

Flow monitoring of people on the move across the Americas

Locations of high transit and migrant presence in Costa Rica

Cantons: Alajuela, Cartago, Escazu, Corredores, Heredia, Los Chiles, San Carlos, San Jose, Santa Ana, Tibas

Situation report: February 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 February 2024.

FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY



41,326 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENTERED COSTA RICA FROM PANAMA IN FEBRUARY 2024

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



40,387 PEOPLE MOBILIZED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THROUGHOUT COSTA RICA

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

EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING IN MONITORED LOCATIONS



1,225 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.



1,088 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)



42 % WOMEN | **58 %** MEN
30 % ACCOMPANIED MINORS



85 % OF INDIVIDUALS TRAVEL IN GROUPS

MAIN NEEDS

Food and nutrition (38 %)
Water (23 %)
Income (20 %)
Other (19 %)



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.



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 Americas**³. According to data published by the Republic of Panama, in **January 2024**, 36,001 entries from Colombia were recorded: 52 per cent were adult men, 27 per cent were women, and 21 per cent were minors (11 per cent boys and 10 per cent girls). 61 per cent came from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 8 per cent from Haiti, 8 per cent from the People's Republic of China, 6 per cent from Ecuador, 6 per cent from Colombia, and another 11 per cent from more than 31 countries⁴.



During the first months of 2024, Costa Rica has 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. This trend becomes more relevant when comparing the February figures with previous years, where 3,724 people were recorded in 2021, 4,467 in 2022, and 19,521 in 2023 (Figure 1). It is important to highlight that political instability, poverty, and lack of economic and job opportunities in the countries of origin continue to drive migration. Also, changes in migration policies and conditions in other transit countries may be influencing the decision of more people to undertake the journey northward.

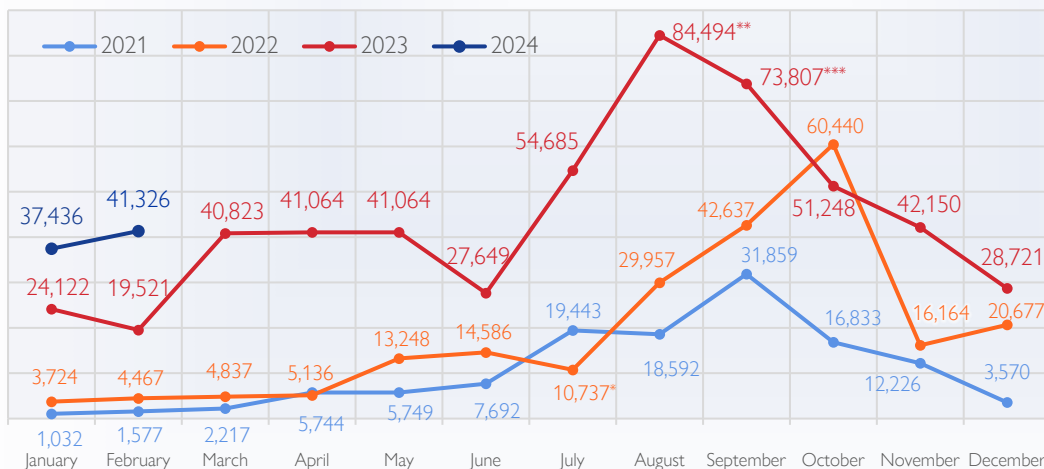


Since November 2023, the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME, by its Spanish acronym) publishes daily reports on the number of people mobilized by public transportation between the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur by its Spanish acronym), in Paso Canoas, near the border between Costa Rica and Panama, and Los Chiles, near the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. This way, in **February 2024**, the DGME recorded **40,387 people using the direct route**, equivalent to 98 per cent of the total number of people estimated to have entered Costa Rica in the same month⁵.



In February 2024, the DGME recorded a total of **922 stranded migrant individuals at the EMI Sur shelter, called the Temporary Attention Center for Migrants (CATEM, by its Spanish acronym)**, reflecting a 61 per cent increase compared to January (573 stranded migrant individuals in CATEM). This rise in the demand for services at CATEM highlights the need to strengthen the resources and care provided to ensure that the basic needs are met, and the human rights of all individuals are respected.

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



78,762
Migrant individuals in
January and February 2024

529,348
migrant individuals in 2023

226,610
migrant individuals in 2022

126,512
migrant 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 For more information, visit: www.dtm.iom.int/costa-rica

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

⁵ For more information, visit: www.dtm.iom.int/costa-rica

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

At the request of key informants, 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, by its Spanish acronym) 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 Panama⁶. In addition, **since November 2023, the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME, by its Spanish acronym) 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 CATEM⁷.**

During February 2024, **1,198 valid surveys** were obtained (99 per cent response rate and 1 per cent non-response rate), collecting information on 3,039 migrants (1,198 surveyed and 1,841 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 Corredores, San Jose, 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**. Nine per cent of the surveys were conducted with migrants stranded in the EMI Sur shelter called CATEM (Corredores canton) and in two shelters in the San José canton, while the remaining 91 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 of the migrant population that transits through this site, it avoids inconsistent selection biases, and it 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% (based on historical data at the site), a confidence level of 95 percent, and a maximum margin of error of 5 percent.

For surveys in shelters in **San Jose**, 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 in **CATEM, 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 in the mentioned cantons. 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 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: 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. However, the existence of migratory flows in other areas far from these controls make it difficult 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 but less than 1 per cent in the FMS surveys in the same period.

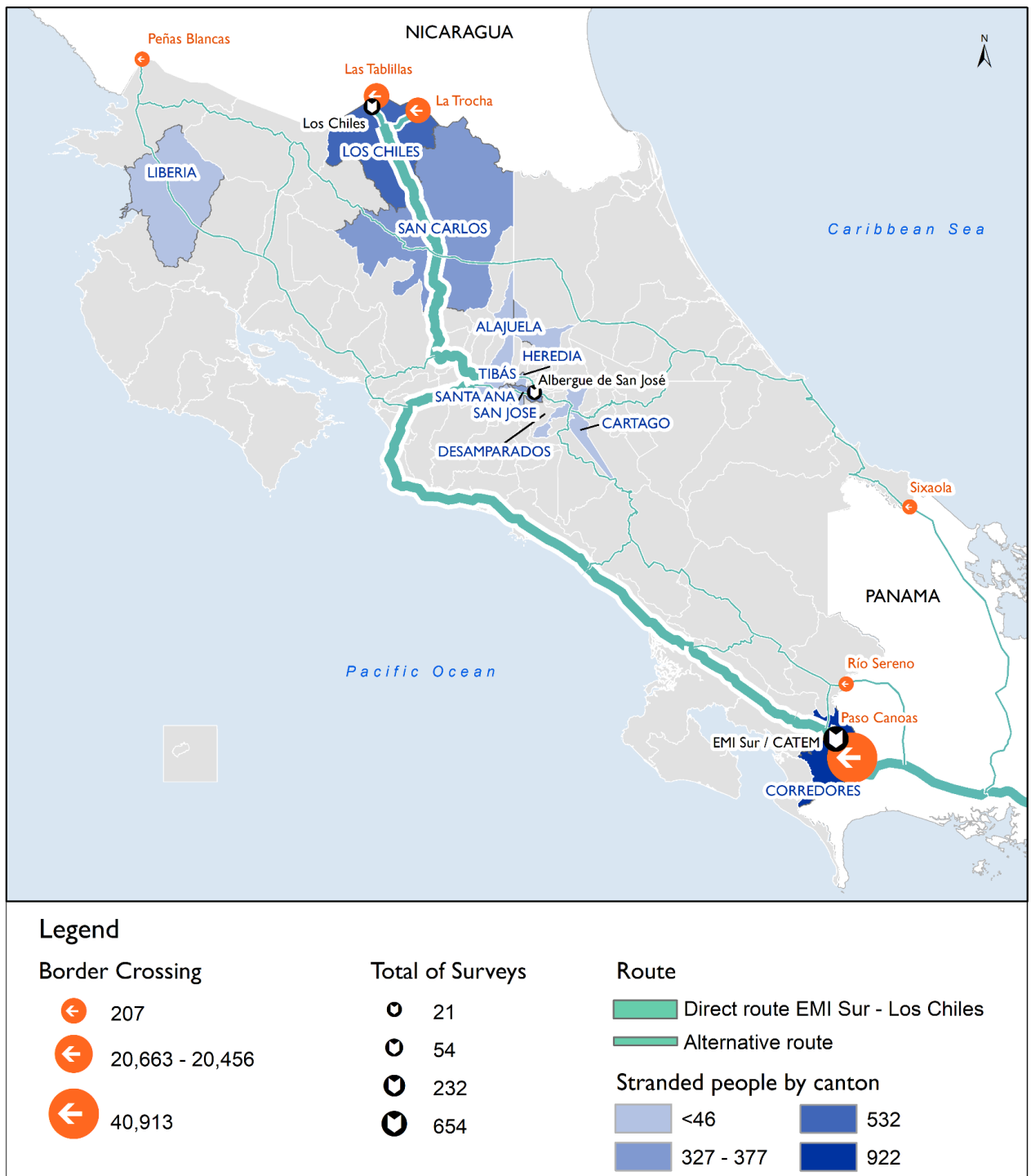
⁶ For more information, visit: www.migracion.gob.pa

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



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




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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 **41,326**
 Estimated number of individuals entering Costa Rica. February 2024

 Estimated increase of **10 %** compared to January 2024 (37,436)

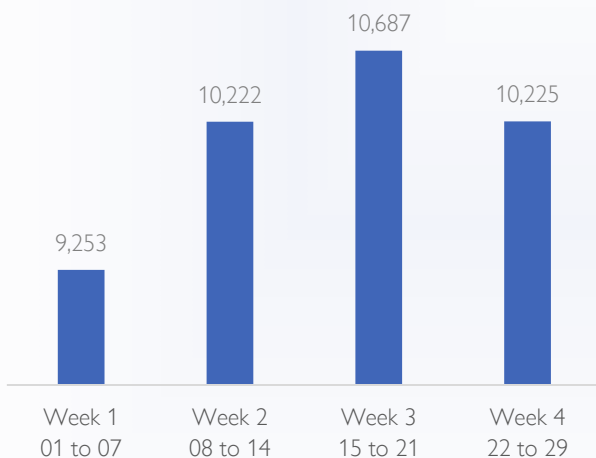
 **40,387**
 Individuals using direct public transportation from the southern to the northern border. February 2024

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Costa Rica, it is estimated that **approximately 41,326 people on the move across the Americas entered the country in February 2024**. Close to 99 per cent 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 40,387 people moved through this route**, equivalent to **98 per cent of the total flow that entered the country in the same month (Figure 2)⁹**. The presence of stranded people in public places in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM, by its Spanish acronym) 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.

Figure 2 shows an increasing trend during February, with a peak in the third week. The weekly average was of 10,097 people.

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



February 2024



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 February 2024, the EMI Sur in Costa Rica continued to be the main point of migration transit.

MOBILITY IN CENTRAL CANTONS: In February 2024, the GAM maintained a constant flow of migrants passing through the capital using Terminal 710 and the Tracopa terminal, as well as taxis to move along the main routes to the north.

MOBILITY IN NORTHERN CANTONS: During February 2024, the northern cantons of Costa Rica maintained their role as active corridors for migration to the border with Nicaragua. The patterns of migrants using direct routes to border points like La Trocha and Las Tablillas continued. However, there was a notable presence of migrants getting off buses at unauthorized points to continue their journey informally, such as taxis to unofficial border crossings.

These mobility patterns have significant implications for local communities and the response capacity of authorities and humanitarian organizations. Constant transit through points like Los Chiles and San Carlos puts continuous pressure on basic services, which can lead to tensions with local populations. In addition, the concentration of migrants in certain areas poses specific challenges in terms of security, access to services, and protection risks, especially for the most vulnerable groups.


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 February 2024, **1,225 stranded migrants were identified in public spaces** of several monitored cantons, and **1,088 people were stranded in three monitored shelters**. There is a significant increase (49 %) in people sheltered in CATEM compared to January 2024, with the average stay time remaining at 6 days.

The rise in the number of stranded migrants can be explained by the intensification of migratory flows in the region, driven by adverse economic, social, and political factors in their countries of origin. Although the number of migrants in public spaces in February 2024 (1,225 people) remained similar to January 2024 (1,407 people), the trend of Los Chiles and San Carlos as cantons with the highest number of individuals stranded in public spaces continued (552 and 327 individuals stranded in February 2024, respectively).

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.

 **1,225**
Individuals stranded in **public monitored sites**

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN SOUTHERN CANTONS: From the reports of DGME about individuals stranded in CATEM¹⁰, it is estimated that, in February 2024, **922** individuals were sheltered. According to key informants, the persistent police controls to direct the flow towards the EMI Sur of the country cause no reports of stranded individuals in public spaces of that area.

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN CENTRAL CANTONS: In February 2024, **330** stranded migrant individuals were identified in monitored public spaces of the cantons Alajuela, Cartago, Escazu, Corredores, Heredia, San Jose, Santa Ana, and Tibas (Figure 3) (while in January 2024 there were 341 migrants stranded in public spaces). In the monitored shelters of San José, a slight increase in the number of stranded individuals was observed, going from 159 in January 2024 to **166** in February of the same year.

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN NORTHERN CANTONS: In February 2024, **895** stranded migrant individuals were identified in public areas of the cantons Los Chiles, and San Carlos. A decrease in the number of stranded individuals was identified compared to the previous month (1,066 stranded individuals in January 2024, equivalent to a 16 per cent decrease).


 **1,088**
Individuals stranded in **monitored shelters**

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

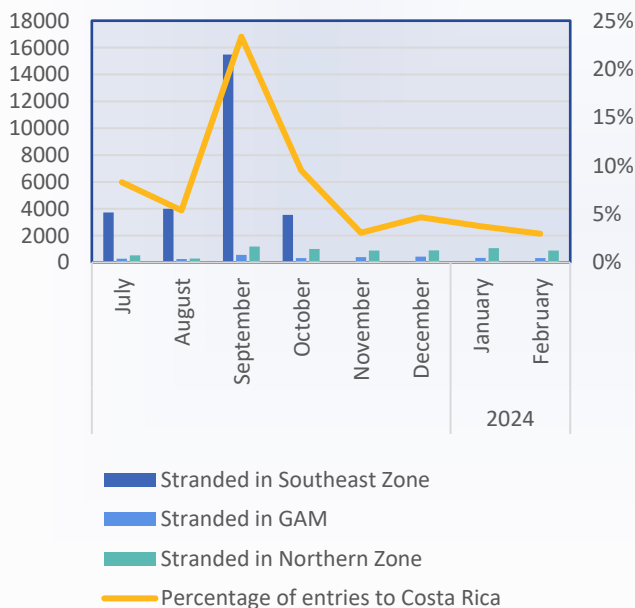
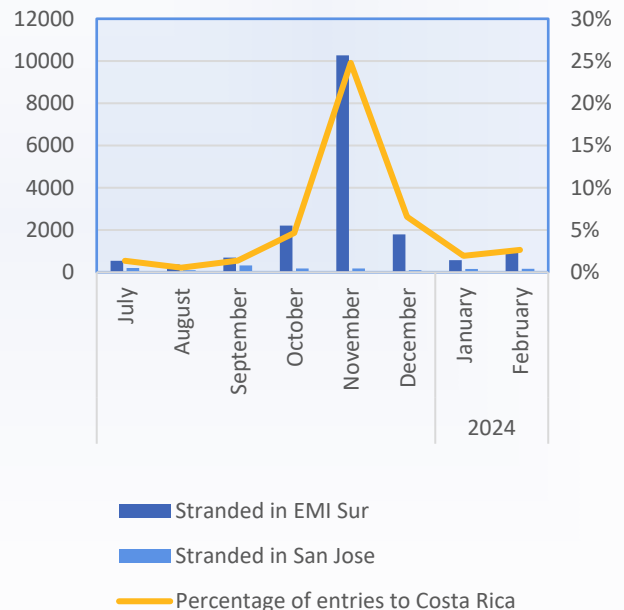


Figure 4. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in monitored shelters



¹⁰ For more information, visit: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx.

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FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

(Individuals surveyed: 1,198 | Family members: 1,841)

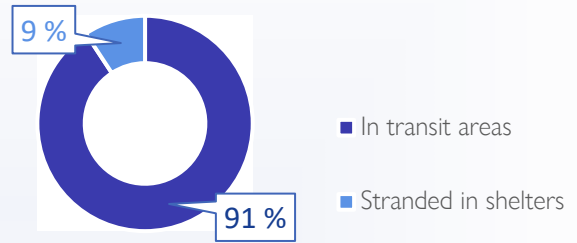
Data collection: February 1-31, 2024

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 **3,039 migrants** (1,198 respondents and 1,841 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)



1,087

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



111

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 (n=1,087)



Percentage of individuals stranded in monitored shelters by nationality (n=111)



EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 6. Percentage of individuals surveyed in transit by gender and highest level of completed education (n=1,087)

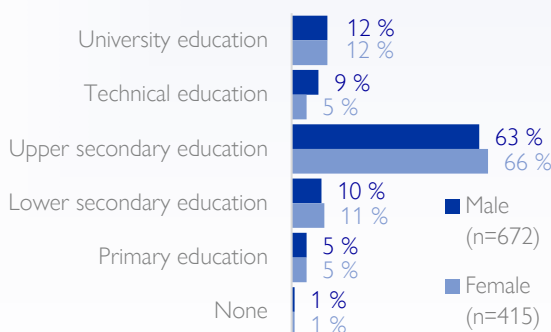
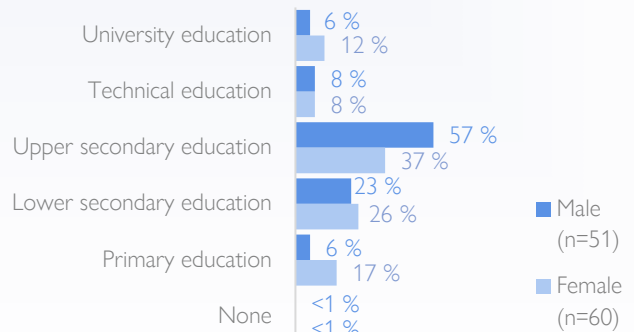


Figure 7. Percentage of individuals surveyed in shelters by gender and highest level of completed education (n=111)

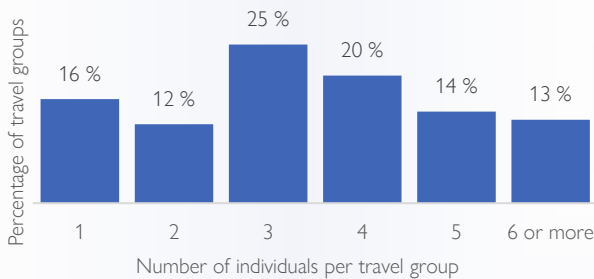


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Of the 1,087 people surveyed at transit sites, information was obtained on 1,619 travel companions, equivalent to a total of **2,706 family members and respondents**. Among the groups analyzed, 16 per cent were traveling alone (24 % were men and 7 % were women), and 12 per cent were couples. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 72 per cent of the total, were mainly composed of groups of 3 individuals (25 %), 4 individuals (20 %), 5 individuals (14 %) or more (13 %) (Figure 8).

In terms of gender and age distribution, 59 per cent of the people in the travel groups, including respondents and their family members were male, while 43 per cent were female. Minors (17 years of age or younger) constituted 29 per cent of the total. The average age of adults was 30 years and that of minors was 7 years, as detailed in Figure 9.

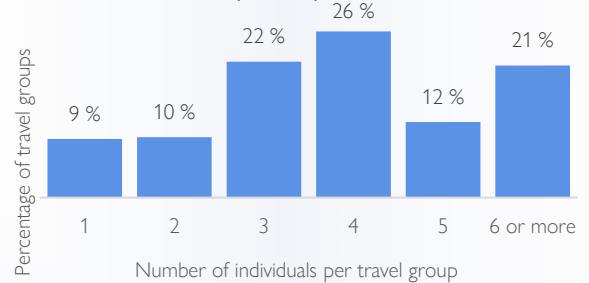
Figure 8. Size and number of Travel groups of surveyed individuals at transit sites (n=2,706)



Of the 111 people surveyed in **3 shelters**, one in the southern border and two in San Jose, information was obtained on 222 travel companions, equivalent to a total of **333 family members and respondents**. Of the groups analyzed, 9 per cent were traveling alone (30 % men y 4 % women), and 10 per cent were couples. The largest groups (3 or more persons), representing 81 per cent of the total, consisted mainly of groups of 3 persons (22 %), 4 persons (26 %), 5 persons (12 %) or more (21 %) (Figure 10).

In terms of gender and age distribution, 58 per cent of the members of the travel groups, including transit respondents and their family members, were male, while 42 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 7 years (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals stranded in monitored shelters (n=333)



GENDER AND AGE COMPOSITION OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRAVEL GROUPS

Figure 9. Percentage of individuals comprising travel groups in transit, by age and sex (n=2,706)

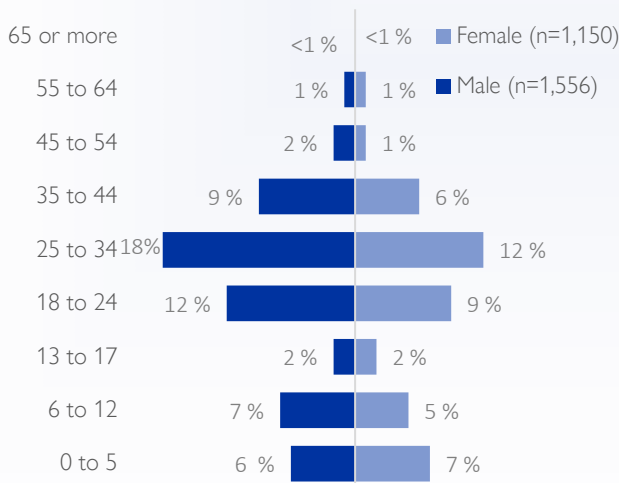
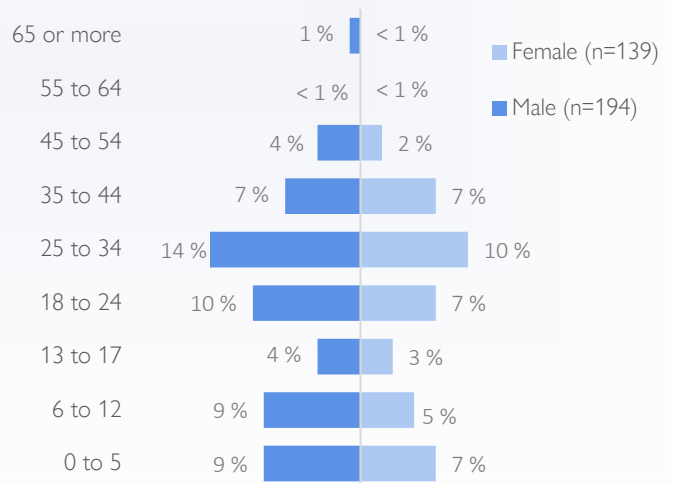


Figure 11. Percentage of individuals comprising travel groups stranded in monitored shelters, by age and sex (n=333)

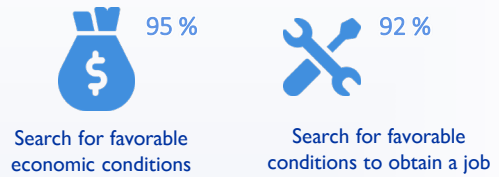


The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. February 2024

REASONS FOR MIGRATING

The main reason of the people surveyed for migrating was the **search for favorable economic conditions** (97% for both people in transit and for those stranded in shelters), followed by favorable conditions to obtain a job (95% for people surveyed in transit and 93% for those who were in a shelter), political stability (58% and 74%, respectively), access to refugee processes (54% and 57%, respectively) and family reunification (17% and 49%, respectively).

Percentage of respondents in transit by main reason for migration (n=1,198)



Note: individuals could choose more than one option

MIGRATORY ROUTE

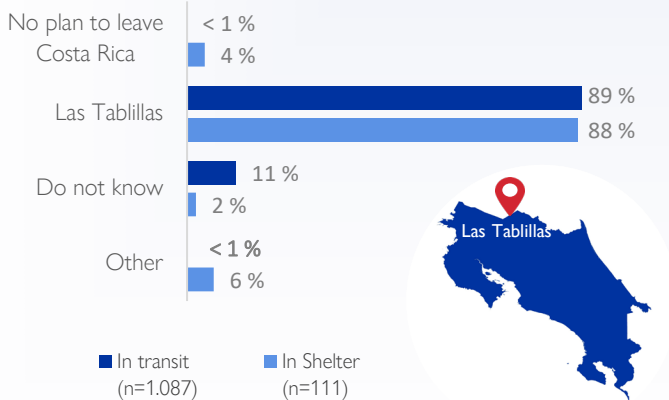
The main place where surveyed individuals indicated they planned to leave Costa Rica, was the **Las Tablillas border crossing in Los Chiles (89 %)**, while 10 per cent indicated not knowing where (the remaining 1 % indicated other border posts). On the other hand, less than 1 per cent of the surveyed individuals indicated not having plans to leave Costa Rica.

Differences in exit locations were identified between individuals surveyed at transit sites and in shelters: 89 per cent of the surveys conducted at transit sites indicated that they would leave the country through the Las Tablillas sector and 11 per cent indicated not knowing. On the other hand, of the individuals surveyed in shelters, 88 per cent would leave through Las Tablillas, 6 per cent through other sites, and 2 per cent indicated not knowing (Figure 14). Likewise, 4 per cent of the individuals surveyed in shelters indicated their intention to remain in Costa Rica.

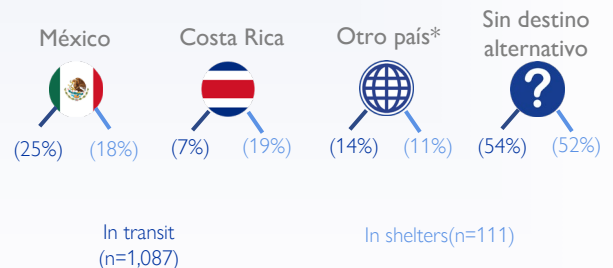
The **destination** indicated by the surveyed individuals was similar in transit sites and shelters: in both cases, **96 per cent of the surveyed individuals indicated the United States of America**. Other countries identified were Mexico (2 % by individuals in transit and 3 % by individuals stranded in shelters) and Costa Rica (1 % and 2 % respectively). Other countries mentioned to a lesser extent were Canada, Panama, Guatemala, Ecuador, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Some differences were observed in the main alternative destinations mentioned among the individuals surveyed at transit sites and in shelters. For those in transit, 25 per cent indicated Mexico as an alternative destination, while this percentage was 18 per cent for individuals in shelters. In contrast, 19 per cent of those surveyed in shelters indicated Costa Rica as an option, compared to 7 per cent of those who were in transit. The percentages of other countries and of individuals without a defined alternative destination were similar in both groups.

Figure 12. Percentage of respondents by planned place of departure from Costa Rica (n=1,198)



Percentage of surveyed individuals by alternative destinations (n=1,198)

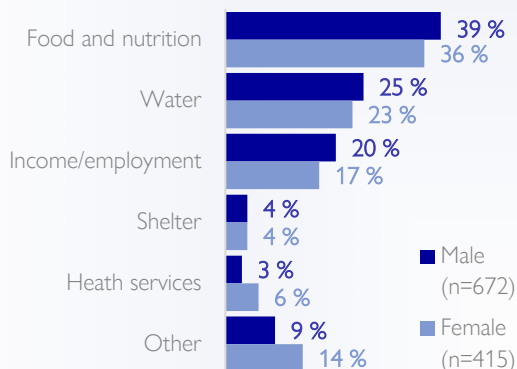


*Canada, United States of America, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Spain, Panama, Ecuador, Brazil, Nicaragua, Germany, Peru, Argentina, Honduras, El Salvador, Honduras and El Salvador.

The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. February 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%). 41 per cent indicated that they lacked information during their trip. 63 per cent also expressed needing legal advice to know their migration options. These data suggest that, during transit, migrants face greater uncertainties and basic deficiencies

Figure 14. Percentage of surveyed individuals in transit by gender and main need (n=1,087)

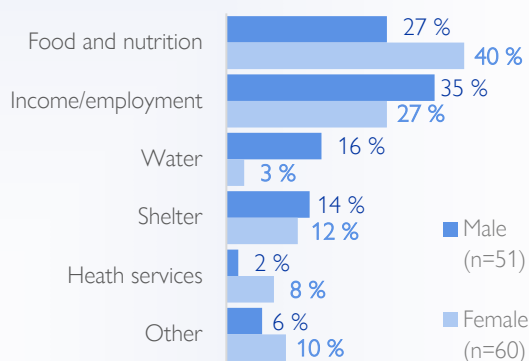


Other needs: Non-food items (diapers, sanitation and hygiene items, feminine hygiene products), among others.

On the other hand, in shelters, while food and nutrition remain important (27%), the most prominent need is for economic income and employment (35%). Only 20 per cent mentioned a lack of information during their journey, and 16 per cent indicated requiring legal migration advice.

These differences illustrate how needs evolve once migrants reach a more stable place like shelters, where the priority shifts towards finding means of subsistence.

Figure 15. Percentage of surveyed individuals stranded in shelters by gender and main need (n=111)



63 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=1,087)



16 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=111)



41 % indicated that they were missing some information during their journey. (n=1,087)

- Information of the route: **27 %**
- Information on travel costs: **23 %**
- Safety information: **19 %**



20 % indicated that they were missing some information during their journey. (n=111)

- Information of the route: **13 %**
- Information on travel costs: **11 %**
- Safety information: **10 %**

Note: People had the possibility to choose more than one option.

MAIN NEEDS

Despite coordination efforts between humanitarian actors and authorities during February 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 minors and babies. At CATEM, adaptations efforts have been made, 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.

In the GAM, the commitment of the United Nations System and local organizations continues to be fundamental to provide legal, medical and psychological services, especially to families and minors. However, there is a worrying increase in the number of people spending the night in public spaces and a greater demand for humanitarian assistance, accommodation and food.

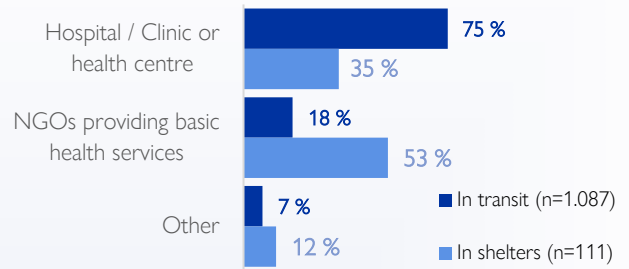
Meanwhile, the northern area faces an increasingly critical situation. Communities such as Los Chiles and Ciudad Quesada deal with a constant flow of migrants stranded due to lack of economic resources to continue their journey. Of particular concern are the protection risks for vulnerable groups, such as women, children and people with specific health care needs. Furthermore, 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. February 2024

In case of need medical assistance, **75 per cent of the surveyed individuals in transit indicated that they would go to hospitals, clinics, or health centers, while only 35 per cent of the individuals in shelters would opt for this option.** On the other hand, 53 per cent of the individuals in shelters would seek care from Non-governmental organization (NGOs) that provide health services, in contrast to only 18 per cent of the individuals in transit. 7 per cent of the individuals in transit and 12 per cent of those in shelters would consider other alternatives. These differences suggest that the availability and accessibility of health services vary significantly depending on the situation and location of migrants, highlighting the importance of adapting healthcare strategies to the specific needs of each group.

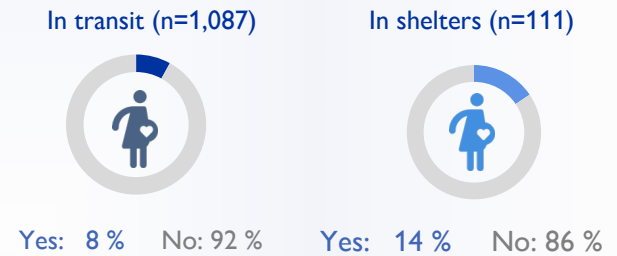
Eight per cent of surveyed women and women family members over 15 years old indicated being pregnant and had an average age of 26 years. These per centages vary between individuals surveyed at transit sites, where the per centage of pregnant women is 8 per cent with an average age of 26 years, and those in shelters, where these figures are 14 per cent and 25 years.

Figure 15. Percentage of surveyed individuals by type of movement and injuries suffered during the journey (n=1,198)



Other sites: Pharmacy, 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 capacity to respond to fluctuating demand and emergency situations remains a challenge. The arrival of a larger number of migrants to the GAM has put pressure on the health system, highlighting the need to strengthen health promotion and disease prevention programs, as well as expand medical care capacity.

In the northern region, the scarcity of health resources has been exacerbated by the increase in migratory flow in February 2024. The demand for medical services significantly exceeds the available supply, generating critical gaps in healthcare for migrants and local communities. 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. Greater investment and support are required to strengthen primary care capacity, establish effective referral systems.

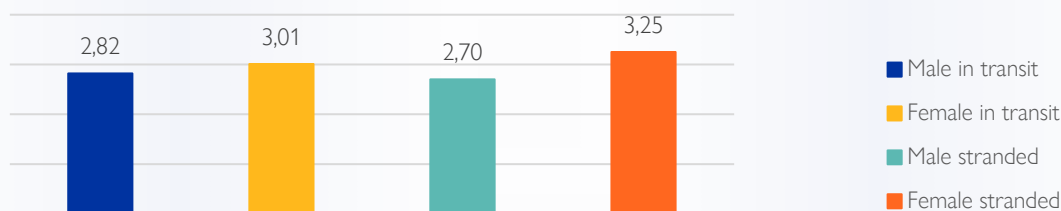
The indicator measures the level of vulnerability of travel groups on a scale of 0 to 5, where 5 represents the highest possible vulnerability and 0 the lowest.

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 methodology assigns an additional point of vulnerability for each unmet need, considering the following criteria:

Table 1. Vulnerability indicator criteria

Variable	Answer	Contribution to the indicator
Main need	Economic income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Medical attention; Psychosocial care	1 point
2nd main need	Economic income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Medical attention; Psychosocial care	1 point
3rd main need	Economic income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Medical attention; Psychosocial care	1 point
Minors in the travel group	>=1	1 point
Size of Travel group	>= 3	1 point

Figure 18. Level of vulnerability by gender and classification of migrants surveyed in February 2024



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

In general, **stranded women present highest levels of vulnerability** (in the case of stranded people the index is 3.25 in women and 2.70 in men, in the case of people in transit, the index varies from 3.01 in women and 2.82 in men). This suggests that migrant women face more pressing challenges, risks and needs compared to men, which places them in a situation of greater risk and vulnerability.

In general, it is urgent to adopt a differentiated approach in 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 guarantee 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.



Surveys at EMI Sur
Corredores, Puntarenas
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According to IOM Costa Rica estimations, the migratory flow continued to increase in February 2024, with 41,326 entries, +10 per cent more than in January and +112 per cent more than in February 2023. This constant flow puts pressure on the response resources and capacities of authorities and humanitarian organizations, highlighting the need to strengthen regional cooperation, develop coordinated policies, address the situation to ensure the protection of the human rights of migrants, and provide comprehensive and adequate care, especially to the most vulnerable groups, through a joint and supportive effort by all the actors involved.



The direct route from Paso Canoas to Los Chiles continues to be the most used, with a flow of 40,387 migrants registered by the DGME during February 2024, equivalent to 98 per cent of the estimated entries in the same month. 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 February 2024, the presence of vulnerable migrants in Costa Rica continued to be notable. There were reported 1,088 of individuals temporarily sheltered, which highlights the need to strengthen the resources and care provided, to guarantee that basic needs are met and the human rights of all people are respected. In addition, 1,225 people were reported stranded in different public points in various cantons. Ciudad Quesada in San Carlos and Los Chiles remain the most critical areas in terms of assistance and support needs for stranded migrants.



Significant gaps persist in responding to the needs of migrants, such as the lack of financial and human resources, limited coordination between actors, and insufficient capacity to assist vulnerable groups. However, there are also lessons learned and good practices, such as the establishment of safe spaces for women and minors, the provision of mental health services, and the inclusion of host communities in interventions, which can guide future efforts.



The scarcity of health resources and the difficulties in providing adequate assistance highlight the urgency of further strengthening support networks and coordination between organizations. It is essential to address basic and mental health needs, guarantee care for vulnerable groups, and improve transportation logistics and basic services to avoid impacts on communities in locations with high migratory traffic.



The situation in February 2024 underlines the importance of implementing comprehensive and sustainable solutions to address the challenges faced by migrants and host communities. Greater investment in resources, strengthening local capacities, and promoting migration policies based on human rights and regional solidarity are required.

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



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