

# MIGRATION DATA IN CENTRAL AMERICA, NORTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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**IOM REGIONAL OFFICE, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA**  
REGIONAL MIGRATION DATA UNIT (RMDU)

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## PUBLICATIONS

**Migration in the region** Migration and human mobility are defining features in Central America, North America, and the Caribbean. It is well recognized that they take place in a context marked by historical, political, economic, and social ties and are driven by multiple and often overlapping factors such as poverty, inequality, slow economic growth, lack of decent jobs, labour market needs, political instability, the impact the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, environmental degradation, climate change, violence, insecurity, and family ties.

IOM's regional analysis and reports cover a wide range of issues such as: entries and exits; movements through key transit points (such as the Darien Gap); apprehensions, presentations and encounters in transit; issued residence permits and visas in countries of previous residence, transit and destination; asylum requests and refugee status; remittances; returns; human trafficking; missing migrants; internal displacement; influence of climate change and disasters in mobility; focus on nationals of specific countries (Venezuelans, Haitians, Cubans among others); changes in visa policies, points of entry; compilation of official data sources of such data and primary multisectoral data collection on mobile populations through the Displacement Tracking.

### Reports on migration trends



Large movements of highly vulnerable migrants in the Americas. Elaborated jointly with the IOM Regional Office for South America in Buenos Aires, Argentina [\[Spanish\]](#) [\[English\]](#)



Migration Trends in Central America, North America and the Caribbean, 2021 [\[Spanish\]](#)



Migration trends during COVID-19 in Central America, North America and the Caribbean, 2020 [\[Spanish\]](#) [\[English\]](#)



Human mobility derived from disasters and climate change in Central America [\[Spanish\]](#) [\[Full report here\]](#)

### Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)



The impact of Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Latin America and the Caribbean  
Elaborated jointly with the Global DTM team [\[Spanish\]](#) [\[English\]](#)

### Missing and deceased migrants



"If not for pure necessity": Deaths and disappearances on migration journeys in North and Central America [\[Spanish\]](#) [\[English\]](#)



Searching for missing migrants in Central and North America: Five good practices of civil society organizations [\[Spanish\]](#) [\[English\]](#)

### Migration data in the region

Elaborated in coordination with the [Global Migration Data Analysis Centre \(GMDAC\)](#)



Migration data in Northern America [\[Spanish\]](#) [\[English\]](#)



Migration data in Central America and Mexico [\[Spanish\]](#) [\[English\]](#)

### Regional Compendium of Sources of Migration Data



Mexico [\[Spanish\]](#)



### 1. Support to Country Offices and different IOM Units

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Amongst the many functions of the RMDU is the support the Unit offers to Country Offices and various IOM divisions. Since the establishment of the Unit in late 2020, the RMDU has supported approximately 15 Country Offices in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean in a diverse array of areas, including revisions of project proposals, ToRs, reports, methodological approaches, research studies and more. Additionally, the Unit has provided technical support to numerous initiatives (including drafting information products, planning events and providing technical support and review) under the [Western Hemisphere Programme](#) (WHP) and the following Divisions: [Migration, Environment and Climate Change](#) (MECC), [the Department of Emergencies](#) (DoE), [Migrant Protection and Assistance](#) (MPA) and [Mental Health and Psychosocial Support](#) (MHPSS).

### 2. Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

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In 2021, the RMDU collaborated with and supported numerous missions in the region in designing and revising concept notes, questionnaires, sampling methodologies, data analysis and the elaboration of information products related to DTM. In total, 11 countries in the region carried out DTM exercises in 2021.

The RMDU has also led the development of an exhaustive and standardized Data Dictionary, which consists of a set of standardized questions that have been validated by thematic specialists in the region. The questions cover a variety of themes that are highly relevant for the generation of information on migration, including health, protection, livelihoods, labour migration, borders, sociodemographic profiles and more. The principal objective of the Data Dictionary is to facilitate implementation of data collection activities under the DTM umbrella and make possible the realization of comparable studies at a regional level, by way of a question bank which is highly customizable based on the methodologies being employed.

Additionally, RMDU collaborated on projects such as flow monitoring on the Costa Rican borders with Nicaragua and Panama, the design of [flow monitoring surveys in the Darien zone in Panama](#), the design and validation of a [survey report in Tapachula](#), support to questionnaire design for other flow monitoring surveys in Mexico, the revision of a final survey report in Curacao, the revision of a final survey report in Nicaragua, and more. Additionally, RMDU personnel collaborated with colleagues in the Costa Rica Country Office on field work near the northern border aimed at identifying unofficial border-crossing points in La Cruz, Upala and los Chiles, in order to define monitoring points for a DTM project under the framework of the Integrated Response Mechanism (IRM) for Migration in Central America.



## WORKING GROUPS AND INTERNATIONAL FORA

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### 1 Support to Roundtable 1 of the Regional Revision of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in Latin America and the Caribbean

The RMDU, jointly with other UN agencies including ECLAC, ILO, OPS/OMS, UNFPA and the IOM Media and Communications Unit, coordinated the planning and realization of two webinars related to data and Information (objectives 1, 3, 17 and 23) to support the regional revision of the advancements and challenges in the implementation of the GCM. In the second webinar taking place from the 26-28 April, 936 participants from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and academia participated.

### 2 Missing Migrants Project (MMP) – Virtual Coffee Sessions

MMP's Virtual Coffee Sessions are a space for civil society organizations, journalists, governmental institutions, UN agencies and IOM representatives in Central America, North America and the Caribbean to meet and discuss themes relevant to missing and deceased migrants in a safe and open dialogue. The objective of the space is to gradually create a network of civil society organizations in the region who participate in the documentation of migrant deaths and disappearances, while also envisioning joint policy action. In the four sessions that have been conducted thus far, some of the topics covered have included: practical strategies to improve data collection on missing and deceased migrants (for example, in the case of Yolas shipwrecks) and the development of practical networking strategies to search for data on missing and deceased migrants in the Darien Zone as well as at the United States-Mexico border. In general, 35 participants are engaged in each session, the majority operating in Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and the United States.

### 3 Engagement with the Working Group on International Migration of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC):

The Working Group is an interactive and collaborative space composed of governments and UN Agencies, with a focus on identifying the capacities of National Statistical Systems in the region to collect information on migration. IOM, represented by RMDU, closely supported the biennial activities of the Working Group for 2020 and 2021, which were oriented towards characterizing the state of international migration statistics, identifying national needs, quantifying migration flows through a standardized way, better visualizing migrants in household surveys, and identifying the principal initiatives, methodological resources and data portals related to migration managed by the UN in the region.

The Working Group has served as an important space for the RMDU to participate in dialogue and explore new initiatives with governments and other UN agencies in the region. In 2021, the RMDU participated as both a moderator and presenter in two webinars on indicators relevant to migration and on administrative data, while also contributing to the elaboration of the first chapter of the Working Group's final diagnostic report.

### 4 Strengthening evidence-based policymaking in international fora

The RMDU elaborated Information products (including high level presentations) for various international fora with the objective of providing up-to-date technical Information to governments, UN agencies, other intergovernmental organisms, civil society and more on migration dynamics and trends in the region. Some of the international fora that benefitted from these information products included: The Regional Conference on Migration (RCM), the South American Conference on Migration (SACM), national UN Migration Networks, the Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on Human Mobility, the Central American Commission of Migration Directors (OCAM), the Montreal Conference and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).



## ABOUT THE REGIONAL MIGRATION DATA UNIT

The RMDU was established in September 2020 in IOM's Regional Office for Central America, North America and the Caribbean with the purpose of operationalizing and implementing IOM's institutional [Migration Data Strategy](#) in the region.

The RMDU provides support to IOM Country Offices as well as to Member States, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders in the region through a wide range of activities related to migration data and information management.

The three main objectives of the RMDU, aligned with the IOM Migration Data Strategy, are:

**Objective 1** - Strengthen the global evidence based on migration.

**Objective 2** - Develop the capacities of States and other relevant partners to enhance the national, regional and global migration evidence base.

**Objective 3** - Ensure more evidence-based IOM- and United Nations system-wide programming, operations, policy advice and communications.

The RMDU's activities are aligned with the commitments made in various international frameworks, including the [GCM](#), in particular its Objective 1: "Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies", as well as the goals and indicators of the [SDGs](#), including, for example, Target 10.7: "facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and mobility of persons, including by way of the implementation of well-planned and managed migration policies) and Target 17.18: "... increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status..."

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