

# PROTECTION MONITORING: MEXICO

## SNAPSHOT JULY & AUGUST 2023

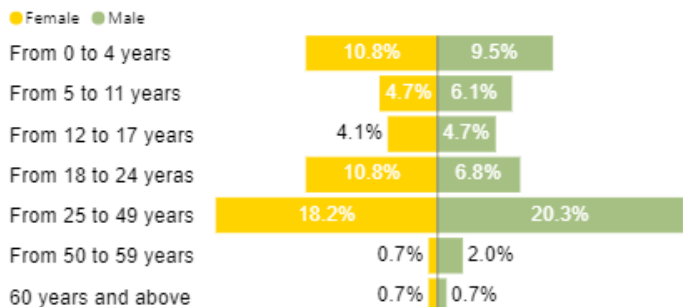
This SNAPSHOT summarizes the findings of Protection Monitoring conducted during bimester. Protection Monitoring is part of the humanitarian response of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in Mexico to the crisis affecting mixed migration flows. DRC conducts this Protection Monitoring directly in Tapachula and jointly with the Jesuit Refugee Service Mexico (JRS) in Ciudad Juarez, within a consortium with Save the Children Spain and Mexico, Plan International Spain and Mexico, HIAS Mexico and Medicos del Mundo France, with the financial support of the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). To view the interactive Dashboard of the results of this period and since the start of the Protection Monitoring program, click [here](#).

During July and August 2023, changes in the migration policy affecting access to United States territory continued to take effect, with confusion and desperation along both of Mexico's borders. CBP statistics reveal a slight decrease in the events of apprehension of persons irregularly crossing into the United States or who present themselves at a port of entry – to request protection or for other reasons, without authorization to enter: approximately [315,000 events](#) compared to 350,000 in the previous bimester. Additionally, [44,700 people](#) were processed to enter the United States through the CBP One application in July and [45,400 people](#) in August. The trend with respect to the number of new applications received by the COMAR remained constant during the bimester, with approximately [23,000 people](#) formalizing their applications nationwide. In Tapachula, the arbitrary practices of issuing departure documents (*oficios de salida*) continued, allowing for a flow of people towards the north of the country without passing through the COMAR. There are no records confirming the magnitude of people entering the country.

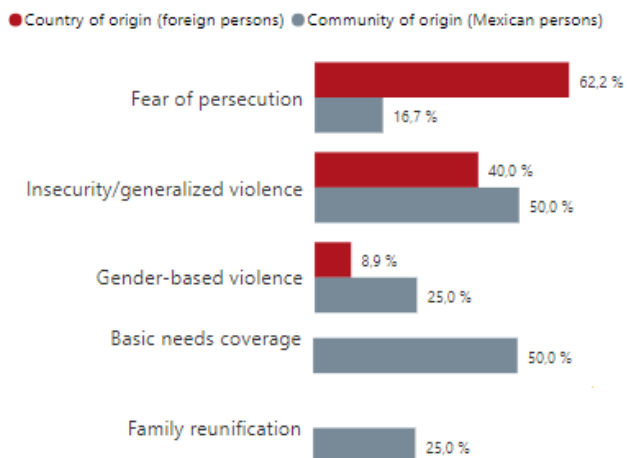
### KEY FIGURES

Between July and August 2023, 107 interviews were conducted, covering a total of 242 people.

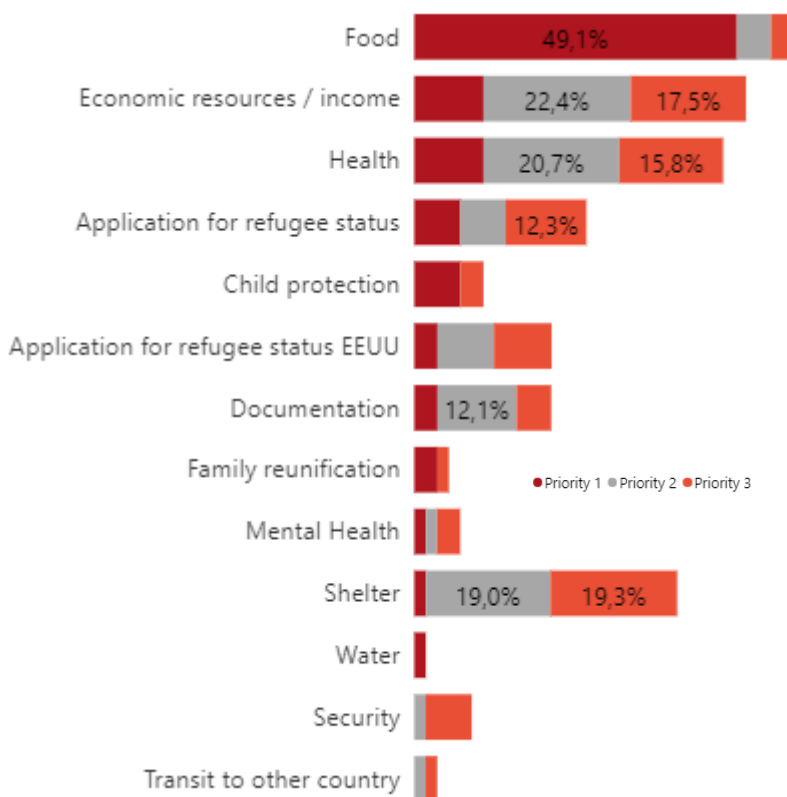
#### Sex and Age



#### Flight Motives



#### Main Priorities



*This document is part of the humanitarian response activities of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in Mexico, with the financial support of the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). It is not a publication of ECHO. The financing agencies are not responsible for the use that may be made of the information contained in the document and do not necessarily support its contents. All of the opinions expressed herein belong exclusively to DRC and should not be interpreted in any way as the official opinion of the European Union or its Member States.*

## PRIORITY ISSUE: LIVELIHOODS

*The relationship between access to livelihoods or means of subsistence by people affected by a humanitarian crisis and their exposure to protection risks has many dimensions. While having money does not eliminate the risks that a person can face, it is undeniable that having economic resources can increase the capacity of individuals to face violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation, insofar as these resources allow people to find shelter in safe locations and travel by safer routes. In the same way, not having access to money generally diminishes the capacity of the population to cover basic needs, such as food, shelter and hygiene, causing an increase in vulnerability and the adoption of **coping mechanisms** which, in some cases, can increase exposure to protection risks. In the face of these situations, persons in need can resort to establishing informal settlements in unprotected areas to address their need for shelter or to child labor or survival sex to establish a source of income. In the same way, multiple protection risks are influenced by economic factors, with threats disproportionately affecting people who lack livelihoods and thus are more vulnerably. Access to livelihoods also impacts the capacity of the affected population to **access services** that seek to reduce their exposure to protection risks or mitigate the impacts of the risks that have already materialized. The cost of transportation or telephone or internet connectivity can prevent some people from accessing information or services offered by organizations and institutions.*

Protection Monitoring with **mixed migration flows** in Mexico confirms that access to livelihoods is a priority issue. During the bimester, the issue of income or economic resources was referenced as a second priority among the population of concern, with important numbers of respondents in both Ciudad Juarez and Tapachula affirming the relevance of economic resources to be able to protect themselves and meet their most basic needs. The first priority identified during the bimester was food, classified as the main need by more than half of all respondents in both locations. The fact that this primordial need is the first priority of so many people reflects the limited access to economic resources necessary to purchase food.

The main sources of income detected among peopled monitored correspond to personal savings or the sale of belongings (47.7%); support from other individuals (25.2%); work in the current location (22.4%); and remittances (20.6%). This demonstrates the dependence

of affected people on the money that they bring with them on the journey, which is necessarily limited to the amount that they had before leaving their place of origin. In the same way, 67.7% of foreign respondents and 55.0% of Mexican respondents confirm that having these savings was the main factor in being able to have reached their current destination.

25.2% of respondents confirm that their households do **not have any source of economic resources** to cover their various needs. This figure reflects the high level of vulnerability of a significant part of the population of concern. While there are some assistance programs to cover needs such as shelter, food and health, these continue to be insufficient, particularly for those who do not have the means to cover these necessities and protect themselves from the risks present in the context. On this issue, 52.3% confirm not having received any assistance during their time in Mexico.



In some cases, the risks that people face can have impacts on the economic resources that they have available. People who survive kidnappings or extortion, for example, report having been completely stripped of the economic resources they possessed as well as their personal property. Following these incidents, survivors remain without access to means of subsistence which exposes them to greater vulnerability and significantly reduces their capacity to seek services that can mitigate the effects of these forms of violence.

Household surveys also confirm some of the other effects on the limits on access to means of subsistence. The cost of medications (44.0%), the cost of transportation (30.0%) and the cost of medical care (28.0%) were among the most comment barriers for **accessing medical care** cited by those monitored. The economic situation of households also has implications on the psychosocial wellbeing of affected people. Access to economic resources was cited as the main factor provoking **anxiety or depression**, referenced by 82.5% of people with these symptoms. Similarly, **negative coping mechanisms** to deal with the lack of resources were detected, including the reduction of meal sies and frequency, reported by 37.8% of households.

80.4% of respondents confirm that no one in their household is working. In the less than 20% of households with at least one person working, the vast majority of these – more than 90% - are informal jobs, such as [construction](#), which is also characterized by the short duration of projects that are more compatible with the migration plans of persons of concern. There is also a marked tendency with respect to gender, with men making up the majority of people of concern working in Tapachula. Participants in a focus group discussion voiced facing discrimination by some of the people who contract their services, as well as harassment and compensation below the minimum wage, which can lead to **forced labor** or **labor exploitation**. Some cases of [forced labor](#) have been documented in Ciudad Juarez.

Household surveys confirm the persistence of multiple **barriers to work**, such as the lack of opportunities (45.8%), the lack of migratory status (38.3%), and the lack of documentation (16.8%), among others. According to an interview with the National Employment Services, the high rate of mobility of people of concern is a challenge

for local companies that seek workers with a commitment to continue learnings and working during longer periods of time. According to this authority, the dynamics of movement contribute to the limited availability of work opportunities for the population of concern in Tapachula. In the same way, an interview with the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation confirmed that programs for labor integration for refugees through agreements with private companies have been limited in Tapachula given that few people intend to remain in this location.

Additionally, access to economic resources influences the intentions of people of concern. In Tapachula, the lack of work opportunities and the low salaries contribute to people continuing on to other parts of Mexico, mostly to states in the north of the country. For respondents in Tapachula, the availability of work opportunities is the fact that most influences their decision as to what their place of destination will be.



## TAPACHULA

During July and August, 100% of entries documented by Protection Monitoring were irregular in nature, confirming the continued absence of mechanisms to regularly Access territory. 62.7% of respondents in Tapachula confirmed suffering some type of abuse upon entering Mexico, with the main forces being confiscation of property (28.0%) and extortion (24.0%).

The *ad hoc* mechanism, for transfers by INM of persons recently arrived in Ciudad Hidalgo to the city of Tuxtla Gutierrez, continued. In July, direct observations enabled documentation of the prevalence of Venezuelan and Cuban nationals among these flows, as a practice by INM of denying the transfer service to persons from other countries in Central and South America. Also, during that month, there were numerous collective departures of [caravans](#) composed of around one hundred people, frustrated by the uncertainty around the transfers. The patterns of caravans continued during August, with multiple groups of around [400 people](#) mobilizing from Tapachula and surrounding areas due to the impossibility of obtaining documentation to freely circulate in the territory and due to the risks of violence, extortion and harassment that they face at the border, in public spaces and at check points.

Legal case management revealed a practice that leads to the **denial of the right to seek asylum** for children and adolescents. In particular, the COAMR refused to receive applications for recognition of refugee status from children and adolescents who arrived in Mexico after their family members had already regularized their migratory status. Pursuant to this practice, the children and adolescents are denied the opportunity to request asylum and have their applications considered independently of the cases of their family members. Beyond the effects that this has on the

right to seek asylum, this practice leaves children and adolescents without access to documentation, given that the COMAR instructs them to approach INM in order to pursue regularization based on family relationships. The high cost of this type of regularization makes it prohibitive for a significant part of the population of concern.

Similarly, other practices of the COMAR to manage the high concentration of cases prejudice **access to the asylum procedure**. In particular, the continued use of an appointment system in Tapachula to program the formalization of asylum applications leaves those who have not yet have their appointments unprotected. 78.3% of respondents in Tapachula confirmed being in this stage of the process with COMAR. The use of online systems to inform applicants about the scheduling and rescheduling of appointments was cited by multiple persons of concern as sources of confusion.

During the bimester, DRC detected cases of people who had been forcibly transferred from the north of the country to the south, including people who had a Multiple Migration Form authorizing their stay, but who had nonetheless been detained at checkpoints and returned to Tapachula. In some of these cases, due to the overwhelming needs for international protection and the experiences of violence during their initial transit through Mexico, these people opted to attempt to initiate the asylum process with the COMAR. There were also cases of some Venezuelan and Colombian nationals who manifested an intention to return to their countries of origin due to the high exposure to multiple risks and the lack of options to obtain documentation of legal stay in Mexico. For some of these people, the lack of a provisional passport or other authorization is a limitation that complicates their safe return.



## CIUDAD JUAREZ

Throughout July, a significant portion of those monitored in Ciudad Juarez signaled being confused about the processes to access U.S. territory, due mostly to [rumors and misinformation](#) disseminated through digital platforms and other communication channels, as well as unauthorized [payment-based services](#). JRS detected challenges in attempts to obtain an appointment through the CBP One application – from application errors to the lack of connectivity -, while those who were able to schedule an appointment reported wait times of around three weeks. 97.5% of respondents in this location with the intention of entering the United States affirmed their intention of seeking asylum. In this context, wait lists continue to operate to enable access to border crossings to seek asylum in the United States due to the challenges obtaining an appointment. Of those monitored in this location, 28.6% had been in Mexico for more than three months and 60.0% had not received any documentation conferring legal status or rights in Mexico.

During the month of July, informal camps continued to be formed near the bridges connecting the two countries. Despite the fact that various governmental actors and members of civil society encouraged those living in formal settlements that lack basic hygiene and secure conditions to approach shelters, a significant portion of the population remained in the camps, including after the **forced evictions** of [some of these spaces](#).

The identification of a large number of people who had suffered **kidnapping** continued the increase reported in the previous bimester, with some cases being disseminated through social media and local [news outlets](#). 22.2% of respondents in Ciudad Juarez affirmed that a member of the household had suffered kidnapping during their transit through Mexico. Those monitored described multiple types of experiences before arriving to Ciudad Juarez, from multiple kidnappings that they attributed to the person who had been contracted as a guide or coyote, to kidnappings produced in certain transportation routes used by bus or [train](#). There were also cases detected of people who had been kidnapped during their stay in Ciudad Juarez.



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