

Mixed Movements Monitoring

April - June 2024



© UNHCR/ Melissa PineI

Key Figures



4,440

Individuals were interviewed from April to June 2024.



42 Nationalities interviewed



51% VENEZUELANOS
20% HONDURANS
8% COLOMBIANS
5% HAITIANS
4% CUBANS

Main countries of origin of respondents



32 Average age of respondents



GUATEMALA: 1,573
MEXICO: 1,343
COSTA RICA: 616
HONDURAS: 536
PANAMA: 372

Number of interviews per country



54% Men



55% Travelling with family



46% Women



39% Travelling in families with children

Key Findings

- 1 Multiple interconnected factors continue to push individuals into situations of human mobility. Two out of five respondents cited having left their countries both because of violence and difficulties in accessing fundamental rights and basic needs.
- 2 72% of respondents experienced or witnessed protection incidents along the route. Respondents traveling with children reported protection incidents or threats slightly more frequently than the ones without children in their travel groups (75%).
- 3 Individuals exposed to protection incidents are more likely to face heightened food security challenges, and vice versa. This quarter, 61% of people who witnessed or had been victims of protection incidents also reported resorting to severe food coping strategies.
- 4 Food insecurity remains a significant challenge, despite some improvement compared to the previous quarter. Currently, 34% of respondents reported skipping meals—down from 45% in the last quarter. However, 82% of those surveyed this quarter still indicated using negative coping strategies within the past week, such as reducing meal portions or going without food for entire days.
- 5 64% of respondents traveling with children under 6 six months reported employing severe food security coping strategies, like skipping meals or going an entire day without eating, compared to 54% of those without young children.

Introduction and scope

In recent years, Central America and Mexico have seen a significant increase in mixed movements, where individuals and groups cross borders using similar routes and means of transport for various reasons. These movements often occur irregularly due to onward movement-related reasons, challenges in accessing territory, barriers to claiming asylum at the destination countries, or difficulties in meeting state entry requirements while in transit. The diverse population in mixed movements includes asylum-seekers, refugees, victims of human trafficking, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), stateless persons, and migrants in vulnerable situations. To understand these dynamics, UNHCR and WFP launched a regional monitoring project in 2023, aiming to identify trends and

profiles, as well as the protection and food security needs of those on the move. In the second quarter of 2024, UNICEF joined the project, contributing to data collection and analysis, particularly on child-related indicators around nutrition, health, education, primary needs, and humanitarian assistance received. Accurate data is crucial for informing evidence-based decision-making about responses, discussions in UN forums, and regional collaboration. The project's report addresses the drivers of human mobility, profiles of individuals involved, risks along the journey, conditions in transit countries, food security, child protection, and future objectives. The information gathered and interpreted through this project aims to inform policy and humanitarian efforts effectively.

Methodology



Q2 2024

6th round of data collection



1st quarter of UNHCR/WFP/UNICEF questionnaire, with core questions on children

12 civil society organizations are part of the initiative



Qualitative research in

**PANAMA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
COLOMBIA**

The sixth round of data collection for the Mixed Movements Monitoring was conducted from **April 1st to June 30th, 2024**. This round marked the debut of the **tripartite questionnaire** developed by **UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP**, incorporating new indicators specifically for children. As in previous quarters, data was collected in Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico,¹ in collaboration with 12 civil society organizations. The **qualitative research** included focus group discussions, key informant interviews in Panama, Honduras, and El Salvador, and field observations from the Necocli Field Diary in Colombia.

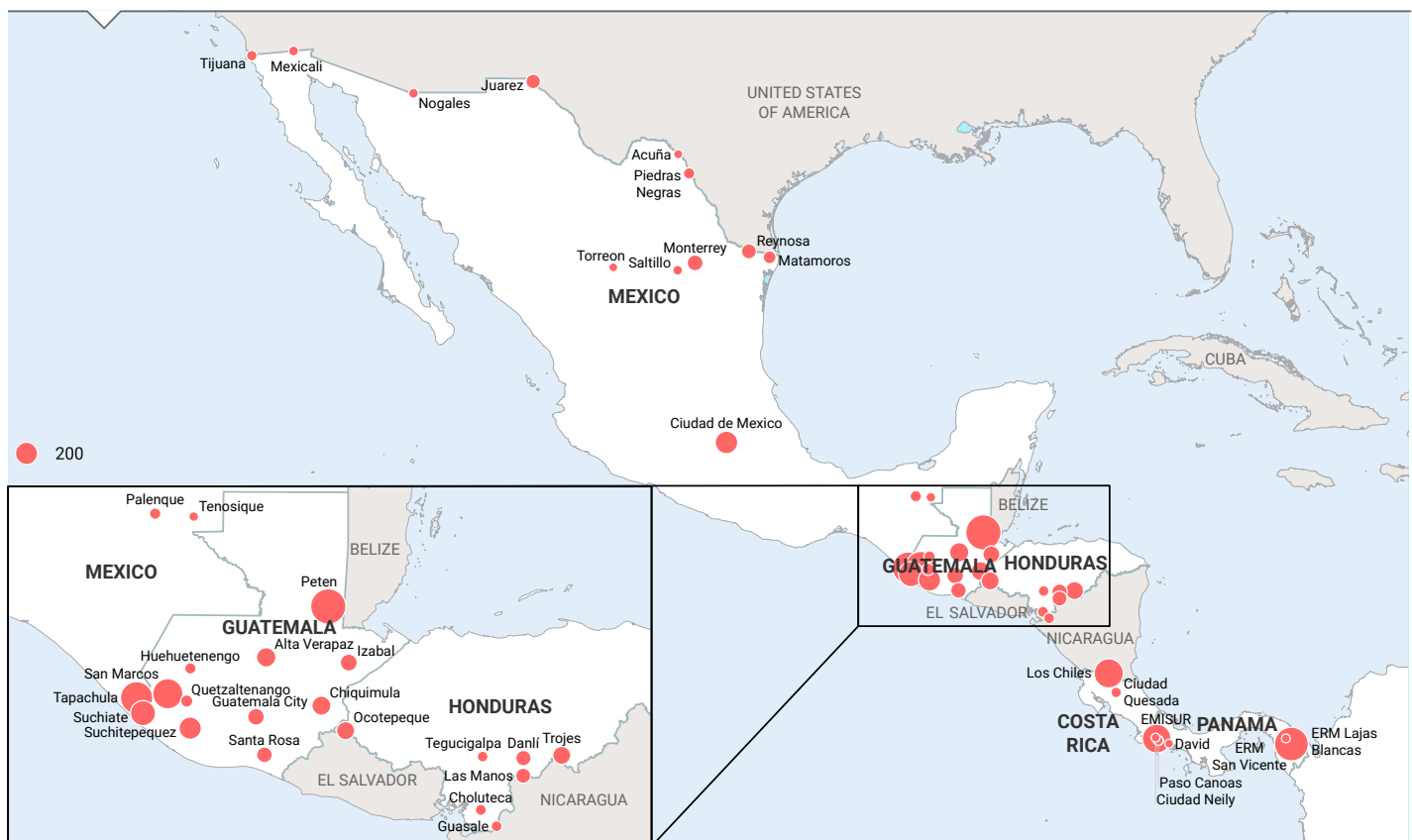
The data analysis involved a collaborative process, featuring an interagency joint interpretation session and consultations

with field colleagues and experts across various disciplines. The report integrates official government data and secondary sources to enhance the primary findings and provide additional context.

Methodological challenges encountered include difficulties accessing new route points, outreach to vulnerable populations, and overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers faced by extracontinental individuals from outside the Americas. The findings are only representative of the individuals interviewed and offer valuable insights into human mobility trends, protection risks, food security, and child protection among the populations engaged in mixed movements in the region.

Data collection locations

Most interviews in this round were conducted at formal and informal border crossing points and nearby collective and temporary shelters, representing 78% of the total. Additionally, interviews were carried out at non-border locations such as strategic transit facilities, bus terminals, shelters, and reception sites. This quarter, there was a slight increase in interviews at these non-border locations, especially in Mexico, reflecting a strategic effort to expand route coverage and enhance outreach.



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 new questionnaire was implemented in Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala, while Mexico continued using the previous version. Therefore, results for child-specific indicators should be interpreted with the understanding that they reflect data from a more limited set of respondents, excluding Mexico.

Human Mobility Context

From January to June 2024, the number of individuals arriving in the Darien Gap saw only a 2% increase compared to the same period in 2023. Migration authorities recorded 201,063 arrivals during the first semester of 2024, with the majority —66%— originating from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereafter Venezuela). Other significant groups included nationals from Ecuador (7%), Colombia (6%), and China (6%). Notably, the number of Haitians crossing the Darien continued to decline, with a 12% decrease compared to the same period last year, as they sought alternative routes. The demographic composition of extracontinental arrivals continues to evolve, with Chinese and Indian nationals remaining the most prominent, consistent with trends from the same period in 2023.

In Costa Rica, more than 200,000 individuals traveled by bus from the Temporary Migratory Reception Stations in Panama during the first half of 2024, according to the Ministry of Governance and Police. These individuals typically arrived at the Temporary Migrant Attention Center (CATEM) on the border between Panama and Costa Rica before continuing by bus to the Nicaraguan border. During this period, Costa Rica received 11,613 new asylum applications, primarily from nationals of Nicaragua (77%), followed by Cuba (9%) and Venezuela (7%).

In June 2024, Costa Rica reformed its refugee law to better align with international standards. The reform eliminated the previous one-month filing deadline, allowing greater flexibility for asylum seekers. Additionally, the modifications include the issuance of work permits upon lodging an asylum claim, as well as the right to free transit and mobility.²

Honduras experienced a significant increase in irregular arrivals, with 248,035 people entering the country during the first half of 2024 — an 83% increase compared to the same period in 2023. The predominant nationalities were Venezuelans (47%), Cubans (17%), Ecuadorians (6%), and Haitians (6%). Notably, there has been a shift in the composition of refugees and migrants, with Cubans now representing the second most common nationality after Venezuelans, surpassing both Ecuadorians and Haitians. This change is likely due to the number of Cubans being lower at the beginning of 2023, influenced by the introduction of U.S. humanitarian parole, which had a diminishing impact over time. In June, the Honduran Government inaugurated a Center for the Assistance of Irregular Migrants (CAMI, in Spanish) in Danli, El Paraiso, with the aim of addressing irregular mixed movements through a human rights approach. The center is designed to provide humanitarian assistance including medical and psychological care, as well as a safe shelter, for individuals from other countries who use Honduras as a transit point. The National Migration Institute, which is overseeing the operation of the CAMI, indicated that the Government over the last two years has shifted its human mobility focus to that of "policies of protection" rather than that of "containment", which also includes the migratory amnesty that is currently in place until December 31st, 2024.

In Mexico, there were 712,226 events involving individuals in irregular migration status between January and June 2024, marking a 194% increase from the same period in 2023. The predominant nationalities were Venezuelans (28%), Ecuadorians (10%), and Hondurans (9%). On the other hand, the first semester of 2024 saw 41,427 new asylum claims a 46% decrease compared to the same period last year.³ This decrease is likely influenced by changes in the admissibility phase of asylum procedures, the closure of the Mexico City office of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR, in Spanish) by the end of May, as well as a reduction in Haitian applicants, partly due to the suspension of documentation for asylum seekers. The primary nationalities of asylum seekers were Hondurans (42%), Cubans (21%), Haitians (9%), and Salvadorans (8%).

New border procedures, implemented on June 5th, 2024, under the "Securing the Border" rule, are expected to further increase reliance on the CBP One app for scheduling appointments, with 87% of those interviewed in northern Mexico already seeking appointments through it, despite challenges in securing a spot.

The United States remains the preferred country of destination (82%), whereas Mexico comes second (13%), with a smaller percentage aiming for Canada. In the first half of 2024, the United States Government reported more than one million encounters at the U.S. Southwest land border, representing a 3% decrease compared to the same period in 2023. The primary nationalities included Mexicans (34%), Guatemalans (9%), Venezuelans (8%), and Cubans (7%). Compared to the same period in 2023, there has been a notable shift in the nationalities arriving at the U.S. border, with Mexicans and Guatemalans remaining at the top of the list, now followed by Venezuelans and Cubans instead of Colombians and Hondurans.

Elections in the Dominican Republic were held in May 2024, with the incumbent president winning re-election. President Luis Abinader has held office in the Dominican Republic since 2020. While it is still too early in his term to understand how policies affecting human mobility may be implemented, he has publicly stated that he is considering further policies to support the Venezuelan population, as was done in 2021 with the Normalization Plan for Venezuelans. Conversely, according to the Dominican Government, 251,011 Haitians were returned from the Dominican Republic in 2023. The returns, including of children, have continued in 2024, with the Zanmi Foundation reporting an increase in child returnees turning to its shelters this year.⁴

On June 4th, 2024, the Biden administration issued a Presidential Proclamation alongside an interim final rule, reshaping how arrivals at the U.S.-Mexico border are handled. The order restricts the entry of noncitizens and limits asylum eligibility for those crossing irregularly. It was introduced as daily arrivals averaged 2,500 over a week, with the measure

² El Confidencial Digital. (2024, June 14th). *Gobierno de Costa Rica restituye derechos a los solicitantes de refugio*. Retrieved from <https://confidencial.digital/migrantes/gobierno-de-costa-rica-restituye-derechos-a-los-solicitantes-de-refugio/>

³ El Confidencial Digital. (2024, June 14th). *Gobierno de Costa Rica restituye derechos a los solicitantes de refugio*. Retrieved from <https://confidencial.digital/migrantes/gobierno-de-costa-rica-restituye-derechos-a-los-solicitantes-de-refugio/>

⁴ Dirección General de Migración República Dominicana, Memoria Institucional 2023, Retrieved from <https://migracion.gob.do/transparencia/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MEMORIA-INSTITUCIONAL-2023-DGM-VF.pdf>

remaining in effect until the number falls to 1,500 per day. It is unclear when the restriction may be lifted, as entries averaged 3,800 per day in May. This ruling means that, with limited exceptions, individuals cannot apply for asylum upon arrival at the southern border. These exceptions include those with previously scheduled CBP One appointments, unaccompanied children, trafficking victims, and people facing life-threatening emergencies.

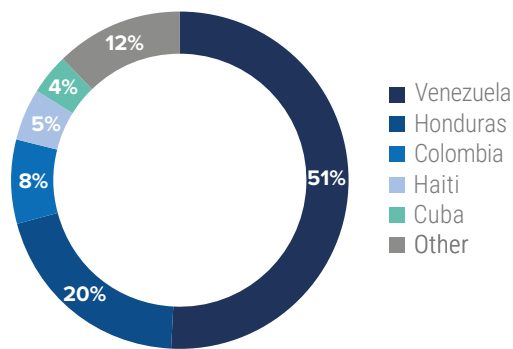
In March 2024, amid the ongoing crisis in Haiti, UNHCR released guidelines on the international protection

considerations for people fleeing Haiti.⁵ The document highlights groups potentially requiring international protection, including political activists, gang opponents, judges, journalists, women, children, LGBTIQ+ individuals, trafficking survivors, people with disabilities, and those living with HIV/AIDS. Considering the extremely concerning and volatile security, humanitarian, and human rights situation in Haiti, UNHCR reiterates its call on States not to forcibly return anyone to the country.

Demographics

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

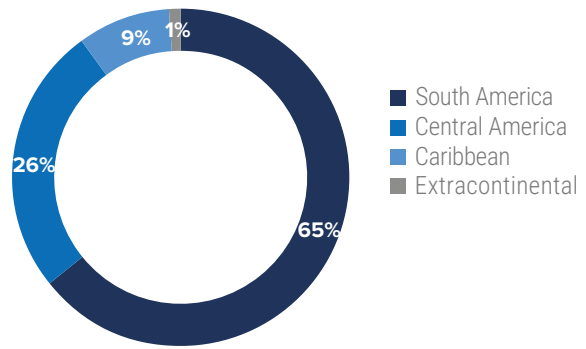
Countries of origin



During the second quarter of 2024, the Mixed Movements Monitoring interviewed individuals from 42 nationalities. Almost two-thirds of the respondents are from South American countries. This is the highest proportion of South Americans since data collection began and could be attributed to the increased number of Venezuelans interviewed.

In all five countries surveyed, there has been an increase in the number of Haitians interviewed. Compared to the same period in 2023, Haitians are back to being the fourth most frequently interviewed nationality in the region, a position they had not held in previous quarters.

Regions of origin of respondents (by geographic location)

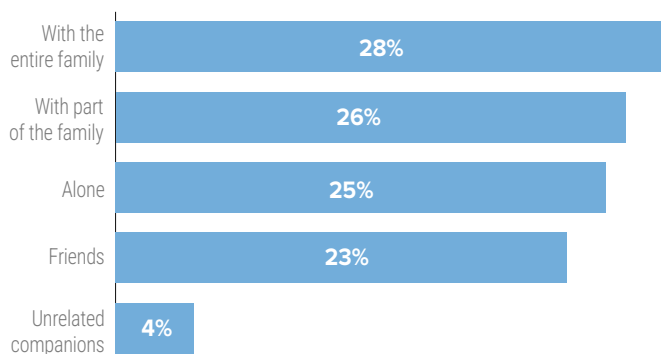


During this period, Mexico continues to have the highest number of nationalities interviewed. Interviews were conducted with individuals from 29 nationalities in Mexico and 20 in Honduras. Similar to the previous quarter, Honduras remains the only country where Cubans rank among the top nationalities interviewed (14%), likely due to two main factors: most Cubans arrive by plane to Nicaragua and then cross into Honduras, and due to the migratory amnesty in Honduras, people on the move can more easily be accessed and interviewed.

Further analysis of countries of origin and routes will be presented in the following section, "Journey".

Travel group composition

Who do you travel with?



Currently, 55% of people interviewed are traveling with their family, in full or in part. This quarter has seen a slight increase in the number of people traveling with their whole families compared to the previous one (26% to 28%).

The proportion of respondents traveling alone remains significant at 25%, with notably higher rates among those from the Caribbean (41%) and Central America (38%). Of those traveling solo, 72% are men and 28% are women. Among the women traveling alone, the majority are from Honduras (32%), followed by Venezuela (22%), with Haiti and El Salvador each representing 8%.

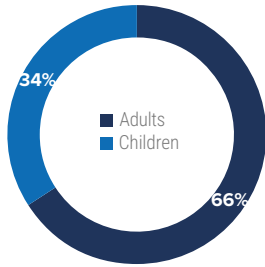
⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024, March 20th). *International Protection Considerations with Regard to People Fleeing Haiti*. Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/policy/countrypos/unhcr/2024/en/147710>

In contrast, South Americans are more likely to travel with their families, with 72% doing so. Qualitative data from the Darien crossing indicates that many individuals undertake the journey

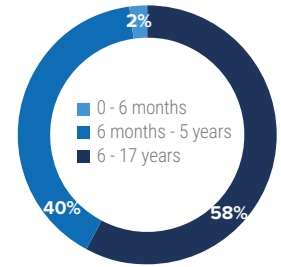
multiple times, often after being denied entry to their intended destination and subsequently returned to their country of origin.

Family composition

Family age breakdown



Children in family age breakdown



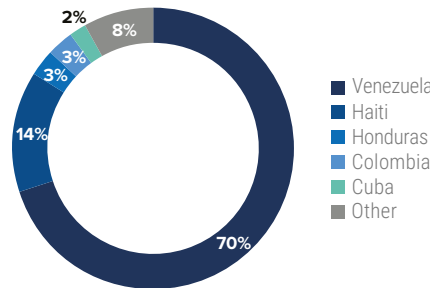
As mentioned earlier, 55% of respondents reported traveling with their families. The age distribution within these families consists of 66% adults and 34% children. While Central Americans traveled with their families less frequently than South Americans, their families tended to include a higher proportion of children compared to those from South America.

39% of the respondents indicated traveling with at least one child in their family, totaling 3,461 children. The age breakdown is available only for part of surveys (999 out of 1746): two out of five children are under 5 years old, while the other three out of five are between 6 and 17 years old. Families from the Caribbean have less children per group (1,4) if compared to other regions of origin.

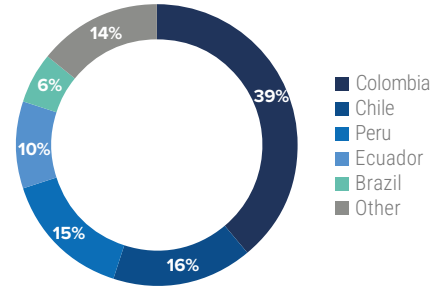
Host countries⁶



Main nationalities of respondents who resided in host countries



Host countries



One out of every five survey participants reported living in a country other than their country of origin for at least six months. This period saw an increase in the number of respondents who declared having lived in Chile, primarily Haitians (56%) and Venezuelans (36%).

traveled directly from their home countries or stayed in other countries for a shorter period than six months. This represents a slight decrease from the previous quarter. The proportion of Venezuelans who may have traveled directly from their country of origin also increased, rising to 71% this quarter compared to 65% in the first quarter of 2024.

Approximately 80% of respondents indicated that they had not previously lived in a host country, suggesting they may have

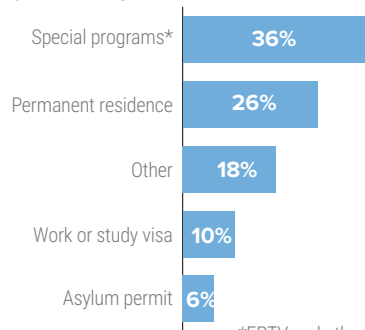
LEGAL STATUS

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

Out of the 21% of people who have lived in other countries for more than 6 months:



Type of legal status obtained



*EPTV and others.

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



⁶ Host country: 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.

Compared to the previous quarter, there has been an increase in the number of respondents who did not apply for legal status while living in a host country, rising from 43% to 49%. Meanwhile, 41% of respondents reported that they had applied for and obtained legal status. The most common types of legal status obtained were temporary permits from special programs, such as the EPTV (Estatuto Temporal de Protección de Migrantes Venezolanos) in Colombia (36%), and permanent residency status (26%). Consistent with previous trends, Venezuelans and Haitians were the primary nationalities interviewed who had applied for and received legal status, most frequently in Colombia and Brazil, respectively.

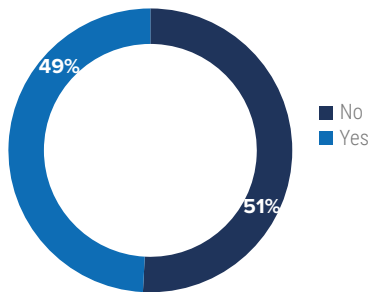
The majority of respondents who had resided in a host country cited the lack of access to employment opportunities as their primary reason for leaving (64%), followed by generalized

violence (28% in total, 31% for women, and 27% for men respondents). This applied even for those who obtained a legal status in the host country. Focus group discussions in Honduras highlighted that several Venezuelans interviewed had chosen to sell all their belongings and embark on a journey northward despite being granted Temporary Protection in Colombia. Their decision was driven by the lack of employment, difficulties in accessing healthcare, and incidents of xenophobia in Colombia.

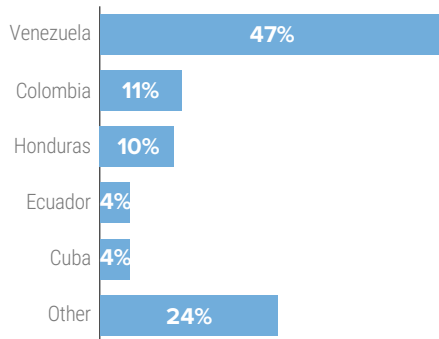
When asked about the validity of their legal status documents, 64% of respondents have valid documents, with most of these remaining valid for more than a year. However, 36% of respondents have expired documents. Notably, when comparing the main nationalities interviewed, the percentage of expired documents is highest among Haitians, at 53%.

Legal status of family living in host countries

Individuals with the rest of the family in a host country



Location of the other part of the family




Among the respondents traveling with part of their family (26%), they were asked if their family members were residing in a host country. Over half of them (51%) reported that their family members are living in a host country, while the remainder are in their countries of origin.

DOCUMENTATION

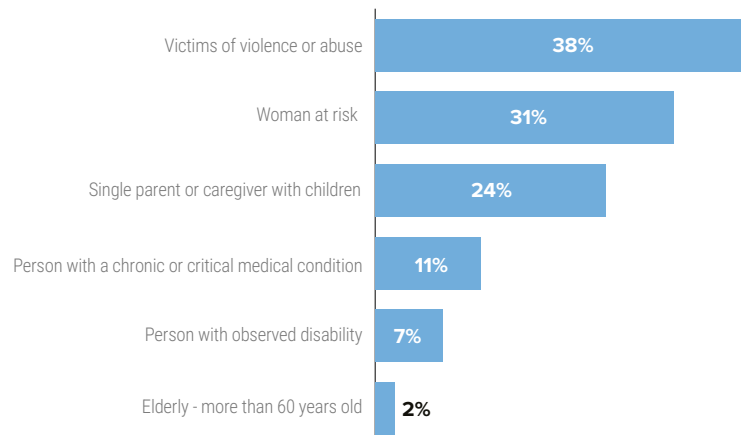
Reflecting previous trends, 85% of respondents carry national ID cards, while 24% have passports. The type of documentation varies significantly by region of origin: Caribbean (87%) and

Extra-continental (63%) respondents mainly use passports, while South Americans (92%) and Central Americans (82%) possess ID cards. Additionally, 13% of passport holders possess expired passports, consistent with earlier data.

SPECIFIC PROTECTION NEEDS


 **26%** of individuals/families with at least one specific protection need observed.⁷


Type of specific protection needs observed




⁷ Persons with specific needs are particularly exposed to protection risks and abuses as the difficult 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 environments, which requires specific targeted actions in order 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.

Women at risk

 **31%** of women or families with women considered at risk.⁸

 **4%** of breastfeeding women in travel group.⁹

 **9%** of breastfeeding women in travel group.¹⁰

Pregnant or breastfeeding women and girls: This is the first quarter since data collection began in which respondents were asked if anyone in their travel group was pregnant or breastfeeding. 4% reported having at least one pregnant woman in their group, while the proportion of groups with breastfeeding women was higher, at 9%. The highest percentage of pregnant women was found among Haitians (6%), whereas Venezuelans had the highest concentration of breastfeeding women (10%). Focus group discussions in El Salvador this quarter underscored the urgent needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women, particularly for services of health, nutrition and psychological support. These needs are made more critical by the limited availability of specialized services and the lack of shelters along the route. Additionally, qualitative data from Honduras highlights the increased vulnerability of pregnant women and single mothers traveling with children. A growing number of unaccompanied children was observed traveling with acquaintances, indicating that their parents are already in the intended destination country.

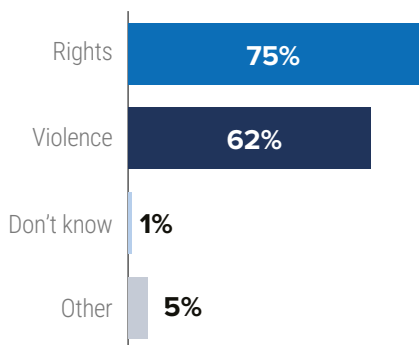
Displacement

REASONS TO LEAVE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

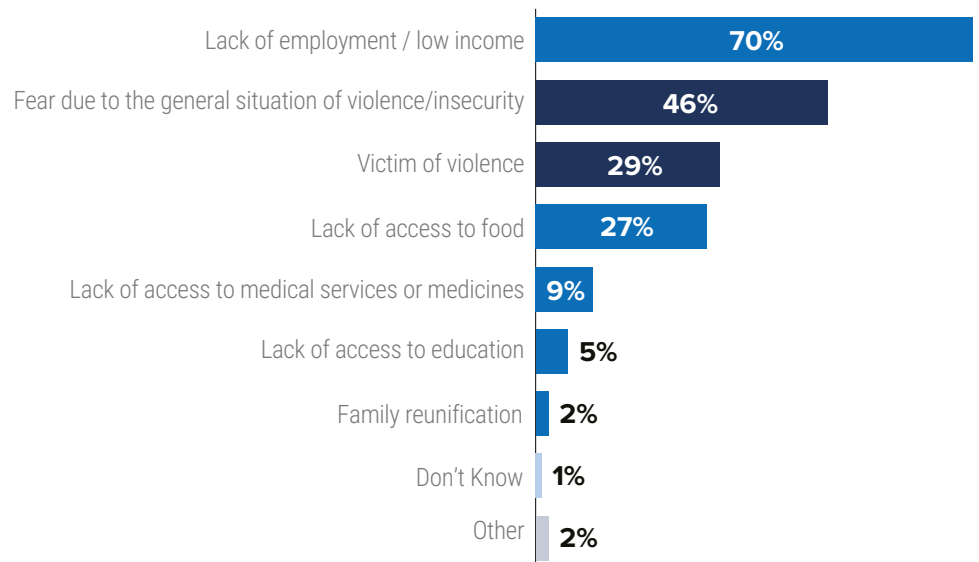
The monitoring exercise examines the motives for respondents leaving their respective countries of origin. The question posed to respondents allows for multiple answers, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing their decision to leave. In the subsequent analysis,

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.¹¹

Reasons to leave country of origin (groups)



Reasons to leave country of origin (breakdown)¹²



⁸ The category "women at risk" refer to women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or have faced other risks, threats, or violence during the route.

⁹ **Pregnant women** need nutrient-rich food and micronutrient supplements to meet increased energy and vitamin and mineral requirements to support changes in maternal tissues, metabolism, and fetal growth and development. In humanitarian situations, including migration contexts, pregnant women access to nutrient-rich food, care and services is compromised which increase women's risk of malnutrition, illness, death.

¹⁰ **Women and girls who are breastfeeding** have increased energy needs compared with non-pregnant and non-breastfeeding women. In settings where breastfeeding mothers already face challenges in meeting their nutritional requirements, humanitarian crisis may exacerbate malnutrition, including deficiencies in vitamins and minerals and underweight.

¹¹ **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.

¹² In previous quarters, "victim of violence" and "threats/intimidation" were two separate answer options. After the third quarter of 2023, the answer options were revised and consolidated. "Victim of violence" now identifies "The person or someone close to them was a victim of violence, threats or intimidation (extortion, assault, GBV, kidnapping, discrimination / xenophobia, etc.)".

 **75%**

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.

The most frequently cited reason for leaving one's own country of origin remains the lack of access to employment (70%).

 **62%**

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

This includes fear due to the general situation of violence/insecurity (46%) or suffering violence themselves (29%). Among the top five nationalities interviewed in this quarter, violence-related reasons are most frequently cited by Haitians (80%) and Colombians (73%).

 **37%**

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

This continues to highlight the interconnected and concurrent nature of the factors driving mixed movements. 47% of Venezuelans and 44% of Colombians interviewed reported both rights and violence-related reasons to leave their country of origin at the same time.

Qualitative data highlights additional profiles of extracontinental individuals who fled their countries due to violence and persecution, though these are underrepresented in the interviews. This quarter, the Necocli field diary recorded the experiences of Afghan families escaping Taliban persecution, Ethiopian journalists fleeing government threats, and Chinese families leaving due to severe human rights violations, including freedom suppression and ethnic discrimination.

Respondents in families with children reported a slightly higher incidence across all categories of reasons for leaving their countries of origin, both related to challenges in access to basic rights and services, as well as violence reasons, indicating the increased vulnerability of families and children within mixed movements.

 **27%** of respondents left the country of origin due to lack of food, a slight increase from the previous quarter (21%).

Respondents traveling with children are more likely to leave their country of origin due to food shortages, with 32% citing this as a reason, compared to 24% of those traveling without children. Additionally, in South America, 35% of respondents identify lack of food as one of the major reasons for migration. Food security remains a critical factor in the decision to leave one's country of origin, representing one of the main push factors behind mixed movements in the region.

Adverse effects of climate change and disasters

Qualitative data highlights the adverse effects of climate change and disasters as key drivers of displacement for specific groups. In the Necocli field diary, African respondents reported fleeing due to climate change-induced droughts and food scarcity resulting from damaged crops. Similarly, Ecuadorian families from Saquisilí, Quevedo, Huaquillas, Loja, and Zapotillo cited persistent rain and drought in their regions. These communities face reduced harvests, damaged infrastructure, water shortages, and energy cuts, all of which have severely impacted their income and livelihoods.

© UNHCR/NicoloFilippoRosso



JOURNEY

Human mobility patterns during the second quarter of the year consistently reveal the complex and diverse routes individuals from different regions undertake. These routes are influenced by factors such as the travelers' countries of origin, reasons for displacement, economic means, and intended destinations, with Central America serving as a pivotal transit hub.

The transit routes differ significantly among different groups, reflecting diverse protection needs and risks, as well as the many existing barriers to accessing territory and safety. Darien continues to be one of the key routes, and the number of individuals reporting having crossed the Darien jungle more than once has been rising. Often, they make their second or third attempt accompanied by their children or partners.

Alternative routes to the Darien are not new, but their diversification has increased, often linked to the perception that they are safer and more accessible than crossing the Darien. These routes were initially more commonly used by extra continentals, but it is now common to find Venezuelans, including minors, using them. One common sea route is through the Pacific from Jurado, Colombia. Further, the Caribbean Sea route from San Andres Island, a Colombian-territory island in the Caribbean, to Nicaragua continued to be popular in the second quarter of 2024. Through remote monitoring conducted by UNHCR, it is understood that traveling through San Andres is prevalent among individuals with more financial means looking to avoid the Darien crossing. Nonetheless, recent reports indicate that this route also carries a high level of risk due to shipwrecks and abductions. Specifically, UNHCR has received reports that human trafficking networks often

stage shipwrecks to kidnap and traffic people. Moreover, on May 6th, the U.S. imposed visa restrictions on the executives of several Colombian maritime transportation companies for facilitating irregular movement.¹³

Nicaragua allows visa-free entry for citizens from over two dozen African countries as well as Cuba. During this reporting period, there has been a marked increase in the number of Cuban nationals arriving in Nicaragua. Additionally, reports indicate that Venezuelans are traveling from Venezuela to Cuba and then onward to Nicaragua, with most continuing their journey toward the U.S. border. However, this route is more restricted for Venezuelans, as it requires both financial resources and a passport.

Focus group discussions with Venezuelan and Colombian participants in Honduras reveal individuals feel they were able access humanitarian assistance in the country, including access to information, internet, accommodation, medical services, and support from host community members.

In Guatemala, there are a significant number of people in mixed movements from Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. The most common profiles are entire families with different compositions, including young couples, single adults, and older adults. Due to the visa requirement for these nationalities to access Guatemalan territory, many people cross into Honduras and join larger groups of people before entering Guatemala.

Arrival to country of interview

 **75%**

of respondents arrived in the country of interview less than one week ago.

This trend is consistent with previous quarters, where most respondents were recent arrivals.

Length of journey

 **51%**

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

which represents a decrease from 63% in the same period in 2023.

Intended length of stay

 **76%**

expressed an intention to stay in the country of the interview for less than one month.

37% of the respondents in Mexico intend to stay in the country more than one year, particularly when they come from Central American countries. These values are consistent with previous quarters.

¹³ Mixed Migration Center. (2024, Q2 April-June). *Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Latin America and the Caribbean*. Retrieved from https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/QMMU_Q2_2024_LAC_EN.pdf

Countries transited

The map below illustrates the primary routes used by both continental and extracontinental individuals to reach North America:



Source: UNHCR and R4V



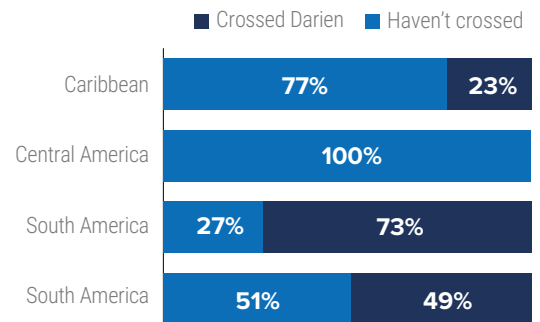
58% PANAMA
58% COLOMBIA
53% HONDURAS
48% NICARAGUA
48% COSTA RICA

Top 5 countries of transit



50%

of respondents crossed the Darien



PROTECTION INCIDENTS



72%

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



Respondents traveling with children are

75%

more exposed to protection incidents or threats than those not traveling with children (70%).

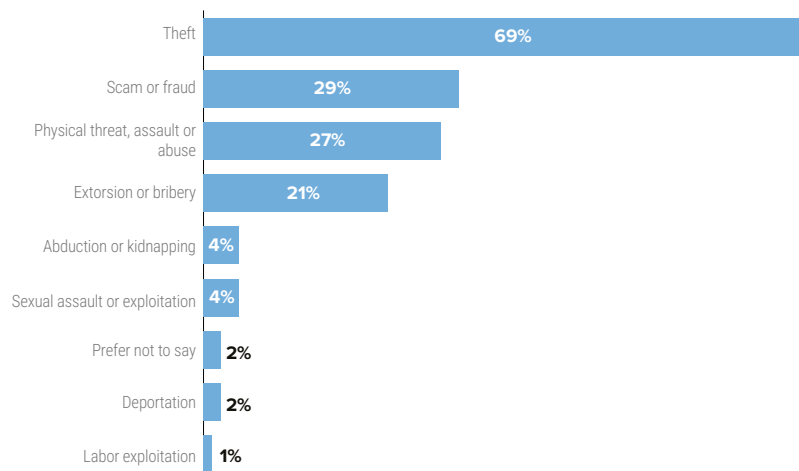


Respondents who crossed the Darien are

34%

more likely to report protection incidents than those who have not crossed the jungle.

Type of protection incidents (breakdown)



The number of individuals who experienced or witnessed a protection incident along the route has continued to exceed previous quarters, with 72% of respondents reporting such incidents in the second quarter of 2024. This marks a 22% increase since the third quarter of 2023, when the survey began including not only firsthand experiences but also observations of other people in the group facing incidents or threats.

In the second quarter of 2024, thefts remain alarmingly prevalent, comprising 69% of reported incidents, significantly outpacing other categories. Additionally, there has been an increase in scam and fraud incidents, reported by 29% of respondents, with physical threats and assaults following at 27%. The number of kidnappings reported has also slightly increased, particularly in the context of the north of Mexico (12%), due to the deterioration of the security situation in the country.

The occurrence of protection incidents also varies depending on the route or border point within a given country. Typically, northern, and western border points are associated with a higher rate of protection incidents compared to southern and

eastern borders, suggesting that the chosen route through the country can significantly increase the risks faced by people on the move.

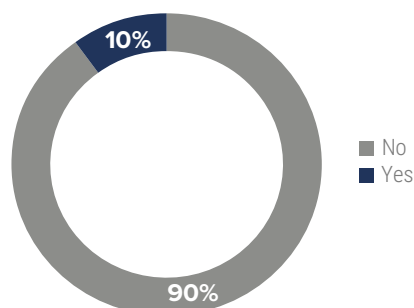
The crossing of the Darien remains one of the most traumatic experiences for those who undertake it, largely due to the extreme levels of violence encountered along the way. Female participants in focus group discussions in Honduras reported being at constant risk of sexual violence, with many having either witnessed such incidents or survivors themselves during their journey.

91% of respondents in Guatemala reported a protection incident or threat, one of the highest rates in all countries of interview. This percentage is greater amongst Ecuadorians, as almost all respondents of this nationality interviewed in Guatemala (97%) reported having suffered or witnessed an incident.

In El Salvador, focus group discussions highlight that criminal networks are extorting individuals by charging them for guidance through illegal routes and unauthorized crossing points into Guatemala and Honduras.

Separated children

Any child in travel group been separated since the beginning of the journey



The second quarter of 2024 also brings additional information on separated children. 10% of respondents have reported that at least one child or adolescent has been separated from their parents or legal guardians during the journey.¹⁴ This incidence is higher for groups from Colombia (18%). During the first half of 2024, UNICEF Panama has identified a total of 2,718 unaccompanied or separated children entering the country from the Darien gap, corresponding to 6% of children.

¹⁴ Results do not include Mexico in Q2.

ACCESS TO FOOD



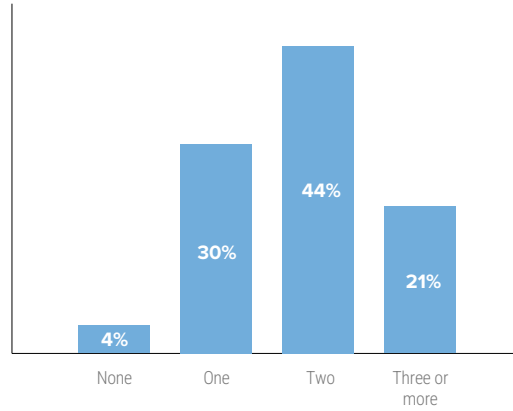
34%

of respondents reported having only one meal or none the day before the interview. This represents an improvement compared to previous quarter (45%).

Nevertheless, these figures were highest in Panama, where 50% of interviewees reported having one meal or none the day prior.

Food insecurity remains a critical issue throughout the journey. Over one-third of respondents (34%) only managed to consume a single meal (30%) or went without food entirely (4%) on the day before the interview. This quarter has seen an increase in the number of people who reported having eaten one or no meals the day before the interview in Panama (from 45% in the last quarter to 50%) and a continued decrease in Costa Rica (from 44% to 21%). Though these figures improved in Costa Rica, 10% of respondents reported eating no meals the day before the interview, the highest of all the interview countries. There was an improvement of respondents reporting having two meals the day before the interview, from 37% in the previous quarter to 44% in this quarter. In Guatemala, although there was an improvement in meal consumption, 87% of

How many meals did you eat yesterday?



respondents still cited food for their family as their primary need, highlighting the dire food security situation faced by migrants transiting through the country.

Regarding nationalities, this quarter has seen a decrease in the number of Central American nationalities, particularly Hondurans, who reported low levels of meal consumption (one or no meals the day before the interview), from 61% in the previous quarter to 46% in this one. Even so, Hondurans reported the lowest levels of meal consumption of any nationality. Moreover, an improvement in meal consumption for nationals from El Salvador was also observed, with 42% reporting one or no meals the day prior in the previous quarter and 22% in this current quarter.

How many meals did you eat yesterday? (Central American countries of origin, comparison between Q1 2024 and Q2 2024)



Meanwhile, among the main nationalities interviewed, Venezuelans have reported a slight improvement in meal consumption since the last quarter of 2023 (from 58% in Q4 of 2023, to 46% in Q1 and 33% in Q2 of 2024). Ecuadorians have also shown an improvement in these indicators, with a

decrease from 51% in the previous quarter to 30% in this one. 35% of Haitians reported low meal consumption, 6% of which indicates no meals eaten the day prior, the highest among nationalities and consistent with previous quarters.

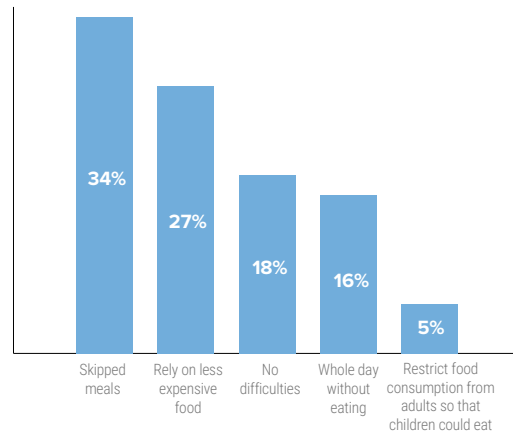


82%

of respondents faced difficulties covering their food needs and had to resort to various negative coping strategies due to lack of food or insufficient funds to purchase it.

This quarter has seen a slight increase in the number of people who choose less expensive or less preferred foods (from 22% to 27%) and a noticeable decrease in the number of people who had to skip meals (from 45% to 34%). 41% of respondents in Panama reported going a whole day without eating, the highest among all the countries of interview.

Percentage reporting different consumption coping strategies



When asked about their food situation over the previous week, 18% of respondents reported having no difficulties, 4% more than the last quarter. Still, most people adopted coping mechanisms to face food shortages and the lack of financial means to access food (82%). These strategies range from skipping meals (34%) to eating cheaper and less preferred foods (27%), as well as regularly spending entire days without eating (16%). Women respondents were more likely than male respondents to restrict their consumption so children or dependents could eat (8% and 4%, respectively). This quarter a new question was introduced to understand the relationship between group composition and food coping strategies. 64% of respondents who traveled with children under 6 years old reported employing severe coping mechanisms related to food security, such as skipping meals or going an entire day without eating. In contrast, those who did not travel with young children were less likely to engage in such negative coping strategies, with only 54% reporting similar issues.

Skipping meals was reported most in Guatemala (39%), followed by Mexico (37%) and Panama (32%). 30% of respondents in Costa Rica reported skipping meals, an improvement from the previous quarter (60%). The situation has improved dramatically in Costa Rica since last year, as throughout 2023, more than half of respondents were going a whole day without eating, a

number that is down to 20% this quarter. During this quarter, 41% of individuals interviewed in Panama reported going a whole day without eating, the highest among all the other countries of interview and consistent with previous quarters. In Honduras, 32% of respondents reported not having difficulties accessing food, a pattern consistent with the last two quarters and a noticeable improvement since the same quarter of 2023 (14%). In Honduras, the State has opened a reception center at its southern border with a capacity of 300 to 400 people per night, which may have improved the situation since previous quarters. Even so, focus group discussions in Honduras have reported difficulties accessing food on the journey, with mention of illnesses due to non-potable water and low-quality food and food prices being inflated for migrants compared to locals.

When assessing the election of severe food coping strategies by country of interview, in Panama and Costa Rica, 78% and 73% of respondents, respectively, had to resort to food coping strategies. Meanwhile, most respondents in Honduras reported the opposite, with 67% reporting no severe food coping strategies. This could highlight the difference between the institutional and humanitarian support offered at different points along the route, changing mixed movements routes, and the location of the data collection sites along the journey.

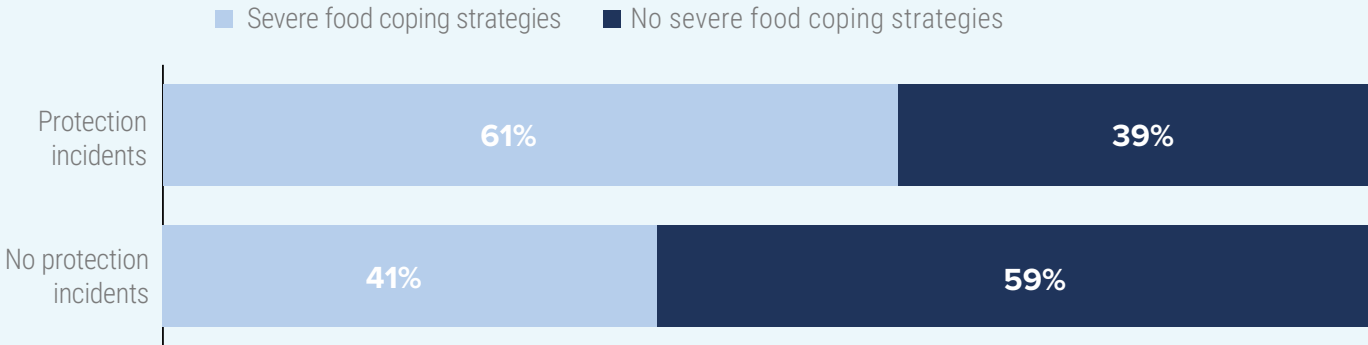
Food security and protection



This quarter, 61% of the respondents who reported at least one protection incident on the route also engaged in severe coping mechanisms related to food security, including skipping meals and going a whole day without eating, an increase since last

quarter (47%). In the graph below, it is possible to see that individuals who did not report a protection incident were less likely to resort to negative coping mechanisms.

Severe food coping strategies by victim/witness of protection incident



Haitians and Colombians ranked worse than other nationalities. Of those who were victims of or had witnessed a protection incident, 29% of Haitians reported going a whole day without eating, and 42% of Colombians reported skipping meals to ensure adequate food, the highest among all nationalities for the respective indicator. Lack of resources, language barrier, and cultural differences in diet could factor into coping strategies selection.

60% of individuals who experienced or witnessed theft, the most prevalent protection incident reported this quarter, also resorted to severe food coping strategies. When considering individuals who had experienced or witnessed instances of extortion, 66% of individuals reported skipping meals or forgoing food altogether to cope, the highest among all the protection incidents reported.

Infant and young child feeding indicators

In the second quarter, a new set of child-related indicators covering various information gaps were introduced. This section covers the results of child nutrition in early childhood, specifically children under five years old. The dietary diversity and nutrition indicators below are defined in accordance with WHO-UNICEF guidelines to evaluate feeding practices of children under five years old.¹⁵

Infants under 6 months of age who are not exclusively breastfed are vulnerable to infection and to developing diarrhoea. They can then easily become malnourished and dehydrated and so are at real risk of death.

For babies under six months of age, the only recommended food is breastmilk. Therefore, exclusive breastfeeding is used as the child nutrition indicator for this age group. Two out of three respondents (67%) reported exclusive breastfeeding for a child under 6 months of age in the family the day before the interview.

For children between six months and five years old, the nutrition indicator used in this report is called “food poverty” which quantifies the dietary diversity using the number of food items belonging to different food groups eaten by a child the previous day. Children in this age group need to consume food from at least 5 out of the 8 identified food groups for a “minimum dietary diversity”. Children who consume food from less food groups are considered in food poverty of two levels: consuming foods from 2 or less food groups is classified as severe food poverty and from 3 or 4 food groups as moderate food poverty.

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

Child vaccination

A new indicator related to child health was introduced this quarter to assess the vaccination status of children along the journey. According to respondents, 75% of children under six months old and 85% between seven months and five years old belonging to the family have been fully vaccinated according to the schedule.¹⁸ However, these vaccination rates should be higher to hinder the transmission of diseases for which children are vaccinated in the community.

The lower rate for children under six months may be due to the difficulty in accessing vaccination services along the route. Of respondents with children under six months old who have not completed vaccination, 8 out of 11 left the country of origin less than six months before the interview.

children and their families in a cycle of poverty and deprivation.

According to the latest figures from UNICEF,¹⁶ in the Latin American and the Caribbean region, 9% of children under 5 years have severe food poverty and 28% have moderate food poverty.¹⁷ The high levels of food poverty in this report are compatible with food being one of the primary needs of people in transit, including children and adolescents.

65% of respondents reported that their family children had consumed food items from two food groups or less, so had severe food poverty. 29% reported that their children had consumed food from three or four groups, meaning that they had moderate food poverty. Only 6% reported their children as not in food poverty, meaning that children had consumed from five to eight food groups and met the minimum dietary diversity standards.

This quarter, severe child food poverty is highest in Panama (88%) and Honduras (83%) while comparatively lower in Guatemala (46%). The high food poverty rate in Panama may be explained by the arduous journey of crossing the Darien, a trip that can take two to five days and where food is scarce. Field observations highlight that many children arrive in Panama malnourished and requiring medical attention. Although many children should receive food assistance at the migration reception points upon exiting Darien, the intense trip can cause gastrointestinal disorders or amoebiasis due to drinking contaminated water, which impacts their ability to eat some foods until recovery.

In Honduras, high rates of food poverty may be partially because many surveys are collected right after crossing the border or before leaving the country, so children have not eaten with enough nutritional diversity for long.



75%

of children under six months old and 85% between seven months and five years old belonging to the family have been fully vaccinated, according to respondents.

¹⁵ 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/>

¹⁶ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Child Food Poverty. Nutrition Deprivation in Early Childhood. Child Nutrition Report, 2024. UNICEF, New York, June 2024. Available online at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-food-poverty-report-2024/>

¹⁷ The food poverty levels are from countries where data is available.

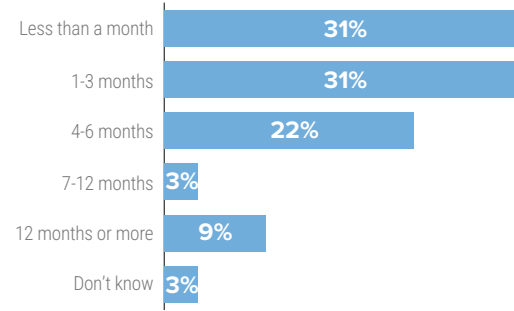
¹⁸ The answers are from a direct question to the respondent; the vaccination card was not checked.

Child education

This quarter also saw the introduction of indicators related to education for children and adolescents between six and 17 years of age. For 85 out of 664 respondents (13%), it was not possible for their children to receive an education (including either institutional or remote learning) in the country where they lived before starting the journey.

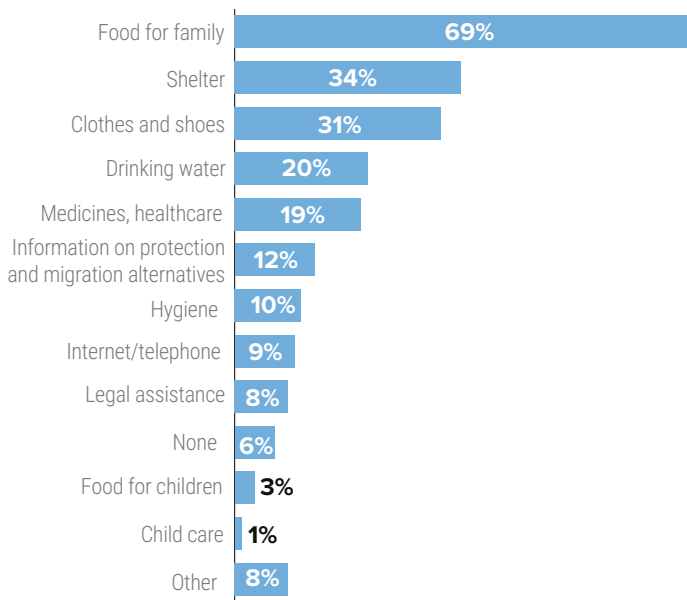
For three out of five respondents (62%), the children attended education for the last time three months or less before the interview. Four out of five of them left their country of origin less than six months before. 22% of respondents reported that their children attended school for the last time between four and six months before. Interestingly, 9% of respondents reported that their children did not attend education for more than one year, a much higher proportion than those who last attended between seven months and one year before.

Percentage of families with children of 6-17 years by last attendance of education



Three out of five family respondents do not carry any document that certifies the last educational level approved, and four out of five reported not knowing the requirements to access the educational systems in different countries.

MAIN NEEDS



69%

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

This was followed by the need for shelter (34%) – which is particularly prominent among respondents in Costa Rica and Mexico –, as well as the need for clothing and footwear (31%), especially for respondents in Panama and Costa Rica after having crossed the Darien jungle.

Further analysis of the responses segmented by the country of interview provides additional insights into respondents' main needs. In Panama, more than half of the respondents continue to list clothing and footwear as their main need (56%), likely due to conditions following the crossing of the Darien jungle. Food for family is a primary concern in all other countries of interviews, particularly in Guatemala, where the category reaches peaks at 87%. Drinking water is among the main categories of needs of respondents in Guatemala (29%) and Honduras (28%).

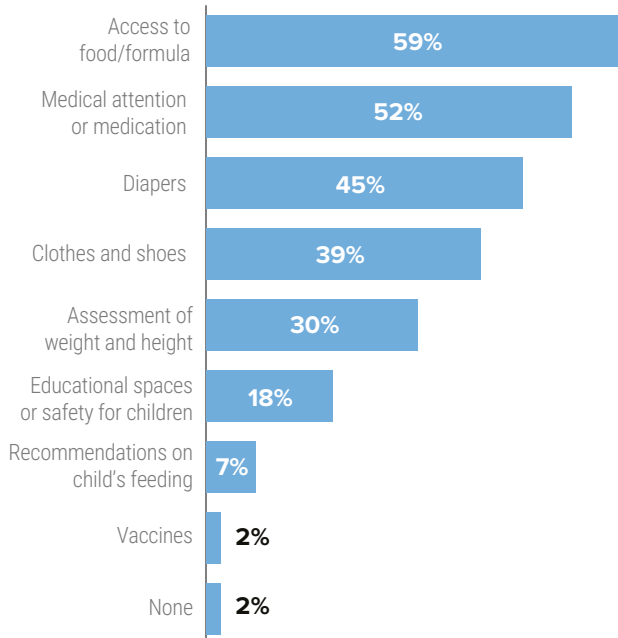
Focus group discussions in Honduras underscored the critical need for accurate information, as participants reported an increase in human traffickers along the route who spread false

information to persuade people in mixed movements to hire their services. Participants also emphasized the importance of clear information about available humanitarian assistance along the route and recommended improving the signposting of these services to ensure they are more easily accessible.

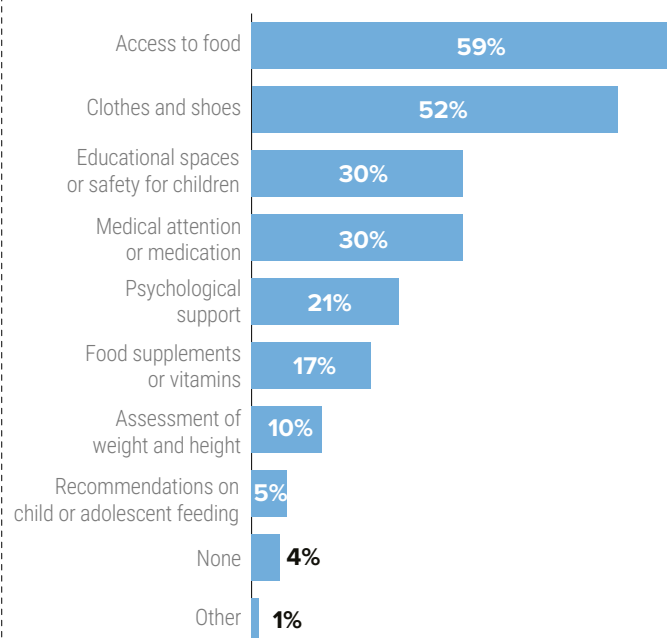
Health care, typically one of the top five main needs, was cited by 19% of respondents this quarter. Qualitative data from key informants in Honduras suggest that individuals requiring medical treatment often prioritize continuing their journey with their group over staying for a few days to receive necessary care. This preference to remain with their group has often outweighed the immediate need for medical attention.

Main needs of children

Main needs of family with children of 0-6 months



Main needs of family with children of 6 months to 17 years



This quarter a new question was introduced to understand the primary needs of children in the families of respondents. For babies under six months old, the main need reported was access to food or infant formula (59%), followed by medical attention, diapers, clothing and footwear, and assessment of weight and height and nutrition counseling. For children and adolescents between six months and 17 years, 59% of respondents reported access to food as the primary need, in agreement with the main needs of adults.

Following food, 52% of interviewees reported clothing and footwear as a need for children between six months and 17 years, in contrast to 31% of adult respondents ranking their primary needs. Dedicated educational and safe spaces for children and medical attention were both reported by 30% of respondents and ranked as the third primary need, with a tangible gap between it and the second.

Breaking down the needs by nationalities, Colombians reported in high numbers the need for dedicated educational

and safe spaces for children (40%, 39 respondents) while the majority of Cubans reported having no needs (71%, 10 respondents). Hondurans reported psychological support (43%, 12 respondents) in equal share with food and medical attention, in contrast to the total figures.

The primary needs of children aged six months to 17 years varied significantly across the countries of interview. In Guatemala, 43% of respondents cited psychological support as a key need, second only to food. In Costa Rica, 55% highlighted the need for educational and safe spaces, following clothing and food (66%). In Panama, clothing and footwear were the top priorities for 64% of respondents, a higher percentage than for adults. Additionally, 42% of respondents in Panama reported equal needs for food and medical attention, likely due to the hardships endured during the Darien crossing.

Humanitarian assistance received by children



91%

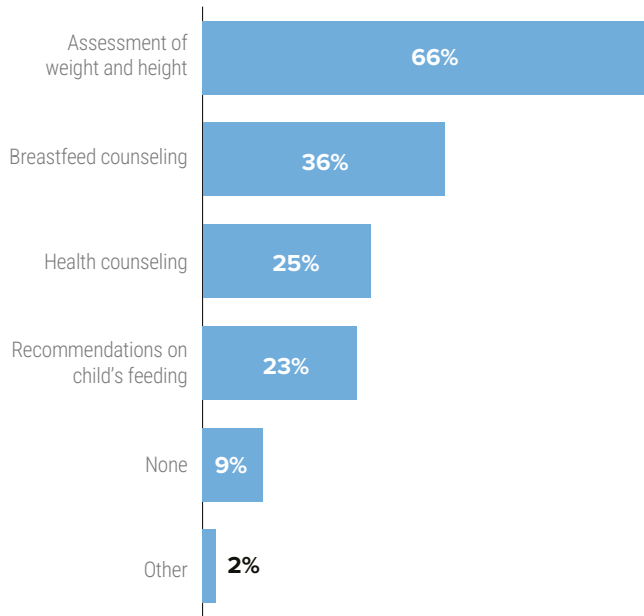
of the children under 6 months old received humanitarian assistance along the route.



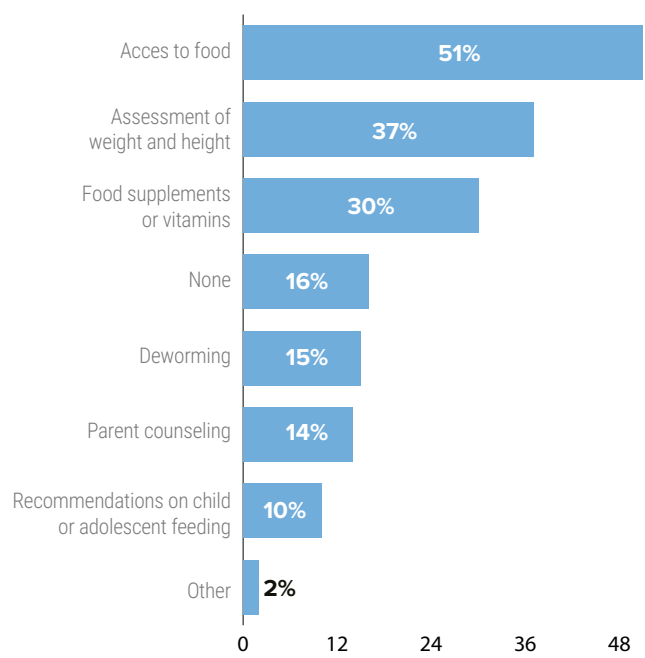
84%

of the children between 6 months and 5 years received humanitarian assistance along the route.

Type of assistance received by family with children of 0-6 months



Type of assistance received by family with children of 6 months to 5 years



This quarter also saw the introduction of an indicator to understand the humanitarian assistance and services received by children in the families of respondents.

91% of families with babies under six months old report having received assistance. Nutrition assessment using weight and height was conducted among two out of three infants under 6 months old. Also, one out of three (36%) mothers of infants in this age group received breastfeeding counseling.

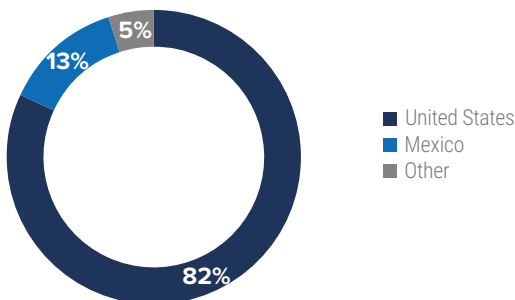
For children between six months and five years old, 47% of those interviewed in Panama reported not receiving any assistance since the start of their journey, the lowest among all the countries of interview. Across all the countries, the

types of assistance reported by families with children between six months and five years were food (51%), an assessment of weight and height (37%), and delivery of vitamin or nutritional supplements ready for consumption (30%).

In Guatemala and Costa Rica, the primary assistance for this age group was food (56% and 82%, respectively). Contrastingly, in Honduras, access to food was reported by only a few respondents (17%), while assessment of weight and height and delivery of vitamin or nutritional supplements ready for consumption were the top services (61% and 54%, respectively). In Guatemala, the second service reported was advice to the mother on breastfeeding or feeding (35%), and the third was deworming (32%).

INTENTIONS

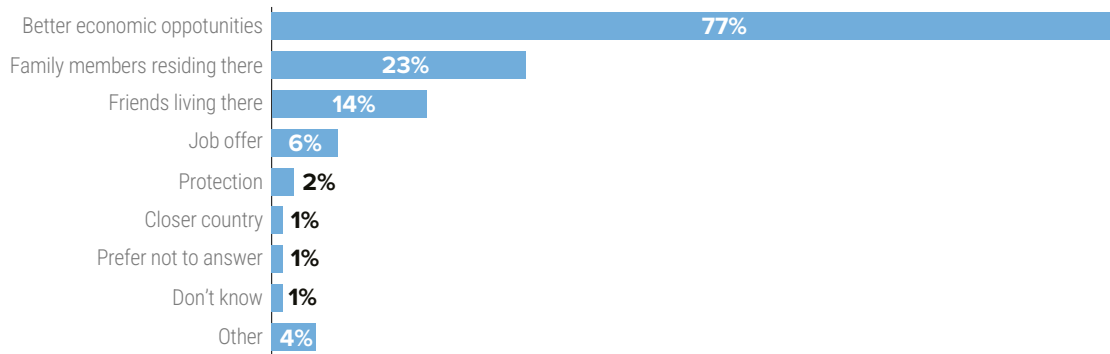
Intended country of destination



82%

of respondents intend to go to the United States.

Main reasons for intended destination

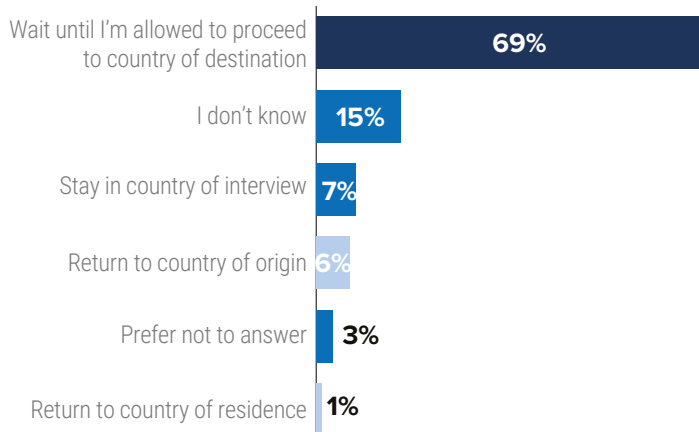


The United States remains the preferred destination, attracting 82% of respondents, with Mexico following at 13%. Among the top five nationalities, 92% of Venezuelans and 84% of Colombians expressed the strongest intention to reach the United States. In contrast, the highest intention to reach Mexico is found among Haitians and Cubans, at 47%. Other intended destinations (5%) include Costa Rica (2%), Canada (1%), and a few others.

The primary motivation for choosing their destination, as stated by a significant 77% of respondents, is the availability of better economic opportunities in the chosen country. Additionally, 23% cited the presence of family members in the destination country and the need for family reunification.

Scenarios of alternative intentions

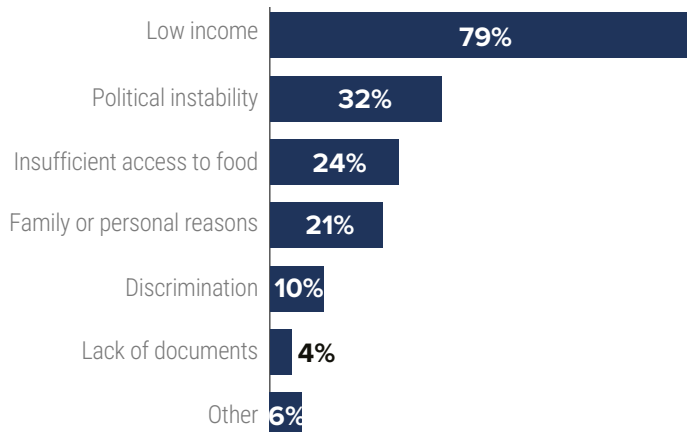
In case not possible to reach intended country of destination, what would yo do?



Notably, **69% of respondents expressed a willingness to wait until they are permitted to proceed to their intended destination.**

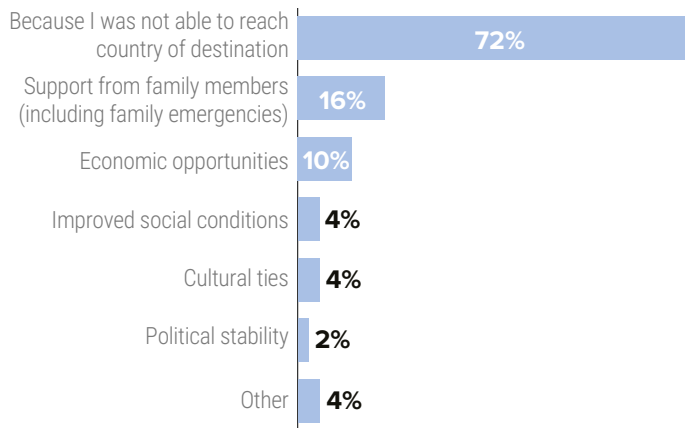
Among this group, the highest rates of intention to wait are found among Colombians and Venezuelans. Conversely, those most likely to consider returning to their country of origin or host country are predominantly Hondurans.

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



Consistent with previous quarters, the main reason deterring individuals from considering a return to their country of origin remains predominantly economic, cited by 79% of respondents. Political instability is also a notable factor, affecting 32% of those surveyed.

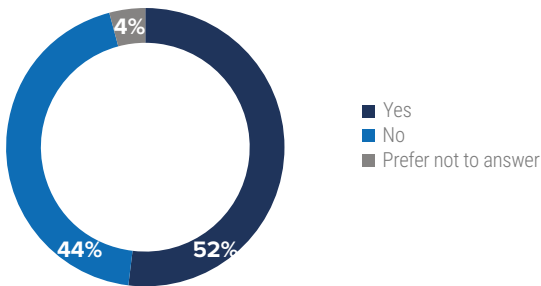
What would be the reason(s) to return?



Among those contemplating a return to their country of origin or host country (totaling 7% of respondents), 72% indicated they would only consider this option if unable to reach their intended destination. In this quarter there has been a slight increase in the number of people citing the need to support their family or respond to family emergencies as their reason for considering a return (16%).

Risks upon return

Risk upon return for self or family



← **52%**
of people responded that they would face some kind of risk upon return.

Respondents were asked if they would face any kind of risk if they had to return to their country of origin or host country.

More than half of the respondents would face some kind of risk upon returning to their countries of origin or host countries.

Broadly speaking, protection concerns upon return can relate to security and/or reintegration prospects, particularly where the overall situation in the country or the circumstances for specific individuals and groups (e.g., unaccompanied and/or separated children, victims of human trafficking, survivors of gender-based violence, LGBTIQ+, among others) remains fragile.

The prevalence of risks upon return remains particularly high in Mexico, where 77% of the interviewed individuals expressed facing risks of any kind when returning to their country of origin, and 68% of the respondents highlighted that the risk they faced would be persecution, threats, extortion, general violence and/or discrimination.

In collaboration with:

