

# 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, Escazu, Heredia, La Cruz, Los Chiles, Liberia, San Carlos San Jose, Santa Ana, Santo Domingo, Tibas y Upala.



**Situation report: May, 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, respectively<sup>1</sup>. The results of this report present information collected from 1 – 31 May 2024.

#### FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY



**33,240** ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENTERED COSTA RICA FROM PANAMA IN MARCH 2024

Source: Projection from IOM Costa Rica, based on previously published monthly data<sup>2</sup>.



**32,364** PEOPLE MOBILIZED BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION THROUGHOUT COSTA RICA

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

#### EMERGENCY EVENT TRACKING IN MONITORED LOCATIONS



**814** 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.



**1,381** INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN **3** MONITORED SHELTERS  
Average stay: **6 days**

#### FLOW MONITORING SURVEY: LOCATION OF HIGH TRANSIT AND MIGRANT PRESENCE (713 individuals surveyed and 1,091 group companions)



**42 %** WOMEN | **58 %** MEN  
**33 %** ACCOMPANIED MINORS



**86 %** OF INDIVIDUALS TRAVEL IN GROUPS



**MAIN NEEDS\***  
Food and nutrition (47 %)  
Income (17 %)  
Water (14 %)  
Other (22 %)

Source: IOM, 2024

<sup>1</sup> For more information, visit: [www.dtm.iom.int](http://www.dtm.iom.int)

<sup>2</sup> 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, Chiriqui. 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 of the **Flow of People on the Move across the Americas**, with migrants crossing by land from the border between Colombia and Panama through the Darien crossing, destined for the northern countries of the continent. According to data published by the Republic of Panama, between January and May 2024, 170,014 entries, through the Darien Region, into Panama were registered. According to data published by the Republic of Panama, in May 2024, 36,841 entries from Colombia were registered: 49 per cent were adult men, 28 per cent were women, 12 per cent boys and 11 per cent girls. Sixty-three per cent came from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, nine per cent from Ecuador, seven per cent from Colombia, seven per cent from Haiti, five per cent from the People's Republic of China, and another 8 per cent from more than 31 countries<sup>4</sup>.



**During the first months of 2024, Costa Rica experienced a notable increase in the entry of people on the move across the Americas, in comparison with previous years.** According to estimations from IOM Costa Rica, 15,949 people entered in the first 5 months of 2021, 32,986 in 2022, 166,649 in 2023, and 179,157 in the first 5 months of 2024 (Figure 1). Additionally, during the same period, (January-April) the General Directorate of Migration (DGME, by its acronym in Spanish) registered **175,660 people (98 % of the total estimated by IOM) using the direct transportation route between the Southern Migration Station (EMI Sur, by its acronym in Spanish), in Paso Canoas (border between Costa Rica and Panama), and Los Chiles (border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua)**<sup>5</sup>.

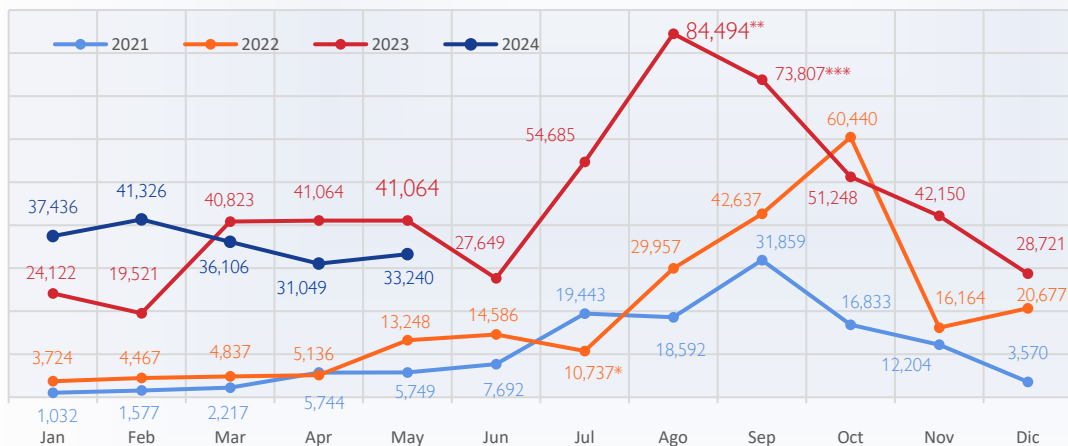


Comparing the records of regular and irregular migration movements highlights the dimensions of this flow. According to the DGME<sup>6</sup>, during May 2024, there were 57,424 regular entries of foreign individuals through Costa Rica's land border posts (18 % via Paso Canoas), **while the estimated irregular entries of mobility flow across were equivalent to 58 per cent of the regular ones.**



Based on the Flow Monitoring Surveys, in May 2024, 33 percent of travel groups of surveyed migrants were minors, and 1 percent of respondents were traveling alone. Between January and April, minors represented 30 percent, and individuals traveling alone accounted for 18 percent. In the first five months of 2023, minors comprised 34 percent, and 8 percent were adults traveling unaccompanied. These data show fluctuations in travel groups, with a recent trend of more people traveling alone compared to previous periods.

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



**179,157**  
Migrant individuals in  
January and May 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 %.

<sup>3</sup> For more information, visit: [www.dtm.iom.int/costa-rica](http://www.dtm.iom.int/costa-rica)

<sup>4</sup> For more information, visit: [www.migracion.gob.pa](http://www.migracion.gob.pa)

<sup>5</sup> For more information, visit: [www.migracion.go.cr](http://www.migracion.go.cr)

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

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

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 Panama<sup>7</sup>. 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 CATEM<sup>8</sup>.

During May 2024, **713 valid surveys** were obtained (99 per cent response rate and one per cent non-response rate), collecting information on 1,671 migrants (713 surveyed and 1,091 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, 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. Thirteen 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 87 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 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 5 per cent.

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 at EMI Sur, 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. 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 Costa Rican government 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, there are still flows through unofficial routes far from these controls, which makes it impossible to keep a complete record of all entries into the country. Likewise, the publication of this data is carried out through daily reports that do not present accumulated data on the number of persons mobilized by public transport or persons in CATEM, so the data presented in the report represent a record that the IOM has made based on the publications indicated.

Other constraints relate to language and cultural barriers, temporary stay at monitoring points, geographical complexities and irregular migration dynamics, including human smuggling networks. For example, people from the People's Republic of China, who accounted for six per cent of inflows to Panama between January and March 2024, are only represented at less than one per cent in FMS surveys in the same period.

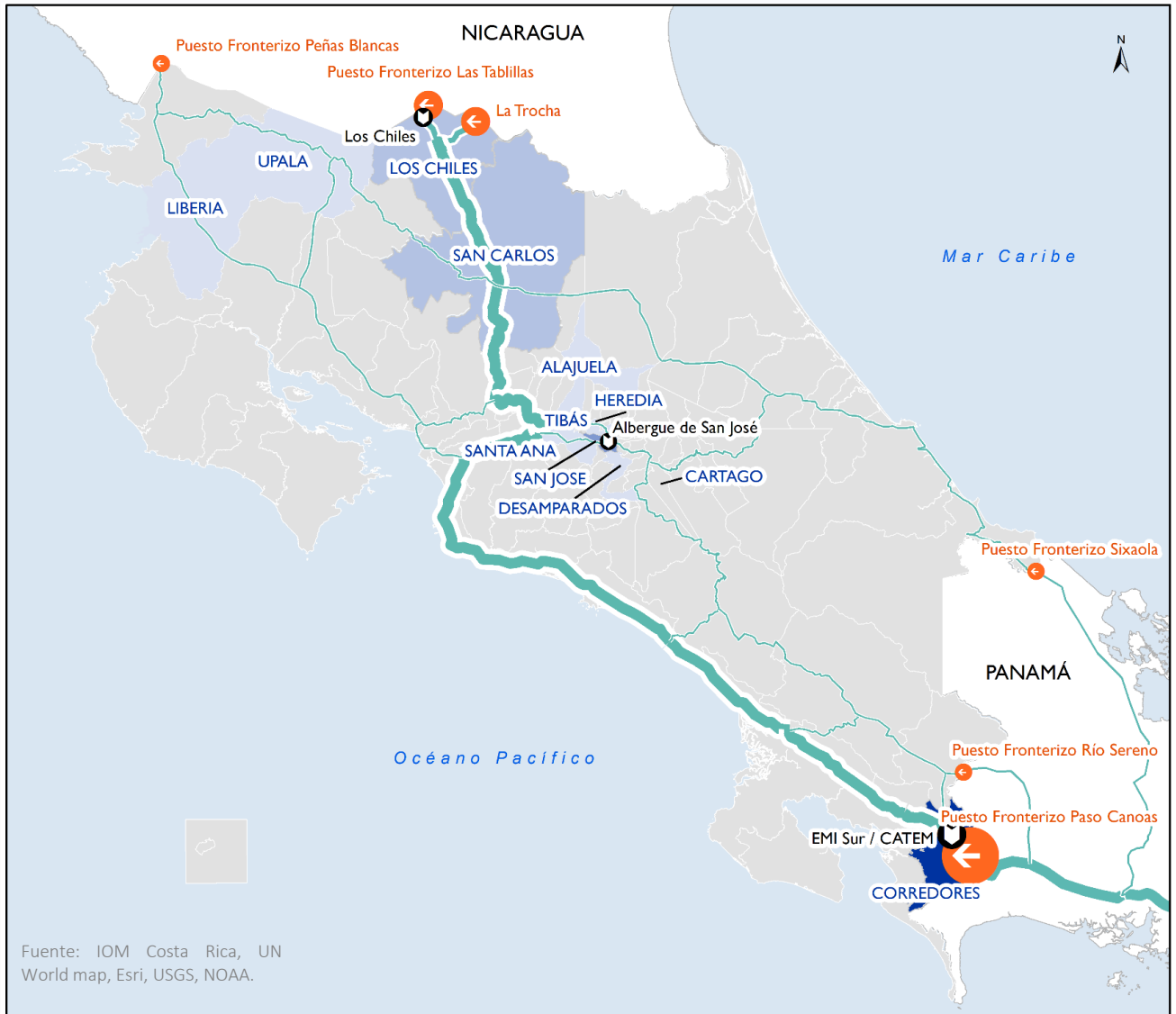
<sup>7</sup> Para más información, visite: [www.migracion.gob.pa](http://www.migracion.gob.pa)

<sup>8</sup> Para más información, visite: [www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx](http://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. May 2024



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

## Simbología

### Total de Cruces Fronterizos

- < 166
- 16.454 - 16.620
- 32.908

### Total de Encuestas

- 49
- 308
- 356

### Ruta

- Ruta Directa EMI Sur - Los Chiles
- Ruta Alternativa

### Total de personas varadas identificadas

- < 45
- 179 - 265
- 301
- 1.293

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. May 2024



# 33,240

Estimated number of individuals entering Costa Rica. May 2024



Estimated increase of 7 % compared to April 2024 estimations (31,049)



# 32,364

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

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Costa Rica, it is estimated that approximately 33,240 people from the migratory flow of people on the move across the Americas entered the country in May 2024, an approximate daily average of 1,072 people. 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 to **32,364 people moved through this route**, equivalent to 90 per cent of the total flow that entered the country (Figure 2)<sup>9</sup>. The presence of stranded people in public places in the GAM 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.

In relation to the transportation of migrants on the south-north route, Figure 2 depicts an increasing **trend during the fourth week of May 2024, with a weekly average of 8,091 people**. It is important to highlight the significant peaks recorded on May 1st and 31st, with 1,707 and 1,739 migrants respectively, figures that nearly double the values observed at the beginning of the month.

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, the need to seek economic resources to continue the migration route and wait for fellow travelers are some of the reasons for taking alternative routes.

**MOBILITY IN SOUTHERN CANTONS:** In May 2024, the EMI Sur in Paso Canoas was the main migratory transit point. The migratory flow was variable due to the weather conditions present in Panama and especially in the Darien crossing, experiencing a decrease in the second and third weeks of the month. However, there was an increase during the last week of May. It is noteworthy that during May, most buses transporting migrants departed from the southern area in the morning hours.

**MOBILITY IN CENTRAL CANTONS:** In the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM), people primarily entered who were traveling from community to community and returning from the northern zone of the country in search of economic resources to continue their journey. The GAM acts as an intermediate point where migrants can find temporary work or receive remittances before continuing north. Migrants often use the bus stops and available shelters in the GAM to rest and plan the next steps of their journey.

**MOBILITY IN NORTHERN CANTONS:** As mentioned, the route from the southern zone to the northern zone continued to be the primary corridor for people in mobility across the Americas. Specifically, during nighttime hours, there was a greater influx of individuals due to the arrival of more buses at that time from the southern zone. However, they also arrive via taxis or disembark at unauthorized bus stops, aiming to reach unofficial border crossings. The presence of the stranded migrant population in the cantons of the northern zone is primarily due to their lack of the necessary economic resources to continue their journey. Many individuals remain in public spaces, gathering resources to proceed, which maintains a constant flow of transit and creates pressure on basic services.

<sup>9</sup> La estimación de personas se calcula con los datos publicados por la DGME. Para más información, visite: [www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx](http://www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx)



## INDIVIDUALS STRANDED AT MONITORED SITES

In May 2024, **814** migrants were identified as stranded in **public sites (a decrease of 13 % compared to April 2024)** in monitored cantons and **1,381** stranded in **three shelters (an increase of 58 % compared to April 2024)**. The average length of stay remained at 4 and 6 days, respectively.

The data collected during May 2024 highlights the importance of strengthening cooperation in the northern zone, particularly in Los Chiles, where there have been high numbers of stranded people in recent months (2,002 from January to May of this year).

**INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN SOUTHERN CANTONS:** Based on the reports issued by the DGME about individuals stranded in CATEM, it is estimated that, in May 2024, **1,293** 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.

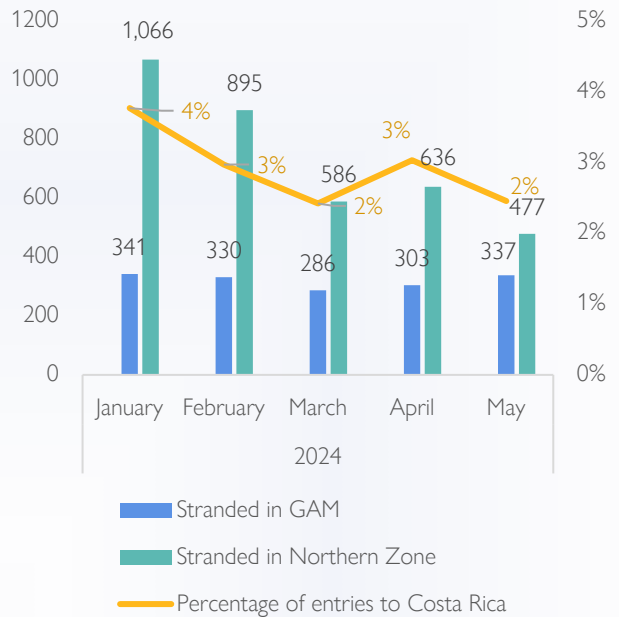
**INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN CENTRAL CANTONS:** In May 2024, **337** stranded migrant individuals were identified in monitored public spaces of the in various cantons of the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) were highlighted, with San Jose having **213** stranded individuals. Similarly, in the monitored shelters of San Jose, **90** stranded individuals were recorded; this figure has remained consistent throughout 2024 (Figure 4),

**INDIVIDUALS STRANDED IN NORTHERN CANTONS:** Although the number of stranded migrant individuals in the northern zone decreased from February (895 individuals) to April 2024 (636), 477 individuals were identified in May, approximately 28 percent more than in the GAM. The trend since December shows that this is an ongoing issue that requires attention and resources (Figure 3). Key informants have identified informal shelters in the northern zone, where migrant individuals seek temporary refuge. Although we lack complete records, these shelters provide basic support but face challenges in terms of sanitary conditions and resources.

The data collected during May 2024 underscore the importance of enhancing cooperation in the northern zone, particularly in Los Chiles, where high numbers of stranded individuals have persisted (2,002 from January to May of the current year).

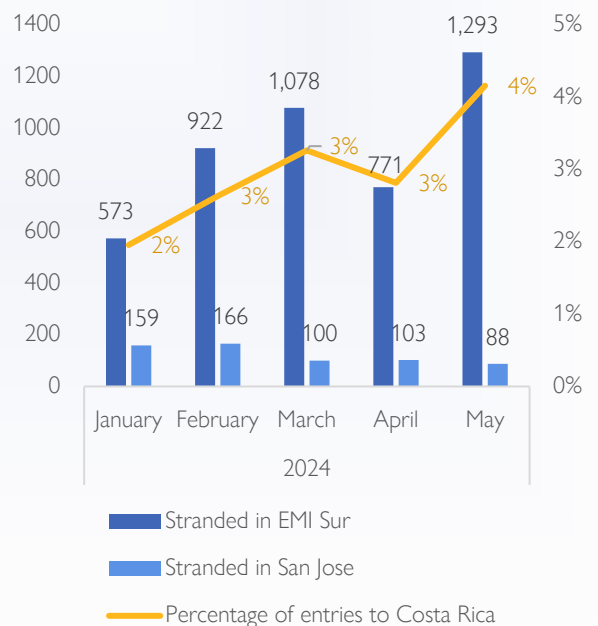
### 814 Individuals stranded in public monitored sites

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



### 1,381 Individuals stranded in monitored shelters

Figure 4. Monthly distribution of stranded individuals in monitored shelters



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

# FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

(Individuals surveyed: 713 | Group companions: 1,091)

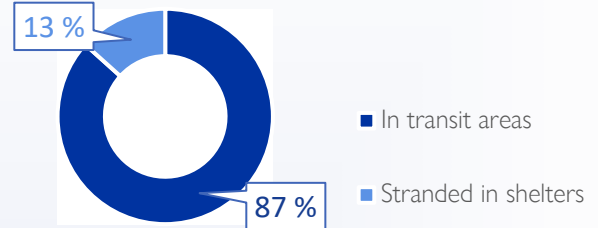
Data collection: May 01-31, 2024

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 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 **1,505 migrants** (713 respondents and 1.091 group companions).



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

Figure 5. Surveys by type of movement of surveyed individuals (n=713)



**623**

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



**90**

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=623)



percentage of individuals stranded in monitored shelters by nationality (n=90)



### NIVEL EDUCATIVO DE PERSONAS ENCUESTADAS

Figure 6. percentage of individuals surveyed in transit by gender and highest level of completed education (n=623)

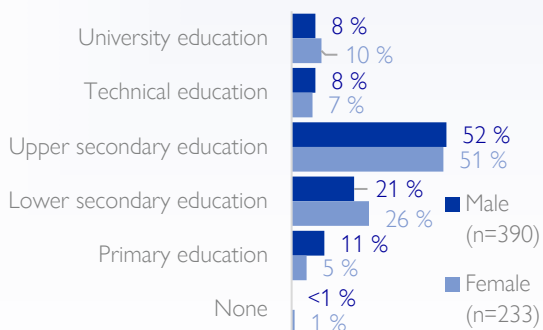
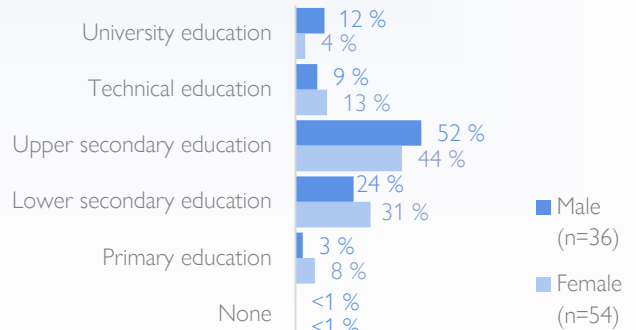


Figure 7. percentage of individuals surveyed in shelters by gender and highest level of completed education (n=90)



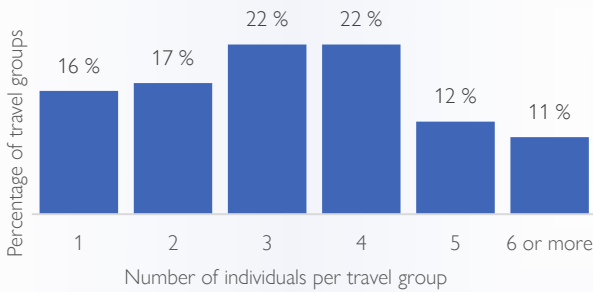
The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. May 2024



Out of 623 surveyed individuals at **transit locations**, data was collected on 882 travel family, resulting in a total of **1,505 group companions and surveyed individuals**. Among the analyzed groups, 16 per cent were individuals traveling alone (26 % of the surveyed men and 5 % of the surveyed women) and 17 per cent were couples. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 67 per cent of the total, were mainly made up of groups of 3 individuals (22 %), 4 individuals (22 %), 5 individuals (12 %), or more (11 %) (Figure 8). The average travel group size was 2 people.

Regarding the distribution by gender and age, 58 per cent of the people within the travel groups, including surveyed individuals and their group companions, were men, while 42 per cent were women. Minors (17 years old or younger) made up 30 per cent of the total number of individuals, and the average age of the adults was 31 years, with minors averaging 7 years old (Figure 9).

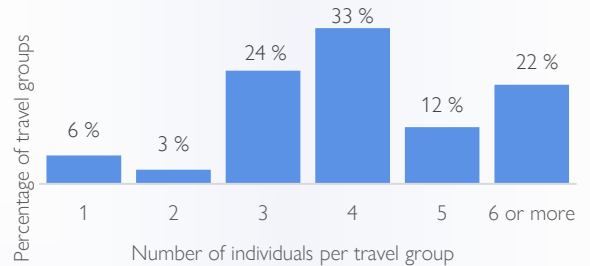
Figure 8. Size and number of travel groups of surveyed individuals at transit sites (n=1,505)



Out of the 90 surveyed individuals in **3 shelters**, information was collected on 206 family, making a total of **299 group companions and surveyed individuals**. Of the analyzed groups, six per cent were individuals traveling alone (6% of the men and less than 1% of the women), and three per cent were couples. The larger groups (3 or more individuals), representing 91 per cent of the total, were mainly made up of groups of 3 individuals (24 %), 4 individuals (33 %), 5 individuals (12 %), or more (22 %) (Figure 10). The average travel group size was 3 people.

Regarding the gender and age distribution of the surveyed individuals and companions, 56 per cent of the members of the family, including surveyed individuals and their group companions, were men, while 44 per cent were women. Minors (17 years or younger) constituted 45 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=299)



GENDER AND AGE COMPOSITION OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRAVEL GROUPS

Figure 9. Percentage of individuals comprising travel groups in transit, by age and sex (n=1,505)

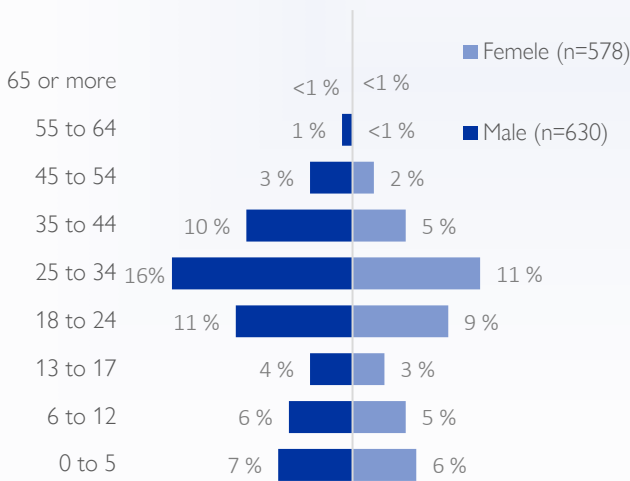
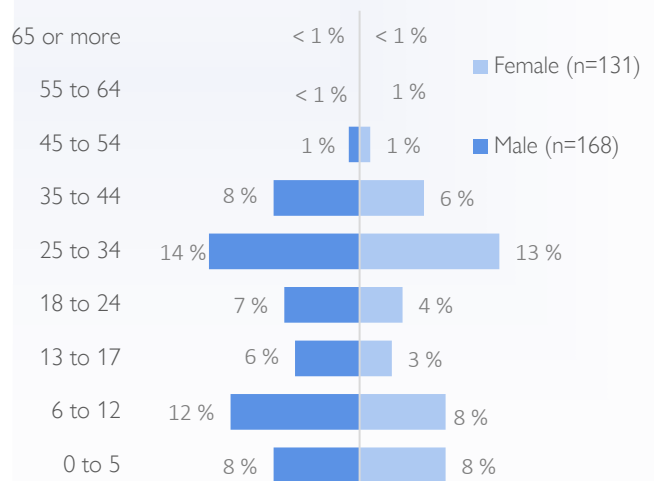


Figure 11. Percentage composition of groups of individuals stranded in monitored shelters, by age and sex (n=299).



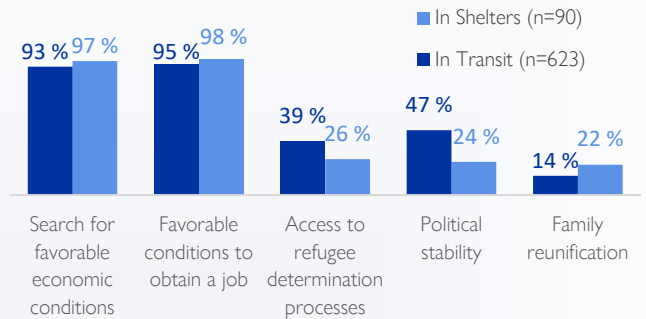
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## REASONS FOR MIGRATING

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=713)



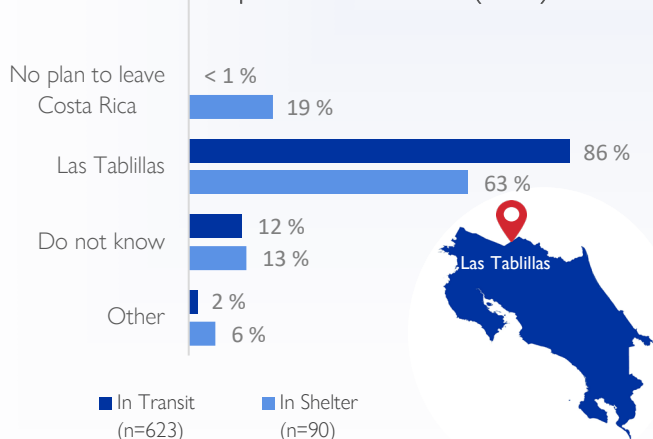
Note: individuals could choose more than one option

## MIGRATORY ROUTE

The main route that surveyed individuals indicated they planned to leave Costa Rica was through **Las Tablillas** border crossing in Los Chiles (83%), while 12 per cent indicated not knowing which border crossing, they were exiting through (the remaining 2% indicated other border posts, it can be associated to smuggling of migrants). On the other hand, less than three per cent of the surveyed individuals indicated not having plans to leave Costa Rica, equivalent to 61 individuals in the travel groups.

Differences in exit locations were identified between individuals surveyed at transit sites and in shelters: 86 per cent of the surveys conducted at transit sites indicated that they would leave the country through Las Tablillas sector and 12 per cent indicated not knowing. On the other hand, of the individuals surveyed in shelters, 63 per cent were planning to leave through Las Tablillas, six per cent through other sites (mainly through La Trocha), and 19 per cent indicated not knowing (Figure 13). Likewise, 19 per cent of the individuals surveyed in shelters indicated their intention to remain in Costa Rica.

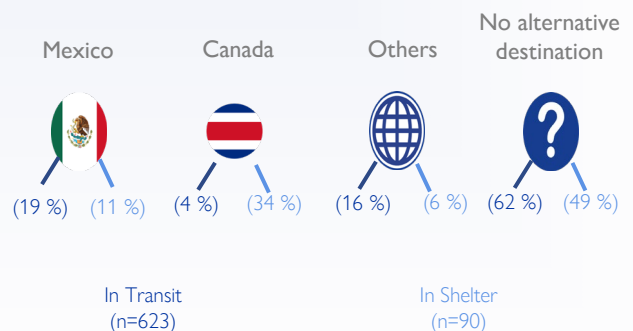
Figure 13. Percentage of respondents by planned place of departure from Costa Rica (n=713)



The **destination indicated** by the surveyed individuals varied considerably at transit sites and shelters: **93 per cent of the surveyed individuals at public sites indicated the United States of America**, compared to **72 per cent of the surveyed individuals in temporary shelters**. Other identified destinations were Mexico (3% of individuals in transit and <1% of individuals stranded in shelters) and Costa Rica (less than 1% of individuals in transit and 24% of individuals stranded in shelters). Additionally, there were individuals without an alternative destination (2% and 1% respectively)

Differences were observed in the main alternative destinations mentioned among the individuals surveyed at transit sites and in shelters. For those in transit, 19 percent indicated Mexico as an alternative destination and 4 percent indicated Costa Rica, whereas this percentage was less than 11 percent and 34 percent, respectively, for individuals in shelters. The percentages of individuals without a defined alternative destination varied from 62 percent in transit individuals to 49 percent in stranded individuals.

Percentage of surveyed individuals by alternative destinations (n=713)



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

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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 (49 %), and income/employment (17 %) and water (14 %). Respondents were also asked about the need for legal advice to learn about their migration options, with a 66 per cent response rates among respondent (Figure 14).

Surveys conducted with migrants in temporary shelters indicate that the most pressing needs are, food and nutrition (38 %), shelter (36 %), and income/employment (9 %). Respondents were also asked about the need for legal advice to learn about their migration options, to which 56 percent expressed needing (Figure 15).

Figure 14. per centage of surveyed individuals in transit, by gender and main need (n=623)

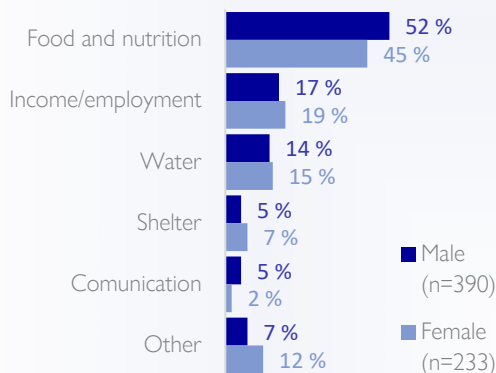
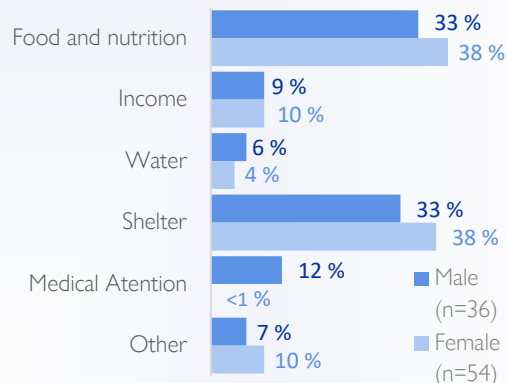


Figure 15. per centage of surveyed individuals stranded in shelters, by gender and main need (n=90)



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



**66 %** indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=623)



**50 %** indicated a need for legal advice to learn about migration options. (n=90)



Main non-food need:

- 1- Soap (41 %)
- 2- Shampoo (13 %)
- 3- Toilet paper (13 %)
- 4- Deodorant (12 %)
- 5- Others (21 %)



Principal necesidad no alimentaria:

- 1- Shampoo (22 %)
- 2- Toilet paper (17 %)
- 3- Sanitary Towels (16 %)
- 4- Deodorant (11 %)
- 5- Others (34 %)

### MAIN NEEDS

Despite coordination efforts between humanitarian actors and authorities during May 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 children and babies. At CATEM, efforts have been made to adapt, 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.

Migrants in the GAM face a series of difficulties due to the economic problems they have, such as lack of accommodation, psychosocial, legal and medical care, as well as clothing and basic needs. Although different actors and local organizations work in the GAM area, it is essential that humanitarian efforts are present. Collaboration between these entities is crucial to provide support and assistance to migrants. Efficient coordination can make a difference in the humanitarian response and ensure that priority needs are effectively addressed.

Meanwhile, stranded migrants in the northern zone begin to increase this month with greater needs in food, shelter, access to water, among others. Communities such as Los Chiles and Ciudad Quesada handle a constant flow of stranded migrants due to lack of economic resources to continue their journey. It has been observed through key informants that there are high protection risks for vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and people with specific health care needs. Key informants mention that the prolonged presence of migrants in these communities generates tensions with the local population. New NGOs have begun to offer services to migrant individuals in transit, such as cellphone battery charging and internet services.

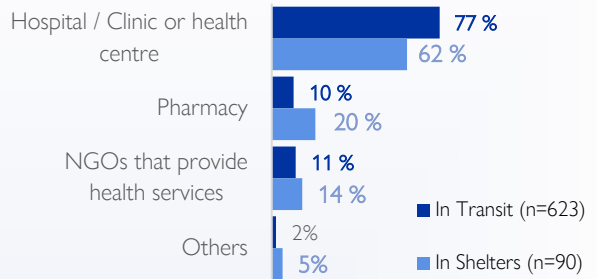
The data presented in this report does not represent the entirety of the migratory flow. May 2024

In the event of needing medical assistance, 77 per cent of respondents in transit indicated that they would go to hospitals, clinics or health centers, while only 62 per cent of those in shelters would opt for this option. On the other hand, 20 per cent of those in shelters would seek care in pharmacies, in contrast to only 10 per cent of those in transit (Figure 16).

In migratory matters, most public hospitals and clinics in Costa Rica only attend to emergencies, pregnant women, and minors. Data indicates that, compared to individuals in transit, those in shelters are more likely to visit hospitals and clinics than pharmacies. These differences suggest that perceptions of the availability and accessibility of health services vary according to the situation and location of migrant individuals.

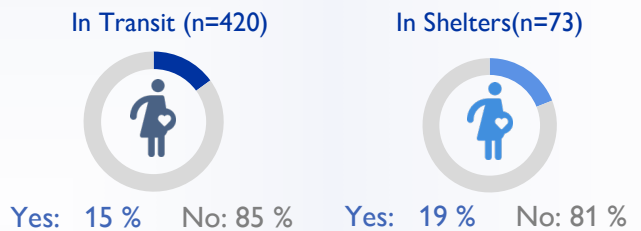
Sixteen percent of female respondents and group companions over the age of 15 reported being pregnant and had an average age of 25 years. These data vary between respondents in transit sites, where the percentage of pregnant women is 15 per cent and an average age of 24 years, and those in shelters, where the data are 19 per cent and 28 years.

Figure 16. per centage of surveyed individuals by type of movement and injuries suffered during the journey (n=713)



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

Figure 16. per centage of women aged 15 and over by pregnancy status



### OBSERVED HEALTH ISSUES

Main health conditions observed in stranded migrants include:

- Gastrointestinal disease: Diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach discomfort.
- Physical injuries: Lacerations, open wounds, bruises from falls, blisters on feet and hands, swelling of feet, fractures, and musculoskeletal injuries.
- Mental health issues such as anxiety and depression: Anxiety, depression, stress, and fatigue.
- Respiratory illnesses: Asthma, flu, cold, and cough.
- Infectious diseases: Suspected cases of malaria and other infections.
- 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 advances in health services with a focus on communicable diseases and psychosocial support, the increase in migrants and limited access to medical services hinder migrants' health. The most common problems include flu and stomach ailments. Some shelters have psychologists and collaborations with local clinics for emergencies, while others rely on coordination with international agencies to deal with medical emergencies.

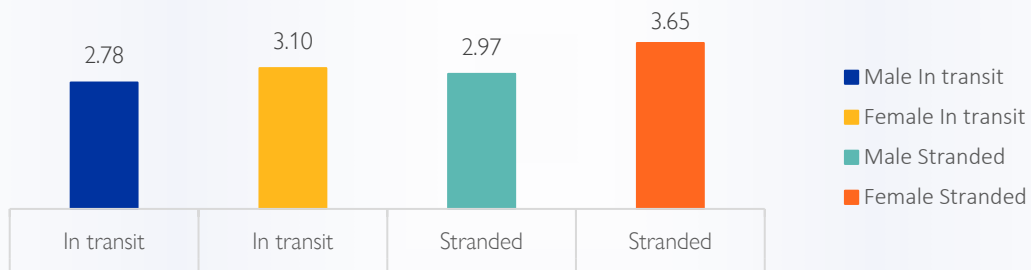
In the northern zone, the scarcity of health resources has been exacerbated by the increase in migratory flow in May 2024. Since previous months, the demand for medical services has significantly exceeded the available supply, creating critical gaps in healthcare for migrant individuals and local communities. Additionally, there has been an increase in the prevalence of respiratory illnesses (such as asthma, flu, and colds) among migrant individuals in transit, compared to April 2024, where the majority of reported health issues were gastrointestinal. The lack of medical personnel, supplies, and adequate infrastructure has limited the capacity to respond to illnesses, injuries, and specific health needs.

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
<b>Most urgent need</b>	Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care	1 point
<b>2nd most urgent need</b>	Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care	1 point
<b>3rd most urgent need</b>	Income; Shelter; Food and nutrition; Water; Health care; Medical care; Psychosocial care	1 point
<b>Minors in travel groups</b>	>=1	1 point
<b>Travel group size</b>	>= 3	1 point

Figure 17. Vulnerability level by sex and classification of migrants surveyed in May 2024



**In general, both stranded and in-transit women exhibit higher levels of vulnerability compared to men** (for stranded individuals, the index is 3.65 for females and 2.97 for males; for those in transit, the index ranges from 3.1 for females to 2.78 for males).

Regarding the main variations of this index between April and May 2024, a 0.4 point increase in the level of vulnerability among stranded women is identified (3.25 in April, 3.65 in May), directly associated with an increase in the need for shelter, food, income, and the rise of travel groups consisting of three or more individuals. There is also a 0.21 point decrease in the level of vulnerability among stranded men (3.18 in April, 2.97 in May), directly related to a decrease in the need for food, income, access to clean water, and a reduction in travel groups with three or more members.

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



Bus station Los Chiles, north zone of Costa Rica  
©OIM 2024/ Pamela MURILLO



Staff at the shelter, CATEM, Corredores  
©OIM 2024/ Eliana SANCHEZ

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According to IOM estimates in Costa Rica, May represented a seven percent increase compared to April 2024 and a 19 percent reduction compared to May 2023. **However, considering the first five months of the year, there is an eight percent increase in the number of entries during 2024 (179,157) compared to the same period in 2023 (166,594).**



**The direct route from Paso Canoas to Los Chiles continues to be the most used by transit flow.** In this context, the 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.**



Data from May 2024 show a 13 percent increase in migrants stranded in public sites and a 58 percent increase in shelters compared to April. **A change in geographical distribution was observed, with a decrease in the northern zone, especially in Los Chiles and San Carlos, which could be related to factors such as migratory routes, economic opportunities, and resource availability.** These data highlight the importance of strengthening cooperation in the northern zone to address the needs of this vulnerable population.



Surveys conducted with migrants reveal significant **differences in demographic profiles between migrants in transit and those stranded in shelters.** The largest groups (3 or more people) represented 67 percent of the total in transit, while in shelters this percentage rose to 91 percent. **Likewise, minors constituted 30 percent of the total in transit, in contrast to 45 percent in shelters.** These differences highlight the need to provide direct and specific support to shelters, where larger groups and a higher proportion of minors are concentrated, implying requirements in terms of care, services, and resources to ensure their well-being and protection.



In May 2024, key informants from EMI Sur observed an **increase in the prevalence of respiratory illnesses among migrants in transit.** Compared to April 2024, where most reported health problems were gastrointestinal, May saw more cases of asthma, flu, and colds. This shift underscores the need to adjust the available health services at transit points, focusing on the provision of appropriate medications and timely medical care. With the onset of the rainy season in Panama and Costa Rica, it is likely that these respiratory illnesses will further increase, worsening the health situation of the migrant population. It is crucial to anticipate these emerging needs to ensure comprehensive and adequate care, considering the additional challenges that the rains may bring.

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



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IOM National Office in Costa Rica:  
1A Avenue and 78A Street, in front of The Place Condominiums.  
Rohrmoser, San Jose, Costa Rica  
Telephone: +506 4052-3500  
Email: [IOMcostarica@iom.int](mailto:IOMcostarica@iom.int)  
Website: [www.costarica.iom.int](http://www.costarica.iom.int)