

## HIGHLIGHTS

### FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY

Source: Migrant Reception Station (MRS) in Los Planes de Gualaca, Chiriquí.  
Government of Panama, 2022



**4,467** PEOPLE DEPARTING FROM PANAMA

**17 percent** increase in flow compared to the previous month (**3,724** people leaving Panama in January 2022)

### FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

Source: IOM, 2022



**39%** OF THE FLOW IS COMPOSED OF MEN BETWEEN 26 AND 35 YEARS OLD



### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA (43%), CUBA (18%), HAITI (13%) AND SENEGAL (6%)



**70%** OF PEOPLE REPORTED COMMUNICATING IN **SPANISH**

Of the **715** people who indicated being originally from an African country (Angola, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and Togo), **49 percent** communicates in **French** and **30 percent** in **Portuguese**.



**75%** OF PEOPLE HAVE THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS THEIR FINAL DESTINATION



**91%** OF PEOPLE TRAVEL ACCOMPANIED



**70%**  
men



**30%**  
women



**2%** elderly people  
(+60 years old)



**16%** persons under 17  
years of age or younger

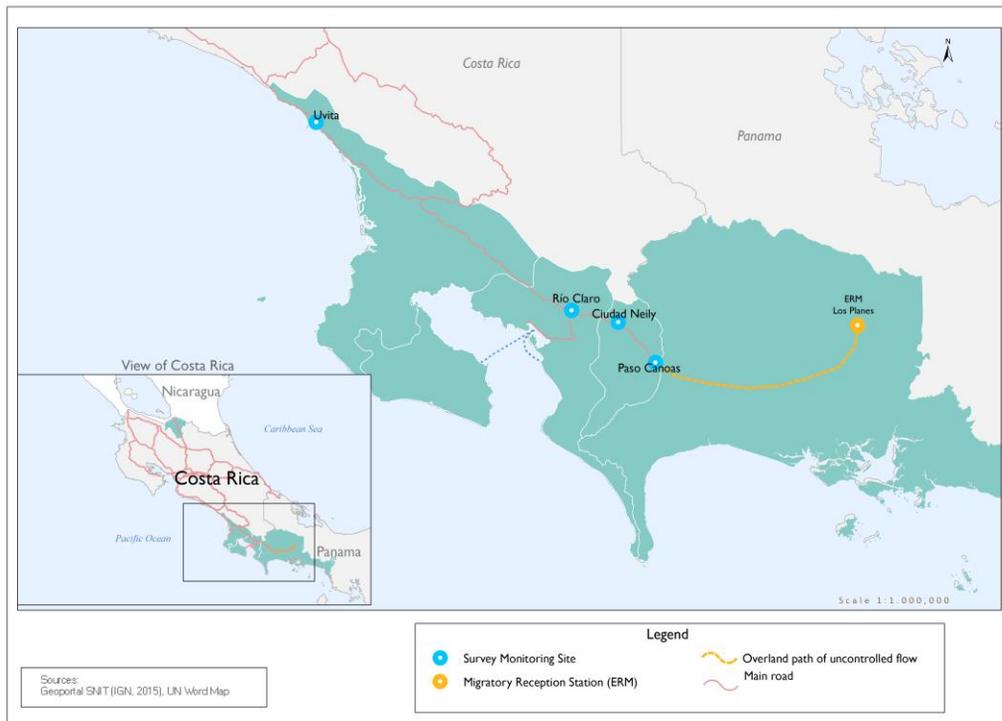
# METHODOLOGY

The Flow Monitoring component of the DTM (Displacement Tracking Matrix)<sup>1</sup> tool consists of a registry of migrants and the application of surveys directed at representatives of travel groups and allows the generation of quantitative estimates on the flow of people in a defined location and, from this, the collection of qualitative data.

The data for the flow monitoring registry is obtained from official data provided by the Government of Panama, corresponding to the voluntary departures of migrants from the MRS of Los Planes, in Gualaca, through the National Migration Service (SNM). For the application of Flow Monitoring Surveys, the instrument used is available in Spanish, English and Haitian Creole, with the objective of expanding the number of people who can be surveyed and collecting data on gender, age, nationality, characteristics of the trip, migration route, country of habitual residence, in addition to counting the people who make up the travel group of the people surveyed. For the definition of monitoring sites (Map 1), the Baseline Assessment of Irregular Migration Flows and Mobility Tracking in border localities in southern Costa Rica under the context of COVID-19 was taken as a reference, based on consultations with key informants<sup>2</sup> and field work.

For the study, records of irregular departures from Panama were obtained between February 1 and February 28, 2022, corresponding to 4,467 irregular departures to Costa Rica. In parallel, a stratified random sampling was carried out during January by monitoring points. A total of 365 surveys were conducted with migrants, of which 63 percent (229) were valid surveys and 37 percent were invalid (refusals by respondents). The data analysis was based on the assignment of the sample weight, which is useful for extrapolating the characteristics of people interviewed to the rest of the persons recorded in the exit registers. With this statistical analysis it is possible to know, by means of estimates, the characteristics of the total number of people counted. Of the 365 surveys carried out, 136 responses were obtained in which informed consent was not accepted; therefore, when weighting the sample weight, they were excluded from the calculation.

Map 1. Distribution of monitoring points



This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

1. Information associated with the data collection methodology is available at [www.dtm.iom.int/about](http://www.dtm.iom.int/about).
2. Retrieved from: <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/costa-rica-linea-base-para-la-evaluaci%C3%B3n-de-flujos-migratorios-y-presencia-de-migrantes-1>

## CONTEXT



In the context of the COVID-19 emergency, since March 19, 2020, the Government of Costa Rica has kept its land border with Panama closed for the Binational Controlled Flow Operation, which sought an orderly and safe migration of migrants moving through the Americas<sup>3</sup>.



Given the presence of this irregular migration flow, since August 24, 2021, IOM Panama has published information on the irregular migration flow in Darién, Panama<sup>4</sup> under the context of COVID-19, identifying that between August 2021 and January 2022, 93,139 migrants have entered Panama: Haiti (61%), Cuba (11%), Chile and Brazil with 7 percent, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (4%), among other countries of South America, Africa and Asia (10%).

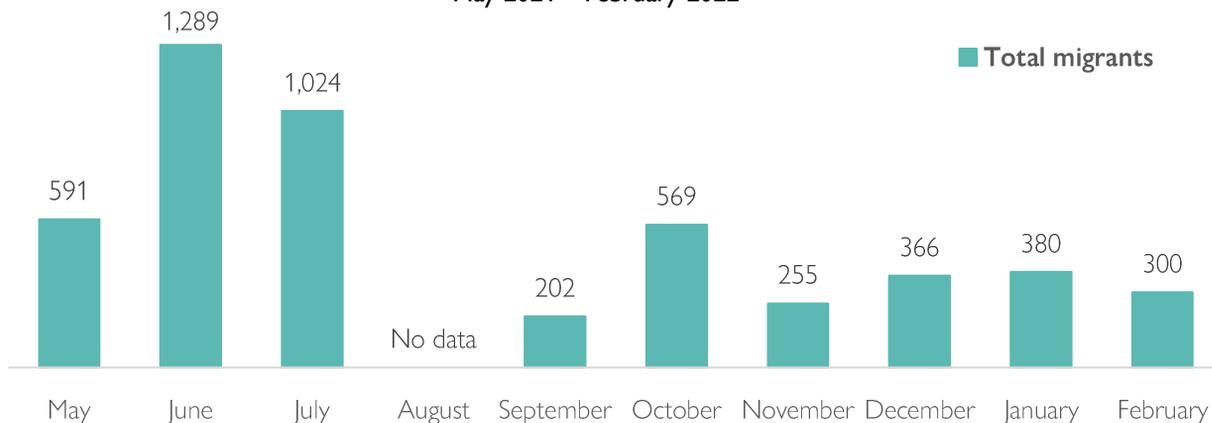


In Costa Rica, during 2022, a steady increase in the number of migrants of this migration flow has been identified (it has increased by 20% compared to December 2021, when the monitoring of flows in Costa Rica began). In addition, according to data from the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners (DGME), during May 2021 and February 2022, 4,976 rejections<sup>5</sup> have been made in Paso Canoas.



In Costa Rica, there are many perceived vulnerabilities: people traveling alone, children, disoriented elderly people, people with medical problems, emotional exhaustion caused by stress, anguish and frustration. In addition, the main needs identified are associated with access to food, clothing, diapers, shelter, medicines and transportation. Many people have lost their identification documents and are reluctant to receive medical assistance, as they believe that they would not be allowed to continue their journey.

Figure 1. Number of rejections at the Paso Canoas border, May 2021 – February 2022



Source: DGME Costa Rica, 2022

3. People in mobility through the Americas is understood as the migration flow of people who migrate from Panama to Costa Rica, through Central America and North America, and is mainly composed of nationals from Haiti, Cuba, as well as other countries in South America, Africa and Asia.
4. Information on the DTM: Monitoring of Migration Flows in Darien, is available at [www.panama.iom.int/es/dtm-monitoreo-de-flujos-migratorios-en-darien](http://www.panama.iom.int/es/dtm-monitoreo-de-flujos-migratorios-en-darien).
5. Section 64 of the General Immigration and Foreigner Law establishes that rejection is the action by which the immigration authority denies the foreigner entry to the country, ordering his/her immediate return to the country of origin or precedence, which is executed when the person does not comply with the entry requirements demanded by the legislation in force, presents an impediment to enter the country or is caught trying to evade immigration control or entering through a place not authorized for such purpose.

## REGISTRY OF VOLUNTARY DEPARTURES OF MIGRANTS FROM THE MRS OF LOS PLANES, PANAMA

According to the registry of voluntary departures of migrants from the MRS of Los Planes, in Gualaca, Panama, between February 1 and February 28, 2022, 4,467 departures of people from the migration flow through the Americas were recorded, equivalent to an average of 160 departures per day. This figure represents an increase of 17 percent compared to the 3,724 people who left the MRS in January 2022 (Figure 2).

Between December 2021 and February 2022, there was an increase, mainly of people from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; in December 2021 there was an average of 115 daily departures from the MRS of Los Planes, in January 2022 this figure increases to 120 people, and to 160 in February 2022.

Figure 2. Registered departures of migrants in the MRS of Los Planes, Chiriqui, by range of dates. December 2021 - January 2022



Source: Government of Panama, 2022



Migrants moving through the Americas in the MRS in Los Planes, Gualaca, Chiriqui, Panama.  
© IOM 2021

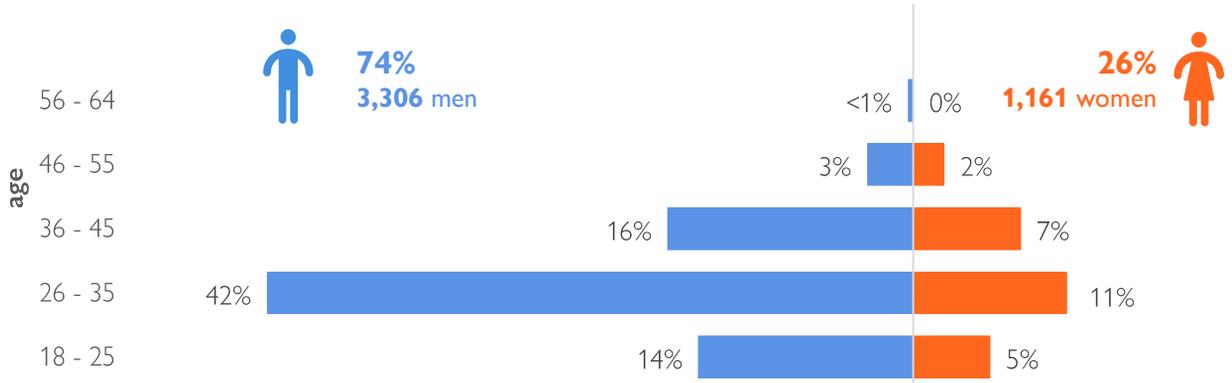
# FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

### A) Gender and age

Between February 1 and February 28, 2022, it was estimated that 4,467 irregular migrants in mobility through the Americas entered Costa Rica. The majority of the migration flow is composed of men (75% men and 25% women). The average age is 34 years, with a majority of people (72%) between 26 and 45 years of age (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of people in mobility situations through the Americas by age and gender



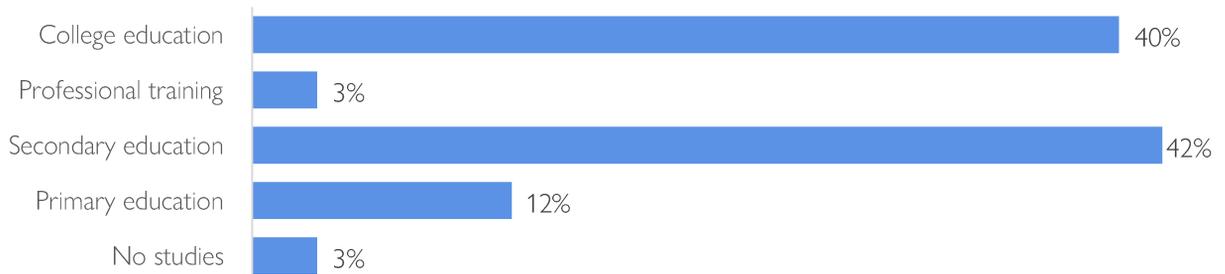
### B) Country of nationality



### C) Educational level

The level of education varies according to nationality: people from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Cuba have higher percentages of completed secondary education (97% and 98% respectively), compared to people from Haiti and Senegal; 30 percent of the Haitian population has not completed secondary school, while 14 percent of the population from Senegal has not completed any level of education.

Figure 4. Percentage of people in a mobility situation in the Americas by educational level completed



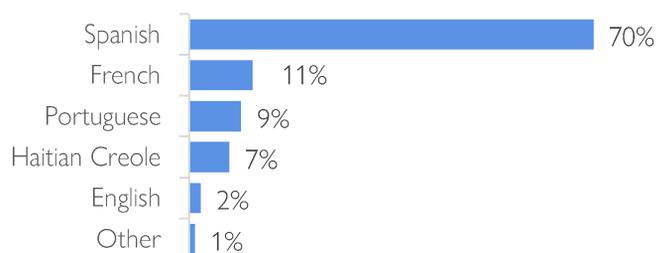
## D) Language

The main languages in which migrants normally communicate are Spanish (70%) and French (11%); however, other languages are identified in smaller proportions: Portuguese, Haitian Creole and English (Figure 5). Between December 2021 and February 2022, a decrease in the number of people who normally communicate in Haitian Creole has been noted, and the population that communicates in French and Portuguese has increased; in December 2021, 13 percent of the population reported communicating in Haitian Creole, five percent in French and three percent in Portuguese, while by January 2021, 11 percent reported communicating in Haitian Creole, eight percent in French and nine percent in Portuguese.

The population that normally communicates in French is composed of 36 percent of people originating from Senegal, 28 percent of people originating from Haiti, and to a lesser extent, Democratic Republic of Congo (16%), Angola (8%), Cameroon (4%), Guinea (4%) and Togo (4%). The population that normally communicates in Portuguese is composed of 33 percent of people from Haiti, 19 percent from Angola, 14 percent from Senegal, 14 percent from the Democratic Republic of Congo and 20 percent from other countries (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cameroon, Bangladesh and Brazil). Likewise, 100 percent of the population who report communicating in Haitian Creole are originally from Haiti.



Figure 5. Percentage of people in mobility through the Americas according to the language in which they normally communicate.



Fifty percent of Haitian nationals normally communicate in Haitian Creole, followed by French (23%), Portuguese (23%), and Spanish (3%).

Sixty-four percent of people of Senegalese origin normally communicate in French, 21 percent in Portuguese, and 14 percent in Spanish.

## MIGRATION STATUS

### E) Accompaniment during the journey

The survey collected information on the groups with whom people travel, that is, the people who accompany the surveyed migrant during their migratory journey. A total of 1,224 people were counted, of which 70 percent are men and 30 percent are women. In addition, it is estimated that the groups of accompanying persons are 16 percent persons under 18 years of age and two percent elderly people.

However, the percentage of people traveling alone is higher among men: 11 percent compared to two percent of women (Figure 6). On the other hand, of the 91 percent of people who reported traveling in groups, 60 percent were accompanied by their family and/or relatives, with an average of four people per travel group.

Figure 6. Percentage of travel companionship of people in mobility situation through the Americas, by gender

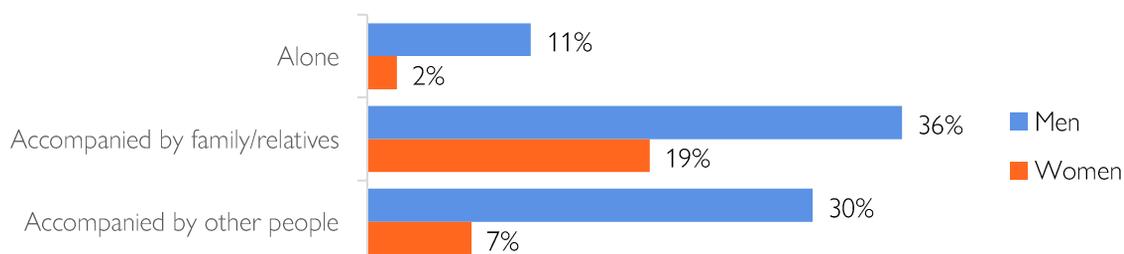
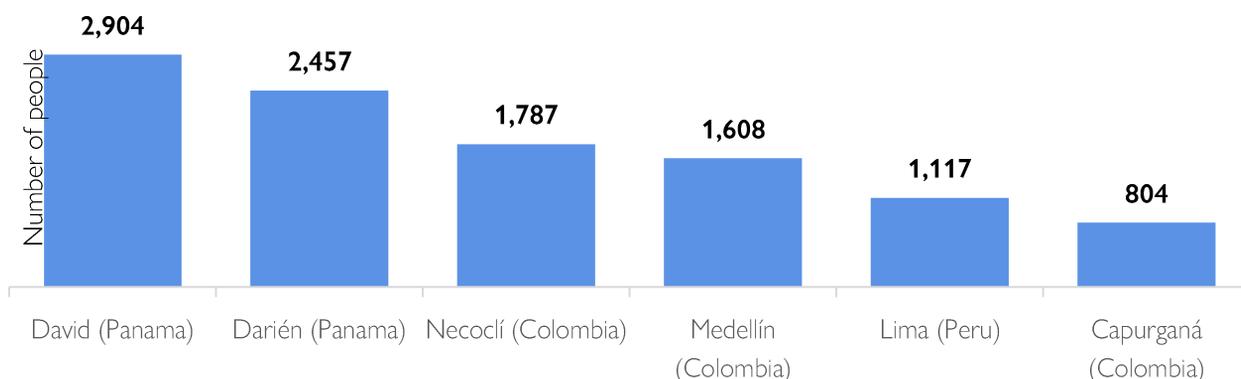




Figure 7. Main cities reported as transit sites on the migration route  
 People had the possibility of choosing more than one option.



Map 3 shows the main migration routes identified by the migrant population moving between South American countries to Central America<sup>6</sup>. The identified route begins in Brazil and Bolivia, continuing to Peru (mainly to the city of Lima), and then to Quito in Ecuador. From Ecuador, the route forks into two routes; one to Medellín and the other to Necoclí in Colombia. From Medellín, there is one flow that indicates heading directly to David in Panama, and two others that travel to Necoclí or Darién in Panama, and from there, the routes are distributed among various transit cities reported in Panama.

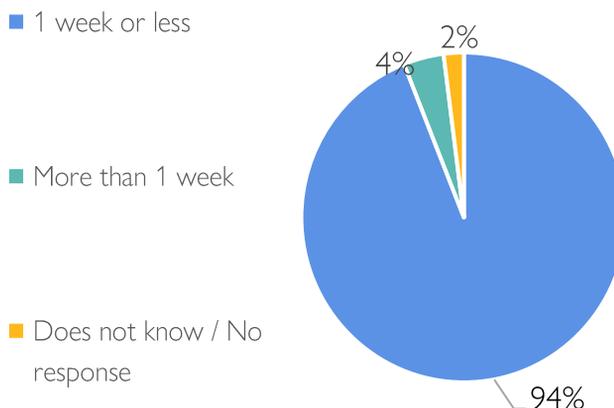
Map 3. Main transit route and cities of the migrant population in mobility through the Americas



This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

The main countries and cities of transit reported by migrants during their journey are also identified<sup>6</sup>. Approximately 95 percent of the people are aware of having passed through various cities in Panama, mainly through David (65%), Darién (54%), among others (Tocumen, San Vicente, Puerto Limon, Panama City, Chiriqui, Canaan Membrillo, Bajo Chiquito). The next country to be reported as part of the route is Colombia; approximately 89 percent of the flow passed through this country, mainly through the cities of Necoclí (40%), Medellín (36%) and Capurganá (18%). Other main countries reported as part of the route are Ecuador (43%), Peru (41%), the Plurinational State of Bolivia (22%) and Brazil (8%).

Figure 8. Percentage of people in mobility situation through the Americas by approximate length of time they plan to stay in Costa Rica



The population was asked about the approximate length of time they planned to stay in Costa Rica: 87 percent indicated that they planned to stay less than one day in Costa Rica (Figure 8).

### INFORMATION NEEDS DURING THEIR STAY IN COSTA RICA

Forty-one percent of the population indicated having some need for information during their stay in Costa Rica, related to access to basic resources, documentation and economic resources, among others; while the remaining 59 percent indicated having no need at all.



No need  
59%



Access to food  
12%



Medical assistance  
6%

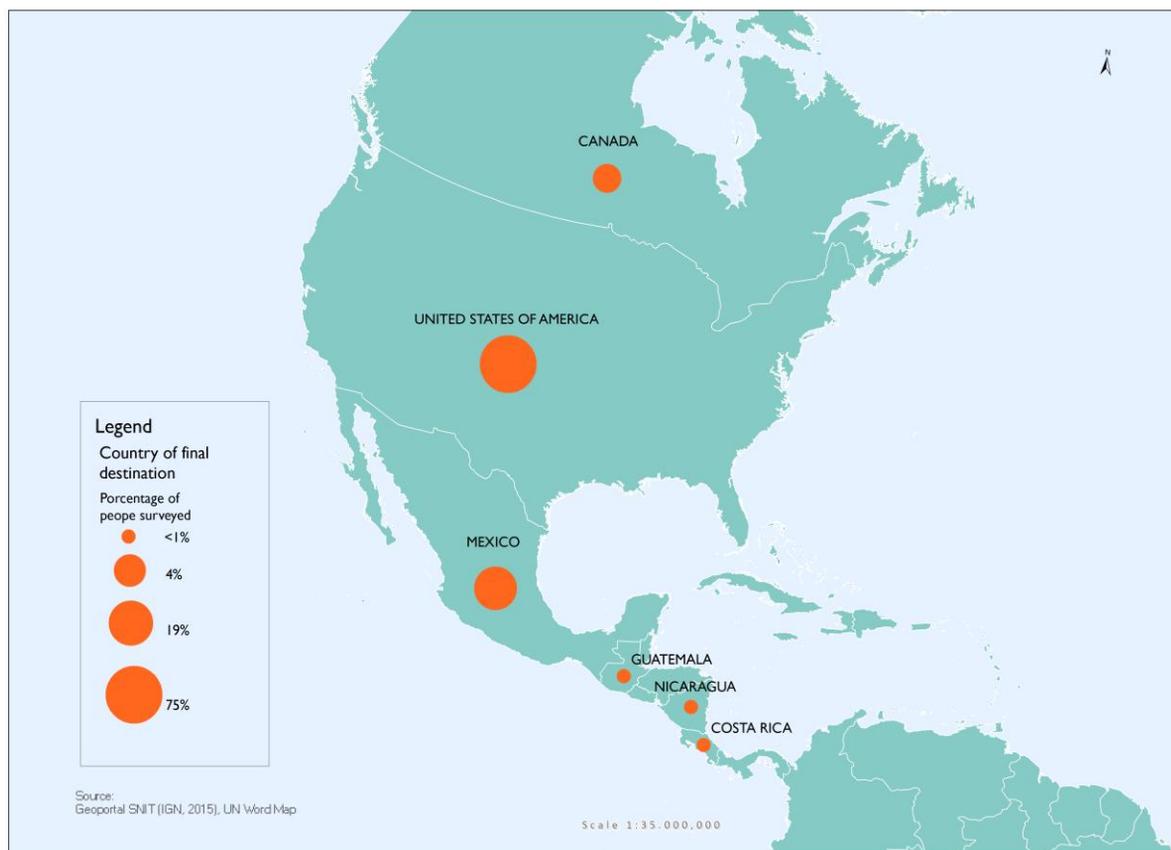


Safety  
5%

- Ninety-three percent of the surveyed population responded on migration routes, and 11 percent of the responding population indicated only one movement.
- Map 3 includes information on migration routes identified by 10 or more respondents, excluding all those with fewer records.

Regarding the countries of destination of the population, the United States of America was identified as the main destination country (75%), followed by Mexico (19%), Canada (5%), among others (Map 4). However, there is a percentage variation in the destination country according to the nationalities of the individuals: of those who indicated that they came from Haiti, 63 percent indicated Mexico as their final destination country, followed by the United States of America (33%), and three percent indicated Costa Rica as their destination country. On the other hand, 98 percent of people originating from Cuba also indicated the United States of America, and two percent indicated Mexico. In addition, 90 percent of persons originating from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela indicated the United States of America as their final destination country, followed by Mexico (5%), Canada (2%), Guatemala (1%) and Costa Rica (1%). Finally, 100 percent of the population originating in Senegal indicated the United States of America as their final destination country.

Map 4. Country of final destination of people in mobility situation through the Americas

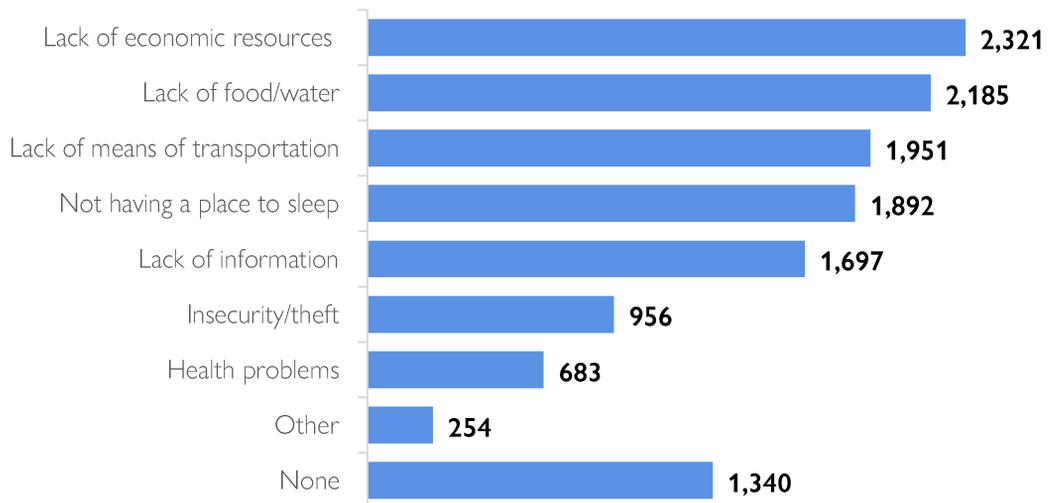


This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

## F) Difficulties during the trip

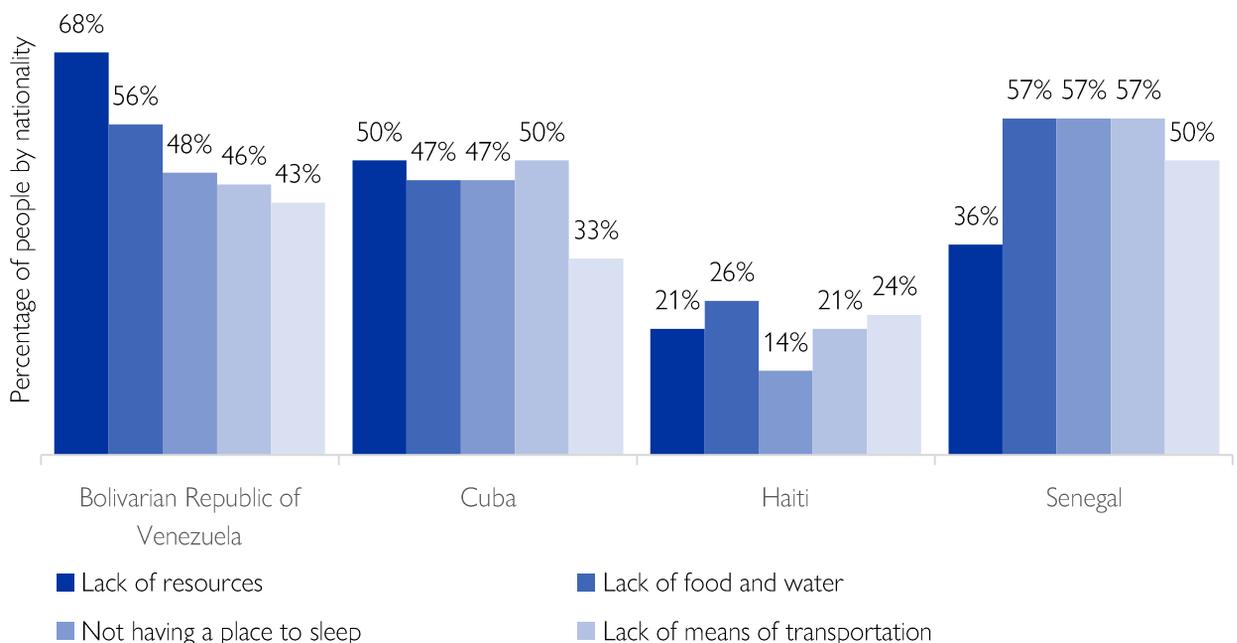
Regarding difficulties during the trip, 52 percent of the population pointed out lack of economic resources, followed by lack of food or water (42%), not having a place to sleep (33%), lack of means of transportation (32%), lack of information (27%), insecurity or theft (23%), health problems (22%), among others (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Number of people who experienced difficulties during the trip, according to type of difficulty.  
People had the possibility to choose more than one option



Other difficulties: Documentation problems (179) and deportation (23).

Figure 10. Main difficulties by main identified nationalities  
People had the possibility to choose more than one option.



## CONCLUSIONS



The flow of migrant population in mobility through the Americas continues to be high compared to previous years and, likewise, during January and February 2022 there was an increase, mainly of population originating from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: between January and February 2022 there was an increase in departures from the MRS of Los Planes and the consequent entry into Costa Rica.



Most people (85%) reported having completed high school or higher educational levels (university, professional training); however, these proportions vary according to nationality. People from Haiti and Senegal had lower levels of education completed compared to people of other nationalities: 70 percent of Haitians reported having completed secondary education and/or higher education, and 14 percent of people from Senegal had not completed any level of education.



A high percentage of the population began their journey in countries other than their countries of origin, indicating that the population moving through the Americas had previously migrated, mainly to countries in the Americas, such as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, and Ecuador (among others).



The majority of the population (87%) indicated that they do not plan to stay more than one day in Costa Rica, similar to the length of stay in the country compared to the 95 percent who entered in January 2022 and who indicated wanting to stay less than one day. The United States emerged as the main destination of the migration flow, however, it was identified that, for the population of Haitian origin, Mexico is the main attracting country. It was also identified that close to one percent of the flow points to Costa Rica as the final destination country, this percentage is made up of people from Haiti and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.



Lack of economic resources and access to food were the main difficulties identified in the migration process of the migrant population moving through the Americas, while during their stay in Costa Rica, access to food, health and security became important.

This publication was made possible through the support provided by the United States of America Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration under the framework of the IOM Western Hemisphere Programme. However, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Government of the United States of America.

IOM National Office in Costa Rica:  
Av. 1A and 78A street, in front of The Place  
condominiums.  
Rohrmoser, San José, Costa Rica  
Phone: +506 2212-5300 / E-mail:  
oimcostarica@iom.int  
Website: [www.costarica.iom.int](http://www.costarica.iom.int)

IOM National Office in Panama:  
Calle Vicente Bonilla, Building 110  
City of Knowledge, Clayton  
Panama City, Panama  
Phone: +507 305 3350 / Email: [iompanama@iom.int](mailto:iompanama@iom.int)  
Website: [www.panama.iom.int/panama](http://www.panama.iom.int/panama)