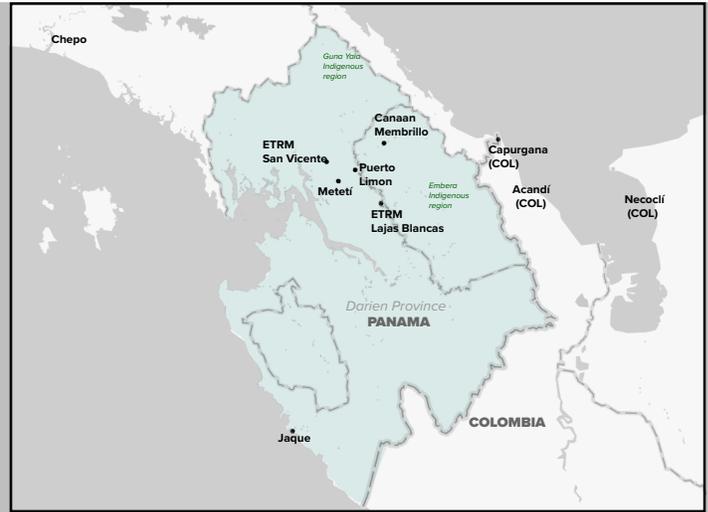


April 2023

Context

Darien is Panama's largest and poorest province. Bordering Colombia, the province hosts a 60-mile-deep jungle, the only breaking point of the Pan-American highway, linking the continent from south to north. Despite being one of the most dangerous jungles in the world, Darien is a transit location for thousands of refugees and migrants, most of them coming from Haiti, Venezuela, Cuba, African and South Asian nations. According to official statistics of the National Migration Service (SNM), from 2010 to 2020, some 120,000 people crossed through this area. In the last two years, Panama has been facing an unprecedented mixed movement crisis, with nearly 400,000 people making this perilous journey through the jungle. In 2022, a total of 248,284 people entered the country irregularly through Darien.

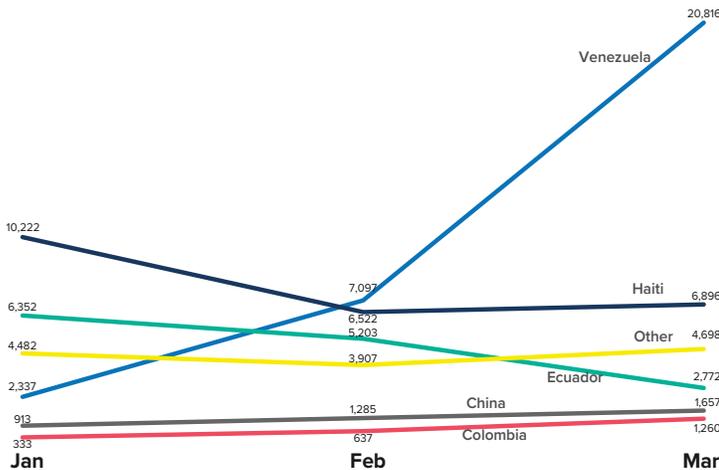


Key Figures

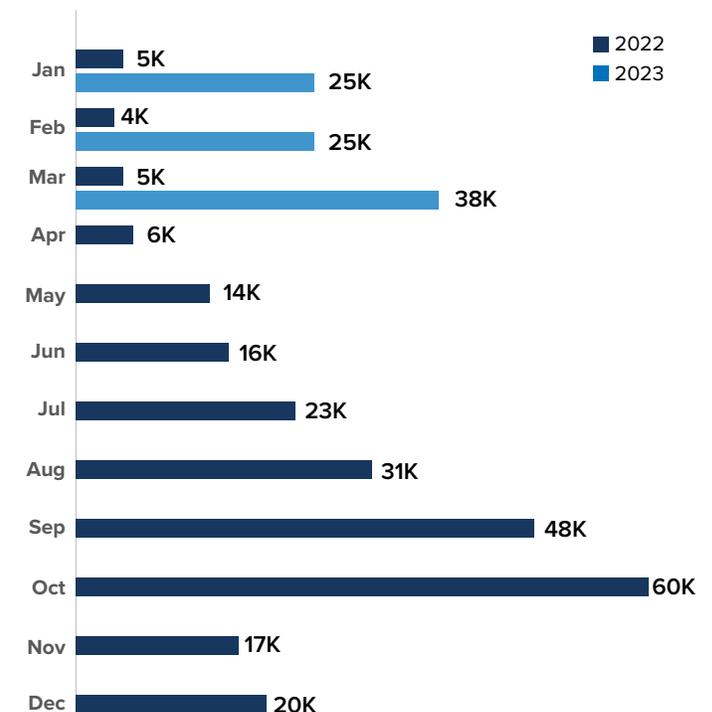


Source: Panama National Migration Service

Main Nationalities entering irregularly through the Darien in January to March 2023

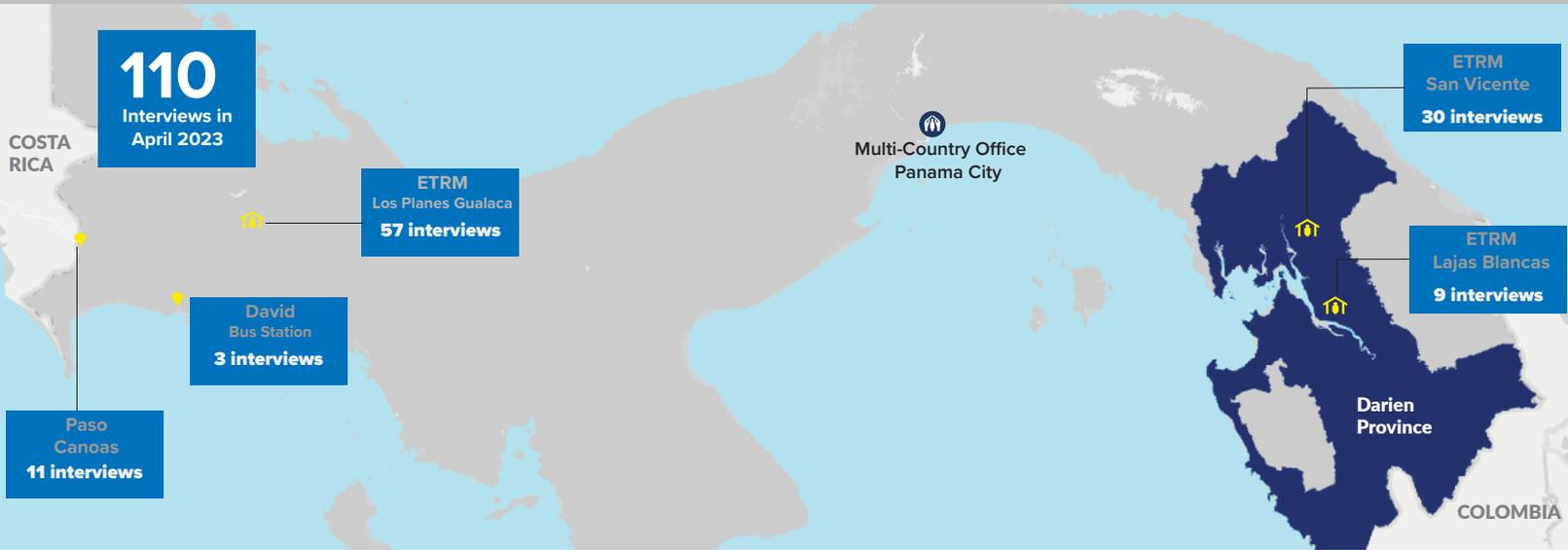


Irregular entries through the Darien 2022-2023 (in thousands of people)



UNHCR Data Collection

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, collects monthly information on the characteristics, vulnerabilities, and protection needs of refugees and migrants who enter Panama through the province of Darien at the southern border with Colombia. The information is compiled through individual interviews conducted in Panama's Darien and Chiriquí provinces. The preliminary results presented here are indicative only. They should not be interpreted as representative of the total population of refugees and migrants crossing the border through the Darien jungle.



Demography

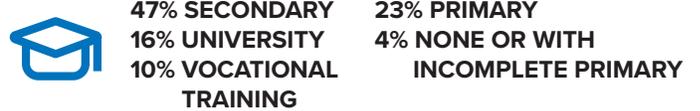
Sex of interviewed individuals



Average age

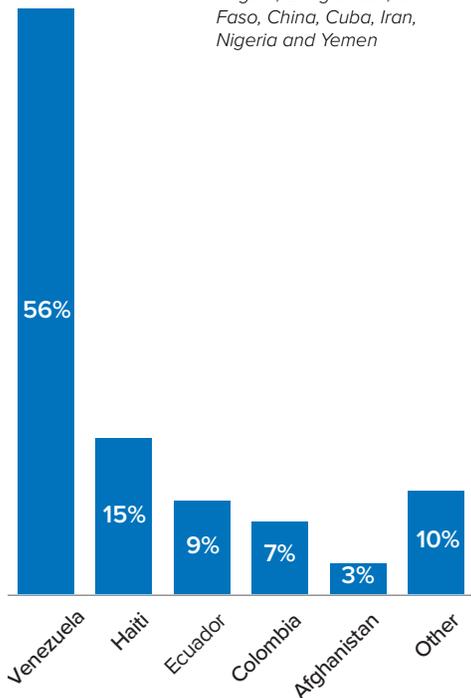


Highest education level

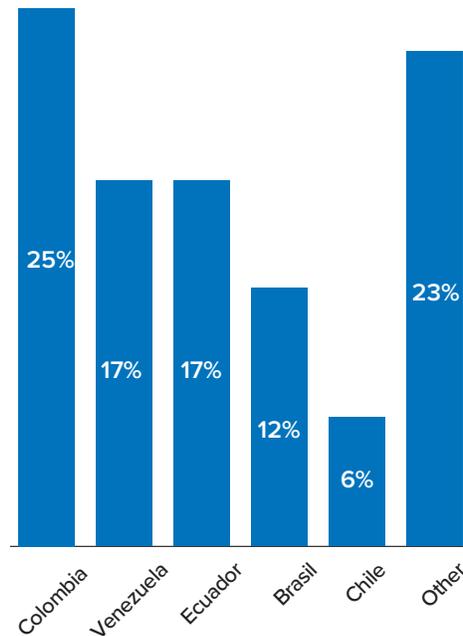


Nationality of interviewed individuals

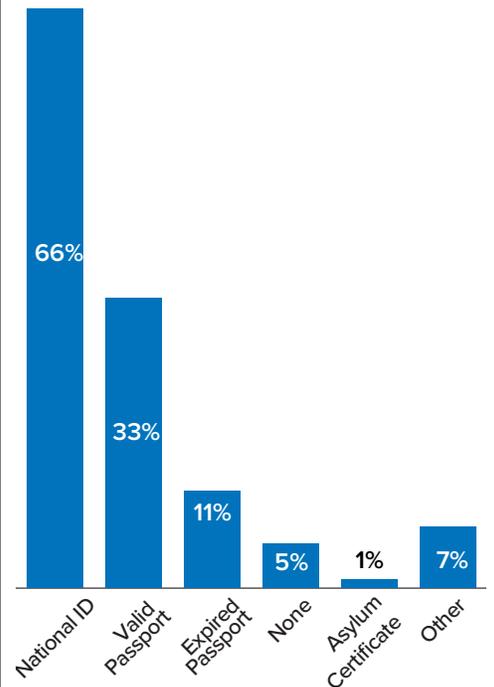
Other nationalities include: Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, China, Cuba, Iran, Nigeria and Yemen



Country of residence in the last year



Documents carried by the family



Respondent profile

More than half of interviewed refugees and migrants were from Venezuela (56%). Most of them (69%) reported coming to Panama from their country of residence (mostly Colombia: 35%, and Ecuador: 13%) and 31% of them reported coming directly from Venezuela.

Interviewed Colombians and Ecuadorians were coming directly from their countries of origin, while Haitians came mainly from Brazil (71%) and Chile (12%).

Most interviewed people reported traveling with their national ID card (66%), and some Venezuelans and Haitians (5%) reported traveling without documentation.

At least two in ten interviewed people reported wanting to stay in Panama, although mostly temporarily. Around a quarter traveled with at least one person with special needs and vulnerabilities (pregnant, lactating women, unaccompanied children, and elders).

 **59%**

of interviewed individuals left their country of origin/residence less than four weeks ago.

 **20%**

of interviewed individuals reported having the intention to stay in Panama.

Most of them are planning to stay less than a month.

 **11%**

of interviewed individuals had applied for asylum in another country, prior their arrival to Panama.

 **1 in 4**

of interviewed individuals reported traveling with a survivor of violence in their group (sexual, physical or psychological).

 **24%**

of interviewed individuals reported traveling with pregnant (9%) or lactating women (15%).

 **11%**

of respondents reported traveling with someone with a critical or chronic medical condition.

 **8%**

of interviewed individuals reported traveling with unaccompanied children in their group.

 **14%**

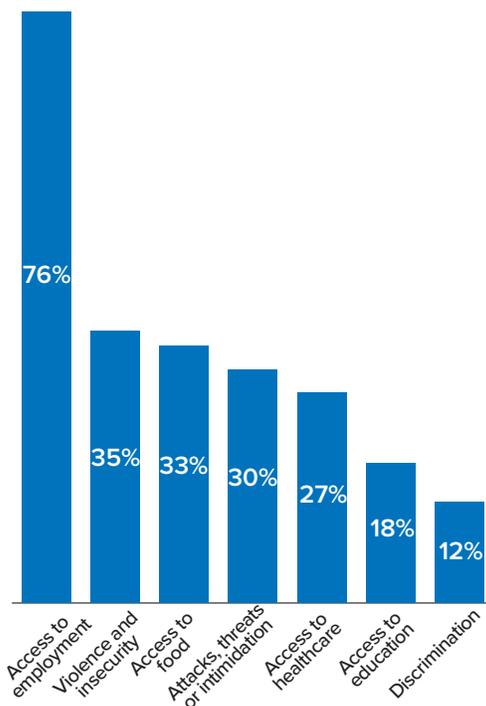
of interviewed individuals reported having a single parent traveling with children in their group.

 **15%**

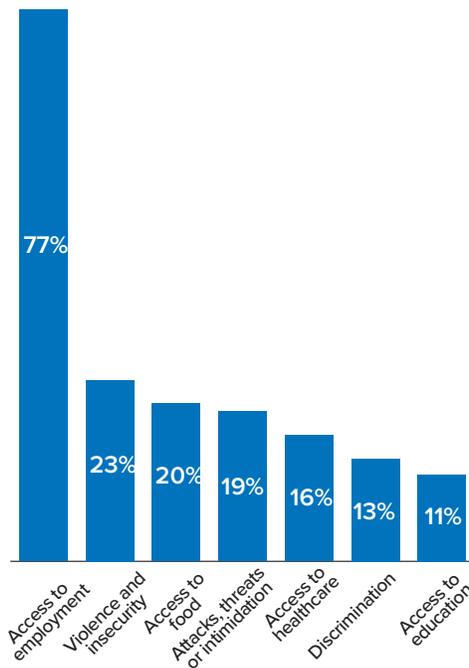
of interviewed individuals reported traveling with an elder in their group.

Push and pull factors

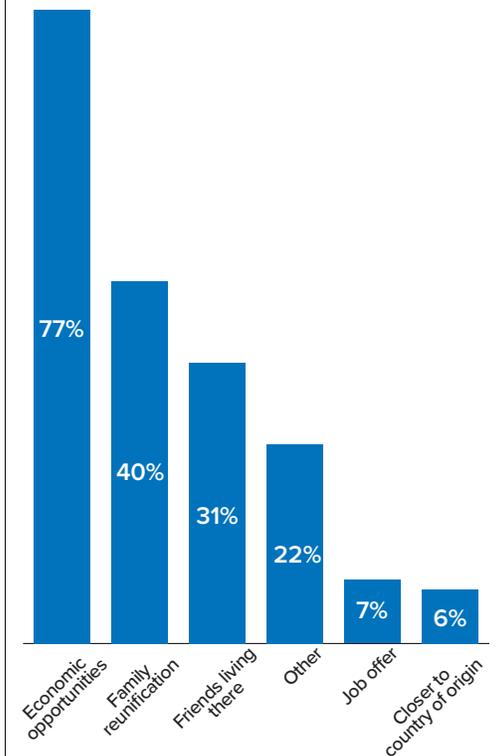
Main reasons for leaving country of origin



Main reasons for leaving country of residence



Reasons for choosing destination country



84%

of interviewed individuals reported the United States as their final destination.

Followed by Canada (6%), and Mexico (3%).

6 in 10

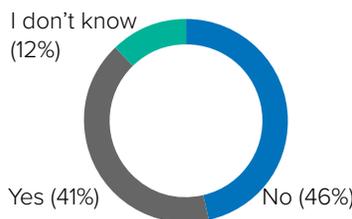
interviewed reported receiving information about the journey and making decisions based on the information received from friends and relatives who had already made it.

Also received information through social networks, mainly TikTok (42%), Facebook (36%) and WhatsApp (30%).

Cubans, Haitians and Venezuelans

Have you received information about the new entry requirements to the United States?

How did you receive that information?



- 37% FRIENDS/RELATIVES LIVING IN THE US
- 17% TIK-TOK
- 17% FACEBOOK
- 13% WHATSAPP CHAINS
- 7% FRIENDS/RELATIVES LIVING IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Challenges during the journey

4 days

is the average time interviewed individuals crossed the Darien jungle. (Min. 1,5 days and Max. 15 days).

1 in 4

experienced mistreatment or abuse during the journey through the jungle.

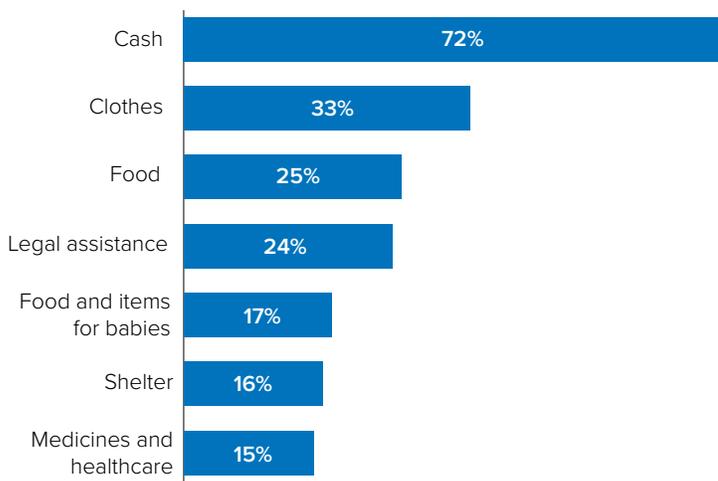
37%

of interviewed individuals reported being victims of robbery or fraud during their journey through the jungle. (14% reported being victim of threats, intimidation, and attacks).

65%

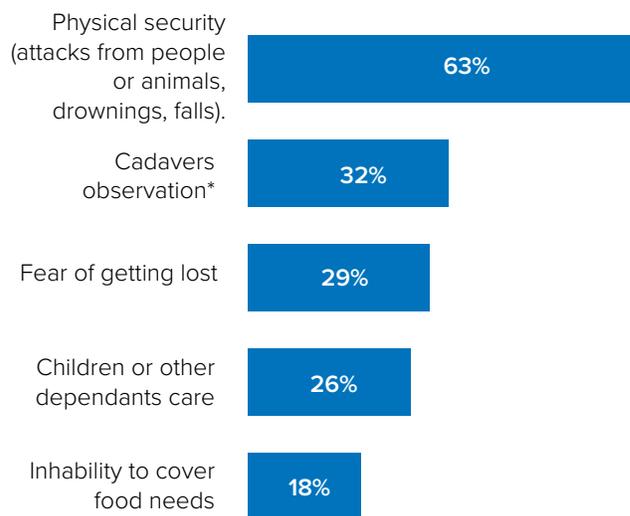
of interviewed individuals paid a person to guide them through the jungle.

Main reported needs for the continuation of the journey



During data collection, cash for the bus was reported as one of the primary priority needs, especially among families traveling with children.

Situations that affected people the most while crossing the jungle



*Most people (94%) reported seeing between 1 and 10 cadavers in the previous seven days to data collection.

UNHCR Multi Country Office for Belize, Cuba, Panama, Nicaragua and Southern Caribbean

Data Sources: UNHCR Protection Monitoring, conducted on the 3rd to 10th April 2023.

Feedback: panpaim@unhcr.org

To access all our protection monitoring products visit [here](#)