

# Covid-19 and (Im)mobility in the Americas

## HONDURAS

1. **Poverty rate:** 52.6% out of the total population<sup>1</sup>

2. **Migration data**<sup>2</sup>

- a. Sending country: About 801,000 Hondurans, or 8.35% of its population, reside abroad mainly in the US (82%), Spain (7.2%), and Mexico (2%).
- b. Destination country: Around 39,000 immigrants or 0.41% of the total population live in Honduras. The main countries of origin are El Salvador (23%), Nicaragua (20.27%), and the US (18%).
- c. Transit country: Salvadoran migrants, and to a lesser extent Nicaraguan migrants and migrants from Caribbean, South American, Asian, and African countries transit Honduras en route to the US.
- d. Host country for refugees: In October 2019, Honduras signed an agreement to be a “Safe Third Country” to receive and protect asylum seekers from Cuba and Nicaraguan seeking to reach the US.

3. **Impact of COVID-19<sup>3</sup> (as of July 14, 2020)**

- a. Registered cases: 28,579
- b. % of cases out of the total population: 0.28%
- c. Number of deaths: 789

4. **State measures**

- Border closures and increased surveillance measures.
- Honduras signs an agreement with the US to be a “Safe Third Country”, but asylum claims determination procedures are suspended due to the pandemic.
- Border security is increased to prevent transit of irregularized migrants.
- Honduras and Nicaragua established the Regional Contingency Plan in which they plan to manage migration flows and implement security measures during the pandemic.
- The Emergency Operations Commission (COE) was activated within the tourist, migration and customs institutions. The Commission implements measures of surveillance of travelers to prevent the spread of COVID-19 across borders.
- Migration offices remain closed due to quarantine, except for cargo transportation and supplies for the population.
- Immigration authorities reinforced border control to stop the movement of Salvadorans.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/1352983-410/honduras-pobreza-medicion-hondurenos-economia-estadisticas-gobierno>

<sup>2</sup><https://datosmacro.expansion.com/demografia/migracion/emigracion/honduras>;  
<https://www.vaticannews.va/es/mundo/news/2019-02/caravana-migrante-guatemala-mexico-eeuu.html>;  
<https://www.acnur.org/guatemala-abre-la-puerta-a-un-nuevo-comienzo.html>.

<sup>3</sup> John Hopkins University (2020). “Coronavirus Resource Centre”. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

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- Cooperation agreements continued to receive Honduran deportees from the US during the pandemic.
- A Temporary Isolation Center is set up for Hondurans deported from Mexico and/or the US so they can socially distance and stay in quarantine for 2 weeks.
- So far, no explicit measures have been taken to support Honduran migrants abroad.

## 5. At risk populations

- *Honduran deportees* (this population is extremely vulnerable to COVID-19)
  - o Before the pandemic:
    - Hondurans were detained and sent in handcuffs on deportation flights from the US to Honduras. Others were returned by land from Mexico by Mexican immigration authorities.
  - o During the pandemic:
    - Deportation flights from the US have continued without the implementation of health protocols to prevent Honduran deportees infected with COVID-19 from flying.
    - An Isolation Center was created to receive Honduran deportees, but a group of 47 Hondurans refused to remain at this Centre. Deportations from Mexico by land have continued. In mid-April, the National Institute of Migration (INM) left more than 500 Honduran, Guatemalan and Salvadoran migrants abandoned and stranded in Talisman, the border of Mexico and Guatemala. Guatemalan agents refused to accept the migrants for fear of contracting COVID-19. Migrants managed to get off from the bus and continue the journey to their countries of origin.
- *Irregularized migrants in transit, mainly Central American, but also from South American, Caribbean, Asian and African countries* (this population is extremely vulnerable to COVID-19)
  - o Before the pandemic:
    - Irregularized migrants lived under constant threat of deportation and detention and had limited access to health services.
    - They were the target of abuse and of multiple kinds of violence along the way.
    - **The situation for irregularized migrants in transit has NOT changed during the pandemic. Risks have possibly been exacerbated, which directly affects the lives of irregularized migrants in Honduras.**
  - o During the pandemic:
    - The vast majority have been stranded and waiting until the borders are opened in order to continue their transit north.
    - The conditions in which they migrate are very precarious.
    - They do not have a place to socially distance or self-isolate at home.
    - Many do not have a source of income during their journey.

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- Due to their condition of irregularity, they not only face a threat of deportation but if they do become ill, they have limited access to health care.
- The majority live in overcrowded places that endanger their health.
- More than 80 irregularized migrants in transit have been assaulted by Honduran police authorities. They have been robbed, forced to pay extortions, threatened and they had other rights violated as well. Among these groups were pregnant women and children, who entered through the southern border in Choluteca.
- There are 254 immigrants stranded in Honduras, mainly from Cuba and Haiti, including children and adolescents.

## 6. Social Responses

### - *Migrant struggles*

- Around 500 irregularized Central American migrants that were stranded at the border of Mexico and Guatemala on INM buses, rebelled in protest and managed to get off the buses and continue the journey to their communities of origin.
- Irregularized transit to return to their countries of origin:
  - Salvadoran and Honduran migrants have travelled south through Guatemala to return to their countries of origin and protect their health.
  - 3,472 Honduran have returned to their country. Medical controls have applied to them and they were socially distancing and staying in quarantine at home where they were under medical surveillance.

### - *Solidarity networks:*

- IOM provides assistance to 254 immigrants, mostly from Cuba and Haiti, stranded in Honduras. Hygiene kits, face masks, disinfectant gel, gloves and food for 14 days were given to each immigrant, including 45 minors. This was done in coordination with the National Institute of Migration and the Director for Children, Adolescents and Family (DINAF) of Honduras.
- The Catholic Church called for an end to the "massive and arbitrary" deportations in Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.
- The Network of Institutions for the Children's Rights (Coiprodén) of Honduras urged the authorities to approve a national protocol for comprehensive care and protection of migrant children and a binational protocol with Guatemala in the midst of the coronavirus crisis.

## Sources:

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\*For more detail go to the digital achieve that we created:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1o00O4-LalYs9FNi0PIRRz99hinvqyWgT>

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