

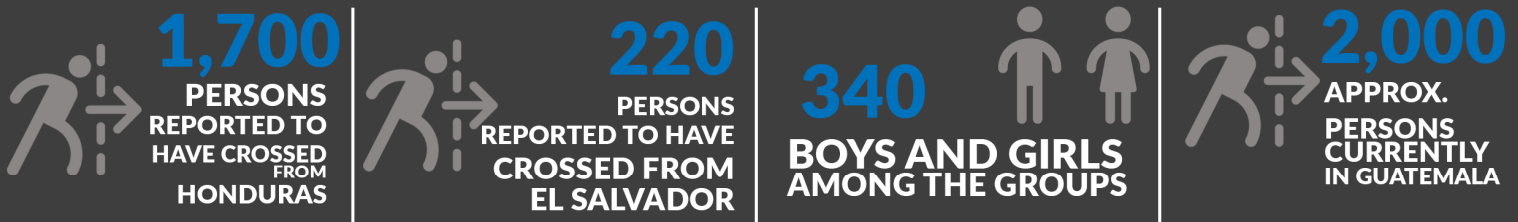
FLASH UPDATE

INTER-AGENCY RESPONSE

MIXED MOVEMENTS FROM THE NORTH OF CENTRAL AMERICA (NCA)

14 - 17 January 2019

KEY POPULATION FIGURES OF LARGE MOVEMENTS FROM NCA (estimations as of 16 January 2019)



IOM, the International Organization for Migration, is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As the leading international organization for migration, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, supports States in providing international protection to asylum-seekers and refugees, those who have fled their countries of origin because their lives are at risk. UNHCR holds periodic discussions with governments, other UN agencies and NGOs at the field level with the aim of facilitating a coordinated response in terms of shelter, humanitarian assistance, basic services, and access to asylum procedures, as well as on finding durable solutions to the plight of asylum-seekers and refugees.

UNICEF works with local and national governments and civil society to protect the rights of refugee and migrant children, through addressing the root causes of forced and irregular migration and ensuring the integral protection of the rights of children in countries of origin, transit and destination. UNICEF works in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador where it provides immediate support to children and families in the context of migration and displacement, while also strengthening institutional capacities of different sectors working with this population.

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UPDATES

Between 14 and 16 January, mixed groups from Honduras and El Salvador departed from different towns with the hope of reaching Mexico and the United States of America. Reasons for their flight vary. Among them are people fleeing violence and persecution in their countries, as well as others looking to improve their economic situation, reunite with their families in the United States or solve their food security needs. Of particular concern is the vulnerability of those on the move, who might face risks related to smuggling or trafficking. During the reporting period, some 1,700 departed from Honduras, while approximately 220 have been confirmed to have departed from El Salvador. Among the groups from Honduras, at least 70 unaccompanied children were identified, 25 of them were referred for family reunification and 24 to the Child Protection authority (DINAF) for protection services. To date, an estimated 2,000 people have crossed into Guatemala, where the Early Warning and Response Plan was activated by the Protection Working Group, led by the United Nations Agencies, and local and international NGOs.

In light of these mixed movements of asylum-seekers and migrants, the United Nations system and partners in the field have been deploying teams to the borders to support governments in the countries of origin, transit and destination in responding to the specific needs of these groups, according to the respective mandates.

In **Honduras**, IOM will also distribute 1200 hygiene kits, 900 snacks and provide transportation for returnees. Given that vulnerable migrants, women, and children are expected to make up part of the groups, IOM is also coordinating with the family welfare authorities to ensure that government personnel are ready to assist unaccompanied children. These officers have been extensively trained in advance by the IOM Regional Program on Migration. The International Organization for Migration also coordinates with the government to ensure that information about the Assisted Voluntary Return Program (AVR) is available through local partners, brochures and MigApp. IOM coordinates its support to returnees with local authorities at San Pedro Sula, Omoa and El Amatillo border crossing.

UNHCR has supported government institutions at the central level and at borders to coordinate the overall response and undertake an early assessment of protection needs among people on the move. Further monitoring is being conducted in other key locations across the country.

UNICEF, with Honduran Red Cross, has in stock 330 hygiene kits and 120 kits for providing psychosocial support to migrant children. The capacities of the DINAF have been increased with seven DINAF Child Protection Officers deployed to border crossing sites (Agua Caliente, El Florido, Corinto, La Lima and Belén), supporting management of cases of children with immediate protection needs. In addition, nine additional expert officers are supporting DINAF's efforts on return and reintegration of unaccompanied detained/returnee children.

In **El Salvador**, IOM has deployed a team to monitor and track the movements, which allows real-time information on the number of people traveling, the route and the composition of these groups. This with the objective of providing quality information to the decision makers for an adequate response and assistance. Likewise, the Organization staff is coordinating with the government to ensure that information about the AVR is available through local partners, brochures and MigApp. IOM coordinates its support to returnees with local authorities at San Salvador and La Hachadura border crossing.

UNHCR has deployed teams to key locations in San Salvador and La Hachadura border to conduct monitoring, identify protection needs and provide relevant information on access to international protection. Further coordination structures have been established with additional government institutions, the Red Cross and NGOs.

In **Guatemala**, IOM staff is coordinating with the government to ensure that information about the AVR is available through local partners, brochures and MigApp. Its support to returnees is coordinated with local authorities at Tecún Umán, Quetzaltenango and Guatemala City. IOM staff has deployed at the Agua Caliente border. Regarding displacement monitoring, through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), IOM is capturing data on the movements of the groups. Also, personnel are being trained and coordinated with local partners at the borders of Guatemala and Mexico so that they can conduct quick assessments.

UNHCR has established presence at the Agua Caliente (Honduras) and Pedro Alvarado (El Salvador) borders where information on the asylum process in Guatemala is being provided. Through civil society

organizations and community entities shelter and humanitarian assistance is being delivered to those crossing the border. Further support is being provided to those intending to seek asylum in Guatemala.

UNICEF, has deployed psychosocial support (PSS) teams at Casa del Migrante, with other teams in standby to be deployed to Tecún Uman if needed. At least 60 people have received PSS, including eight children. Supplies have been prepositioned, including 400 mats for Casa del Migrante (Guatemala City and Tecún Uman); 600 blankets and hygiene kits for children and women in Casa del Migrante in Guatemala City. Depending on the needs, supplies may be transferred to Tecún Umán. If needed, UNICEF will support WASH actions, mainly with the installation of toilets, mobile sinks and showers, both in Guatemala City and Tecún Uman.

In **Mexico**, IOM closely coordinates with the National Institute for Migration (INM for its acronym in Spanish) for the printing and distribution of materials on legal migration options, including humanitarian visas, and the AVR; and with capitals and borders to ensure that information about the AVR is available through local partners, brochures and MigApp. Through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), IOM is capturing data on the movements of the groups. Also, personnel are being trained and coordinated with local partners at the borders of Guatemala and Mexico so that they can conduct quick assessments. The possibility of delivering food and non-perishable items is discussed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE for its acronym in Spanish).

UNHCR Mexico is part of the national and local coordination mechanism to the response and remains in close contact to the relevant government bodies and other actors to adjust the strategy and preparedness as required to meet newly emerging and changing needs. Coordination of the ongoing response and preparedness for new arrivals is led by the Mexican Government under the leadership of Civil Protection, and is based on the new "Immigration policy 2018-2024" issued on 19 December 2018. With this new policy, the government commits to migration and asylum policies based on human rights and economic development in Central America. UNHCR Mexico developed a contingency and preparedness plan based on previous groups. UNHCR indicated in writing that it is prepared to: i) conduct border monitoring to ensure access to the territory for people in need of international protection; ii) support the government to facilitate access to the Mexican asylum process through mass-information and logistical and staffing support to COMAR; iii) set-up of information and service desks and implementation of established referral mechanisms for people with specific needs; iv) shelter support for arrivals who claim asylum; v) scale-up of its cash-based-interventions programme to new arriving asylum-seekers; vi) implement jointly developed child protection mechanisms and BID; vii) and facilitate internal relocation and local integration of asylum seekers.

UNICEF maintains presence in both borders, with staff in Tapachula, Chiapas state and Tijuana, Baja California state. UNICEF's Children's Pavilion at 'El Barretal' shelter (Tijuana) will remain active while the shelter is still in operation, with children-focused activities, including special protection measures for children, psychosocial support, breastfeeding support, and WASH. UNICEF is also providing psychosocial support and breastfeeding activities in other five shelters in Tijuana. In Tapachula, UNICEF continues providing technical assistance to Child Protection authorities on special protection measures for children. In view of the current situation, UNICEF foresees providing support for the design and establishment of services for new groups arriving in Chiapas. Support provided by UNICEF will focus on technical assistance and implementation of protocols and procedures, without having direct intervention in the field. A direct intervention would only be considered as "provider of last resort".