



Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Latin America and the Caribbean

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The core focus countries for this region are the countries currently affected by the Venezuelan crisis, including Colombia, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador, in addition to the Caribbean islands. Concerning northern movements to the United States, this QMMU covers Mexico and Central American countries. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to some countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in DRC regional offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, and a small global team in Geneva. For more information on MMC, the QMMUs from other regions, and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

MMC's understanding of mixed migration

"Mixed migration" refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel - often travelling irregularly, and wholly, or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

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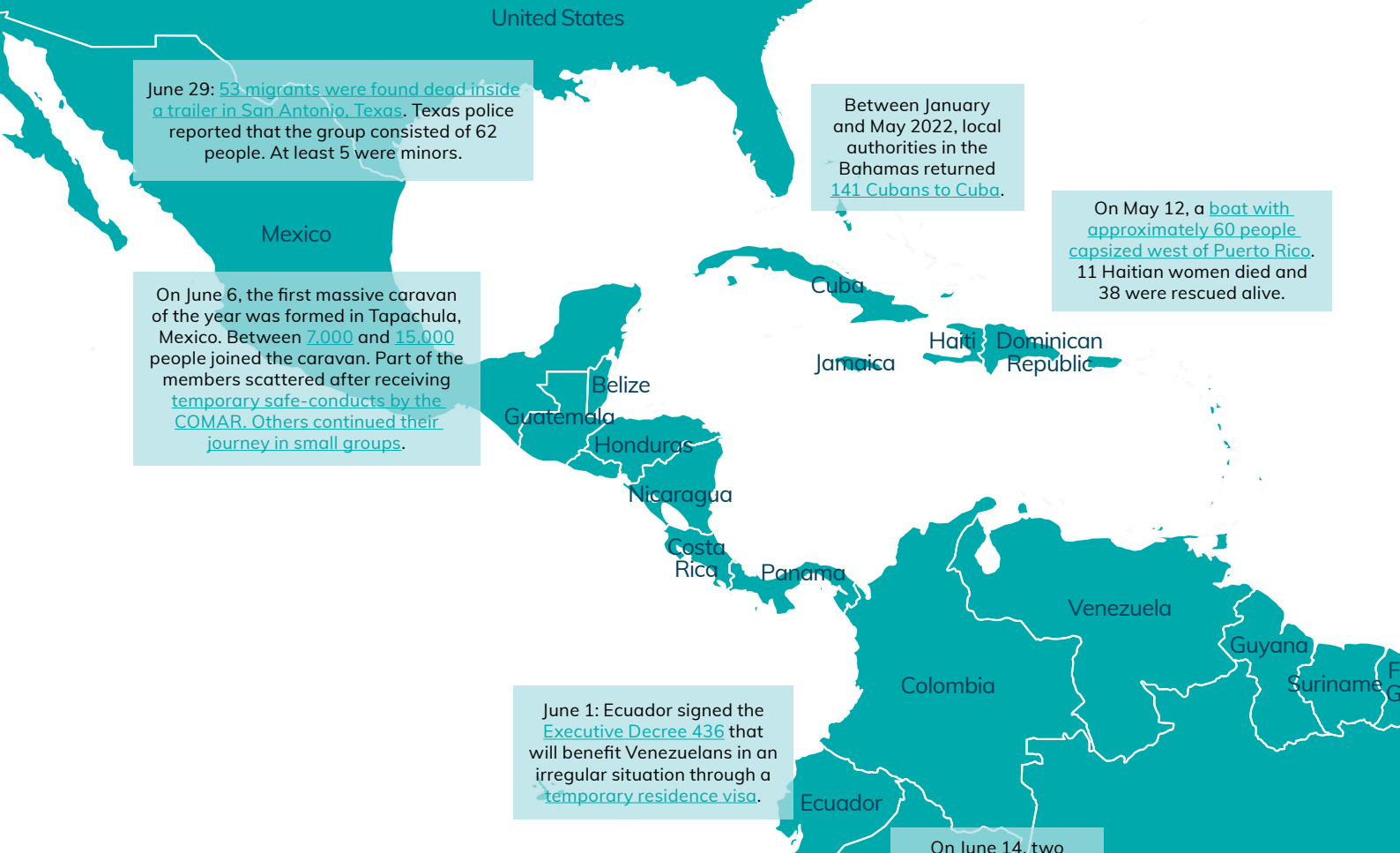
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Quarter 2 - 2022

Key Updates

- According to the latest update of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants (R4V), as of May 2022, [6,133,473](#) Venezuelans have left the country. Of these, [5,083,998](#) (83%) are located in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Meanwhile, according to key actors at borders, returns intentions among Venezuelans are increasing, but this [has not yet translated](#) into an increase in return movements.
- In May, a Venezuelan died at the Colchane border crossing between Bolivia and Chile. He is the [26th victim](#) reported this year in the mountainous area. [11 Haitian women died](#) after a shipwreck close to Puerto Rico. In June, [more than 50 migrants](#) were found dead inside a trailer in San Antonio, Texas. At least 5 of 62 people were minors.
- The ["encounters"](#) at the southern border of the United States between people on the move and national authorities continue to increase. From January to May 2022, [1,017,951](#) "encounters" were reported, an increase of 42% compared to the same period in 2021. As of May, [239,416](#) "encounters" were reported at the southern border, the [highest figure in the last 3 years](#). 5,078 ["encounters"](#) with Venezuelans at the southern border of the United States were reported, an increase of 23.64% compared to April 2022 (4,107 "encounters").
- [In April 2022](#), the U.S. Supreme Court [rejected](#) the request of the current U.S. administration to repeal the policy of the [Migrant Protection Protocol](#) (MPP), better known as the ["Remain in Mexico"](#) program. Under this policy, people who seek asylum at the U.S. border or after being apprehended while crossing irregularly are returned to Mexico while their cases are being processed. As of May 2022, [2,244](#) people were subject to the MPP, and [65% \(1,460 people\)](#) were returned to Mexico.
- Shipwrecks and associated deaths by sea continue to increase in the region. Between October 2021 and June 2022, [2,464 boats were intercepted by the United States Coast Guard \(USCG\)](#). In May 2022, UNHCR warned of the need to [protect people that migrate by sea](#).
- On June 10, 21 countries in the region, including the United States and Canada, [signed the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection](#). The document proposes "changing the way people migrate" based on the implementation of [a "humane and hemispheric management of migration," as well as the "promotion of coordinated humanitarian assistance."](#)

Regional Overview*



The Caribbean



*The information on the map presents a selection of updates or news and does not cover all mixed migration flows from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mixed Migration Regional Updates

Venezuelan mixed migration flows

Movements towards South America

According to the latest update of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants (R4V), as of May 2022, [6,133,473](#) Venezuelans have left the country. Of these, [5,083,998](#) (83%) have moved to other Latin America and the Caribbean countries. [Colombia](#) is the main recipient of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region ([36% live in this country](#)), followed by Peru ([25%](#)), Ecuador ([10%](#)), Chile ([8%](#)), and Brazil ([6%](#)).

According to [actors at the borders](#), the intentions of refugees and migrants to return to Venezuela in the future are increasing. This can be explained [by the optimistic projections of economic improvement in the country](#) and by the difficulties faced by Venezuelan refugees and migrants settling in host countries. Despite the reported increase in return intentions, there is no corresponding increase in actual return movements as of yet, and [Venezuela's outflow is still higher](#) according to R4V.

[Venezuelans' regional secondary movements have](#) strengthened. Although there is a lack of updated data, an increasing proportion of Venezuelans are migrating to a second or third host country in the region. In the last six months, [Uruguay became a destination country](#) for Venezuelan refugees and migrants from other countries of first displacement in the region. Secondary movements are often due to restrictive migration policies, discrimination, or economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Migration and regularization process in Colombia

As of May 2022, [36%](#) of all Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the Americas were in Colombia. The delivery of [Temporary Protection Permits](#) (PPT) was accelerated with the implementation of mass delivery events in sports halls between [January](#) and [April 2022](#). Since May 2022, only those who entered the territory regularly and all children and adolescents enrolled in school can access the PPT. The register will be open until November 2023.

As of June 2022, [1,266,498 printed PPTs and 1,083,098 delivered PPTs](#) were reported. The PPT is essential to guarantee access to the social protection system in Colombia: as of May 2022, [738,349](#) Venezuelan refugees and migrants were enrolled in the national health system. Of these, [53% had a PPT](#). According to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, it is expected that by the end of 2022, a total of [945,169 Venezuelan refugees and migrants](#) will benefit from the health system in Colombia.

The identification of Venezuelan households as potential recipients of social programs grew more than [147%](#) between December 2021 (35,455 households) and May 2022 (87,647). Since [2017](#), the System for the Identification of Potential Recipients of Social Programs (SISBEN) has been making progress in targeting the Venezuelan population with a view to social and economic inclusion.

Peru

After Colombia, Peru is the second country receiving Venezuelan refugees and migrants. As of May 2022, [more than 1.2 million](#) Venezuelans live there.

[Local actors denounced the constant increase](#) of fines linked to the expiration of documents and other similar administrative infractions for Venezuelan citizens established in Peru. The [costs of these sanctions](#) could amount to thousands of dollars while the average monthly salary of a Venezuelan person in Peru is [295 dollars](#). [Humanitarian organizations](#) in the country give legal assistance and economic support to Venezuelans in an irregular situation. But for many of them, the fines are too high, and they decided [to leave the country](#) for other countries in the region or North America.

On May 1, Peru reopened the land border with Chile in [Tacna-Santa Rosa and Chacalluta](#). It should be noted that immigration services at this border [had been suspended since mid-March 2020](#) due to sanitary restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Reports of the increased presence of smugglers](#), also known as "[Andean foxes](#)," "[trocheros](#)," or "chamberos," on the border between Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, continue. In June 2022, [three drivers](#) were arrested in Desaguadero (Peru) while transporting [33 refugees and migrants in trucks to Chile](#).

Brazil

As of May 2022, [345,013](#) Venezuelan migrants and refugees were in Brazil. In April 2022, the [Observatory of International Migration \(OBMigra\)](#) reported the arrival of 11,899 Venezuelans in the country.

Between April 2021 and April 2022, refugee applications from Venezuelans tripled, going from 534 (April 2021) to 1,786 applications (April 2022). In April 2022, a significant proportion of requests were made in [Pacaraima \(62%\)](#) the state of Roraima, at the border with Venezuela.

[76,398 Venezuelan refugees and migrants](#) have benefited from the "[inland relocation](#)" strategy, implemented in April 2018 by the Federal Government of Brazil, with support from UNHCR, IOM, and other UN agencies. This measure aims to guarantee the [voluntary and safe relocation](#) of Venezuelan refugees and migrants from the state of Roraima to other cities in the country. Inland relocation is complemented by socio-economic, integration, and social protection support.

Ecuador

Approximately [10%](#) of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region are living in Ecuador. Since 2019, Ecuador has been implementing mechanisms for regularizing Venezuelan migrants. In June 2022, Decree 436 was signed, which contemplates the "[migratory amnesty](#)" and the extraordinary regularization of Venezuelan citizens. The regularization will be given through the [Temporary Residence Visa of Exception for Venezuelan Citizens \(VIRTE\)](#), which will be valid for 2 years and can only be renewed once.

Only Venezuelans who regularly entered Ecuador and who are in an irregular situation due to the expiration

of stay on the date of issuance of [Decree 436](#) in June 2022 may apply to this mechanism. Holders of humanitarian visas and temporary residence within the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) framework can also apply. The application period for VIRTE will be 12 months and will have a migratory registration number with the Ministry of Interior. More details about the process are expected in the coming months.

Immigration amnesty is an important step to temporarily guarantee regularization and access to rights in the country. However, there is concern among the Venezuelan refugee and migrant population who entered the country irregularly. According to [the DTM \(OIM\) of May 2022](#), [15.1%](#) of the respondents in Tulcán, Ecuador, did not have any identification documents, so they will not be able to claim "immigration amnesty." Actors in the field report [fears of future deportations](#) of people who do not have a residence visa.

Barriers to accessing temporary regularization may discourage staying in Ecuador. Between January and May 2022, there were [11,921](#) departures of Venezuelan citizens to Colombia through the Rumichaca crossing point. Departures through this border point increased by [7.1%](#) compared to 2021 (846 departures). It is too early to establish a trend, but actors report that these people will choose another country in the region to settle in or [will head towards North America](#).

Chile

According to R4V, [448,138](#) Venezuelan refugees and migrants are in Chile as of May 2022.

Between February and [April 2022](#), Chile decreed a state of emergency, granting special powers to the Armed Forces to control irregular migration on its northern border. The military deployment remains in the region.

The entry into force of the new [Migration and Foreigner Law in February 2022](#) foresees an increased use of expulsion to discourage entries. This decision led to the expulsion of [166 foreigners](#) between April and May 2022.

The new law also allows border officials to detain anyone entering through an irregular crossing and return them to the country they came from. Between February and April 2022, [Bolivia rejected 93%](#) (7,700 out of 8,863) of the immediate returns of Venezuelans. Most of them re-entered immediately to Chile. In contrast, the [488 immediate returns to Peru](#) were made without limitation. As of April 28, [Bolivia will only accept returns of its nationals and Peru of other nationalities](#).

Discrimination and [rejection](#) of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Chile continue to grow. A national study of public opinion reveals that 61% of respondents consider it necessary to ban immigration. In the Antofagasta region, in the north of the country, 59% of respondents reported that the impacts of migration in the region were "bad or very bad." Stigmatization and [deterioration of coexistence](#) may affect [integration](#) and [drive Venezuelan refugees and migrants to leave for other countries in the region or to the north of the continent](#).

Movements towards North America

The number of Venezuelans crossing the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama [continues to grow](#). Between April and May 2022, [19,561](#) entries of refugees and migrants coming from the Darien were reported in Panama. Of these, 12,538 ([64,1%](#)) were Venezuelans.

The visa requirements for Venezuelan citizens adopted by Guatemala, El Salvador, and Panama were replicated by [Mexico](#), [Honduras](#), [Nicaragua](#), and [Costa Rica](#) in early 2022. These restrictions limited the use of safe air routes to migrate from South America to the north. These restrictions directly impacted the increase in transit through the Darien, an unregulated and dangerous area, to reach Central America.

The Colombian Ombudsman's Office and [UNICEF](#) warned of the increase in children and adolescents traveling alone across the Darien. In May, 169 children and adolescents were reported leaving Necoclí for Panama. Migration by sea to the Darien has also resulted in multiple [shipwrecks](#). In June, [25 Venezuelan citizens](#) were rescued in the Gulf of Urabá — between the municipalities of Necoclí and Acandí in Colombia.

In May 2022, the [U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#) reported 5,078 “encounters” with Venezuelans at the southern border of the United States. It represents an increase of 23,64% compared to April 2022 (4,107 “encounters”).

Movements in Central America

According to the [National Migration Service of Panama](#), between January and April 2022, [45%](#) of entries from Colombia to Panama were people from South America, 24% from Africa, 20% from the Antilles, and 11% from Asia.

From January to May 2022, there were [32,593 refugee applications](#) of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. These new applications are in addition to the other [150,000 pending requests](#) in the country. In Mexico, [3,390 refugee applications](#) from Nicaraguans were submitted from January to May 2022, 37% more than in the entire year of 2021 ([2,912 applications](#)).

The search for international protection by Nicaraguans in neighboring countries is reportedly related to the [increase in political repression](#) and [arbitrary detentions](#) in the country.

Mixed migration in Mexico

To date, Mexico has approximately [48,981 asylum seekers](#). Application requests increased by 20% compared to the first four months of 2021. In May, [9,113 refugee applications](#) were submitted, mainly by people from [Honduras, Cuba, Haiti, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, among other nationalities](#). Tapachula (south of the country) is the city with the largest number of applicants, with 32,858 applicants as of May 2022, followed by Mexico City (6,093 applicants).

[The Protection Monitoring \(PM\) of DRC-Mexico](#) reported that 49,4% of the respondents in Tapachula and Ciudad Juárez wanted to continue their journey to the United States, while 45,3% said wishing to settle in Mexico.

The delay in obtaining transit passes and humanitarian visas increased the search for alternatives to reach the United States from southern Mexico. On June 16, [366 people of 16 different nationalities were found in a cargo truck](#) trying to leave Tapachula.

Caravans of migrants to the United States

At the beginning of June, between [7,000](#) and [15,000](#) people left Tapachula in a caravan towards the northern border of Mexico [to protest against the delay in obtaining documentation to regularize their immigration status](#). Part of the caravan dispersed in Huixtla [after the delivery of safe-conducts of temporary residence by the Mexican authorities](#).

On June 21, a caravan (State of Nuevo León, Mexico) with approximately [800 people](#) headed for Piedras Negras, Coahuila, towards the border with the United States. According to local actors, members of the caravan already crossed the border with the United States.

A new caravan of approximately 3,000 people left on [June 24 from Tapachula](#) towards Huixtla, Chiapas. Members of the caravan denounced the [delays in the delivery of temporary residence permits](#) by immigration authorities in the city. According to the National Institute of Migration, on [June 26, the progress of this last caravan was "suspended"](#) after the delivery of temporary transit documents.

Situation on the border with the United States

Encounters

The ["encounters"](#) at the United States' southern border continue to increase. From January to May 2022, [1,017,951 "encounters"](#) were reported. This represents an increase of 42% compared to the same period in 2021. In May alone, 239,416 "encounters" were reported at the southern border, the [highest monthly figure in the last 3 years](#).

70% of the reported "encounters" were with single adults, and 22% with family groups. 14,699 "encounters" with unaccompanied adolescents were also reported (an increase of 4,39% compared to May 2021) and 235 cases of unaccompanied minors.

Expulsions and deportations

On 20 May 2022, a new [judicial decision blocked](#) the possibility of revoking Title 42. This policy, implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, allows for the immediate expulsion of asylum seekers and migrants apprehended in the United States. Title 42 was supposed to end [on May 23, 2022](#), but a coalition of states, led by Arizona, Louisiana, and Missouri, appealed for the continuation of this measure.

From April to May 2022, [200,589 people were expelled](#) under Title 42.

Changes in United States Policy

[In April 2022](#), the U.S. Supreme Court [rejected](#) the request of the current administration to repeal the policy of the [Migrant Protection Protocol \(MPP\)](#), better known as the “[Remain in Mexico](#)” program. Under this policy, people who seek asylum at the U.S. border or after being apprehended in crossing irregularly, are returned to Mexico while their cases are being processed. On [July 1st](#), the Supreme Court ruled on the possibility of eliminating this measure. More information about this decision is expected in the coming months.

Between December 2021 and May 2022, [7,259 people](#) were “enrolled” in the MPP. Of these, 60% were Nicaraguans, 15% Cubans, and 9,4% Colombians. In May alone, [2,244](#) people were enrolled in the MPP, and at least 65% (1,460 people) were directly returned to Mexico.

On May 16, 2022, the [Department of State](#) announced that [the Cuban Family Reunification Parole \(CFRP\)](#) would be reinstated. CFRP allows certain eligible U.S. citizens and permanent residents to apply for an entry permit for their relatives in Cuba. The program was created in 2007 and suspended in 2017. This program has benefited more than [20,000 Cubans per year](#) since its creation.

Extra-regional mixed migratory flows

Between January and May 2022, [32,797](#) people on the move entered Panama through the Darien. Of them, [5,8%](#) came from Haiti (810 people), [4%](#) from Cuba (567), [3,7%](#) from Angola (527), and [1,8%](#) from Bangladesh (254), among other extracontinental nationalities with fewer entries registered.

Between October 2021 and June 2022, [2,464 boats were intercepted](#) by the United States Coast Guard (USCG). In May 2022, a boat with approximately [800 Haitians](#) traveling to the United States arrived in Cuba. At the beginning of June, the [Cuban government](#) began returning these people to Haiti. UNHCR warned of the need to [protect people traveling by sea](#).

The [State of Florida](#) remains an important entry point into the United States, but new flows have been reported through Puerto Rico. In May, the Coast Guard [intercepted 44 Dominicans](#) between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. In May, [11 Haitian women](#) died in western Puerto Rico after their boat capsized.

Summit of the Americas

On June 10, 21 countries in the region, including the United States and Canada, signed the [Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection](#). Despite the vetoes and absences of countries with a key role in regional migration dynamics (Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Mexico), the Declaration is the first regional initiative seeking hemispheric management of mixed movements. The current situation is critical: in the region, the use of unsafe routes is increasing to face the increase in restrictions on freedom of mobility.

The document proposes "changing the way people migrate" based on the implementation of assistance mechanisms, stability, migration management, reduction of irregular routes, and promotion of humanitarian assistance. It remains to be seen [whether implementation and concrete actions will follow the encouraging tone and spirit of the declaration's text](#).

Thematic focus:

"The Darien jungle is hell... and I don't recommend it to anyone"

Between August and September 2021, more than [10,000](#) people on the move were [stranded](#) in the small Colombian municipality of Necoclí, near the border between Colombia and Panama. The presence of these massive groups of refugees and migrants waiting to cross from Colombia to Panamá through the Darién jungle attracted media and public attention to this migratory route to North America.

The Darien gap route has historically been used by refugees and migrants coming from [Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean islands](#). However, as of early 2022, the composition of mixed migration flows along this route started changing quickly and quite dramatically. Between 2021 and 2022, the migratory flow of Venezuelans through the Darien increased sixfold, and [it is estimated that this flow will continue to increase](#).

The reason for this massive increase of Venezuelans is the deterioration of their living conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulties in [regularizing their migratory situation](#) in countries of first displacement in Latin America, pushing many of them to try to move north toward Central America and, potentially, from there to the United States.

To reach Panama from Colombia by land, refugees and migrants must cross along the Darien Gap, walking several days through the tropical jungle controlled by criminal gangs, facing dangers of death, sexual violence, physical violence, kidnapping, and extortion, among others. International actors have warned about the need to reinforce humanitarian assistance and reception conditions in Panama, given the extreme vulnerability of people leaving the Darien after spending several days in the jungle facing various dangers.

Venezuelans are now the first nationality from Colombia to Panama through the Darien route

Mixed migration flows through the Darien gap saw a significant increase since 2021, but this route has been used since at least 2009. [A 2019 study mentions that](#) the flow of Asian, African, and Caribbean people in irregular transit through the Darien border area has increased by 703% since 2014. Before crossing to Central America through the Darien Gap, extra continental refugees and migrants arrive in South America in countries with less strict migration regulations, such as Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Guyana, and even Suriname (see map 1).

Map 1. Extracontinental and regional mixed flows to the north



Source: [MMC](#)

In 2021, Haitians and Cubans made up most of the mixed migration flow crossing from South America to the north through the Darien. That year, the [National Migration Service of Panama \(SNM\)](#) reported 129,993 entries into the country through the Darien. [60.94%](#) of the entries were made up of Haitians (79,219 people) and [14%](#) of Cubans (18,600 people).

Since the beginning of 2022, the transit through the Darien reports a greater presence of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. In 2021, [2,819 entries](#) of Venezuelans into Panama were reported, while, from January to May 2022, their number went up to a six-fold increase and making them [51%](#) of all entries registered in Panama.

In 2021, Venezuelans entering Panama came mainly from host countries in South America. Although information is lacking on the exact motivations of the Venezuelan heading north, these are related [to the](#)

[deterioration](#) of their living conditions in the countries of first displacement in South America during the COVID-19 pandemic, the difficulties of regularizing their [migratory status](#), the [uncertainties in changes of governments](#) in the region, or the increase in [discrimination](#) and xenophobia. Recent [studies](#) reported that increasing numbers of refugees and migrants are [now leaving directly from Venezuela](#).

Restriction of visas imposed on Venezuelans since 2022 limited their possibilities to travel regularly and safely by plane to Central and North America. To reach the United States, they now need to travel irregularly by land, across very dangerous areas.

From Colombia to Panama: a long journey by boat and walking through the jungle

The routes used throughout the Darien are constantly changing. The main routes were identified by testimonials from refugees and migrants collected by 4Mi enumerators and a review of [secondary sources](#).

The journey begins with sea trips in small boats from the Colombian municipalities of [Turbo \(Antioquia region\)](#), [Necoclí](#), and [Cabo Tiburón \(Choco region\)](#) to [Acandí](#), [Capurganá \(Chocó\)](#) or [Sapzurro \(Chocó\)](#), towards the Panama border. Also, sea trips were reported from municipalities of the Gulf of Urabá to Carreto, [La Miel](#), or [Puerto Obaldía](#) in Panama (see map 2).

Map 2. Main transited places in the Darien region



Sources: [MMC](#)

Inside the Darien jungle, two main routes were identified. The main one is from Carreto (Panama) to the village of Canaán Membrillo, and the other is from the town of Capurganá (Colombia) to the village of Bajo Chiquito.

According to the [DTM \(OIM\)](#) carried out in Panama, between March and May 2022, [81.37%](#) of the people who cross the Darien took the route to the little village of Cannán Membrillo. This route has a reputation for being faster and safer. From the hamlet of Cannán Membrillo, people in transit must pay for the services of a boat to reach the village of [Puerto Limón](#). From that point, they head towards the Migratory Reception Station (ERM) implemented by the Panamanian Government to identify refugees and migrants and offer them basic assistance and reception.

Before entering the Darien jungle and beginning the land journey to Panama, refugees and migrants must hire smugglers' services. Few people can join the Darien on their own. Most do not want to try. The lack of knowledge of the routes, and the belief that a guide can provide safety, motivates them to hire smugglers.

Smugglers [operate as "guides" in the territories run by the Community Councils of the Department of Chocó in Colombia](#). These community organizations [control the territory](#) and the [use of the routes in the jungle](#), as smuggling is [a very profitable business](#).

Some reports mention that [smugglers and community councils are close to criminal groups](#) that control the routes of entry and transit through the Darien. Transit fees are paid to community council representatives, who then redistribute the money among the guides. The Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC), also known as "Clan del Golfo," are a powerful organized armed group (GAO) in Colombia. Part of the illegal drug trade in the country is controlled by the AGC.

[Drug trafficking routes are the same routes used by people on the move](#). Although the group does not directly guide people through the Darien, it does benefit from the smuggling of migrants and authorizes transit through the [territory under its control between Colombia and Panama](#).

Crossing the Darien Gap: 3 to 10 days "in hell"

The Darien is a rainforest, an extremely humid and muddy environment, full of insects and snakes and, therefore, very hostile, and difficult to cross. People arrive in this territory unprepared to face these extreme conditions, often for several days.

"I injured my foot there because I slipped and fell, hitting myself hard. Crossing the jungle is very hard; there are hills and hills and very muddy ground. You walk, and you bury yourself up to your knees."

34-year-old Haitian woman interviewed in Costa Rica.

"During the trip, it took us 8 days in the jungle, passing through muddy places, walking wet, dirty, with little food. I slept every night near the bank of a river. I now have very strong injuries in my ankles. My legs cannot take it anymore, from being swollen and from mosquito bites."

30-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

People on the move must carry with them all that is needed for the journey, including food and water and the tools to survive in the jungle. The journey entails long daily walks, crossing rivers and mountain cliffs. These conditions expose refugees and migrants to a high risk of [injuries and deaths](#). According to the DTM, [62.87%](#) of the respondents between March and May 2022 had injuries to the legs and feet when arriving at the ERM of San Vicente in Panama. The lack of food and clean water available during the trip is also frequently reported as a challenge.

"I ran out of money and food. To survive, I took a lot of water and collected seeds here and there along the way."

22-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

Reports of deaths from falls, accidents, extreme exhaustion, and the presence of bodies of the deceased on the roads, are constantly reported.

"You keep finding human remains throughout the trails of the jungle. Along the way, I found a hand, a skull, the part of the pelvis."

24-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

The presence of [wild animals](#) in the jungle, including mosquitoes and [poisonous snakes](#), is also a significant risk.

"I witnessed a well-known young Venezuelan woman who died because a venomous snake 'mapana' (local name for the species Bothrops atrox, ndlr) bit her. She lasted only half an hour; the venom of that snake is very lethal. Unfortunately, we left the body there, and we could do nothing to save her."

24-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

In 2021, Panamanian authorities reported [50 people dead](#) in the Darien jungle. From March to May 2022, the DTM (IOM) reported that [95 people disappeared in the Darien](#). Several people interviewed by 4Mi in Costa Rica reported having seen "decomposed corpses of people lost in the mountains, dead from starvation" and "human bones."

In the Darien, abuses and human rights violations are systematic

Several criminal groups control the territory. Human rights abuses and violations are systematic. Robberies are reported as inevitable, and people who resist, risk being murdered.

"Armed people stole everything we had. A Haitian woman had bills hidden in her braids. When the men found that money, they almost beat her to death for having tried to hide her money."

32-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

Refugees and migrants also reported local community members as perpetrators of such abuses.

"I came with my family, and what I did was pay so that they would not do anything to us. And well, even so, local community members stole the money we brought."

30-year-old Peruvian man interviewed in Costa Rica.

The use of smugglers' services is not a guarantee of safety. According to testimonies, smugglers are often not able or not willing to protect their clients. Also, during the journey, people often get separated from the main group, and the risk of falling prey to armed people is higher when alone.

"I came with my family, and what I did was pay so that they would not do anything to us. And well, even so, local community members stole the money we brought."

30-year-old Peruvian man interviewed in Costa Rica.

As of April 2021, [420 cases](#) of sexual violence against women and men have been reported. Between January and May 2022, humanitarian actors operating in Panama's Migratory Receiving Stations (ERM) assisted [hundreds of victims of rape that occurred in the Darien](#). The testimonies of people on the move interviewed by 4Mi in Costa Rica show that this sexual violence [is systematic](#).

"I cried from the helplessness of being unable to save a girl. I saw how she was beaten, raped."

22-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

"During the journey, they raped a girl. That girl came out of that jungle wanting to commit suicide, and well, you cannot get in there to defend her because they kill you."

30-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

The attention provided in Panama is insufficient

Safe transit mechanisms through the Darien are limited. In 2016, Panama's government and Costa Rica began to execute the policy of "Controlled Flow Binational Operation", [aiming to manage mixed migration flows from the Darien in their national territories](#). People on the move who crossed the jungle must stay in the Migratory Receiving Stations (ERM) in the Darien region until the Panamanian authorities facilitate their transit to the Costa Rican border.

The Migratory Receiving Stations (ERM) were created in [2016](#) under the name of Temporary Humanitarian Aid Stations. These are spaces dedicated to the reception, identification, medical assistance, and provision of other basic services. By July 2022, the ERM of San Vicente is the only operational station in the Darien region. The station of [La Peñita has been closed since January 2021](#). Actors on the ground reported adjustments at [Lajas Blancas \(ERM\) since February 2022](#).

Faced with the increase in mixed movements through the Darien region, several humanitarian actors present in the ERM of San Vicente warn about the worsening of [attention provided at the receiving stations](#). [According to MSF](#) in the ERM of San Vicente, "[there is no access to general accommodations, children and pregnant women sleep on the floor, and sanitation conditions are deficient](#)". This is particularly problematic [for victims of sexual violence](#), which is rampant in the area mentioned above.

"When we arrived at the shelter in Panama, the attention was not very good, since the food they gave us was going bad and we got sick in the stomach, and we were held for 3 days because we didn't have money to pay for the stay. In Panama, everything costs."

28-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

Respondents of 4Mi in Costa Rica, as well as [different actors](#), reported that people on the move must pay for their bus transfer from the ERM of San Vicente, to another ERM in the north of Panama, in the Chiriquí region, where authorities let them cross the border to pass into Costa Rica.

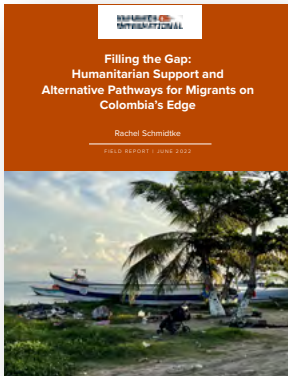
This is problematic as many refugees and migrants were victims of robberies and extortion during their trip through the Darien and did not have that money. 4Mi respondents reported having had to "work" to be able to pay the Panamanian authorities for their transfer to the border with Costa Rica.

"They charged us double for the help they gave us in Panama; so that you have an idea, between the jungle and Panama, all the money is gone, that's why many migrants have to sleep in bus terminals because Panama costs us one hundred percent."

24-year-old Venezuelan man interviewed in Costa Rica.

The information reported by refugees and migrants shows the extreme danger experienced by all those who passed through the Darien Gap. Reception conditions in Panama do not comply with minimum protection standards for refugees and migrants in this mixed migratory flow. The recurrence of violence and the current weakness of humanitarian assistance, unconditioned or limited, place us in a panorama of acute crisis for the safe management of this mixed movement in the region.

Highlighted New Research and Reports



[Filling the Gap: Humanitarian Support and Alternative Pathways for Migrants on Colombia's Edge](#)

Refugees International - Rachel Schmidtke | June 2022

This report provides an update on the increase in mixed migratory flows of Venezuelan refugees and migrants through the Darien Gap, a stretch of approximately 100 km between Colombia and Panama.



[Executive Summary of the Multisectoral Study on Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Population Living in Metropolitan Lima \(2022\)](#)

Acción Contra El Hambre | June 2022

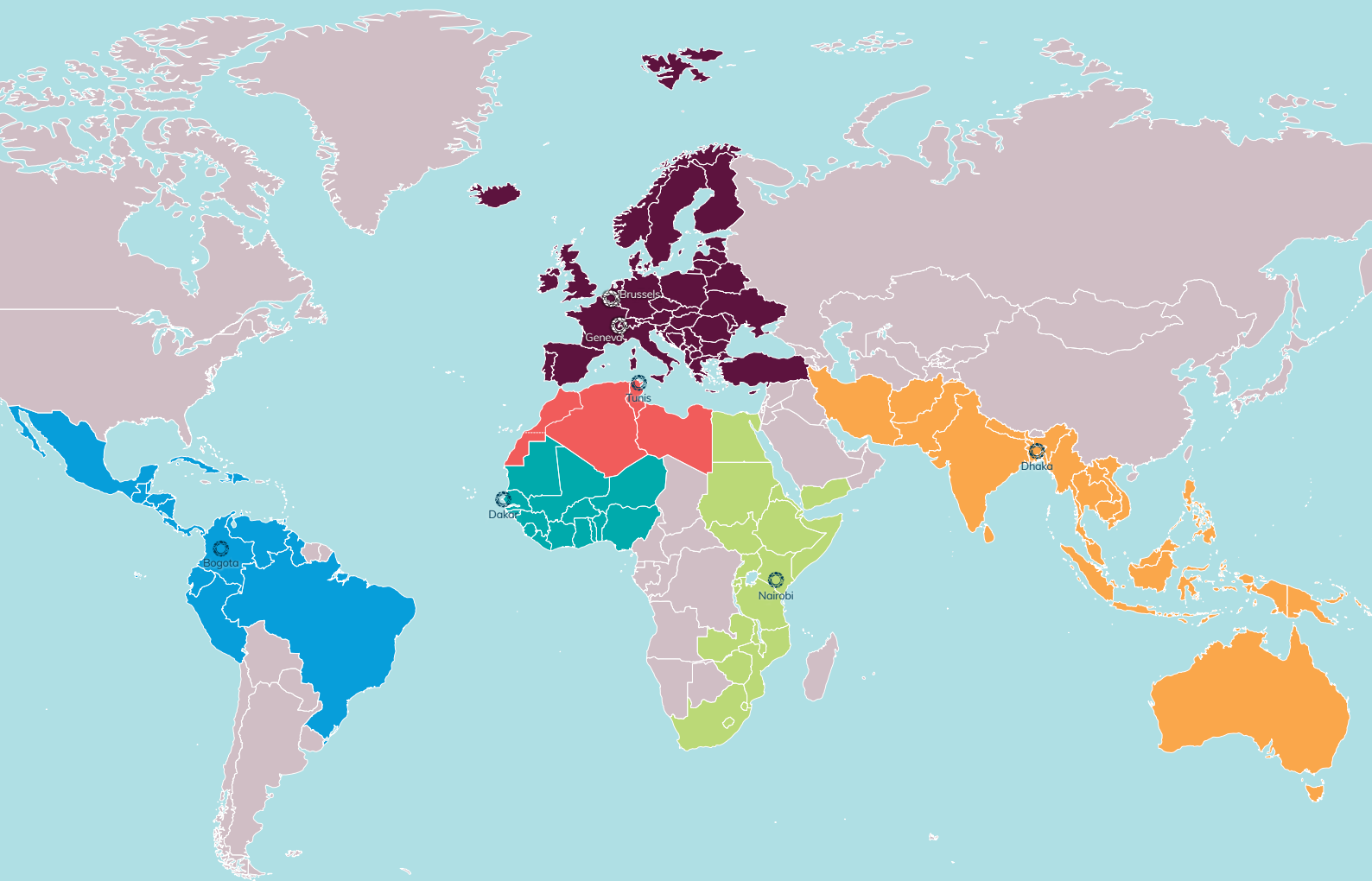
The executive report presents the quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional results of the socio-economic situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela residing in Lima and Callao, Peru, in the context of the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.



[World Migration Report 2022](#)

International Organization for Migration | April 2022

The Global Migration Report 2022 aims to generate a greater understanding of migration around the world. This new edition presents data and information on migration by region and thematic chapters on migration-related issues of interest.



MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in DRC regional offices in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, and a small global team in Geneva.

MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise. MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Global and regional MMC teams are based in Brussels, Geneva, Dakar, Nairobi, Tunis, Bogota and Dhaka.

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