

HIGHLIGHTS

IRREGULAR MIGRATION FLOW

An irregular migration flow is understood to be the number of international migrants who arrive (enter) or depart (exit) a country during a period established irregularly through unofficial crossing points. These data are a dynamic measure for counting the number of people who cross a border and include those migrants who cross one or more times in a set period.

The data collected show the perception of key informants, so the data is interpreted as averages and general estimates of the situation.

EXITS FROM GUATEMALA

The border localities in which key informants reported departures were Bethel, Gracias a Dios, Tecún Umán, La Mesilla and El Ceibo.



Nacionalities



Gender



STRANDED POPULATION

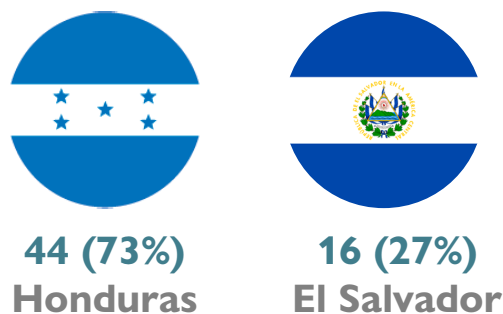
Stranded population refers to migrants who are not in a position to return to their country of origin, to regularize their situation in the country in which they reside or to access regular migration routes that allow them to move to another country. The term can also refer to migrants who are stranded in the country of destination, of transit or of origin, for humanitarian or security reasons, and who, consequently, cannot return home or continue the journey to another place¹.



Gender



Nationalities



¹IOM. IOM Glossary on Migration (Geneva, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

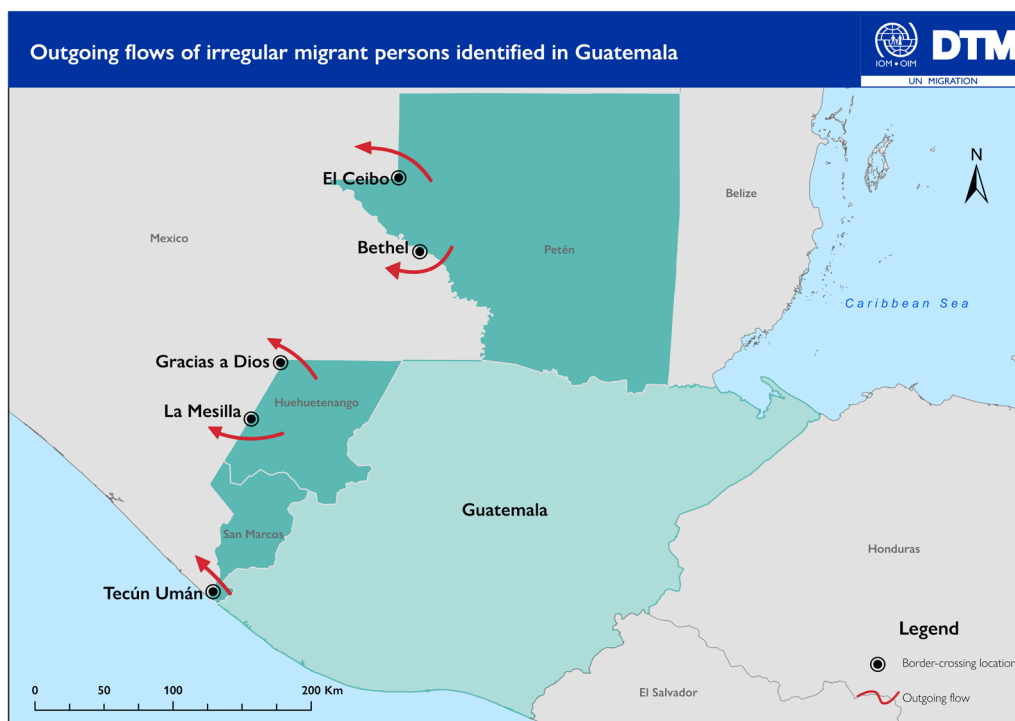
13 key informants

The DTM (Displacement Tracking Matrix), through the sub-components flow monitoring and mobility tracking, is a methodology whose purpose is to quantify and analyze trends in migration flows and the presence of migrants in specific localities during a specific period. Data were collected through interviews conducted remotely with strategically selected key informants. Information was used from the Public Information Office of the Municipality of La Libertad, the Mini-Muni of the Municipality of La Libertad, the Committee of Solidarity Families of Migrants in Bethel and La Técnica, the National Civil Police (PNC) of Naranjo, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) based in Petén, the Health Center based in the village of El Naranjo, the Community Development Council (COCODE) on the border of Gracias a Dios, the Health Post based in La Mesilla, the Office of Attention to Migrants of the Municipality of Tecún Umán, the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office (PDH) based in Coatepeque, the Transportation Sector of Tecún Umán and Gracias a Dios, and Civil Society organizations (merchants and hotel workers).

The data collected are the result of systematic records of field observations, migration control operations, or show the perception of the key informants consulted. For the calculation and quantification of the nationalities identified for entries and exits from Guatemala, the totality of the migration flows reported in the round by locality and key informants is considered, with which a calculation of the maximum value per nationality, locality and current round is elaborated. The data are presented in a percentage ratio due to limitations in specifying the number in absolute numbers for each nationality reported.

Estimates may be biased due to the difficulty of quantifying irregular flows not recorded by key informants. In addition, there are important discrepancies between the estimates of population flows from different key informants, in quantitative and qualitative terms. Therefore, the results of this report are general approximations of the situation.

LOCATION



Basemap source: ESRI and UN World Map.
Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

SITUATIONAL CONTEXT



In the case of Guatemala, a considerable number of people were reported to have left the country for Mexico or the United States in search of vaccination against COVID-19, given the crisis and the lack of access to vaccines for the population in their country of origin, according to a report by the authorities of the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT)². Although there is no official information on whether these movements were regular or irregular, in some border towns in Mexico there were reported cases of deportation of people traveling without documentation while trying to access this service.



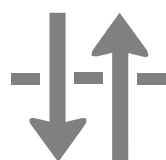
The detection of extraregional migrants in transit through Guatemala to North America from the Caribbean, South America, Africa and Asia continues to increase, according to information sources from the Guatemalan Migration Institute (IGM) and the National Civil Police (PNC), based on border patrols carried out in the country's migration corridors, mainly in the borders of San Marcos, Huehuetenango and Petén.



In July, security controls were established by the National Civil Police (PNC) in various locations throughout the country to identify and contain the entry and transit of irregular migrants, causing the detention of buses³ and heavy-duty vehicles⁴ transporting migrants from Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, Cuba, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil and Chile in inhumane conditions and without complying with the measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



In Huehuetenango there was a case of aggression against police officers by illegal migrant smugglers in San Mateo Ixtatán, a municipality near the border town of Gracias a Dios, while police officers were patrolling the area⁵.



According to key informants, most migrants in transit through Guatemala enter the country through blind crossings at the borders of El Corinto in Izabal, and El Florido and Agua Caliente located in Chiquimula, in small mixed groups of various age groups. These persons transit in an irregular condition, evading migration control posts established by the Guatemalan Government at these borders, which consist of the review of personal identification and proof of the COVID-19 test. It should be noted that the issuance of certifications for the COVID-19 has been established as a business under deception and scams with false tests in border localities, while sanitary measures are in place to spread the pandemic.

² La Prensa Libre. Inguat recognizes increase in Guatemalans leaving for Mexico or the U.S. to be vaccinated against covid-19. 05 July 2021. available at: www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/comunitario/inguat-reconoce-incremento-de-salida-de-guatemaltecos-rumbo-a-mexico-o-ee-uu-para-vacunarse-contra-el-covid-19-breaking/

³ PNC Guatemala, July 06 2021. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/PolicialNacionalCivildeGuatemala/posts/4306103959411355>

⁴ PNC Guatemala, July 17 2021. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/308379499183841/posts/4336685519686532/>

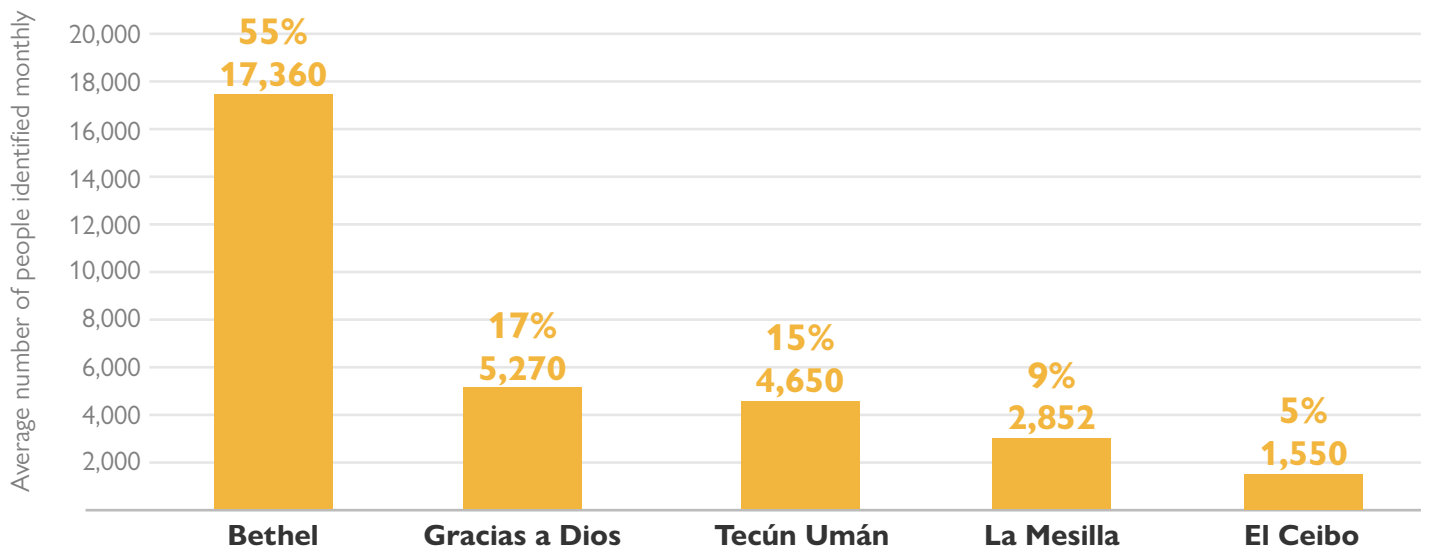
⁵ Soy 502. "VIDEO: "Los Polleros", smugglers assault the police at Huehuetenango", 22 July 2021. Available at: <https://www.soy502.com/articulo/video-buscan-agresores-agentes-pnc-huehuetenango-32419>

OUTGOING MIGRATION FLOW



Street sale of masks. Countries of the North of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) © IOM 2020

Approximate monthly departures of irregular migrants by border location (July, 2021)



With respect to outbound migration flow, data provided by key informants showed that in July, Bethel was the main exit point with 55% of cases, followed by Gracias a Dios and Tecún Umán with 17% and 15%, respectively. Meanwhile, at the El Ceibo border, compared to last month, there was a decrease in the flow of migrants leaving through this location during this round.

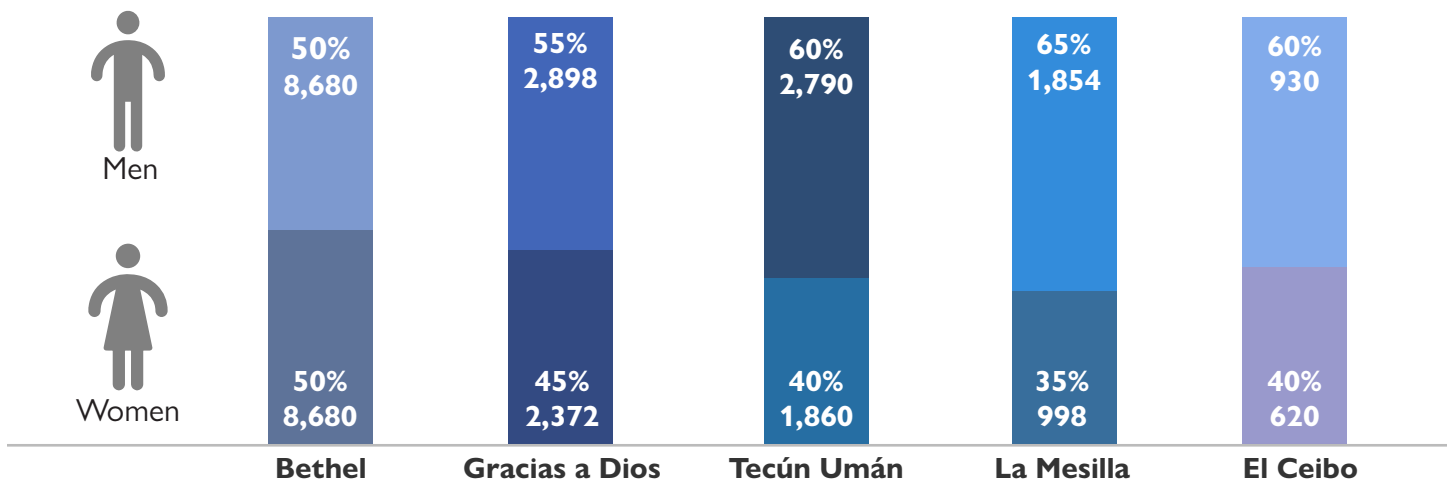
OUTGOING MIGRATION FLOW



Organizational meeting of IOM officials. Countries of the North of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador) © IOM 2020

In the case of El Ceibo border, according to the Health Center's statistical report, the number of migrants transiting this border has decreased considerably due to several factors, including: 1- The use of this border by Mexican authorities for the deportation of Central American migrants under Title 42 Program carried out by the Government of the United States. 2- The control of mountainous and forested areas (irregular migration routes) by organized crime organizations, who carry out assaults, extortion, and physical and sexual violence against migrants, particularly migrant women.

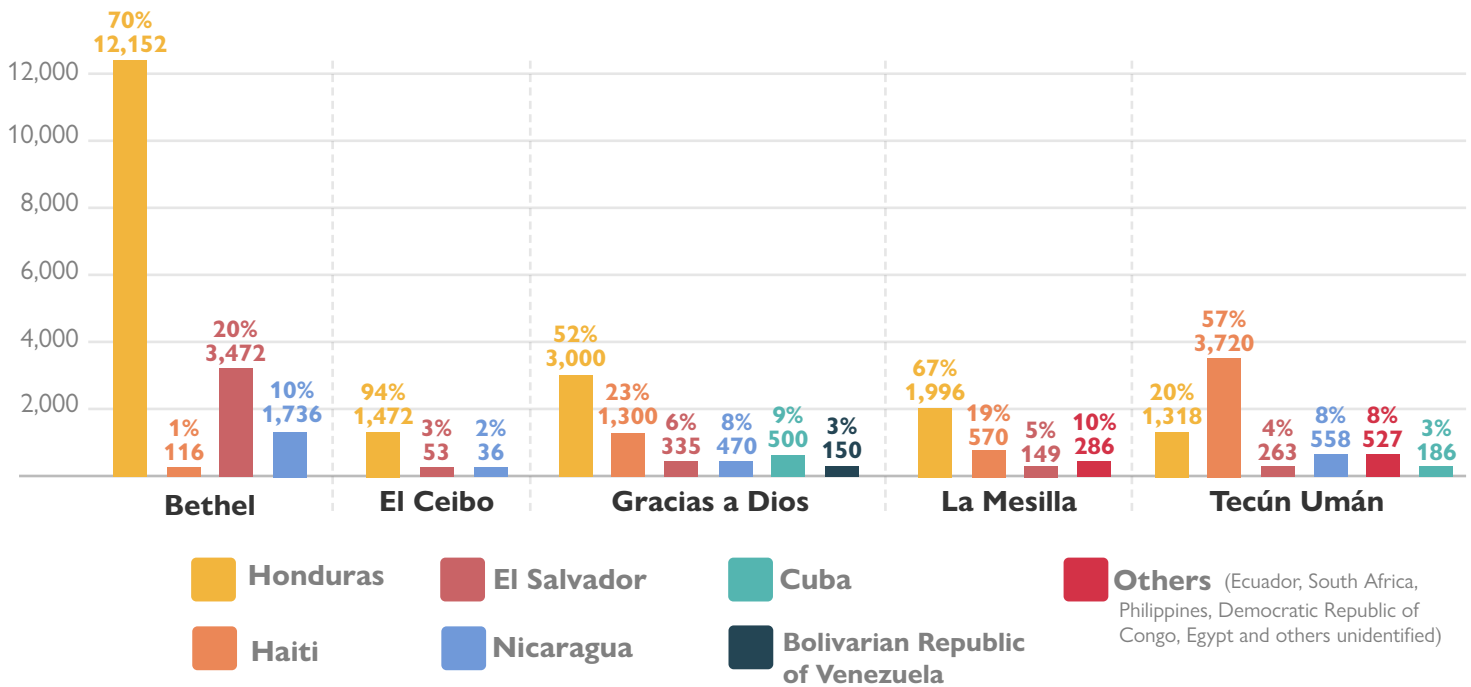
Approximate departures of irregular migrants by gender and border location (July, 2021)



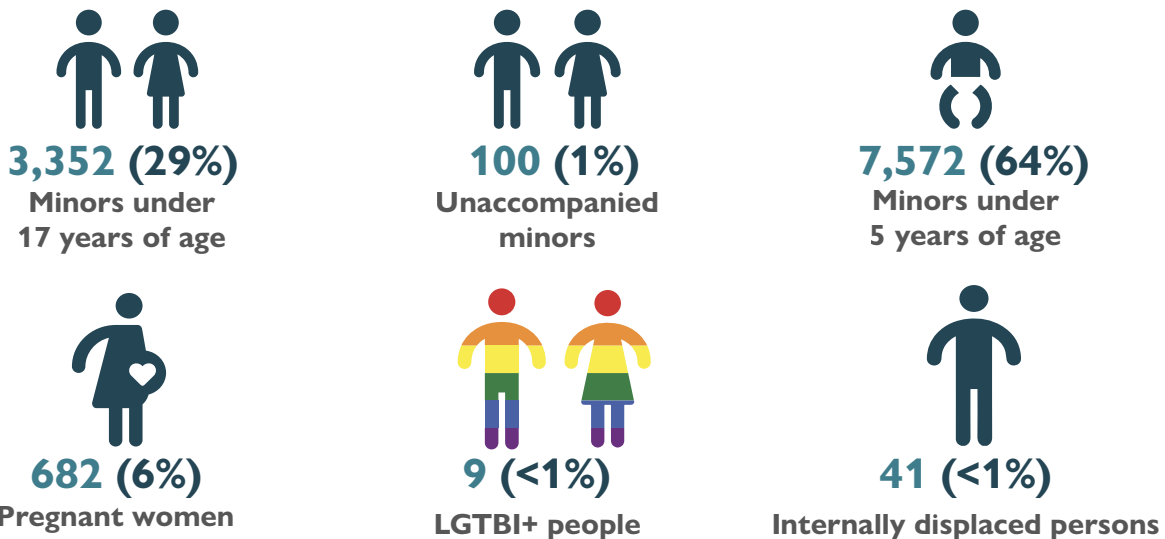
OUTGOING MIGRATION FLOW

The migration flow of departures was divided among seven nationalities mainly, and other identified and unidentified nationalities. The largest flow is of Honduran nationals, who represent 58 percent of total departures in July. Haitian nationals represent 17 percent and their departure is mainly through Tecún Umán; however, in the rest of the key informant localities, key informants indicated that there is a considerable transit of these people, mainly at night, so this factor limits their quantification. People from El Salvador and Nicaragua represent 12 percent and 8 percent respectively, while the remaining percentage is diluted among nationals from Cuba, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Guatemala and other nationalities from South America, Africa and Asia.

Approximate departures of irregular migrants by nationality and border location (July, 2021)



Persons of the outgoing migration flow identified under some condition of vulnerability, July 2021



OUTGOING MIGRATION FLOW

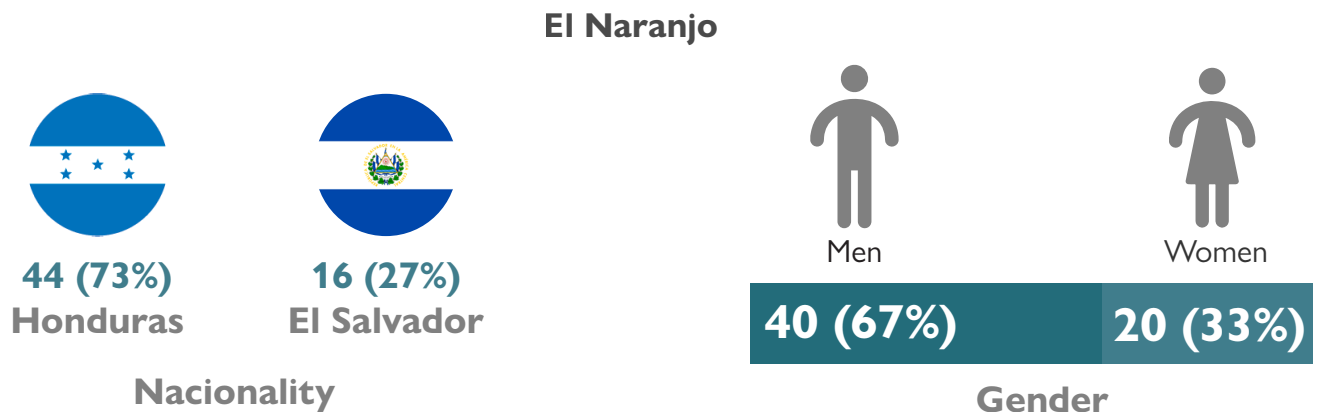
Minors are the most represented category of persons identified as vulnerable, with 3,352 minors between 6 and 17 years of age, 100 unaccompanied minors and 7,572 minors under 5 years of age identified. Minors represent 35 percent of the outgoing migration flow from Guatemala.

Children and adolescents were the biggest vulnerable group with the arrival of the pandemic, which led to the suspension of on-site classes and the total closure of schools. This not only generated a distance between home and school, but also a lack of interest in studying. According to the Committee of Solidarity Families of Migrants in Bethel, since 2014, girls and boys have been actors of migration in search of family reunification. However, with the arrival of the pandemic in 2020, the problem worsened and the migration of this sector of the population increased⁶.

Regarding the reasons why these people migrate irregularly to other countries, they indicated the search for better socioeconomic opportunities, health care, family reunification, forced displacement due to violence, discrimination and political conflict.

STRANDED POPULATION

In the village of El Naranjo, a total of 60 migrants, mostly of Honduran and Salvadoran origin, were stranded in that community in July. Twenty children under 5 years of age were identified. 67 percent of the stranded persons are men and 33 percent are women.



It was identified that the village of El Naranjo is a strategic point for stranded migrants, because it is one of the largest and most complex villages in the border area in terms of services. It is used by migrants who are living on the street, and only some choose to use the hotel services for 1 or 3 days maximum, and then continue their travel route. Other migrants decide to stay temporarily in this community, mostly migrant women, or mothers with children, looking for work for a maximum of 3 months or requesting humanitarian aid, and then resume their migration journey to the United States.

The relationship between the stranded migrants and the host community in this locality is neutral; it is normal for the locality to see stranded migrants and there has been no conflict with the community or the authorities. The reason they indicate for being stranded is due to lack of money to continue their journey to the United States or because they were returned by Mexican authorities.

⁶ EFE. With 5,000 migrants apprehended daily at border, U.S. nears Trump record. March 27 2021. Available at: www.france24.com/es/ee-uu-y-canad%C3%A1/20210327-eeuu-migrantes-detenido-frontera-biden-record-trump

POPULATION STRANDED IN THE BORDER

Stranded migrants identified under some condition of vulnerability, July 2021



Among the stranded population, 20 children under 5 years of age were identified, representing 25 percent of the stranded irregular migrants.

Housing conditions of stranded migrants, July 2021.



On the other hand, according to key informants, 56 percent of the people live on the streets, while 15 percent live in shelters.

CONCLUSIONS



The Bethel Border has become an important departure point for migrants, and the town of Gracias a Dios continues to be one of the most frequented places for the transit of irregular migrants, mainly used by Central American migrants despite the existence of organized crime organizations.



Most of the key informants expressed that the migration trend at the border points may vary, given that migrants travel at night to avoid border checkpoints and health checks by police agents.



It was identified that the main nationalities detected continue to be Honduras, Haiti and El Salvador; however, discrepancies were identified between the estimates of the different key informants with respect to the nationality of the migrants, and even when calculating the nationalities by locality there could be differences with the maximum values reported. This could mean that the estimates presented in this report are underestimates.



IOM officials field work. Countries of the North of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador). © IOM 2020