



**MMC Latin America  
and the Caribbean**

**QUARTER 3 2022**



**Quarterly Mixed  
Migration Update:  
Latin America and  
the Caribbean**

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The core focus countries for this region are the countries currently affected by the Venezuelan crisis and the Caribbean islands. This QMMU covers Mexico and Central American countries concerning northern movements to the United States. 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 regional policy developments. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary 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](https://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 engaged in mixed migration 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. Mixed migration describes refugees and migrants traveling along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often traveling irregularly, and wholly or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

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# Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Latin America and the Caribbean

## Quarter 3 - 2022

### Key Updates

- According to the latest update of the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela ([R4V](#)), as of August 2022, [6,805,209](#) Venezuelans have left the country. Of these, [5,745,664](#) (83%) are in Latin American and Caribbean countries. [According to key actors at the borders](#), returns intentions among Venezuelans are increasing. However, local actors in Venezuela stated that returns could be [temporary](#), as economic conditions in Venezuela are still [unstable](#).
- On July 22, 2022, the [Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs modified the general requirements on visas](#) with the publication of [resolution 5477](#): Venezuelans with temporary documents for more than 5 years may now be eligible to apply for residence visas.
- The number of Venezuelans trying to reach Nicaragua from Colombia by sea is increasing. Between August [23rd](#) and [30th](#), five boats with 54 people on board, mainly Venezuelans, were intercepted by the [Colombia National Navy](#) near the Island of San Andrés, Colombia.
- From January to August 2022, [1,631,699 “encounters”](#) were reported at the southern border of the United States, an increase of 23% compared to the same period in 2021 (1,324,649 “encounters”). As of July 2022, [200,195 “encounters”](#) were reported at the southern border, 4% less compared to June 2022 (207,986 “encounters”).
- On August 8, the [Migrant Protection Protocol](#) (MPP), better known as the “Remain in Mexico” program, [officially ended](#). The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [confirmed](#) that individuals are no longer being newly enrolled in the MPP.
- Maritime migration, accompanied by [shipwrecks and associated deaths by sea](#), [continues to rise in the region](#). Between October 2021 and September 2022, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) intercepted [5,392 Cubans](#) (543% more than in 2021, [838](#) interceptions) and [7,173](#) Haitians (369% more than in 2021, [1,527 interceptions](#)).

## 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 migratory movement

### Movements towards South America

According to the latest update of the Inter-agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela ([R4V](#)), as of August 2022, [6,805,209](#) Venezuelans have left the country. Of these, [5,745,664](#) (84%) have moved to a country in Latin America and the Caribbean. [Colombia](#) is the main recipient of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region ([43% live in the country](#)), followed by Peru ([22%](#)), Ecuador ([9%](#)), Chile ([8%](#)), and Brazil ([6%](#)).

In the last nine months, [Uruguay became a destination country](#) for Venezuelan refugees and migrants from other countries of first displacement in the region. In August, [UNHCR](#) inaugurated its first office in [Uruguay](#) due to the increase in mixed movements in the country. From 2019 until May 2022, [the Uruguayan Refugee Commission \(CORE\) recognized 498 Venezuelans as refugees](#).

According to [actors at the borders](#), the intentions of refugees and migrants to return to Venezuela in the future continue to increase. According to UNHCR and Plan International's [border monitoring](#), between May and July 2022, [56%](#) of the surveyed Venezuelans who entered Peru from Chile were headed to Venezuela.

There is a lack of updated data to understand the motivations and future migration intentions of the population willing to return to Venezuela. [Local actors](#) in Venezuela consider that the returns could be [temporary](#). Despite the announcements of [economic improvement](#), the Venezuelan economy remains [unstable](#). However, return movements could increase with the opening of the Colombian-Venezuelan border since [September 26, 2022](#).

[Venezuela's outflow is still higher](#), according to R4V. A study conducted in Venezuela and published on August 22 reveals that [3 out of 10 Venezuelans still want to leave the country](#).

### Migration and regularization process in Colombia

As of August 2022, [2,477,588](#) Venezuelan refugees and migrants were in Colombia. Currently, only those who enter the territory regularly and all children and adolescents enrolled in school can access the [Temporary Protection Permits](#) (PPT). The register will be open until November 2023.

As of September 2022, [1,537,397 printed PPTs and 1,440,235 PPTs delivered](#) were reported. The PPT is essential to guarantee access to the social protection system in Colombia. According to the [National Observatory of Migration and Healthcare](#), as of August 2022, [924,391](#) Venezuelans were enrolled in the national health system. Of these, [83% had a PPT](#).

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. According to official data from the Ministry of Health and Social

Protection, as of August 2022, the inclusion of Venezuelans in healthcare services [has reached 98% of the national goal](#).

Migration governance in Colombia showed progress. On July 14, 2022, the [National Council for Economic and Social Policy](#) presented the [CONPES Document 4100](#). This document defines the national strategy for Venezuelan refugees and migrants' integration. The strategy considers Venezuelan migration as a ["development asset for the country"](#).

In July 2022, the Ministry of Labor updated the [Guide for the Employment of Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Colombia](#)". This tool seeks to guide employers in hiring Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

In the same month, the [Colombian Foreign Ministry modified the general visa requirements](#) by publishing [resolution 5477](#). According to the new resolution, Venezuelan may apply for residence visas. To be eligible, they must have had the [Special Stay Permit \(PEP\)](#), the current PPT for 5 years, or 5 years accumulated between both documents. Venezuelans with the PTT may apply for a residence visa from June 2023.

[Venezuela and Colombia restored diplomatic relations](#) after 3 years and appointed [their respective ambassadors in Caracas \(Venezuela\) and Bogotá \(Colombia\)](#). On September 26, 2022, the main border crossing between the two countries, in Norte de Santander department, which had been [closed since 2015](#), was [reopened](#) for cargo transport.

## Peru

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

In July, about [100,000 Venezuelans](#) were fined because of the expiration of their residence documents in Peru. Local actors have denounced the [high cost of those fines](#). The Congress of the Republic is expected to respond promptly to a bill that considers an [amnesty for the payment of immigration fines](#) for foreigners in the country.

Foreigners who entered Peru before October 20, 2020, and with irregular status are allowed to renew the [Temporary Stay Permit \(CPP\)](#) until October 2022, according to the [National Superintendency of Migration](#).

On August 12, Peruvian President Pedro Castillo presented a new bill to Congress to extend the [grounds for expulsion](#) and increase the ban on entry to the territory from 15 to 25 years for foreigners who commit offences. According to the [Council of Ministers](#), unvaccinated foreigners [could be expelled](#) from the country, although vaccination is not compulsory in Peru. Failing to present [identification documents or driving a delivery vehicle without authorization services could also be motives for expulsion](#). Others include carrying weapons, false documents, or narcotic substances.

The Peruvian president [sought to link the criminality in the country to migration](#) and emphasized the presence in Peru of "people who [...] have come to commit crimes, [...] and are taking the life and opportunities to continue living" from Peruvians. [Local actors](#) denounced this ["flawed bill with xenophobic overtones"](#) that

could increase acts of [discrimination and xenophobia](#) against Venezuelans in the country.

Likewise, [activists in the field](#) warn that the possible modification of grounds for expulsion would violate [the human rights](#) of refugees and migrants living in Peru.

On August 18, 2022, an [order was published by the Ministry of Defense](#) that contemplated Venezuelans' return to Venezuela by plane. Besides, the Ministry of Defense mentioned the possibility of deportation of about [200 Venezuelan people arrested](#) on August 8 after a police raid in Lima's northeast. However, [people arrested were released on August 20](#).

## Brazil

As of August 2022, [358,412](#) Venezuelan migrants and refugees were in Brazil. In August 2022, [the Observatory of International Migration \(OBMigra\)](#) reported that [14,971](#) Venezuelan entered the country.

Between August 2021 and August 2022, Venezuelan refugee applications decreased by [38%](#) (2,478 applications in August 2021 to 1,541 in August 2022). As of August 2022, [59%](#) of requests were made in [Pacaraima](#), the state of Roraima, near the border with Venezuela.

[Brazil included the refugee and migrant population](#) in the national demographic census of 2022. According to the [Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics](#), the census was also conducted in shelters, with the [support](#) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR.

## Ecuador

Approximately [9%](#) of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region are living in Ecuador.

On September 1, the "[migration registration process](#)" began for people in an irregular situation in Ecuador through the Ministry of the Interior's platform "[I'm Here](#)". The process will be completed through in-person [biometric registration and interviews](#). The registration process will be open until [August 2023](#).

This measure is framed in the [Decree 436](#) of June 2022, which contemplates the "[migratory amnesty](#)" and the extraordinary regularization of Venezuelans in the country. The regularization will be given through the [Temporary Residence Visa of Exception for Venezuelan Citizens \(VIRTE\)](#), which is valid for 2 years and can only be renewed once.

According to the platform, only Venezuelans who entered the country through a [border cross-point with regular travel documentation](#) until [June 2022](#) may apply for migration registration. This group's regularization process is expected to be scheduled for [October 2022](#).

Approximately [300,000 Venezuelans](#) will benefit from this measure. On September 24, [25,560](#) Venezuelans completed their registration on the platform. The government of Ecuador also plans to include in the "migratory amnesty" [Venezuelans who entered the country irregularly](#), starting from February 2023.

In July, the [VIII Joint Declaration of the Quito Process](#) was signed. The document contemplated common responses regarding integration and socio-economic measures for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region.

## Chile

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

On August 4, 2022, the Ministry of the Interior announced the processing of a bill [to simplify the administrative expulsions of foreigners](#) with a criminal record or irregular situation in the country. This bill will complement the current [Immigration and Foreigner Law](#) that entered into force in [February 2022](#).

According to the Chilean National Police, [598](#) administrative and judicial expulsions were made in the first half of the year in Tarapacá, Antofagasta Arica, and Parinacota, regions located in northern Chile, 240% more expulsions compared to the same period of 2021 ([176 expulsions](#)). Currently, [Bolivia will only accept returns of its nationals and Peru of other nationalities](#).

The Ministry of Interior plans to develop a [bill](#) to extend preventive identity control by the police to identify migrants in an irregular situation.

The degradation of security conditions in the north of the country, at the border with Bolivia and Peru, [reopened discussions on a "possible" extension of the state of emergency](#) decreed in the region between [February and April 2022](#).

The [detention](#) of a leader of the "[Tren de Aragua \(Train of Aragua\)](#)", a Venezuelan criminal gang, and the mediatization of [homicides](#) and [crimes](#) involving Venezuelan people in Chile could increase [xenophobia](#) towards the Venezuelan population in the country. Stigmatization and [deterioration of coexistence](#) already affect [integration](#) and drive Venezuelan refugees and migrants to leave for other countries in the region or the continent's north.

## Movements towards North America

The number of Venezuelans crossing the Darien Gap, an unregulated and dangerous area between Colombia and Panamá, [continues to grow](#). Between January and August 2022, [102,067](#) entries of refugees and migrants coming from the Darien Gap were reported in Panamá. Of these, 68,575 ([67%](#)) were Venezuelan.

According to [local authorities](#), the [rainy season in Panama](#) is increasing the safety risks of the population crossing through the Darien Gap.

[87%](#) of the refugees and migrants interviewed by the 4Mi project in Costa Rica mentioned the United States as their preferred destination. In August, [U.S Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#) reported [23,349 "encounters"](#) with Venezuelans at the southern border, an increase of 32% compared to July 2022 ([17,652 "encounters"](#)). Between August 2021 and August 2022, the "[encounters](#)" at the southern border with



Venezuelans increased by more than [270%](#).

[Colombian authorities](#) warned of the increasing numbers of refugees and migrants trying to reach Nicaragua from Colombia by sea through [the Caribbean Islands](#). Refugees and migrants use this maritime route as an alternative to avoid crossing the perilous Darien Gap (See [QMMU 2 of 2022](#)).

Between August [23](#) and [30](#), The [Colombian Navy](#) intercepted five boats near the [island of San Andrés](#) (Colombia) with 54 migrants onboard, mostly Venezuelans. According to the Colombian authorities, on September 23, [8 boats were intercepted](#) close to San Andrés Island with around 118 people on board, of which 19 were children. In 2022, more than [200 people](#) were intercepted trying to reach Nicaragua from San Andrés Island.

## Movements in Central America

### Panama

According to the [National Migration Service of Panama](#), between January and August 2022, [75%](#) of the entries from Colombia to Panama were people from South America ([76,703](#)), 11% from the Antilles ([10,938](#)), 8% from Africa ([7,963](#)), and 6% Asia ([5,775](#))

In July, [protests](#) in Panama [blocked major roads](#), and the Darien region's transit was impossible. At one point, more than 1400 people on the move were [stranded](#) in the Migration Reception Stations (ERMs) in the Darien region. To respond to the daily entry of people through the Darién, Panama's government proceeded to temporarily reopen the ERM of Lajas Blancas. [Blockades were lifted at the](#) end of July.

According to UNICEF, [1 in 5 migrants](#) crossing the Darien are minors. Migrant children are highly exposed to [protection risks in the Darien Gap](#).

### Costa Rica

From January to July 2022, there were [46,348](#) refugee applications from Nicaraguans in Costa Rica ([92%](#) of all refugee applications in the country). During the same period, [1,395](#) applications from Venezuelans were submitted.

The lack of reception capacity in Costa Rica increases refugees' and migrants' vulnerabilities. Local actors have voiced alarm that an increasing number of refugees and migrants are [stranded](#) in the country, [without money](#) to continue their journey, some [living in the streets](#). In August, local organizations opened three [new shelters](#) in the capital of Costa Rica, San José.

In August, the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica [warned](#) about the need to improve international cooperation to respond to the mixed movements in the country. According to the Foreign Minister, Venezuelan and Nicaraguan mixed movements in Costa Rica [“exceed the country’s limits.”](#)

## Guatemala

Guatemala has strengthened migration controls throughout its national territory. Between January and August 2022, national authorities expelled [9,019 people](#) to the southern border with Honduras.

Between January and the first week of September 2022, [43,687](#) Guatemalans were returned by flight from the [United States \(74%\)](#) and [Mexico \(26%\)](#).

## Honduras

From January to September 2022, Honduran authorities registered [89,737](#) irregular entries into their territory. [53%](#) of these correspond to Cubans and [27%](#) to Venezuelans, followed by Ecuadorians and Haitians. This register is based on people who have solicited transit permits, to continue their journey through the country. [77%](#) of people who entered Honduras from January to September were identified in [Danlí and Trojes](#), located in the south of the county close to the Nicaraguan border.

On August 4, 2022, the government announced a "[migratory amnesty](#)", to exempt [fines](#) to people on the move who enter Honduras irregularly before December 1, 2022. As of September 2022, around [5,000](#) people on mixed movements in the country have benefited from this measure.

According to the National Migration Institute ([INM](#)), between January and September 2022, [70,900](#) Hondurans were returned, deported, or voluntarily returned to the country. Of these, 96% came from Mexico and the United States ([68,393](#)). This figure represents an increase of [44%](#) compared to the same period in 2021 when 47,374 people were returned to Honduras.

## Mixed migration in Mexico

To date, Mexico has [77,786](#) asylum seekers, mainly from [Honduras \(26%\)](#), [Cuba \(17%\)](#), [Haiti \(13%\)](#), and [Venezuela \(11%\)](#), among other nationalities. In August, [10,763](#) refugee applications were submitted in Mexico. Tapachula (south of the country) is the city with the largest number of applicants ([52,245 applicants](#)), followed by Mexico City ([8,955 applicants](#)).

On August 9, 2022, the [governors of Oaxaca, Veracruz, Chiapas, Tabasco, Baja California, and Sonora](#) states met with Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to discuss a strategy for [migrants' protection from human trafficking and kidnapping](#). Local organizations in Mexico continue to warn about the exposure of refugees and migrants [to violence from organized crime groups](#).

Mexican immigration authorities have increased controls on buses and [trucks](#) in different parts of the country. [In Puebla \(Puebla State\)](#), [2,465 people](#) without transit documentation have been identified since 2022. Of these, 70% correspond to minors, and 46% were unaccompanied children.

## Caravans of migrants to the United States

On July 25, 2022, about [4,000](#) people left Tapachula in a caravan towards the northern border of Mexico to protest against the delay in obtaining [documentation to transit the country](#). Part of the caravan settled on the outskirts of the [Huixtla Border Transit Assistance Center \(CAIF\)](#).

On August 28, 2022, another caravan left Tapachula with approximately [1,000](#) people and headed for San Pedro Tapanatepec, Oaxaca. On August 30, another group of [600](#) people left for the same municipality.

The daily arrival of people in the municipality of San Pedro has [generated concern among local authorities](#). A sports center was temporarily enabled to deliver [transit permits](#) between July and August.

Some people who did not get their transit permit in San Pedro continued toward the State of [Veracruz](#). Migrant rights activists advocate for implementing a [humanitarian corridor](#) to guarantee free transit through the country.

According to the [DRC Protection Monitoring](#) in Mexico, as of July 2022, [53%](#) of the respondents intend to reach the United States, while [41%](#) plan to stay in the country.

## Situation on the border with the United States

### Encounters

There were 200,195 “[encounters](#)” at the United States’ southern border in July, a [4% decrease](#) compared to June (207,986 “[encounters](#)”). In August 2022, 203,597 “[encounters](#)” were reported. 69% of the “[encounters](#)” in August were with single adults and [25%](#) with family groups. The [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#) estimates that more than [140,000 unaccompanied minors](#) will enter the southern border during the fiscal year 2022.

As of August, [11,365 "encounters"](#) were reported with unaccompanied adolescents. It represents a decrease of 14% compared to July 2022 (13,278 “[encounters](#)”).

### Expulsions and deportations

Title 42 remains in force, as a judicial decision from [May 2022](#) blocked the possibility of revoking it. In August, [73,153](#) people ([36%](#) of all “[encounters](#)”) were expelled on the southern border under Title 42. [130,445 people](#) were expelled under [Title 8](#).

## Changes in United States Policy

On August 8, the [Migrant Protection Protocol](#) (MPP), better known as the “Remain in Mexico” program, [officially ended](#). The measure follows the [Supreme Court’s decision on June 30, 2022](#), which sought to end the return policy of asylum seekers to Mexico. The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [confirmed](#) that individuals are no longer being newly enrolled in the MPP. People already enrolled must wait

until their next court date before they can be [removed from the program](#).

[9,653](#) people were “enrolled” in the MPP between December 2021 and June 2022. Of these people, 60% ([5,765 people](#)) were directly returned to Mexico ([5,765 people](#)).

The [Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\)](#) for Venezuelans was [extended by 18 months](#) and is effective from July. This measure [will only protect Venezuelans](#) already residing in the US as of March 2021.

Since March 2021, Texas has implemented a border control program called “[Operation Lone Star](#)” and has deployed more than 10,000 National Guard members and Department of Public Safety troopers to the border with Mexico and [build border](#) barriers. This program has been [highly criticized by different organizations, for whom Lone Star is “violating fundamental constitutional rights”](#). Thousands of immigrant men seeking to enter the country have been [arrested for trespassing on private property](#), and some have been held in prison for weeks [without legal help or formal charges](#). Under this program, between April and September 2022, Texas moved more than [10,000 people to Washington D.C. and New York](#), including “two buses of migrants from Texas outside Vice President Kamala Harris’ residence” [to “draw national attention to the growing crisis at the border”](#). The U.S. Department of Justice is [investigating](#) the “Lone Star” program for “[potential human rights violations](#).”

On July 7, the Governor of Texas issued an [executive order](#) authorizing [state officials and security forces](#) to make arrests and returns people who enter the state irregularly. This bill seeks to strengthen the [federal government’s role](#) in enforcing immigration law, including arrests, deportations, and penalties.

## Extra-regional mixed movements

In August 2022, Panama reported [31,055](#) entries through the Darien Gap. Of them, [4,9%](#) came from Haiti (1,538 people), [1,8%](#) came from Cuba (574), and [1%](#) from India, among other extracontinental nationalities with fewer entries registered.

Between October 2021 and September 2022, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) intercepted [5,392 Cubans](#) (543% more than in 2021, [838](#) interceptions) and [7,173](#) Haitians (369% more than in 2021, [1,527](#) interceptions).

On August 30, the U.S Coast Guard [intercepted 76 Dominicans and 3 Venezuelans](#) near the [Canal de la Mona](#), a maritime strait that separates Puerto Rico from the Dominican Republic. About [1,919](#) non-US citizens have been intercepted in Puerto Rican waters between October 2021 and June 2022.

Likewise, the Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF) has identified more than [2,000](#) people trying to enter the Bahamas by sea between January and August 2022, mainly Haitians and Cubans.

## Thematic focus: Crossing the Darien Gap or facing the open sea

Between January and August, the Colombian National Navy intercepted more than [240 people](#), mainly Venezuelans, in different boats, near the Island of San Andrés, Colombia. The fishing boats were headed for Nicaragua, the first step in the journey through Central America to the United States.

Since 2022, an increasing number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants try to reach Central America from Colombia by sea, to avoid [systematic dangers and abuses in the Darien Gap](#). However, taking the maritime migration route to Nicaragua is not without risks. Refugees and migrants usually [embark on fishing boats in poor conditions: the risk of a shipwreck is high](#).

Because it is a relatively new dynamic, there is still little consolidated information on migration by sea to Central America, specifically to Nicaragua, through the Caribbean islands. The information available comes mostly from press articles reporting on the rescues and shipwrecks of refugees and migrants in the Caribbean region.

To find more information about this route, monitoring social networks is almost a necessity. Social media platforms are used by refugees and migrants to ask for or share information about this new maritime route and by smuggling networks to promote and sell their services.

### The route by sea to Nicaragua: a solution to avoid the Darien Gap

Since the beginning of 2022, transit through the Darien region, between Colombia and Panama, has seen an increasing presence of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. In 2021, [2,819](#) entries of Venezuelans into Panama were reported, while from January to August 2022, the numbers went up to a twenty-four-fold increase, making them [67%](#) of all entries registered in Panama. Due to the dangers and widespread abuses reported in the Darien region ([see QMMU 2](#)), an increasing number of Venezuelans intend to reach Central America directly by sea to avoid crossing the Darien Gap.

Migration by sea in the Caribbean has historically been used by refugees and migrants from [Haiti](#) and [Cuba](#) to reach the United States. Since 2019, a growing number of Venezuelans have also migrated by sea to the Caribbean islands, such as [Aruba, Curacao, and Trinidad and Tobago](#), and only in a few cases, [to Central America](#). According to the few reports or press articles published on the subject, at least [144 Venezuelan people](#) disappeared trying to reach the Caribbean Islands by sea between 2019 and 2021.

There is almost no official information on the sea movement from Colombia to Nicaragua. In 2022, reports of shipwrecks, rescues, or apprehensions of refugees and migrants in open seas by the Colombian National Navy [began to be more frequent](#), thus reflecting an increase in mixed movements along that maritime route.

## An expensive route through the Caribbeans

According to the few reports on these mixed movements, Venezuelans begin their journey to Central America, [entering San Andrés Island, Colombia \(see map 1\), as tourists by plane from Bogotá or Medellín](#) (Colombia).

Not all Venezuelan refugees and migrants have access to this migration route. Only people with regular entry to Colombia and passports can book a domestic flight in the country. Also, the price of the journey by sea to Nicaragua, charged by smugglers, can range from [hundreds to thousands of dollars](#), a cost too high for the vast majority of refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

Refugees and migrants usually arrive in San Andrés with a “[package](#)”, including accommodation on the island and transportation by sea to Nicaragua, already purchased by a smuggler in Venezuela or online. Otherwise, they must establish contact with smugglers directly in San Andrés.

From the Island of San Andrés, people on the move embark on small fishing boats and set sail at night or in the early hours [to avoid police checks](#). On average, the sea journey from San Andrés to Nicaragua can last [4 to 15 hours](#), depending on the winds and waves, important factors in the open sea.

Some reports also [mentioned](#) departures from other small islands south of San Andrés.

### Map 1. Route of migration by sea between San Andrés Island and Nicaragua



Source: MMC

On August 12, 2022, the Colombian Navy detected [36 irregular migrants](#) on a small island of the San Andrés archipelago, [Pescador Island](#). According to the authorities, people had established a [makeshift camp](#) on the island while waiting to be transported by smugglers to Nicaragua.

Between September 21 and 22, the Nicaraguan Navy intercepted [two boats near Corn Island](#), Nicaragua. 31 people were apprehended, of which 29 were Venezuelans. [Some reports](#) mention that smugglers use Corn Island as an intermediate stop before arriving in Nicaragua (see map 1). From Corn Island, people are [transported to the port of Bluefields](#), Nicaragua, from where they continue their journey to the capital, Managua.

## The maritime route is highly perilous

On social networks, the maritime route to Nicaragua is usually promoted by smugglers under cover of ["tourist packages"](#) and as a ["less risky" and "faster" journey](#) to reach Central America than the route from Colombia to Panama, through the Darien Gap.

### Images 1 & 2. Facebook posts promoting a safe journey by sea to reach Nicaragua



**Image 1:** “Departures from San Andrés to Corn Island, then to Nicaragua’s mainland; I have evidence that our trips are 100% safe.”



**Image 2:** “Direct route from San Andrés to Nicaragua. 100% recommended. For more information, see the following link.” Note: We removed the username and the WhatsApp link.

However, migration by sea presents [high risks](#). Ships used by smugglers are usually [fishermen boats or small ships in poor condition, single-engine, overloaded, and without safety vests or communication instruments: thus increasing the risk of shipwreck](#).

According to the IOM [Missing Migrants](#) project, the maritime routes in the Caribbean present the second highest number of deaths and disappearances recorded in the Americas, after the border area between Mexico and the United States. Of the [6,737 deaths or disappearances recorded](#) by IOM between 2014 and 2022, [33%](#) (2,225 reports) correspond to drownings occurring on sea journeys. These deaths can be underestimated due to the [lack of registration at departure ports](#) that help identify the crew and the boats. In the case of a shipwreck on open seas, ["there is no way of knowing"](#), according to experts.

On [August 5](#), 2022, a boat with approximately 12 people was reported missing between San Andrés and Nicaragua. [Relatives of the disappeared in Venezuela](#) have asked for support to continue their search.

On August 8, 2022, [another boat disappeared with 7 Venezuelan citizens between San Andrés and Corn Island](#). After six days, 7 people, including two minors, were rescued by Costa Rican authorities close to the coast of Manzanillo (Costa Rica).

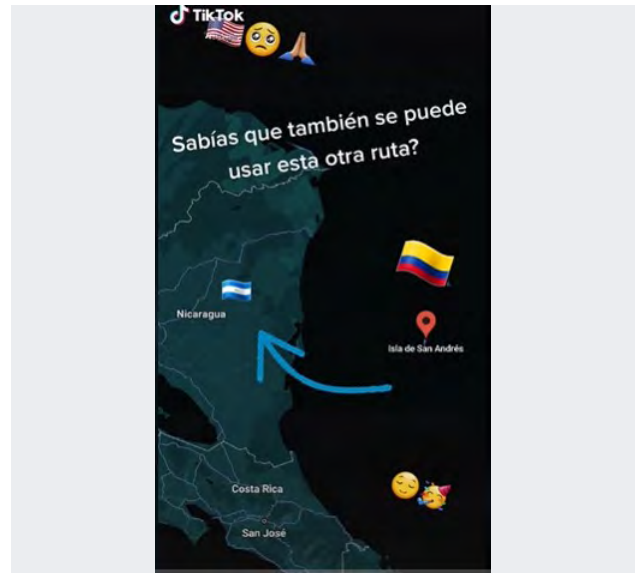
## Social networks as a source of information and promotion of the route

[Various studies](#) showed how [social networks and messaging applications](#) were significantly used by Venezuelan refugees and migrants to access information and make decisions about their journey. A follow-up to some virtual groups dedicated to Venezuelan migration on [Facebook and TiK ToK](#) is evidence that the maritime route to Nicaragua [has been trending for the last several weeks](#).

### Images 3 and 4. TikTok post promoting the new maritime route between San Andrés to Nicaragua



**Image 3 published 17 of July:** "Route confirmed, NOT to cross the Darien jungle. San Andres Island - Direct boat trip to Nicaragua."



**Image 4, published 25 of September:** "Did you know that you can also use this other route?"

Information on social media about the maritime migration route to Nicaragua is easily accessible. In several online groups, people share their questions, videos of personal experiences, practical tips, or [recommendations for a "successful journey"](#). Social networks also circulate information about routes' costs and even the possibility of contacting smugglers to buy the ["tourist packages"](#) to reach Nicaragua or the United States (see images 3 and 4).



## Images 5 and 6. Request for information costs on the maritime route to Nicaragua:



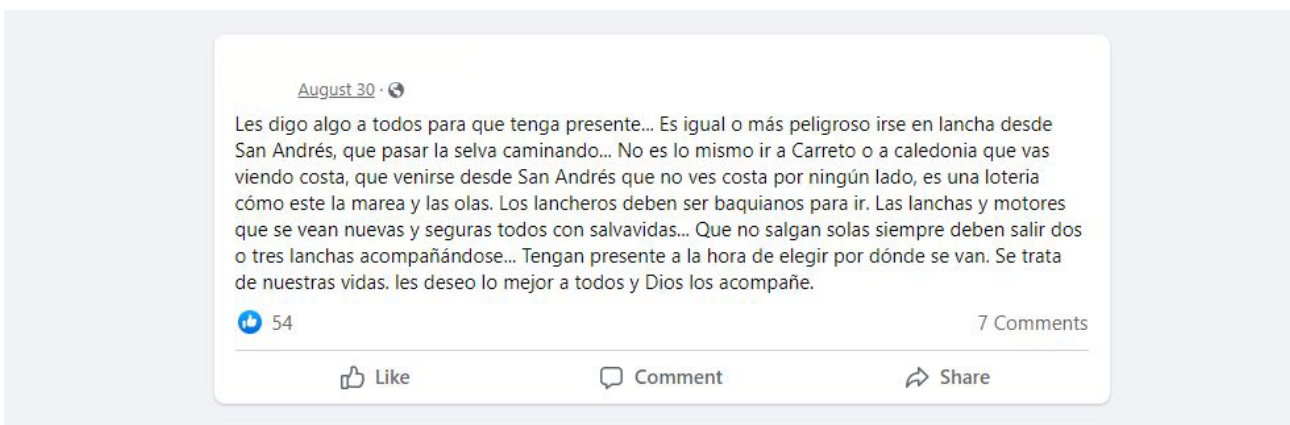
**Image 5:** “Yes! This route exists, but you must pay between 800 and 1000\$ to cross from San Andres to Nicaragua.” 2. “Information, please.” 3. “You leave from Colombia to San Andres - Nicaragua. On the island, look for fishing boats and organize with them to see if they can cross to Nicaragua.” 4. “And you don’t have to cross through the jungle?” (Editor’s note: Reference to the Darien Gap)



**Image 6:** 1. “How much did your ticket cost from San Andres to Nicaragua? When you arrived on the mainland, how much did the transit permit cost you?” (Editor’s note: In Nicaragua, people on the move must pay a temporary document for transit in the country) 2. “1500\$ for the boat and 150\$ for the transit permit.” 3. “Can you give me the information? Thank you.” 4. “Tell me, what do you need to know?”

Overall, [stories shared on social media minimize the dangers of migration by sea.](#)

## Image 7. Facebook post associated with risks in the maritime route between San Andrés and Nicaragua:



**Image 7:** “I will say something to all of you to keep in mind. It is equally or more dangerous to go by boat from San Andrés than to walk through the Darien jungle. It is not the same to go to Carreto or Caledonia (Editor’s note: Darien Gap route), where you will see the coast, as going from San Andrés, where you do not see the coast anywhere, is a lottery of how the weather and the waves are. The fishers must be experts to go. The boats and motors must look new and safe, all with life jackets. Do not go out alone;

*two or three boats should always go together. Keep this in mind when choosing where to go. It is about our lives; I wish you all the best, and may God be with you.”*

Experts report that, in some online groups, administrators [usually quickly remove warnings](#) about risks of the maritime route through the Caribbean. According to researchers, it could indicate a [direct relationship](#) between some administrators of those groups and smuggling networks. The elimination of relevant information associated with the dangers can lead people on the move to have a [“skewed perception”](#) of the risks of the maritime migration route, perceiving it as a safer alternative than crossing from the Darien Gap.

The information generated by official organizations or the press [is generally absent or quickly suppressed](#) on these social media pages. [Some studies](#) seem to indicate that an important proportion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants mainly seek information from friends, family, and other migrants or through social media. [Few are using information confirmed by official sources](#) to inform themselves or to make decisions about their migration.

# Highlighted New Research and Reports



## [We have a way to start out on our own](#)

**Women’s Refugee Commission (WRC), CARE, CORPRODINCO | July 2022**

This report presents the results of integrated cash assistance in gender-based violence case management for forced migrant women, refugees, and host-country nationals in Norte de Santander, Colombia, based on a quasi-experimental mixed-methods evaluation.



## [Hard Times in a Safe Haven: Protecting Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia](#)

**International Crisis Group | August 2022**

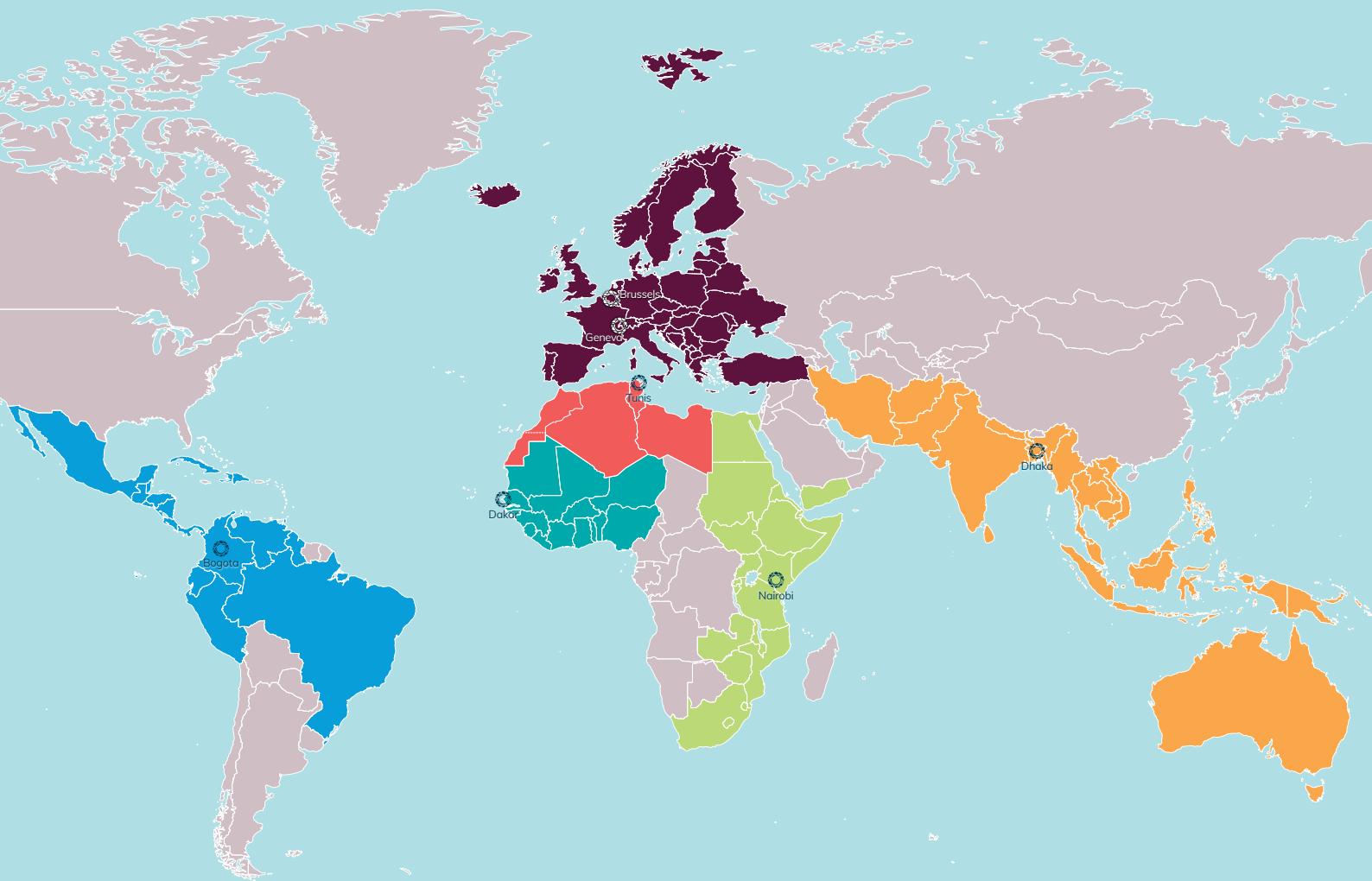
This report examines, during the political transition in Bogotá, the challenges Venezuelan migrants who have sought haven in Colombia, including the risk of recruitment by armed and criminal groups, and how their vulnerability in this regard has affected public perceptions of them. It also explores how the Colombian state has attempted to support migrants; the difficulties it has encountered; and the gaps in support and protection that the new government will need to fill.



## [Human development report 2021-22: Uncertain times, unsettled lives: shaping our future in a transforming world](#)

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | Sept2022**

This year's report critically examines a critical look at archaic and oversimplified assumptions about human decision-making. Institutions ignore the complexity of people. It also challenges conventional ideas of "progress" based on self-defeating trade-offs. It makes a strong case that human development is not only an end but also a means to determine the way forward in uncertain times.



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.

For more information visit:  
[mixedmigration.org](https://mixedmigration.org) and follow us at [@Mixed\\_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

