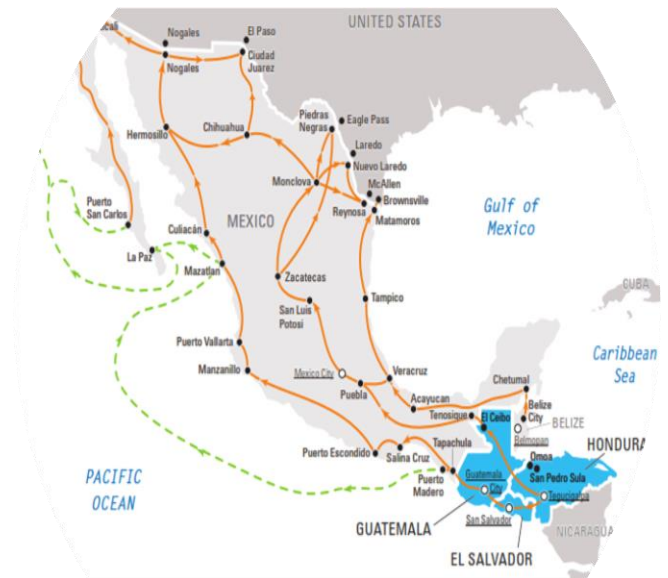


## Quick Facts on care and protection for children on the move in Northern Central America, Mexico and the US in the context of COVID-19

### The Context in numbers

- 48-65% of children who migrated from the region said the desire to escape violence was a primary reason.
- In Honduras, 3 of every 5 adolescents do not attend school.
- 76,000 unaccompanied children and 473,000 family units were apprehended at the Southwest Border of the United States in U.S. Fiscal Year 2019.
- Approximately 52,000 migrant children were identified by Mexican Immigration authorities; 34,700 among them were returned to their countries of origin.
- Most of these children were held in migration detention.



**This is a children’s crisis.** In the Northern Central America – Mexico- U.S. migratory route, children comprise a disproportionately large number of the people on the move.

**75%** of the migrant population crossing into Mexico are migrants traveling with at least one child.

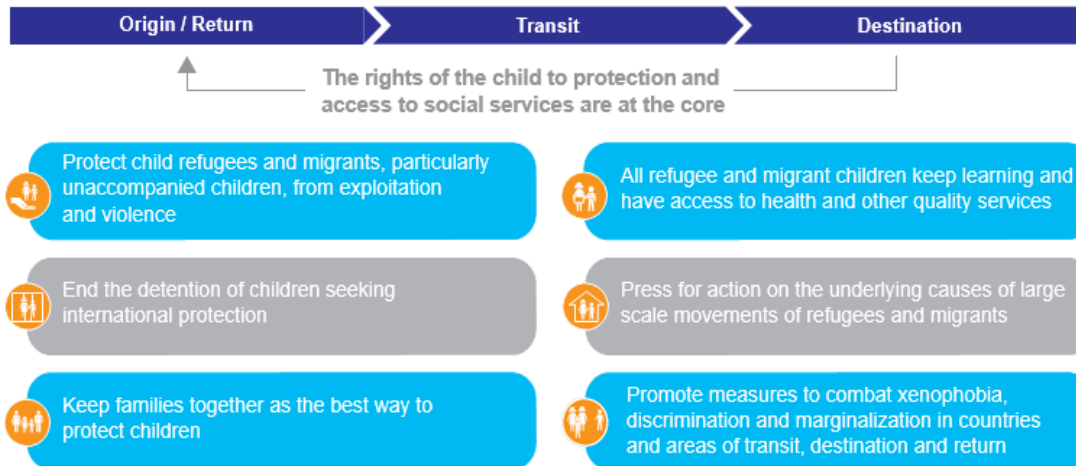
**65%** of the people apprehended at the US southwestern border in U.S. Fiscal Year 2019 were families and unaccompanied children.

**Existing protection risks for children are now exacerbated in the context of COVID – increased violence, worsened poverty, further limited education and livelihood options, overstretched child protection systems, and extended family separation.**

- Just in the month of March, emergency services in Honduras received nearly 8,000 calls for help from women and girls. That’s **4 times more calls for help than during the same time last year.**
- Nearly **2.5 million children in Honduras are missing out on school.**
- Even prior to the pandemic, child protection authorities in Mexico have functioned with **27% of the budget that they would require to operate effectively.** Yet, UNICEF estimates that each case would require only 2.5 USD to be handled by protection authorities and referred to specialized services.

Children are facing significantly reduced access to safety, international protection and opportunities for family reunification. Since mid-March, asylum processing in the U.S. has been halted indefinitely. At least 2000 children have been returned from the US and Mexico to Mexico and the northern countries of Central America, a majority without adequate protection and health safeguards and without consideration of the child’s best interests.

## UNICEF's Global Agenda for Action



### 3 Main Child Protection Priorities:

1. Strengthening child protection systems
2. Family and community-based care as alternatives to detention
3. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

### Priorities in the year ahead

- Strengthen protection mechanisms and case management, including cross-border case management.
- Strengthen social protection systems as both a deterrent to forced migration and a means to ensure sustainable reintegration for those returned.
- Strengthen Mental Health and Psychosocial Support through direct service provision as well as by building capacity on mental health at local and national levels.
- Strengthen sustainable solutions for children in need of protection and ensure best interest determinations guide these decisions.
- Further develop and scale up family and community-based care arrangements, family reunification, life skills, vocational training, education and efforts to smooth the transition to adulthood and autonomy.
- Continue to support safe, child-friendly quarantine efforts and family reunification during COVID-19.



The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, safe water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. To learn more, contact:

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