

# Migrants From US-Bound Caravan Get UN Help Returning Home

UNITED NATIONS: The U.N. migration agency last month repatriated more than 450 Central American citizens, mostly men, who were in a caravan of U.S.-bound migrants, its spokesman has said.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) spokesman Joel Millman said at least another 300 of the estimated 4,000 migrants and asylum-seekers who had arrived in the Mexican border city of Tijuana expressed an interest in going home.

He said the agency was coordinating a safe and dignified means of transportation for those wishing to return to their countries of origin.

The agency's Protection Officer Martiza Matarrita said many migrants had learned about the caravans via social media and television reports and had not understood what was involved in the trek to the US border.

"Many of them said it was almost an impulse, they didn't stop to think about the risks and the exhausting days of walking," she said. "They just joined a group of friends or neighbours and joined the caravan." More than 450 migrants have been helped back to their countries of origin since 4 November via IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return programme, which is funded by the US State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration.

According to the UN agency, more than eight in 10 returnees were men and nearly one in three were aged 19-25.

Nearly six in 10 people of those who joined the caravans came from Honduras, almost four in 10 were from El Salvador and around one in 20 were from Guatemala.

An additional 25 unaccompanied migrant children were helped home by plane, IOM said, adding that in the Mexican city of Tijuana - close to the US border - more than 300 people have also sought the agency's help to go home.

"IOM is coordinating safe and dignified means of transport for them," it said in a statement. "Migrants wishing to return are counselled and screened by IOM to

evaluate their options prior to making the decision to return.” In addition to its facilities in Tijuana, IOM also runs information and registration booths in Tapachula, Mexico City, and in Tecun Uman, Guatemala.

To ensure the safe return of the migrants, IOM coordinates with the governments of the returnees, who receive food and psychosocial support at border crossings. When they arrive at reception centres in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, migrants receive hygiene kits and, in many cases, transportation money to get home.

According to IOM, although “a large number” of migrants who had joined the caravans had “muscle disorders, fatigue and malaise-cough and flu”, more than four out of five were in ‘healthy’ shape.

Since 1979, IOM has helped 1.5 million migrants return to their country of origin or residence through its assisted returns scheme.

“A voluntary returns programme is an indispensable part of a comprehensive approach to migration management aiming at orderly and humane return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in host or transit countries and wish to return voluntarily to their countries of origin,” said Marcelo Pisani, IOM Regional Director for Central America, North America, and the Caribbean.

---

Source: <https://www.urdupoint.com/en/miscellaneous/migrants-from-us-bound-caravan-get-un-help-re-495441.html>

[Disclaimer]