

PROTECTION MONITORING: MEXICO

SNAPSHOT JULY-SEPTEMBER 2024

This SNAPSHOT summarizes the findings of Protection Monitoring conducted during the quarter. Protection Monitoring is part of the humanitarian response of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in Mexico to the crisis affecting mixed migration flows. DRC conducts this Protection Monitoring in Tapachula, Reynosa and Matamoros. The activities are carried out with the financial support of the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) and the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) of the United States Department of State. The intervention is conducted in association with Save the Children Spain and Mexico, Plan International USA and Mexico, HIAS Mexico, Doctors of the World France and Switzerland, and Alternativas Pacificas- To view the interactive Dashboard of the results of this period and since the start of the Protection Monitoring program, click [here](#).

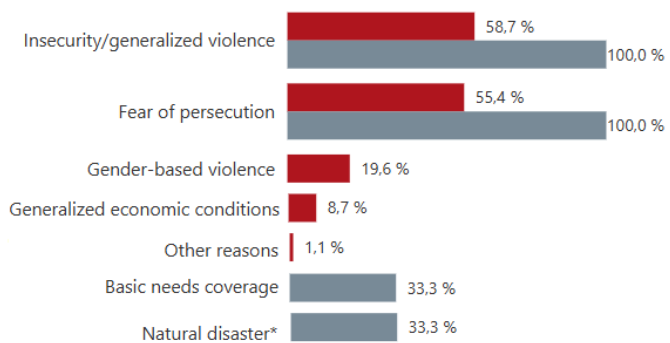
The quarter from July to September 2024 was characterized by changes in migration flows in the country, due to the impacts of different measures and policies. According to official figures, more than [200,000 people](#) without regular immigration status were processed by Mexican immigration authorities between July and August, reflecting the general upward trend since the end of 2023. These figures may suggest an increase in migration flows arriving in Mexico or only in the scope of the containment measures implemented by the Mexican authorities. At the same time, between July and September, COMAR formalized the receipt of applications from approximately [17,000 people](#), which represents a reduction of more than 50% with respect to the number of applicants registered in the same period during 2023. These figures coincide with the continuation of measures that hinder access to asylum in the United States, and with the decision of US authorities at the end of August 2024 [expanding coverage](#) of the CBP One application to the states of Chiapas and Tabasco, which opens the opportunity for people in Tapachula to initiate applications for an appointment with the US authorities. On the other side of the border, U.S. immigration authorities continued to process individuals with CBP One appointments, with approximately [38,000 in July](#) and [44,000 in both August and September](#), while simultaneously reporting a significant decrease in irregular arrivals during the quarter, with approximately [300,000](#) events recorded, compared to more than 680,000 in the same period in 2023. This is largely attributed to changes in the procedure and criteria for asylum adopted in June.

KEY FIGURES

Between July and September 2024, 962 interviews were conducted, covering a total of 248 people.

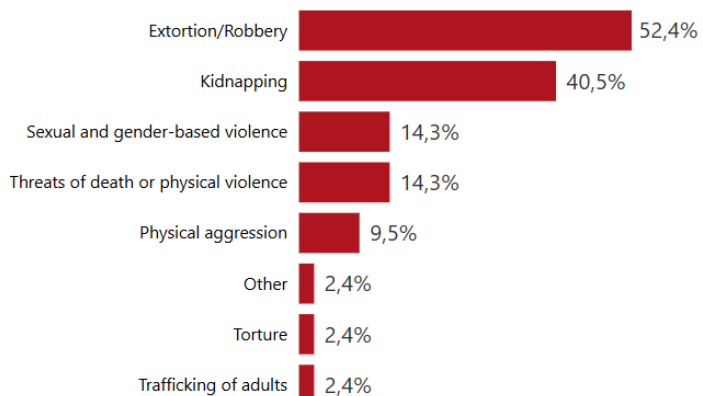
Flight Motives

● Country of origin (foreign persons) ● Community of origin (Mexican persons)



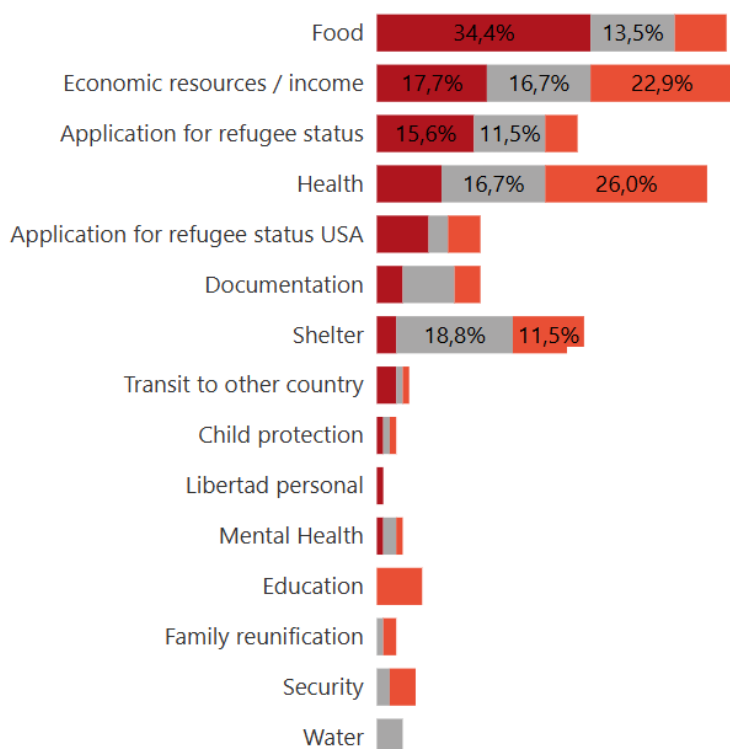
Types of Violence

(among the 43.8% who report experiencing violence in Mexico)



Main Priorities

● Priority 1 ● Priority 2 ● Priority 3



PRIORITY ISSUE: SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

*During emergencies, the risk of **gender-based violence**, which exists everywhere, is often higher, due to the existence of various factors that increase the **vulnerability** of people affected by humanitarian crises. Guidelines published by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2015 state that all humanitarian actors must assume that gender-based violence is occurring, regardless of whether there is evidence. This protection **threat** includes **sexual violence**, which consists of any form of non-consensual sexual contact, and therefore includes any type of rape or touching. At the same time, other forms of **gender-based violence** are contemplated, including any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will that is based on socially attributed differences between men and women. Given systemic gender inequality and the existence of intersecting forms of discrimination, the Global Protection Cluster has recognized that women and girls are often particularly impacted by various forms of gender-based violence. However, men and boys can also suffer from sexual violence. The nature of this violence, which generates **fears of stigma** and **retaliation**, together with the existence of multiple barriers to institutional response, contribute to the fact that, in an overwhelming number of cases, these incidents are not reported to the authorities and remain invisible.*

*While sexual and gender-based violence constitute a protection threat in its own right, in many contexts it arises among the effects of other threats that are also based on an imbalance of power, such as **extortion** by authorities or other powerful actors, **forced recruitment** by armed groups and **trafficking in persons** for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The threat of sexual and gender-based violence can take many forms, from physical intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence to groping or even rape by a trafficker or an armed agent. In some cases, sexual violence may occur within the framework of a **coping mechanism**, including in the context of **denial of services**. Regardless of the form in which it manifests itself, sexual and gender-based violence generates or aggravates **specific needs** for assistance, particularly in the areas of health, legal aid, mental health and psychosocial support and safe shelter.*

The humanitarian crisis affecting people in mixed migration movements in Mexico also reflects this global trend. In line with IASC guidelines, the Protection Monitoring framework does not ask people about their experiences with sexual and gender-based violence, however, some information is recorded that evidences the phenomenon. Half of the people covered during the quarter – 51.6% – are women and girls, which shows the significant presence of profiles that tend to face greater exposure to this protection threat. When indicating the main reasons that influenced the decision to leave their countries of origin, 19.6% of foreign respondents referred to a situation that can be classified as gender-based violence. This figure rises to 23.9% among female respondents, among whom are single women, which corresponds to 14.6% of all respondents covered during the quarter, and households with girls, boys and adolescents headed only single women, which corresponds to 20.0% of the monitored households. This data confirms the trend documented by other humanitarian actors, who point to gender-based violence as an important factor [driving displacement](#) to Mexico. In this regard, participants in a focus group in Tapachula confirmed having suffered mistreatment and robbery by border authorities in one of the transit countries due to being a woman traveling alone. Still other people reported having been inappropriately touched by Mexican police while crossing the border from Guatemala.

Similarly, among the 58.7% of respondents who said they had faced violence or abuse during their entry into Mexican territory, one of the households offered information about an experience of gender-based violence. Although this number is low, surely due to the various barriers to revealing this type of information noted above, it suggests the existence of practices that fit into this category of risks on Mexico's southern border. This, together with reports from [other humanitarian actors](#) confirming high levels of sexual violence in transit through the Darien jungle, shows that the transit route to enter Mexico is also characterized by increased exposure to sexual and gender-based violence.

However, this exposure does not end with entry into Mexican territory. 43.8% of respondents during the quarter confirm that a member of their household has experienced violence during their stay in Mexico. 10.3% of these reported that these experiences of violence fall within the category of sexual and gender-based violence. This includes experiences not only upon entering Mexico, but also during transit within the country and at the monitoring location. Authorities and unknown individuals were identified as the main perpetrators of these types of incidents, followed by individuals known to the survivors (including family members) and criminal groups. These accounts suggest multiple manifestations of gender violence among people on the move in the country. A focus group in Tapachula suggests that lack of access to formal work increases exposure to

gender violence, with some participants commenting that women suffer unwanted touching and caressing in places where they work informally, but that they cannot report these abuses for fear of losing their jobs. In this same space, some participant women said they were worried about their teenage daughters, as they consider that the conditions in which they are housed could expose them to people who want to sexually assault them.

Similarly, during other field activities, certain dynamics were observed that contribute to a heightened exposure to this risk. In both Reynosa and Tapachula, individualized protection assistance services, the delivery of cash assistance, and referrals made throughout 2024 evidence the occurrence of sexual violence during extortion-motivated kidnappings. Some women approached in Tapachula, for example, indicated that when they were unable to pay the money that was demanded of them as a condition for them and their children to be released from a kidnapping, they were

sexually abused.

While DRC's Protection Monitoring does not seek to identify people who have survived gender-based violence, it does seek to measure the population's perception regarding the presence of this risk. During the quarter, 68.5% of respondents indicated that they consider gender-based violence to be a risk present in their current environments. However, only 4.5% of respondents covered were aware of services available to address these forms of violence in their area. This data confirms the need to strengthen the dissemination of information on available services, as well as to expand the offer of specialized response services, contextually-appropriate to address these forms of violence. In this regard, respondents who provided information on experiences of gender-based violence in the framework of the Protection Monitoring interviews indicated that affected people have needs for psychosocial support, medical attention and legal services as a result of these incidents.



REYNOSA & MATAMOROS

The effects of the restrictions adopted by the United States in June 2024 were observed throughout the quarter, leading the authorities of that country to report a [50% reduction](#) in irregular entries into the United States' territory. However, only 5.6% of respondents nationwide had managed to get an appointment through CBP One at the time of being monitored, with 100% of these appointments scheduled more than three months after the monitoring date. The findings from the quarter reflect long stays of multiple months in these locations on the northern border, which is directly related to exposure to protection risks. Some people who had managed to schedule an appointment at CBP One reported not being able to show up for their appointment due to kidnapping or other incidents of coercion.

Similarly, [persistent misinformation](#) about procedures for accessing U.S. territory continued to contribute to an

environment of confusion and desperation among persons of concern in these locations. In this regard, 42.3% of monitored persons stated that their main source of information about policy changes was word of mouth from other persons on the move, and 38.1% referred to social media.

The prolonged stay of persons of concern in Reynosa, Matamoros, and other locations on the northern border not only extends their exposure to protection risks, but also requires the adaptation of response strategies. In September, the government of the state of Tamaulipas announced a [new program](#) for basic education of persons of Mexican nationality among the mobile population, based on a recognition of the long wait times for entry into the United States through the CBP One application.



TAPACHULA

The quarter saw the impacts of a decrease among new arrivals in Tapachula during July in interest in the COMAR, which resulted in a reduction in waiting times to formally register new applications with COMAR and a pause in the application of the triage mechanism. However, legal aid activities permitted the identification of practices that limit access to asylum for certain groups of the population of concern, including particular barriers for Salvadorans, Cubans and Hondurans. These same activities evidenced the effective suspension of the issuance of humanitarian visas (TVRH), with the exception of unaccompanied children and adolescents who are represented by child protection authorities, which worsened access to documentation for the population of concern. In this regard, 97.8% of those monitored stated that they did not have a valid document conferring legal status in the country. This despite the announcement by U.S. authorities in late August that [expanded geographic access](#) to the CBP One application, allowing people in Tapachula and elsewhere in the state of Chiapas to request an appointment from these locations. Although Mexican authorities [announced measures](#) to coordinate the regular transfer of people with CBP One appointments to the northern border, this did not change the suspension of the issuance of the TVRH, since these people are given a migration form (FMM) valid for 20 days for the purpose of traveling to attend the appointment at the United States border. Likewise, at the end of the quarter, there was little information on

the effectiveness of the [emerging safe mobility corridor](#) adopted for that purpose.

At the same time, DRC maintained the specialized program for family-based regularization, through which legal support is provided in navigating this process that leads to obtaining residency in Mexico. Part of this support includes the payment of fees in priority cases because, in Tapachula, the INM systematically refuses to exercise its discretion to waive these fees, even when the person does not have the means to make the payment. Additional barriers were documented during the quarter in cases of foreign parents of children born in Mexican territory due to a lack of coordination between the immigration authority and the Civil Registry to verify the authenticity of birth certificates. Simultaneously, the demand for FMM within the framework of the emerging corridor for people with CBP One saturated the INM services in Tapachula, thus causing delays in the attention to other types of regularization cases.

In parallel, a continued deterioration in the security situation for people of concern in Tapachula and surrounding areas was documented. During the quarter, there was increased visibility of the practice of [kidnappings of people on the move](#) by organized crime actors. During parallel direct assistance activities, people who had survived these incidents were identified as having specific protection and response needs.



This document is part of the humanitarian response activities of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in Mexico, with the financial support of the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) and the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) of the United States Department of State. It is not a publication of ECHO or PRM. The financing agencies are not responsible for the use that may be made of the information contained in the document and do not necessarily support its contents. All of the opinions expressed herein belong exclusively to DRC and should not be interpreted in any way as the official opinion of the United States or of the European Union or its Member States.

