

June - July 2024

Context

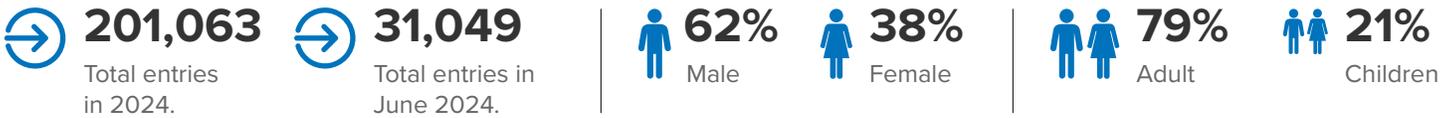
Darien is Panama's largest and poorest province. Bordering Colombia, the province hosts a 60-mile-deep jungle, the only breaking point of the Pan-American highway, linking the continent from south to north.

Despite being one of the most dangerous jungles in the world, Darien is a transit location for thousands of refugees and migrants, mainly from Venezuela, Ecuador, Haiti, and African and South Asian nations.

Panama's mixed movement crisis has been ongoing for over two years. According to National Migration Service (SNM) statistics, over 1,100,000 people crossed this area between 2021 and 2024.

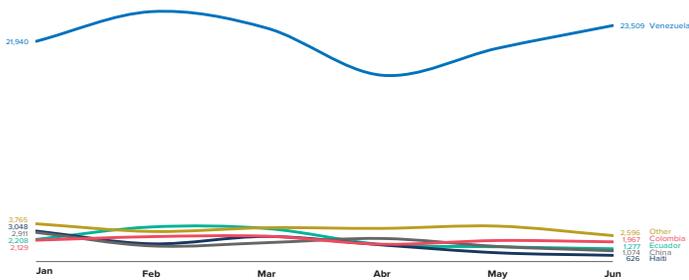


Key Figures



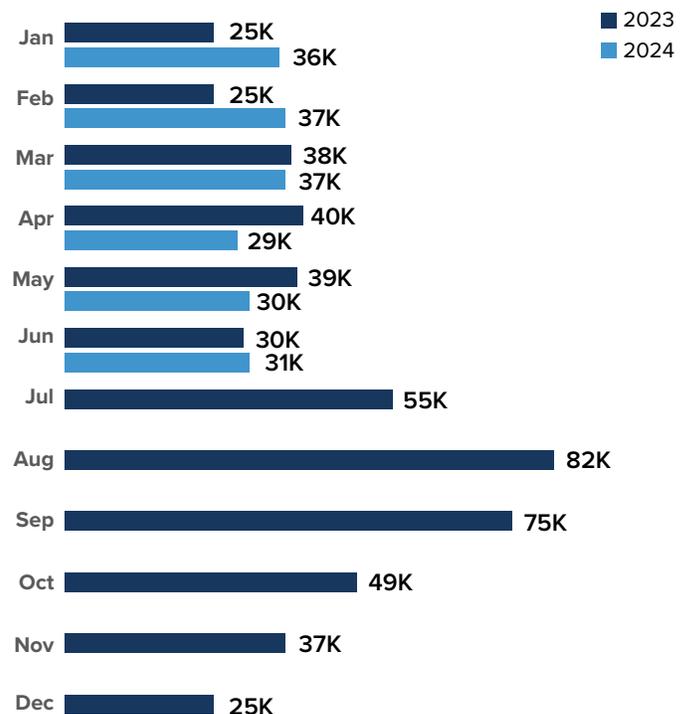
Source: Panama National Migration Service

Main Nationalities entering irregularly through Darien from January to June 2024



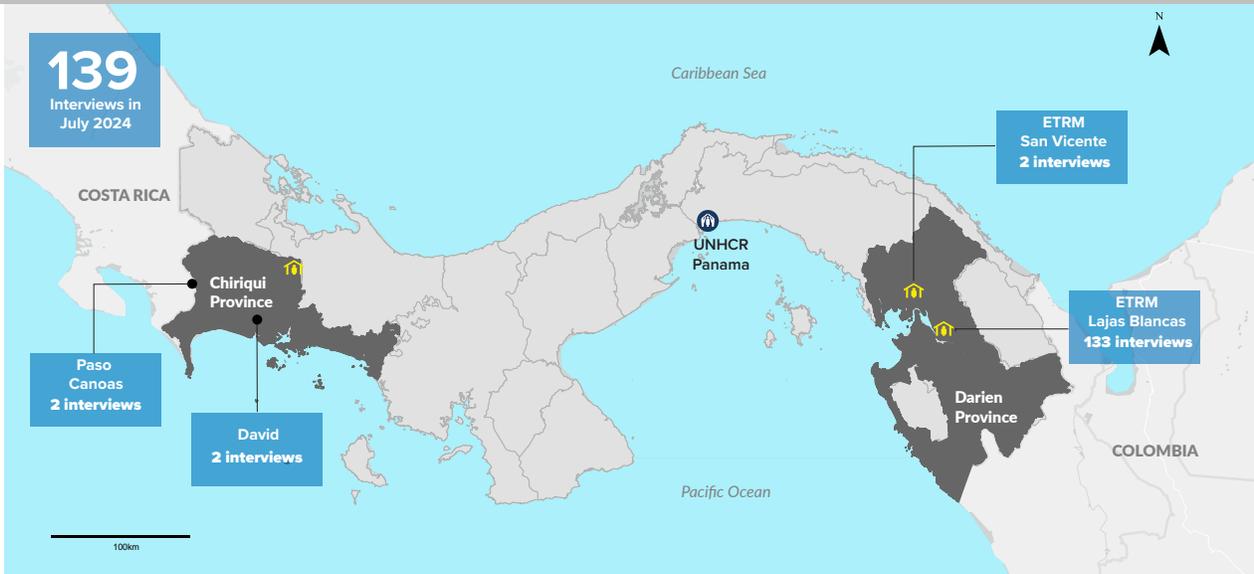
	Ene	Feb	Mar	Abr	May	Jun
Venezuela	21,940	24,895	23,257	18,558	21,245	23,509
Ecuador	2,208	3,450	3,295	1,700	1,475	1,277
Haití	3,048	1,775	2,506	1,661	882	626
China	2,911	1,562	1,885	2,302	1,511	1,074
Colombia	2,129	2,483	2,524	1,729	2,098	1,967
Otro	3,765	3,001	3,374	3,309	3,536	2,596
Total	36,001	37,166	36,841	29,259	30,747	31,049

Irregular entries through Darien 2023-2024 (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 data is compiled through individual interviews conducted in Panama's Darien and Chiriquí provinces. Preliminary results 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



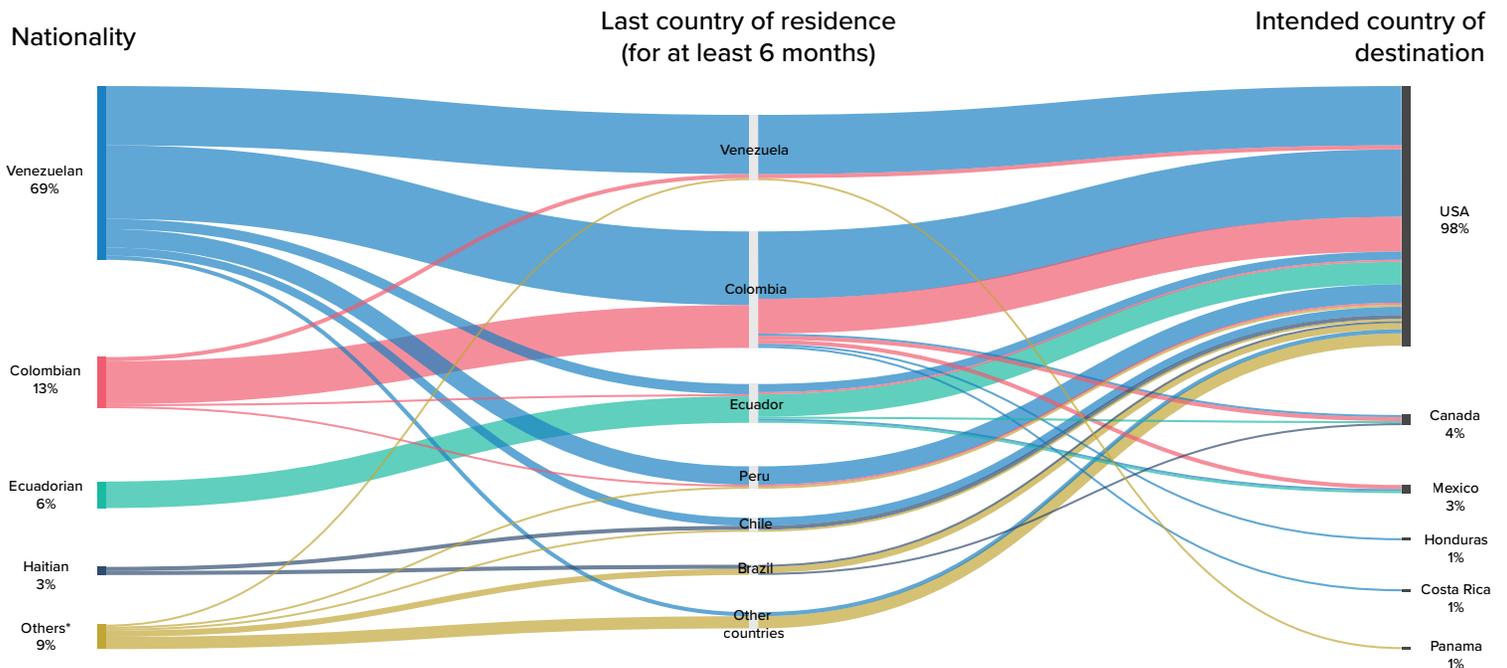
Travel group composition



Documents carried by the family



Interviewed individuals by country of origin, last country of residence, and intended country of destination



*Other nationalities include: Angola, Bolivia, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, India, and Peru.

Respondent profile

Three in five refugees and migrants were from Venezuela (61%). One-third (34%) came directly from Venezuela, a 4% decrease compared to last month, while the remaining 66% came from other countries of residence, mainly Colombia (42%), Peru (11%), and Ecuador (6%).

Three-fifths (60%) had applied for legal status in their previous country of residence, and 31% had valid documentation from that country.

Over half (55%) were travelling with family, and over one-third (37%) were travelling alone or with unrelated companions. Those travelling with children had an average of 2 children, 37% under five. Five childbirths were registered in the jungle this year.

Among the main reasons for fleeing their country of origin, 61% cited attacks, threats, and general insecurity; 69% stated that lack of employment or low income motivated their decision, while 38% noted the lack of access to services.

 **51%**

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

 **1%**

intended to stay in Panama.

 **60%***

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

Out of 70 respondents that had lived in another country.

 **7%**

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

This figure likely represents an underestimation of these incidents.

 **6%**

were travelling with pregnant or lactating women.

 **3%**

were travelling with someone with a critical or chronic medical condition.

 **1%**

were travelling with unaccompanied children in their group.

 **4%**

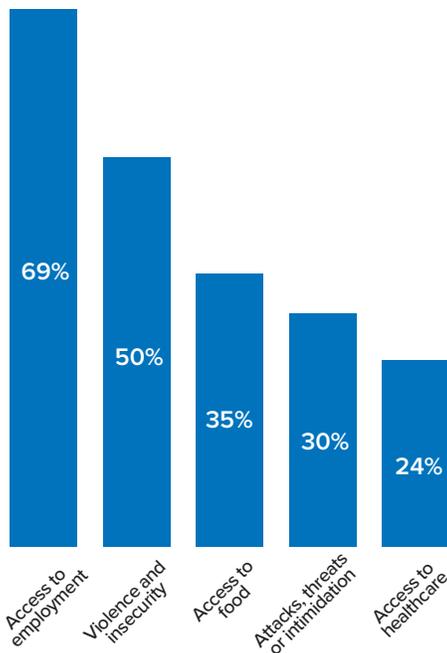
were travelling with a single parent accompanied by their children.

 **1%**

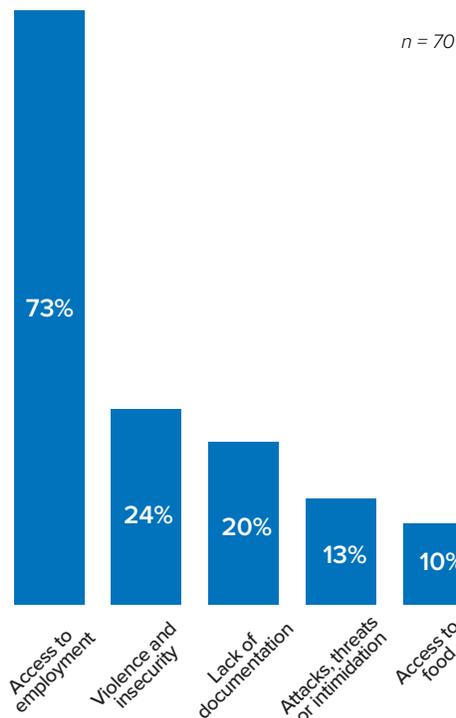
were travelling with a person over the age of 60 in their group.

Push and pull factors

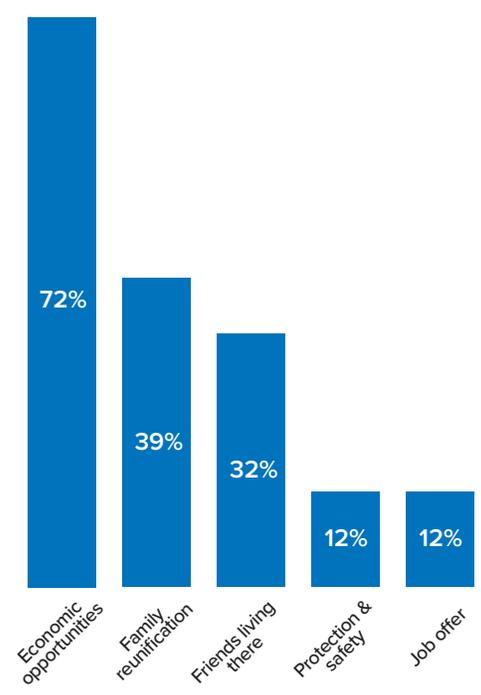
Main reasons for leaving country of origin



Main reasons for leaving country of residence



Reasons for choosing destination country



 **4 in 5**

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

 **7 in 10**

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

Also received information through social media, mainly TikTok (55%) and Facebook (27%).

 **7%***

had applied for legal status in their previous country of residence, **and did not obtain it.**

**Out of 70 individuals that had lived in a country other than their country of origin for at least 6 months.*

 **41%**

consider they would face risks if they had to return to their country of origin/residence.

Challenges during the journey

 **4 days**

is the average time spent crossing the Darien jungle (min. 2 days and max. 9 days).

 **2 in 5**

experienced mistreatment or abuse during the journey through the jungle.

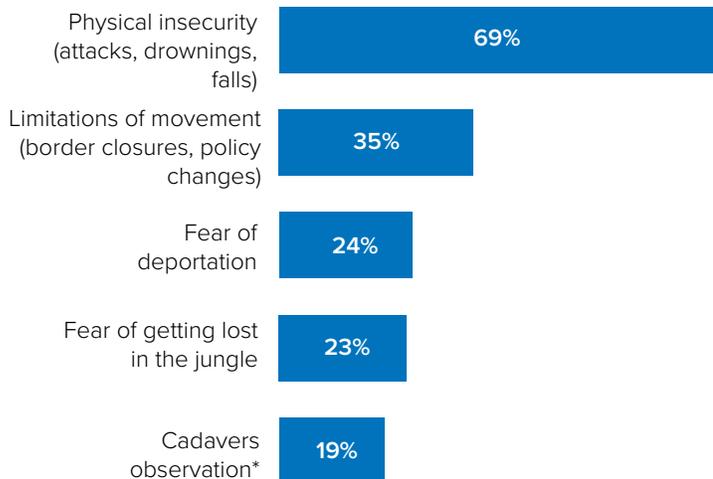
 **42%**

were victims of theft, scams or fraud during their journey through the jungle. **Additionally, 22% were victims of threats, intimidation, and attacks.**

 **67%**

paid a person to guide them through the jungle.

Situations that affected people the most while crossing the jungle



**Those who reported seeing cadavers, saw between 1 and 11 cadavers during the seven days prior to data collection.*

Main needs for the continuation of the journey

Cash

There are no official financial service providers in transit communities and at the ETRMs. Informal intermediaries leave people exposed to theft and scams.

Information

There is a lack of timely and detailed information about bus transfer services to Costa Rica, including options for those who cannot pay and the criteria for assigning humanitarian spaces managed by the Ombudsperson's Office.

Food

Free meals at the ETRMs do not account for the specific needs of children or people with illnesses. During data collection, there were not enough meals for everyone.

Clothes

There is a lack of clothes and shoes, especially for young children and male adults.

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

Data Sources: UNHCR Protection Monitoring, conducted on the 5th till 26th July 2024

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

Feedback: panpaim@unhcr.org