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**Haitian Forced Migration in the Americas:
Trajectories and Protection Gaps - 2023**



Haitian Forced Migration in the Americas: Trajectories and Protection Gaps – 2023

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Context

In the last decades, the Haitian diaspora has been a constant reality in the migratory flows panoramas of the Americas and the Caribbean. However, in 2021, record numbers were observed in their migratory movements, becoming the leading actor of a new massive exodus in the region, this time not from Haiti but from the southern countries where Haitians had settled¹. Even though there has been a reduction in recent years, this flow continues to be significant. There is also a large number of people seeking to leave Haiti due to the situation of insecurity and violence in the country, heading both to the Dominican Republic and other countries in the Americas to join this migratory route.



This situation sets a crisis that includes a route to the United States, focused on four borders:

- U.S.-Mexico
- Mexico-Guatemala
- Panama-Colombia
- Dominican Republic-Haiti

Has demonstrated a regional incapacity to manage and assist this flow. These people, mainly driven by the structural crisis in Haiti and violence, as well as the racism, discrimination, and rejection they face in host countries, together with the lack of opportunities for a better life, move in an almost invisible way through the Americas.

In this context, JRS LAC initiated a data collection process in 2023 with Haitian people in mobility and those with settlement intentions in different parts of the continent. To have a proper, accurate, and grounded identification of the current migratory flow, their barriers to rights access, their differential needs for protection, capacities, and opportunities for accompaniment and care in the region. The data collection has been developed in

close collaboration with other organizations, including different organizations of the humanitarian sector in Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, and Mexico, the Inter-agency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows - GIFMM of Urabá (Colombia) and its allied organizations, JRS Mexico, JRS Ecuador, and JRS Colombia.

2

Methodology

The methodology for this data collection comprises two components. One of the external evaluations includes documentation and conversations with third parties—another participative evaluation, with field observations, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews with Haitian people. We made 22 conversations with external parties (Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, and Mexico), 06 field observations, 11 focus groups, and 433 travel groups were interviewed from June 2023 to February 2024 (Colombia and Mexico).

¹ According to statistics from Migration Panama (migracion.gob.pa), the transit of Haitian people in the period 2010-2019 was 27,703 people; in 2020, 6,653 people; and in 2021, 82,879 people.

The number of individuals who participated in the data collection process represents the reality of Haitian people in mobility. However, it's important to note that statistical significance of the indicators was not analyzed due to the nature of the instruments used. Therefore, the results should be considered indicative of the reality of the HMF (Haitian Migratory Flow) during the data collection dates.

3 Main findings

The Haitian Migratory Flow is a **highly vulnerable** flow, not only within their own country but also in their countries of residence and during transit to the U.S., where they are frequently victims of robbery, extortion, and violations of their human rights



The HMF feel and find themselves very lonely; **leading them to rely on their families for support.** The result has been that people have lost trust in Civil Society Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and governments, losing the importance and reliability of institutions and their procedures

The HMF has become an easy and attractive target **for human smuggling and trafficking networks.** These networks offer their services in various sections of the route due to the vulnerability of the HMF



The **structural racism** that exists in the Americas generates considerable rejection that, on many occasions, prevents them from laying the foundations for rebuilding their life projects in other countries and receiving dignified treatment in their movements.



It is a dynamic and evolving flow, with numerous barriers to mobility, which enables it to take opportunities within its context, even if they represent **safety and security risks.**

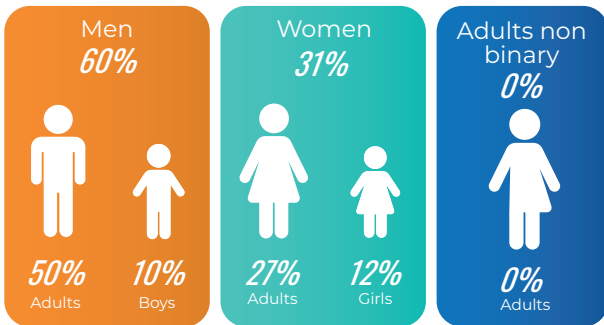
Women, girls, boys, adolescents, and single-parent families with dependents, are the most vulnerable people during the transit, especially those who do not speak Spanish.



4 Travel groups

Travel groups are composed of an average of 3.8 people. Groups of friends traveling together, single-parent and two-parent families with children under 12 years of age, and young couples with infants or pregnant women are the most common. Most travel groups, whether comprising family members or friends, consist of young individuals with an average age of 38 years. People who begin their journey alone, usually join other groups along the way.

Graph 01. Profiles by gender and age



• Traveler profiles by gender

Within the travel groups, 60% are men (adults and boys), 39% are women (adults and girls), and 1% are non-binary people. 22% are minors (girls and boys), of which 55% are girls.

Source: Own elaboration²

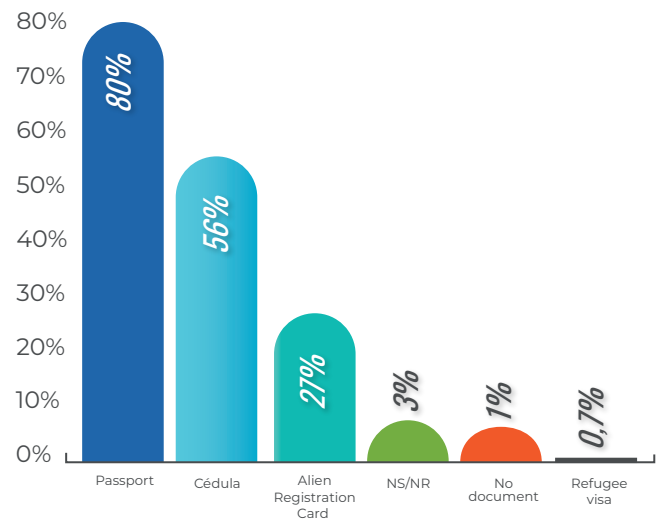
According to Haitians, almost all of them (99%) travel with some form of identification document.

About 76% of the individuals who were interviewed **do not speak Spanish**, which restricts their access to information and rights on the route. According to detailed interviews and interviews with third parties, it is evident that the language barrier exacerbates their vulnerability exposing them to fraud, robbery, extortion, illicit smuggling, and misinformation. Additionally, **women** are the least proficient in the language even though some of them have lived in Spanish-speaking countries.

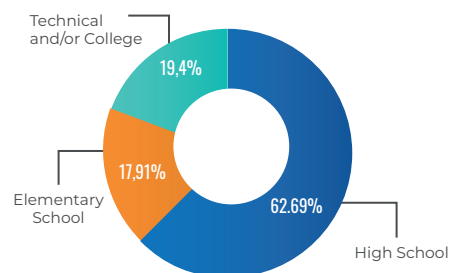
• Educational level of individuals in transit

About 82% of the individuals have completed high school; nearly 20% hold a technical or professional degree. However, it is common among Haitians to encounter barriers when attempting to validate their academic degrees in their countries of residence.

Graph 02. Travel documents

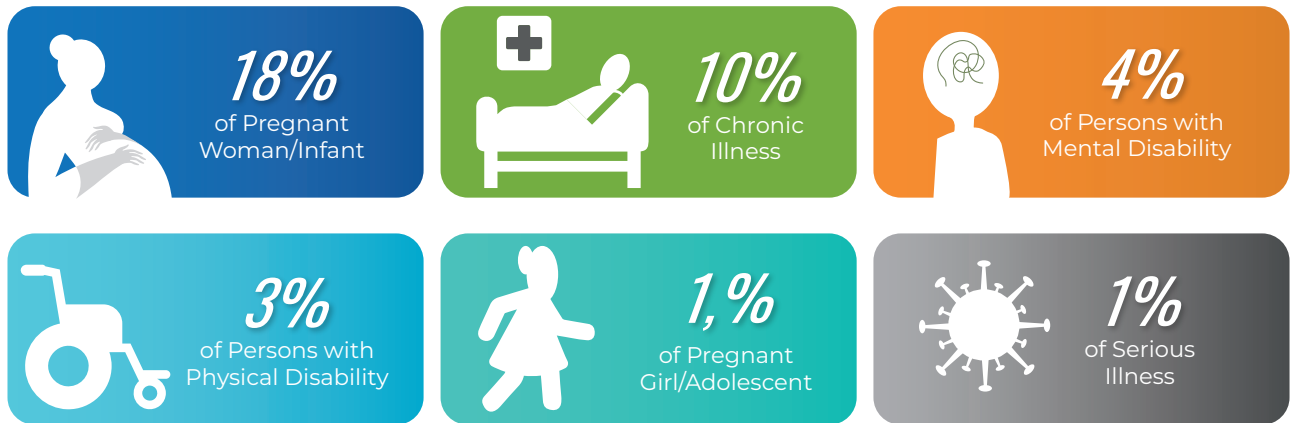


Graph 03. Completed educational level



² The source of all graphs and maps in this document is the author's own elaboration. In this sense, this information is omitted hereinafter.

Graph 04. Priority profiles



● **Priority profiles**

Approximately 19.5% of travel groups include a pregnant or breastfeeding woman, 11% include a person with chronic or serious illness, and 7% include a person with some form of disability (physical or mental).

5 Motivations for migrating

People's motivations for leaving Haiti vary considerably between those interviewed in the first and second half of 2023. For those interviewed in the first semester, their primary motivations are focused on the lack of access to rights, predominantly the lack of employment (87%), the lack of access to food (33%), and widespread violence in the country (27%).

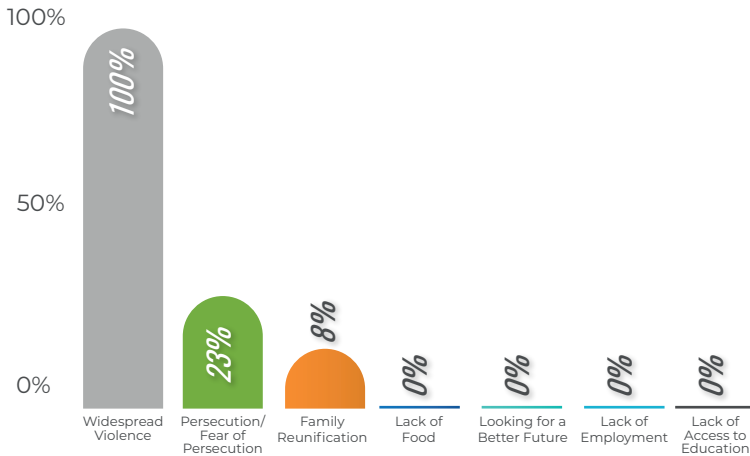
Graph 05. Motivations for leaving Haiti (first half of 2023)



● **Motivations for leaving Haiti**

In addition, individuals interviewed in the second half of the year, their primary motivations are related to the worsening violence and insecurity crisis in the country. The principal cause was violence (100%), followed by persecution or fear (23%), and family reunification process(8%).

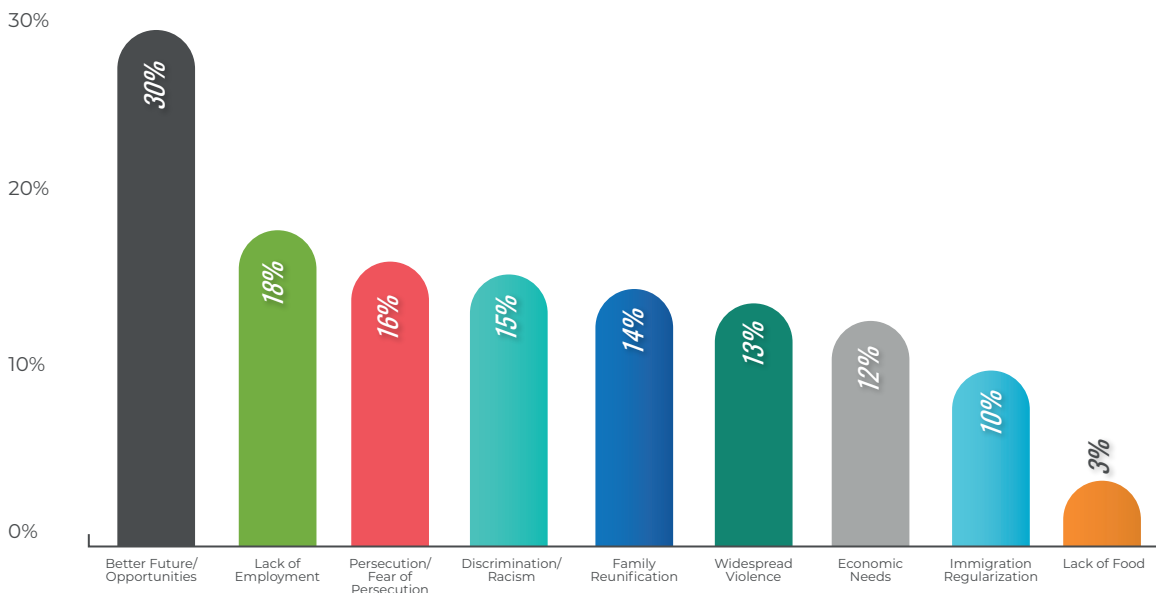
Graph 06. Motivations for leaving Haiti (second half of 2023)



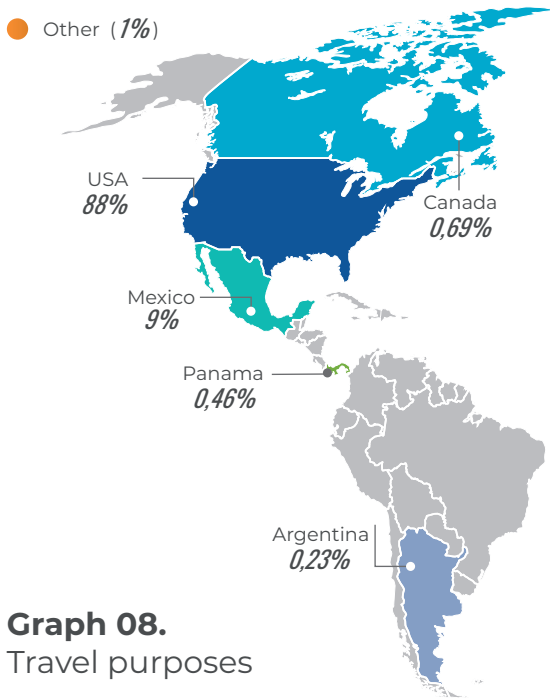
Regarding the information obtained from the focus groups,, within widespread violence, people mentioned internal displacement due to the invasion of criminal gangs or other armed groups in the sectors where they live, the threats they receive from them, and the loss of neighbors or relatives because of the criminal actions of these gangs.

There is greater diversity in the motivations of people who leave their countries of residence. About 30% say they are looking for a better future and opportunities, 18% mention lack of employment, 16% because of persecution or fear of persecution, and 15% because of the discrimination and racism they experience in those countries.

Graph 07. Motivations for leaving other countries



In addition, the focus groups showed that Haitians tend to experience rejection of their cultural identity, a rejection of their knowledge and skills in their countries of residence, where they also find it very difficult (in terms of processes and resources) to validate their professional qualifications. They often face situations of undignified and racist treatment. These facts limit their employment opportunities, often relegating them to low-skilled or precarious jobs. Regularizing their migratory status or their family members' regularization is usually a long and complex process, which becomes an additional barrier to their integration into society.



Graph 08.
Travel purposes

Only 24% of the travel groups reported having enough financial resources to reach their intended destination (the United States), even though people sell all their possessions before setting out on their journey in most cases. 46% of the groups interviewed have support networks in the country of destination, which would provide them with economic support, if necessary.

The intention to come to the United States is primarily based on the opportunity to obtain a higher quality of life and a better future for their daughters and sons. They are aware that the Haitian community there is large enough to facilitate the adaptation process for newcomers. Existing networks can connect them with various job opportunities. They believe that once there, they can secure well-paying jobs and be able to send money back to their families in Haiti, as well as access education.

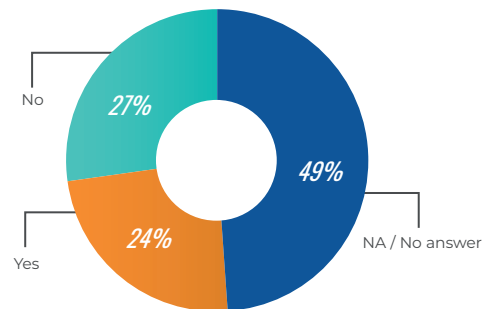
Only 30% are aware of U.S. immigration policy. When we went deeper with some people, we found a high level of misinformation, not only related to the destination but also regarding the routes they take. The least informed individuals did not plan their route and were not very aware of the dangers along it. Individuals with more accurate information, found it in social media and paid for services of "guides" (coyotes) to take them along the route. However, they do not usually use official sources of information.

More than 22 different routes to the United States have been identified, depending on whether people began their route in Haiti (53%) or if they started their journey in countries other than their country of origin, such as Chile (28%) and Brazil (13%), mainly. **On average, travel groups pass through 8 countries to arrive in Mexico and use 30 days on their route.**

6 Travel intentions and routes

About 88% of the interviewed individuals said their destination is the United States, 9% said Mexico and the remaining percentage mentioned other countries. However, in a different data collection instance, it has been observed that people whose destination is Mexico or other countries are typically planning a medium-term settlement in those places; they aim to stabilize their economic situation before eventually moving on to the United States.

Graph 09. Financial resources to reach their destination



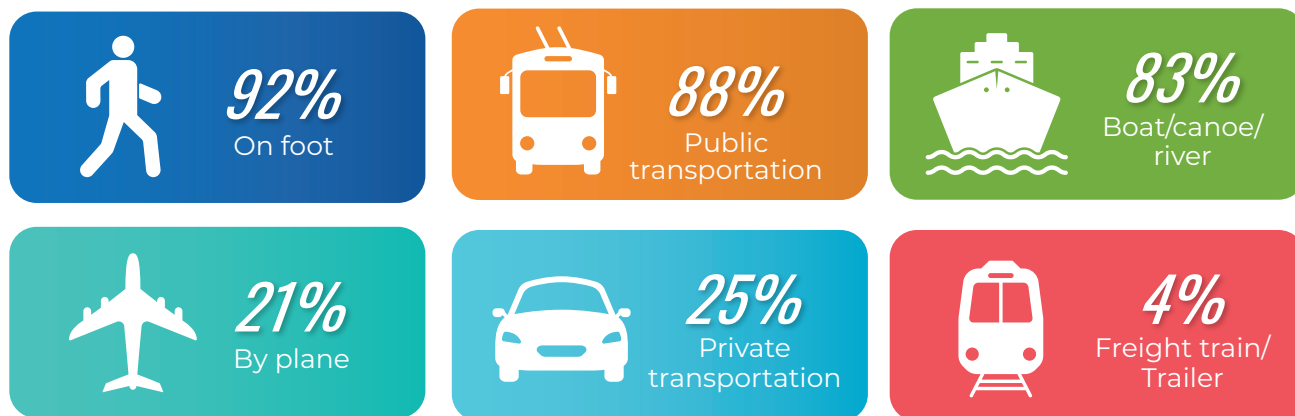
Map 01. Countries and routes

- Direct routes
- Transited routes
- ↑ Direction of traffic
- Expelling countries
- Transit countries

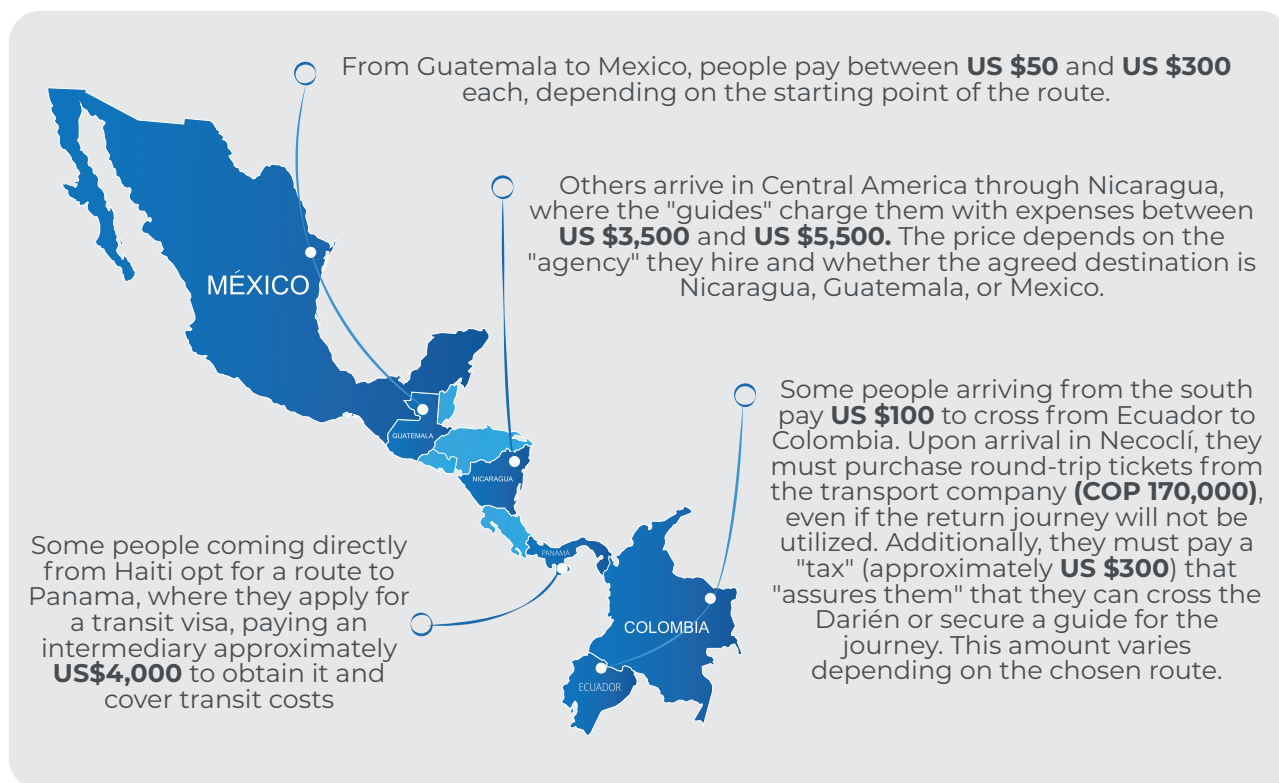


People use different transportation methods to move around, according to the type of route, but payment for transportation predominates in more than 80% of the cases. Field observations and conversations with third parties and with Haitians have revealed their high exposure to human smuggling networks. Most of them (regardless of their place of origin) pay to "coyotes" or "polleros", "travel guides" to "help" them in the processing of visas, to move along the route, or to "get off" in a country, which means ensuring their entry without the risk of deportation.

Graph 10. Transportation and routes



The identified values vary according to different sections of the migratory route and the associated procedures.

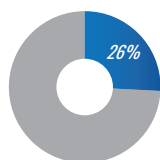


This route has two significant points of interest, not only because of the many people who have passed through them but also because of their importance as points of contact with the Haitian population in mobility: Colombia and Mexico.

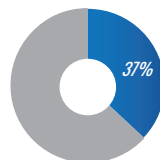


6.1 Transit point - Colombia

Colombia plays a crucial role in the migratory route for people traveling from the south to the Darien Gap on their way to the United States. In the last few years, thousands of people in human mobility have transited through this country. During 2023, there was a significant increase, exceeding the previous year's figure by more than 200%. However, the migratory flow of Haitian people remained almost constant, with a total of 47,334 people (as far as has been recorded) crossing into Panama in 2023.



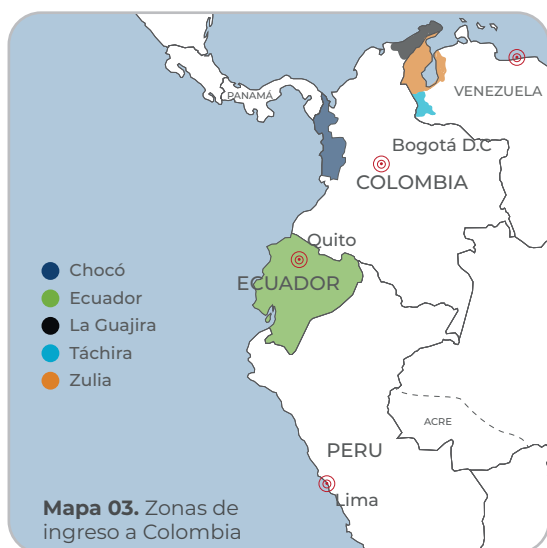
Approximately **26%** of the interviewed travel groups in Colombia reported facing challenges along the route to reach the country.



Only **37%** received some support along the way

Mainly in terms of health (29%) and from Non-Governmental Organizations or United Nations agencies (50%). And at least one of the travel groups lost a family member on the route.

Map 03. Entry zones to Colombia



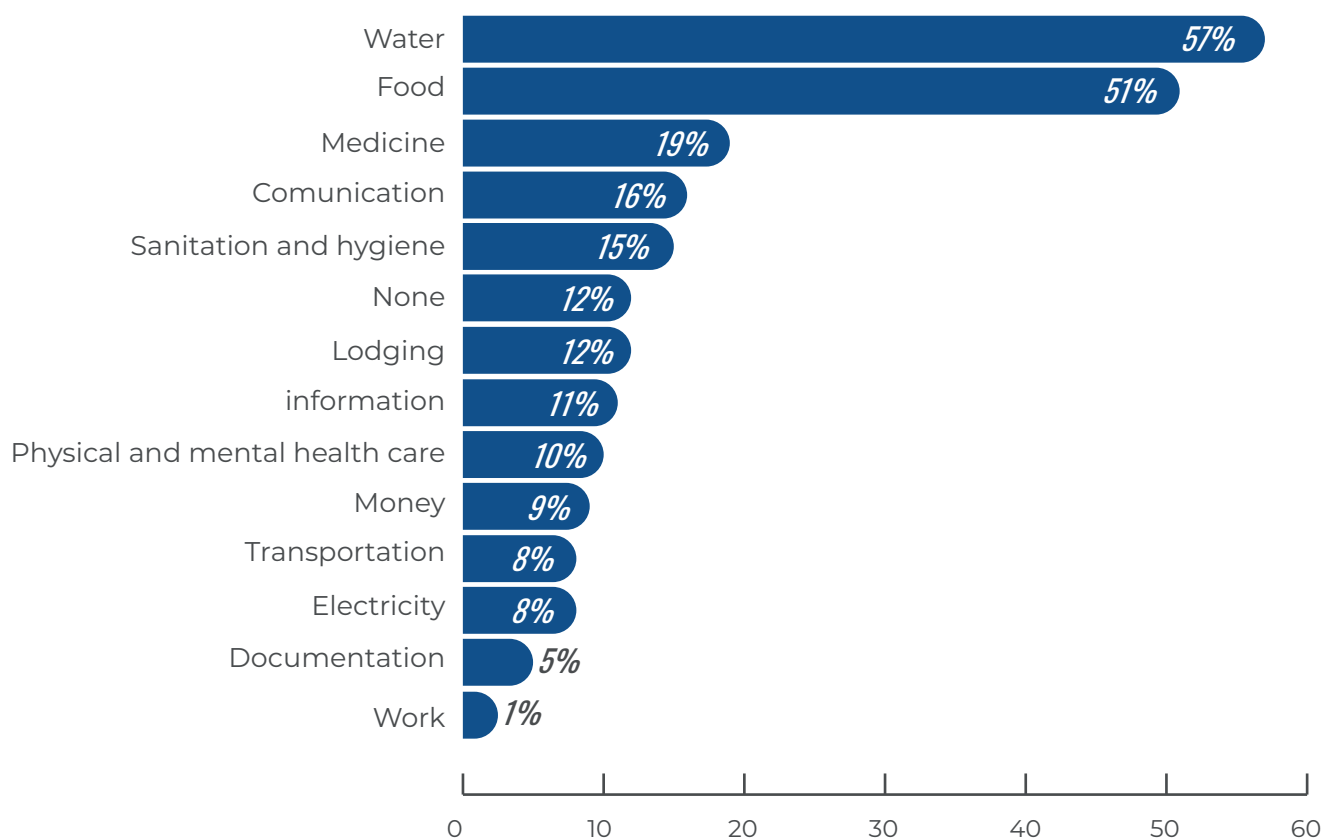
Before getting into the Darien Gap, until 2023, 90% said that they arrive in Colombia through border crossings on the Ecuador - Nariño route (southern Colombia), they make two stops in the country before reaching the Gulf of Urabá (Chocó) and their stays do not usually last more than three days. Of the groups that stay a few days in Colombia.

60% stay in a hotel or shared house (of the community)

5% only 5% stay on the Street/ Beach

An average of 72% of people consume two meals per day whenever they are in Colombia, with no significant differences by gender.

Graph 11. Urgent needs in Colombia



The needs identified in this area vary, with a prevalence of needs related to **water** (57%) and **food** (51%). In this part of the route, people still have resources for their transit (their own or from their networks) if they have not suffered robbery or extortion, therefore, their conditions are more favorable compared to those observed in the north of the continent.

Regarding health issues (19% medicines, 10% care), it is evident that most people have some **preexisting medical conditions** (hypertension, diabetes) or are **pregnant women** who interrupt their medical treatments during the transit and do not have access to the necessary health controls. As a result, they approach health services (mainly provided by non-governmental organizations) only when they have a related problem and usually when the situation is already complex.



The lack of **child** and **adolescent** protection is also evident during their transit through Colombia.

Is not only common for them to leave the formal school system in the middle of the school year or even without completing it, but they also lack access to transitory educational services along the route. The extended interruption of education and the associated loss of documentation cause significant difficulties for later integration into the receiving country's educational system.

Underage individuals with families whose parents or caregivers do not speak Spanish face another significant risk. In many cases, these underage travelers act as **translators** for their parents, regardless of the speaker. Consequently, the **exposure to dangerous situations, abuse, and exploitation** by unscrupulous individuals, as well as the risk of **family separation**, is high.



The principal interaction between people from the Necoclí community and Haitians is through economic exchanges by purchasing products such as water purification tablets, medicines, tents, cell phone cases, flashlights, shoes, etc. Additionally, it includes access to food services, housing, and receiving money for remittances (if their passports have not been stamped, they cannot withdraw cash from remittance companies). However, these people **charge them in dollars** and at considerably **higher prices** than the common ones.



Although this was the reality evidenced in 2023, during the last visit from Ipiales to Medellín in February 2024, none of the crossing points referred by Haitians were currently in use by this flow. Conversations with other humanitarian organizations and local police authorities, both in Tulcán (northern Ecuador) and in Colombia, identified that illegal human smuggling probably begins before entering Colombia. These networks use irregular border points into the country and travel at night, becoming visible again only when they reach the Gulf of Urabá.

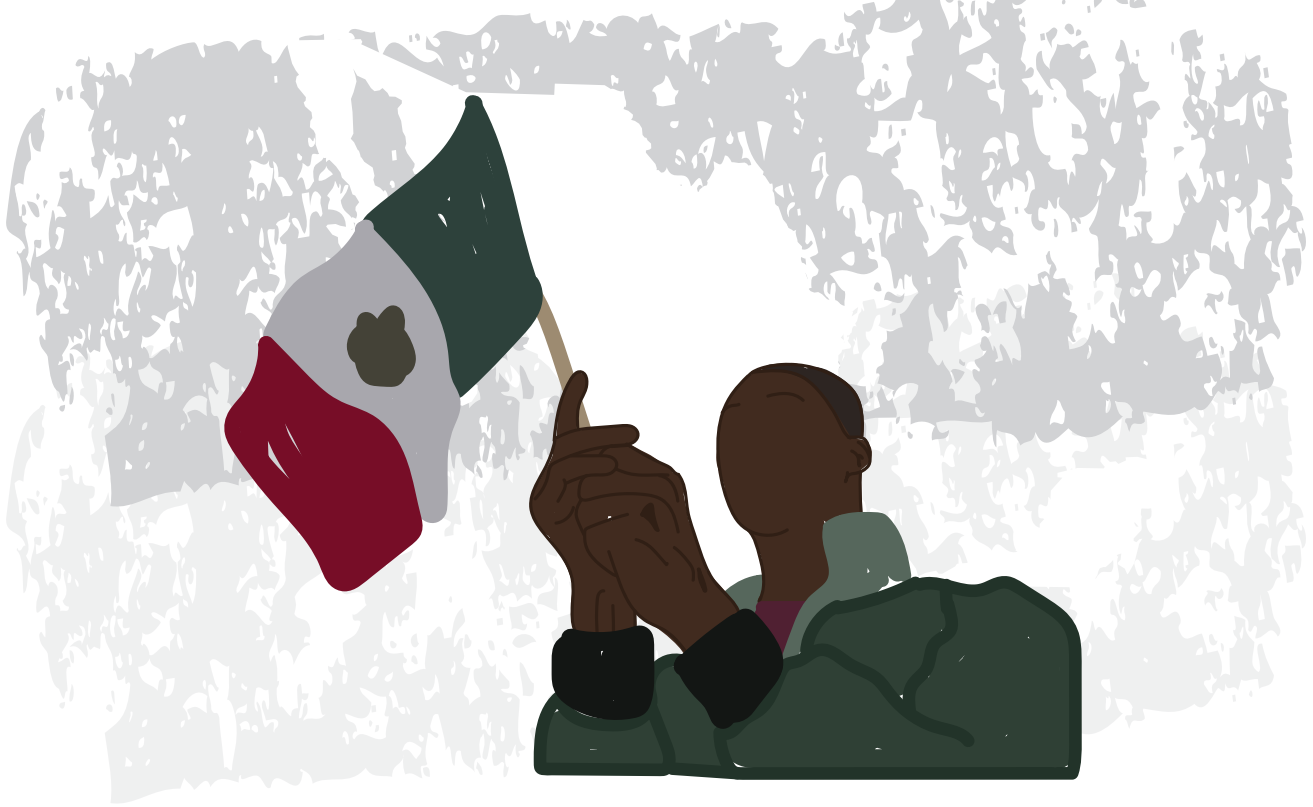


Among the possible causes of the indiscriminate use of illicit smuggling networks are the difficulties faced by Haitians in Colombian territory for their movement. These difficulties are not only regarding migratory aspects but also concerning the challenge of acquiring official tickets at transportation terminals. On many occasions, this circumstances have forced individuals to purchase alternative tickets, which turned out to be scams in some cases. People were incorrectly informed that they had arrived in Necoclí when they were still in the southern part of the country.



It is outstanding to mention that according to official Colombian migration figures, no Haitians have entered through the Rumichaca border in 2024 (data collected up to February 29), while data on departures to the Darien indicate the transit of 3,687 people from January 1 to February 12, 2024³. That is evidence of the migration flow, although it is becoming increasingly invisible within Colombia.

3 Information provided by GIFMM Urabá, according to the registry of maritime companies.



6.2 Transit point - Mexico

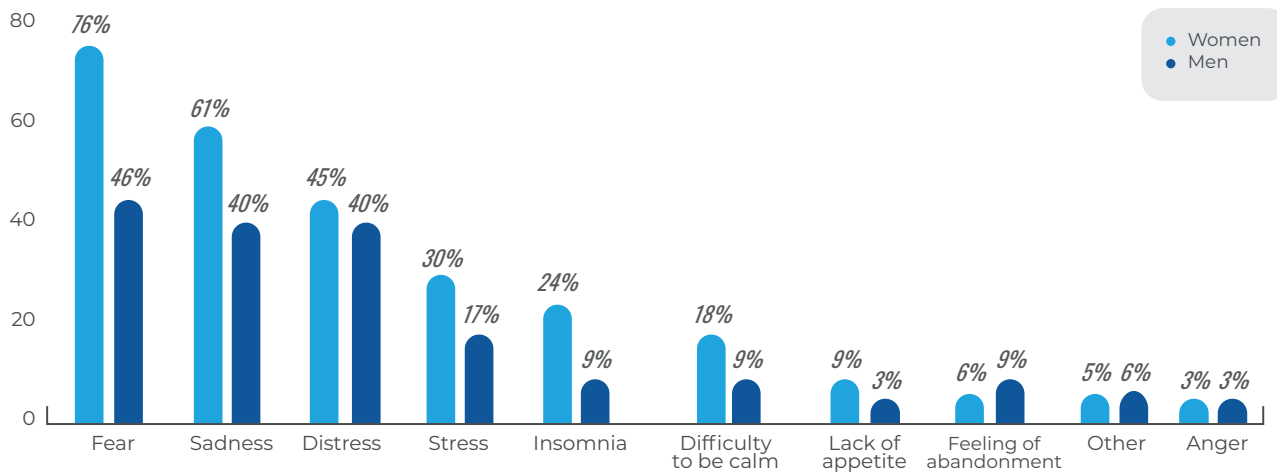
In recent years, Mexico has become a crucial transit, origin, and destination point for migrants from around the world, influenced by U.S. immigration policies. In 2023, the extension of Parole to Haitian nationals and the end of **Title 42** led to a significant increase in the number of Haitians in the country for extensive periods. Indeed, from the interviewed travel groups in Mexico, only 1% reported entering Mexico through an official border crossing, and 81% reported entering Mexico through Ciudad Hidalgo-Chiapas; their stays are much longer than in Colombia and at the time of the interview (on average) the groups had been in the country for 77 days. Most of these individuals initiate refugee application processes in Mexico, even though the rate of positive resolution is low, only 8%, despite the complex situations of violence from which many Haitians try to escape. However, some of them receive Complementary Protection⁴.

About **57% of travel groups** reported they faced problems on the route to Mexico, and only **22%** received some support along it, mainly in terms of housing (32%) and from different shelters (50%). Six of the travel groups lost a family member during the journey. Once they arrived in the country, 32% of the travel groups stayed in hostels, 29% in shared houses or rooms, and 19% in Street, Beach or parks. Meanwhile, among groups led by men, 44% consume an average of two meals a day and 33% only one. Regarding groups led by women, 47% consume on average two meals a day and 41% only one.

The deterioration of people is evident when they arrive in Tapachula: when asked about the primary emotions they have felt in the place, fear predominates (Women: 76%, Men: 46%), sadness (Women: 61%, Men: 40%) and anguish (Women: 45%, Men: 40%). Although there are some differences between men and women, they coincide in the primary emotions.

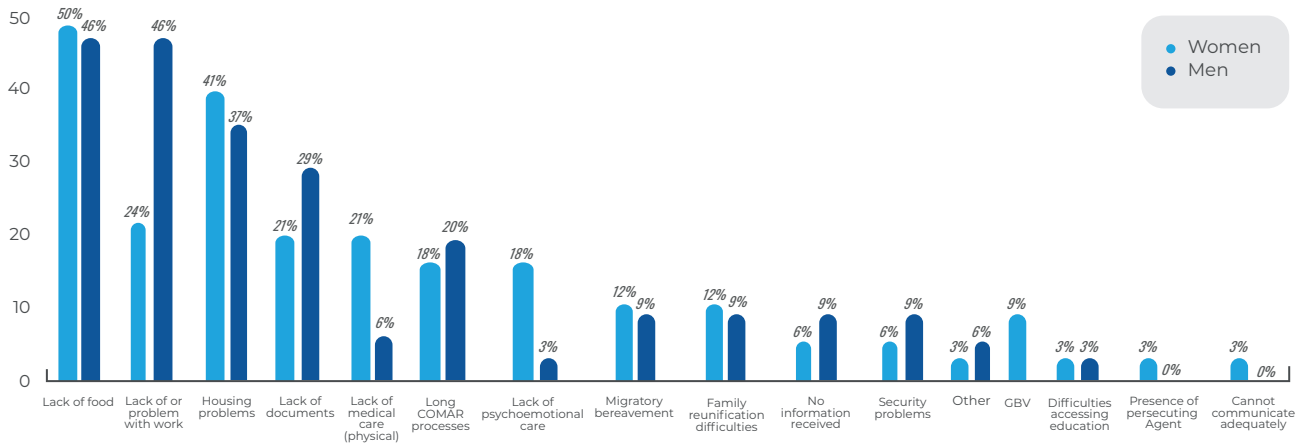
⁴ Type of international protection granted to a foreigner who has not been recognized as a refugee under the law (Mexican legislation contemplates both the universal definition of the term refugee and the expanded definition, when it is considered that his return could endanger his life or put him at risk of being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment). https://portales.segob.gob.mx/work/models/PoliticaMigratoria/CEM/UPM/MJ/CyL_5.pdf

Graph 12. Emotions by gender



The main causes of these emotions are:

Graph 13. Causes of emotions



Gender differences regarding the significant triggers of these emotions are few. For men, the main problems include lack of food (46%), problems or lack of work (46%), housing problems (37%) and lack of documentation (29%). On the other hand, for women, the main challenges are lack of food (50%), lack of housing (41%), problems or lack of work (24%), and lack of documents and medical care (21%). However, in the case of women, situations of gender violence (9%), the presence of a persecuting agent (3%), and difficulties in communicating (3%) also stand out.

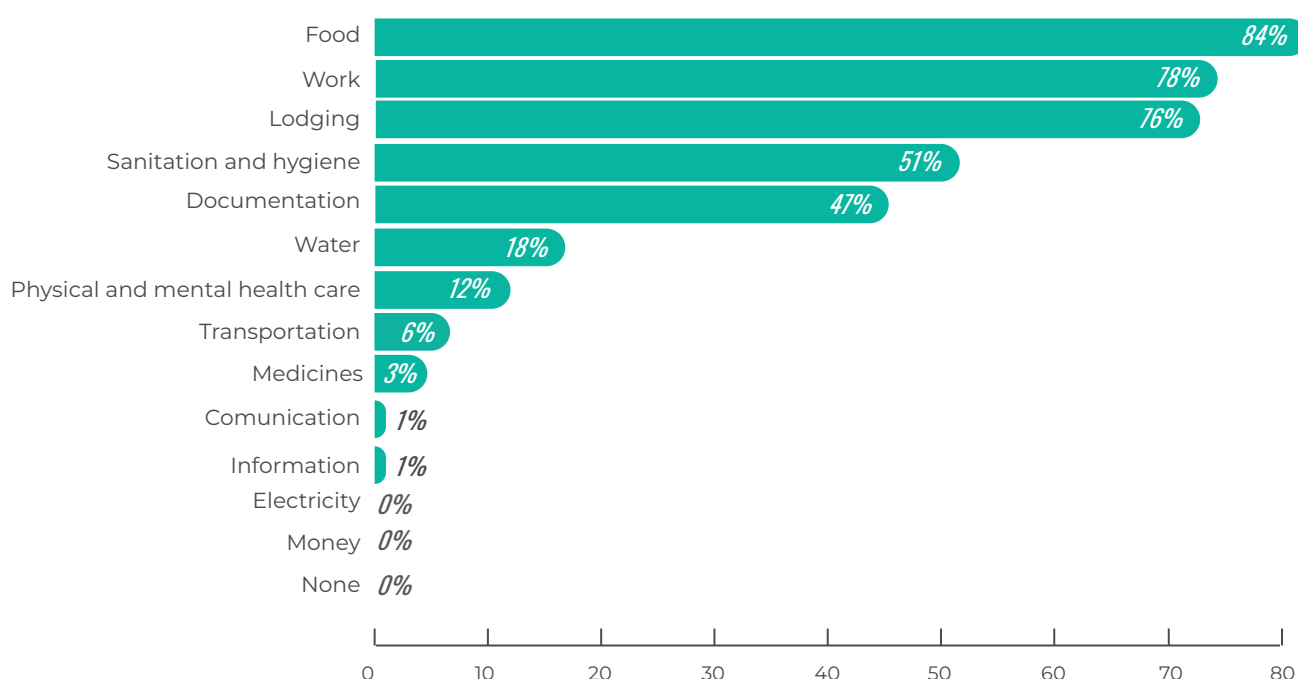


Despite this situation, mental health and psychosocial support for Haitians is practically nonexistent along the route and in Mexico. Although some organizations have made efforts through translators or interpreters, Haitians tend not to continue with care due to the presence of a third person, which leads them to perceive care as impersonal and uncomfortable.

Upon arrival in Mexico, the conditions of the people and their unmet needs worsen, mainly due to robberies, excessive charges, and incidents they experience along the route. Additionally, their stays are longer than usual. They face the need to access **food (84%)**, the lack of **housing (76%)**, and the challenge of finding a **job (78%)** to obtain the resources needed to continue their journey.

In addition to these needs, the focus groups showed the need to address health, sanitation, living conditions, medicines issues, and Spanish language courses. People report many difficulties in living, as costs are very high, and it is difficult to find a job. The need for sanitation and hygiene services is particularly relevant (51%), as many travel groups spend the night in the streets or parks of different cities, so their access to sanitation services is limited.

Graph 14. Mexico's immediate needs



Many people recognize that not speaking Spanish is a major limitation to interacting with local people, finding a job, or accessing services.

Regarding health-related aspects, focus groups and interviews with external stakeholders identified a high prevalence of sexually transmitted, respiratory, dermatological, and digestive diseases. Even though Mexican law establishes that migrants have the right to receive any medical care from the public and private sectors -regardless of their migratory status- some Haitians state that, in local health care centers, they are sometimes not attended to, either without justification or because they do not have a document certifying their place of residence. On the other hand, when they are with a third party, usually a member of an organization, there are no obstacles to providing medical care.

In addition, through the testimonies of several interviewed individuals (both in Tapachula and Mexico City), there have been identified some situations of obstetric violence against **Haitian women**. In some cases, this has led to deaths of newborns without

conclusive explanations. The right to health is affected by the lack of interpreters and translated material in public services, as well as the absence of willingness to provide quality medical care despite Mexican regulations requiring these service provisions.

In terms of access to education, **children and adolescents** encounter various limitations. For instance, if the school year has already started, they are often prohibited from attending school, which forces them to wait until the following academic year to begin. Moreover, in some instances, they need to present educational documents from their country of origin for enrollment, many of which they do not have. This situation further complicates the lives of **single parents**, who comprise 9% of travel groups; among them, 6% are mothers with dependents, and 3% are fathers with dependents. During transit, they lack support networks to care for their children while they work, exacerbating the absence of protected spaces such as schools, thus representing an additional disadvantage.

A prominent barrier perceived in Mexico is racism, which exposes people to situations of **discrimination and violence**, both by civil society and migration authorities. In institutional terms, racism is perceived in the **discretionary nature of the provision of public and immigration services**. These pose a risk for individuals and constitute a violation of their rights, as the care they receive can vary significantly depending on the public official who attends to them at any given time.

One problem identified by lawyers from partner organizations is that when presenting complaints regarding crimes such as kidnapping, rape, and others, the prosecutors' offices often avoid handling the cases, arguing that it is not their responsibility and suggesting that they should go to another prosecutor's office. Consequently, cases are transferred from one prosecutor's office to another, leading to prolonged delays in seeking access to justice. This results in many people abandoning the legal process. Such a situation not only affects the psycho-emotional integrity of individuals due to the violence suffered but also because of the repeated violation of their human rights and **the lack of access to justice**.

During the visit to Mexico City in October 2023, it became evident that the number of people in the vicinity of the offices of the Mexican Commission for Aid to Refugees (COMAR) indicated a very complex situation, not only in the Versailles area but also in the forests of Tláhuac. In the Versailles area, an estimated 200 individuals were homeless. Meanwhile, many of them were in a transit situation, some families had been there for more than a month, living in precarious hygienic conditions, experiencing poor health, and lacking free access to sanitary facilities. The situation in Tláhuac did not differ significantly; the shelter was overcrowded, making it impossible to determine the exact number of residents.

It is also critical to consider that applications for the Humanitarian Visitor's Card (TVRH) and Refugee status are being processed in Tlahuac. The day before the mentioned visit, one thousand and three hundred people had attended to, with 90% of them being Haitian. Initially, their service capacity was 120 people. However, due to the high demand, they increased their response capacity and provided translators to support non-Spanish-speaking individuals throughout the process. This overcrowding and demand of services occur because most people arriving in Mexico City initiate the application process and await an appointment through the CBP One⁵ application in this zone. Once the appointment is confirmed, they can continue their mobility to the border areas, as the process can be initiated from Mexico City toward the north.

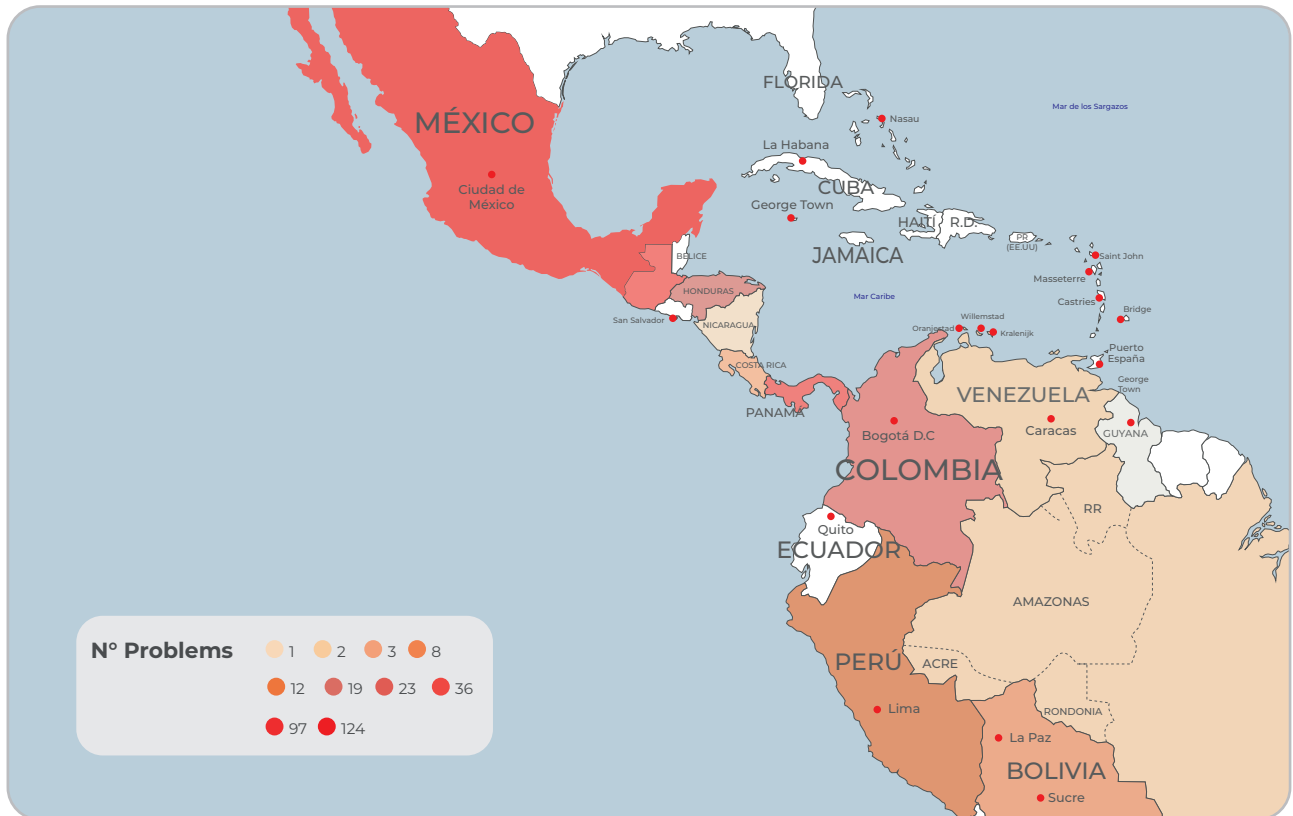
⁵ CBP One™ Mobile Application | U.S. Customs and Border Protection

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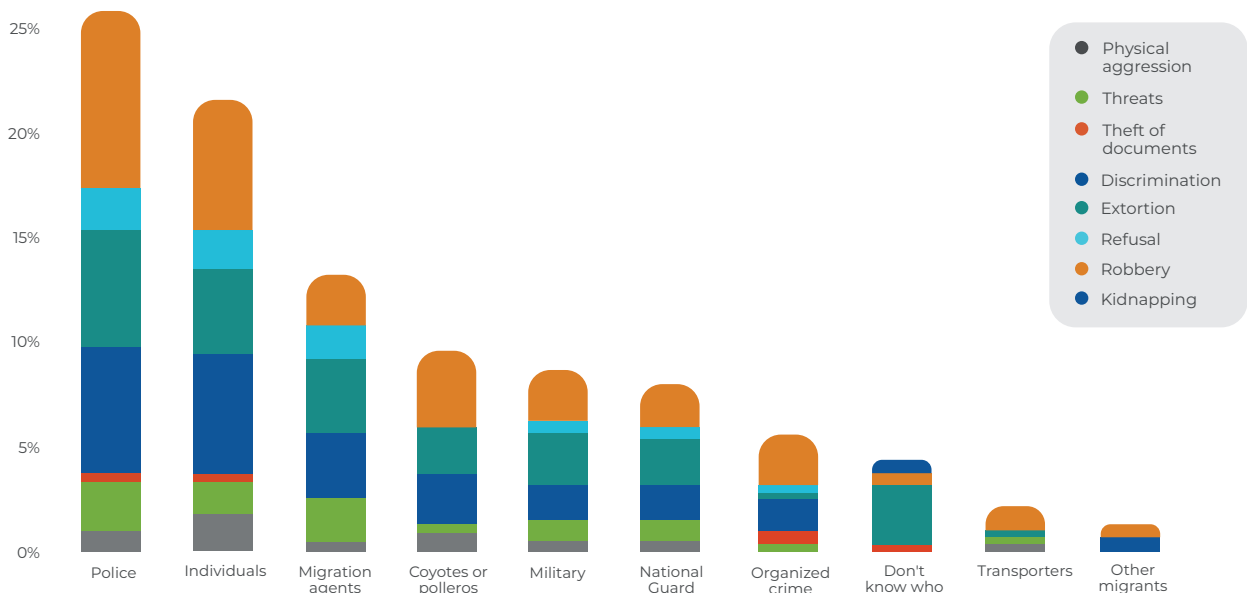
Map of violence

Map 03 displays the countries where Haitians in transit experienced various rights violations, including physical aggression, threats against their life and integrity, document theft, extortion, discrimination, rejection, or robbery. Lighter and orange colors represent fewer incidents, while darker and red tones indicate a higher incidence of these events. Figure 15 illustrates the perpetrators of these violations as reported by Haitian nationals, with the color of the bars indicating the type of violation committed.

Map 03. Number of violent incidents per country



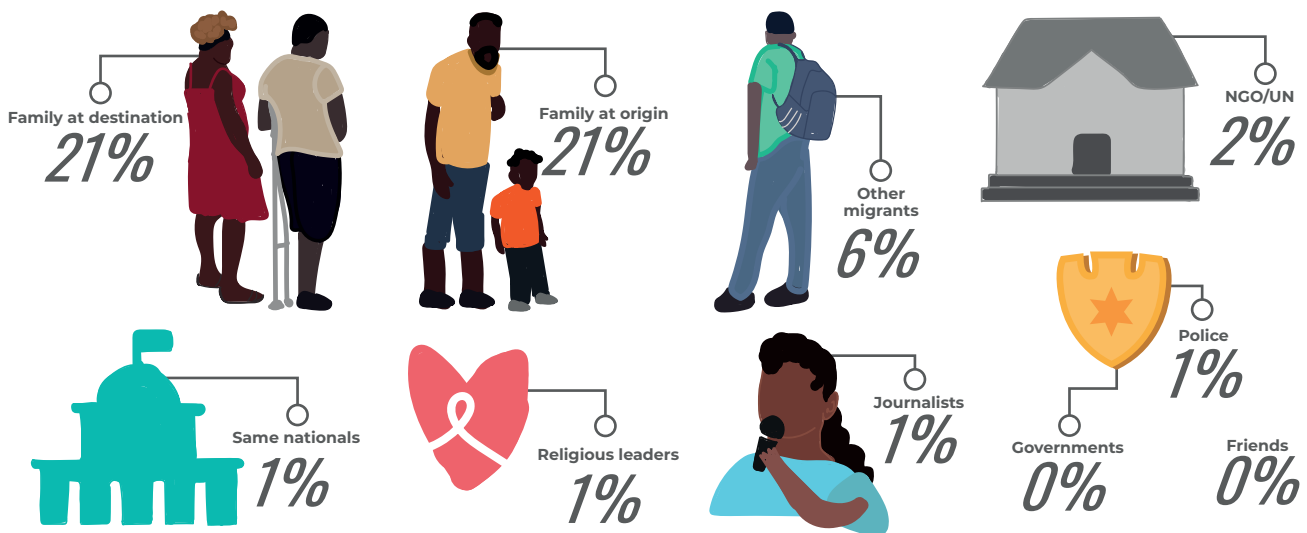
Graph 15. Perpetrators and type of violation



The map shows that the country where travel groups experience the highest violations is Mexico, followed by Guatemala, Panama, and Colombia. The most frequently identified perpetrators of violence are the police, followed by private individuals and migration agents. Regarding the harm caused, robbery, extortion, and discrimination stand out. Furthermore, in the discussion groups about the risks and violations along the route, gender-based violence, and kidnappings are highlighted, especially when there are language barriers. This repetitive series of violations along the journey translates into a systematic violation of their human rights and a loss of confidence in the authorities and institutions. These, in the short term, result in greater exposure and search for human smuggling networks, based on the comments that circulate among people about their "effectiveness" ("it worked for my neighbor"). In the medium and long term, this isolates people from the structure of opportunities society has, increasing marginalization and social exclusion.

In fact, upon asking them about their main reliable sources of information, it is evident that people have low credibility towards governments (0%), police (1%), and even non-governmental organizations or United Nations agencies (only 2%).

Graph 16. Reliable sources of information



Despite the numerous human rights violations that people face both on the route and in Haiti, during 2023, more than 182,000 Haitians⁶ were returned to their country;

182,000 Haitian people returned to their country



Violating the **principle of non-refoulement**. Most of these returns came from the Dominican Republic, representing 95% of the cases, followed by the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the Bahamas.

⁶ Source: IOM Repatriated Persons Report

In the activities carried out with the Haitian population transiting through the Americas, it has been possible to collect some testimonies about the lived experiences along the way. Two testimonies are below, one person in his first migration and the other in his second migration.

Accompanied person 1



I am Haitian, 29 years old. I was born in Cité Soleil and grew up in Croix des Bouquets. In 2017, the area where I lived became very unsafe. In May 2023, a gang called "400 Mawozo" killed my father in the yard of our house because he didn't want to be part of them. We didn't have a place to go, so we stayed in the house with my mother, a younger sister, and me. After the funeral, they began to threaten us, telling us that we had to be their partners; otherwise, they would rape us and kill us. In June of the same year, facing the threats, we moved to the Dominican Republic: we lived there for four months (June-October) until migration authorities sent us

back to Haiti because we didn't have documents to be in the Dominican Republic. During those four months, we experienced a lot of discrimination. We knew that we couldn't stay in Haiti because they would find us; our lives were in danger there. On November 11, we decided to leave Haiti again, but this time to go further and not return. We took a flight to Nicaragua: the agency that organized the trip charged US \$3,250 per person; arriving in Nicaragua, we paid US \$160, and from Nicaragua to Mexico, we spent about US \$700 each. Upon entering Mexico, we had no money, but we knew we were out of danger. In Guatemala, we were victims of robbery. Now we are in Mexico, and I am in a process with COMAR: every time I go to COMAR for an appointment for the recorded interview, they tell me there is no agenda available. Here, we cannot work because we have no documents to be here, and we have no one to support us. It is very difficult to live in Tapachula; we eat once a day, and we have felt general discomfort and stomach problems due to the lack of food. We want to stay in Mexico; We took a flight to Nicaragua: the agency that organized the trip charged US \$3,250 per person; arriving in Nicaragua, we paid US \$160, and from Nicaragua to Mexico, we spent about US \$700 each. Upon entering Mexico, we had no money, but we knew we were out of danger. In Guatemala, we were victims of robbery. Now we are in Mexico, and I am in a process with COMAR: every time I go to COMAR for an appointment for the recorded interview, they tell me there is no agenda available. Here, we cannot work because we have no documents to be here, and we have no one to support us. It is very difficult to live in Tapachula; we eat once a day, and we have felt general discomfort and stomach problems due to the lack of food. We want to stay in Mexico; we have no one in the United States or Canada. We have been in Tapachula for months without work, without anything; this generates a lot of stress for me. Every day, I go for a walk to see if I can find an organization that can help us: I need documents, food, and housing."

Accompanied person 2



I am Haitian, 35 years old. I was born and raised in "Martissant" south of the capital. This area is currently the territory of the "5 seconde" gang, which is the most bloodthirsty of all the gangs in the country. I remember that it was not always a gang area: my youth in this area was full of neighborhood football with the other young people and music (it was everyone's dream), so it was easy to see young people walking by with guitars. It was also an agricultural area: I remember going with my parents to the corn plantations we had. I used to visit the

Leclerc room, the house of a French army general in colonial times, and his wife "Pauline Bonaparte" Napoleon Bonaparte's sister. Nowadays, Martissant is the most dangerous area of the capital.

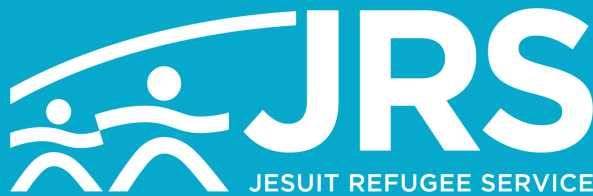
Me, I left in January 2017 because they burned my house, killed my older brother, raped my mother and my sister. We fled to the Dominican Republic without documents, we suffered discrimination, and we lived hidden, doing low-paid jobs until I saved money to go to Chile. I arrived there at the end of 2018, like in October; everything started badly. The person who was going to receive me did not come for me. Thank God for a gentleman who was coming for his son accepted to receive me for a couple of months, and I am very grateful to him until now. In Chile, they did not give me documents, and there was a lot of discrimination: once I was knocked in the street, I struggled to find a place to live because they did not rent to me because I was Haitian. I also did a lot of low-paid work because I did not have documents.

In September 2020, I left Chile and moved to Brazil, where I lived with less discrimination, but still, the jobs did not pay well. I changed my living city often to improve my condition (Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Rio de Janeiro), but I did not get stability until May 2023. I bought a ticket to Honduras because some friends said I could travel to this country with my Brazilian residency; I was returned to Brazil. In June of the same year, I decided to go through the Darien to get to Mexico. The experience of Darien I would not do that again: I saw many dead people. The things that can kill you on this road are a lot, from an accident, breaking a bone, or even drowning; the most complicated thing is that no one can help you. I saw families leaving members was horrible, you drink from the water that is full of bodies, and as you have no other option, it is normal; add to those assaults, rapes, and extortion, but I arrived in Mexico without anything serious thanks to God.

I arrived in Mexico in August. I heard that I had to go to COMAR for documents. No one explained to me how the process was; I just went for papers. I slept three nights outside the COMAR office, one before I went in to register. Afterward, a friend living in Canada told me what asylum was and that I had to explain why I left Haiti. I didn't understand it well, but that's what I did: in December, I passed the recorded interview, and thank God I got a positive answer; now I will bring my two children. I want to work, but there is no work in Tapachula. I have to pass an interview with UNHCR to go to another city and find a job. I hope to be able to bring my children back; until then, I will see if I will go to the United States. My children do not have a good life in the Dominican Republic, and at any wink, immigration can detain them and deport them, which I would not like to happen.

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