

Flow monitoring of people on the move across the Americas

Locations of high transit and migrant presence in Costa Rica

Cantons: Alajuela, Cartago, Corredores, Desamparados, Heredia, Liberia, Los Chiles, San Carlos, San José, Santa Ana, Tibás



Situation Report: January 2024

Main 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 January 2024.

FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY



37,436 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENTERED COSTA RICA FROM PANAMA IN JANUARY 2024
 Estimated daily average of **1,208** individuals
 Estimated increase of **17 %** compared to December 2023 (**5,023** individuals)

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

EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING IN MONITORED LOCATIONS



1,407 INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN MONITORED PUBLIC SITES
 Average stay: **2 days**



732 INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN **3** MONITORED SHELTERS
 Average stay: **6 days**

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

FLOW MONITORING SURVEY: LOCATION OF HIGH TRANSIT AND MIGRATION PRESENCE (952 individuals surveyed and 1,434 family members)



41 % WOMEN | **59 %** MEN
30 % ACCOMPANIED MINORS



84 % OF INDIVIDUALS TRAVEL IN GROUPS

PRIMARY NEED

Food and nutrition (**39 %**)
 Water (**17 %**)
 Income (**16 %**)
 Other (**28 %**)



Shelter, medical care, sanitation and hygiene, diapers, feminine hygiene supplies, psychosocial support, safety and security

Source: IOM, 2024

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.

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



Costa Rica, like other countries in Central America, has been characterized as a migratory corridor that begins when migrants cross the land bridge between Colombia and Panama at the Darien Gap in hopes of reaching countries in North America as the primary destination. This is known as the **trend of people on the move across the Americas**³. According to data published by the Republic of Panama, between January and December 2023, there were 520,085 entries from Colombia: 64 per cent were men and 36 per cent women; 21 per cent minors. Around 63 per cent came from Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 11 per cent from Ecuador, 9 per cent from Haiti, 5 per cent from the People's Republic of China, 4 per cent from Colombia, and another 8 per cent from 31 different countries⁴.



There was an increase in the migratory flow between December 2023 and January 2024 (28,721 and 37,436 people, respectively). The sustained growth of migration reflects transformations in policies and the global socioeconomic situation, which drive people toward new opportunities. This upward trend highlights the need for continuous analysis and monitoring of migration flows.

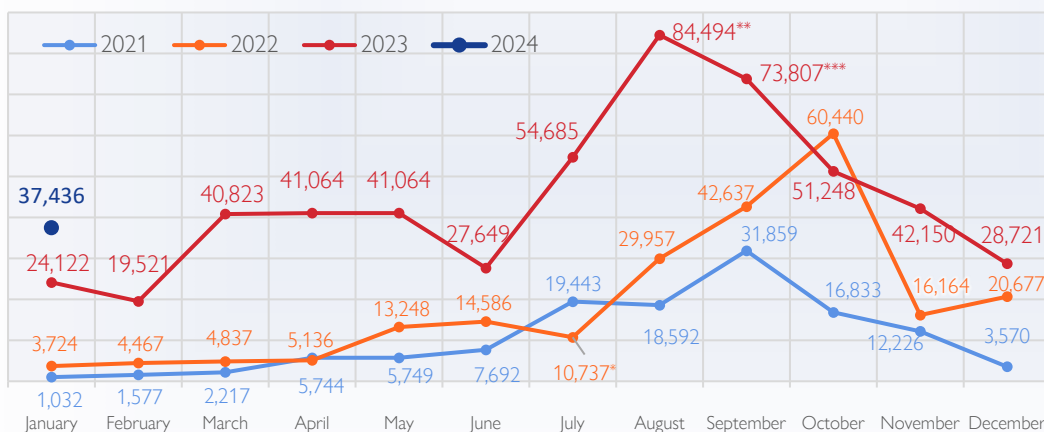


Since October 7, 2023, the Professional Migration Police of Costa Rica (PPM) has implemented a significant restructuring in the management of cross-border transportation. They centralized the operations of buses transiting from the southern border to the north in a single location, next to the Temporary Attention Center for Migrants (CATEM), creating the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur). This specific measure allowed for a more efficient monitoring of migratory flows, improving the allocation of resources and services to migrants. It also contributed to a significant reduction in the number of migrants stranded in public spaces by providing them with a focal point to receive assistance while their migratory situations are being processed.



In January 2024, the General Direction of Migration in Costa Rica (DGME) recorded a total of 732 stranded migrant individuals in shelters, with 573 at the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur) and 159 in two shelters in San José, reflecting a significant decrease of more than 60 percent compared to the 1,888 cases in December 2023 (Graph 4). The proportion of stranded migrants remained at 2 percent of the total entries into the country, like most of the previous months except for the peak of 25 percent in November. In addition, 1,407 stranded individuals were counted in public areas, with 341 in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) and 1,066 in the Northern Zone (Graph 3), marking a slight increase from the previous month and highlighting the absence of cases in the Corredores canton (+5 %), a notable change since the creation of EMI Sur. The rate of stranded migrants with respect to total entries into the country was 4 percent in January, down from the peak of 23 percent in September 2023, but still higher than the 1 percent of January last year⁵.

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



37,436
Migrants individuals in
January 2024

529,348
migrants individuals in 2023

226,610
migrants individuals in 2022

126,512
migrants individuals in 2021

*In 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 %.

³ Para más información, visite: www.dtm.iom.int/costa-rica

⁴ Para más información, visite: www.migracion.gob.pa

⁵ Para más información, visite: www.dtm.iom.int/costa-rica

At the request of key informants, starting in October 2023, IOM Costa Rica began calculating the number of potential entries of migrants to Costa Rica. These estimates are derived from historical data on outflows from the Temporary Migration Reception Station (ETRM) in Los Planes, Gualaca until 30 August 2023 and the inflows to Panama that are published on the website of the National Migration Service of Panama⁶. Likewise, since the beginning of November, **the Migration Institute of Costa Rica (DGME, by its Spanish acronym) publishes a daily report of people moving by public transportation and the number of people who remain stranded in CATEM**⁷.

The FMS data collection method involves in-person surveys to migrants on the move across the Americas in Costa Rica, in the cantons Corredores, San Jose, Liberia, and Los Chiles. The surveys are available in Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. The flow monitoring points are locations with high migrant presence and mobility, which allow for differentiation between those stranded in shelters and those in transit sites (Map 1). The surveys use a non-probabilistic, convenience sampling technique, and are applied voluntarily to adults, representatives of groups, or individuals traveling alone to gain in-depth knowledge of the profile of migrants⁸.

For the January 2024 FMS, **952 valid surveys** were obtained (99% response rate and 1% non-response rate) and information on 2,386 migrants (952 respondents and 1,434 family members); 74 per cent of the surveys conducted were of people in the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur) and people stranded in shelters in San José, the remaining 26 per cent were conducted in sites of high transit and migrant presence in the cantons of Liberia and Los Chiles.

At the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur), a systematic random sampling was implemented that attempts to generalize findings to the entire migrant population that passed through this site. Because the size of this population is unknown from month to month, this sampling is carried out under the assumption of an unknown population size; for which to obtain results with 95 percent confidence and a margin of error of ± 5 percent, at least 386 individuals must be surveyed at EMI Sur. This method ensures that each individual has an equal chance of being selected, thus providing a representative sample that reflects the characteristics of the entire migrant population in transit.

For surveys in shelters in San José, an effort is made to survey as many adults, representatives of travel groups, as possible. For surveys in high migrant transit sites in the cantons of Liberia and Los Chiles, non-probabilistic sampling was implemented at the monitoring points. 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 in the cantons. Non-probability sampling was chosen due to the specific conditions of these sites, which may include the mobility and geographic 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 probability methods is not practical.

Parallel to the quantitative information presented in the report, descriptive information on the migratory dynamics of the trend through Costa Rica was also obtained through the EET, which allows tracking sudden movements and providing recent updates through key informant interviews, 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: The Government of Costa Rica implements an official registration system for those who travel along the route connecting the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur) with Los Chiles, on the northern border, and conducts a count of individuals at the Temporary Attention Center for Migrants (CATEM). However, the presence of migratory movements in areas far from these controls, such as the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM), Liberia, San Carlos, and La Cruz, indicates significant flows through unofficial routes, evidencing the lack of a complete registry of all entries into the country. This challenge is compounded by additional difficulties that affect the collection of adequate information, such as language and cultural barriers, the temporary stay of migrant individuals at the monitoring points, and the complexities of the terrain and migratory dynamics, which include the operation of human trafficking networks.

On the other hand, when comparing the results of recent surveys with the official records of Panama, discrepancies in fundamental demographic data are observed, such as gender, proportion of minors, and nationality. Specifically, Costa Rica's records show a predominance of individuals from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (72% in December 2023), in contrast to 47 percent reported by Panama for entries into Panama through Darien. In addition, the omission of certain nationalities that have a considerable number of entries through Darien is highlighted, such as individuals from the People's Republic of China, who represent 12 of the entries into Panama through Darien, but less than 1 percent in the surveys of the FMS during the same period.

⁶ For more information, visit: www.migracion.gob.pa

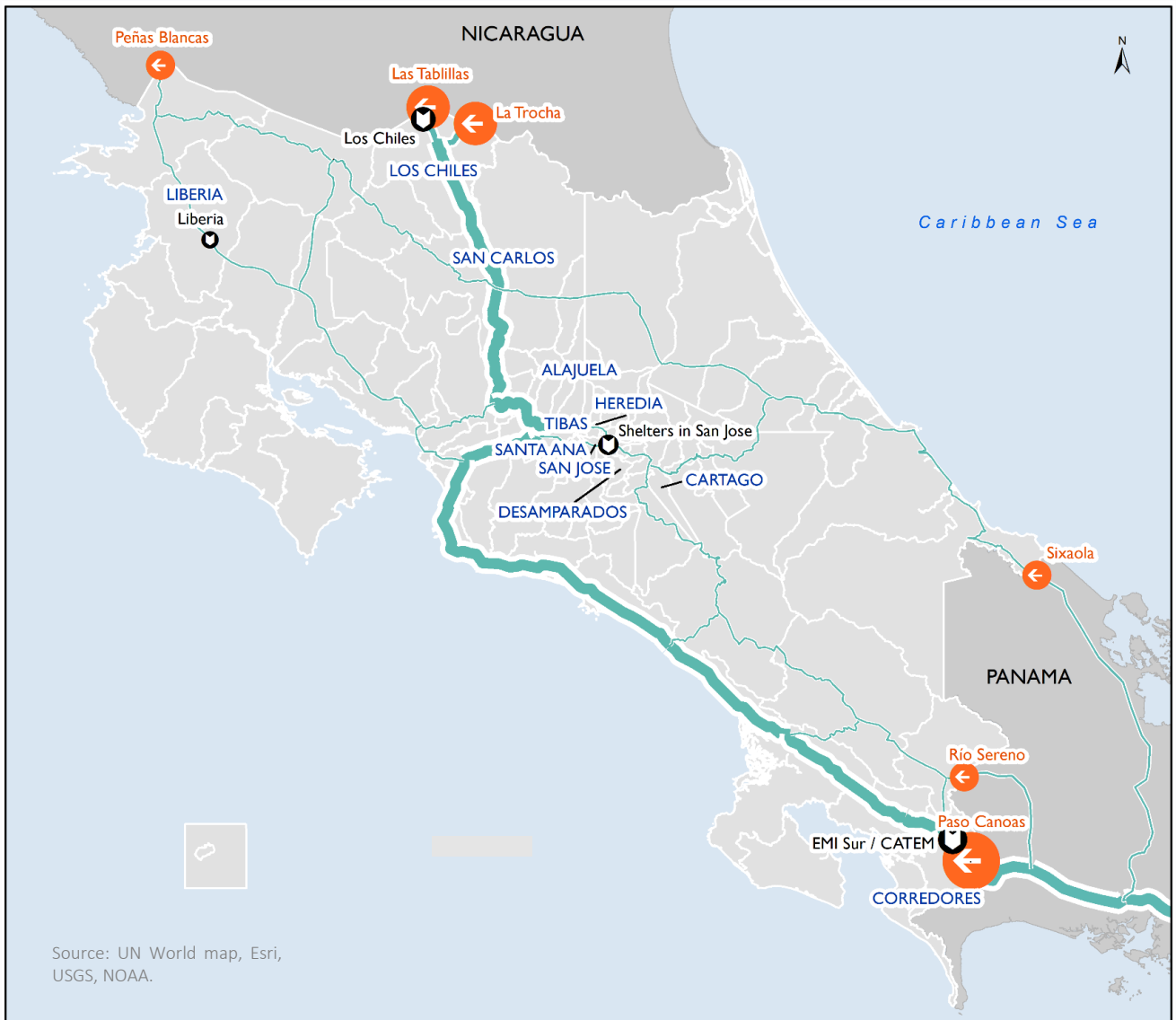
⁷ For more information, visit: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx

⁸ For more information, visit: www.iom.int/es/proteccion-de-datos



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. January 2024



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

Legend

Surveys

- 12
- 54
- 232
- 654

Border Crossing

- 169
- 16.703 - 16.872
- 33.744

Route

- Direct Route EMI Sur - Los Chiles
- Alternative Route

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

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37,436

Estimated number of individuals entering Costa Rica. January 2024



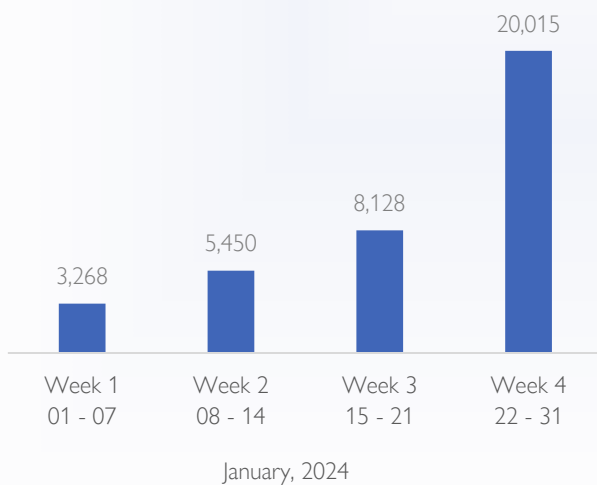
Estimated increase of **17 %** compared to December 2023 (28,721).

According to projections from IOM Costa Rica, it is estimated that around **37,436** people entered the country in January 2024 as part of the migratory flow across the Americas. The majority would have entered through Paso Canoas, on the border with Panama (99 %) with a daily average of 1,089. Examining the annual statistics, an **upward trend in long-term migration** is detected: In January 2021, there were 1,032 entries; in January 2022, 3,724 (261 % increase over the previous year); in January 2023, 24,122 (548 % increase); and in January 2024, 37,436 (55 % increase).

The main route identified was directly from Paso Canoas (southern border) to Los Chiles (northern border) by bus, costing approximately USD 30 per person and taking less than a day. This month, an estimated **36,861 people** moved through this route, equivalent to **98 per cent of the total trend entering the country in the same month** (Figure 2)⁹. The presence of people stranded in public places in the GAM and areas far from Los Chiles and Paso Canoas are evidence that alternative routes continue to be active.

According to Figure 2, there is a progressive increase in the number of individuals transiting this direct route. In the first week, 3,268 individuals were registered, a number that continuously increased, reaching a peak of 20,015 individuals in the fourth week.

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 January 2024, the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur) in Costa Rica continued as a focal point for migration, especially for populations coming from Asia, Haiti, and Africa, marking a change in recent migration trends. The company Tracopa provided transportation services for migrants to the north of the country, while humanitarian organizations provided continuous assistance. Despite improvements in management and living conditions compared to previous months, challenges such as transportation delays persisted. The migratory response demonstrated adaptability to adapted in the face of contingencies, reflecting Costa Rica's commitment to humane migration management.

MOBILITY IN CENTRAL CANTONS: During January 2024, the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) of Costa Rica reinforced its role as a key point in the mobility of migrant individuals, maintaining the upward trend in flows observed since the previous December. The 710 Terminal and taxi transportation continued to be the main daytime transit routes to the north of the country. Food services and accommodation in shelters and dining halls experienced sustained demand, reflecting the ongoing need for information on internal routes and legal migration advice for people in transit. This situation highlights the need for constant adaptation of the local response to the changing regional migratory dynamics.

MOBILITY IN NORTHERN CANTONS: During January 2024, the mobility of migrant individuals in the northern cantons of Costa Rica continued the trend observed in December 2023, with frequent use of direct routes to the border area. There was a preference for journeys from the south of the country or San José to Los Chiles, followed by movement through unofficial paths to irregular border points such as La Trocha and Las Tablillas. It was common for people to get off the bus at unauthorized locations, such as the community of El Parque in Los Chiles, to take informal taxis to unofficial border crossings. While a significant number of stranded individuals were recorded in the northern zone at the beginning of the month, this figure showed a decrease in the following weeks.

⁹ The estimate of persons is calculated by approximate number of buses reported by key informants. It is assumed that 60 people travel per bus.



INDIVIDUALS STRANDED AT MONITORED SITES

In January 2024, 732 stranded migrant individuals were identified in shelters and 1,407 in public sites of various monitored cantons. There is a significant decrease in the number of individuals housed in CATEM compared to previous months, and the average length of stay, which was 6 days in the previous month, was maintained.

The marked decrease in the number of migrant individuals housed in CATEM and the increase in the length of stay in shelters during December (1,888 individuals) and January 2024 (732 individuals) suggests an intervention in reception policies and practices, which plan measures to manage migratory flows and the precise identification of cases requiring extended assistance.

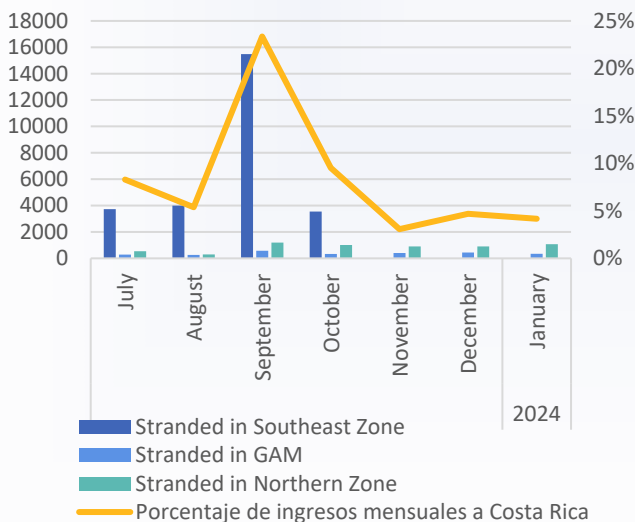
Although the number of migrants in public spaces in January 2024 (1,407 persons) remained like December 2024 (1,345 persons), there was a significant increase of stranded persons in the canton of San Carlos (612 stranded persons in January 2024).

According to key informants, these are mostly people traveling from Los Chiles to San Carlos in search of resources to continue their journey.



INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN SOUTHERN CANTONS: Since the beginning of November, Costa Rica's Directorate General of Migration and Aliens (DGME) has issued daily reports on **people stranded in the EMI Sur shelter, known as CATEM**¹⁰. In December 2023, **573** people were counted.

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

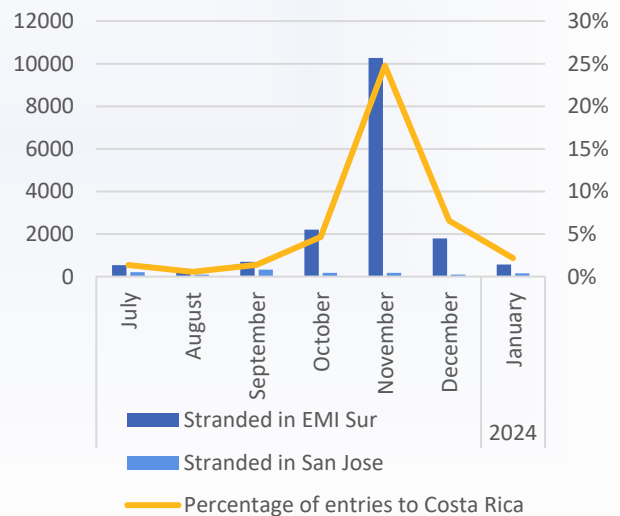


In January 2024, interventions at the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur) in Costa Rica continued, sustaining the reduction of migratory congestion observed at the end of December 2023. Efforts have been made to improve waste management and efficiency, which has had a positive impact on the quality of care and the satisfaction of fundamental humanitarian needs. The cooperation between various United Nations agencies has played a crucial role in strengthening assistance and logistics.

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN CENTRAL CANTONS: In January 2023, 341 stranded migrant individuals were identified in public sites monitored in the cantons of San José, Desamparados, Cartago Heredia, Santa Ana, Alajuela, and Tibás (Figure 3). Additionally, 159 migrants were found in 2 shelters in the central canton of San José. There was an increase in the number of individuals stranded in shelters, rising from 96 individuals in December 2023 to 341 individuals in January 2024. However, there was a decrease in the number of migrants in public spaces, from 442 individuals in December 2023 to 341 individuals in January 2024, equivalent to a 23 percent decrease.

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN NORTHERN CANTONS: In January 2024, 1,066 stranded migrant individuals were identified in public areas of the cantons of Liberia, La Cruz, Los Chiles, and San Carlos. San Carlos and Los Chiles stood out as the points with the highest number of stranded migrants in the northern area, Los Chiles have a safe space facilitated by UNICEF, which offers child protection and psychosocial assistance. A slight increase was identified compared to the previous month, from 903 stranded individuals in December 2023 to 1,066 in January 2024, equivalent to an 18 percent increase.

Figure 4. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in monitored shelters



⁸ The estimate of individuals is calculated by approximate number of buses reported by key informants. It is assumed that 60 people travel per bus.

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

FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

(Individuals surveyed: 952 | Family members: 1,434)

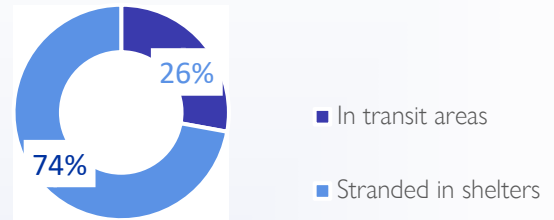
Data collection: January 1-31, 2024

This 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 (Liberia and 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, although 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 **2,386** migrants (652 respondents and 1,434 family members).

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



Figure 5. Surveys by type of movement of surveyed individuals (n=952)



244

Individuals surveyed in **high-traffic transit areas** throughout Costa Rica (Liberia and Los Chiles).



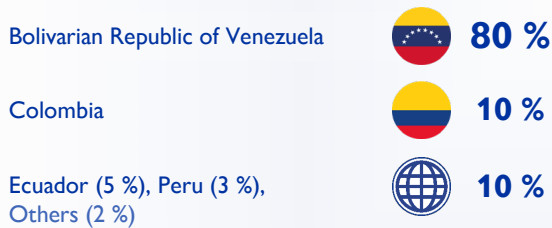
708

Individual surveyed persons surveyed stranded in shelters in Costa Rica (2 shelters in the Greater Metropolitan Area and CATEM in EMI Sur)

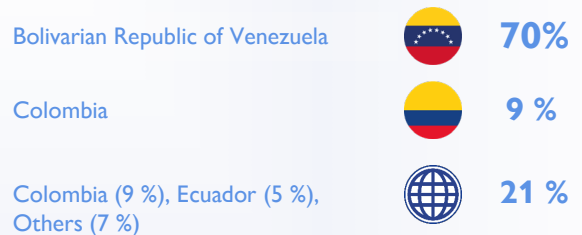
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

NATIONALITIES OF SURVEYED INDIVIDUALS

Percentage of individuals in transit by nationality (n=244)



Percentage of individuals stranded in monitored shelters by nationality (n=708)



EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 6. Percentage of individuals surveyed in transit by gender and highest level of completed education (n=244)

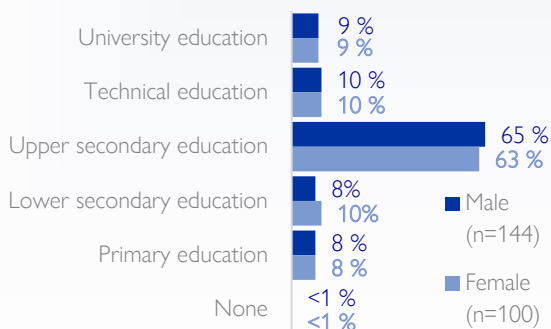
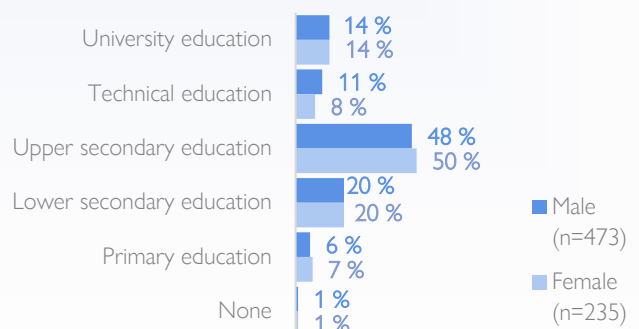


Figure 7. Percentage of individuals surveyed in shelters by gender and highest level of completed education (n=708)



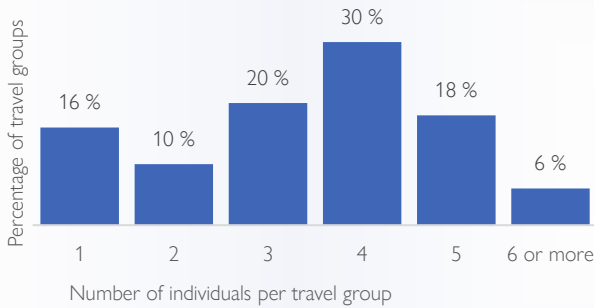
The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. January 2024



Of the 244 people surveyed at transit sites, information was obtained on 373 travel companions, equivalent to a total of **617 family members and respondents**. Among the groups analyzed, 16 per cent were traveling alone (19 % were men and 11 % were women), and 10 per cent were couples, of which 44 per cent were spouses, 18 per cent were parents with a child, and the remaining 44 per cent were other relatives. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 74 per cent of the total, were mainly composed (72 percent) of spouses and their children (Figure 8).

In terms of gender and age distribution, 54 per cent of the people in the travel groups, including respondents and their family members, were male, while 46 per cent were female. Minors (17 years of age or younger) constituted 33 per cent of the total. The average age of adults was 30 years and that of minors was 8 years, as detailed in Figure 9.

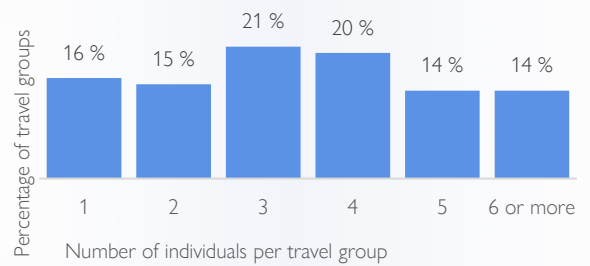
Figure 8. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals at transit sites (n=617)



Of the 585 people surveyed in **3 shelters** in the southern zone (1) and San José (2), information was obtained on 1,038 travel companions, equivalent to a total of **1,623 family members and respondents**. Of the groups analyzed, 14 per cent were traveling alone (33 % men and 2 % women), and 10 per cent were couples, of which 49 per cent were spouses and 18 per cent were fathers or mothers with a son or daughter. The largest groups (3 or more persons), representing 76 per cent of the total, consisted mainly (77 %) of spouses and their children (Figure 10).

In terms of gender and age distribution, 57 per cent of the members of the travel groups, including transit respondents and their family members, were male, while 43 per cent were female. Minors (17 years of age or younger) constituted 38 per cent of the total. The average age of adults was 31 years and that of minors was 8 years, as detailed in Figure 11.

Figure 10. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals stranded in monitored shelters (n=1,769).



GENDER AND AGE COMPOSITION OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRAVEL GROUPS

Figure 9. Percentage of individuals comprising travel groups in transit, by age and sex (n=617)

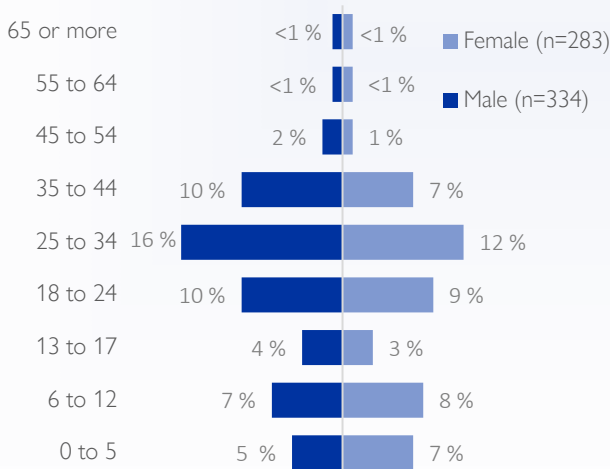
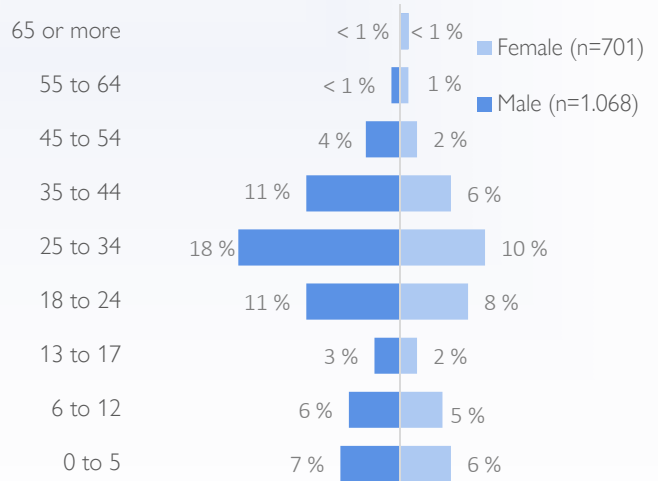


Figure 11. Percentage of individuals comprising travel groups stranded in monitored shelters, by age and sex (n=1,769)



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

REASONS FOR MIGRATING

Of the total number of **people surveyed in transit sites**, 98 per cent indicated that their main reason for migrating was the search for favorable economic conditions, followed by the search for favorable work conditions (95 %), political stability (66 %), access to refugee determination processes (60 %), and family reunification (5 %).

Percentage of respondents in transit by main reason for migration (n=244)



Of the total number of **surveyed persons stranded in monitored shelters**, 90 per cent indicated that their main reason for migrating was the search for socioeconomic conditions, followed by the search for favorable conditions to obtain employment (90 %), access to refugee processes (63 %), political stability (60 %) and family reunification (24 %).

Percentage of surveyed persons stranded in shelters by main reason for migration (n=708)



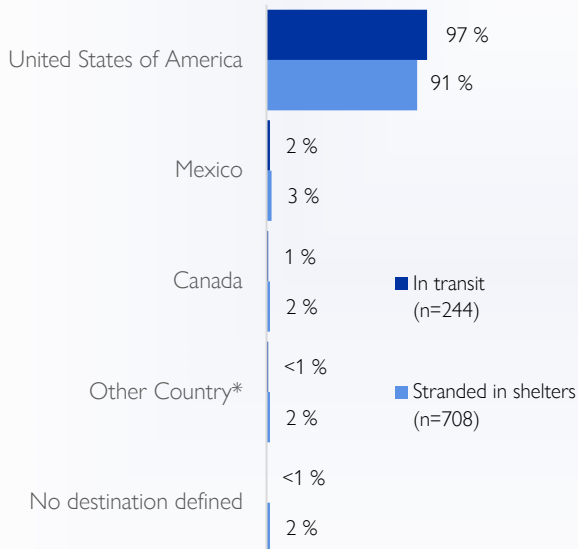
Note: individuals could choose more than one option

INTENDED DESTINATION

These proportions remain similar among respondents in transit sites and shelters: 99 per cent of respondents in transit sites indicated the United States of America as their destination compared to 91 per cent of respondents in shelters (Figure 12).

On the other hand, Mexico emerged as the main alternative destination country (25 % of the total number of people surveyed), followed by Canada (10 %) and Costa Rica (8 %), among others (6 %). Meanwhile, 51 per cent indicated not having an alternative destination.

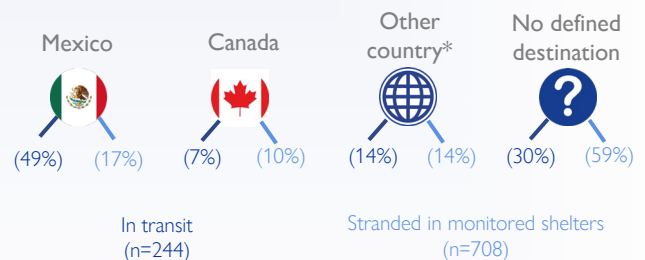
Figure 12. Percentage of surveyed individuals by country of final destination (n=952)



*Others: Costa Rica, Colombia, Spain, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Regarding the minimum needs to stay in the alternative country, 91 per cent cited income resources, 81 per cent cited regularization and 50 per cent indicated medical care (respondents had the option to choose more than one need). Differences in the minimum needs for staying in the alternate destination country were highlighted between transit and stranded respondents; 74 per cent of transit respondents indicated regularization, while 98 per cent of stranded respondents indicated income and 83 per cent indicated regularization.

Percentage of surveyed individuals by alternative destinations (n=952)



*Costa Rica, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, United States of America, Honduras, Colombia Chile and Brazil.

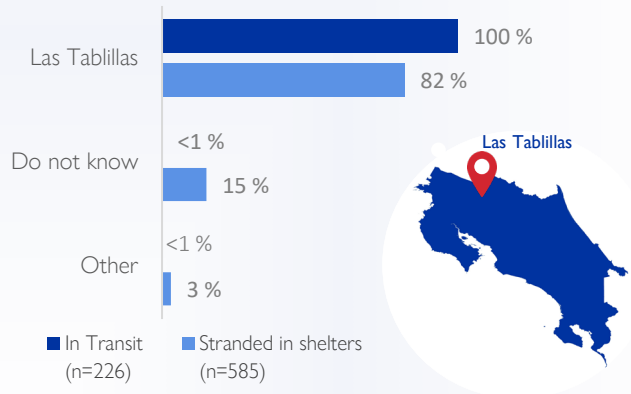
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Map 2 shows the route of respondents (in transit sites and stranded in shelters) from their country of departure to their country of usual residence during the last 12 months, and then on to Costa Rica. **27 per cent reported residing in a country other than their country of departure**, of which 12 per cent (of the total number of persons surveyed) corresponded to persons who started their journey in Colombia but resided in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela but went to live in Colombia. Additionally, 3 per cent made this movement from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to Peru, and 3 per cent from Haiti to Chile.

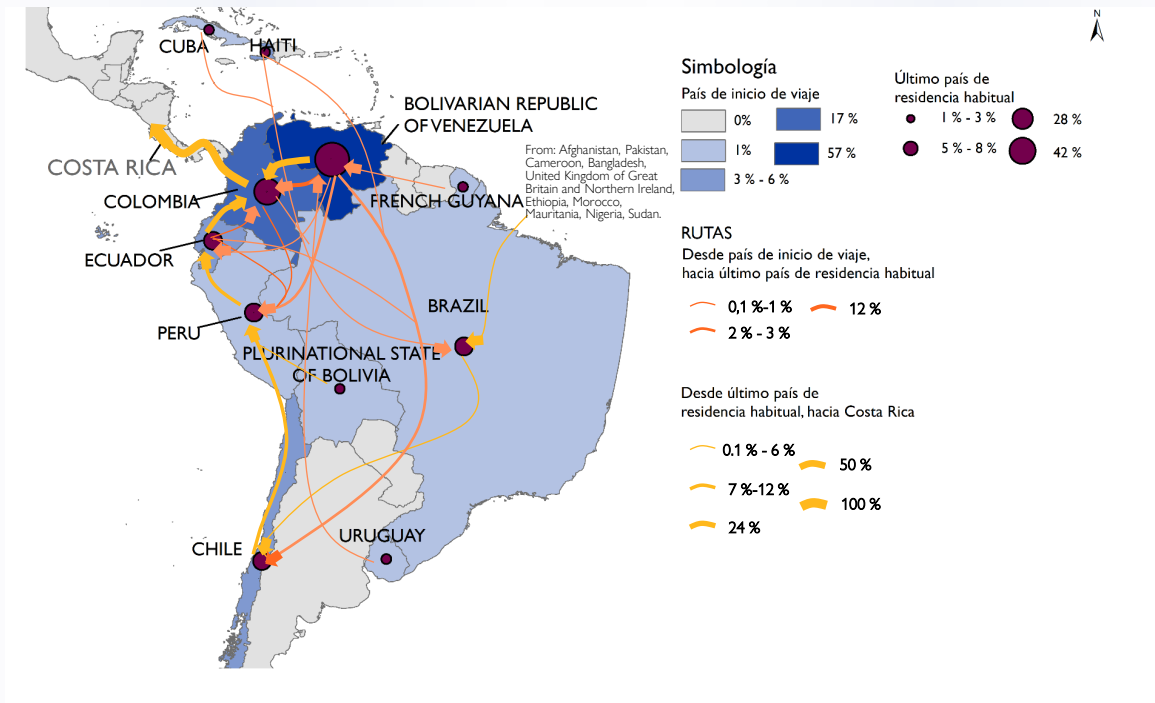
Most respondents indicated planning to leave Costa Rica through the Las Tablillas border crossing in Los Chiles (80 %), while 18 per cent indicated they did not know where they would exit (the remaining 2 % indicated other border crossings). On the other hand, less than 1 per cent of the migrants surveyed indicated leaving through border points between Costa Rica and Panama, that is, in the opposite direction of most of the trend.

Differences emerged in the cited exit locations between those surveyed in transit sites and in shelters: 100 per cent of those surveyed in transit sites indicated that they would exit the country through the Las Tablillas sector. On the other hand, of those surveyed in shelters, 82 per cent would exit through Las Tablillas, 3 per cent through other sites, and 15 per cent indicated that they did not know (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percentage of respondents by planned place of departure from Costa Rica (n=952)



Map 2. Percentage of surveyed individuals by country of origin and and last country of usual residence (n=952).

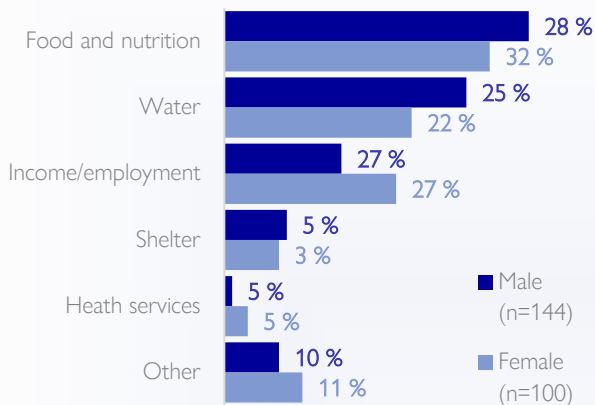


Note: This map is for illustrative purposes only. The boundaries, names and designations used do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

The routes presented represent movements between the country of departure, the last country of residence and Costa Rica. For more details, visit the interactive dashboard (link at the end of the document).

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Percentage of surveyed individuals in transit by gender and main need (n=244)



85 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options (n=244).



36 % indicated that they were missing some information during their journey (n=244).

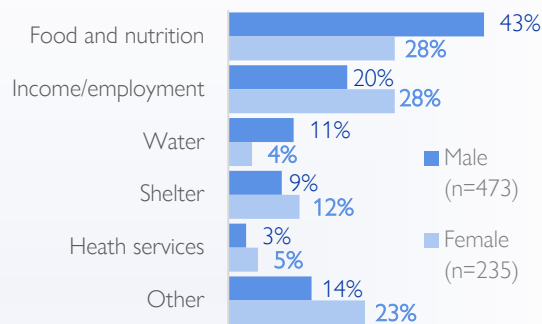
PRIMARY NEEDS

The increase in the number of buses coming from Darien has generated a greater influx in the EMI Sur, which highlights the need for even closer coordination between humanitarian actors and authorities to manage the logistics of basic services and respond to the health problems that emerge with the arrival of a greater number of people. Immediate needs include the constant improvement of reception infrastructures, the guarantee of effective health and nutrition services, as well as the adequacy of spaces that respect the privacy and dignity of migrants in EMI Sur.

In the Greater Metropolitan Area (GMA), the commitment of the United Nations System, together with local and non-governmental organizations, has been fundamental in providing legal, medical and psychological services and ensuring safe environments, especially for families and children. Despite the challenges of waste management, a human migration flow has been sustained, although hygiene and waste management need to be reinforced.

In contrast, the Northern Zone faces a challenging situation, with border communities such as La Cruz, Liberia, Upala, Los Chiles and Ciudad Quesada dealing with the increasing arrival of migrants without sufficient economic resources. Efforts remain focused on the provision of temporary shelter, food distribution and access to health services, but greater investment and collaboration is required to address the scarcity of resources and improve the living conditions of those affected.

Figure 15. Percentage of surveyed individuals stranded in shelters by gender and main need (n=708)



37 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about immigration options (n=708).



24 % indicated that they were missing some information during their trip (n=708).

Other needs: Non-food items (diapers, sanitation and hygiene items, feminine hygiene items), Communication, Protection and security.

NEEDS BY NATIONALITY



Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela:

In January 2024, the needs of the migrant population of Venezuelan nationality have intensified, keeping food as a critical priority, while income generation and job search have become more pressing due to the prolongation of their stay.



Ecuador:

For the Colombian community on the move, the number of families and minors in worrying health circumstances has grown, which has required a reinforcement of the humanitarian response. Children require specialized health care and nutritional support, and families require housing solutions that ensure adequate hygienic conditions and a safe environment for child development.



Others:

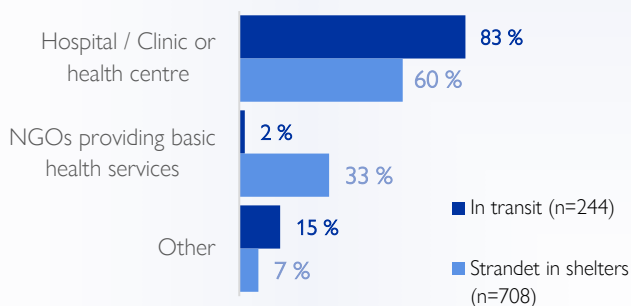
For other nationalities, including Haiti, Afghanistan, Philippines, China, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Cuba, Eritrea, Ecuador, Ghana, Peru, Dominican Republic, Nepal, Bangladesh, Congo, Sierra Leone and Togo, there is a growing demand for transportation to urban areas such as San José. In addition, there has been a greater availability of cab services, which has facilitated access to basic services.

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



In terms of requiring medical assistance, respondents indicated that they would go to hospitals and the nearest clinic or health center (67 %), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide health services (25 %), pharmacies (3 %), alternative medicine (3 %), among others (4 %). Differences were found between respondents in public sites and shelters, specifically in the per centage of people who would attend pharmacies; 33 per cent of respondents in transit sites compared to 2 per cent of respondents in shelters.

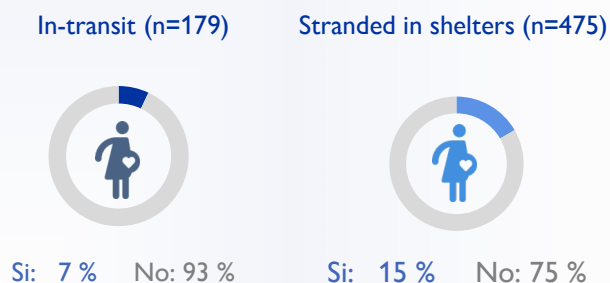
Figure 16. Percentage of surveyed individuals by type of movement and injuries suffered during the journey (n=952)



Other sites: Pharmacy, Alternative Medicine, Local medical or nursing professional.

Among the women (respondents and family members over 15 years of age), 13 per cent indicated that they were pregnant. The average age of pregnant women was 27 years old. These per centages vary between respondents in transit sites, where the per centage of pregnant women is 7 per cent and an average age of 25, and those in shelters, where these data are 15 per cent and 26 years old.

Gráfico 17: Percentage of women aged 15 and over by pregnancy status



HEALTH AFFLICTIONS OBSERVED

Main health conditions observed in stranded migrants include:

- Severe dehydration.
- Gastrointestinal issues, primarily diarrhea.
- Mild flu.
- Child malnutrition.
- Dermatological problems; primarily sunburns and exposed wounds.
- Psychological stress.
- Others:
Risk of vector-borne diseases, infections

In EMI Sur, despite the improvement in health protocols and the availability of basic medical services, there are still challenges in addressing chronic conditions and ensuring care for vulnerable groups. Mental health and access to medicines continue to be areas that require attention and reinforcement.

In GAM, efforts have been made to integrate health services, with a focus on communicable diseases and psychosocial support. However, the capacity to respond to variable demand and emergencies remains a challenge, making health promotion and disease prevention essential.

In the Northern Zone, the scarcity of health resources remains a barrier, with demand outstripping the supply of medical services. Collaboration between different organizations is vital to improve health care and prevent disease outbreaks in this region of migratory transit.

CONCLUSION AND KEY FINDINGS



According to IOM Costa Rica estimates, the total number of entries from January to December 2023 (529,348) exceeded the 2022 total (226,610) by 133 percent. During January 2024, approximately 37,436 persons entered the country as part of the migratory flow in the Americas, mainly through Paso Canoas on the border with Panama (99 percent) with a daily average of 1,208 persons. Although January 2024 saw a 55 per cent increase in the number of migrants compared to the same month of the previous year, the growth was less significant relative to the 2022 to 2023 period (548 %) and lower than the increase experienced between 2021 and 2022 (261 %).



During January 2024, the direct route from Paso Canoas to Los Chiles was the busiest, with a weekly total amounting to 20,015 people in the last week of January. EMI South has played a vital role in managing this flow, providing essential services such as health care, legal assistance and shelter, despite the logistical and sanitary challenges that persist. In the northern zone, a different dynamic is reflected with alternative routes and increased demand for basic services and transportation.



During January 2024, there has been a notable presence of vulnerable migrants in Costa Rica. There were reports of 732 individuals temporarily sheltered and 1,407 people in different public points in various cantons that are being monitored, which is evidence of a significant problem. The northern zone has registered the highest number of stranded migrants, standing out as the most critical area in terms of assistance and support needs.



In January 2024, the analysis of migratory flows in a situation of mobility through the Americas highlights critical needs, especially in the northern zone, where the highest number of stranded migrants is identified. The scarcity of health resources and the barriers to adequate assistance highlight the urgency of strengthening support networks and coordination between organizations to meet basic and mental health needs, guarantee care for vulnerable groups, and improve transportation logistics and basic services so as not to affect communities in high-transit locations.



For more information about the study, follow this [enlace](#) or scan the QR code.



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