

MONITORING OF RETURNS OF VENEZUELAN REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

August 2020



1

CONTEXT

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Brazilian government issued Ordinance no. 125, of March 19th 2020, restricting in an exceptional and temporary manner the entry of foreigners in the country. This Ordinance authorized the closure of the Venezuelan border thus restricting people's access to Brazilian territory.

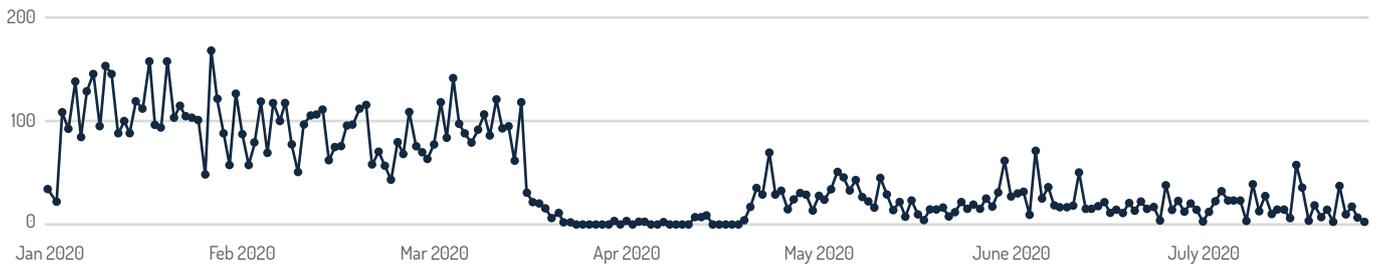
By March 2020, countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile begun to notice an increased number of Venezuelans spontaneously returning to Venezuela. In Colombia, there was a peak of 600 Venezuelan returns daily. In Brazil, according to official data from the Federal Police, between March 19th and July 27th, 2,304 Venezuelans crossed the border at Pacaraima, returning to their country of origin. Even though the current average (17 people per day) is inferior to the return flow observed from January to July 2020 (88 people per day), it is possible to notice the movement's stability, as shown in the chart.

R4V COORDINATION PLATFORM

With the humanitarian crisis initiated by the social, economic and political situation in Venezuela, it is estimated that over five million people have left the country since 2018. Until December 2019, more than 264,000 Venezuelans sought asylum, temporary residency or other forms of regularized migration in Brazil, most of whom entered the country through the city of Pacaraima, in the State of Roraima. As a means to complement the Brazilian government's humanitarian response, the Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) was established, co-led by UNHCR, the UN Agency for Refugees and by the International Migration Organization (IOM). The R4V Platform is a coordination mechanism that gathers 43 organizations, among UN agencies and national and international civil society organizations in Brazil.

DAILY RETURNS OF VENEZUELAN THROUGH THE PACARAIMA (RR) BORDER / JANUARY TO JULY 2020

Source: Federal Police



From this scenario, UNHCR and IOM decided to jointly monitor the situation in order to identify the profile of the refugees and migrants returning from Brazil to Venezuela, as well as the main causes of this flow.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied in data collection was quantitative and random. Every refugee and migrant returning to Venezuela was approached at the Screening Post (PTRIG) at Pacaraima.

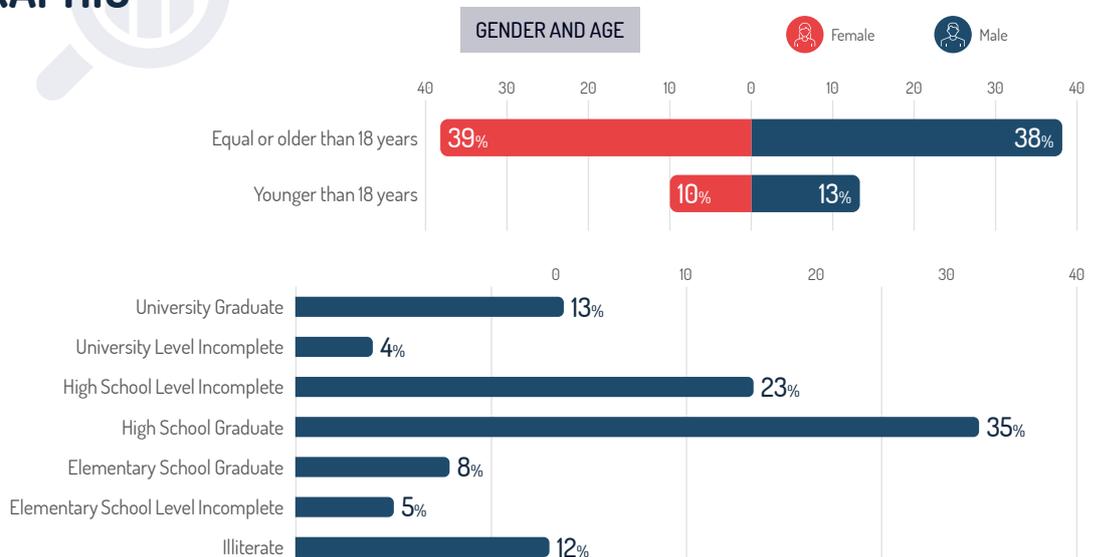
A questionnaire was applied to a reference person from the family group, including specific questions

at individual and family levels. Interviews were conducted in weekdays at business hours by the UNHCR and IOM teams properly identified and using the electronic system KoBo. The questions were made in Spanish to ensure the understanding of interviewees. The results below refer to the period of June 12th to July 15th, when 214 reference people from the family group returning to Venezuela were interviewed, in a total of 355 people mapped with information about the demographic profile.

3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

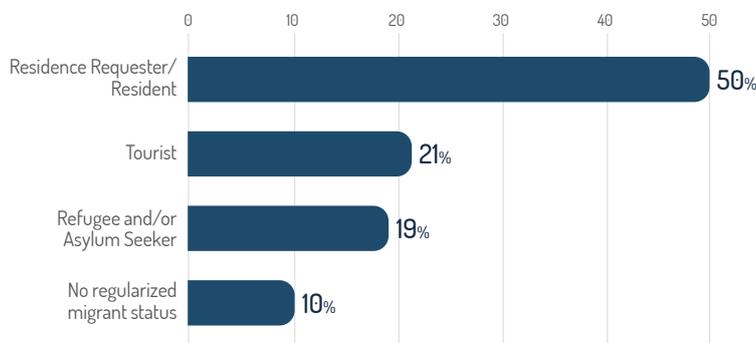
214 interviews with 355 people.

EDUCATION DEGREE

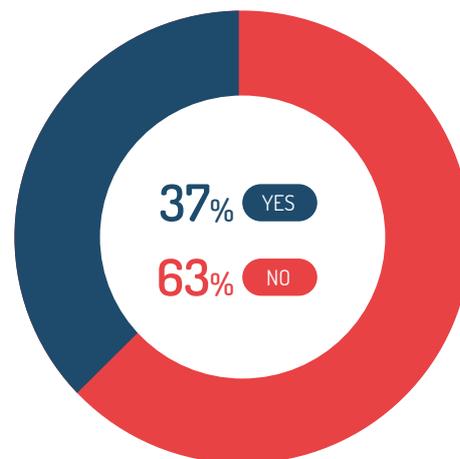


- ▶ **37%** of the people returned on their own. Among the people interviewed that have family members not present upon the return, 91% said to have part of the family in Venezuela and part in Brazil.

LEGAL STATUS OF THE MAIN INTERVIEWEE



DO YOU HAVE OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS THAT ARE NOT RETURNING WITH YOU?



- ▶ **50%** resided in the State of Roraima, more specifically, 10% resided in the city of Pacaraima and 40% in the city of Boa Vista. 26% of the interviewees lived in the city of Manaus.

- ▶ **2%** of the interviewees had ethnic indigenous origin.

Social and Economic Conditions:

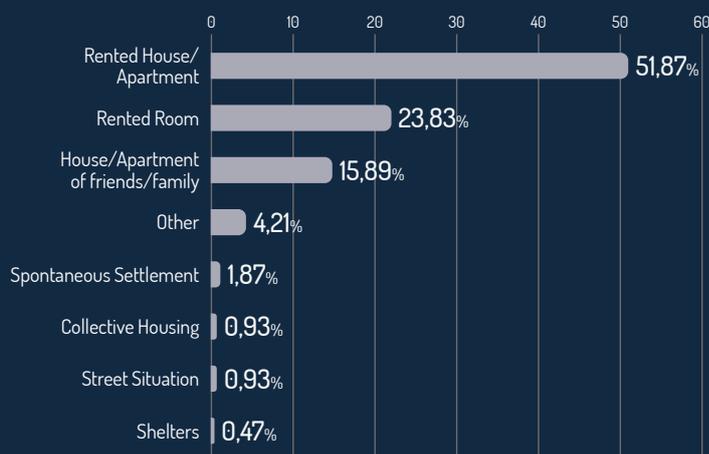
When questioned about the family's main sources of income over the last six months, the interviewees were able to inform one or more sources. The main responses were:

- ▶ **40%** reported obtaining their income from regular informal work
- ▶ **33%** of the interviewees reported not having a specific income
- ▶ **30%** reported occasional informal work
- ▶ **7%** reported having a formal employment

On the housing conditions, the majority of interviewees (51%) lived in a house or apartment. A significant percentage of people lived in rented rooms (23%) or at a family or friend's house (15%).

It was identified that 52% of the interviewees did not receive social assistance benefits over the previous six months. Among the interviewees that received such benefits, the most recurring was *auxilio emergencial* (emergency grant) created by the Brazilian government as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other benefits, e.g. Bolsa Família, basic needs grocery package, cash or card provided by NGOs were mentioned few times.

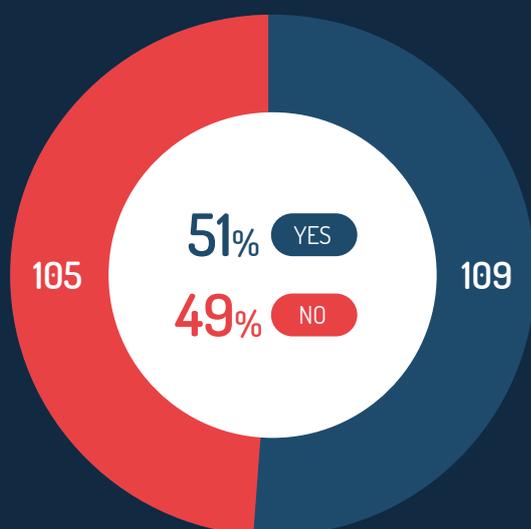
WHAT KIND OF HOUSING DID YOU HAVE IN BRAZIL?



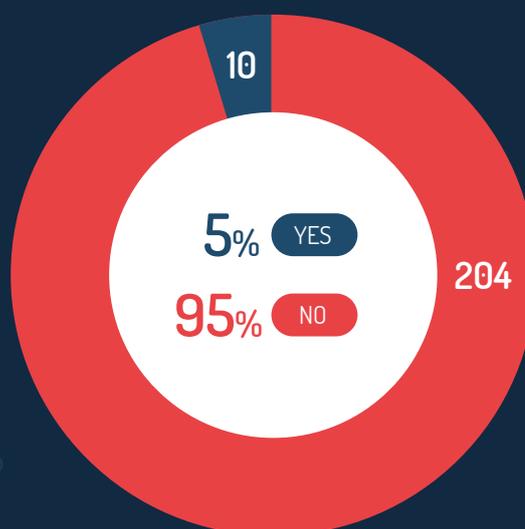
The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic:

Only 4% of the interviewees reported that they or a family member presented COVID-19 symptoms since the beginning of the pandemic. When questioned if the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted the family's income situation in Brazil, 50% of the interviewees answered 'yes'.

WAS THE INCOME SITUATION OF YOUR FAMILY IMPACTED BY THE CURRENT COVID-19 SITUATION?



DID YOU OR ANY OF YOUR LISTED FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE EXPERIENCED ANY COVID-19 SYMPTOMS SINCE THE PANDEMIC STARTED?

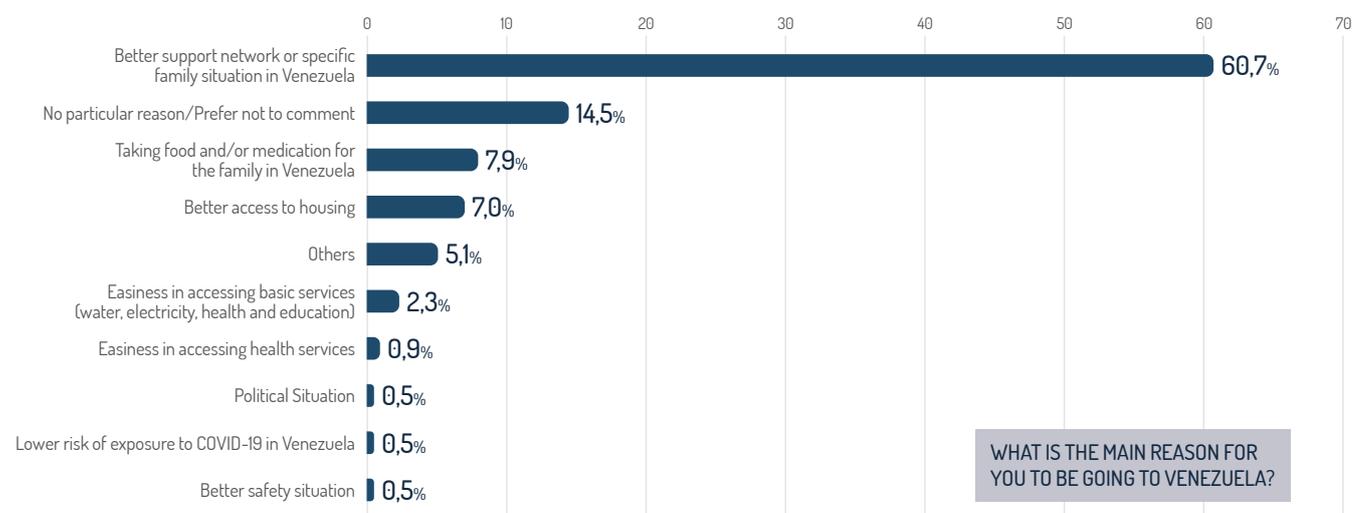
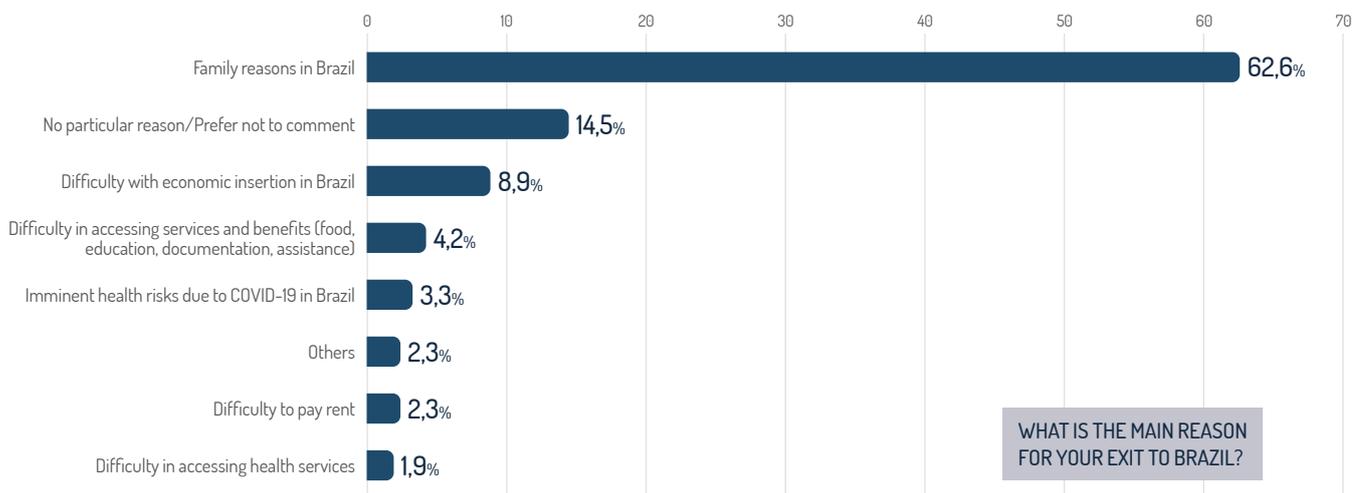


4 REASON FOR RETURNING: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

The questionnaire aimed at identifying, with four questions, the reasons that may have encouraged the Venezuelans' return to their country of origin (push factors) and factors that may attract these people to Venezuela (pull factors). Therefore, this set of questions must be analyzed together.

The interviewees' answers showed that 62.6% of exits from Brazil (push factors) were motivated by family issues, such as health issues or death of a family member in Brazil. When focused in the analysis of factors that encouraged the return to Venezuela (pull factors), 60.7% of the interviewees also reported as reasons the support network and family situation in Venezuela. For each of the questions, the interviewees reported additional factors that lead to the exit from Brazil and attraction to Venezuela.

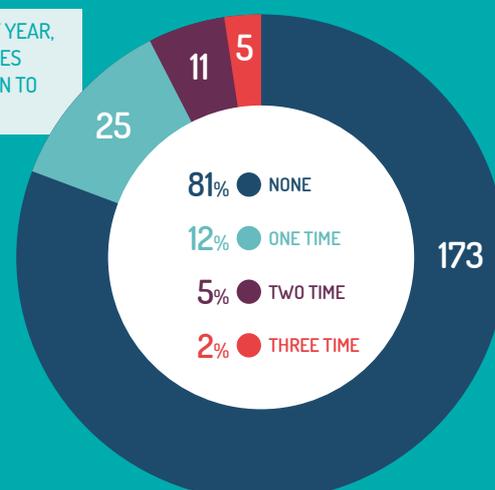
Other reasons for leaving Brazil include: difficulty on economic inclusion - lack of work/low income (8.9%); difficulty/low quality of access to benefits (food, education, documentation, among others) (4.2%) and imminent health risks due to COVID-19 in Brazil (3.3%). Regarding the additional factors for Venezuela's attractiveness: 7.9% and 7% indicated the need to the food or medication to the family and the possession housing in their country of origin, respectively. Difficulty or low access to services and benefits (food, education, documentation and assistance) and imminent health risks due to COVID-19 in Brazil were mentioned only by 2.8% of the interviewees as the main reason for returning to Venezuela. One may, therefore, infer that the returns do not have an overall economic nature, being characterized as movements due to family reasons.

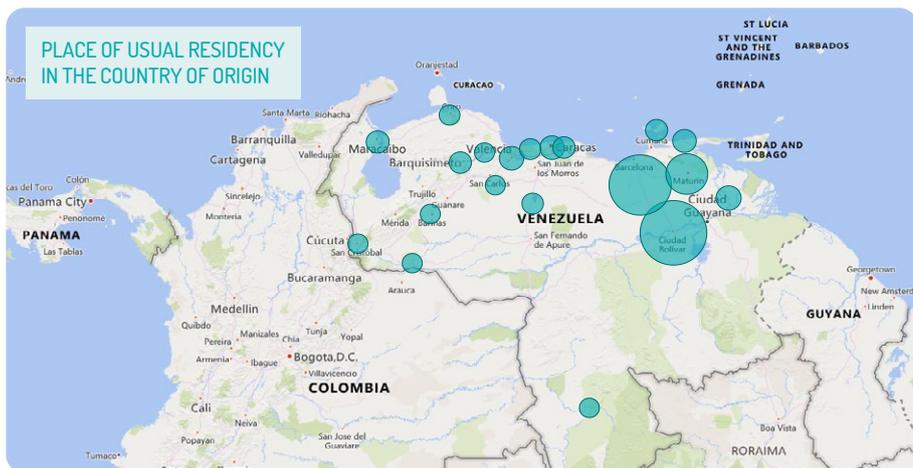


DISPLACEMENT AND TRANSPORT

When questioned about how many times over the previous year the interviewee returned to Venezuela, it was identified that 81% of the individuals did not return to their country of origin in that period. Around 19% of the people returned once or twice of the same period. In 97% of the cases, the interviewee is returning to the city where resided before the displacement to Brazil.

OVER THE LAST YEAR, HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU RETURN TO VENEZUELA?



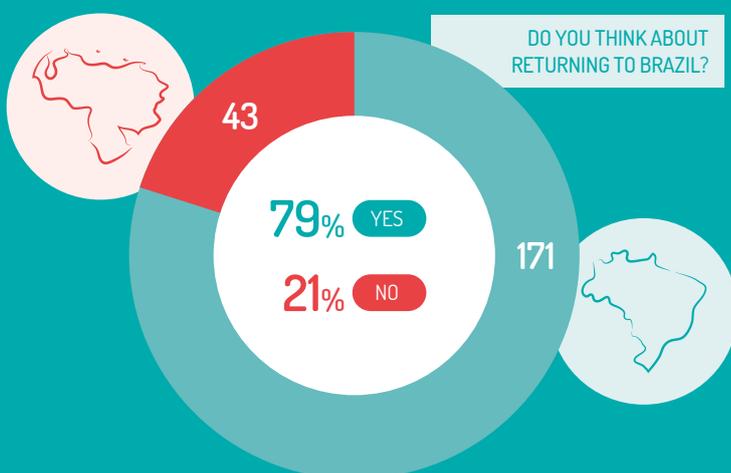


The three main destination points are Bolívar (30%), Anzoátegui (28%) and Monagas (14%).

The main means of transport used by the interviewees to reach the border were taxi and intercity bus, with 43% and 42% respectively. Less than 4% of the interviewees reached the border using their own car, freight bus or hitchhiking.

POSSIBLE RETURN TO BRAZIL

Most of the interviewees (79%) returning to Venezuela thought about coming back to Brazil. The average time period that they intended for this displacement was four months.



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RESPOSTA A VENEZUELANOS
 Plataforma de Coordenação para Refugiados e Migrantes da Venezuela

www.R4V.info