



234.5 K

VENEZUELAN IN THE SUB-REGIONⁱ

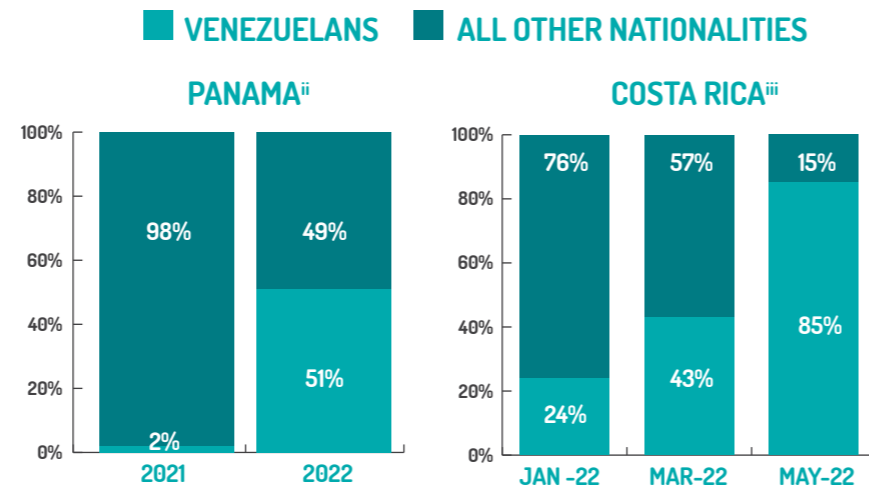
121.6 K PANAMA

83.0 K MEXICO

29.9 K COSTA RICA

(AS OF MAY 2022)

VENEZUELAN AS % OF PEOPLE ON THE MOVE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

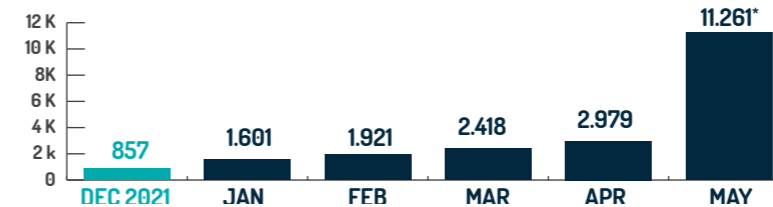


2,979^{iv}

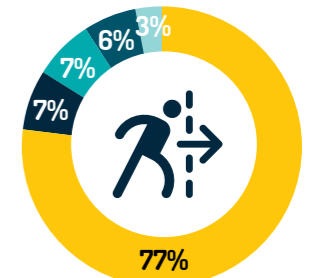
VENEZUELAN SURVEYED ENTERING COSTA RICA FROM PANAMA IN APRIL 2022

INTENDED DESTINATION 98% UNITED STATES 2% MEXICO

VENEZUELAN CROSSING PASO CANOAS^v

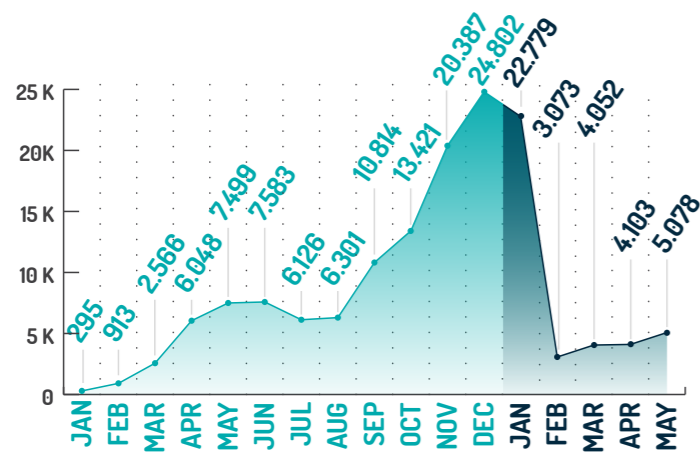


LAST COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE^{vi}:



VENEZUELA PERU
COLOMBIA ECUADOR
OTHER

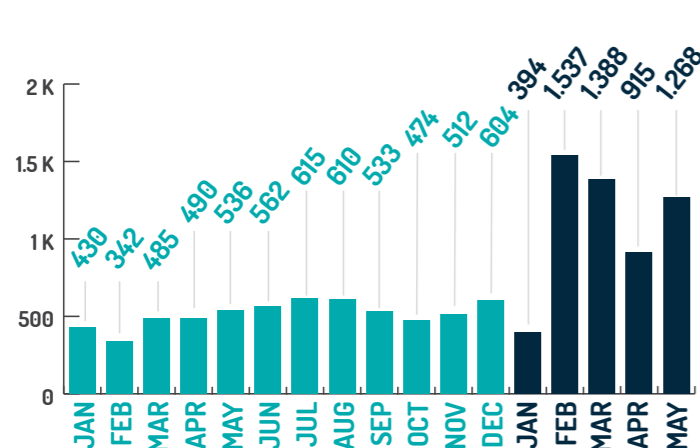
ENCOUNTERS WITH VENEZUELAN AT THE U.S./MEXICO BORDER IN 2022^{vii}



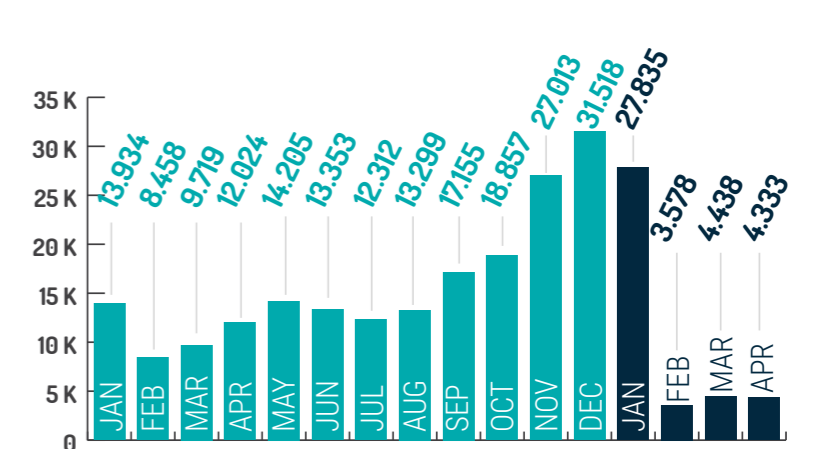
POPULATION FLOWS IN CENTRAL AMERICA



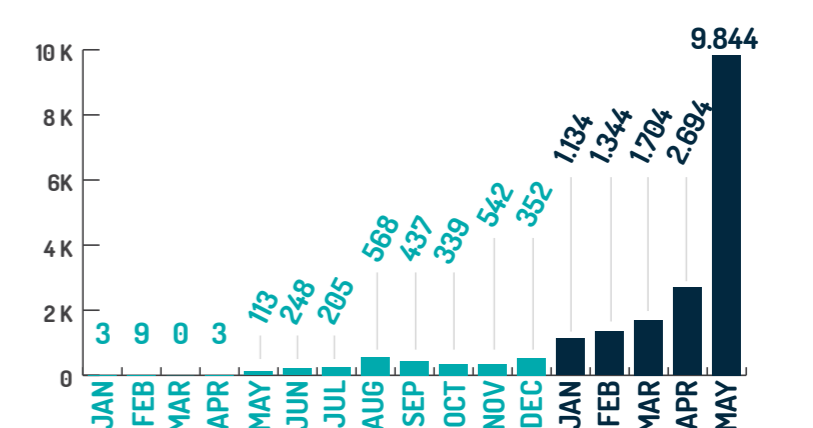
NEW ASYLUM CLAIMS FROM VENEZUELAN IN MEXICO



VENEZUELAN ARRIVING IN MEXICO BY AIR IN 2021 AND 2022^{viii}



VENEZUELAN CROSSING THE DARIEN IN PANAMA IN 2021 AND 2022^{ix}



Sources: (i) The latest available data on cumulative residency permits for the region comprises: Panama: 79.7k (data cutoff: July 2021), Mexico 43.0k (data cutoff: March 2021) and Costa Rica 7.1k (data cutoff: March 2021). (ii) https://www.migracion.gob.pa/images/img2022/PDF/IRREGULARES_POR_DARIEN_MAYO_2022.pdf (iii) January: <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/costa-rica-panama-flow-monitoring-people-mobility-situations-through-americas-2-january> March: <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/costa-rica-panama-flow-monitoring-people-mobility-situations-through-americas-4-march-2022> May: <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/costa-rica-panama-flow-monitoring-people-mobility-situations-through-americas-6-may-2022> (iv) <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/costa-rica-panama-flow-monitoring-people-mobility-situations-through-americas-5-april-2022> (v) <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/costa-rica-panama-flow-monitoring-people-mobility-situations-through-americas-3-february> * Estimated number of Venezuelans, according to the R4V Regional Platform, based on 85% of refugees and migrants surveyed by IOM in Costa Rica in May 2022 being Venezuelan, out of 13,248 total refugees and migrants departing for Costa Rica in May 2022, according to the Government of Panama. Although the 82 surveys carried out in May 2022 represented a much smaller relative sample size of the population in transit in Costa Rica (given >13,000 total monthly entries, compared to <5,200 monthly entries previously) and was therefore less representative of the total population of refugees and migrants, nevertheless this was consistent with the Government of Panama reporting almost 10,000 Venezuelans in transit from Colombia in the same month, or 71% of all refugees and migrants in transit in Panama in May 2022. (vi) <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/costa-rica-panama-flow-monitoring-people-mobility-situations-through-americas-6-may-2022> (vii) <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters> (viii) http://portales.segob.gob.mx/work/models/PoliticaMigratoria/CEM/Estadisticas/Boletines_Estadisticos/2022/Boletin_2022.pdf



CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO, AND COLOMBIA

CURRENT SITUATION

The first five months of 2022 saw a significant increase in the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in transit via land routes northwards through Central America, in comparison to previous years. Due to closed borders and/or newly introduced visa requirements, they largely travel along irregular routes where they are exposed to dangers of grave physical harm, exploitation and abuse.¹

As noted in the previous [R4V Special Situation Report](#) published in March, several countries in the sub-region imposed visa requirements for Venezuelans in January and February in an attempt to limit entries into their respective countries and to curb continued northward movements towards Mexico and the United States, including a new visa requirement for Venezuelans entering Mexico as of 21 January, and Costa Rica as of 21 February.² As a result, the number of regular entries of Venezuelans by [air to Mexico](#) dropped significantly: from 27,835 in January to 3,578 in February, and remained low in subsequent months (4,438 in March and 4,333 in April). Largely unable to meet the requirements for the new entry visas to access countries in a regular, safe and secure manner, the number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants irregularly crossing land borders in Central America notably increased during every month of 2022, with a significant jump in May. According to Panama's National Migration Service ([SNM](#)), in May some 9,844 Venezuelan refugees and migrants entered Panama from Colombia irregularly via the Darien Gap, more than triple the 2,694 Venezuelans

who used this route in April, and more than eight times the 1,134 Venezuelans who crossed the Darien in January. So far this year, Venezuelans represent 51% of the total number of refugees and migrants in irregular transit through the Panama/Colombia border, and 71% of those who crossed in May. A similar pattern of entries was observed at Paso Canoas, at the border between Panama and Costa Rica, where Venezuelans represented 85% of all refugees and migrants surveyed³ entering in [May 2022](#) (out of a total of 13,248 entries) which was more than triple the number of Venezuelan entries in the previous month, after increasing by almost 250% between [December 2021](#) (857) and [April 2022](#) (2,979).

Meanwhile, corresponding with the drop in regular entries by air to Mexico following the introduction of the visa requirement in January, the number of encounters⁴ with Venezuelan refugees and migrants attempting to enter the United States through the southern border with Mexico decreased by more than 85% from January (22,779) to February (3,073) according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection ([CBP](#)), but then rose gradually every subsequent month until May (5,078). Research by R4V partners on the relation between the introduction of additional barriers for Venezuelans arriving by air to Mexico since end-January, and reduced transit movements of Venezuelans to the United States, by diverting them to use more perilous and time-consuming overland routes through Central America, is ongoing and will inform response planning for the second

[1] See also, e.g., <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/07/05/mexico/central-america-new-visa-restrictions-harm-venezuelans>.

[2] Honduras (as of 21 February 2022) and Belize (as of 28 February 2022) also introduced new entry visa requirements for Venezuelans during this period.

[3] The 82 completed surveys by an R4V partner in May represented a significantly smaller sample size of the over 13,000 refugees and migrants in transit in Costa Rica that month, compared to prior months of 2022. The results therefore may not be fully representative of the total population in transit.

[4] The number of "encounters" does not equal the number of individuals who attempted to cross the border, as individuals may attempt to cross multiple times (and will be counted as multiple "encounters") in a given month. The recidivism rate for January through April 2022 was on average 28%, according to [CBP](#).

semester of 2022. In this context, reports from R4V partners indicated an increase in irregular arrivals of Venezuelans along Mexico's southern border with Guatemala, which was corroborated by the increase in requests for asylum by Venezuelans in Chiapas, Mexico, which rose steeply from 69 in January 2022 to 1,092 in May 2022.

While surveys conducted in late 2021 and early 2022 indicated that more than half of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in-transit through Central America and Mexico had previously resided in other countries in South America, more recent surveys show that more refugees and migrants now commence their journeys from Venezuela directly heading northward. A [monitoring survey](#) conducted by an R4V partner at the border between Costa Rica and Panama in May shows that 77% of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in-transit had resided in Venezuela immediately before initiating their journeys north (this percentage increased gradually over the past five months, from 46% in [January](#), to 61% in [February](#), to 65% in [March and 76% in April](#)). For those who had resided in countries other than Venezuela, meanwhile, main countries of previous residency were Colombia (7%), Ecuador (6%) and Peru (3%). Similarly, data from an R4V partner's [characterization of refugees and migrants in transit in northeastern Colombia](#) (Necoclí municipality of Urabá region) from mid-February through end-May shows that 64% of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in-transit came directly from Venezuela, while 20% transited from the south of the continent (Brazil, Ecuador, Chile and Peru) and 9% left from Colombia. Meanwhile, in March, April and May, 98% of Venezuelans interviewed in Costa Rica indicated the United States was their final destination of choice (a slight increase from 90% in February and 86% in January).

The increasing number of Venezuelans in transit northward through the sub-region represents a challenge not only due to the size of the refugee and migrant population on the move, but also due to the severe conditions they face throughout the perilous journey along irregular routes. The journey from Necoclí in Colombia to the first reception centers in Panama usually takes about one week, depending on the combination of routes used; speedboats can reduce the amount of time needed to trek through the jungle to two from six days, but carry risks of shipwrecking, and are more expensive. Venezuelans often have fewer resources than refugees and migrants of other nationalities (64% of Venezuelans in transit in Necoclí [interviewed by R4V partners](#) lacked sufficient resources for their journeys, six

percentage points more than refugees and migrants from other countries) so they are unable to avoid longer stretches of transit by land through the jungle, and resort to sleeping outside prior to and during their transit. Many irregular transit routes through Colombia, Central America and Mexico are known to be controlled by different criminal groups, which prey on refugees' and migrants' vulnerabilities, putting Venezuelans at risk of robberies, human trafficking, exploitation and violence, including sexual and gender-based violence (GBV). A recent report from Doctors Without Borders ([MSF](#)) highlighted the urgent need for protection and emergency healthcare for refugees and migrants crossing the Darien, including for survivors of sexual violence. While a significant majority of refugees and migrants using these routes are men (including 76% of the population in-transit through Costa Rica in April, according to an R4V partner's [monitoring report](#)) women and children face particular challenges on these routes, with women making up 24% and children 15% of the population in-transit, according to the same report. Approximately 9% of women in-transit from [Colombia](#) to Panama are pregnant or lactating and/or have specific needs for health, shelter, nutrition and protection. Meanwhile, the more than 5,000 [refugee and migrant children](#) who have made the journey to cross into Panama so far in 2022 – including over 2,000 in May – face greater risks of drowning, human trafficking and exploitation, according to an R4V partner's report.

The needs of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in transit on these routes are significant:

- In **Colombia**, protection analysis and monitoring by R4V partners identified risks of GBV, shipwrecks, and the recruitment of children and adults for illegal economies by criminal groups. Legal orientation and information on risks associated with irregular movements, as well as access to services and rights, are essential needs (with 35% of all refugees and migrants surveyed identifying legal assistance as a priority). The main profiles of refugees and migrants in-transit include single men and large families (with 38% of those in-transit being men, 28% women, 19% girls and 15% boys). The main needs reported by refugees and migrants in transit in Necoclí in a [characterization by an R4V partner](#) corresponded to shelter (63%), food (56%), internet connection (44%) and WASH services (41%).
- In **Panama**, according to information from local authorities, as many as half of refugees and migrants in-transit through the Darien reported being victims of robbery or fraud during their journeys. Many arrive hungry

and injured at reception centres in the Darien. Around 1 in 10 Venezuelans reportedly lack the funds to continue their journeys and thus remain in reception centres in Panama, awaiting money transfers from relatives, borrowing from friends or working locally until they can afford to continue their transit. While the majority of refugees and migrants in-transit in Panama are young single men or women, among the more than 5,000 children in-transit, there is a small but growing number (10 so far in 2022) identified without birth certificates (born in countries including Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela) contributing to risks of statelessness and human trafficking (due to difficulties in verifying familial relationships without documentation). Among families traveling along these routes, there are also elderly persons with chronic diseases who prioritize continuing their journeys over receiving medical assistance while in transit.

- In **Costa Rica**, according to [border monitoring](#) activities by an R4V partner along the northern border, Venezuelans in transit are in extremely vulnerable conditions, lacking economic resources and unable to meet their basic needs such as food, water and shelter. Health care has been noted as a particular challenge, as refugees and migrants lack the required insurance to access available services, although children and pregnant women receive public health services free of charge, and refugees and migrants with medical emergencies are not denied life-saving care, while longer-term or specialized attention remains elusive. Many work in the informal sector to fund their journeys north, vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Also, while in transit, children are often not enrolled in schools, nor attempt to do so due to continued travels north.
- In **Mexico**, R4V partners are currently undertaking a comprehensive Joint Needs Assessment exercise to better understand the needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela and related challenges encountered in various locations across the country.

On 20 April, the Government of Panama hosted a high-level inter-governmental event with the participation of representatives from 20 countries, where the challenges related to movements of refugees and migrants in the region were atop the agenda. Regional response strategies were discussed further at the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles in mid-June, where 20 countries endorsed the [Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection](#), containing commitments to work together to enhance financial support for countries of destination and transit for

refugees and migrants; to expand access to legal status (through regularization and international protection), promote local integration and regular pathways (including family reunification); and acknowledging the importance of coordination structures such as the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V) for refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

To address the needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan ([RMRP](#)) for 2022 targets 55.6K refugees, migrants and vulnerable members of host communities in Central America and Mexico to receive assistance, as well as 172K Venezuelans in transit in Colombia. Despite the increasing irregular movements of Venezuelans and growing risks related to undertaking these journeys, as of June the RMRP response remained alarmingly underfunded, with only 10.0% of needed funds being reported of the total financial requirement of USD 1.79 billion (of which USD 24.1 million was requested for Central America and Mexico and USD 802 million requested for Colombia).

By end-May, the R4V response in **Panama** had reached 3,234 Venezuelans and members of affected host communities with assistance, largely focusing on food vouchers, shelter support through multipurpose cash assistance, primary health care consultations, legal orientation and assistance services for migratory regularization, access to refugee status and statelessness determination procedures. To promote socio-economic inclusion, R4V partners in Panama advocated to promote access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities with the public and private sectors, and held workshops and online courses with refugees and migrants and host community members, as well as trainings on entrepreneurship and business management.

In **Costa Rica**, by May 2022, the R4V response had reached 998 Venezuelan refugees and migrants with assistance, with a focus on meeting basic needs, such as food and shelter. R4V partners provided health services, including psychosocial and psychiatric care and access to medical insurance; food assistance through the distribution of food cards and baskets; hygiene kits and diapers; distributed multipurpose cash assistance; and ensured temporary accommodation and rental support. Currently 1,618 Venezuelan refugees and asylum-seekers have received medical




insurance, which is covered and revised monthly by an R4V partner under the framework of an agreement with the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS). R4V partners also supported Venezuelan businesses in border areas and in the center of the country to distribute free meals to Venezuelans in transit. To promote longer-term protection and integration, partners provided legal advice and support for the payment of fees associated with migration and documentation procedures, training for entrepreneurship and technical support, as well as seed capital and education support. Partners also supported the processes of degree recognition for Venezuelans in Costa Rica. Finally, partners carried out GBV awareness workshops and case evaluations for access to justice and support networks.

In **Mexico**, R4V partners provided cash and voucher assistance (CVA) to address basic needs, including access to food, shelter and non-food items (NFI) among refugees and migrants, including those from Venezuela. CVA was also distributed to address protection-related risks. To provide longer-term solutions to Venezuelans in Mexico, R4V partners organized entrepreneurship courses to support refugees and migrants to launch or scale-up their businesses. In March a 16-hour entrepreneurship course was completed by 45 Venezuelan women, in conjunction with an organization that works with the Venezuelan diaspora targeting Venezuelan businesswomen and entrepreneurs. A series of 6 master classes on specific topics of interest for entrepreneurs were developed in alliance with Tecnológico de Monterrey – one of Mexico’s private universities – to provide advanced tools for refugee and migrant entrepreneurs, with 74 Venezuelans

registered for this initiative. Moreover, R4V partners provided legal assistance and representation to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, to facilitate access to the asylum procedures, regularization, naturalization and access to public services. By end-May 2022, 2,483 Venezuelans had received assistance from R4V partners in Mexico.

In **Colombia**, starting in March 2022 a local R4V coordination structure was established for the Urabá region, along the northern border with Panama, to coordinate the response to refugees and migrants of all nationalities there, including through the creation of a Working Group on Mixed Movements (GIFMM) which held its first meeting on 9 June with 14 members (mainly in Necoclí and Apartadó municipalities) and 8 observer organizations. R4V partners’ response just in the Urabá region has reached more than 14,100 Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their host communities so far in 2022, particularly with **WASH** support for access to safe water and hygiene items; **Health** and medical services such as general consultations, sexual and reproductive health, psychosocial support and medicines; **Protection** and legal assistance, providing information on risk reduction for trafficking and smuggling, and case management in the context of GBV; **Food Security**; **CVA** for food and WASH supplies and cash for rent; emergency **Shelter** solutions including hotel rooms; **Integration**; and the response to **GBV**. Actions have also been developed to strengthen service and orientation points and assistance provided by R4V partners, and in advocacy regarding specific protection concerns – including child protection – with departmental authorities.

PLATFORM COORDINATORS

REGIONAL PLATFORM	COLOMBIA PLATFORM	CENTRAL AMERICA & MEXICO PLATFORM
See response:	See response:	See response:
		
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