Mixed Movements Official Data
Darien Province, Panama-Colombia Border

June 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total entries in 2023.</th>
<th>Total entries in May 2023.</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>166,649</td>
<td>38,962</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Panama National Migration Service

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>5K</td>
<td>25K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>4K</td>
<td>25K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>5K</td>
<td>38K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>6K</td>
<td>40K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>14K</td>
<td>39K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>16K</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>23K</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td></td>
<td>31K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td></td>
<td>48K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td></td>
<td>60K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td></td>
<td>17K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td></td>
<td>20K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

- 70% Men
- 30% Women

Average age

- 32 Years

Highest education level

- 61% SECONDARY
- 11% UNIVERSITY
- 6% VOCATIONAL TRAINING
- 20% PRIMARY
- 2% NONE OR WITH INCOMPLETE PRIMARY SCHOOLING

Nationality of interviewed individuals

- 67% Venezuela
- 9% Colombia
- 8% Ecuador
- 4% Haiti
- 3% China
- 9% Other

Other nationalities include: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, India, Nepal, Sudan

Country of residence in the last year

- 36% Colombia
- 27% Venezuela
- 11% Ecuador
- 7% Peru
- 6% Chile
- 13% Other

Documents carried by the family

- 55% National ID
- 32% Birth Certificate
- 19% Valid Passport
- 7% Expired Passport
- 7% None
- 4% Other

29% reported still having a valid/legal residence document from their last country of residence (when different to their country of origin)
More than half of interviewed refugees and migrants were from Venezuela (67%). Around half of interviewed Venezuelans (53%) were coming directly from Venezuela, followed by the countries in which they reported residing in the last year, mainly: Colombia (27%), Peru (10%) and Ecuador (6%). Around one third of them reported still having current documentation from this country of residence.

In comparison to the previous month, the average reported time for crossing the jungle was higher in June (5 days). Coupled with the increased reports of incidents of drownings after river surges, flooding, and landslides, the evidence points to increasing difficulties in the conditions for crossing the jungle as the rainy season begins.

In addition to the worsening conditions of the terrain in the jungle, one third of interviewed individuals in June reported experiencing theft, scams or fraud in their journey.

### Respondent profile

- **64%** of interviewed individuals left their country of origin/residence less than four weeks ago.
- **10%** of interviewed individuals reported having the intention to stay in Panama. *Most of them are planning to stay less than a month.*
- **10%** of interviewed individuals had applied for asylum in another country, prior to their arrival to Panama.

- **2 in 10** of interviewed individuals reported traveling with a survivor of violence in their group (sexual, physical or psychological).
- **5%** of interviewed individuals reported traveling with pregnant or lactating women.
- **19%** of respondents reported traveling with someone with a critical or chronic medical condition.

- **2%** of interviewed individuals reported traveling with unaccompanied children in their group.
- **6%** of interviewed individuals reported traveling with a single parent traveling with children in their group.
- **4%** of interviewed individuals reported traveling with an elder in their group.

- **Most common reasons reported under “Other” includes the seek of Protection**

### Push and pull factors

#### Main reasons for leaving country of origin

- Access to employment: 69%
- Access to food: 35%
- Political instability or violence: 33%
- Access to education: 32%
- Discrimination: 30%
- Access to healthcare: 22%
- Attacks, threats or intimidation: 13%

#### Main reasons for leaving country of residence

- Access to employment: 70%
- Access to food: 30%
- Violence: 29%
- Access to healthcare: 28%
- Attacks, threats or intimidation: 23%
- Access to education: 20%
- Discrimination: 13%

#### Reasons for choosing destination country

- Economic opportunities: 70%
- Family reunification: 33%
- Friends living there: 33%
- Other: 9%
- Job offer: 7%
- I don’t know: 1%
86% of interviewed individuals reported the United States as their final destination. Followed by Costa Rica (4%), and Panama (3%).

8 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 Facebook (30%), TikTok (27%) and Youtube (12%)

Have you received information about the new entry requirements to the United States? I don't know (3%) Yes (43%) No (55%)

22% FRIENDS/RELATIVES LIVING IN THE US 22% TIK-TOK 19% FRIENDS/RELATIVES LIVING IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN 16% TV NEWS 16% FACEBOOK 6% INSTAGRAM

5 days is the average time interviewed individuals crossed the Darien jungle. (Min. 2 day and Max. 15 days).

3 in 10 experienced mistreatment or abuse during the journey through the jungle.

33% of interviewed individuals reported being victims of theft, scam or fraud during their journey through the jungle. Additionally, 21% reported being victim of threats, intimidation, and attacks.

72% of interviewed individuals paid a person to guide them through the jungle.

Main reported needs for the continuation of the journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash*</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicines and healthcare</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal assistance</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and items for babies</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cash*

Medicines and healthcare

Food

Legal assistance

Food and items for babies

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

Situation that affected people the most while crossing the jungle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical security (attacks, drownings, falls).</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadavers observation*</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of getting lost</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children or other dependants care</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhability to cover food needs</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Those who reported seeing cadavers, reported seeing between 2 and 9 cadavers during the seven days prior to data collection.