

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, Escazú, Heredia, La Cruz, Los Chiles, Liberia, San Carlos San Jose, Santa Ana, and Tibas.



Situation report: August 2024

KEY FINDINGS

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 between 1 – 31 August 2024.

FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY



16,566 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENTERED COSTA RICA FROM PANAMA IN JULY 2024

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



16,162 PEOPLE USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THROUGH COSTA RICA

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

EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING IN MONITORED LOCATIONS



870 INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN MONITORED PUBLIC SITES
Average stay: 3 days

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



260 INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN **3** MONITORED SHELTERS
Average stay: **11 days** in shelters in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) and **3 days** in the Centro de Atención Temporal para personas Migrantes (CATEM).

FLOW MONITORING SURVEY: LOCATION OF HIGH TRANSIT AND MIGRANT PRESENCE (580 individuals surveyed and 858 group companions)



41 % FEMALE | **59 %** MALE
30 % CHILDREN UNDER 18



84 % OF INDIVIDUALS TRAVEL IN GROUPS



MAIN NEEDS*
Food and nutrition (51 %)
Income (25 %)
Shelter (11 %)
Other (13 %)

Source: IOM, 2024

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

² The estimation of people is calculated with the data published by the DGME. For more information, visit: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx



Costa Rica, like other Central American countries, has been distinguished as a **migratory corridor** for the **Flow of People on the Move across the Americas**, with migrants crossing the border between Colombia and Panama by land through the Darién crossing, **heading towards the northern countries of the Americas**. According to data published by the Republic of Panama, between January and August 2024, 238,185 entries to Panama were recorded through the Darién crossing. Specifically, in August 2024, 16,603 entries were recorded: 50 per cent were adult men, 28 per cent women, 11 per cent boys, and 11 per cent girls. Seventy-one per cent came from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, six per cent from Colombia, three per cent from Viet Nam, three per cent from Ecuador, three per cent from Haiti, and another 14 per cent from more than 31 countries³.



Entry and transit data in Costa Rica reflect a downward trend in migratory entries during 2024. In August, an 80 % reduction was recorded compared to the same month in 2023, indicating a notable change in migratory patterns. From January to July, the total figures show a 24 % difference between 2023 and 2024 (333,422 versus 251,912), with daily averages that vary little. This reveals a marked decrease in migration to Costa Rica during 2024, with a sharp drop in August and a significant overall reduction in the first seven months of the year.

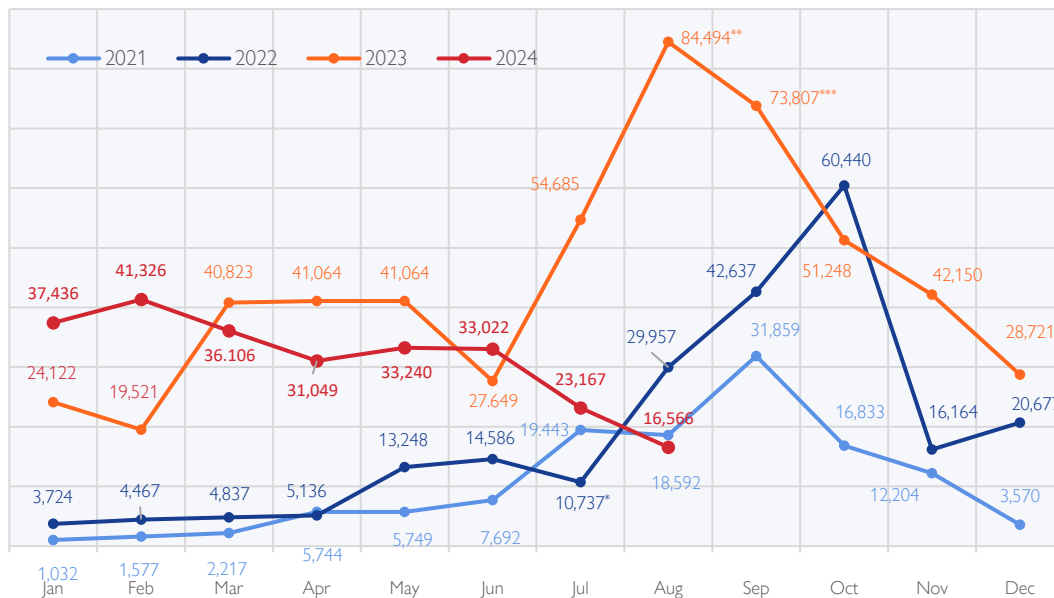


However, the number of people stranded in public places and shelters has not decreased as much. For example, in monitored public places, 870 stranded people were identified, an 11 % reduction compared to July 2024, and in shelters, 260 people, a 10% decrease. This suggests that although there are fewer entries into the country, a significant proportion still remains stranded, especially in public places, putting continued pressure on local resources. This underscores the need for more adaptive migration management approaches.



Additionally, in August 2024, protests in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela following the election results, along with the economic crisis, have heightened concerns about a possible intensification of migration to the Americas. Border closures in the Darien and recent deportations from Panama, following an agreement with the United States, have created uncertainty among migrants in Costa Rica, who are preparing for possible new restrictions⁴.

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



251,912
Migrant individuals in
January and August
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.migracion.gob.pa

⁴ For more information, visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/es/prensa/declaraciones-comunicados/2024/06/04/hoja-informativa-el-presidente-biden-anuncia-nuevas-medidas-para-asegurar-la-frontera/#:~:text=El%20presidente%20Biden%20emiti%C3%B3%20una,sur%20de%20los%20Estados%20Unidos>

At the request of key informants (KIs), starting in October 2023, IOM Costa Rica calculates the potential entries of migrants into Costa Rica, considering historical data on the outflows of people from the Temporary Migrant Reception Station (ETRM) in Los Planes, Gualaca until August 30, 2023, and the inflows to Panama that are published on the website of the National Migration Service (SNM) of Panama⁵. In addition, since November 2023, the General Directorate of Migration and Foreign Affairs (DGME) of Costa Rica publishes a daily report of people mobilized by public transportation from the EMI Sur and the number of people who remain stranded in CATEM⁶.

During August 2024, **580 valid surveys** were obtained (99 per cent response rate and one per cent non-response rate), collecting information on 1,438 migrants (580 surveyed and 858 group companions). The Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) data collection method consists of in-person surveys conducted with migrants on the move across the Americas in Costa Rica, in the cantons of Corredores, San Jose, and Los Chiles. The surveys are applied voluntarily to adults who represent groups or travel alone 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**. Five per cent of the surveys were conducted with migrants stranded in CATEM (Corredores canton) and in two shelters in the San Jose canton, using a non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique, while the remaining 95 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). This is because most migrants prefer to stay in transit areas where they have greater access to resources and transportation. Additionally, the logistics and security in shelters often limit the frequency and number of surveys that can be conducted in these locations.

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

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

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

LIMITATIONS: Although the Government of Costa Rica implements an official registration system for those who travel the EMI Sur-Los Chiles route and counts the number of people who stay at CATEM, these data are not published daily, and there are still flows through unofficial routes far from these controls, making it impossible to keep a complete record of all entries into the country. Additionally, the publication of these data is carried out through daily reports on the number of people mobilized by public transport and the people at CATEM. Another current limitation would be the changes in the internal dynamics of CATEM that have made it difficult to conduct surveys with the people in the shelter.

On the other hand, it is noted that since June 1, 2024, the Government of Panama has not published its monthly data on entries through the Darién crossing.

Language and cultural barriers, temporary stays at monitoring points, geographical complexities, and irregular migration dynamics, including human trafficking networks, also represent additional challenges.

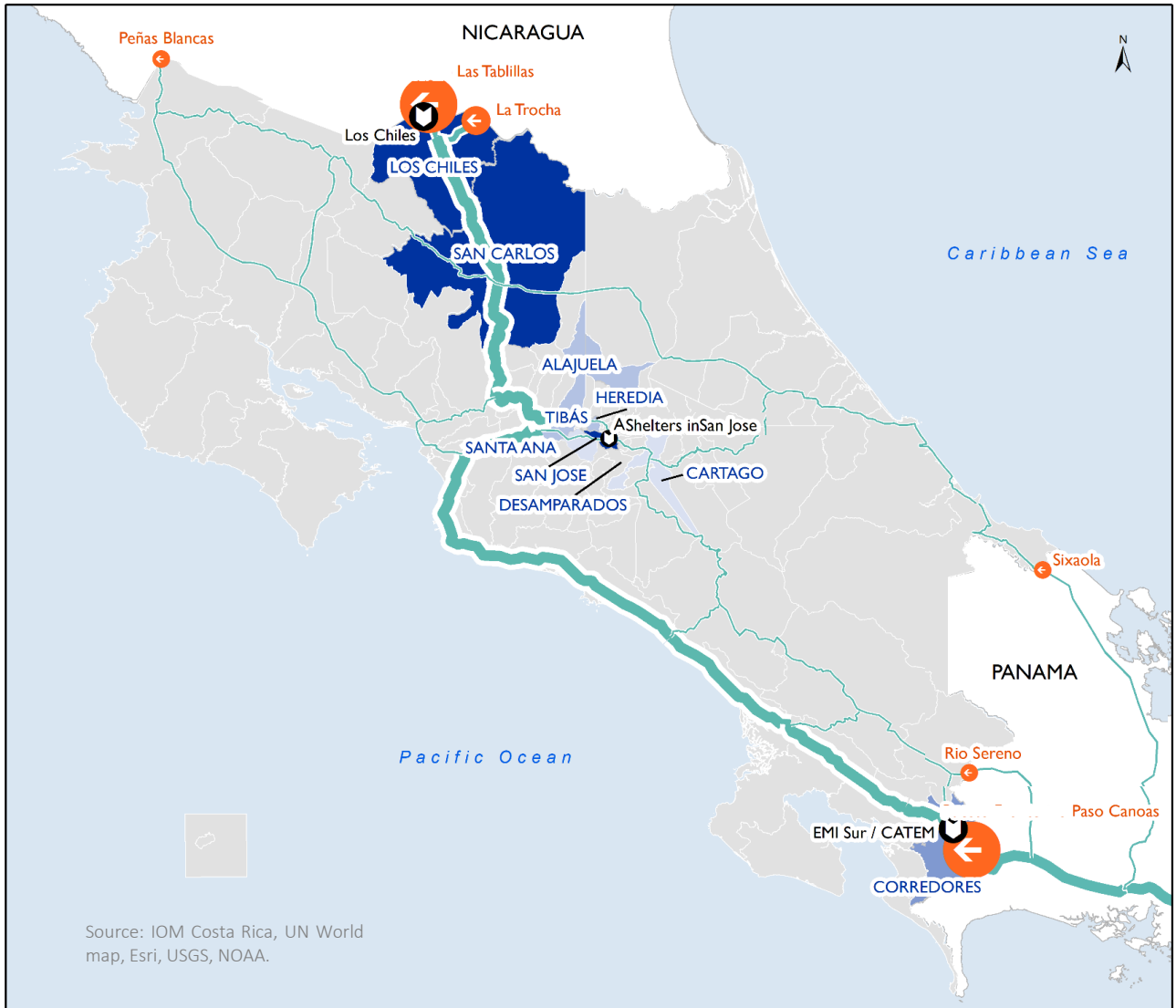
⁵ For more information, visit: www.migracion.gob.pa

⁶ For more information, visit: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx



TREND DISPLACEMENT IN COSTA RICA

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



Source: IOM Costa Rica, UN World map, Esri, USGS, NOAA.

Legend

Border Crossing

- < 80
 - 5470
 - 11,000- 16,400
- Los Chiles Paso Canoas

Surveys

- 39
- 218
- 323

Route

- Direct Route EMI Sur - Los Chiles
- Alternative Route

Stranded individuals per canton

- < 25
- 25 - 38
- 185
- 260 - 311

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

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



16,566

Estimated number of individuals entering Costa Rica. In August 2024



28 % decrease compared to the estimates of August 2024 (23,167)



16,162

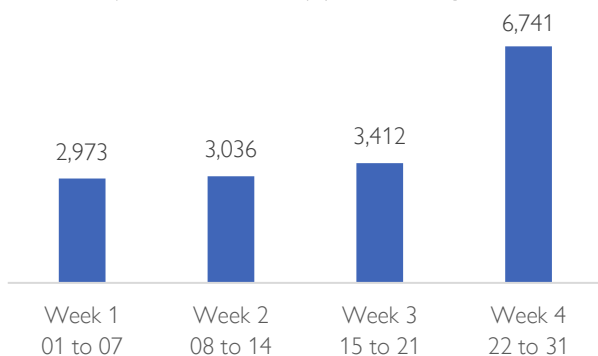
Individuals using direct public transportation from the southern to the northern border. August 2024

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Costa Rica, it is estimated that approximately **16,566 people from the migratory flow across the Americas entered the country in August 2024**, with an **average daily influx of about 534 individuals**. Nearly 99 per cent of these entries occurred through Paso Canoas, on the border with Panama.

The primary route identified was directly from EMI Sur (southern border) to Los Chiles (northern border), carried out by bus, costing approximately 30 US dollars (\$30 USD) per person and lasting less than a day. This month, it is estimated that about **16,162 people moved through this route, equivalent to 98 per cent of the total flow entering the country** (Figure 2)⁷. The presence of stranded individuals in public spaces in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) and areas distant from Los Chiles indicates that alternative routes remain active, albeit to a lesser extent than in previous months and years.

In terms of migrant transportation on the south-north route, Figure 2 shows a fluctuating trend during August 2024. During the first week, from July 1 to 7, 2,973 migrants were transported, while in the second week, from July 8 to 14, there were 3,036. The third week, from July 15 to 21, recorded an increase with 3,412 migrants. Finally, in the fourth week, from July 22 to 30, a considerable increase was observed, reaching a total of 6,741 migrants.

Figure 2. Estimated number of individuals traveling on direct route (EMI Sur - Los Chiles), per week, August 2024



ROUTES AND MOBILITY SCHEDULES

In August 2024, the mobility of migrants presented distinctive characteristics across different regions of the country, marked by variations in routes and transit times.

MOBILITY IN SOUTHERN CANTONS: At EMI Sur, the flow of migrants was variable, influenced by the constant rainfall in various areas of Panama, which increased river levels and made crossing difficult. Most of the buses transporting people from the southern area operated mainly in the morning hours. Additionally, a reverse flow of migrants has been observed, with people deciding to return for various reasons.

MOBILITY IN CENTRAL CANTONS: The main route to the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) is generally taken gradually, moving from community to community from the southern cantons, although direct routes are also used in some cases. It has been recorded that some migrants return from the northern zone in search of economic resources to continue their journey. Most of these movements occur during the day, taking advantage of the availability of buses at that time. Shelters in the area provide essential support, offering rest, food, and the opportunity to plan the next steps of the journey, as well as to collect the necessary money to continue.

MOBILITY IN NORTHERN CANTONS: The route from the southern zone to the northern zone continues to be the main corridor for people in transit. During the night, a higher proportion of buses has been recorded compared to the daytime, although the total number of buses has not varied significantly. It has also been observed that many people choose to use taxis or get off at unauthorized stops to head to unofficial border crossings, such as La Trocha. The constant presence of migrants in the northern cantons is related to the need to gather economic resources before continuing their journey. Key informants indicate that migrants resort to both local hotels and public spaces to rest.

⁷ The estimation of people is calculated using the data published by the DGME. For more information, please visit: www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx



INDIVIDUALS STRANDED AT MONITORED SITES

In August 2024, **870** migrants were identified as stranded in **public sites (an increase of 11 % compared to July 2024)** in monitored cantons and **260 stranded in three shelters (a decrease of 70 % compared to July 2024)**. In August, the average stay in shelters in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) remained between **6 to 11 days**, which is related to internal changes in the conditions of the shelters, allowing for longer stays. Meanwhile, in CATEM and public spaces, the average stay remained at 3 days.

According to key informants, the presence of stranded people in the GAM and the northern zone is due to the search for resources to continue their journey. Key informants in Los Chiles report that the IOM and HIAS provided lodging support to 11 migrants, highlighting efforts to assist people in transit; the data is included within the group of stranded individuals.

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN SOUTHERN CANTONS:

Although the number of people transiting through Costa Rica has decreased, the data on stranded individuals have not shown the same trend. Based on the reports issued by the DGME regarding the people stranded in CATEM, it is estimated that in August 2024, **185** people were sheltered. Thus, CATEM continues to be the most utilized shelter. The authorities' efforts to provide transportation and humanitarian assistance have been critical to preventing the gathering of people in public areas. In addition, cooperation between non-governmental organizations and government agencies has been crucial in effectively managing the accommodation and services needed for these individuals.

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN CENTRAL CANTONS:

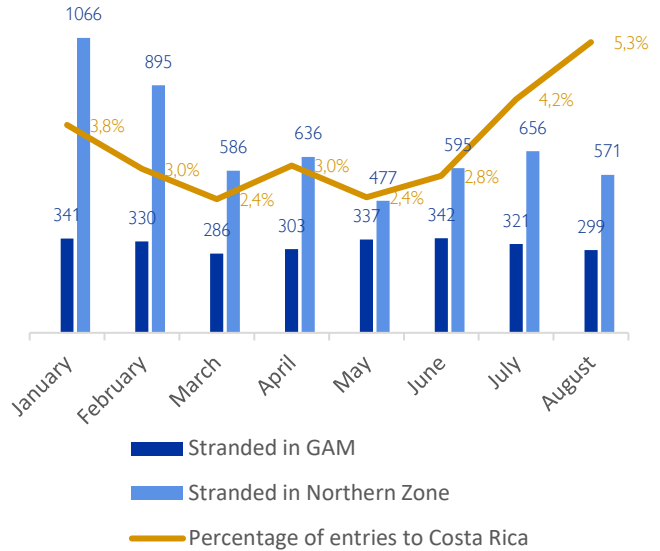
In August 2024, **299** migrants were identified stranded in monitored public places in various cantons of the GAM, with San José standing out with **185**. On the other hand, in the monitored shelters of San José, **75** people were registered; this figure has remained regular during 2024 (Graph 4).

INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN NORTHERN CANTONS:

Although the number of migrants stranded in the northern zone decreased from May (5985 people) to July 2024 (648), during August **571** people were identified, approximately **48** per cent more than in the GAM (Figure 3). Key Informants have identified informal shelters in the northern zone, where migrants seek temporary refuge. Although complete records are not available, these shelters provide basic support, but face challenges in sanitary conditions and resources. The August 2024 data highlight the importance of strengthening cooperation in the northern zone, especially in Los Chiles, where high numbers of stranded people have remained compared to southern and central cantons, (3,249 from January to August 2024) and in San Carlos it is lower with (2,301), referring to the same period.

870 Individuals stranded in public monitored sites

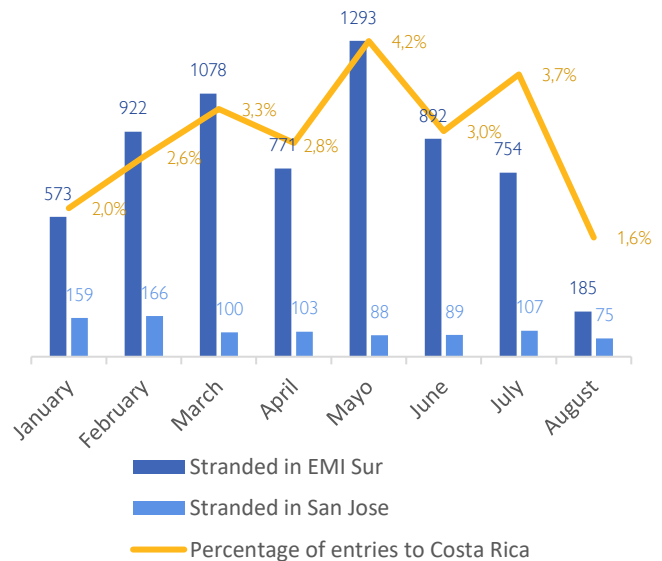
Figure 3. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in public monitored sites



Note: The Percentage of entries to Costa Rica is calculated based on the number of people who entered the country during each of the indicated months. For a more detailed visualization of this data, see Graph 1.

260 Individuals stranded in monitored shelters

Figure 4. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in monitored shelters



Note: The Percentage of entries to Costa Rica is calculated based on the number of people who entered the country during each of the indicated months. For a more detailed visualization of this data, see Graph 1.

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



FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

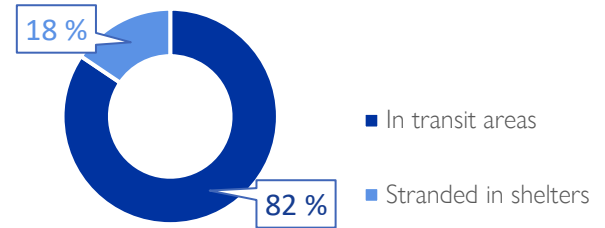
(Individuals surveyed: 580 | Group companions: 858)
Data collection: August 01-31, 2024

This flow monitoring was carried out through individual surveys of persons of legal age (18 years or older) stranded in **two shelters in San Jose and in EMI Sur**, and surveys to people in transit in **two cantons in the northern zone (Los Chiles)** following a **non-probabilistic sampling methodology**. This means that the results obtained **cannot be generalized and they are not representative** to the total number of people moving through the Americas. Nevertheless, while the results cannot be generalized, they do allow us to describe the migratory profile of the people surveyed during this period. In total, information was obtained on **1,438 migrants** (580 respondents and 858 group companions).



It should be noted that, for the purposes of this report, **the data on the left side or in dark blue represent the surveyed individuals who were in high concentration and transit points (EMI Sur Terminal and Los Chiles Terminal)**, while the data **on the right side or in light blue represent the surveyed individuals who were in the monitored shelters**.

Figure 5. Surveys by type of movement of surveyed individuals (n=580)



497

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



101

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=479)



Percentage of individuals stranded in monitored shelters by nationality (n=101)



NIVEL EDUCATIVO DE PERSONAS ENCUESTADAS

Figure 6. Percentage of individuals surveyed in transit by sex and highest level of completed education (n=479)

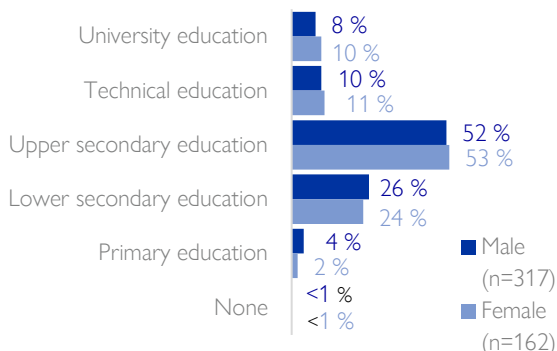
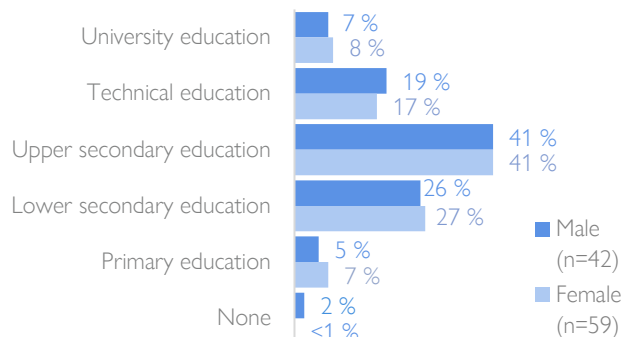


Figure 7. Percentage of individuals surveyed in shelters by sex and highest level of completed education (n=101)



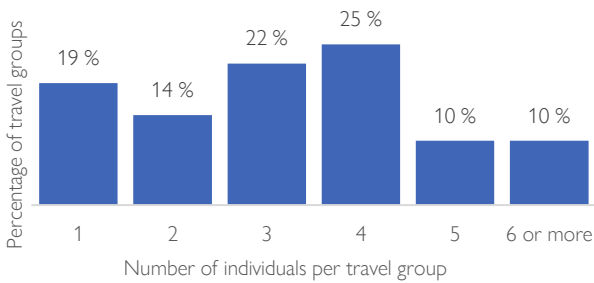
The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. August 2024



Out of 479 surveyed individuals at **transit locations**, data was collected on 623 travel companions, resulting in a total of **1,102 group companions and surveyed individuals**. Among the analyzed groups, 19 per cent were individuals traveling alone (29 % of the surveyed male and 7 % of the surveyed female) and 14 per cent were couples. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 67 per cent of the total (figure 8). The average travel group size was 3.3 people (excluding individuals traveling alone).

Regarding the distribution by sex and age, 61 per cent of the people within the travel groups, including surveyed individuals and their group companions, were male, while 39 per cent were female. Minors (17 years old or younger) made up 26 per cent of the total number of individuals, and the average age of the adults was 30 years, with minors averaging 7 years old (Figure 9).

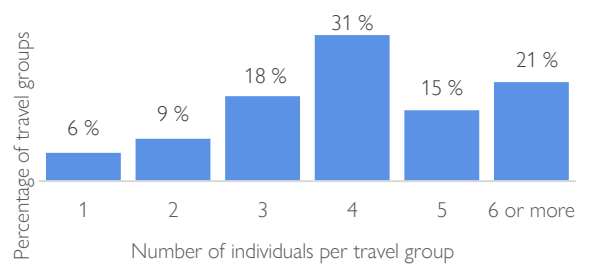
Figure 8. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals at transit sites (n=1,102)



Out of the 101 surveyed individuals in **3 shelters**, information was collected on 235 family, making a total of **336 group companions and surveyed individuals**. Of the analyzed groups, seven per cent were individuals traveling alone (14 % of the male and one per cent of the female), and nine per cent were couples. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 85 per cent of the total, The average travel group size was 3.9 people (excluding individuals traveling alone).

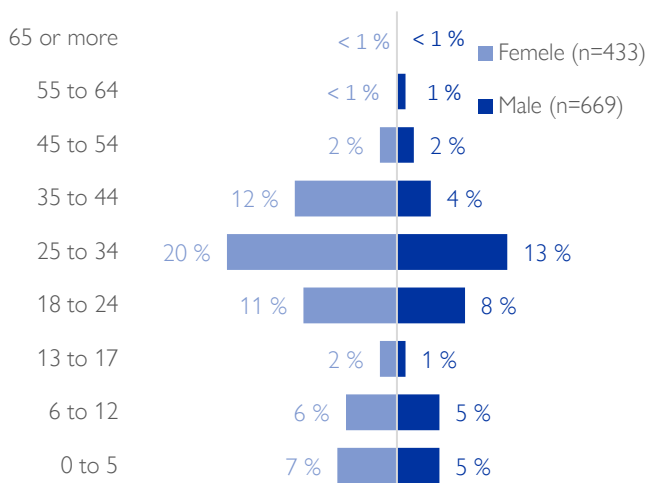
Regarding the sex and age distribution of the surveyed individuals and companions, 52 per cent of the members of the family, including surveyed individuals and their group companions, were male, while 48 per cent were female. Minors (17 years or younger) constituted 42 per cent of the total. The average age of the adults was 31 years and 8 years for minors (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals stranded in monitored shelters (n=336)



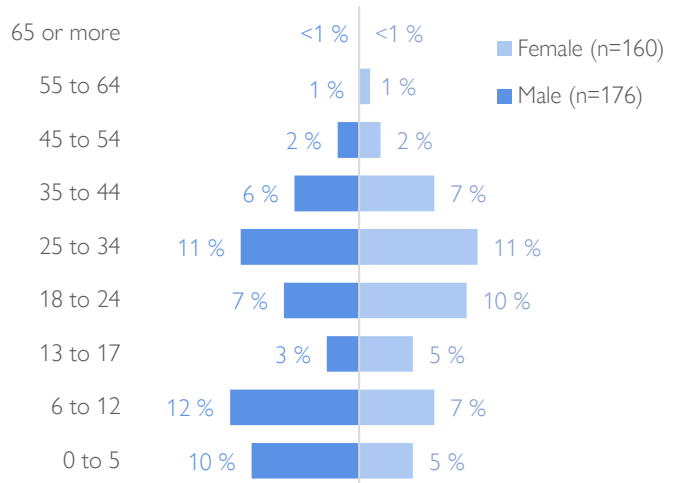
GENDER AND AGE COMPOSITION OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRAVEL GROUPS

Figure 9. Percentage of people in transit travel groups, by age and sex (n=1,102)



Note: This analysis does not include data on unaccompanied minors, as surveys are not conducted with individuals under the age of 18.

Figure 11. Percentage of people in monitored shelters, by age and sex (n=336)



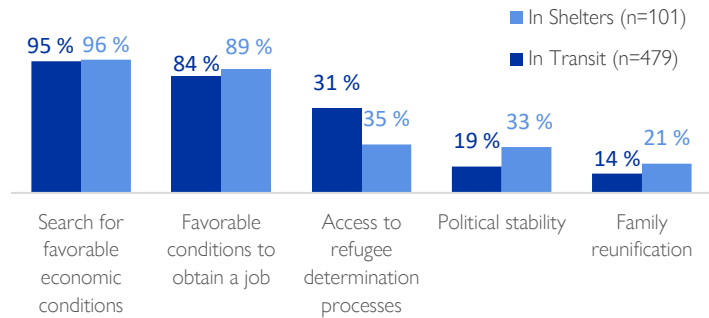
Note: This analysis does not include data on unaccompanied minors, as surveys are not conducted with individuals under the age of 18.

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

REASONS FOR MIGRATING

Regarding migration reasons, surveyed individuals, both in transit and in shelters, primarily highlighted the search for favorable economic conditions and the opportunity to secure employment. Other reasons mentioned, albeit to a lesser extent, included access to refugee determination processes, political stability, and family reunification (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Percentage of respondents in transit by main reason for migration (n=580)



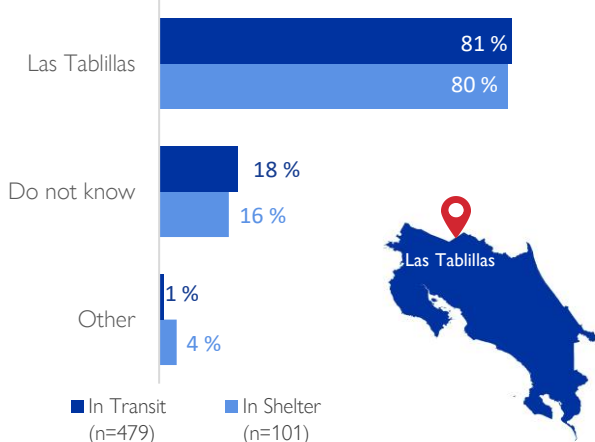
Note: individuals could choose more than one option

MIGRATORY ROUTE

The main route that surveyed individuals indicated they planned to leave Costa Rica **was through Las Tablillas border crossing in Los Chiles (81%)**, while 18 per cent indicated not knowing which border crossing, they were exiting through (the remaining 1% indicated other border posts, which could be associated with actions of illicit trafficking of migrant people). On the other hand, **none of the surveyed individuals indicated that they did not plan to leave Costa Rica.**

Differences in exit locations were identified between individuals surveyed at transit sites and in shelters: 81 per cent of the surveys conducted at transit sites indicated that they would leave the country through Las Tablillas sector and 18 per cent indicated not knowing. On the other hand, of the individuals surveyed in shelters, 80 per cent were planning to leave through Las Tablillas, four per cent through other sites (mainly through La Trocha), and 16 per cent indicated not knowing (Figure 13).

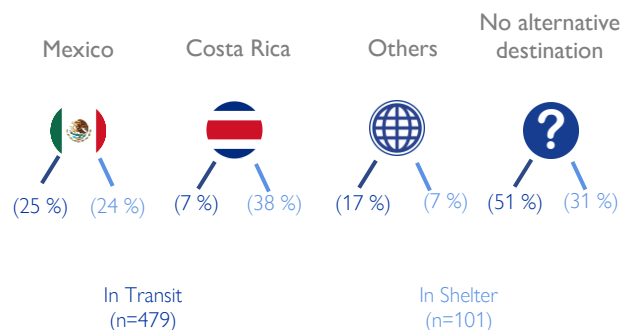
Figure 13. Percentage of respondents by planned place of departure from Costa Rica (n=580)



The **destination indicated** by the surveyed individuals varied at transit sites and shelters: **94 per cent of the surveyed individuals at public sites indicated the United States of America, compared to 95 per cent of the surveyed individuals in temporary shelters.** Other key identified destinations were Mexico (3% of individuals in transit and 1% of individuals stranded in shelters) and Costa Rica (1% of individuals in transit and less than 1% of those stranded in shelters). Additionally, there were individuals without a defined destination (2% of surveyed individuals in transit and less than 1% of those in shelters)

Considerable 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, 7 per cent indicated Costa Rica, and 17 per cent indicated others, whereas these Percentages were 24 per cent, 38 per cent, and 7 per cent, respectively, for individuals in shelters. The Percentages of individuals without a defined alternative destination varied from 51 per cent for those in transit to 31 per cent for those stranded.

Percentage of surveyed individuals by alternative destinations (n=580)

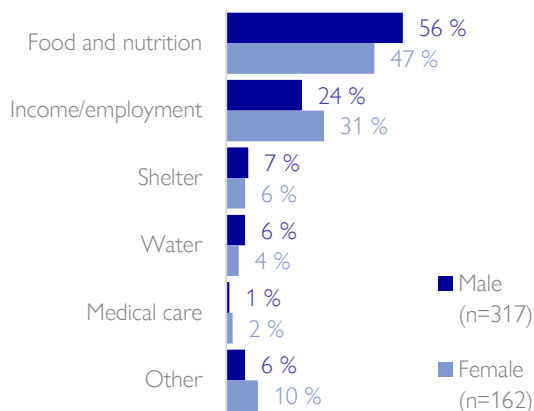


Other countries: United States of America, Spain, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia.

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

In transit, the most pressing needs are food and nutrition (60 %), income/employment (16 %) and shelter (6 %). Respondents were also asked about the need for legal advice to learn about their migration options, with a 64 per cent response rate.

Figure 14. Percentage of surveyed individuals in transit, by sex and main need (n=479)



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



64 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=479)

Main non-food (NFI) need:

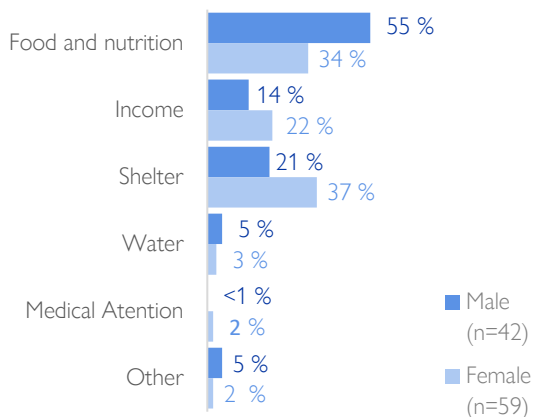


- 1- Soap (31 %)
- 2- Toilet paper (18 %)
- 3- Deodorant (14 %)
- 4- Shampoo (13 %)
- 5- Others (24 %)

Other NFIs: Toothbrush/toothpaste, blanket, sanitary towels, rain poncho, baby items.

Surveys conducted with migrants in temporary shelters indicate that the most pressing needs are food and nutrition (45 %), shelter (33 %), and income/employment (16 %). Respondents were also asked about the need for legal advice to learn about their migration options, to which 52 per cent expressed needing it.

Figure 15. Percentage of surveyed individuals stranded in shelters, by sex and main need (n=101)



52 % indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=101)

Main non-food (NFI) need:



- 1-Toothbrush and toothpaste (15 %)
- 2- Toilet Paper (13 %)
- 3- Deodorant (12 %)
- 4- Soap (12 %)
- 5- Others (48 %)

Other NFIs: Shampoo, blanket, sanitary towels, rain poncho, baby items.

Despite ongoing coordination efforts between humanitarian actors and authorities during July 2024, challenges persist in providing services, improving infrastructure, and addressing health issues. In the EMI Sur region, there is a highlighted need for non-food donations, including clothing (especially for children and babies), personal hygiene items, sanitary towels, diapers, blankets, bottles, and boiled water. Adequate food, constant electricity for charging mobile devices, free telephone lines, and maps of the countries along the migration route with information on support agencies remain crucial.

Although there was a decrease in the migrant population, in the GAM region, difficulties continue due to the lack of accommodation, psychosocial, legal, and medical care, clothing, and essential items. Although various actors and local organizations are present in GAM, it is vital to strengthen humanitarian efforts. Collaboration between entities remains essential to provide effective support and assistance to migrants.

Additionally, an increase in the number of people seeking temporary economic resources before continuing their journey was observed, leading to a rise in demand for informal jobs and basic services in the area.

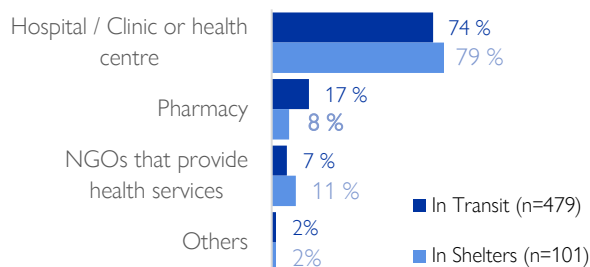
In the northern region, the needs of stranded migrants have increased, particularly for food, shelter, water access, medical care, information, and psychological support. Communities like Los Chiles and Ciudad Quesada experience a constant flow of stranded migrants due to a lack of economic resources to continue their journey. Protection risks for vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and people with specific medical needs, have been identified. Furthermore, the prolonged presence of migrants in these communities has created tensions with the local population. New non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have started offering services to migrants in transit, such as cell phone charging and internet services, as well as providing food (breakfast and lunch).

Regarding migration issues, most public hospitals and clinics in Costa Rica only attend to emergencies, pregnant women, and minors.

In case of needing medical assistance, **74 per cent of surveyed individuals in transit and 79 per cent of those in shelters indicated they would go to hospitals, clinics, or health centers.** On the other hand, 17 per cent of people in transit and eight per cent of people in shelters would seek care from NGOs that provide health services (Graph 16).

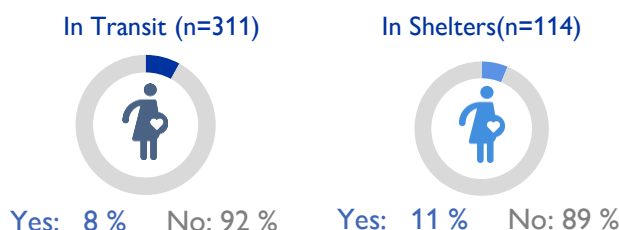
Eleven per cent of surveyed women and accompanying females over 15 years old were pregnant, with an average age of 28 years: eight per cent of women surveyed at transit sites with an average age of 28 years, and another 11 per cent of women in shelters with an average age of 27 years.

Figure 16. Percentage of respondents by location where they would seek assistance if needed (n=580)



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

Figure 17. Percentage of pregnant female aged 15 and over



OBSERVED HEALTH ISSUES

Main health conditions observed in stranded migrants include:

- **Gastrointestinal disease:** Diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach discomfort.
- **Respiratory illnesses:** Flu, cough, and asthma.
- **Skin conditions:** Skin lesions and conjunctivitis.
- **Physical ailments:** Swollen feet, body aches, and headaches.
- **Infectious diseases:** Suspected cases of dengue.
Others: Fever, dizziness, and dehydration.

During August 2024, Los Chiles experienced a constant flow of migrants, mainly during nighttime and early morning hours, due to the arrival of buses from CATEM Sur. The accumulation of solid waste in public spaces, especially at the bus terminal and the municipal market, as well as bird droppings, caused bad odors and significantly increased the risk of health problems. Many people were forced to sleep in these public spaces or in makeshift tents due to the lack of adequate shelters, which increased their vulnerability to diseases.

The scarcity of economic resources exacerbated the situation, leading some individuals to sell items from humanitarian aid kits in order to buy food.

A notable increase in cases of conjunctivitis and suspected dengue was reported, in addition to common conditions such as flu, gastrointestinal problems, and physical ailments like swollen feet and body aches. The lack of access to adequate sanitary services and potable water exacerbated these health issues.

The demand for medical services in the northern zone far exceeded the available supply. This situation highlighted the urgent need for greater health infrastructure and medical personnel in the region. Additionally, there was an observed increase in concern for the mental health of migrants. Reports of stress and fatigue are common, exacerbated by the uncertainty of their situation and difficult living conditions. Many of these individuals are in vulnerable situations, dealing with the trauma of migration and the lack of emotional support. However, despite these challenges, various organizations and community groups are making an admirable effort to provide support.

Despite the fact that shelters in the GAM offer additional support in health and mental health issues to migrants, not everyone manages to access these services. This generates growing concern for the well-being of these people.

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



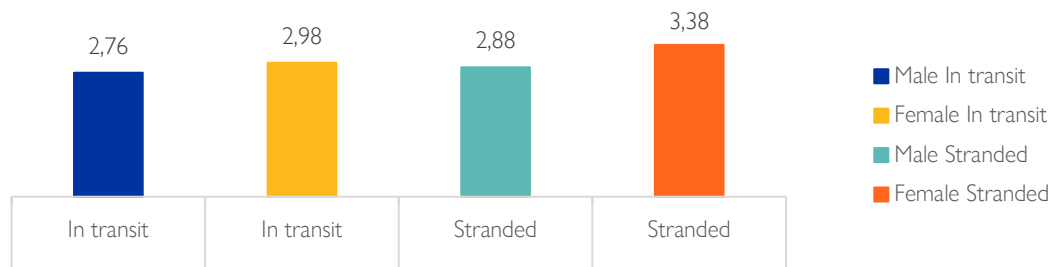
VULNERABILITY PROFILE

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

Table 1. Vulnerability indicator criteria

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

Figure 18. Level of vulnerability by sex and classification of migrants surveyed in August 2024



In general, **both stranded and in-transit women present higher levels of vulnerability than men**. The vulnerability index, which measures the level of risk and unmet needs, is 3.38 for women and 2,28 for men among stranded individuals. For people in transit, the index is 2.98 for women and 2.76 for men.

Between July and August 2024, a decrease of 0.02 points was observed in the level of vulnerability among stranded women (from 3.40 in July to 2,88 in August) and 0.2 for stranded men (from 3.08 in July to 3.04 in August). This is associated with a decrease in shelter, food, and income needs and, in the case of men, with larger travel groups.

Migrant women continue to face more pressing challenges, risks, and needs compared to men, placing them in a situation of greater risk and vulnerability. Therefore, it is essential to adopt a differentiated approach in the humanitarian response, considering the specific needs of each group.



Interview with a migrant person,
Bus station, Los Chiles
©OIM 2024/ Jaison CRUZ

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



CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS



According to IOM estimates in Costa Rica, in August 2024 the migrant flow decreased by 28 per cent compared to July 2024 (from 23,167 to 16,566 people). Observing the first eight months of the year, there is a 24 per cent decrease in the number of entries during 2024 (251,912) compared to the same period in 2023 (333,422). According to recent records, the current trend shows a significant drop in August, suggesting a possible stabilization in the migratory flow for the following months.



The direct route from Paso Canoas to Los Chiles continues to be the most used, with 98 per cent of people moving along this route on public buses. The EMI Sur continues to play an essential role in managing this flow, providing critical services such as healthcare, legal assistance, and shelter, despite persistent logistical and health challenges. In the northern zone, alternative routes remain active, and the demand for basic services and transportation remains high.



Although the total number of people transiting through Costa Rica has decreased, the data reflect a difference in the intensity of the reduction between those stranded in public sites and those in shelters. In August 2024, migrants stranded in public sites decreased by 11 per cent (from 977 in July to 870 in August), while people in shelters experienced a more significant decrease of 70 per cent (from 861 in July to 260 in August). While shelters still have the capacity to accommodate more people, many migrants prefer to continue their journey northward and remain in public spaces. This trend is also reflected in the increase in the number of days allowed to stay in GAM shelters.



Surveys conducted with migrants reveal significant differences in demographic profiles between those in transit and those stranded in shelters. Larger groups (3 or more people) represented 67 per cent of the total in transit, while in shelters this Percentage rose to 85 per cent. Additionally, 19 per cent of people in transit were traveling without family members, compared to only 6 per cent of those in shelters. Furthermore, shelters host a higher number of minors, underscoring the persistence of the pattern where larger groups with more children tend to prefer these spaces. This highlights the need to strengthen support for shelters to adequately assist these more vulnerable populations.



In August 2024, an increase in gastrointestinal diseases, respiratory problems, and skin conditions was observed among migrants, along with a rise in cases of conjunctivitis, suspected dengue, and flu. These findings emphasize the need to adjust available health services, focusing on these emerging conditions and considering the additional challenges that climatic conditions may present.

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



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



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