**“We are fleeing from bullets in my country, we didn't think it would be like that here too”**

Conditions for migrants in Reynosa, Mexico, have sharply deteriorated in recent weeks. With hope that Title 42—a harmful policy that has weaponized the COVID-19 pandemic to enable the immediate expulsion of migrants from the US without due process—will eventually be lifted, thousands of people continue to arrive in the northeastern border city where they face harsh weather conditions, lack of access to basic services, and insecurity.

The situation is now critical. In recent weeks, tensions have increased between organized crime groups disputing territory, generating greater risks for already vulnerable people. Below, we share the testimonies of two migrants in Reynosa. Their stories show the high level of vulnerability they suffer in the city and the difficulties they face in accessing basic services, shelter and security.

**José Amílkar Medina, Honduras.**

My name is Jose Amilkar Medina, I left Honduras on October 16, 2021. We have been here in Mexico for several months. We passed through Tenosique and Mexico City and from there we traveled to Reynosa. We are waiting to be approved for the asylum process. We have never crossed into the United States, it is the first time we are in this city.

I have been in this shelter in Reynosa for 22 days with my wife, my daughter and my 74-year-old father. We are worried because they have told us that they are going to separate us from him. They have put him in other part of the shelter. He has problems with blood pressure, hearing, and eyesight, I am the one in charge of taking care of him. During this time, we have been sick with the flu and sometimes diarrhea because of the food. We are sleeping on the floor—they gave us a tent and some cardboard, so we don't feel the cold floor too much. At night the heat bothers us a lot, we must open the tent and the night wind comes in and that is what gives us the flu.

The other night we heard gunshots very close to the shelter, we felt desperate because we didn't know what was happening. We all went to hide in the bathroom for fear of a stray bullet. We are fleeing from bullets in my country, we didn't think it would be like that here too and it was very scary. There were a lot of people outside the shelter, and they all went inside seeking safety. There was a lot of chaos and fear. We did not know what happened.

**Yaneth Ortiz, Honduras.**

I am Yaneth, I am 20 years old. The gangs threatened to kill my husband because of a business we had. They had us under surveillance. They knew where we lived. I was pregnant—we were afraid they would attack us, and we had to leave Honduras. I entered Mexico in January 2021. It has been very difficult. Mexican immigration officers robbed us. When I crossed to the United States, I was alone because we could only pay for my crossing. I was already five months pregnant. On the other side [US authorities] stopped me. They never told me if my health was good, they only gave me a bottle of water in almost 12 hours, I was never seen by a doctor, they did not give me any information, they only told me to sit down.

I crossed [the border] at night and the next day they sent me to Reynosa. I called my sister, but she could not help me. I got desperate, I felt bad because I had endured hunger, thirst, cold, I cried a lot, I got nervous because I know Reynosa is dangerous. In Reynosa I went through something horrible, I have been in psychology [sessions] because of that. When they sent me to Reynosa, I was raped. The people who attacked me didn't care that I was pregnant, it affected me a lot, it affected my pregnancy.

I looked for my husband in Monterrey. I felt very bad about my pregnancy. My delivery was early, and my baby was born prematurely, with many health problems. In the hospital they wanted to charge me 220,000 Mexican pesos [about $11,000 USD]. I could not pay that, we were paying for my baby's medicines and treatments, he was very sick. I had no way to pay that debt, UNHCR had to help me so they would not charge me that amount. I was very afraid that my baby would die, but now he is better.

It was hard to return to Reynosa after what happened to me. I came because our friends told me about this shelter, and they connected me with the person in charge. She understood our situation and let us in to be safe, but this pain of what I have lived through is still present. Sometimes I would like to sleep and not wake up, but my daughter, my mother who is still in Honduras, my brothers and my husband help me to go on.