



POPULATION MOBILITY MAPPING

MUTARE DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE

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World Health
Organization



INTRODUCTION

The lockdown restrictions in Zimbabwe due to COVID-19 has drastically reduced the number of cross border movements. On average, the numbers crossing through the Mutare main border post has dropped from 400 to 250 persons a day. As of 2 February 2021, Zimbabwe had 33,548 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 26,794 recoveries and 1,254 deaths. As part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Health in collaboration with its partners in health recognized a need to understand the impact mobility within and across borders can potentially have on controlling the spread of the virus. To support these activities, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is working closely with the local government of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Health, and the Immigration Department to support the government of Zimbabwe and other key partners with regards to understanding migration flows, as well as to respond to the outbreak in a way that is sensitive to current and emerging migration and mobility realities in multiple regions in Zimbabwe.

The Forbes Border Post is the main crossing point between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. On the Mozambiquan side, the border is located in Machipanda. This border post is mostly characterised with freight traffic from the port city of Beira in Mozambique; however, mobility trends are also characterized by cross border traders who frequent the town to Chimoio and Manica for basic goods such as food and cheap second-hand clothing. Located 263 km to the East of the capital of Zimbabwe, Forbes border post in Mutare is one of the busiest borders in Zimbabwe.

Mutare, which is the border city where the Forbes border post is located, was founded in 1897 as a fort, about 8 km from the border with Mozambique, and is just 290 km from the Mozambican port of Beira, earning Mutare the title of "Zimbabwe's Gateway to the Sea". It is sometimes also called "Gateway to the Eastern Highlands". Many Zimbabwean locals refer to it as 'Kumakomoyo' (place of many mountains). Forbes Border Post is situated about 8 km from Mutare town east of Mutare and a gateway to the Beira corridor and is between Zimbabwe and



Mozambique, bordering the Machipanda border on the Mozambique side.

Mapping in Mutare was to complement the Government of Zimbabwe's National Preparedness and Response plan for COVID-19 by providing the Government, communities, and humanitarian partners with information on population mobility and cross-border movements. Population Mobility Mapping (PMM) aims to inform public health interventions through the analysis of the dynamics and characteristics of population mobility.

Flow monitoring aims to derive quantitative estimates of the flow of individuals through specific locations and to collect information about the profiles, intentions and needs of the people moving. More broadly, it aimed to enhance prevention, detection, and response to the spread of infectious diseases through an improved understanding of prevailing human mobility patterns in Zimbabwe and Plumtree Border districts.

The specific objectives of this exercise were to:

- Identify the points of entry and congregation areas within Mutare and at its borders with neighboring countries.
- Based on estimations on volume of flows and other criteria, provide a list of specific points of entry and congregation areas that are prioritized

for public health interventions in times of public health emergency.

- Recommend immediate public health interventions for the identified prioritized congregation areas and ports of entry.
- Assess the feasibility of implementing Flow Monitoring and recommend locations of Flow Monitoring Points for the purpose of disease surveillance, interventions strengthening health system along mobility corridors and provide information on cross border mobility trends to support Government's evidence-based migration policy development.

A virtual Participatory Mapping Exercise (PME) was convened on the 21st of January where key stakeholders from the Mutare district committee were present. For this exercise, key stakeholders were selected from the district and local councillors who oversee the community and responsible for day-to-day operations in the community. Participants represented the formal and informal, health and non-health sectors, including local authorities, community leaders. Local councillors also assisted in mapping illegal entry points in Mutare which will help in tracking irregular and regular migrants. Key stakeholders from government also participated in the one-day workshop to ensure that flow monitoring points are selected based with their experience in dealing with migrants and flow of people.



The mapping exercise was based on their understanding of the nearby countries such as Mozambique, Malawi, DRC and South Africa and local population movement dynamics in the country.

The meeting was conducted in two phases. First, IOM gave an overview presentation of Population Mobility Mapping (PMM) and Flow Monitoring (FM) to participants. The second phase was on discussions on general cross border movements and regional migration routes in relation to Forbes as the entry/exit point, identification of points of entry and identification of points of congregation. The Mutare city health department gave an epidemiological update during the session. Following an overview of flow monitoring, data collection, target areas, and risk of communication emphasizing transmission of COVID 19 and other health related issues, key informants were then encouraged to relate the information shared with situations in their daily lives and contribute their knowledge of their communities by identifying and locating PoEs, axes of mobility (routes) and Points of Congregation (PoCs), to identify places where travellers could interact with each other and/or the local community. Among the key points, participants selected priority sites for the implementation of public health measures and population mobility patterns and dynamics were then characterized.

FINDINGS

A total of 23 participants (17 male, 6 female) drawn from the Mutare District Development Committee, Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), Immigration, Ministry of Health, Office of

President, IOM enumerators and local authorities took part in the workshop. The connections between travellers and stationary communities in the epicentre, main towns, along mobility pathways were examined. Points of interest were allocated into three categories: Points of Congregation of travellers (where internal mobility is experienced such as markets, churches, universities, playgrounds), Points of Entry (PoEs) (border crossings); and major travelling routes connecting these Points of Entries and the Points of Congregations. These points were prioritized based on significant volume of mobility and strong connections to areas reporting Covid-19 cases. A total of 3 points were identified as Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs), of which 1 priority point (the main border post) was selected for immediate response actions and an IOM tent had been pitched there for support in terms of Covid-19 screening; surveillance, hand washing, risk communication and community engagement.

Characteristics of population mobility (migration routes)

Long distance population flows were identified from neighbouring countries (Mozambique) via Mutare to major towns such as Bulawayo, Gweru and Harare (the capital). High population mobility was noted through the following axes:

- (1) Beira-Mutare-Harare
- (2) Bulawayo-Mutare- Beira



IOM Staff utilizing hand washing station at Forbes PoE © IOM 2021

- (2i) Beitbridge-Mutare-Beira
- (2ii) Beira-Mutare-Masvingo

Mutare is an important transit point for long distance travellers, especially traders to access neighbouring towns (Harare, Masvingo, Bulawayo). Traders of commercial goods, majority of whom come from and reside in Manicaland, Harare and Masvingo provinces transit to Mutare before heading to Chimoio or Beira, resulting in long distance movement across multiple cities and towns with interactions with migrants.

The state of business in Mutare attracts daily travellers coming from Harare, Masvingo, Bulawayo and near-the-border communities as well as nearby semi and rural communities such as Mutare rural. Traders include Mozambiquans, Malawians and Zimbabweans.

At least 5 isolation centres are present in Mutare to curb the spread of COVID-19 and the community at large takes precautionary measures against the spread of COVID-19 in Mutare.

Regional Mobility Routes

During the online exercise, participants identified routes of mobility and mobility patterns observed in Mutare district. The information gathered from the key informants during the exercise include the main axes of mobility, the characteristics of this mobility and the main origin and destination of travellers. Mozambique to Botswana, Mozambique to Zimbabwe and Mozambique to Zambia are three key mobility routes identified.

Axes of mobility

One main mobility route traversing Mutare was identified during the exercise:

Route A3: The main route that connects Mozambique to Zimbabwe through the Forbes official Border post. This route is used by commercial vehicles, buses and pedestrians travelling to and from Zimbabwe. This route connects to N6 in Mozambique which passes through Manica and proceeds to Beira. On the Zimbabwean side, the route proceeds to Harare on the A3. Truck drivers, small traders and regular migrants from Zimbabwe and Mozambique are listed as the most common groups using the crossing point. The local routes pass through local towns such as Bulawayo and Gweru.

Trucks traveling along these axes, from Zimbabwe to Mozambique stop and congregate for a variety of reasons including rest, sleep, meals and for administrative reasons at Forbes PoE. A truck driver will take two days to travel from Mutare all the way to Mozambique, meaning there are many sites for stoppage and congregation along those mobility corridors. Also, the cross border traders usually board buses from Mutare which ferry them to their various destination in Zimbabwe.



Legend

- Country
- Province
- ↔ Major migrants routes
- - - minor migrants routes
- + Quarantine centre
- PoE
- ⚓ official PoE
- ⚓ unofficial PoC

HIGH MOBILITY CORRIDORS

Forbes | Zimbabwe

1:4,902,260 1 cm = 49 km

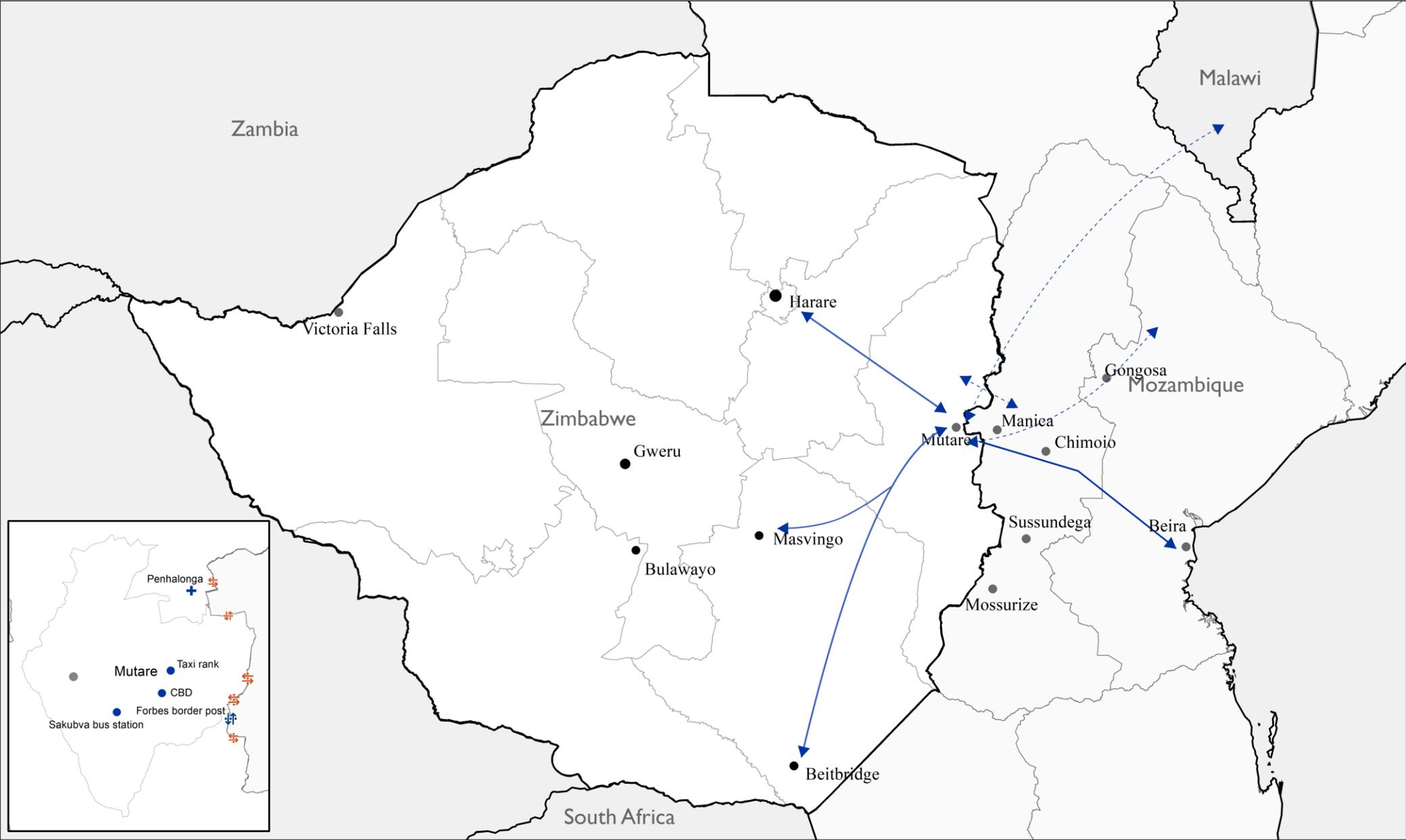
DTM
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Kilometers

0 30 60 120

Source Data : National Authorities Map Production Date : 3 Feb 2021
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Disclaimer : This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.



Inset Map: Mutare Region

- Mutare
- Taxi rank
- CBD
- Forbes border post
- Sakubva bus station
- + Penhalonga



Informal transport providers waiting to ferry returnee migrants near Forbes PoE © IOM 2021

Points of entry

During the exercise, IOM offering COVID-19 prevention services at Forbes PoE © IOM 2021 identified using their knowledge all known official and unofficial Points of Entries (PoEs), estimated daily cross-border movements, characteristics, and those selected for prioritized public health interventions.

Participants identified a total of 3 official and unofficial PoEs in Mutare urban district (1 official, 2 unofficial), and further selected only 1 to be prioritized for additional public health measures based on estimated daily flows of traffic across these points. While the scope of the exercise was for Mutare district, 5 other points of entries were identified by the stakeholders in the province.

The main point of entry and exit in Mutare is the Forbes border post. This is a point which attracts large volumes of people both local and foreigners. Due to COVID-19 constraints, Participatory Mapping Exercise (PME) participants could not visit the official point of entry and no unofficial

points were visited as well. At the border post, there are functional water sources, ablution facilities, medical facilities, and security forces. Before COVID-19, the border post attracted at least 400 migrants (truck drivers, deportees, returnees, and travellers) per day. COVID-19 precautionary measures are in full force at the border post where many hand washing facilities and an automated sanitizing door have been installed at the border as well as awareness raising banners and posters.

It was recorded throughout the exercise that nearly all unofficial PoEs were small military posts along the frontiers with either Zimbabwe or Mozambique, such as the Mary Mount PoE, with the existing road access and infrastructure making them a convenient point of unofficial cross border flows by local populations. From the selected PoE prioritized for additional public health interventions, current daily cross border flows have been estimated to range between 50 and per day.

Emerging Social Issues from the Unofficial Points of Entry

According to various submissions and site observations, the unofficial points of entry

Points of entry				
Name	Category	Estimated daily traffic before COVID-19	Estimated daily traffic during COVID-19	Details
Forbes Border Post	Official	400	250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screening and handwashing stations Most migrants are commercial truck drivers.
Unofficial crossings near main PoE	Unofficial	150	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No screening or handwashing stations.

Medical screening at Forbes PoE © IOM 2021



have been in existence for decades and have created an informal economy for some of the locals in Mutare district. In the advent of the COVID-19, there has been limited movements at the unofficial PoEs and consequently hunger and poverty. The

representatives from local communities narrated also how before the COVID-19 induced lockdown, children moved across the informal points from Mozambique to attend school in Zimbabwe.

Health Hazards Emerging from Unofficial Points of Entry

Participants from the district committee stressed that there are no measures to detect and control infectious disease transmission at the unofficial points of entry between Zimbabwe and Mozambique thus COVID-19 transmission risk is high. There are no health services, water sources, sanitation facilities, PPE, COVID-19 screening and referral mechanisms for those who cross

irregularly. Another health hazard is the unclean water that irregular migrants must cross through in order to traverse between Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The unofficial points of entry were not part of the local authority development plans leading to lack of basic public health facilities which include safe water sources, ablution facilities and waste disposal facilities.

Environmental Hazards Emerging from Unofficial Points of Entry

The unofficial points of entry pass through small rivers and streams. There is no waste management at the unofficial PoEs and most of the littered plastics are just swept away by the wind or rainwater, causing a lot of damage to the environment and animals. People who are downstream these unofficial points of entry are also at risk of drinking contaminated water.

Points of interest/congregation

The following points of congregation were identified during the online session: bus stations, health centres, markets, shopping facilities in the CBD, schools, churches, lodges, bar-restaurants and taxi ranks. Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) were identified at the following 5 locations:

Taxi Rank



Just outside the Forbes border post, there is taxi rank where travellers from Mozambique board their transport to Mutare town and further catch their buses to respective destination. This Station also serves for dropping off travellers from town and various nearby communities who want to cross the border. There are vendors at the rank who provide services to these travellers yet there are no handwashing facilities at the rank.

The taxi rank is less than a kilometre away from the border which means almost all travellers using public transportation pass through this station. The participants indicated that people at the taxi rank do not always consider the COVID-19 precautionary measures hence posing a potential risk to the community of Mutare district and travellers. The taxi rank

The bus stations that are in the Central Business District (CBD) attract intercity travellers, vendors, and other local persons in the community. Most travellers will be transiting Mutare to other cities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, and Beitbridge. There are no functional ablution facilities at the bus station as most of them are not maintained and dilapidated. There are also other bus stations in the residential locations of Mutare city which do not have hand washing stations. The bus stations can attract over 1,000 migrants and numerous buses from major cities such as Harare. However, during the COVID-19 lockdown, intercity travel is heavily restricted, and the number of travellers has reduced to less than 100 per day. The absence of handwashing facilities poses a high risk to the community hence there is a need for

Points of interest/congregation			
Location	Estimated Number Stopping	Distance to nearest health facility	Details
Border Post Rank	200/daily	>5 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The station is outside the border post and less than a km from the border. This is where people board taxis to the town and dropped when coming to the border. No screening or handwashing stations.
Bus station	1000/daily	<2 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 5 major bus stations in Mutare CBD. These are other bus stations namely Sakubva, Penhalonga that also host large numbers of people to different destinations. Buses depart to Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare, South Africa and Mutare district rural throughout the day. No screening or handwashing stations.
CBD	5000/daily	<1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This shopping centre includes nightclubs, bars, post office, business centre, food courts, grocery shops and government offices. Handwashing stations present in almost each shop.

together with the border were prioritized as a single FMP.

Bus stations

immediate response action.

Central Business District (CBD)

Most shops are located less than 5km away from the district hospital. There are food

courts, bars, night clubs, grocery shops, a vegetable market and vendors in the CBD. A lot of handwashing facilities were reported to be present at almost all the entrance of every shop and people entering had face masks. Mutare is a big town with a lot of activities within and outside the CBD.

The workshop identified the following congregation points connected to the identified points of entry and prioritized for public health interventions: Marketplaces at Forbes border post, business centre at Forbes border post, fuel and convenience centre outside Forbes Border post, and taxi rank along Flamingo Road close to Mary Mount and Meikles Park (TM Taxi rank) in the CBD.

Conclusion and recommendations

Population Mobility Mapping (PMM) was conducted to provide key and timely information on priority high mobility corridors and vulnerable areas to be considered in the current COVID-19 response. Data gathered has allowed the Government of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Health and Child Care Protection, IOM and other public health and humanitarian partners on the ground to better understand population mobility trends in the region and their link to transmission risks, and response vulnerabilities of

communities and points of entry. Specific recommendations based on mapping results include:

- Strengthen surveillance along the pathways through POE/POCs:
- Official PoEs: establishment of official PoEs in high mobility unofficial PoEs.
- Reinforce Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and risk communication with community engagement plans and strategies that follow bottom-up and decentralised approaches, putting communities first for the planning and roll-out of activities.
- Provide a greater level of mental health and psychosocial support to travellers for combatting COVID-19 associated stigmatisation, including the correct training in dealing with positive COVID-19 cases.
- Provide handwashing facilities to the stations next to screening points where there is none.
- Distribution of face masks and sanitisers to border workers where possible.



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