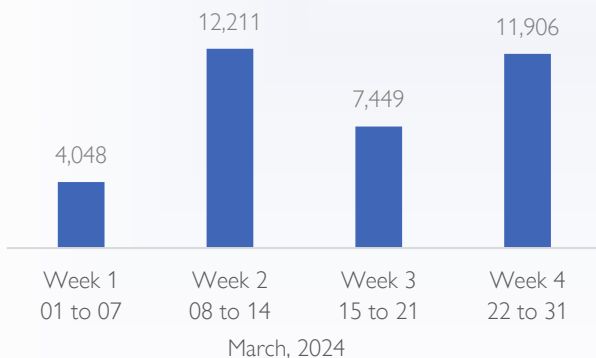
Individuals using direct public transportation from the southern to the northern border. March 2024

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Costa Rica, it is estimated that approximately 36,106 people from the migratory flow of people on the move across the Americas entered the country in March 2024, an approximate daily average of 1,165 people. Close to 99% of these entries were made through Paso Canoas, on the border with Panama.

The main route identified was directly from EMI Sur (southern border) to Los Chiles (northern border), carried out by bus, with an approximate cost of 30 US dollars (\$30 USD) per person and lasting less than a day. This month, it is estimated that close to 35,614 people moved through this route, equivalent to 99 per cent of the total flow that entered the country (Figure 2)⁹. The presence of stranded people in public places in the GAM and areas far from Los Chiles and Paso Canoas is evidence that alternative routes continue to be active, although to a lesser extent than in previous months and years.

In relation to the transportation of migrants on the south-north route, Figure 2 shows an increasing trend during the second and fourth weeks of March 2024, with a weekly average of 8,904 people. However, it is important to highlight that the flow of migrants entering Costa Rica was slightly affected during the first 6 days of the month due to an incident that occurred on March 1 at the San Vicente Temporary Migrant Reception Station, located in the Darien province of Panama¹⁰.

Figure 2. Estimated number of individuals traveling on direct route (EMI Sur - Los Chiles), per week



ROUTES AND MOBILITY SCHEDULES

While the main route goes directly from Paso Canoas to Los Chiles, misinformation about direct routes, the search for temporary rest, avoiding migration controls, and the need to find economic resources to continue the migration route promote the use of alternative routes.

MOBILITY IN SOUTHERN CANTONS: In March 2024, the Southern Migration Station (EMISur) in southern Costa Rica continued to be the main point of migratory transit, with a significant increase in entries after the first six days of the month.

MOBILITY IN CENTRAL CANTONS: During the month of March, there has been a change in the dynamics of the flow of people. Now, instead of using Tracopa buses, migrants are opting for different routes from various cantons in the North and Central Pacific to reach the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM). In addition, they use various bus routes to reach the northern zone and also resort to taxis.

MOBILITY IN NORTHERN CANTONS: During March 2024, the northern zone remained the main and direct corridor from the southern zone to the border with Nicaragua. Despite this, the presence of migrants getting off buses at unauthorized locations to continue their journey informally, using taxis to unofficial border crossings, is still observed. Additionally, the entry of people into different cantons in the northern zone, who travel from community to community, is recorded.

The presence of the stranded migrant population in the northern cantons is mostly due to their lack of the necessary economic resources to continue their journey. Some of them remain in public spaces, collecting resources to move forward. This has significant repercussions, especially when it comes to constant transit, generating great pressure on basic services and uncertainty in local communities, civil society, responsible authorities, and organizations providing assistance to migrants.

⁹ La estimación de personas se calcula con los datos publicados por la DGME. Para más información, visite:

www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx

¹⁰ Para más información, visite:

www.elpais.cr/2024/03/05/migrantes-enfrentan-hasta-15-anos-de-prision-por-incendiar-un-albergue-en-panama/



INDIVIDUALS STRANDED AT MONITORED SITES

In March 2024, 872 migrant individuals were identified as stranded in public sites in various monitored cantons, and 1,178 people were stranded in three monitored shelters. There was a significant increase (17 %) in people sheltered in CATEM compared to February 2024, while the average stay time remained at 6 days.

The number of migrants in public spaces in March 2024 (872 people) decreased by 29 per cent compared to February 2024 (1,225 people), as did the trend of Los Chiles and San Carlos being the cantons with the highest number of stranded individuals in public spaces (367 and 201 stranded individuals in March 2024, respectively).

The increase in CATEM occupancy reflects a rise in the assistance provided, although the sustained number of migrants in Los Chiles and San Carlos suggests that it is imperative to continue with support strategies throughout the territories involved.

According to key informants, the majority of those stranded in the northern zone are individuals traveling from Los Chiles to San Carlos in search of resources to continue their journey.



872

Individuals stranded in **public monitored sites**



1,178

Individuals stranded in **monitored shelters**

Figure 3. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in public monitored sites

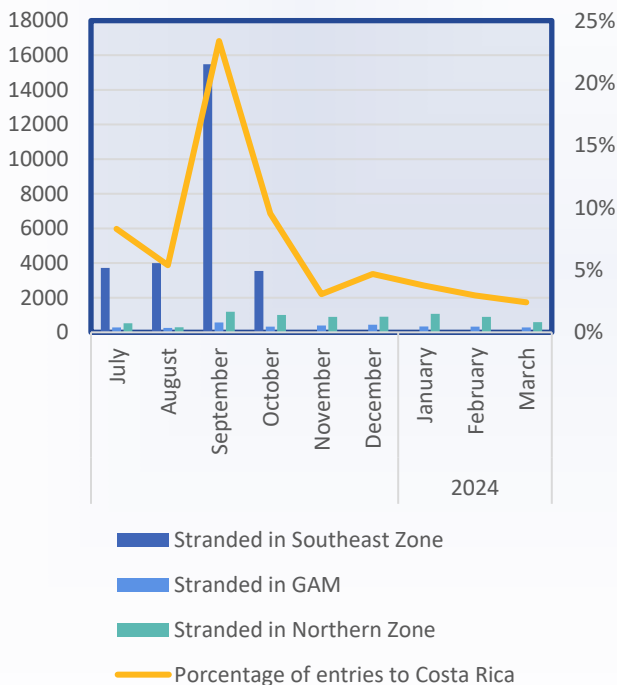
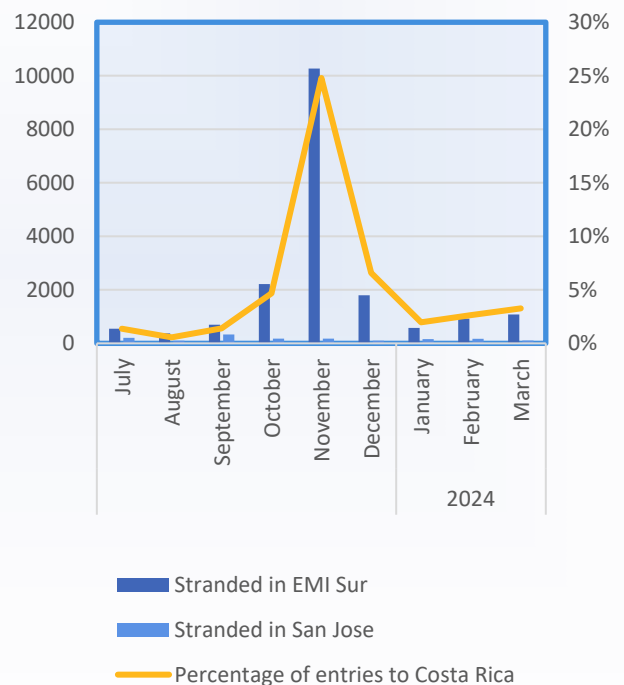


Figure 4. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in monitored shelters



The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. March 2024



FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

(Individuals surveyed: 847 | Family members: 1.181)

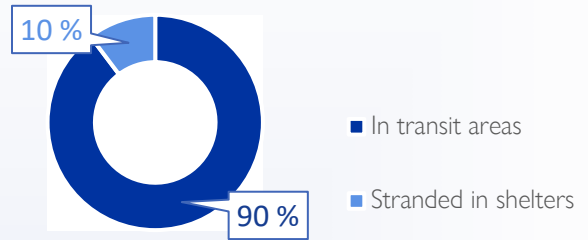
Data collection: March 01-31, 2024

This flow monitoring was carried out through individual surveys of persons of legal age (18 years or older) stranded in **two shelters in San José and in EMI Sur**, and surveys to people in transit in **two cantons in the northern zone (Los Chiles)** following a **non-probabilistic sampling methodology**. This means that the results obtained cannot be generalized to the total number of people moving through the Americas. Nevertheless, while the results cannot be generalized to the total number of people moving through the Americas, they do allow us to describe the migratory profile of the people surveyed during this period. In total, information was obtained on **2,028 migrants** (847 respondents and 1,181 family members).



It should be noted that, for the purposes of this report, the **left side presents data on the respondents who were at points of high transit locations** while the **right side presents data on the respondents who were in the monitored shelters**.

Figure 5. Surveys by type of movement of surveyed individuals (n=847)



760

Individuals surveyed in **high-traffic transit areas** throughout Costa Rica (bus station at EMI Sur and Los Chiles).



87

Individual surveyed persons surveyed **stranded in shelters** in Costa Rica (2 shelters in GAM 1 in southern border)

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

NATIONALITIES OF SURVEYED INDIVIDUALS

Percentage of individuals in transit by nationality por nacionalidad (n=760)



Percentage of individuals stranded in monitored shelters by nationality (n=87)



NIVEL EDUCATIVO DE PERSONAS ENCUESTADAS

Figure 6. Percentage of individuals surveyed in transit by gender and highest level of completed education (n=760)

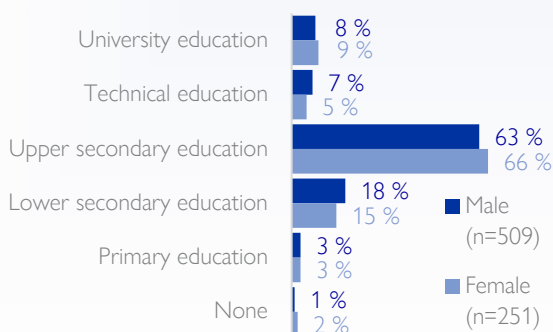
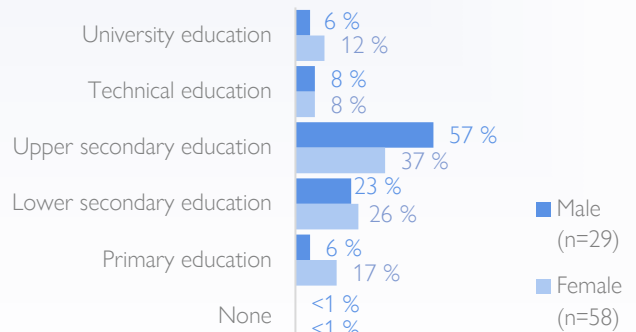


Figure 7. Percentage of individuals surveyed in shelters by gender and highest level of completed education (n=87)

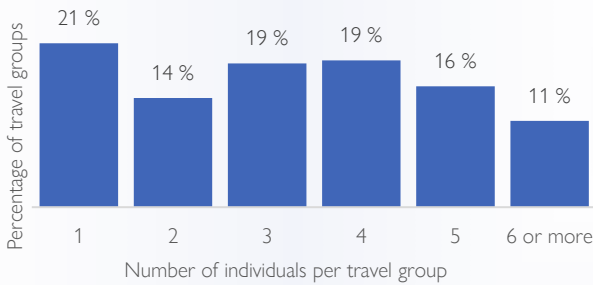


The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. March 2024

Out of 760 surveyed individuals at transit locations, data was collected on 962 travel companions, resulting in a total of 1,722 family members and surveyed individuals. Among the analyzed groups, 21 per cent were individuals traveling alone (30% of the surveyed men and 9% of the surveyed women) and 14 per cent were couples. The most numerous groups (3 or more individuals), representing 65 per cent of the total, were predominantly composed of 3-person groups (19%), 4-person groups (19%), 5-person groups (16%), or more (11%) (Figure 8).

Regarding the distribution by gender and age, 58 per cent of the people within the travel groups, including surveyed individuals and their family members, were men, while 42 per cent were women. Minors (17 years old or younger) made up 27 per cent of the total number of individuals, and the average age of the adults was 31 years, with minors averaging 7 years old (Figure 9).

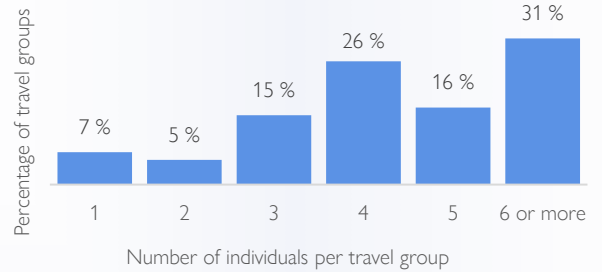
Figure 8. Size and number of Travel groups of surveyed individuals at transit sites (n=1.722)



Out of the 87 surveyed individuals in 3 shelters, information was collected on 219 travel companions, making a total of 306 family members and surveyed individuals. Of the analyzed groups, 7 per cent were individuals traveling alone (12% of the men and less than 1% of the women), and 5 per cent were couples. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 88 per cent of the total, were mainly made up of groups of 3 individuals (15%), 4 individuals (26%), 5 individuals (16%), or more (31%) (Graph 10).

Regarding the gender and age distribution of the surveyed individuals and companions, 58 per cent of the members of the travel groups, including surveyed individuals and their family members, were men, while 42 per cent were women. Minors (17 years or younger) constituted 37 per cent of the total. The average age of the adults was 31 years and 7 years for minors (Graph 11).

Figure 10. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals stranded in monitored shelters (n=306)



GENDER AND AGE COMPOSITION OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRAVEL GROUPS

Figure 9. Percentage of individuals comprising travel groups in transit, by age and sex (n=1.722)

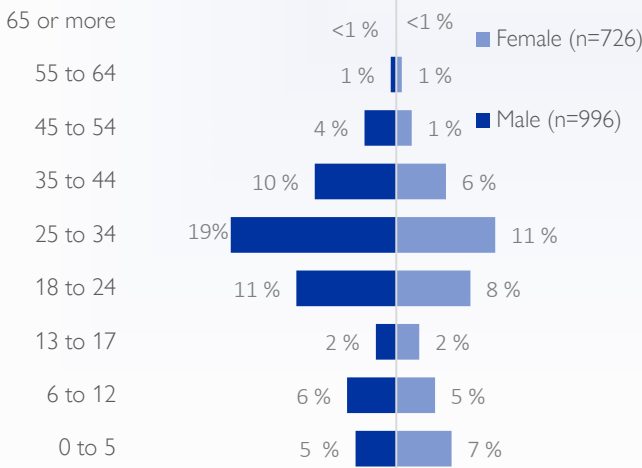
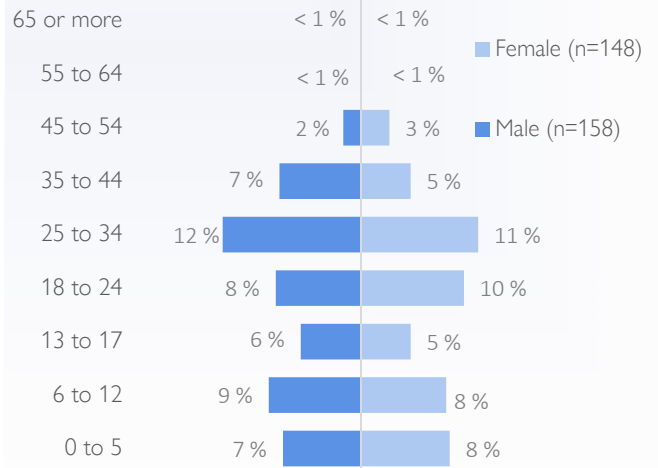


Figure 11. Percentage of individuals comprising travel groups stranded in monitored shelters, by age and sex (n=306)

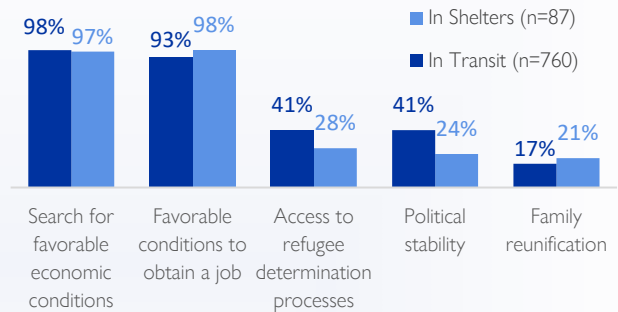


The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. March 2024

REASONS FOR MIGRATING

The main reason of the people surveyed for migrating was the search for favorable economic conditions (98 % for people in transit and 97 % for those stranded in shelters), followed by favorable conditions to obtain a job (93 % and 98 %, respectively), access to refugee determination processes (41 % and 28 %, respectively), political stability (41 % and 24 %, respectively), and family reunification (17 % and 21 %, respectively) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Percentage of respondents in transit by main reason for migration (n=847)



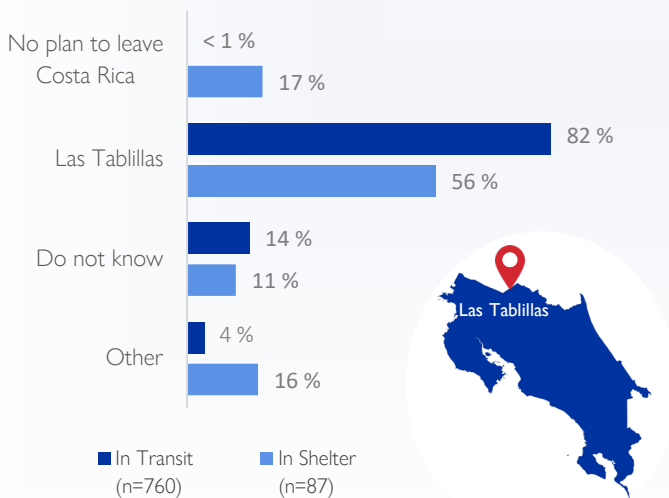
Note: individuals could choose more than one option

MIGRATORY ROUTE

The main route that surveyed individuals indicated they planned to leave Costa Rica was through Las Tablillas border crossing in Los Chiles (80 %), while 14 per cent indicated not knowing which border crossing, they were exiting through (the remaining 6 % indicated other border posts). On the other hand, two per cent of the surveyed individuals indicated not having plans to leave Costa Rica.

Differences in exit locations were identified between individuals surveyed at transit sites and in shelters: 82 per cent of the surveys conducted at transit sites indicated that they would leave the country through Las Tablillas sector and 14 per cent indicated not knowing. On the other hand, of the individuals surveyed in shelters, 56 per cent were planning to leave through Las Tablillas, 16 per cent through other sites (mainly through La Trocha), and 11 per cent indicated not knowing (Figure 13). Likewise, 17 per cent of the individuals surveyed in shelters indicated their intention to remain in Costa Rica.

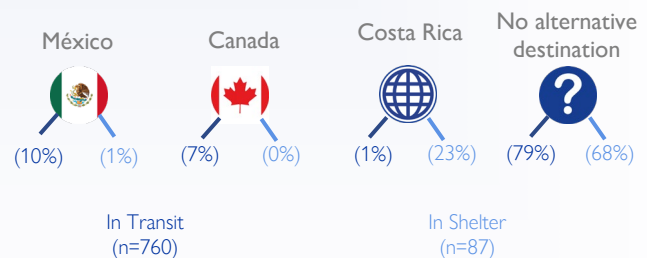
Figure 13. Percentage of respondents by planned place of departure from Costa Rica (n=847)



The destination indicated by the surveyed individuals varied considerably at transit sites and shelters: 95 per cent of the surveyed individuals at public sites indicated the United States of America, compared to 76 per cent of the surveyed individuals in temporary shelters. Other countries identified as destination were Costa Rica (less than 1 per cent of individuals in transit and 17% of individuals stranded in shelters) and Mexico (2% and 0% respectively). To a lesser extent, other countries mentioned were Colombia, Canada, and Ecuador.

Differences were observed in the main alternative destinations mentioned among the individuals surveyed at transit sites and in shelters. For those in transit, 10 per cent indicated Mexico as an alternative destination and seven per cent indicated Canada. In comparison, only one per cent of individuals in shelters mentioned Mexico as an alternative destination, and less than one per cent mentioned Canada. In contrast, 29 per cent of those surveyed in shelters indicated Costa Rica as an option, compared to one per cent of those who were in transit. The percentages of other countries and of individuals without a defined alternative destination varied by 10 per cent in both groups.

Percentage of surveyed individuals by alternative destinations (n=847)



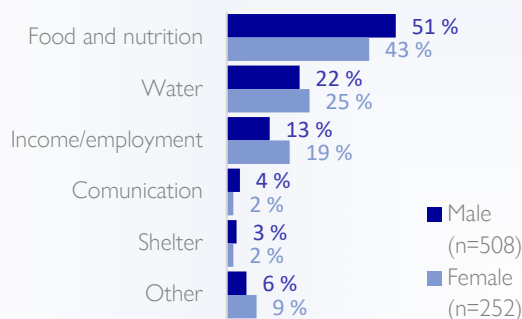
Other countries: United States of America, Spain, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia.

The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. March 2024

Surveys conducted with migrants in transit sites and in shelters reveal significant differences in their needs and challenges. In transit, the most pressing needs are food and nutrition (39%), water (25%), and income/employment (20%). Respondents were also asked about the need for legal advice to learn about their migration options, with a 63 per cent response rates among respondent.

Regarding the main non-food need, 41 per cent indicated soap, followed by deodorant (14%), toothbrush/toothpaste (12%), shampoo (10%), among others (23%).

Figure 14. Percentage of surveyed individuals in transit, by gender and main need (n=760)

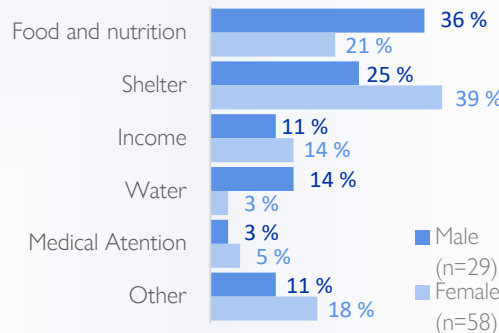


Other needs: Non-food items (diapers, sanitation and hygiene items, feminine hygiene products), among others.

Surveys conducted with migrants in temporary shelters indicate that the most pressing needs are shelter (35%), food and nutrition (25%), and income/employment (14%). Respondents were also asked about the need for legal advice to learn about their migration options, to which 50 per cent expressed needing.

Regarding the main non-food need, 29 per cent indicated soap, followed by deodorant (14%), shampoo (14%), toilet paper (12%), toothbrush/toothpaste (10%), among others (21%).

Figure 15. Percentage of surveyed individuals stranded in shelters, by gender and main need (n=87)



82 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=760)



16 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=87)



Main non-food need:
 1- Soap (41%)
 2- Deodorant (14%)
 3- Others (45%)



Principal necesidad no alimentaria:
 1- Soap (29%)
 2- Shampoo (14%)
 3- Others (43%)

MAIN NEEDS

Despite coordination efforts between humanitarian actors and authorities during March 2024, challenges persist in the provision of services (such as internet connection and difficulties in withdrawing money without valid identification documents), improving infrastructure and responding to sanitary problems. Likewise, the need for clothing for migrants is highlighted, especially for children and babies. At CATEM, efforts have been made to adapt, such as providing mobile stations to charge devices, and addressing specific needs for food, hygiene and shelter, especially for families and people with reduced mobility.

Migrants in the GAM face a series of difficulties due to the economic problems they have, such as lack of accommodation, psychosocial, legal and medical care, as well as clothing and basic needs. Although different actors and local organizations work in the GAM area, it is essential that humanitarian efforts are present. Collaboration between these entities is crucial to provide support and assistance to migrants. Efficient coordination can make a difference in the humanitarian response and ensure that priority needs are effectively addressed.

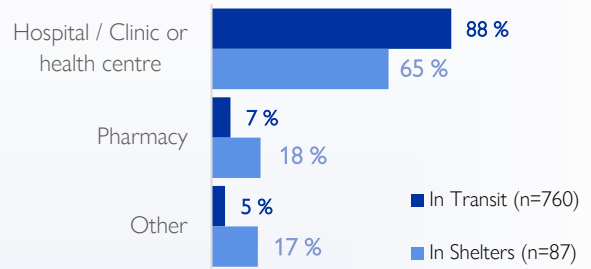
Meanwhile, stranded migrants in the northern zone begin to increase this month with greater needs in food, shelter, access to water, among others. Communities such as Los Chiles and Ciudad Quesada handle a constant flow of stranded migrants due to lack of economic resources to continue their journey. It has been observed through key informants that there are high protection risks for vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and people with specific health care needs. Key informants mention that the prolonged presence of migrants in these communities generates tensions with the local population.

The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. March 2024

In case of needing medical assistance, 88 per cent of the surveyed individuals in transit indicated that they would go to hospitals, clinics, or health centers, while only 65 per cent of the individuals in shelters would opt for this option. On the other hand, 18 per cent of the individuals in shelters would seek care from pharmacies, in contrast to only 7 per cent of the individuals in transit. These differences suggest that the perception of availability and accessibility of health services varies depending on the situation and location of migrants, highlighting the importance of adapting healthcare strategies to the specific needs of each group.

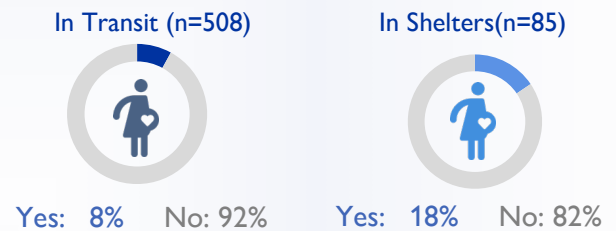
Eight per cent of surveyed women and women family members over 15 years old indicated being pregnant and had an average age of 26 years. These data vary between individuals surveyed at transit sites, where the percentage of pregnant women is 8 per cent with an average age of 25 years, and those in shelters, where these figures are 18 per cent and 22 years.

Figure 16. Percentage of surveyed individuals by type of movement and injuries suffered during the journey (n=847)



Other sites: NGO's, Alternative Medicine, Local medical or nursing professional

Figure 16. Percentage of women aged 15 and over by pregnancy status



OBSERVED HEALTH ISSUES

Main health conditions observed in stranded migrants include:

- Diarrhea and vomiting.
- Lacerations and open wounds.
- Injuries from falls.
- Mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.
- Blisters on feet and hands.
- Respiratory illnesses such as asthma, flu, colds, and cough.
- Others: Fractures and musculoskeletal injuries, headaches, body and joint pain, skin burns, dehydration and malnutrition, fatigue and extreme tiredness.

Despite ongoing efforts to improve sanitary protocols and the availability of basic medical services at the EMI Sur, challenges persist in providing adequate care for individuals with chronic diseases and ensuring access to healthcare for vulnerable groups. Mental health and the constant supply of medications remain areas that require greater attention and reinforcement. Furthermore, high demand and resource limitations have hindered the implementation of preventive measures and the timely response to medical emergencies.

In the GAM, although progress has been made in integrating health services, with a focus on communicable diseases and psychosocial support, the arrival of a larger number of migrants to the region and the limited access to medical services makes access to healthcare even more difficult for migrants. Cases of flu, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach ailments are observed among the main afflictions.

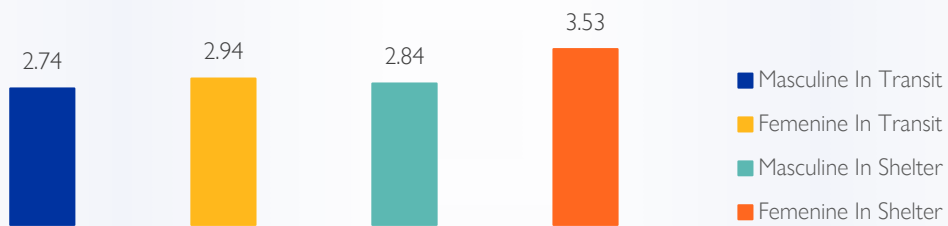
In the northern zone, the scarcity of health resources has been exacerbated by the increase in migratory flow in March 2024. The demand for medical services significantly exceeds the available supply, generating critical gaps in healthcare for migrants and local communities. Some cases of malaria, dehydration, bodily injuries, swelling in the feet, among others, are reported. The lack of medical personnel, supplies, and adequate infrastructure has limited the capacity to respond to diseases, injuries, and specific health needs. In this context, collaboration between humanitarian organizations, local authorities, and the public health system is essential to optimize available resources, improve service coordination, and prevent disease outbreaks in this region of migratory transit.

The composite indicator measures the level of vulnerability of travel groups on a scale of 0 to 5, where 5 represents the highest possible vulnerability and 0 the lowest. This indicator covers several critical dimensions: medical or psychosocial care, food and nutrition, shelter, economic income, access to water, the presence of minors traveling, and the number of people in the group. The indicator's methodology assigns an additional vulnerability point for each unmet need, considering the following criteria:

Table 1. Vulnerability indicator criteria

Variable	Answers	Contribution to the indicator
Most urgent need	Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care	1 point
2nd most urgent need	Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care	1 point
3rd most urgent need	Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care	1 point
Minors in travel groups	>=1 minors in the travel group	1 point
Travel group size	>= 3 people in the Travel group	1 point

Gráfico 17. Vulnerability level by sex and classification of migrants surveyed in March 2024



The analysis of the results of the vulnerability indicator for March 2024 reveals differences in the level of vulnerability depending on the sex and mobility status of migrants.

In general, both stranded and in-transit women present higher levels of vulnerability (in the case of stranded people, the index is 3.53 in women and 2.84 in men, while for people in transit, the index varies from 2.94 in women to 2.74 in men). This suggests that migrant women face more pressing challenges, risks, and needs compared to men, placing them in a situation of greater risk and vulnerability.

Overall, it is urgent to adopt a differentiated approach in the humanitarian response, considering the specific needs and vulnerabilities of each group. It is essential to provide additional support and protection to migrant women, especially those who are stranded, given their high level of vulnerability. Likewise, efforts must be strengthened to ensure security, access to essential services, and adequate assistance for all migrants, both in transit and stranded, in order to mitigate risks and improve their living conditions.



Bus Terminal in EMI Sur
Corredores, Puntarenas
©IOM 2024/ Yirlania QUESADA

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS



According to estimates from IOM in Costa Rica, the migratory flow in March 2024 was 36,106 entries, 13 per cent less than in February 2024 and 12 per cent less than in March 2023. At the beginning of March 2024, an event occurred at a Migrant Reception Station in Panama that caused a decrease in the average number of migrants for approximately 6 days. This event had a significant impact on the migratory flow, demonstrating the sensitivity of migratory routes to specific events.



The direct route from Paso Canoas to Los Chiles continues to be the busiest, with a flow of 35,614 migrants recorded by the DGME during March 2024, equivalent to 99 per cent of the estimated entries in the same month. The EMI Sur continues to play a fundamental role in managing this flow, providing essential services such as health care, legal assistance, and shelter, despite persistent logistical and sanitary challenges. In the northern zone, alternative routes and the growing demand for basic services and transportation remain a pressing reality.



During March 2024, an increase in stranded people was observed at the Temporary Attention Center for Migrants (CATEM), while a decrease in stranded people was recorded in public sites and shelters in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM). This change in the distribution of migrants suggests a greater use of official reception services and a reduction in the presence of migrants in public spaces. The presence of vulnerable migrants in Costa Rica continued to be notable. 1,178 people were reported in temporary shelters, highlighting the need to strengthen the resources and care provided to ensure that basic needs are met, and the human rights of all individuals are respected. In addition, 872 people were reported stranded at various public points in several cantons.



The results of surveys conducted in March 2024 revealed an increase in the percentage of migrants traveling alone, reaching 19 per cent of the total respondents, compared to 15 per cent recorded in February. This data indicates a growing trend of individuals undertaking the migratory process independently, which could imply greater risks and challenges during their journey.



Regarding the vulnerability profiles of the surveyed individuals, it is highlighted that women, both in transit and stranded, present higher levels of vulnerability compared to men. This suggests that they face more pressing challenges and risks, placing them in a situation of greater exposure to various risks. Likewise, the composite vulnerability indicator reveals that stranded individuals tend to have a higher degree of vulnerability compared to those in transit, especially in the case of stranded women, whose index reaches 3.53 points out of a maximum of 5. These findings allow identifying the groups that require priority attention and the implementation of specific measures to ensure their protection and well-being during the migratory process. The need to adopt a differentiated approach in the humanitarian response is evident, providing additional support and protection to migrant women and stranded individuals, as well as strengthening efforts to guarantee security, access to essential services, and adequate assistance for all migrants.

To access our new product with historical information about the Study, go to the following [STORY MAP](#) or scan the QR code.



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