

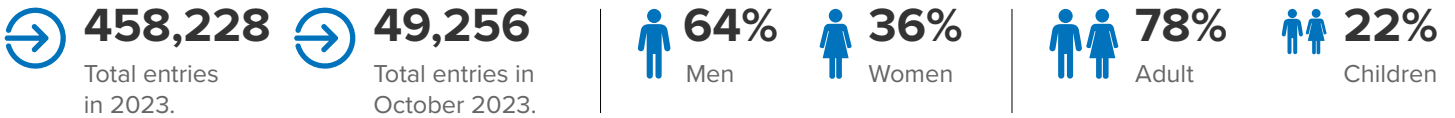
Context

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 Venezuela, Ecuador, Haiti, and African and South Asian nations.

Panama has faced an unprecedented mixed movement crisis in the last two years. According to official statistics of the National Migration Service (SNM), from 2021 to 2022 nearly 400,000 people crossed through this area. In 2022, 248,284 people entered the country irregularly through Darien.

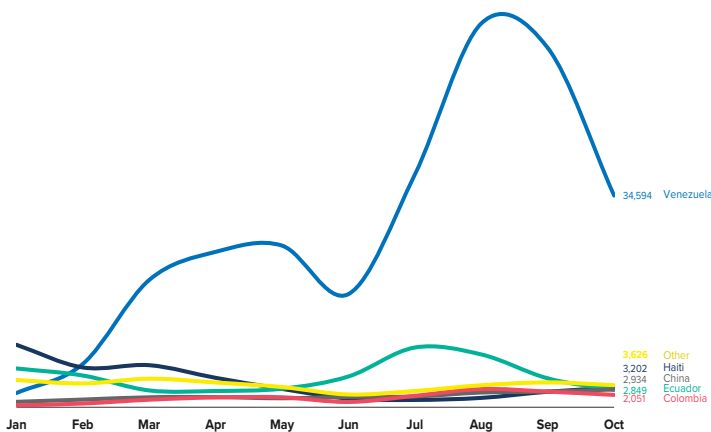


Key Figures



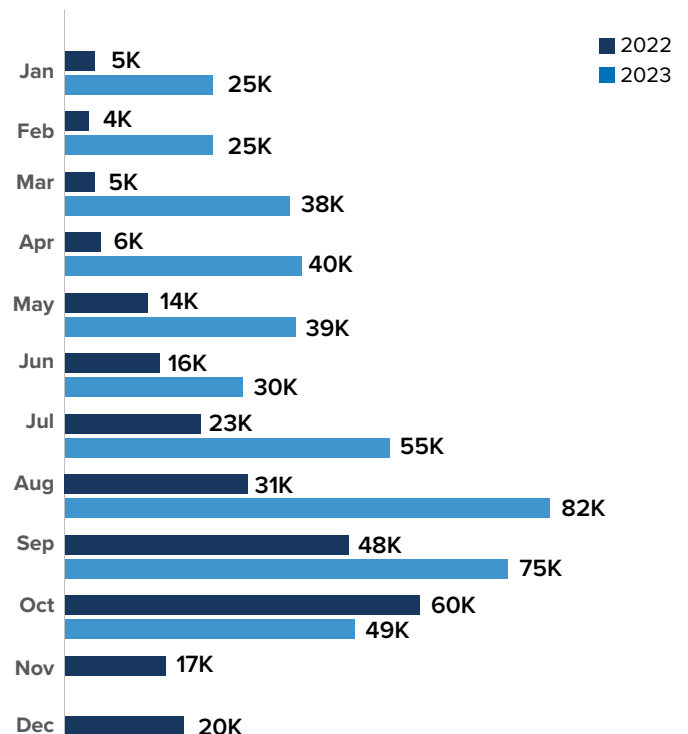
Source: Panama National Migration Service

Main Nationalities entering irregularly through Darien from January to October 2023



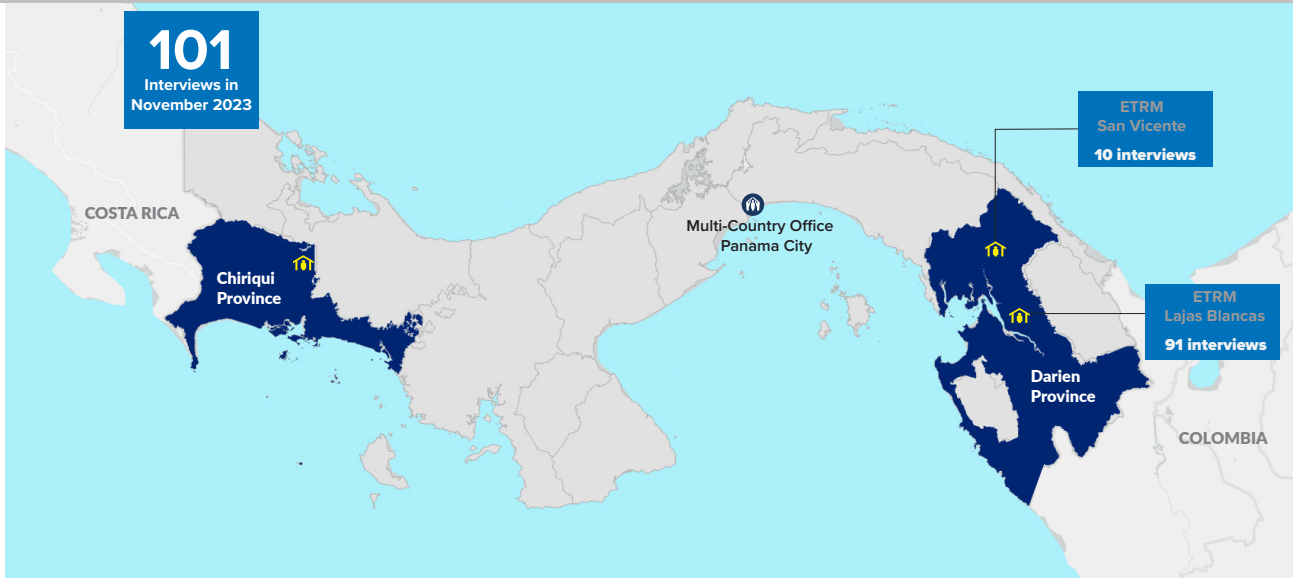
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Venezuela	2,337	7,097	20,816	25,395	26,409	18,501	38,033	62,700	58,716	34,594
Haiti	10,222	6,522	6,896	4,830	3,023	1,446	1,226	1,559	2,563	3,202
Ecuador	6,352	5,203	2,772	2,683	3,059	5,052	9,773	8,642	4,744	2,849
China	913	1,285	1,657	1,683	1,497	1,722	1,789	2,433	2,588	2,934
Colombia	333	637	1,260	1,634	1,645	894	1,884	2,989	2,570	2,051
Other	4,477	3,913	4,698	4,072	3,329	2,107	2,682	3,623	4,087	3,626

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



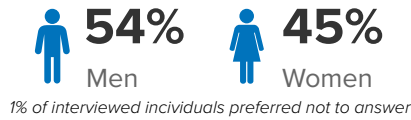
UNHCR Data Collection

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



Demography

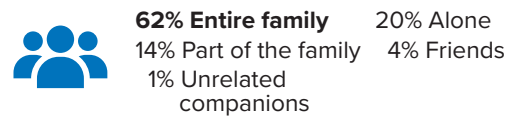
Sex of interviewed individuals



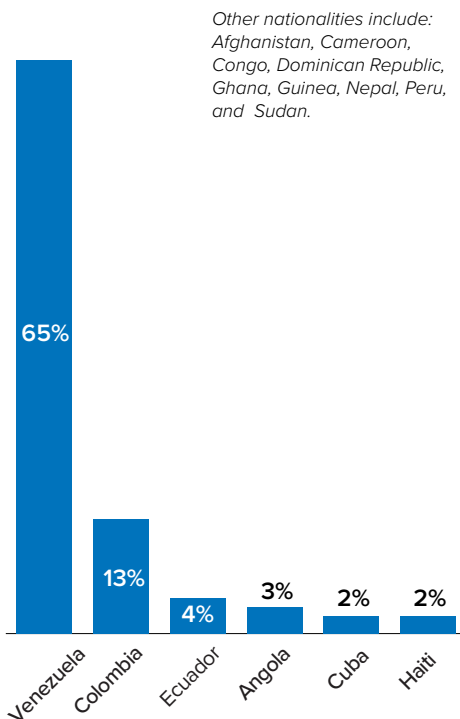
Average age



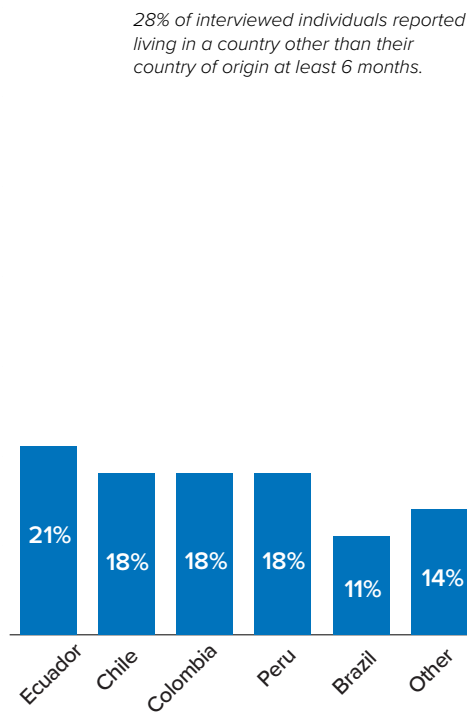
Travel group composition



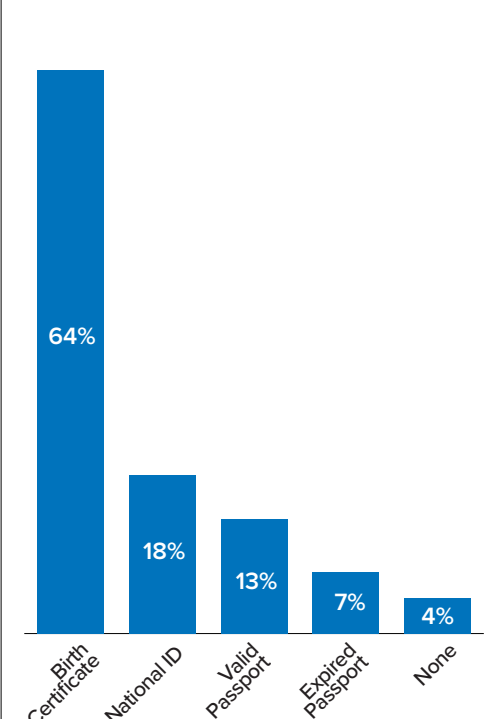
Nationality of interviewed individuals



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 (66%). Eight in ten (79%) came directly from Venezuela, a 20% increase compared to last month, while the remaining 21% came from other countries of residence, mainly: Colombia (6%), Ecuador (6%), Chile (5%), and Peru (5%). Four in ten had applied for legal status in their previous country of residence, and 15% reported having valid documentation from that country.

Six in ten respondents (62%) reported travelling with the entire family, a 23% increase compared to last month, and one-fifth (21%) reported travelling alone or with unrelated companions. Those travelling with children had an average of 2 children, of which two-fifths were under five. Additionally, 14 children were born in the jungle this year.

One in five respondents (19%) travelled with at least one person with a specific need. In November, there was a slight increase in the number of people who reported travelling with pregnant or lactating women (12%).

 **71%**

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

 **2%**

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

 **41%**

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

 **5%**

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

 **12%**

of interviewed individuals reported travelling with pregnant or lactating women.

 **0%**

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

 **0%**

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

 **1%**

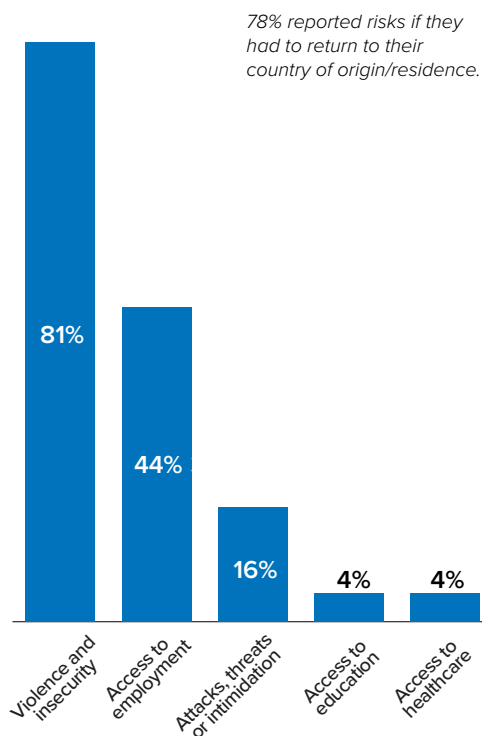
of interviewed individuals reported having a single parent travelling with children in their group.

 **0%**

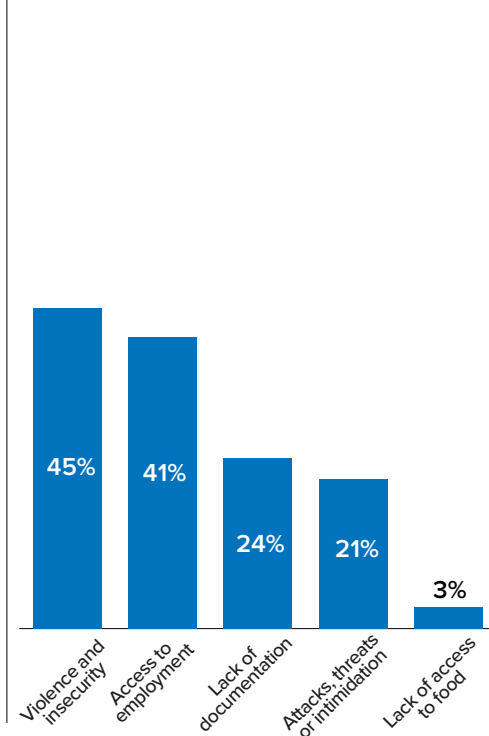
of interviewed individuals reported travelling with an elder in their group.

Push and pull factors

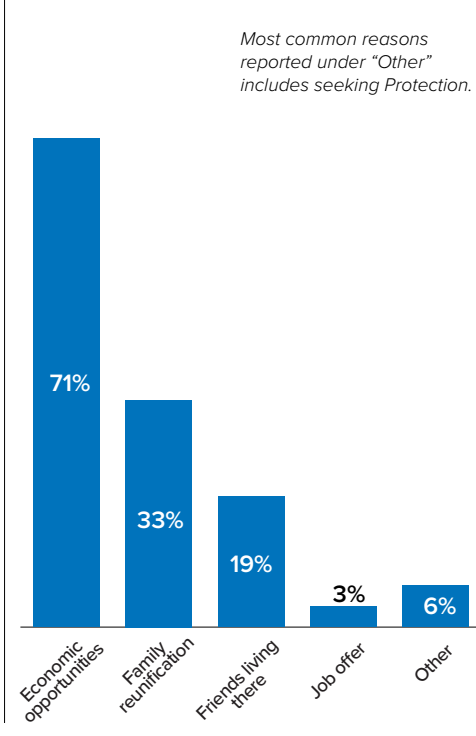
Main reasons for leaving country of origin



Main reasons for leaving country of residence



Reasons for choosing destination country



 **90%**

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

Followed by Canada (4%), Mexico (2%), Panama (2%), Ecuador (1%), and Honduras (1%).

 **9 in 10**

interviewed individuals reported that if they were unable to reach their country of destination, they would wait until allowed to proceed to said country.

 **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 (34%) and Facebook (11%).

 **71%**

of interviewed Haitians, and Venezuelans reported not receiving information about the new entry requirements to the United States.

Challenges during the journey

 **5 days**

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

 **4 in 10**

experienced mistreatment or abuse during the journey through the jungle.

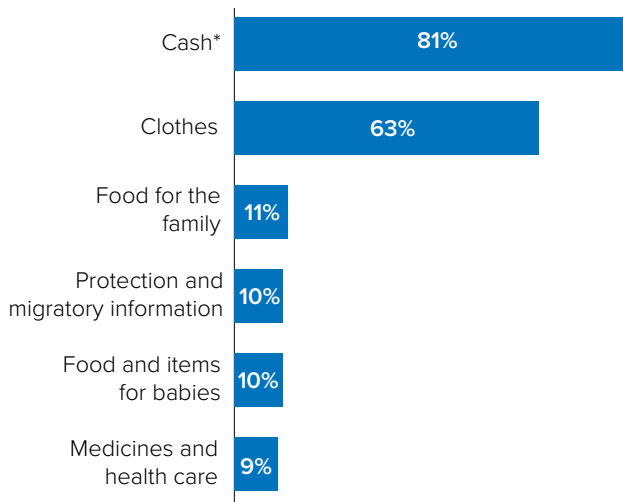
 **38%**

of interviewed individuals reported being victims of theft, scam or fraud during their journey through the jungle. **Additionally, 14% reported being victim of threats, intimidation, and attacks.**

 **84%**

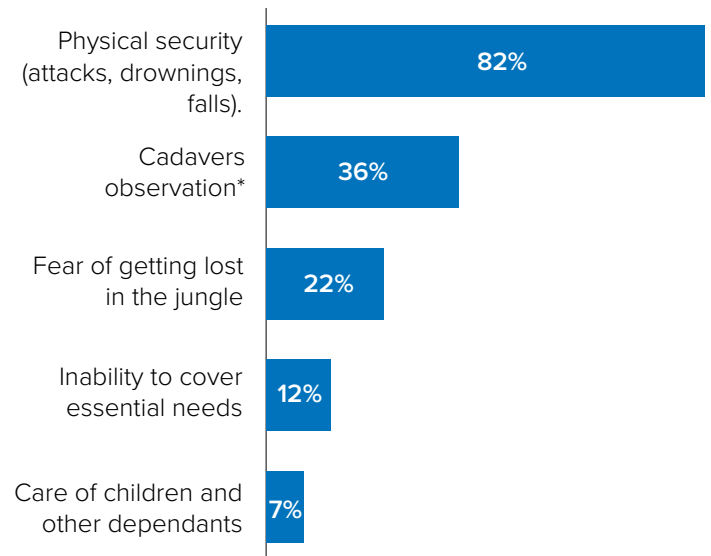
of interviewed individuals paid a person to guide them through the jungle.

Main reported needs for the continuation of the journey



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

Situations that affected people the most while crossing the jungle



**Those who reported seeing cadavers, reported between 1 and 7 cadavers during the seven days prior to data collection.*

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

Data Sources: UNHCR Protection Monitoring, conducted on the 13th to 29th November 2023

Access all our border protection monitoring publications [here](#)

Feedback: panpaim@unhcr.org