Mixed Movements Monitoring

October - December 2024

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Key Figures

6,561
Individuals were interviewed from October to December 2024.

60 Nationalities interviewed

33 Average age of respondents

55% VENEZUELANS
13% HONDURANS
7% COLOMBIANS
6% CUBANS
5% ECUADORIANS
15% OTHER
Main countries of origin of respondents

GUATEMALA: 1,538
CHILE: 1,272
MEXICO: 1,241
PANAMA: 1,147
COSTA RICA: 676
HONDURAS: 447
EL SALVADOR: 240
Number of interviews per country

50% Men

50% Women

50% Travelling with family

36% Travelling in families with children

Introduction and scope

Since 2023, the regional Mixed Movements Monitoring initiative—led by UNHCR and WFP, with UNICEF joining in mid-2024—has been tracking mixed movements across Central America and Mexico, as well as Colombia and Chile in South America.

The initiative has conducted over 43,000 interviews across eight countries. Using a harmonized questionnaire and qualitative research methods applied in border contexts across multiple countries, the initiative systematically analyzes trends, population profiles, and the needs of displaced and vulnerable groups. It collects critical data on drivers of movement, protection risks, food security, and child-related concerns to inform evidence-based policymaking and strengthen regional humanitarian responses.

Key Findings

1. Women and single-headed households, especially female-led ones, were exposed to a broad range of protection risks such as higher rates of violence, including assault, theft, and sexual violence, exacerbating their compounded vulnerabilities during the journey.

2. The highest share of individuals travelling alone (39%) was reported since monitoring began in 2023.

3. More individuals reported restricting their daily meals intake. In this quarter, 39% of respondents reported accessing only one or no meal the day prior to the interview, compared to 35% in Q3.

4. More than half ofthe respondents (52%) stated they would face some risk upon return to the country of origin or host country.

5. The proportion of respondents in Panama, Costa Rica, and Guatemala reporting having only one or no meals the day before the interview has increased by at least 10% in each country compared to the previous quarter.

6. Individuals who reported experiencing or witnessing protection incidents are more likely to resort to severe food coping strategies, with 60% of them doing so.

Methodology

Q4 2024

8th round of data collection

7 Countries of data collection: Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Chile and El Salvador (new).

14 Partners

Qualitative research in **COLOMBIA HONDURAS**

The eighth round of data collection of the Mixed Movements Monitoring initiative was conducted from 1 October to 31 December 2024. El Salvador officially joined the initiative during this round, expanding the geographic scope of the exercise. Data collection continued in Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, and Chile.

As in previous rounds, the research methodology combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. These included focus group discussions and key informant interviews in Honduras and field observations recorded in the Necocli Field Diary[1] in Colombia.

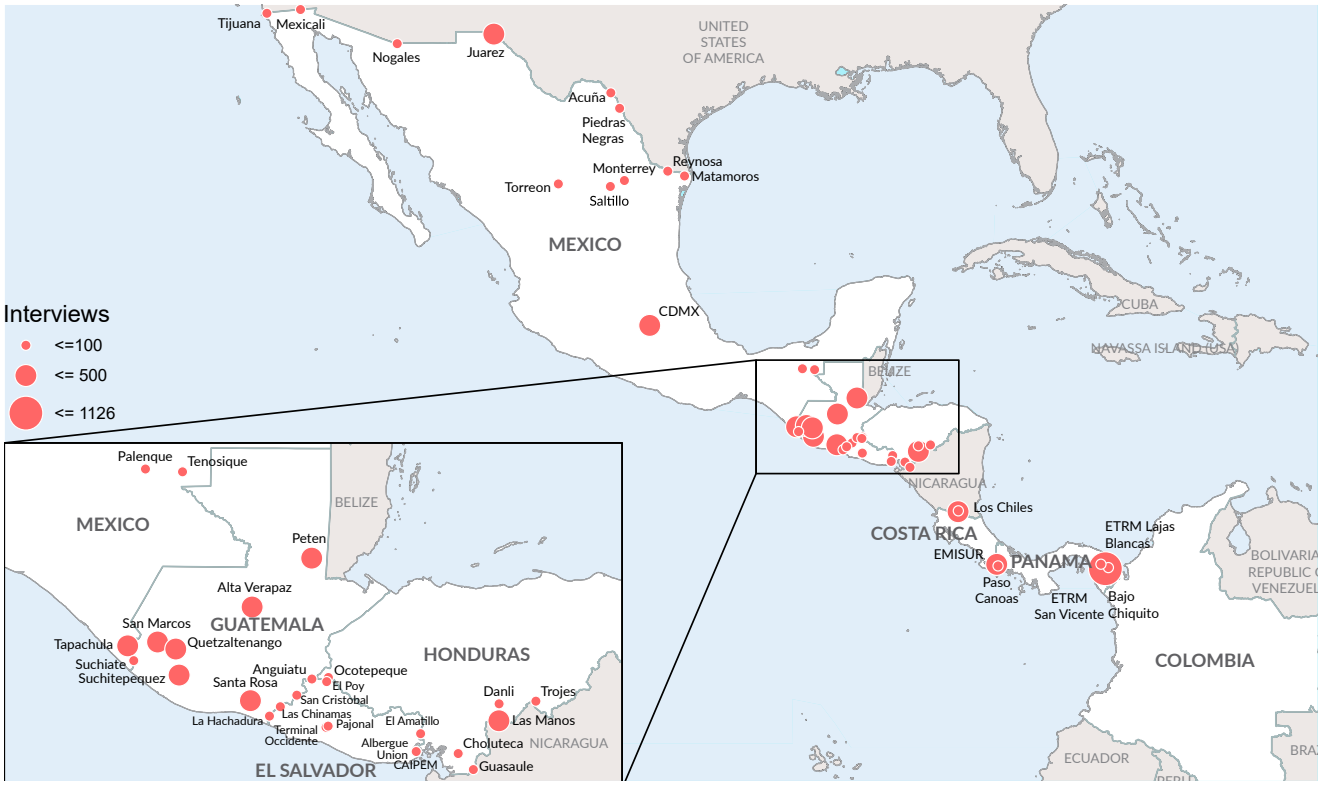
To enrich the analysis, the report incorporates official government statistics and relevant secondary sources, including observations gathered in the field.

Methodological challenges included adapting outreach strategies to a shifting political and policy landscape, and operational barriers to accessing border areas and key transit points. Reaching highly vulnerable groups and engaging individuals from extra-regional origins—often excluded from the sample due to linguistic and cultural barriers—remained difficult. As a result, the findings reflect only the experiences of those interviewed and cannot be generalized to all people on the move.

Nevertheless, the data provides valuable information on the protection environment, evolving protection risks, rights violations, and food security challenges faced by displaced and vulnerable populations in mixed movements across Latin America and the Caribbean.

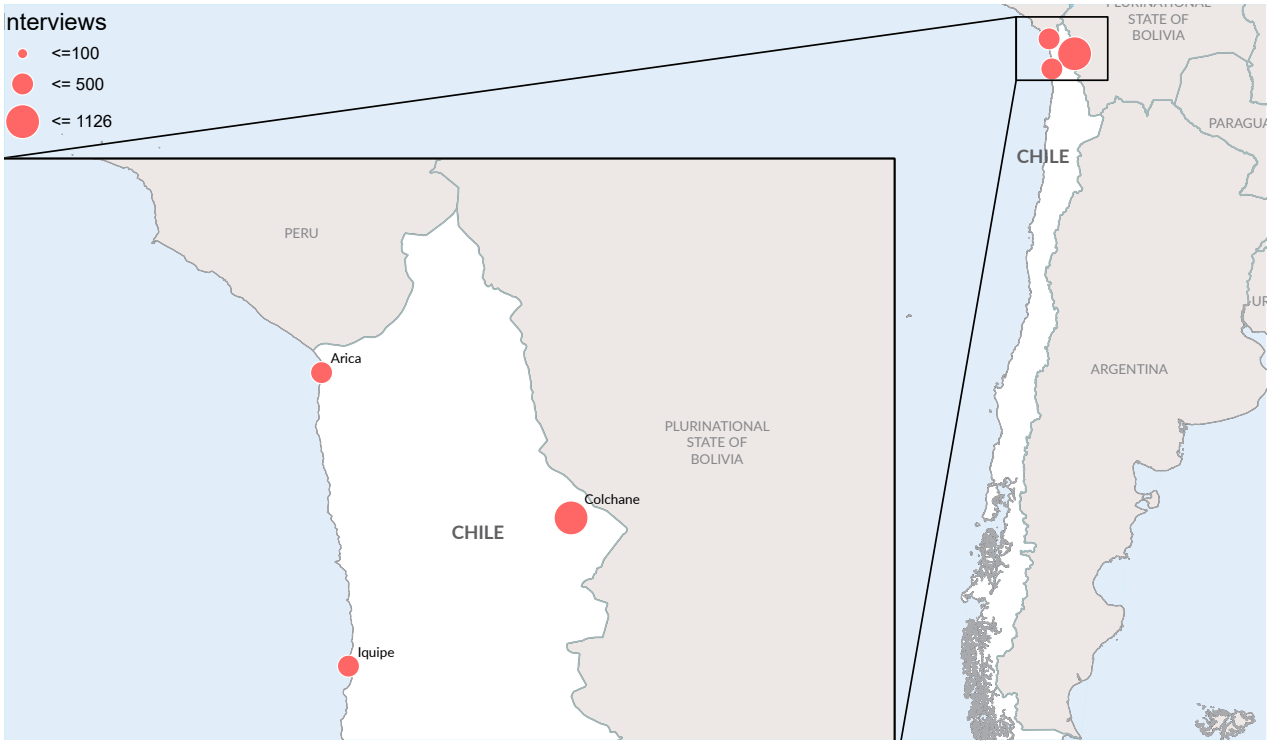
Data collection locations

In this round, 80% of the interviews were conducted at formal and informal border crossing points, as well as nearby collective and temporary shelters. Additionally, interviews were held at non-border locations, such as strategic transit facilities, bus terminals, and reception sites.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

[1] The Necocli Field Diary is a qualitative monitoring tool developed by UNHCR, GIFMM and partners that documents the evolving protection risks, needs, and coping strategies of refugees and migrants transiting through this key departure point in Colombia toward the Darien Jungle.



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Mixed Movements Monitoring results

Context

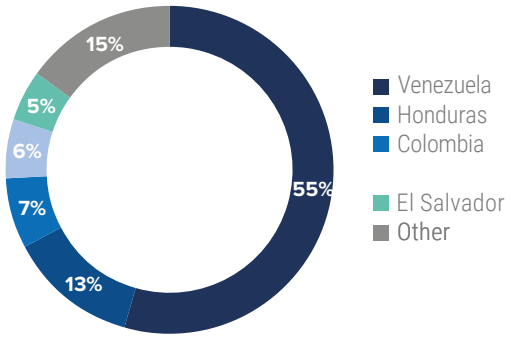
In the fourth quarter of 2024, human mobility across Central America and Mexico experienced a significant decline compared to the same period in 2023. Official government figures indicate that Panama recorded over 38,000 individuals crossing the Darien Province between October and December—a 66% decrease from fourth quarter of 2023—driven by stricter policies, enhanced border controls, and shifting regional dynamics. According to the Mexico's National Migration Institute, irregular entries in the fourth quarter of 2024 were 224,806, marking a 21% drop from 283,601 of the same quarter in the previous year. In Mexico, encounters at the U.S. bordering states (Baja California, Sonora, Coahuila, Chihuahua and Tamaulipas) totaled 8,378, a 75% reduction from the same quarter 4 of 2023 when totaled 33,516, while the number of asylum-claims formally lodged fell by 26%.

In South America, various population movements continued, resulting in diverse cross-border flows. During the fourth quarter of 2024, Chile remained a key destination for individuals navigating these regional mobility patterns.

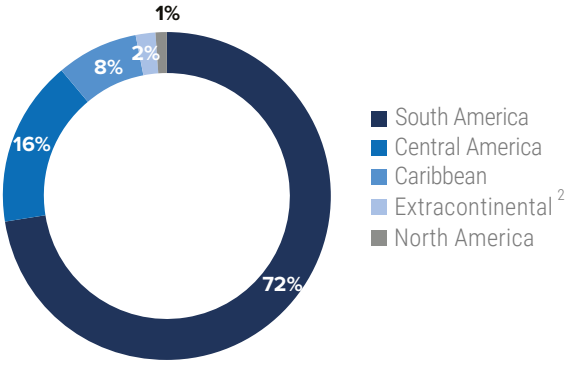
Demographics

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Top countries of origin of respondents



Regions of origin of respondents
(by geographic location)



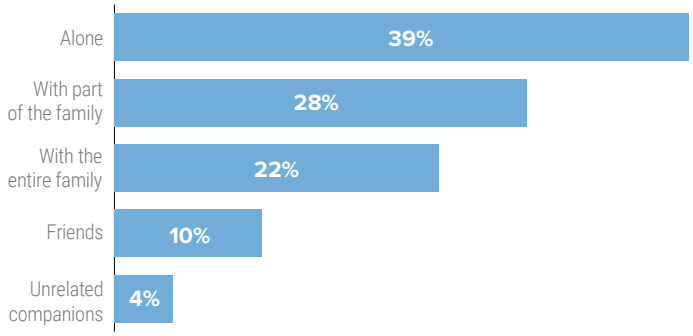
[2] The term "extracontinental" refers to people originating from regions outside the Americas continent, e.g., from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

During the fourth quarter of 2024, the Mixed Movements Monitoring initiative interviewed individuals from 60 nationalities. Panama had the most diverse range of nationalities interviewed of all countries where data collection was conducted, with individuals from 38 countries. The total number of interviews increased throughout the year, reaching its highest point in the fourth quarter, reflecting growing mobility and expanded monitoring coverage.

Most respondents in all countries of interview were from South America, except Mexico, where most interviewees were from Central America (41%). Honduras recorded the highest proportion of Caribbean nationals among all countries (33%), while El Salvador had the largest share of respondents from nationalities outside the region (10%). In Chile, nearly all individuals (98%) were from South America, primarily Venezuelans (64%), followed by Bolivians (18%) and Colombians (11%).

Travel group composition

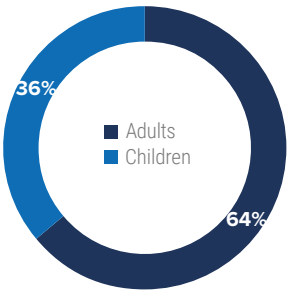
Who do you travel with?



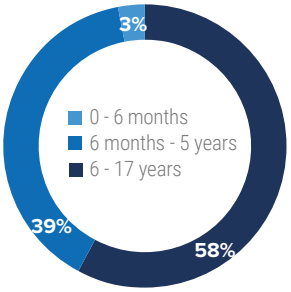
Half of the respondents travel with their families (50%). The share of individuals traveling alone rose sharply to 39%, the highest level recorded since monitoring began in 2023. More individuals from Central America, the Caribbean, as well as from outside the region traveled on their own compared to previous quarters. Although South Americans are still more likely to travel with family than Central Americans, this quarter saw a noticeable decline in that trend.

Family composition

Family age breakdown



Children in family age breakdown[5]



Among the 49% of respondents traveling with their families, 64% were adults and 36% were children.

While families from the Caribbean tended to have fewer children, those from Central America who travelled with families reported larger household sizes, exceeding the regional average. Therefore, even though Central American respondents were less likely than South Americans to travel with family, their groups tended to include a higher proportion of children.

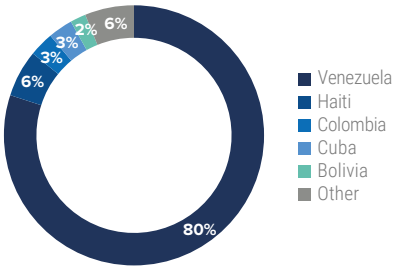
Host countries[3]

19%

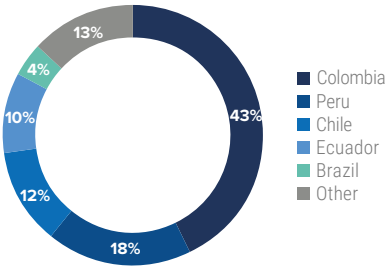
of the respondents have lived in one or more countries other than their country of origin for at least six months .

The proportion of respondents who had lived in another country for more than six months remained relatively stable over recent quarters.

Main nationalities of respondents who resided in host countries



Main previous host countries



LEGAL STATUS

Legal status of respondents who have lived in a previous host country

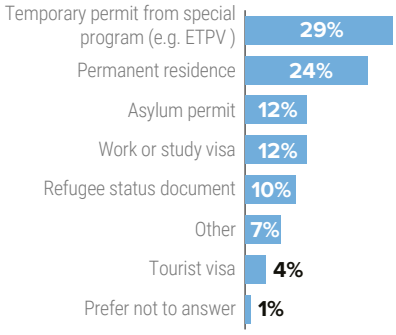
Out of the 19% of respondents who have lived in other countries for more than 6 months:

46% did not apply for a legal status

38% applied and obtained a legal status

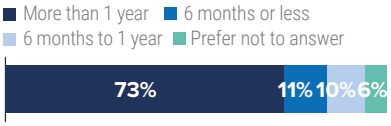
15% applied but did not obtain a legal status

Type of legal status obtained



Have applied, obtained a legal status in host country and the document is still valid

Have applied, obtained a legal status in host country by document validity



Nearly one in five respondents had lived in another country for over six months during the reporting period. Of these, 54% had applied for legal status, while 46% had not. Among those who applied, temporary permits issued through special programs such as Colombia's Temporary Protection Permit for Venezuelans (ETPV) were the most common (29%), followed by permanent visas or residence permits (24%). The proportion of those who reported obtaining temporary permits has varied, but it remains the most frequently cited document across all quarters. Notably, the share of respondents holding asylum seeker or refugee documentation increased this quarter, reaching 12% and 10%, respectively.

Most of those who had resided in a host country cited lack of access to employment opportunities as the main reason for leaving (67%), followed by concerns about generalized violence and insecurity (25%).

DOCUMENTATION

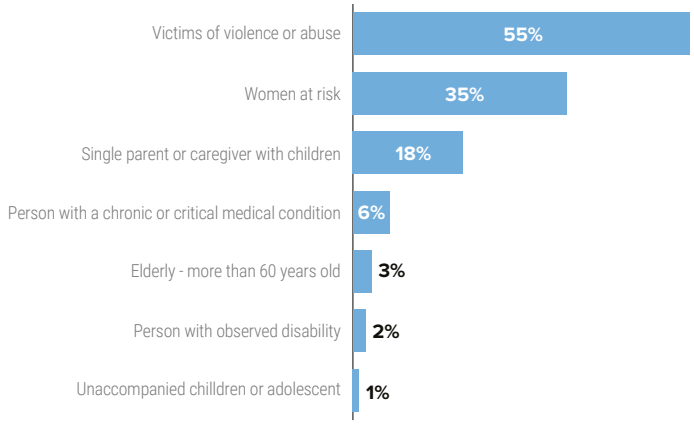
Reflecting previous trends, 86% of respondents carry national ID cards, while 25% have passports. The type of documentation varies significantly by region of origin: Caribbean (87%) and Extracontinental (71%) respondents primarily use passports, whereas South Americans (94%) and Central Americans (78%) mainly possess ID cards. Additionally, 13% of passport holders have expired passports, consistent with earlier data.

[3] Host country: The country in which a non-national stays or resides, whether legally or irregularly. The Mixed Movements Monitoring considers host country a country in which the person has resided for more than six months.

SPECIFIC PROTECTION NEEDS

37% of individuals/families with at least one specific protection need observed.[4]

Type of specific protection needs observed



This quarter, the proportion of respondents with specific needs increased to 37%, up from 31% in the previous quarter. This marks a steady upward trend observed since the beginning of 2024. Notably, more than half of the groups interviewed (55%) identified individuals as victims of violence or abuse, underscoring the heightened protection and assistance needs among those on the move.

Women at risk

35% of women or families with women at risk.[5]

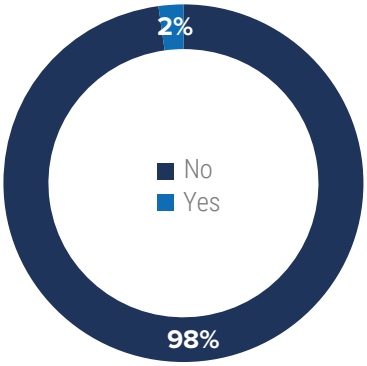
5% of pregnant women in the travel group.

7% of breastfeeding women in the travel group.

Pregnant or breastfeeding women or girls[6]: Respondents were asked whether any women in their travel group were pregnant or breastfeeding. Five percent reported at least one pregnant woman in their group, while seven percent reported having breastfeeding women. Among the top five countries of origin, the highest proportion of pregnant women was reported among Colombian respondents (8%, 26 out of 328), while Venezuelans had the highest proportion of breastfeeding women (9%, 249 out of 2,910).

Unaccompanied or separated children

Child or adolescent separated from their parent or legal guardian and is not currently with the respondent



Among the respondents, 2% have reported that at least one child or adolescent in their family has been **separated** from parents or legal guardians and is not currently with the family. This incidence is higher for respondents in Mexico (5%, 32 out of 633 interviews).

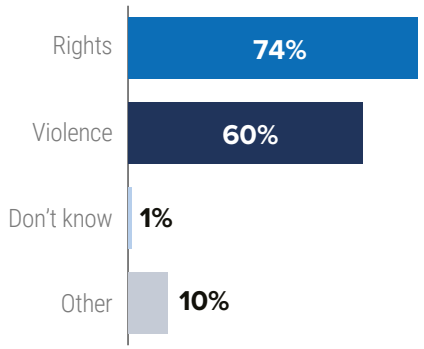
[4] Persons with specific needs are particularly exposed to protection risks and abuses as the challenging conditions of the journey heighten their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation and put them at risk of irreversible and lasting harm. Any person who experiences particular protection risks or barriers due to the intersection of their personal characteristics with the environment requires specific targeted actions to enjoy the full range of their human rights. This is an internal query completed by enumerators at the end of the questionnaire and may not fully capture the range and extent of specific needs among all individuals.

[5] The category "women at risk" refers to women who are pregnant, lactating, or have faced other risks, threats, or violence during the route.

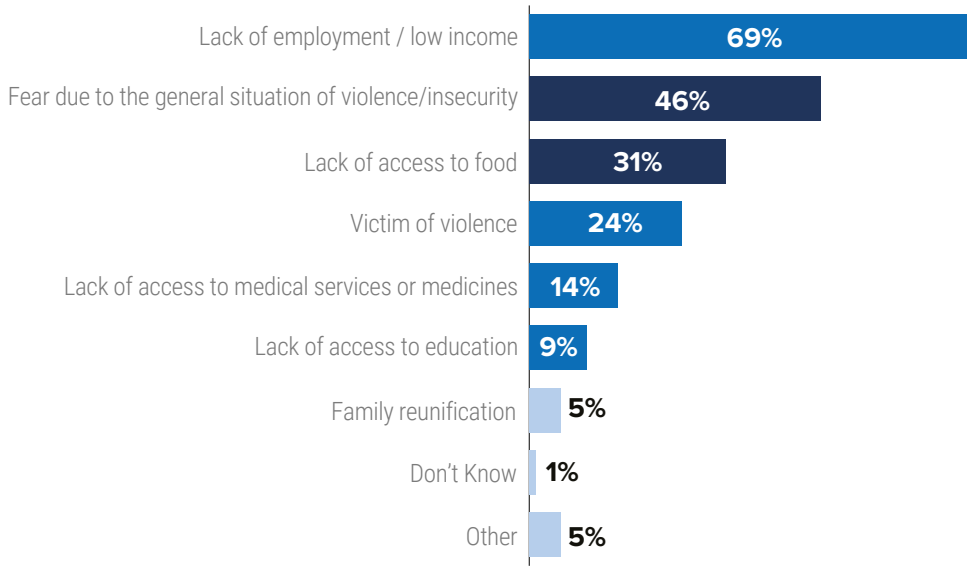
[6] This quarter improved the methodology to determine which respondents were asked about pregnant women or girls in their travel groups, applying the same criteria used for the question on breastfeeding women. Respondents were now asked this question if they were traveling with others or, if traveling alone, identified as women or another gender identity. In contrast, the previous quarter only asked this question of respondents not traveling alone, regardless of their gender.

REASONS TO LEAVE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN[7]

Reasons to leave country of origin (groups)[8]



Reasons to leave country of origin (breakdown)



69%

of respondents left their country of origin due to a lack of employment opportunities, barriers in accessing the labor market, and lack of rights and services, such as food, health, or education.

In 2024, lack of access to employment remained the most frequently cited reason for human mobility, with consistent levels reported throughout the year.

60%

of respondents cited violence-related factors as motivation for their decision to leave their country of origin.

In 2024, violence-related reasons for human mobility were reported at consistent levels throughout the year. The most frequently cited among these were generalized violence and being a victim of violence, both of which remained steady as key drivers for leaving countries of origin.

38%

of respondents mentioned both violence and limited access to basic rights and services as reasons to leave their country of origin.

The steady proportion of respondents citing both reasons throughout 2024 shows how closely linked these factors are, highlighting the overlapping and interconnected causes behind mixed movements.

Respondents traveling in family groups with children consistently reported slightly higher rates across all categories of reasons for leaving their countries of origin in 2024, including limited access to basic rights and services, as well as violence. These findings point to the heightened vulnerability of families and children within mixed movements.

Food insecurity remains a significant push factor for mixed movements in the region. Nearly one in three respondents cited lack of food as a reason for leaving their country of origin, with similar levels reported throughout 2024.

Those traveling with children were more likely to mention food shortages as a driver of movement, with 36% citing it as a reason, compared to 28% of those not traveling with children.

Food insecurity is a key driver of movement, particularly among South American respondents. While 37% of respondents from South America cited lack of access to food as one of their top three reasons for leaving their country, far fewer respondents from Central America (16%) and the Caribbean (17%) mentioned it.

[7] The monitoring exercise examines the motives for respondents leaving their respective countries of origin. The question posed to respondents allows for multiple answers, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing their decision to leave. In the subsequent analysis, the various responses are classified into three overarching groups: reasons related to violence, reasons related to lack of/difficulties in accessing rights, goods, and services, and reasons related to other factors.

[8] Rights-related: This category encompasses factors associated with the lack of access to basic rights and services, including challenges related to employment, low income, food, medical services, or education. Violence-related: Within this category, responses are linked to concerns about the general situation of violence or insecurity, as well as instances of being a victim of violence, including threats and intimidation. Other: This category encompasses a range of reasons, including but not limited to family reunification, natural disasters, and other options that may not distinctly fall into the rights-related or violence-related categories.

JOURNEY[9]

COLOMBIA: 61%
PANAMA: 44%
HONDURAS: 36%
GUATEMALA: 32%
NICARAGUA: 30%

Top 5 countries of transit

Overall movements saw a sharp decline, with a 66% drop in Darien compared to the fourth quarter 2023 and a 42% decrease across all of 2024 relative to the previous year. Stricter entry restrictions and enhanced border controls in the United States and several Central American countries likely contributed to this downward trend.

Arrival to country of interview

75%

of respondents had arrived in the country of interview within the past week,

confirming a consistent trend observed throughout the year. This profile remained the most common across all quarters, highlighting that most individuals are interviewed shortly after arrival. The shares of those present for longer periods—remained relatively low and stable.

Length of journey

53%

of people left their country of origin less than one month ago,

making it the most common profile throughout the year. However, this group declined from 66% in the first quarter, suggesting a gradual decrease in new arrivals over time.

Intended length of stay

74%

of respondents expected to stay in the country of interview for less than one month,

reaffirming the trend observed throughout the year that most individuals are in transit and do not intend to settle. This pattern has remained consistent across quarters, fluctuating between 64% and 82%.

PROTECTION INCIDENTS

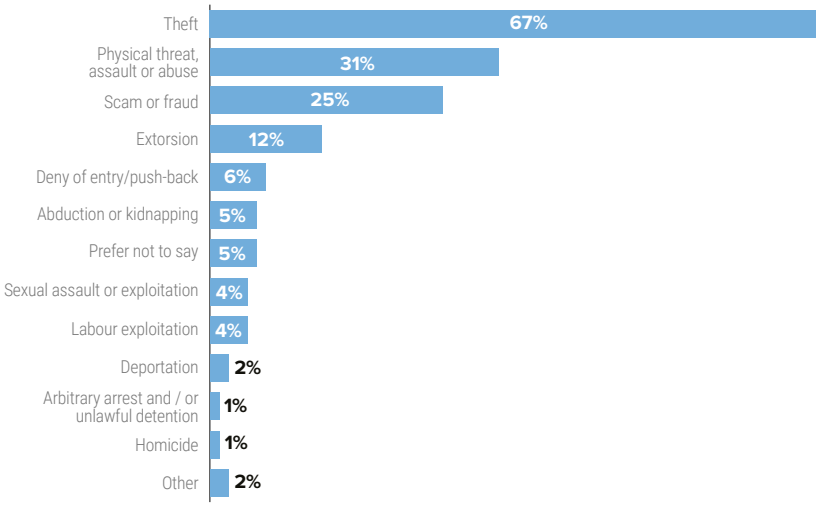
50%

of the people interviewed experienced or witnessed a protection incident or threat along the route.

48%

of respondents traveling with children reported experiencing or witnessing protection incidents, slightly less likely than those traveling without children (51%).

Protection incidents along the route



In this quarter, half of all respondents (50%) reported experiencing or witnessing at least one protection incident along the route. The most commonly reported incidents were theft (67%), followed by threats or physical assault (31%) and fraud (25%). Among those traveling with children, 72% reported theft, pointing to their heightened exposure to such risks during transit.

Throughout the year, theft remained the most persistent type of incident, while reports of threats and physical assault remained consistently high. Fraud showed a gradual decline, and extortion was frequently cited earlier in the year but decreased in the last quarters. Although reported less frequently, incidents of sexual violence gradually increased—possibly reflecting rising risks or greater willingness to disclose—though the

[9] Interviews conducted in Chile were excluded from the analysis of routes extending northward from Darien. This decision aims at ensuring data consistency across the various route-specific indicators.

methodology of this exercise is not designed to safely assess or quantify violence against women and girls, which requires dedicated, survivor-centered services.

The prevalence of protection risks varied significantly by country of interview. The highest rates were observed in Costa Rica (72%) and Guatemala (65%), highlighting increased dangers in these segments of the journey.

Individuals who had left their country of origin within the past month accounted for the largest proportion of reports, representing 42% of those who had experienced or witnessed an incident—indicating a period of heightened vulnerability early in displacement.

While overall rates of reported protection incidents were similar between those traveling with children (48%) and without children (51%), women and single-headed households, particularly those led by women, faced a broader range of risks, including higher rates of assault, theft, and sexual violence.

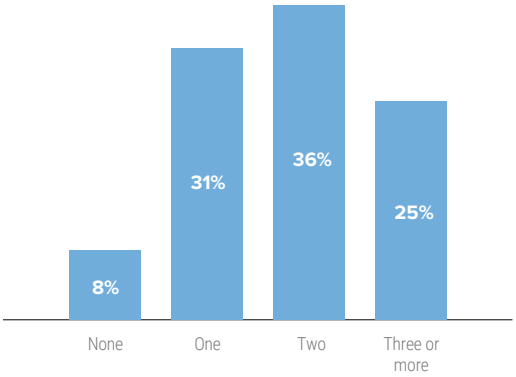
These findings are in line with qualitative data collected in Necocli, which point out to an increase of protection incidents, particularly for individuals with specific needs, due to extended stays in transit areas. These include exploitation, discrimination, and exposure to violence. Prolonged transit has also heightened vulnerabilities, especially among children, women, and LGBTIQ+ individuals.

ACCESS TO FOOD

39%

of respondents reported having only one or no meal the day before the interview. The highest proportions were recorded in Guatemala (56%), Costa Rica (54%), and Panama (39%).

How many meals did you eat yesterday?



Food insecurity remains a serious concern for people on the move. This quarter, 39% of respondents reported eating only one or no meals the day before the interview—an increase from 35% in the previous quarter. The situation was particularly severe in Guatemala (56%), Costa Rica (54%), and Panama (39%). It is important to note that data for this quarter also includes El Salvador, where 10% of respondents reported having access to only one meal or none at all. In Costa Rica, 16% of respondents reported not eating at all, up from 10% in the previous quarter.

In Panama, Costa Rica, and Guatemala, food consumption has deteriorated by at least 10% in each country. The proportion of respondents reporting having only one or no meals the day before the interview has risen to 40%, 55%, and 56%, respectively. Costa Rica recorded the highest percentage of people who did not eat at all the previous day (16%), up from 10% in the last quarter. Similarly, data from Chile shows an increase, with 44% of respondents reporting having one or no meals the day before, and 17% indicating they had not eaten at all.

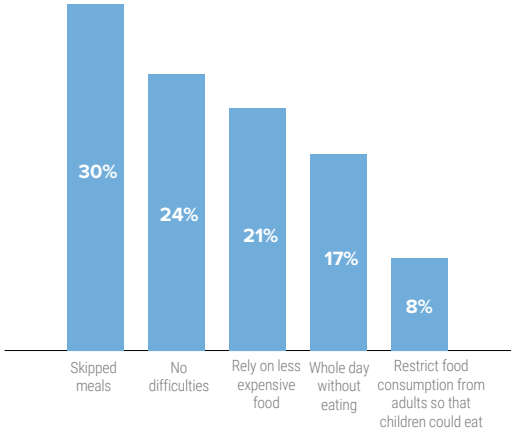
Regarding nationalities, this quarter has seen a stabilization in the proportion of Central American respondents reporting low meal consumption (one or no meals the day before the interview), remaining at 32%, similar to levels observed in the third quarter. However, 40% of Salvadoran nationals reported having only one or no meals the previous day—a significant increase from 26% in the last quarter. Similarly, 45% of Colombian respondents reported low meal consumption, reflecting a 6-percentage-point increase compared to the previous quarter. In contrast, Honduras has shown a steady decline in this indicator over the past three quarters, with 32% now reporting one or no meals the day before the interview.

Since UNICEF joined the monitoring exercise in the second quarter of 2024, additional questions and cross-tabulations have been introduced to better understand the relationship between food consumption and travel group composition. This quarter, 42% of respondents traveling with children under six months reported having only one or no meals the previous day, including 11% who had not eaten at all. This is notably higher than the 35% reported among those not traveling with young children. While this gap may be partially linked to smaller travel groups, it raises serious concerns—particularly as these groups often include breastfeeding women, whose nutritional needs are critical for the health and development of their infants.

76%

of respondents faced difficulties meeting their food needs and resorted to coping strategies. This includes a 10% of respondents who reported restricting their meals so that children in their family or group could eat—double the rate from the previous quarter.

Distribution of food coping strategies used over the past week



When asked about their food situation over the past week, 76% of respondents reported using a severe coping strategy to deal with food insecurity. The most commonly reported responses included skipping meals (30%), going an entire day without eating (17%), and restricting adult food consumption so children could eat (8%). While overall reliance on coping strategies declined slightly from the previous quarter (79%), the percentage of people who went a full day without eating increased by two percentage points.

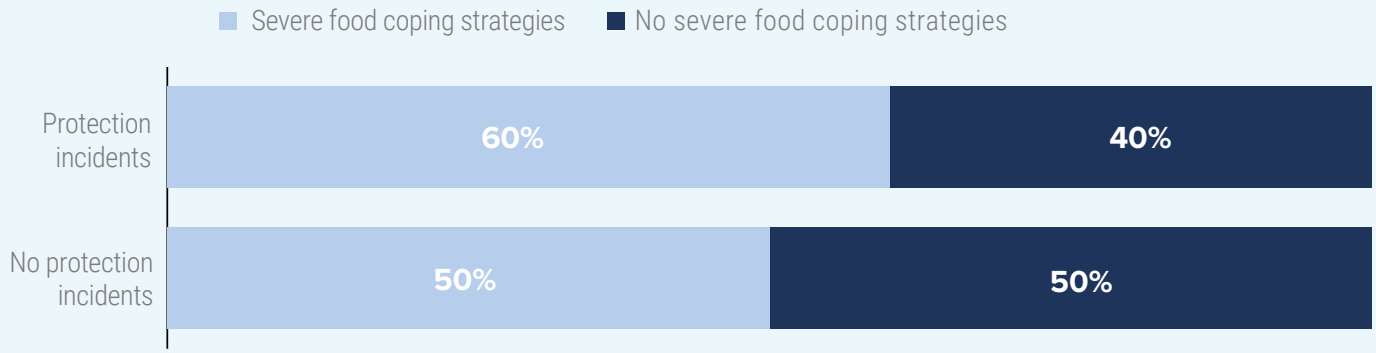
Women remained more likely than men to restrict their meals for children (11% vs. 4%), consistent with trends from earlier quarters.

By country, Costa Rica (48%) and Panama (42%) had the highest rates of reported meal skipping. In Mexico, the situation improved, with rates dropping from 27% to 17%. Meanwhile, Chile experienced a sharp increase in respondents reporting a full day without food—31%, up from 23% in the previous quarter.

Food security and protection

Similarly to previous quarters' results, 60% of respondents who reported experiencing or witnessing at least one protection incident also reported using severe food coping strategies, such as skipping meals or going a whole day without eating. This remains notably higher than the 50% reported among those who did not experience protection incidents.

Severe food coping strategiesby victim/witness of protection incident



Venezuelan and Colombian respondents continued to report the highest overlap between protection risks and food insecurity amongst the most interviewed nationalities: 71% of Venezuelans and 70% of Colombians used severe food coping mechanisms. Both nationalities also had the highest rates of skipping meals (38%) and restricting their own food to feed children (14%).

When disaggregated by type of protection incident, 72% of those who experienced or witnessed theft—the most commonly reported protection incident—resorted to severe food coping strategies. These patterns highlight the compounded vulnerabilities faced by individuals encountering both protection risks and food insecurity during their journey.

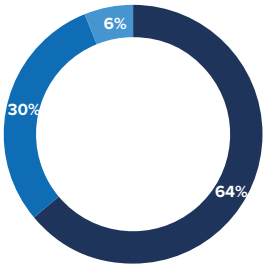
Infant and young child feeding indicators[10]

46%

of infants under six months of age are exclusively breastfed[11] (46 out of 101 respondents)

Food poverty: children aged 6 months to 5 years

64% of respondents with children between six months and five years of age have at least one child experiencing severe food poverty (676 out of 1,057)



This section covers the results of nutrition in early childhood, specifically children under five years of age.

Breastmilk is the only recommended source of nutrition for infants under six months of age[12]. Therefore, exclusive breastfeeding is used as the primary child nutrition indicator for this age group. 46% of caregivers (46 out of 101) reported exclusive breastfeeding for infants under six months of age the day before the interview.

For **children between six months and five years of age**, the nutrition indicator used in this report is called "child food poverty" which quantifies the dietary diversity of food eaten the day before[13]. According to this quarter's data, 64% of respondents reported children fell into the category of severe food poverty (consuming two or fewer food groups), while only 6% met the minimum dietary diversity standard (five or more food groups). These findings remain significantly higher than regional estimates from UNICEF,[14] which reports 9% of children under five in severe food poverty across Latin America and the Caribbean. The most alarming results were observed in Costa Rica and Honduras, where 88% (83 out of 94) and 92% (57 out of 62) of respondents reported children live in severe food poverty —highlighting the extreme vulnerability of young children on the move in these countries.

Child vaccination[15]

62% of infants under 6 months of age are fully vaccinated.

78% of children between six months and five years of age are fully vaccinated.

According to caregivers, 62% of infants **under six months of age** (63 out of 101) had completed their vaccination schedule, while 32% (32 respondents) had not yet completed it. The highest number of infants with incomplete vaccination schedules was reported in Guatemala, where 65% (20 out of 31) had not completed the schedule.

Among children aged **six months to five years,** 78% (836 out of 1,068) were reported as fully vaccinated according to their age. The highest number of children without a completed vaccination schedule in this group was observed in Costa Rica, where 34% (34 out of 99) had not completed their recommended vaccination schedule.

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[10] Questions about children or adolescents are only asked to the caregiver, namely respondent travelling with children who compose the family in the travel group. The caregiver responds on behalf of a child randomly selected from the family in the travel group. Data for child-related indicators was not collect in Mexico.

[11] The exclusive breastfeeding and dietary diversity indicators are defined in accordance with WHO-UNICEF guidelines to evaluate feeding practices of children under five years of age. See "Indicators for assessing infant and young child feeding practices: definitions and measurement methods". Geneva: World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2021. Available online at https://data.unicef.org/resources/indicators-for-assessing-infant-and-young-child-feeding-practices/

[12] Infants who are not exclusively breastfed are highly vulnerable to diseases and infections, including diarrhea, at that age. Thus, they can easily become dehydrated and malnourished, implying a real risk of death.

[13] The child food poverty indicator uses the number of food items belonging to different food groups eat by a child the previous day to assess if dietary diversity is sufficient. Children in this age group need to consume food from at least five out of the eight identified food groups for a "minimum dietary diversity". Children who consume food from less food groups are considered in child food poverty of two levels: moderate if they consume food from three or four food groups, or severe if they consume foods from two or less food groups. Child food poverty harms all children, but it is particularly damaging in early childhood when insufficient dietary intake of essential nutrients can cause the greatest harm to child survival, physical growth, and cognitive development, trapping children and their families in a cycle of poverty and deprivation.

[14] "Child Food Poverty. Nutrition Deprivation in Early Childhood", UNICEF, New York, June 2024. Available online at https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-food-poverty-report-2024/

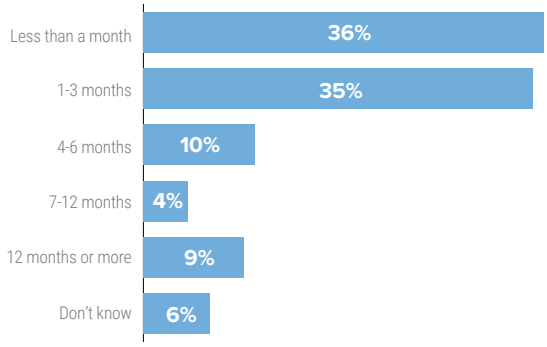
[15] Information about the vaccination status is gathered through a direct question, without checking the vaccination card. See note 10.

Child education[16]

18%

of children and adolescents between 6 and 17 years of age were not receiving education.

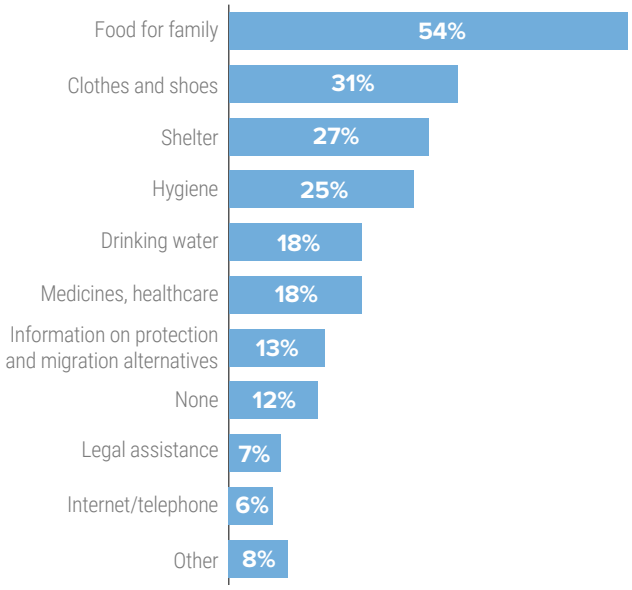
Percentage of families with children aged 6-17 years by last attendance of education
(Data was not collected in Mexico)



Families with at least one child and adolescents in school age, i.e., from six to 17 years of age, were asked a set of questions related to their education. Eighty-two percent of them (1,015 out of 1,233) declared one of their children in this age range had attended school in their country of origin before beginning their journey. However, continuity in education is at risk: while 71% (883 out of 1,252) had last attended school within the past three months, nearly one in five (280 out of 1,252) had been out of school for over six months, including 9% (108 out of 1,252) for more than a year. Educational progress was also limited, with only 14% (173 out of 1,233) having reached secondary education.

Barriers to re-enrollment are significant: 73% of caregivers (900 out of 1,233) reported not carrying any document certifying the last grade completed, and 80% (992 out of 1,233) were unaware of the requirements to access education in other countries. The situation was particularly concerning for children from Honduras, who showed the highest rates of prolonged school interruption. These findings underscore the urgent need for support mechanisms to ensure learning continuity for children on the move.

MAIN NEEDS



54%

of people interviewed reported access to food for their families as their main need.

This need remained the top concern throughout the year, though it slightly declined in the fourth quarter. It was particularly acute among respondents in Costa Rica (75%) and Guatemala (64%).

Clothing and shoes emerged as the second most reported need (31%), showing a steady increase over the year. The demand was especially high in Panama, where 60% of respondents reported shortages—likely due to the harsh conditions of the Darien jungle crossing.

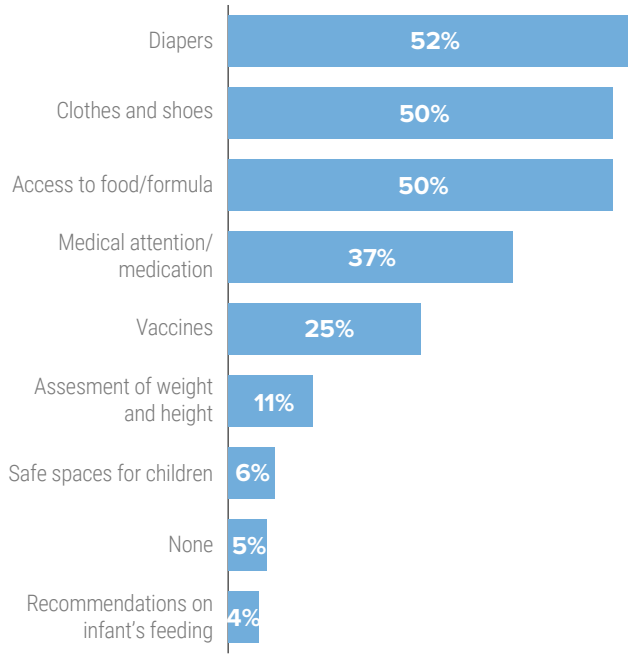
Shelter was the third most common need (27%), with responses fluctuating slightly across quarters but remaining a consistent concern. Similarly, the need for drinking water saw a gradual increase, reaching 24% by the end of the year. El Salvador reported the highest proportion of respondents in need of drinking water (46%) and medicine (35%), both significantly above the regional averages.

[16] See note 10, p. 11.

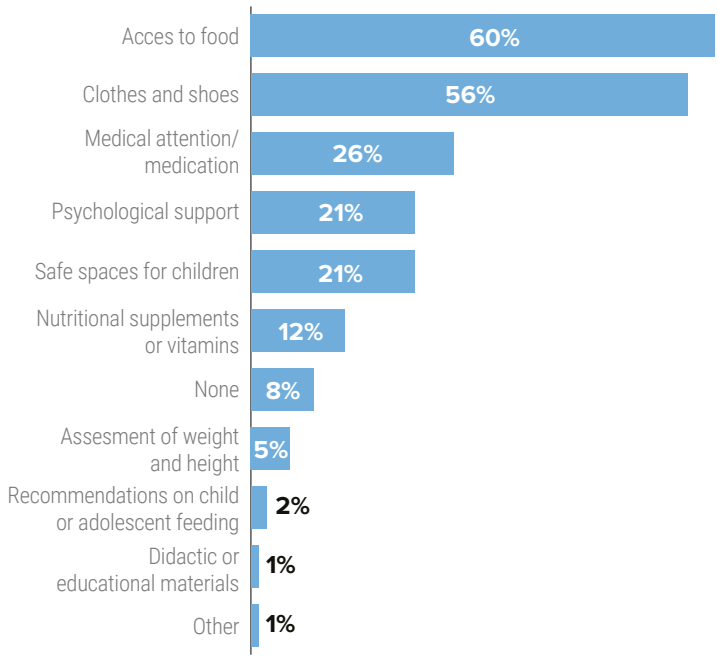
While legal assistance, health care, and protection were reported at lower but stable levels, needs related to hygiene saw a notable increase, especially in Chile, where 29 % of respondents cited hygiene products as critical. In the same country, another 29% identified the need for information on protection and migration alternatives as their second most pressing concern, underscoring a broader shift toward seeking more than just immediate survival needs.

Main needs of children[17]

Main needs of infants under 6 months



Main needs of children aged 6 months to 17 years



For infants under six months of age, the primary need reported by caregivers was diapers (52%, 53 respondents), closely followed by access to clothing and footwear (50%, 51 respondents) and access to food or formula (also 50%, 51 respondents).

For children and adolescents aged six months to 17 years, access to food was the most reported need, cited by 70% of caregivers (1,026 respondents). Clothing and footwear followed closely, reported by 59% (1,008), notably higher than the 36% reported among adult respondents. These two needs remain the most pressing this quarter. Medical attention or medication was identified by 26% (480), while psychological support was mentioned by 21% (375). Access to educational or safe spaces for children was reported by 17% (297), highlighting a significant gap compared to the top priorities.

Across countries of origin and interviews, access to food and clothing emerged as the most frequently reported needs among children and adolescents aged six months to 17 years. Among Venezuelan respondents, 62% (602 out of 976) cited access to food and 59% (571 out of 976) mentioned clothing and shoes. Honduran respondents notably prioritized nutritional supplements or vitamins, with 26% (19 out of 72) selecting it as a main need—after food (69%, 50 out of 72) and clothing (47%, 34 out of 72).

Needs also varied by country of interview. In Guatemala, 37% (149 out of 402) of respondents identified psychological support as a priority, in addition to food (88%, 359 out of 402) and clothing (57%, 230 out of 402). In Chile, 32% (143 out of 444) of respondents emphasized the need for educational or safe spaces for children, highlighting concerns around protection and learning continuity during displacement.

[17] See note 10, p. 11.

Humanitarian assistance received by children[18]

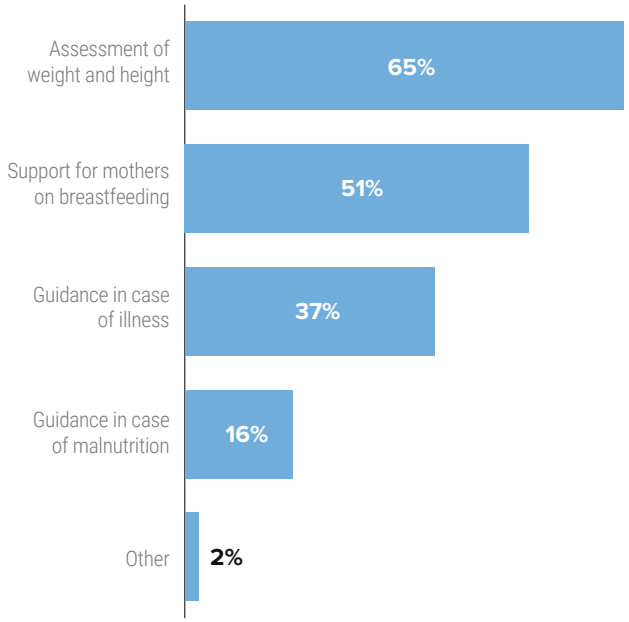
49%

of infants under six months of age have received humanitarian assistance along the route (49 out of 101 respondents).

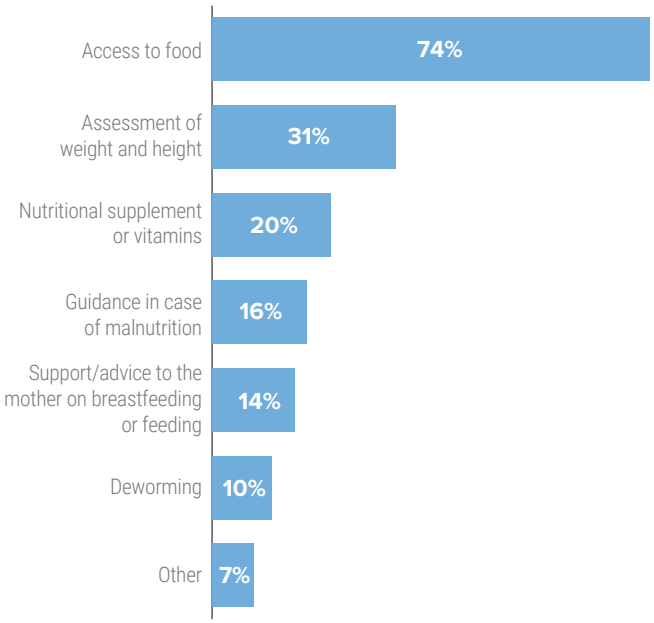
66%

of children between six months and five years of age received humanitarian assistance along the route (704 out of 1068 respondents).

Type of assistance received by infants under 6 months



Type of assistance received by children aged 6 months to 5 years



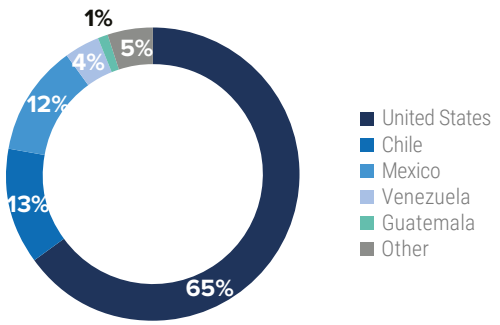
According to 49% of caregivers (49 out of 101), infants under six months of age received some form of humanitarian assistance along the route. Among those who did receive support, the most common types were infant weight and height assessments (65%, 32 out of 49) and breastfeeding counseling for mothers (51%, 25 out of 49). However, more than half of all caregivers with at least one infant (51%, 52 out of 101) reported not receiving humanitarian assistance.

For children aged six months to five years, according to caregivers, 66% reported having received some humanitarian assistance along the route (704 out of 1,608). most frequently cited were food assistance (74%, 524 out of 704), consistent with the main reported need for that age range, followed by weight and height assessment (31%, 216 out of 704) and nutritional supplement or vitamins (20%, 139 out of 704).

[18] See note 10, p. 11.

INTENTIONS

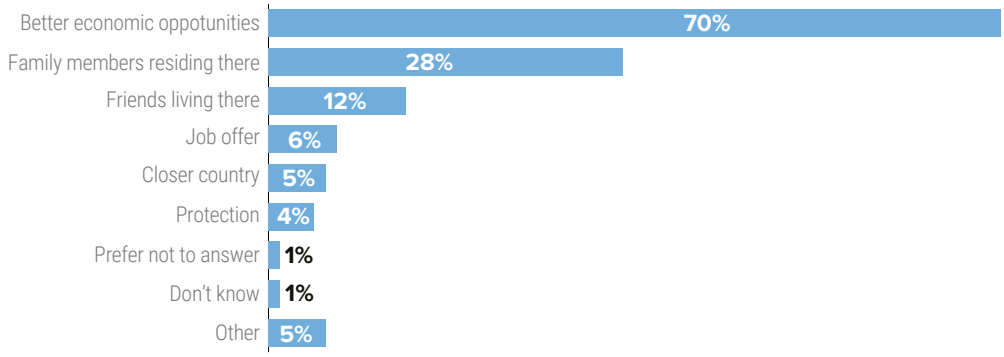
Intended country of destination



65%

of respondents intend to go to the United States.

Main reasons for intended destination



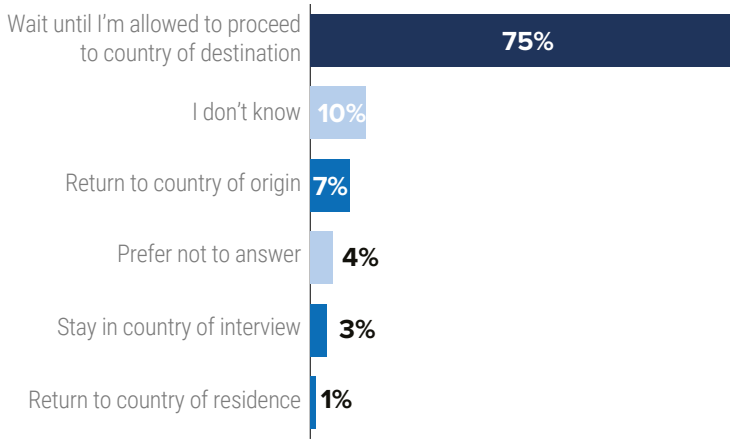
During the last quarter of 2024, the United States remained the most frequently cited intended destination, selected by 65% of respondents. However, this reflects a 22% decrease compared to the same period in 2023, indicating a consistent downward trend throughout the year. Meanwhile, Chile (13%) surpassed Mexico (12%) as the second most commonly reported destination.

Chile continued to be perceived primarily as a destination country, while also reflecting a dynamic pattern of movement between Chile, Peru, and Bolivia. Most respondents surveyed in Chile (66%) indicated their intention to stay, particularly among Venezuelans (57%), Bolivians (26%) and Colombians (10%).

Economic opportunity remained the primary motivation for choosing a destination, cited by 64% of respondents—representing a 13% decline from the same period in 2023. Additionally, 31% cited the presence of family members and the need for family reunification, a 6-percentage-point increase, with Venezuelans, Colombians, and Ecuadorians showing the strongest family ties in their destination countries.

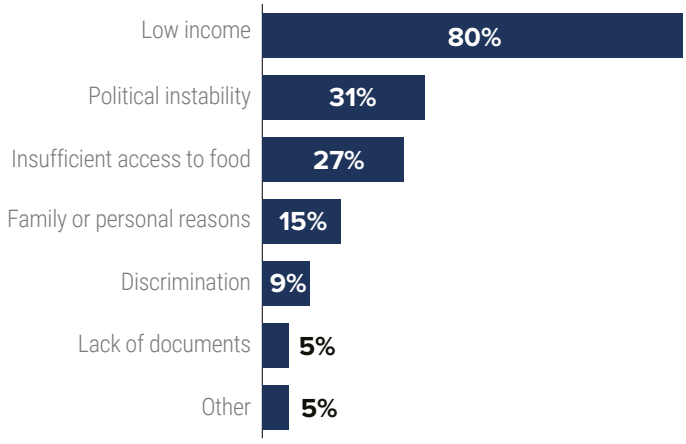
Scenarios of alternative intentions

In case not possible to reach intended country of destination, what would yo do?



In the last quarter of 2024, waiting in the country of departure remained the most common fallback option if unable to reach the intended destination, reported by 75% of respondents. While still the majority, this represents a slight decline from 69% in the same period of 2023. A modest increase was observed in the proportion of people uncertain about their next steps, rising from 10% to 13%, suggesting a gradual shift toward greater unpredictability in decision-making.

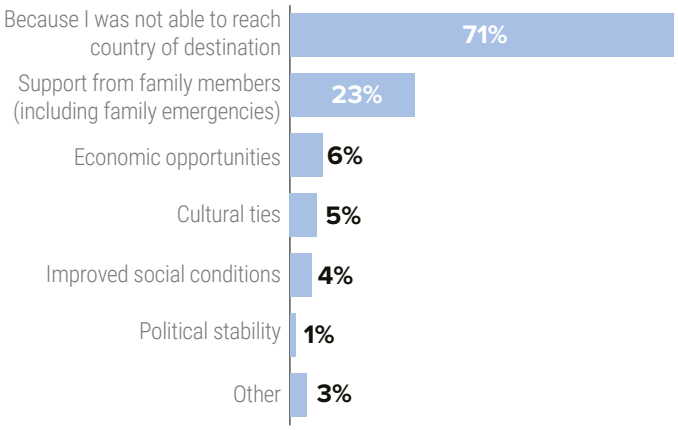
What would be the reason(s) for not considering to return to country of origin or host country?



By nationality, patterns remained relatively stable. Venezuelans continued to be the most likely to wait (80% in 2024 vs. 81% in 2023), although a slight increase in uncertainty and a lower share indicating willingness to return were noted. Similarly, fallback strategies among Hondurans showed limited variation, with 61% choosing to wait and a slight increase in those opting to return. Among Colombians, waiting declined moderately (from 76% to 69%), with a slight rise in uncertainty. The most notable change was observed among Cubans, where the share planning to return to their country of origin or residence increased significantly from 5% to 22%, pointing to a shift in fallback intentions likely driven by changing conditions or the feasibility of onward movement.

While waiting remains the preferred option, slight increases in uncertainty and return intentions—particularly among specific nationalities—reflect a gradual diversification in fallback strategies.

What would be the reason(s) to return?



In the last quarter of 2024, the primary reason for returning to the country of origin continued to be the inability to reach the intended destination, cited by 71% of respondents, slightly up from 69% in the same period of 2023. This confirms that most returns remain reactive rather than voluntary, driven by blocked mobility rather than improved conditions at home.

Across nationalities, this reason was almost universal among Cubans (100%), Ecuadorians (96%), and Hondurans (82%), and remained high among Venezuelans (76%) and Colombians (72%), mirroring trends from the previous year.

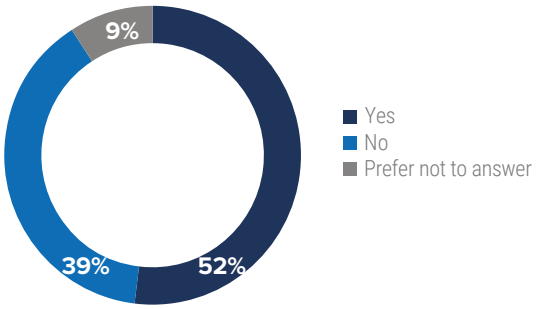
In comparison to the same period of 2023, support for family members gained some prominence as a reason for return, rising from 15% to 23% overall. This was especially notable among Colombians (28%), Venezuelans (24%), and Ecuadorians (22%), suggesting a gradual increase in family-driven return decisions.

Other reasons—such as economic recovery, cultural ties, or improved social conditions—remained limited in both years, each cited by fewer than 10% of respondents, reinforcing the continued absence of strong pull factors in countries of origin.

While blocked mobility remains the dominant driver of returns in last quarter of 2024, the data shows a slight shift toward more personal and family-related motivations, particularly among certain nationalities.

Risks upon return

Risk upon return for self or family



52%

of people responded that they would face some kind of risk upon return.

When asked whether they would face any risk if they had to return to their country of origin or host country, more than half of the respondents (52%) reported facing some risk. In contrast, 39% said they would not, and 9% preferred not to answer.

By region of origin, the highest proportion of respondents indicating potential risks upon return was found among those from extracontinental regions (62%), followed closely by the Caribbean (59%), Central America (54%), and South America (50%).

In Mexico, where respondents are also asked about potential risks if their family had to return to their country of origin, 54% reported facing risks related to threats, extortion, or persecution. An additional 28% cited risks associated with general violence and/or discrimination.

These findings suggest ongoing protection concerns, particularly for individuals from regions marked by instability or systemic insecurity. These risks are often linked to threats to physical safety, lack of reintegration support, and continued vulnerability of specific groups—including unaccompanied or separated children, survivors of violence against women and girls, victims of human trafficking, and LGBTIQ+ individuals.

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