

PROTECTION MONITORING: MEXICO

SNAPSHOT OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024

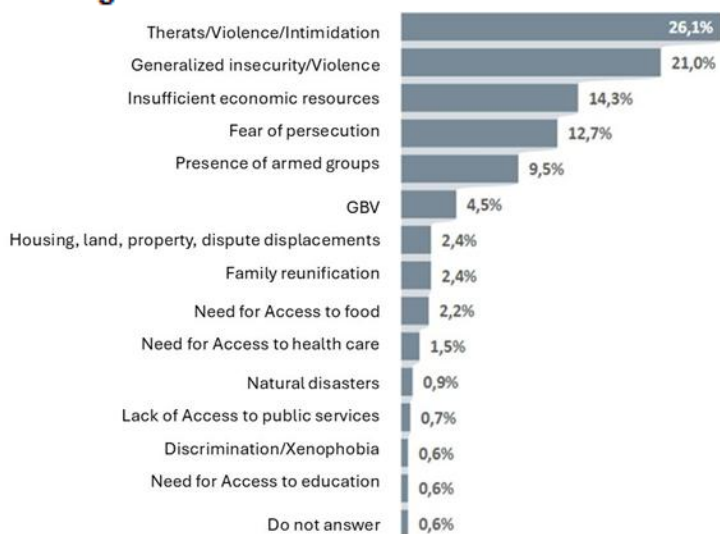
This SNAPSHOT summarizes the findings of Protection Monitoring conducted during the quarter. Protection Monitoring is part of the humanitarian response of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in Mexico to the crisis affecting mixed migration flows. DRC conducts this Protection Monitoring in Tapachula, Reynosa 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, and Doctors of the World France and Switzerland. Beginning in October 2024, this exercise is aligned with the ProLAC initiative to harmonize the Protection Monitoring of DRC and NRC regionally.

Following Claudia Sheinbaum's inauguration as President of Mexico in early October, there were a number of changes that raised questions about the protection environment in Mexico. The [murder of six migrants](#) by Mexican army soldiers in Chiapas reflected the persistent context of militarization of immigration control, while the departure of the head of COMAR with the change of government left a significant [leadership vacuum](#) in the Mexican asylum system. At the same time, the quarter saw [20,355 people](#) formalize asylum applications with COMAR, which represents an increase compared to the previous quarter. During the quarter, tens of thousands of people with a CBP One appointment were able to access the United States from different points along the border – more than [44,900 in October](#), [43,000 in November](#), and [44,000 in December](#). At the same time, the number of [irregular entries](#) recorded by US authorities continued to decline: approximately 296,000 in the three-month period, compared to more than 785,000 in the same period in 2023. In October, US authorities announced that they would not extend temporary status for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans who had entered the country through the [special parole program](#) and also [finalized the adoption](#) of restrictive rules on access to asylum introduced in June. Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election in November was followed by [reports of his plans](#) to massively increase the volume of deportations and resume restrictions on access to the asylum procedure through the MPP program. Despite the fear expressed by many people of concern regarding these potential changes and their urgency to access U.S. territory, persistent challenges in securing an CBP One appointment during the quarter resulted in only 9.6% of respondents with intentions to transit to the United States reporting having been assigned an appointment.

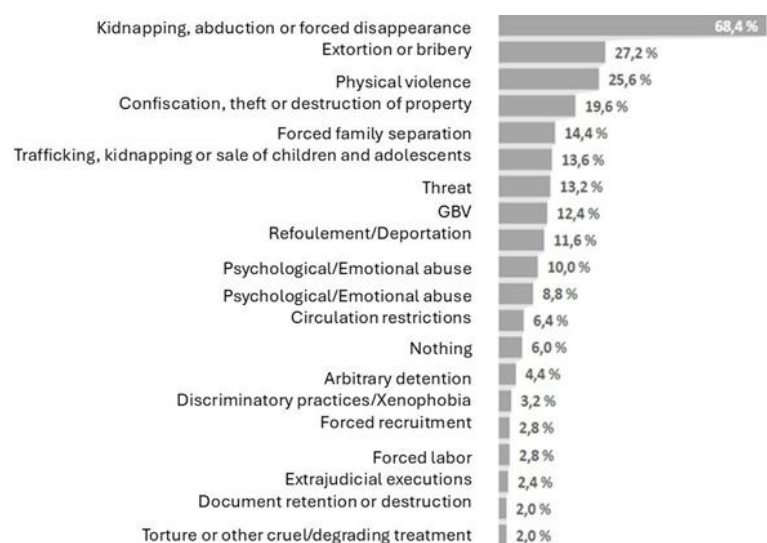
KEY FIGURES

Between October and December 2024, 250 interviews were conducted, covering a total of 609 people.

Flight Motives



Risks Perceived in Current Location



PRIORITY ISSUE: CAPACITIES

*In humanitarian crisis situations, affected people experience protection threats in a differentiated manner, not only according to vulnerability factors, but also due to the presence of different **capacities** that influence the level of exposure or the available evasion or mitigation strategies. A key element in analyzing the protection risks that a person or group may face, the concept of capacity encompasses the resources and skills that individuals, households and communities have at their disposal to deal with a threat, resist its effects or mitigate them. According to the Protection Analytical Framework, capacities can be material, such as **documentation** or **sources of income**, or intangible, including **access to information** or **mechanisms to resolve conflicts**. In this sense, capacities also include the possibility of accessing certain services, such as **shelter, food aid or cash assistance**, among others. Although some of these capacities are directly related to humanitarian interventions from other sectors, they can increase the capacity of the population in a way that reduces its exposure to protection threats or mitigates their impacts.*

*The identification of capacities related to specific protection threats allows for the definition of interventions designed to strengthen individual or collective factors, or access to services, that allow for a reduction in protection risk. Although it is more common among humanitarian actors to identify vulnerability factors that increase exposure to certain protection threats, such as being an **unaccompanied child or adolescent**, the identification of capacity factors is also necessary to carry out a protection analysis that favors the achievement of sectoral protection results. Recognizing, for example, that people who have support networks in a particular context are more likely to mitigate the emotional impacts of **sexual and gender-based violence** can inform the decision to adopt methodologies to strengthen these support networks or expand their reach as part of a protection intervention. Likewise, identifying that people who access **psychosocial assistance** are more likely to stabilize emotionally after displacement and make decisions that favor avoiding **family separation** can lead to the design of activities to expand the offer of psychosocial support services.*

Among the people who make up mixed migratory movements in Mexico, there are various capacity factors related to their personal characteristics. Of the foreign population monitored, 12.7% report having some **documentation** that grants them regular stay in the country. This situation facilitates greater options for regular and safe transit within the country, which reduces their exposure to different protection threats, while streamlining their access to rights and relevant services to mitigate the impacts of the risks they have already faced, including health services and formal work opportunities. A significant portion of the population has **support networks** that are also a critical source of information that allows for reduced exposure to certain routes or places where protection threats are concentrated and are a positive factor in addressing the psycho-emotional impacts of experiences of violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation of rights. 20.8% of those monitored who report experiencing abuse during their stay in Mexico state that they have approached their support network as an adaptation measure. Similarly, 42.8% of respondents say they turn to their family in case of a problem, followed by 16.0% who turn to their friends and 11.2% to the church. In addition to these more traditional support networks, persons of concern also turn to other individuals and groups through

[technological tools](#) such as WhatsApp, including to organize caravans and other collective actions as a way of minimizing exposure to protection risks.

At the same time, there are other capacity factors linked to the situation of the affected population. 30.0% of respondents report having been in their current locations for more than six months, which often translates into greater awareness of the risks of the environment and the services available. 70.0% report having received some form of humanitarian assistance during their stay in the country, with 76.6% referring to humanitarian aid from NGOs and 61.1% from churches. 59.6% report having **access to health services**, which represents an important response to different forms of violence. A majority of respondents report having **access to accommodation** that increases their ability to avoid arbitrary detention, forced recruitment and multiple other protection threats. Specifically, 49.6% of respondents report receiving accommodation assistance in the form of a stay in a temporary shelter, with another significant group (32.4%) reporting paying rent to access private housing. Regarding the source of income, family support was the most frequently cited source (32.4%), followed by economic activity (21.4%) and savings (16.8%). Being able to draw on these sources to cover basic and personal needs is a favorable factor in minimizing exposure to numerous protection risks.

REYNOSA & MATAMOROS

In October, Tamaulipas state authorities announced a [reduction in the flow of mixed-migration arrivals](#) to Reynosa, which was attributed to the expansion of the CBP One application's area of use to locations in central and southern Mexico. However, the results of the elections in the United States caused the [arrival at the northern border](#) of people desperately looking for a way to enter the United States on a regular basis. A key actor reported that the flow of people was also impacted by the extortion practices carried out by different authorities who charge the population to access safe transfers to the northern border in the Emerging Safe Mobility Corridor program. 99.1% of respondents in transit between Reynosa and Matamoros say they intend to transit to the United States, of which only 13.3% have a CBP One appointment. Caravan departures from the south of the country following the election results in the United States were monitored by humanitarian actors in Tamaulipas, with some expressing [concern about the possible saturation](#) of food and accommodation services, among others, which are already overwhelmed. 92.4% of people in transit monitored during the quarter are housed in a temporary shelter.

Towards the end of the quarter, there was an established trend of short stays in both Reynosa and Matamoros, with people arriving just before their CBP One appointments to minimize the time spent in these places. This pattern coincided with the announcement by the [Senda de Vida](#) shelters that they would stop accepting more people in their facilities due to the practice of **kidnappings** by organized crime groups of people arriving at these shelters. Other local actors pointed out a [pattern of assaults](#) on people waiting to cross the international

bridge from Reynosa to the United States, and media reported the [kidnapping of more than 30 people](#) on the move on the route between Reynosa and Matamoros in the last days of the year.

78.0% of respondents reported experiencing abuse of a family member in Mexico, with extortion or bribery (59.8%) and kidnapping (39.1%) being the main forms of abuse. Participants in a focus group confirmed that multiple other abuses occur in the context of kidnappings, including **theft and destruction of personal property**, as well as different forms of **violence**, with women being more likely to suffer sexual violence, and men physical violence, manifested in beatings and torture. These insecurity factors, together with the arrival of low temperatures in both locations, contributed to reducing the length of stay of the affected population in Reynosa and Matamoros.

Following the need to access U.S. territory, the main priority reported by 35.6% of respondents between Reynosa and Matamoros relates to livelihoods, where a gap is identified not only in formal employment opportunities for the affected population, but also in the restriction on mobility due to the perception of insecurity in the area. The main source of income for respondents in these locations is family support, with only 6.6% reporting income from an economic activity. In November, federal and state authorities held a [job fair](#) at the Senda de Vida 1 shelter to link Mexican and foreign shelter residents with formal job opportunities in the private sector in the area. As a complement to this effort, state authorities offered [vocational training](#) for people housed in shelters in Matamoros and Reynosa.



TAPACHULA

Protection Monitoring in Tapachula confirms that the border area between Guatemala and Mexico remains a place of high exposure to various forms of violence and other protection threats. 46.2% of respondents during the quarter confirmed that someone in their household had suffered some form of abuse in Mexico, with kidnapping, extortion, and fraud being the main forms of abuse reported. Of the respondents in Tapachula who report incidents of abuse, 36.4% report that these occurred while crossing the border. During an interview, a respondent described a modus operandi where criminal actors attempt to separate from their groups people who travel on the highway that connects the border area in Suchiate with the city of Tapachula for the purpose of **kidnapping for extortion**. During household interviews, accounts of kidnapping were recorded, suggesting targeting of Venezuelan and Cuban nationals based on the perception that these groups have access to greater economic resources and are therefore more profitable in terms of extortion. According to other accounts from those monitored, the participation of authorities such as the INM and the National Guard has been observed in some kidnapping incidents.

Throughout the quarter, multiple [caravans](#) left Tapachula, heading toward the [northern border](#), with [increased movement](#) around the election results in the United States. 34.8% of respondents in Tapachula during the quarter referenced the United States as their destination country. The [caravans](#) that [departed](#) in [December](#), composed of approximately 4,500 people, faced blockades and [deterrence by Mexican authorities](#), forcing many people to seek alternative, more dangerous routes or to stop their trip in precarious conditions. The INM said it [remained committed](#) to managing safe transfers to the capital of Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutierrez, and to respecting the

safe mobility corridor for people with a CBP One appointment. However, some people who had benefited from the transfers offered by the INM said they had been [deceived by authorities](#). People who were assigned an appointment at CBP One in the last weeks of the year [crowded in front of the INM offices](#) in search of the documentation that would allow them to travel to the northern border to attend their appointments.

At the same time, during December, the INM, in coordination with the National Guard, [intensified search operations](#) in hotels and parks in Tapachula for persons of concern in an irregular situation. 90.8% of respondents in Tapachula stated that they did not have any documentation granting them legal stay in the country. This despite the fact that 64.9% of respondents had requested international protection in Mexico.

The slight increase in asylum applications filed nationwide was reflected in the increased demand for COMAR services in Tapachula, where more than 65% of all asylum applications in Mexico were registered in 2024. During legal consultations provided by DRC at the Ecological Park, it became evident that some people's intention to initiate the process with COMAR arises from the fear that the new U.S. government will suspend the appointment mechanism via CBP One. The legal activities also confirmed the resumption of the COMAR triage mechanism as a pre-filter that resulted in the exclusion from the COMAR procedure of people who had the CBP One application installed on their personal cell phones.



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.

