

Mixed Movements Monitoring

January - March 2024



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Key Figures



3,931

Individuals were interviewed from January to March 2024.



48

Nationalities interviewed



47% VENEZUELAN
20% HONDURANS
8% COLOMBIANS
5% ECUADORIANS
5% CUBANS

Main countries of origin of respondents



GUATEMALA: 1,651
MEXICO: 894
COSTA RICA: 560
HONDURAS: 498
PANAMA: 328

Number of interviews per country



57% Men



43% Women



32 years

Average age of respondents

Key Findings

- 1 Multiple interconnected factors continue to push individuals into situations of human mobility. Among the respondents, 69% left their country of origin due to difficulties in accessing fundamental rights and meeting basic needs. On the other hand, 54% cited reasons associated with pervasive violence or personal experience of violent incidents.
- 2 Sixty-nine percent of respondents experienced or witnessed protection incidents on their route, a 10% increase from the previous quarter. The most common issues reported were thefts (70%), followed by physical threats (27%), extortion and bribery (24%), and fraud (23%). Notably, reports of sexual assault and exploitation, though at 3%, reached their highest level since data collection began.
- 3 Individuals exposed to protection incidents continue to be more likely to face heightened food security challenges, and vice versa, this percentage increased from 30% in Q4 2023 to 47% in Q1 2024.
- 4 In quarter 1, food insecurity persists as a major issue. 86% of those surveyed reported adopting coping strategies within the past week, such as eating less or skipping meals, sometimes for entire days. The rise in the percentage of people skipping meals from 37% in Q4 2023 to 45% in Q1 2024 is a concerning trend.
- 5 In Guatemala, 58% of individuals reported having only one meal or none at all in the previous day. While in Costa Rica, the number of people who reported skipping meals in the last week rose from 17% to 60% in the last quarter.

Introduction and scope

In recent years, Central America and Mexico have seen a significant increase in mixed movements, where individuals and groups cross borders together using similar routes and means of transport for a variety of reasons. These movements are often irregular due to obstacles in accessing territory or meeting state entry requirements.

The diverse population in mixed movements includes asylum-seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied children, stateless persons, and migrants in vulnerable situations. To understand these dynamics, UNHCR and WFP have initiated a regional monitoring project aiming to identify trends, profiles, and the protection and food security needs of those on the move. Accurate data

is crucial for evidence-based responses and discussions in UN forums and regional collaboration. The project's report addresses the motivations for human mobility, profiles of individuals involved, risks along the journey, conditions in transit countries, food security, and future aspirations. The information gathered and interpreted through this project aim to inform policy and humanitarian efforts effectively.

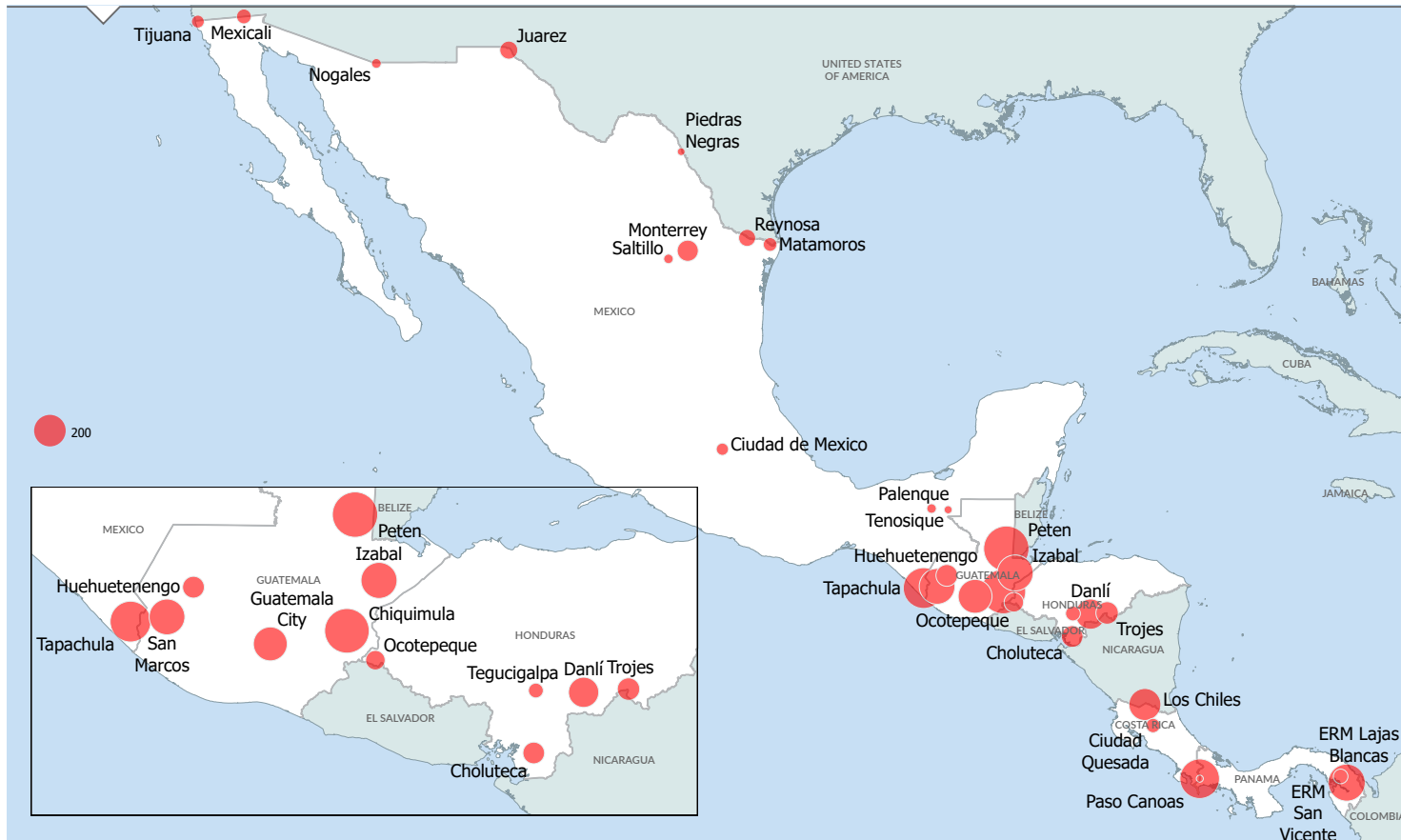
Methodology

The fifth round of data collection conducted by UNHCR-WFP took place between January 1st and March 31st, 2024, focusing on Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico, particularly at border points where mixed movements are common. Qualitative research included interviews and focus groups. Challenges included accessing remote areas and irregular movements, especially for extracontinental

individuals from outside the Americas region. Therefore, findings represent only those interviewed. Nonetheless, they provide valuable insights into protection trends, rights violations, risks, and food security among the population engaged in mixed movements across Central America and Mexico.

Data collection locations

Most interviews conducted in this exercise occurred at formal and informal border crossing points and nearby collective and temporary shelters, accounting for 88% of the total. Non-border locations encompass strategic transit facilities, including bus terminals, shelters, and reception sites, situated in capital cities or larger urban or peri-urban centers. These non-border locations serve as gathering points for individuals in transit, oftentimes where they seek support, assistance, and means of transportation.



Understanding the Human Mobility Context

During the first quarter of 2024, the Darien region observed a significant 26% increase in arrivals compared to the same period in 2023, with 110,008 individuals recorded. The majority originated from Venezuela (64%), followed by Ecuadorians (8%) and Haitians (7%). The decline in Haitian crossings persisted during this period, reaching levels similar to those of the first quarter of 2022, likely due to their exploration of alternative routes, particularly through Nicaragua as noted in this report. Additionally, there was a slight shift in the composition of extracontinental arrivals, with Chinese, Angolan, and Afghan nationals emerging as prominent, in contrast to 2023 when Indians were among the top three.

In Costa Rica, 110,740¹ people traveled by bus from Temporary Migratory Reception Stations in Panama during the first trimester of 2024, arriving at the South Migration Station (EMISUR) on the Panama-Costa Rica border. Subsequently, these individuals continued their journey by bus to the Nicaraguan border. Regarding asylum applications, there was a 59% decrease compared to the same period in 2023, with Nicaraguans (76%), Cubans (11%), and Venezuelans (6%) being the main applicants. Changes implemented by asylum authorities in registration and processing modalities, including the implementation of daily registration caps and admissibility measures, have restricted access to asylum, leading to a decrease in the number of people able to apply for asylum.

In Honduras the number of arrivals in Q1 2024 was 133,518, more than double the 60,532 recorded in the same period in 2023. Predominant nationalities included Venezuelans (47%), Cubans (15%), Ecuadorians (7%), and Haitians (7%). A high number of displaced children were recorded, with boys and girls comprising 14% and 11% respectively. In March, 97% of individuals entered the country through the department of El Paraíso (Las Manos and Trojes), while the remainder entered through the department of Choluteca. With regard to exits, the vast majority of people on the move crossed from Honduras into Guatemala at the Agua Caliente border point. According to the Guatemalan Migration Institute,²

over 7,500 people (77% of them Venezuelans) have been expelled from Guatemala to Honduras at this border point between 1 January and 16 April 2024. Nonetheless, most people re-enter Guatemala irregularly on the same day.

Mexico reported 360,146 encounters from January to March 2024, a 200% increase from the same period in 2023. The predominant nationalities during this period were Venezuelans (25%), Hondurans (10%), Ecuadorians (10%), and Guatemalans (10%). Colombians (6%) also notably increased, now surpassing Haitians compared to last year quarter³. Additionally, the first quarter saw 23,753 new asylum claims in Mexico, with the main nationalities being Hondurans (44%), Cubans (22%), and Haitians (8%). The reduction in new asylum claims reported during this period, compared to 2023, is in part due to the lack of documentation provided to asylum seekers by authorities since October 2023, following Mexico's decision to cease issuing temporary humanitarian visas to asylum seekers. This reduction in asylum applications is taking place despite the fact that half of new arrivals continue to confirm that they fled their countries of origin due to suffering violence, threats and/or intimidation.

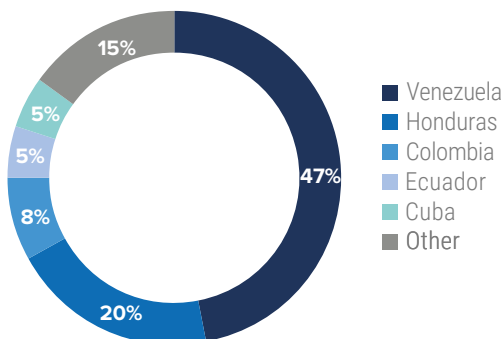
In the first quarter of 2024, there were more than half a million reported encounters at the U.S. Southwest land border, representing a 20% increase compared to the same period in 2023. The primary nationalities include Mexicans (34%), Guatemalans (11%), Cubans (8%), and Venezuelans (7%). Compared to the same period in 2023, there has been a shift in the nationalities involved in these encounters, with Mexicans and Guatemalans remaining at the top of the list, now followed by Cubans and Venezuelans instead of Colombians and Hondurans.

The complexity and scale of mixed movements across the region underscore the urgent need for a coordinated and humane approach. It is imperative to address the multifaceted challenges comprehensively, reflecting a collective responsibility towards human rights and dignity.

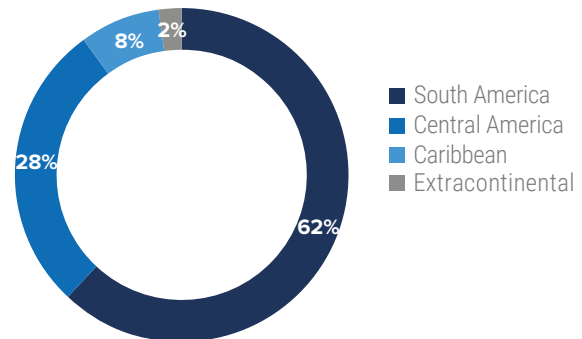
Demographics

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Countries of origin



Regions of origin of respondents (by geographic location)



¹ Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería, Costa Rica: <https://www.migracion.go.cr/Paginas/Centro%20de%20Documentaci%C3%B3n/Estad%C3%ADsticas.aspx>

² Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración, Guatemala: <https://igm.gob.gt/migrantes-localizados-y-rechazados-en-guatemala-por-situacion-irregular-abril-2024/>

³ Unidad de Política Migratoria, Registro e Identidad de Personas, Boletín mensual de estadísticas migratorias. March 2024.

During the first quarter of 2024, the Mixed Movement Monitoring interviewed individuals from 48 different nationalities. Almost two-thirds of the interviewees come from South American countries.

Throughout 2023, the number of respondents from Central American countries declined overall. Yet, in the first quarter of this year, there was an uptick in the number of Hondurans interviewed, making them the most represented nationality among Central American respondents.

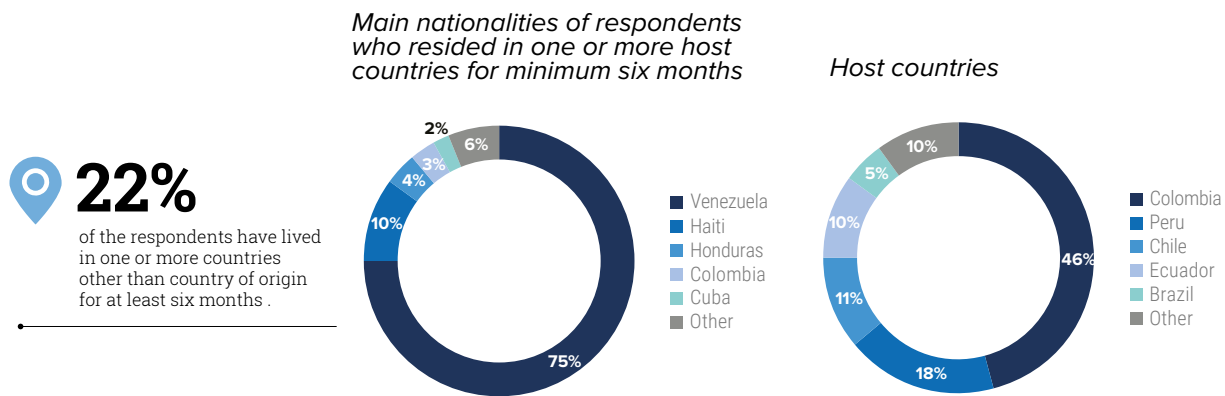
The Caribbean ranks as the third largest region of origin in this quarter, comprising 8% of the total. This group is followed by a smaller percentage of individuals from Asia and Africa (2%), maintaining the distribution observed in previous quarters.

During this period, Honduras, and Mexico surpassed Panama with a higher number of nationalities interviewed. Interviews

were conducted with individuals from 30 different nationalities in Honduras, 25 in Mexico, and 19 in Panama. In Honduras, Venezuelans (33%), followed by Cubans (21%) and Haitians (13%) compose the top three nationalities transiting through the country. This shift could suggest that Haitians and Cubans are choosing alternative routes to avoid the Darien jungle. Additionally, the greater variety of nationalities interviewed in Honduras can be attributed to easier access to individuals in mixed movements due to relatively favorable policies put in place by the Government. On the other hand in Guatemala, trafficking networks combined with less favorable Government policies often make it difficult to access individuals for interviews.

In Mexico, Hondurans (29%) continue to be the dominant group, followed by Venezuelans (22%), with Salvadorians (11%) now overtaking Cubans for the third spot, a shift from the usual distribution seen in past quarters.

Host countries⁴



One out of every five survey participants reported living in a country other than their country of origin for at least six months. Consistent with the last three quarters⁵, Venezuelans were the nationality most frequently cited as having lived in another country (75%), followed by Haitians (10%) and Hondurans (4%). Colombia was the most reported host country for Venezuelans, accounting for 60% of responses, with Peru (22%) and Chile (11%) following. This period, in contrast to the previous quarter, saw a higher number of Haitian respondents residing in Chile (65%) and Brazil (26%), rather than the Dominican Republic and Guyana.

This quarter, 65% of Venezuelans declared that they did not previously reside in another country, indicating

they moved directly from their country of origin. The figure decreased from 75% in the last quarter of 2023.

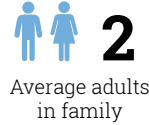
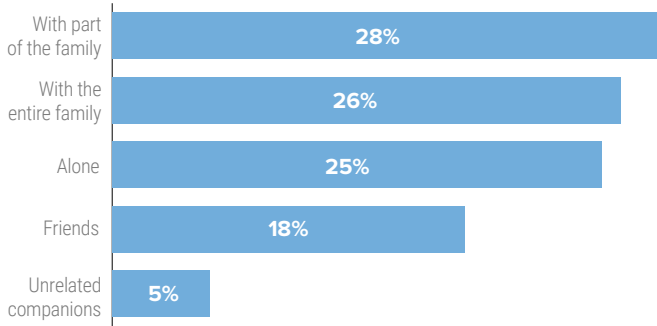
Some 78% of respondents pointed out that they had not lived in a host country, which indicates they traveled directly from their home countries, a slight decrease from the previous quarter. Among these, Venezuela remained the most frequent country of origin (39%), followed by Honduras (25%) and Colombia (10%). This represents a change from previous quarters when Colombia trailed behind Cuba, suggesting a growing trend of Colombians emigrating northward.

⁴ Host country: The country in which a non-national stays or resides, whether legally or irregularly.

⁵ Instead of the first quarter of 2023, comparison was made to previous quarters due to a change in the timeframe for the host country concept, shifting from one year to six months in third quarter of 2023.

Group composition

Who do you travel with?



For the first time since the start of data collection regarding group composition, more people reported being displaced with part of their family (28%) rather than with their whole family (26%). Among those traveling with family, the average group size was four, typically comprising two children, one of whom is under 5 years old. This data underscores the significant presence of children in these mixed movements within the region.

On the other hand, one in every four respondents reported being on the journey on their own. This is a more prominent pattern amongst Central Americans, as 40% of them reported being alone. In contrast, South Americans tended to travel more frequently with their family and/or friends, forming larger groups than the average four members. This is a decrease from the previous average of five members.

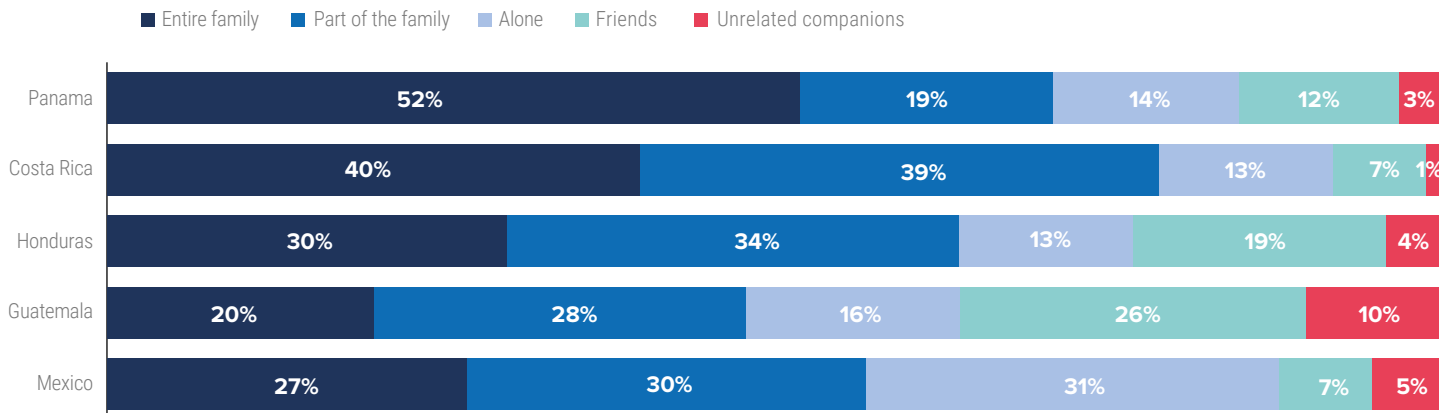
For extracontinental respondents, there was also a notable tendency to travel alone and with friends (both

30%), or with the entire family (21%). This represents a shift from previous quarters, where traveling with part of the family was more common. Among those traveling with family, the average group size was four members, typically including one child under the age of four years old.

Data from this quarter also indicate a shifting pattern in the family composition of groups along the route, particularly those that cross the Darien. The graph below shows the group composition of South American respondents across the five countries of transit. As illustrated, the graph evidences a decrease in the number of individuals moving with their entire families in Panama, with a simultaneous increase in those moving with only a portion of their family or even alone, a trend most pronounced in Mexico.

Who do you travel with?

Comparison of countries of data collection (South Americans only)



*Multiple-choice question bars do not sum to 100%. However, this graph shows relative percentages with each bar totaling 100% to facilitate category comparison.

LEGAL STATUS

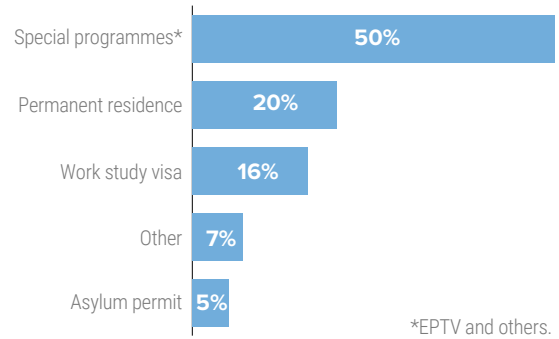
Legal status of respondents who have lived in a previous host country

Out of the 22% of people who have lived in other countries for more than 6 months:

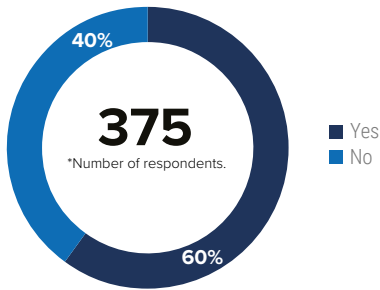
1 in 2
people applied for legal status in the host country

88%
of them obtained a legal status

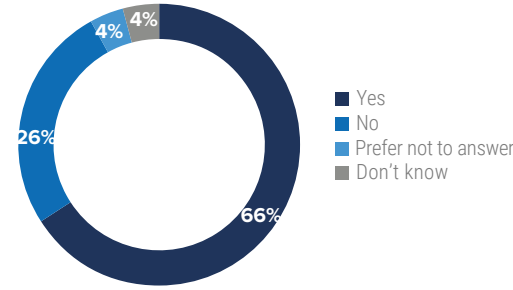
Type of legal status obtained



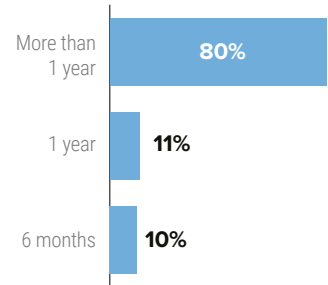
Are the documents in your possession?



Are the documents still valid?



If valid, for how long?



During this period, among those who had lived in a host country for at least six months, the number of individuals applying for and obtaining legal status was similar to previous quarters, with 76% successfully securing the status they sought. However, 40% did not carry with them the documents to prove their legal status. This could be attributed to a high incidence of theft during their journey. Additionally, respondents reported instances where individuals sent their documents to family members already in safer locations along the route.

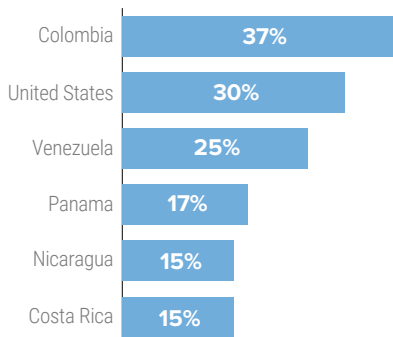
This quarter also witnessed a continued rise in the number of people possessing valid documents from host countries, with 66% remaining valid for more than a year, indicating an improvement in the stability of their legal status.

The primary nationalities that applied for legal status were Venezuelans, accounting for 81% of applications, followed by Haitians at 7%.

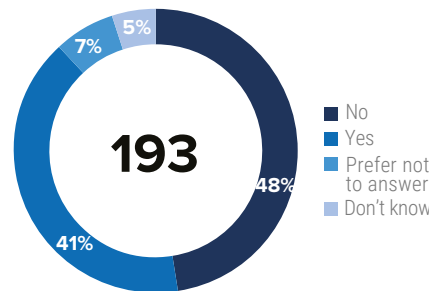
This quarter also saw an increase in the number of Venezuelans who left Colombia while in possession of permanent residency in the country, rising to 58% from 43% in the previous quarter. Among Haitians residing in a host country, the majority obtained permanent residency (52%) and participated in special programs (28%). Venezuelans, Hondurans, and Colombians—the latter surpassing Haitians this quarter—collectively represented the majority of asylum documentation holders, making up 5% of the observed permits

Legal status of family living in host countries

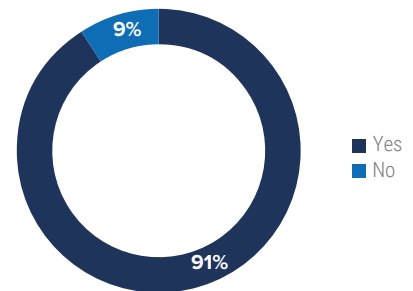
Where is the rest of the family?



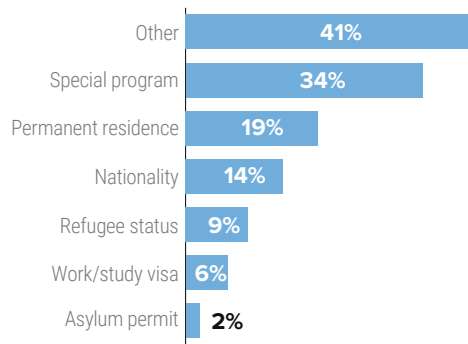
Applied for legal status in country



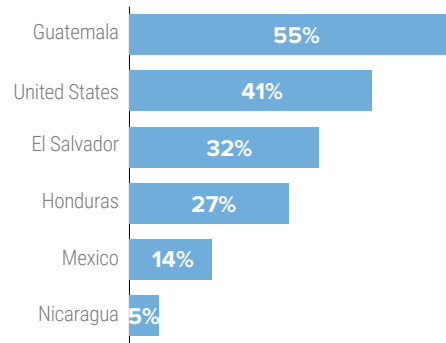
Status obtained in country



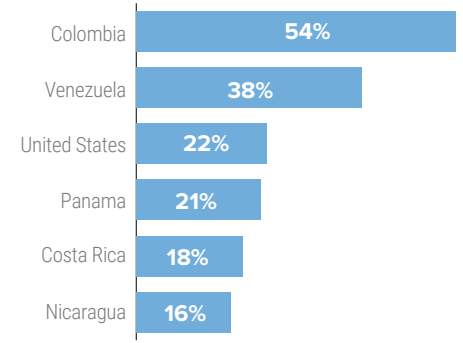
Type of status obtained



Where is the rest of the family? Central Americans



Where is the rest of the family? South Americans



As mentioned, more people reported traveling with only part of their family this quarter compared to previous ones. Overall, the majority of remaining family members are now primarily located in Colombia (37%), the United States (30%), and Venezuela (25%). This represents a shift in patterns, with more family members residing in Colombia rather than in the United States.

Furthermore, among the family members residing in host countries, 41% applied for legal status, with a significant majority (91%) successfully obtaining it. During this quarter, there has been a notable trend of more individuals with legal status in Central and South American host countries moving towards North America.


DOCUMENTATION


Echoing trends observed in the previous quarters, a majority of respondents reported carrying their national identification cards (83%), while a significant number also have their passports (25%).

The distribution of these documents significantly varies when analyzed against the respondents' regions of origin. Passport is the main documentation for individuals from the Caribbean (89%) and extracontinental countries of origin (71%), in contrast

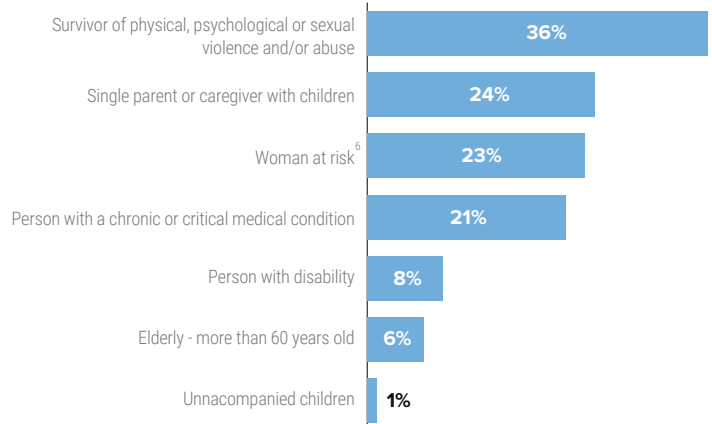
to ID cards, which are more predominantly carried by South Americans (90%) and Central Americans (82%). Among passport holders, 16% possess expired documents, similarly to previous quarters. This is particularly pronounced among Venezuelans, with only 13% holding a valid passport and 51% holding an expired passport. High costs and barriers to accessing renewal procedures are among the primary reasons for their limited access to valid passports, potentially restricting their access to parole programs and other legal pathways.

SPECIFIC PROTECTION NEEDS

 **28%** of respondents had at least one specific protection need.

 **36%** of respondents with specific needs experienced physical, psychological, or sexual violence and/or abuse.

Type of specific protection need



⁶ The category for "woman at risk" includes risks specific to women such as pregnancy and lactation, which used to be separate categories in previous versions of the survey.

Persons with specific needs⁷ 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.

This quarter, there has been an alarming increase in the number of individuals identified as having at least one specific need. At 28%, this marks the highest percentage since data collection began in January 2023.

Among these profiles of specific needs, the most prevalent was survivors of physical, psychological, or sexual violence and/or abuse, accounting for 36%. Remarkably, this category not only ranks first but also represents the highest percentage observed across all previous quarters. Furthermore, the prevalence of reported victims is particularly pronounced among respondents from Central American countries, reaching 49%.

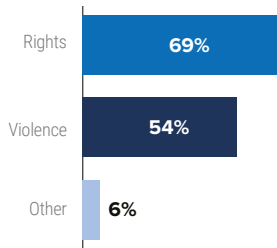
Displacement

REASONS TO LEAVE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

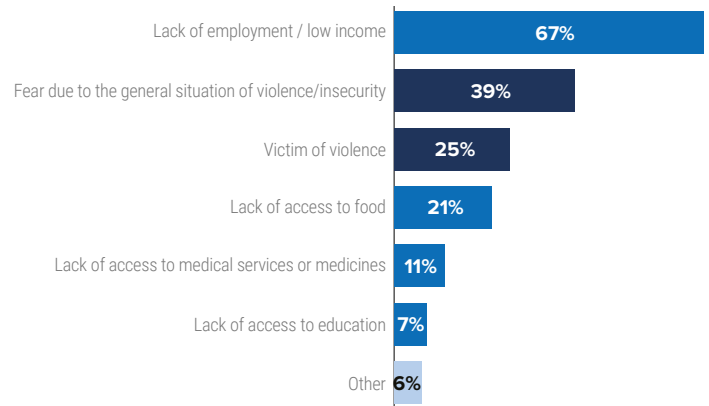
The monitoring exercise examines the motivations of why respondents leave their respective countries of origin. The question posed to respondents allows for multiple answers, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing their decision to leave. In the subsequent

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.⁸

Reasons to leave country of origin (groups)



Reasons to leave country of origin (breakdown)⁹



 **70%**

of respondents left their country of origin due to lack of employment opportunities, or barriers in accessing the labor market, as well as other rights and services, such as lack of access to food, health, or education.

The most frequently cited reason for leaving one's own country of origin remains the lack of access to employment (67%), even though there was a decrease if compared to first quarter of 2023 (74%).

 **54%**

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

This includes fear due to the general situation of violence/insecurity (39%) or suffering violence themselves (25%). Violence-related reasons continue to be the most frequently cited by Ecuadorians (84%) amongst the main nationalities interviewed.

 **25%**

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 nature of the factors driving mixed movements.

⁷ 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. Children (especially unaccompanied and separated children), victims of trafficking, women and girls at risk, older persons, and persons with disabilities are among the groups that often have specific protection needs. These persons have the same basic needs as other refugees but often face barriers to having these needs met.

⁸ **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.

⁹ In previous quarters, "victim of violence" and "threats/intimidation" were two separate answer options. For the third quarter, 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.)".



21%

of respondents left the country of origin due to lack of food, consistent with the previous quarters.

Women respondents were more likely to state that they left country of origin due to lack of food (25%) than men respondents (19%), a trend consistent with other quarters. 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.

JOURNEY

Human mobility patterns in the first 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.

In Colombia, the maritime transport services for transit passengers were suspended in late February following the arrest of two captains on 24 February 2024. Operational halts by transport companies followed, citing lack of guarantees for safe passage. Colombia's Migration Department enacted a new policy which further affected operations, limiting services to tourists, Colombians, and indigenous persons, while excluding Venezuelans with legal status in Colombia. As a result, boat departures remained suspended until the end of February, leaving hundreds of people—primarily from Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, and Angola—stranded at the pier without basic amenities. Monitoring during this period highlighted severe deficiencies in legal documentation, security, lodging, hygiene, food, and water. Despite these challenges, services resumed on March 1, 2024, with enhanced migration control and support services, aiding over 600 individuals at the pier.

Nicaragua allows visa-free entry for citizens from over two dozen African countries and has experienced an influx of people from Angola, the Republic of Congo, Guinea, Mauritania, and Sudan, among other countries. The majority of them continue their journey towards the US border.

In Honduras, most people in mixed movements entered from Nicaragua through the El Paraiso Department (97%),

with a smaller number coming through the Choluteca Department. Even though the majority of Haitians in this period arrived in Honduras having crossed the Darien jungle, around one in five Haitians arrived by plane directly through Nicaragua, presumably to avoid the perilous Darien route. Amongst Cubans, the majority also travel by air to Nicaragua and then cross into Honduras by land, although there are continued reports of smaller numbers of Cubans entering by boat through the Roatan Island.

El Salvador, traditionally not a major transit country, saw a shift in movement dynamics during the second half of 2023 due to lenient visa policies for certain nationalities. In 2023, approximately 56,000 Ecuadorians opted to fly directly to El Salvador, corresponding with a decrease in the number crossing the Darien jungle. A similar trend was observed with Indian travelers; the number traversing the Darien jungle has declined since April 2023, while a significant increase of Indian nationals flying to El Salvador has been observed, with over 25,000 entries recorded within the same year.

Similarly, individuals from the Caribbean, benefiting from lenient visa policies in Central America, often begin their journeys in this region to avoid crossing the Darien jungle altogether. Throughout this quarter, Nicaragua has also emerged as a significant starting point for people on the move from other continents.

These evolving transit routes underscore the need for safer, more accessible pathways that are protection-sensitive and reflect the complexity of human mobility in which people navigate diverse challenges to reach safety and security.

Arrival to country of interview

→ 76%

82% of respondents had arrived in the interview country less than one week ago,

marking a continuous increase from 76% in Q1 2023. This trend is consistent with previous quarters, where most respondents were recent arrivals. The increase highlights the ongoing dynamic and rapid movements of people within the region.

Length of journey

🕒 56%

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

which represents a decrease from 70% in the same period in 2023. In contrast, the proportion of respondents who left their countries more than five years ago increased from 1% to 10% (particularly Venezuelans and Haitians). This shift indicates a notable increase in longer-term displacement among these populations, as well as the increased prevalence of secondary and onward movements.

Intended length of stay

📍 82%

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

Across all transit countries—Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala—nearly all respondents planned stays of less than one month. 40% 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.

Countries transited

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



Source: UNHCR and R4V



57% PANAMA
54% HONDURAS
54% COLOMBIA
46% NICARAGUA
43% COSTA RICA

Top 5 countries of transit



35%

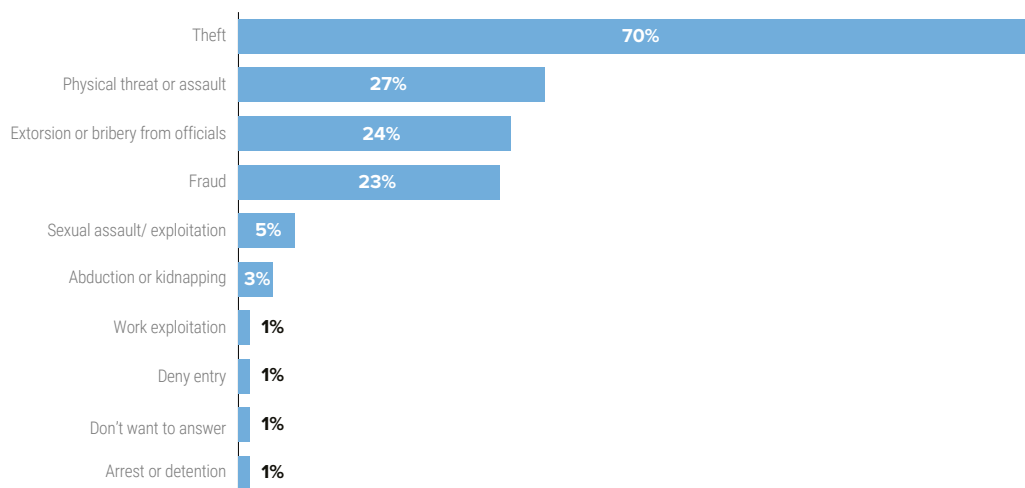
of Venezuelans traveling north resided in another country for at least six months before their journey.

This is 10% more than the last semester of 2023, when 25% of Venezuelans interviewed while traveling north had lived in a host country, while some 75% had come directly from Venezuela.

The primary host countries are Colombia (60%), Peru (22%), and Ecuador (11%). These individuals typically follow the route through the Darién Gap and Central America.

PROTECTION INCIDENTS

Type of protection incidents (breakdown)



69%

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

The number of people who experienced or witnessed a protection incident along the route has continued to surpass the previous quarters, with 69% of respondents in the first quarter of 2024. This represents an increase of 10% since Q3 2023 when the question started to include both the experience of first-hand incidents and witnessing others face incidents or threats.

While in the previous quarters, there was a more even distribution of types of protection incidents, the first quarter of 2024 saw an **alarming increase in the number of thefts** reported compared to other categories. 7 out of 10 people who reported an incident or threat mentioned they had been victims or witnesses of thefts on the route. This category is followed by physical threats and assaults (27%), extortion and bribes from officials (24%), and fraud (23%) as the types of protection incidents most frequently cited.

This quarter has witnessed an **alarming increase in the number of people who reported sexual assault and exploitation**, reaching 5%. Although this percentage is low compared to other categories, it represents the highest level reported since data collection began. This spike is particularly alarming given that sexual and gender-based violence are typically under-reported in protection monitoring exercises. Methodological challenges such as confidentiality concerns, inadequate environments for building the necessary trust, and the mental health impacts on survivors contribute to the under-reporting of these incidents in this data collection efforts. Additionally, qualitative data from field observations in Colombia point to the challenges faced by LGBTQI people, particularly trans

women, prior to crossing the Darien. Focus group discussions indicate that groups of trans women of Venezuelan nationality who resided in Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador before arriving in Colombia not only reported recurrent harassment and discrimination in the host countries, but also reported suffering physical and sexual violence on the route.

More than 4 out of 5 respondents in Guatemala reported a protection incident or threat. This percentage is highest amongst **Ecuadorians**, as almost all respondents of this nationality interviewed in Guatemala (92%) reported having suffered or witnessed an incident in the country. Qualitative data from Ecuadorians in Colombia also point to a high number of families who reported being victims of bribery and extortion by officials, particularly at border points, where they had to pay between 80 and 100 dollars to continue their journey, depending on the size of the group and whether or not they possessed an Andean card¹⁰.

It is important to consider that **the larger the route, the higher the rate of protection incidents and threats reported**. For instance, Venezuelans reported higher levels of protection incidents in Mexico and Guatemala (76 and 78%, respectively) compared to Panama (64%). A similar pattern can be observed at different border points within the same country, with a higher prevalence of people reporting incidents in the northern and western borders compared to the southern and eastern borders. To illustrate, more people reported incidents in Guatemala exiting through a border with Mexico (85%) compared to those who recently entered the country from Honduras (69%).

¹⁰ The Andean card is a travel document that facilitates movement across member countries of the Andean Community. For more information please access: <https://www.comunidadandina.org/temas/dg3/migracion-y-movilidad-humana/>

ACCESS TO FOOD



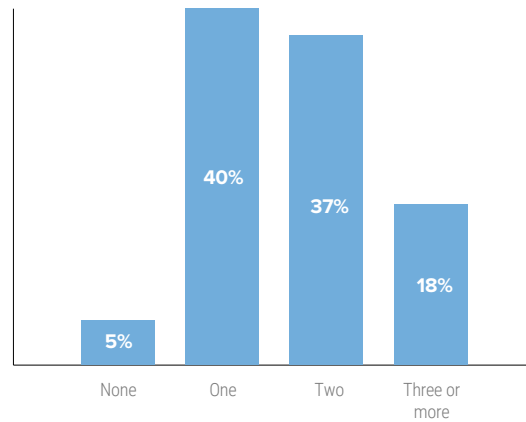
2 in 5

respondents consumed only one meal (40%) or none at all (5%), the day before the interview.

These figures were highest in Guatemala with 58% of interviewees reporting having eaten one meal or none in the day prior.

Food insecurity remains a critical issue throughout the journey. Nearly half of those surveyed (45%) only managed to consume a single meal (40%) or went without food entirely (5%) on the day before the interview. This quarter has seen a slight increase in the number of people who reported having eaten one or no meals the day before the interview in Guatemala (from 54% in the fourth quarter of 2023 to 58%), and a great decrease in Costa Rica (from 71% to 44% in this quarter). In Mexico, a steady increase has been observed every quarter since Q3 2023 (from 19% in the third quarter, 21% fourth quarter of 2023 to 32%).

How many meals did you eat yesterday?



Regarding nationalities, this quarter has seen an increase 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 25% in the previous quarter to 60% in this one. Moreover, a deterioration for nationals from El Salvador in meal consumption was also observed, with 18% reported in the previous quarter to 42% in this current quarter.

How many meals did you eat yesterday? (Comparison between Q4 2023 and Q1 2024)



Meanwhile, among the main nationalities interviewed, Venezuelans have reported a slight improvement in meal consumption (from 59% in the previous quarter to 46% in this

one). Ecuadorians have shown further deterioration of new consumption indicators, with an increase from 47% in the previous quarter to 51% in this one.

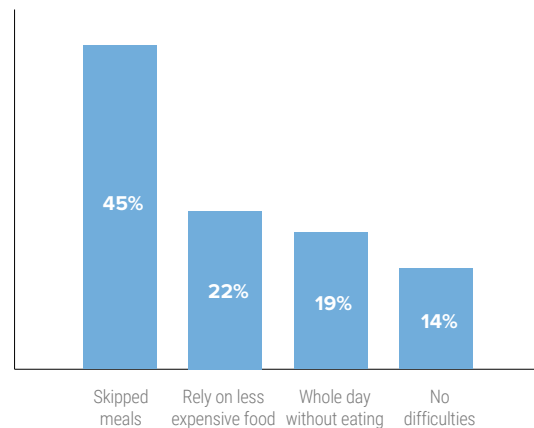


86%

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 an increase in the number of people who skipped meals (from 37% in the previous quarter to 45%) and a slight decrease in the number of people who had to spend the whole day without eating (from 22% to 19%). 60% of respondents in Costa Rica reported skipping meals, the highest among all the countries of interviews.

Percentage reporting different consumption coping strategies



When asked about their food situation over the previous week, 19% of respondents reported having no difficulties, 2% fewer than the previous quarter. Still, a higher number of people (86%) adopted coping mechanisms to face food shortages and/or the lack of financial means to access food. These strategies range from eating cheaper and less preferred foods (22%) to skipping meals or eating less (45%), as well as regularly spending entire days without eating (19%). Skipping meals was reported most in Costa Rica (60%), followed by Guatemala (54%), a country which has observed a slight deterioration of these indicators in this quarter compared to the previous one (52%).

Even though Costa Rica has improved its food situation due to food security interventions at reception centres, known as CATEM (Centro de Atención Temporal de Migrantes in Spanish), conditions remain worse in the north where there are no reception centres. Meanwhile, this quarter is the first since the start of 2023 where Costa Rica was not the top country for respondents going a whole day without eating, a figure that has gone from 55% to 23% since last quarter alone. During this quarter, 33% of individuals interviewed in Panama reported going a whole day without eating, the highest among all the other countries of interview.

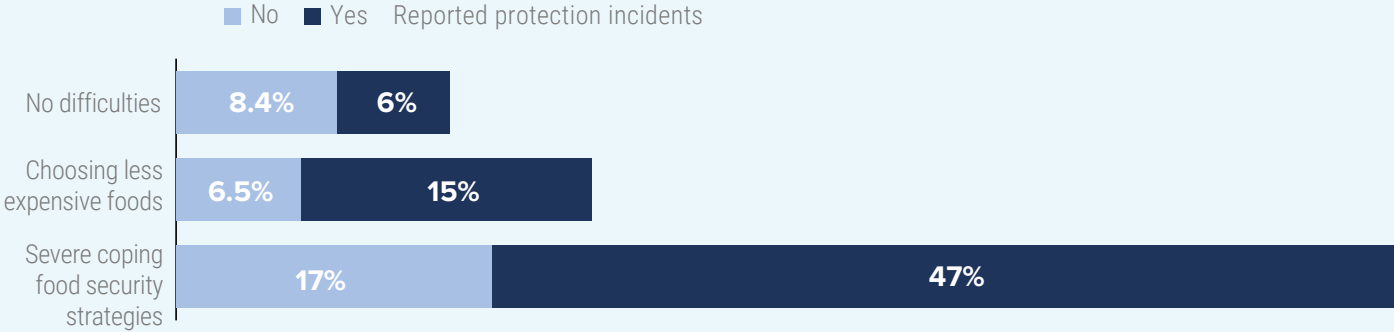
Food security and protection



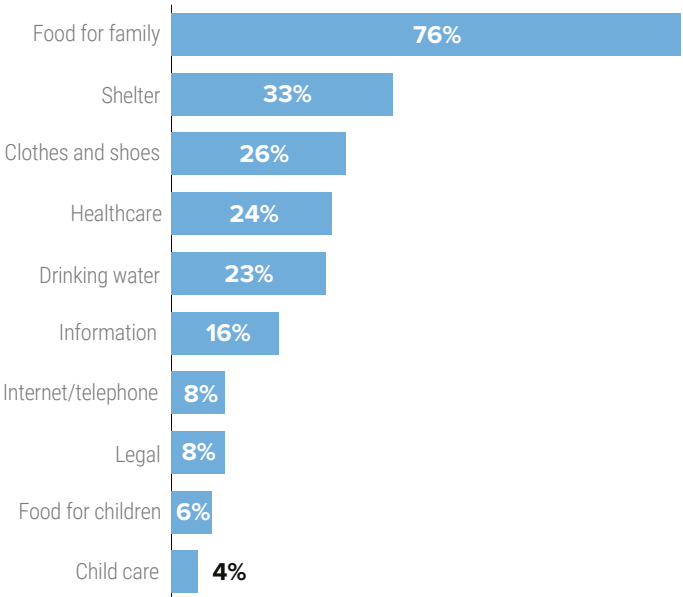
The combined analysis of food security and protection indicators continue to underscore the interconnectedness between the two areas. In this quarter, 47% of the respondents who reported at least one protection incident on the route also engaged in negative coping mechanisms related to food security, including skipping meals or

going an entire day without food. This constitutes an increase if compared to the previous quarter (30%). In the graph below it is possible to see that individuals who did not report a protection incident are associated with fewer difficulties in food consumption in the past week.

Food security coping mechanisms vs. Protection incidents



MAIN NEEDS



76%

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

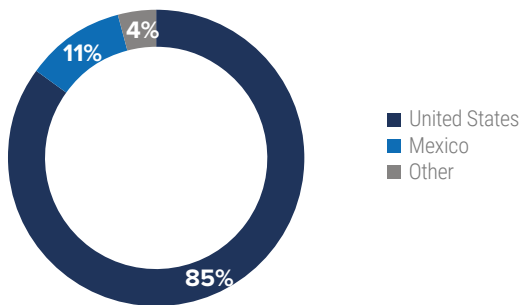
This was followed by the need for shelter (33%) – which is particularly prominent of respondents in Mexico –, as well as the need for clothing and footwear (26%), especially for respondents in Panama and Costa Rica after having crossed the Darien jungle.

Further analysis of the responses segmented by the country of interview provide additional insights to the main needs of respondents. In Panama more than half of the respondents continue to list clothing and footwear as their main need (55%) following the crossing of the Darién jungle. Food for family is a primary concern in all other countries of interviews, particularly in Guatemala where the category reaches a peak of 84%.

Drinking water is among the main categories of needs of respondents in Honduras (38%) and Guatemala (30%). Respondents in Mexico have highlighted the need for shelter (45%) and information (27%), with higher averages for these categories than the regional figures.

INTENTIONS

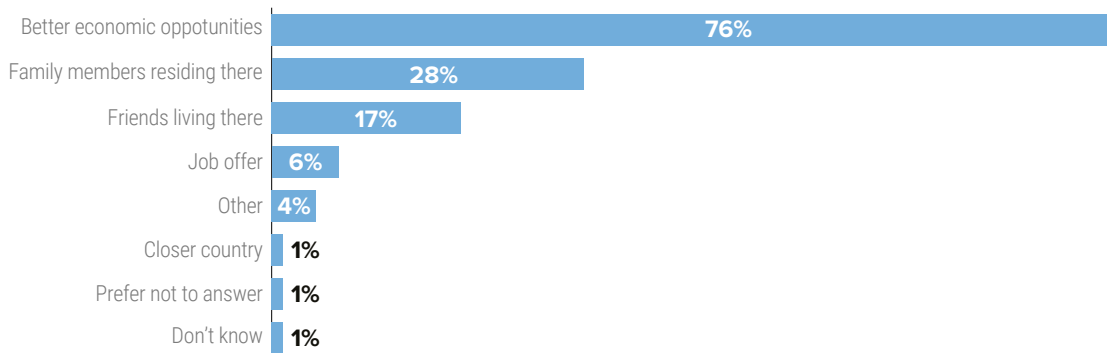
Intended country of destination



85%

of respondents intend to go to the United States.

Main reasons for intended destination

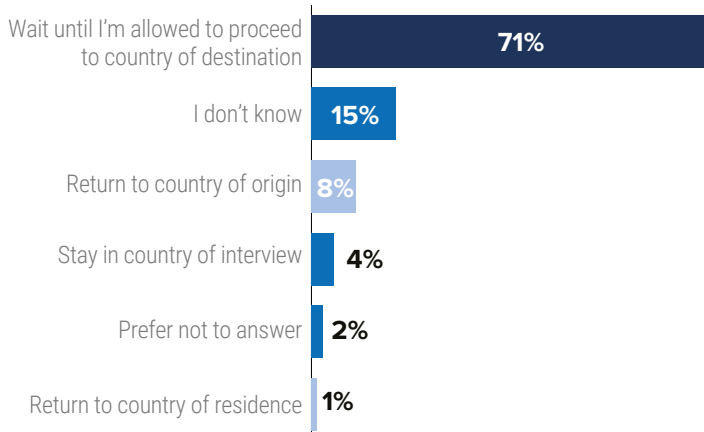


In the first quarter of 2024, the results remained consistent with the previous quarter, showing an increased intention among respondents to reach the United States compared to the same period in 2023. The United States continues to be the preferred destination, drawing 85% of respondents, while Mexico follows with 11%. Venezuelans are the most represented nationality intending to reach the United States, comprising 52% of respondents, with Hondurans next at 19%. Among those choosing Mexico, Hondurans account for 31%, making them the largest group, followed by Cubans at 14% and Salvadorians at 13%.

The primary motivation for choosing their destination, as stated by a significant 76% of respondents, is the availability of better economic opportunities in the chosen country. Additionally, 28% cited the presence of family members in the destination country and the need for family reunification.

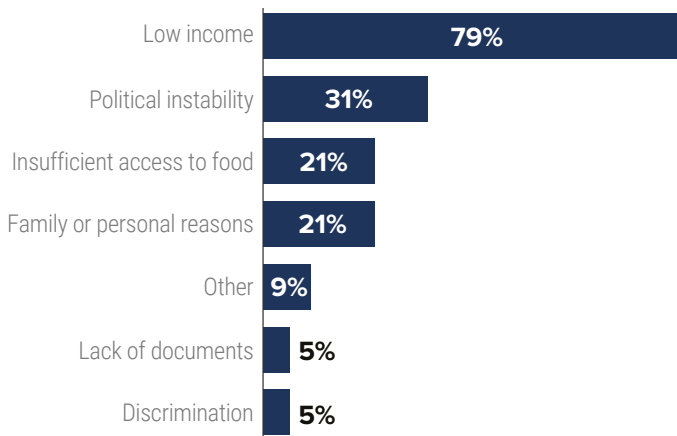
Scenarios of alternative intentions

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



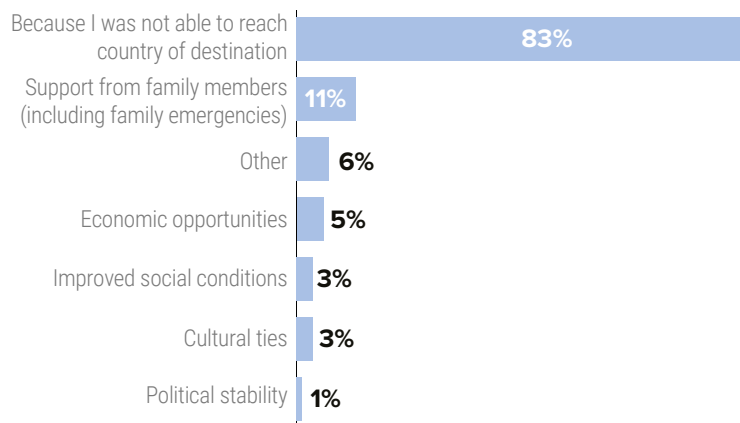
Remarkably, **71% indicated their willingness to wait until they are permitted to proceed to their intended country.** Within this group, 61% were Venezuelans, 10% Colombians, and 8% Hondurans. On the contrary, among those considering a return to their country of origin, the majority (57%) were Hondurans, while 15% were Venezuelans. This suggests that Hondurans are more inclined to view returning home as a viable alternative, in contrast to Venezuelans who lean towards waiting in a transit country as their preferred course of action. These results are consistent with the previous quarters.

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



The **primary reasons** deterring individuals from considering a return to their country of origin are predominantly economic, accounting for 79% of cases—an 8% increase from the previous quarter. Political instability is also a significant factor, mentioned by 31% of those surveyed.

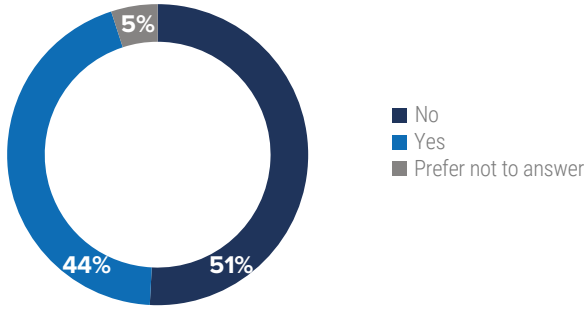
What would be the reason(s) to return?



This quarter's trends align closely with the previous one. Among those contemplating a return to their country of origin or host country, now totaling 9%, a significant 83% indicated they would only consider this option if unable to reach their intended destination. Additionally, 11% cited the need to support their family or respond to family emergencies as their reason for considering a return. Hondurans are the predominant nationality contemplating a return to their country of origin should they be unable to reach their final destination.

Risks upon return

Risk upon return for self or family



← **44%**

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. **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, trafficked persons, survivors of GBV, LGBTIQ+, among others) remains fragile.

The **prevalence of risks upon return** remains particularly high in **Mexico**, where 76% of the interviewed individuals expressed facing risks when returning to their country of origin. Among the reasons, **threats, extortion, and/or persecution (56%), general violence and/or discrimination (26%)** were highlighted as the main concerns.



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