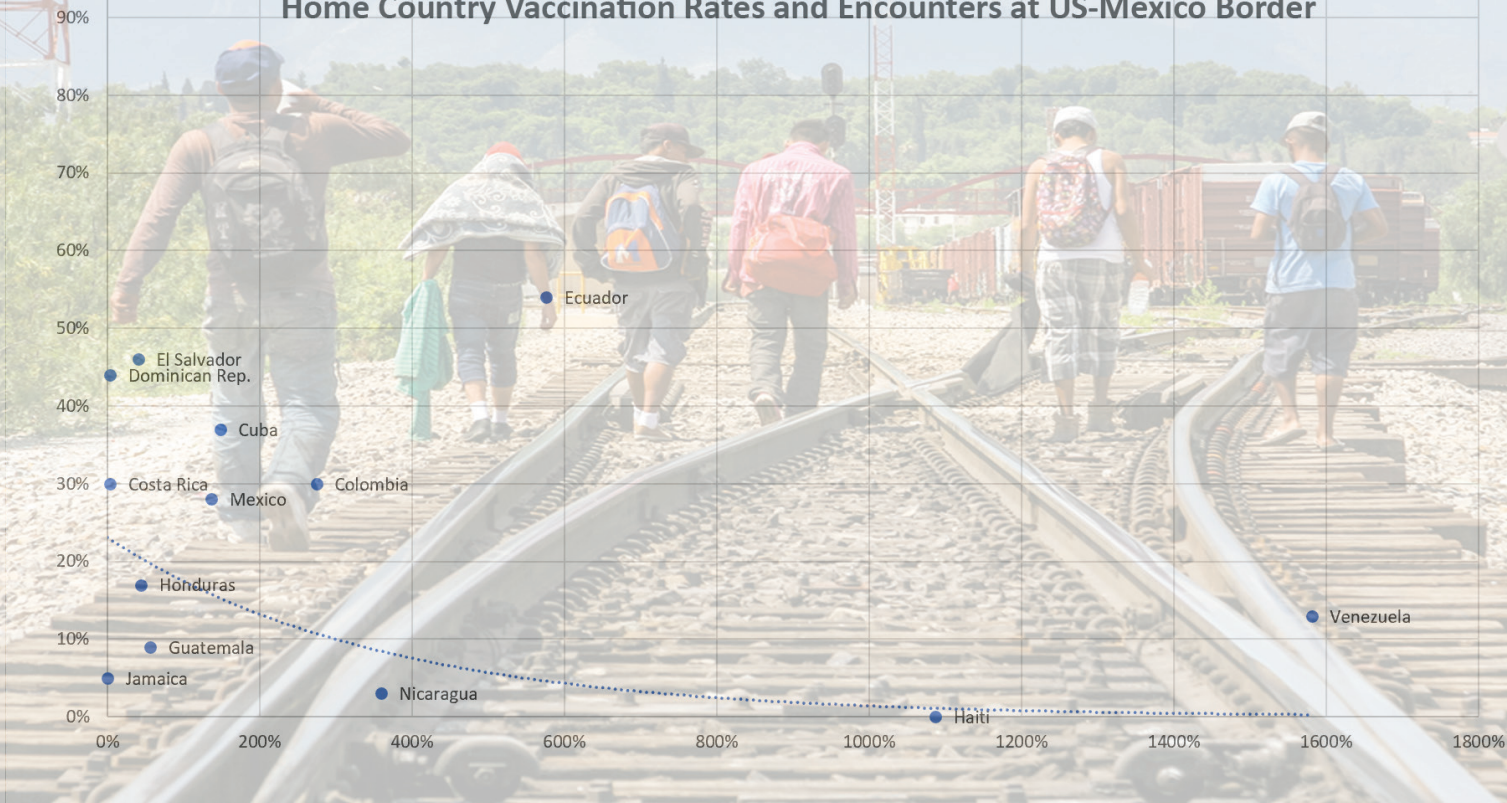


Home Country Vaccination Rates and Encounters at US-Mexico Border



Complex Migration Trends from Latin America and the Caribbean Amidst the Global Pandemic

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Introduction

The nature, composition, and scale of migration in the Americas has changed dramatically from 2019 to now. Migration flows to the United States have doubled to nearly 2 million people. This inflow to the United States is composed of migrants from Mexico, Central America—with significant increases from Nicaragua—and Ecuador as well as refugees from Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti.

The sustained increases in the past two years are exceptional, given that migration inflow to the United States in 2019 was substantial. Separate from the United States, outmigration is growing between countries in the region.

Amidst the global pandemic, migrants—particularly from Venezuela and Haiti—are going to Colombia, Chile, and Brazil. The root causes of current migration are more complex and include political crises, economic insecurity, violence, weak social protection systems, COVID-19 contagion, low vaccination rates, and natural disasters.

However, successfully addressing solutions to the increasing numbers of migrants into the United States and other countries within the LAC region will require interventions that can have a regional as well as a country-by-country approach.

Table 1: Migration and Social and Economic Indicators

Country	Aprehensions /Encounters at US Border	Percentage Growth			Share of Population		Global Health Index
		Aprehensions at US Border	Remittances	Per Capita Income	Vaccinated	Covered by Social Insurance	
	2021	2019-21	2020-21	2019-21	2021	2021	2021
Colombia	6000	274%	36%	-12%	30%	9%	44
Costa Rica	250	3%		-3%	30%	20%	45.1
Cuba	35,000	148%		-18%	37%	NA	35
Dominican Rep.	3,000	3%	28%	-7%	44%	7%	38.3
Ecuador	98,000	576%		-9%	54%	11%	50.1
El Salvador	140,000	40%	30%	-4%	46%	6%	44.2
Guatemala	440,000	56%	30%	2%	9%	4%	32.7
Haiti	33,600	1087%		-8%	0%	1%	30
Honduras	389,000	44%	25%	-4%	17%	3%	27.6
Jamaica	1,000	0%	15%	-12%	5%	40%	57.6
Mexico	575,000	136%	23%	-12%	28%	5%	35.1
Nicaragua	60,000	359%	15%	-1%	3%	NA	23
Venezuela	46,468	1581%		-24%	13%	7%	29

¹ Manuel Orozco and Mariellen Jewers, Center for Migration and Economic Stabilization, Creative Associates, Washington, DC 2021.

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/world/covid-cases.html> [week of Sept 6]; Global Health Security Index, <https://www.ghsindex.org/report-model/>; World Bank Dev. Indicators; <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters>.

Mexican migration, a new wave in the making?

Mexican migration had slowed down since 2005 (See Table) and it showed a sudden increase since 2020. Mexican immigrants in the United States have been staying longer, which partly explained larger increases in remittances from the United States despite slowed migrant entry during this period. However, in 2021, the number of encounters at the US border of Mexicans attempting to enter the country doubled, nearing the number of apprehensions in 2010. It is important however to point out that the ‘migrant recidivism’ rate among Mexicans was highest to an average of 30% against 15% in 2019 and 26% in 2020.²

Table 2: Characteristics of Mexican Immigrants in the U.S. and Mexican Migration to the U.S., 2010-21

Year	Immigrants in United States			Irregular Migration		Non-immigrant Visas		Legal Migration
	Total	Ave Yrs in US	Share 20+ yrs living in US	Border Apprehensions	Irregular Entries	H1-B, H1-B2	H2-A, H2-B	
2010	12,168,662	12	30%	632,034	94,805			66,956
2015	11,643,298	16		267,885	48,219			82,323
2018	11,500,000	17	40%	252,267	45,408	962,888	242,582	79,678
2019	11,489,684	19	44%	254,595	45,827	1,042,961	261,097	54,780
2020	11,489,684	20	48%	297,711	53,588	625,726	244,109	29,242
2021	11,600,000	20	48%	578,000	108,000			30,000

Source: UNDESA, DHS, Orozco, Manuel. *In the Cusp of Change*, 2016. *A Commitment to Family: Remittances and Covid-19*, June 2021.

Because a majority of migrants start sending money on the same year they arrive, remittance transfer data serve as reasonable proxies for identifying geographic shifts in migration. Remittance data offer important insight, first to the effect that the flow of money is not evenly distributed and second, that is not trending its regular pattern—that is not going to the same states as in previous years. From 2020 to 2021, remittance flows grew more than 9 percent to the states of Tabasco, Mexico City, Coahuila and Zacatecas. Other states like Durango, Yucatan, Sonora, Aguascalientes, Quintana Roo, Nuevo Leon and Guanajuato saw growth in transfers between 2 percent and 4 percent.

It is difficult to discern what may explain these shifts in Mexican outmigration. In examining the relationship between key indicators (e.g. COVID-19 cases, state GDP, formal job creation, homicides, and size of the informal economy), the growth in remittance flows corresponds largely to COVID-19 cases per state, as opposed to job performance or productivity.

Table 3: Growth in Remittances, by Mexican State, 2020 - 2021

State	Remittance Growth 2020-2021
Tabasco, Mexico City, Coahuila, and Zacatecas	Over 9%

² The recidivism rate may be associated with the pandemic event and border closures. <https://www.wola.org/2021/06/weekly-border-update-cbp-data-points-to-a-rise-in-migrants-from-other-countries/>

Durango, Yucatan, Sonora, Aguascalientes, Quintana Roo, Nuevo Leon and Guanajuato	2% to 8%
Chiapas, Colima, Hidalgo (30% of all migrants)	1% growth
Tamaulipas, Jalisco, Campeche, Oaxaca,	No growth
Morelos, Tlaxcala, Veracruz, Querétaro, Nayarit, Estado de México, San Luis Potosí, Baja California, Chihuahua, Baja California Sur, Michoacán, Sinaloa, Puebla (42% of all migrants)	Negative growth, remittance decline between -1, -4%, Puebla -14%

Source: Central Bank of Mexico

Central American Migration

Migration from Central America is also showing what could represent a historic high outflow. The projected outmigration amounts to one million people based on surveys showing a large percent of citizens intend to migrate. A 2019 study by Creative Associates showed that 25 percent of people from these countries have considered emigrating. In 2021 in El Salvador the number increased from 24 percent to 36 percent.³

Table 4: Migration Trends of Central Americans

Households with individuals with an intention to migrate					
	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	CAM countries
2021	544,500	430,000	575,000	560,000	2,111,521
Total outmigration estimate =					
(legal entry + irregular border crossing, + apprehensions + overstays)					
2021	139,927	388,239	444,799	65,331	1,038,297
Share between the intention and actual outmigration					
	26%	90%	77%		49%
A. Legal permanent status arrivals					
	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Nicaragua	Three countries
2,018	16014	9188	6997	1,972	32,199
2019	10,605	5,479	6,045	2,248	22,129
2020	5,343	2302	2,250	1,077	9,895
2021 est.	7,500	3500	4000	500	15,500
B. Non-immigrant visa of foreign labor entry (2019)					
H2A	157	2537	306		3,000
H2B	653	3269	829		4,751
C. Irregular entry estimates					
2018**	4,798	35,390	23,772	500	84,166
2019	9,721	26,123	26,123	1,600	64,165
2020*		14,000	8,000	2,500	22,000
2021 est.	13,406	39,170	44,967	6,649	104,192

³ Orozco, Manuel. Survey of El Salvadorans about their intention to migrate. Forthcoming, October 2021.

D. Apprehensions					
2018**	41,981	161,845	116,845	3,000	320,671
2019	85,059	228,575	228,575	14,000	561,446
2020*	21,051	61,488	52,594	3,000	135,133
2021 est.	117,305	342,737	393,460	58,182	911,683
E. Visa Overstayers***					
2019	3,432	5,664	4,745	2500	13,841
2021 est.	1716	2832	2373	500	6,921

Note: US Visa Statistics, <https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/AnnualReports>; <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-statistics/nonimmigrant-visa-statistics.html>. * as per survey respondents that 0.9% and 1% of their relatives went to the US. **surveys on migrants in the US point that 2.5% arrived the same year they were interviewed. ***Between 0.6 and 5% of Latin American and Caribbean migrants overstay https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/20_0513_fy19-entry-and-exit-overstay-report.pdf, for 2021 with the travel restrictions in place, a maximum equivalent to 50% of 2019 travelers is considered as overstayers. Intention to migrate: Saliendo Adelante.

Generally, people who have considered migrating reported being exposed to tough economic situations and have been victimized to a greater extent than those who had not considered emigrating. They also have larger transnational family ties than those who have not thought about migrating.⁴

Across the region, the individual experiences and characteristics associated with thoughts of migrating include being young, living in a low-income household, being a low skilled or informal worker, being unemployed, being a skilled worker with at least a high school education, having an unfavorable outlook on the future economic situation, having been victimized, and having transnational ties. Youth are twice as likely to consider migrating than their older counterparts.⁵

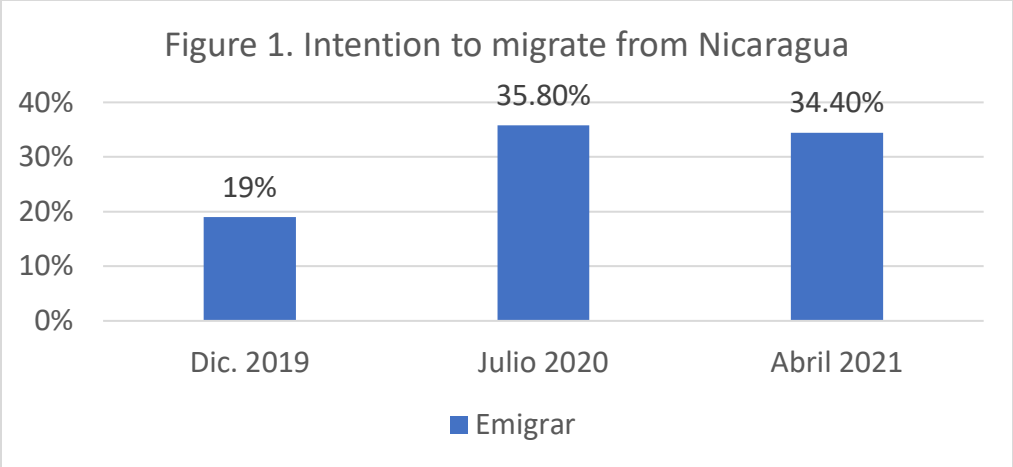
A range of economic issues influence whether residents from these countries consider migrating. Living in a household earning less than \$400 a month that can't make ends meet makes people 1.24 times more likely to consider migrating. Believing that conditions are worse off today than they were last year makes people 1.67 times more likely to think about migrating. Labor market conditions also matter. Regarding transnational ties, having a relative abroad does not make a person more likely to think about migrating but receiving remittances does. In all three countries, receiving remittances has greater statistical significance than having a relative abroad. However, the statistical interaction⁶ between receiving remittances and having a relative abroad is significant and yields a 71 percent chance that the person has thought of migrating. In the case of Honduras, the intention to migrate correlates with having had a property destroyed from Hurricane Eta.

Amidst this regional trend there is an unprecedented wave of migration taking place from Nicaragua. An estimate of the size of Nicaraguan migration to the US may be at least 60,000 people, including border apprehensions, visa overstayers, and legal migration. Another 40,000 will go to Costa Rica this year. This adds to a growing outmigration trend that is likely to continue, based on 2021 survey findings that 35 percent of Nicaraguans intend to migrate.

⁴"Saliendo Adelante: Why migrants risk it all," www.saliendo-adelante.com

⁵ Source: Creative Associates, 2019, "Saliendo Adelante: Why migrants risk it all," www.saliendo-adelante.com

⁶ In statistical analysis, two variables *interact* when a particular combination of variables yields results that would not be anticipated based on the main effects of those variables.



Orozco, Manuel. Survey of 700 Nicaraguans, April 2021. June 2020; December 2019.

People’s desire to migrate is shaped by their views of Nicaraguan politics and the continued deterioration of the economy. Nicaraguans’ personal incomes have stagnated for four years and are roughly the same as 2017 levels. Looking at survey data from April 2021, the intention to migrate increases among those who are unemployed, are working in the informal economy, who think the economic crisis is the main problem in the country, and who cannot make ends meet.⁷ In addition, however, those who think there will be fraud in the elections, and believe that human rights violations and bad government are the main problem in the country, are more likely to migrate.⁸

Venezuelan Migration: Continuity in the Midst of the Pandemic

Despite the pandemic, outmigration from Venezuela increased by 11 percent from March 2020 to September 2021.⁹ Large outmigration from Venezuela, both before and during the pandemic, has been driven by economic hardship, including food insecurity and unemployment.¹⁰ Data available in 2020 revealed that 97 percent of Venezuelan households are food insecure, with food and fuel becoming even more scarce during the pandemic.¹¹ As of June 2021, the Venezuelan Industries Confederation (CONINDUSTRIA) registered eight consecutive years of negative production, averaging 30.6% decrease in productivity index from 2012.¹²

The pandemic has left a majority of businesses (large and small) without access to diesel and functioning at 20 percent capacity. Unfortunately, policies to stop the spread of COVID-19 have seriously limited or eliminated regular pathways for migration available to Venezuelans before the pandemic.

Pathways for Venezuelan migration within the region have changed from June 2020 to September 2021 (Table 1). Colombia experienced a decline of migrants from Venezuela. In 2020, despite exceptionally low numbers of migrants for several months due to border closures, Colombia experienced a net increase in

⁷ The odd of migrating increase 2, 1.5, 1.2, and 6 times over these respective economic issues.
⁸ The odds of migrating among them are 1.5, 2 and 1.4 times over those who think otherwise.
⁹ Calculations based on data from [Refugiados y migrantes de Venezuela | R4V](#)
¹⁰ [Venezuelan immigrants in Colombia Final ONLINE.pdf](#)
¹¹ [Effect of Remittances on Food Security in Venezuelan Households | Publications \(iadb.org\); Venezuela: Temporada de mangos | Internacional | EL PAÍS \(elpais.com\)](#)
¹² [Adán Celis, presidente de Conindustria: Aprobación de plan de vacunación y eliminación del esquema 7+7 permitirá reactivar parte de la producción industrial - Conindustria](#)

Venezuelan migrants. This trend reversed from January to July of 2021; Colombia experienced a net reduction in migrants from Venezuela, with more migrants leaving than entering the country. At the same time, there was a 102 percent increase in migrants refused from entering Colombia at the border.¹³ Peru, followed by Ecuador, now host much larger shares of Venezuelan migrants than in June of 2020. The sustained migration to Peru—despite rising xenophobia, policing and obstacles to economic integration—supports that outmigration is driven by the persistent and desperate economic situation in Venezuela.¹⁴

Table 5: Regional Migration, June 2020 and September 2021

	VENEZUELANS REPORTED BY RV IN JUN-20	VENEZUELANS REPORTED BY RV IN SEP-21	GROWTH JUN - SEP 2021	JUNE SHARE BY COUNTRY	SEPT 2021 SHARE BY COUNTRY
COLOMBIA	1,790,644	1,742,927	-3%	42%	38%
PERU	829,677	1,049,970	27%	19%	23%
CHILE	455,494	457,324	0%	11%	10%
ECUADOR	362,901	451,093	24%	8%	10%
BRAZIL	263,445	261,441	-1%	6%	6%
ARGENTINA	179,069	173,248	-3%	4%	4%
PANAMA	121,072	121,598	0%	3%	3%
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	96,625	114,050	18%	2%	2%
MEXICO	73,115	102,223	40%	2%	2%
COSTA RICA	29,813	29,906	0%	1%	1%
OTHER	103,143	112,782	9%	2%	2%

Source: R4V <https://www.r4v.info/es/refugiadosymigrantes>, Evolución de las cifras en los 17 países r4v. Growth and share calculations are authors'. Total for June 2020 from data graphic was 4,304,998 and for September 2021 is 4,616,562.

Migration trends suggest that migrants are using Colombia as a point of departure to other destinations. There were 12,386 more Venezuelan migrants exiting than entering Colombia from June 2020 to September 2021. While we have no specific data on destination of the migrants exiting from Colombia, it is unlikely that they are returning to Venezuela.¹⁵

The trend of migration from Venezuela to the United States seems to have changed considerably from 2020 to now. Venezuelans have experienced that largest increase in apprehensions at the United States' border, with an increase of 1,058 percent. Nevertheless, as a share of total migration to the United States.

Haitian Migration, between Assassinations and Earthquakes, Migration Increases

Migration from Haiti is driven by persistent poor economic growth and social systems punctuated by recurrent political crisis and natural disasters. By most measures Haiti is arguably the most fragile state within the region and is thirteenth most fragile state as ranked by the Fund for Peace.¹⁶ During the

¹³ Comparison of the 2020 total migrants and the number of “*inadmisión*” for 2020 and 2021 on Migración Colombia. [Flujos Migratorios - 2021 | Tableau Public](#) and [Flujos Migratorios - 2020 | Tableau Public](#)

¹⁴ [Venezuelans Can Bolster Economic Recovery and Stability in Peru amid COVID-19 | Center For Global Development \(cgdev.org\)](#); <https://www.latimes.com/espanol/internacional/articulo/2021-02-06/preocupacion-por-delincuencia-en-peru-afecta-a-venezolanos>

¹⁵ [Where Are Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees Going? An Analysis of Legal and Social Contexts in Receiving Countries - The Center for Migration Studies of New York \(CMS\) \(cmsny.org\)](#)

¹⁶ [Global Data | Fragile States Index; Migration-Patterns-and-State-Fragility.pdf \(thedialogue.org\)](#)

pandemic, Haitians continued to move to the Dominican Republic in a regular fashion as in previous years. However, to other countries, the mobility has increased. In the first half of 2021, an estimated 25,000 Haitian migrants reached Colombia as a point of transit; the majority were on their way to Panama.¹⁷ The number of people choosing irregular migration into Chile, Colombia and Panama are reaching numbers comparable to post-earthquake 2010. While many Haitian migrants that enter Chile remain in the country at least for some time, Colombia and Panama are transit points for migrants on a northward journey.

Haiti is dependent on remittances, which reached 3.8 billion dollars in 2020.¹⁸ For every ten dollars remitted back to Haiti in 2020, at least eight came from the United States. In line with remittances, the United States remains the primary destination for Haitian migrants.

Haitian migration in the past three years has been characterized by a reduction in visa pathways and increase in border apprehensions. From 2018 to 2019 immigrant and nonimmigrant visas for Haitians declined by 35 percent and they declined even further (50%) from 2019 to 2020. At the same time, apprehensions between 2019 and 2021 increased by 1,087 percent. Irregular migration began to swing upwards at the same time of swelling unrest in Haiti, which later culminated in the presidential assassination on July 7, 2021. Within one month, Haiti was struck by the deadliest natural disaster in the country since the 2010 earthquake.

While data for August and September is not yet available, experiences from 2010 would suggest a further increase in outmigration because of the August 2021 earthquake. As in 2010, where Brazil was a major destination for Haitians who worked on the construction for the 2016 Olympics, the United States, Chile and the Dominican Republic are now a key economic destination for Haitians. With the combined crises facing Haiti, those who enter the United States through the border may be applying for asylum status.

A Cuban exodus in the middle of a pandemic?

Although the United States is the destination for most Cuban migrants, hosting more than 80 percent of all Cuban migrants worldwide, the growth of irregular migration to the US as well as to other countries signal a shifting pattern.

The concentration of Cubans in the United States can be largely attributable to the longstanding preferential treatment for Cubans within U.S. immigration policy. While U.S. policies have changed, the United States remains the primary destination for sustained outmigration from Cuba.

Economic indicators suggest persistent poor economic opportunity. Based on private data sources, remittances account for 5 percent of Cuba's GDP. Following mismanagement of vaccine roll-out and health system failures to attend infected persons, surging civil unrest has only added to the number of people leaving Cuba.

¹⁷ [Miles de migrantes haitianos permanecen varados en la frontera entre Colombia y Panamá | Internacional | EL PAÍS \(elpais.com\)](#)

¹⁸ [Global-Flows-of-Family-remittances.pdf \(creativeassociatesinternational.com\)](#)

Table 6: Cuban Migration

Year	Puerto Rico	Spain	USA	WORLD	USA	Spain	Puerto Rico
1990	19,579.00	21,854.00	736,971.00	835,796.00	88%	3%	2%
1995	19,293.00	28,314.00	815,617.00	935,463.00	87%	3%	2%
2000	19,054.00	45,738.00	894,876.00	1,049,761.00	85%	4%	2%
2005	17,039.00	71,614.00	959,480.00	1,162,586.00	83%	6%	1%
2010	12,882.00	103,189.00	1,055,229.00	1,313,321.00	80%	8%	1%
2015	13,321.00	131,134.00	1,210,674.00	1,507,660.00	80%	9%	1%
2019	13,645.00	141,447.00	1,337,371.00	1,654,684.00	81%	9%	1%

Source: UNDESA

In fact, Cubans' immigration pathways to the United States have changed dramatically since the termination of the "wet foot, dry foot" policy and limitations to the Cuban Adjustment Act.¹⁹ Between 2019 and 2021, there has been a rise in irregular migration among Cubans, which is largely a reflection of the major shifts in opportunities for Cubans to immigrate to the United States made in 2016 and 2017.²⁰ In 2018 there were just over 2,000 apprehensions, increasing to 14,136. This year the number of Cubans encountered at the US-Mexico border will reach more than 35,000 people.

When Resilience is Depleted in Fragile States: Some Reflections

The number of people migrating amidst a global pandemic is alarming.

The intense growth of migrants from Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti are culminating in historically high levels of irregular migration into the United States and other countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region.²¹ Migration to Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Panama or Peru, highlights an immediate humanitarian concern. However, the effects of the current wave of migration will require ongoing attention as migrants settle in their new homes and attempt to reunite their families. More than half of Venezuelans in Colombia say that they would stay and would bring their relatives at some point.²²

Whether this inflow to the US and other countries may be temporary in some cases or 2022 will exhibit a similar pattern, a humanitarian and economic response in the short-term is important given the severity of conditions in which many of those migrant home countries are facing. These issues raise new complexities in international migration from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Addressing these complexities means bringing existing strategies, expanding and complementing them with additional approaches. It is important to bear in mind that these flows come from predominantly fragile states, countries whose resilience capacity has been exhausted and are now suffering severe crises

¹⁹ [Microsoft Word - CORREA SPAGAT PUBLICATION V.5.docx \(wilsoncenter.org\)](#)

²⁰ Migration from Fragile States PPT

²¹ The figures for 2021 control for 'recidivism'; the increase of repeat encounters, that is people who have been apprehended or encountered at least once more within one year above 20% up from 14% from previous years, still points to a large inflow. <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/national-media-release/cbp-releases-july-2021-operational-update>

²² Orozco, Manuel. *Venezuelan Immigration Trends, Challenges, and Possibilities for Integration*, 2021.

or even collapsed health and economic systems. To that effect, it is important to explore immediate solutions.

First, a humanitarian response is urgently needed to address this outflow and inflow, an effective humanitarian response would be best fashioned to provide short-term relief in coordination with intervention that address the root causes of migration outlined in the Biden Administration strategy for the region.

The humanitarian approach includes extending vaccine relief to home countries where large migration is taking place or to host countries where migrants feel the need to move out because options for vaccination in those places are very low.²³ Short-term solutions may deal with extending temporary protected status to those arriving in host countries, such as the United States.

The increased numbers of people moving to the United States may also reflect that they are coming from third countries after realizing conditions are not adequate for their wellbeing, in the absence for example of vaccines or secure employment opportunities.

Second, in this light, a critical aspect to stemming growth in migration is to extend solutions proposed by the Biden Administration for the Northern Triangle countries to other countries like Nicaragua and Haiti. It is important to extend the US migration management approach to the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Peru and Chile. These solutions would leverage the positive capacity of migration and stem social backlash to immigration flows, particularly given the stress to social and health safety nets created by the pandemic.

²³ In most migrant host countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, vaccine access to migrants starts with those with regular legal status, then extended to those in irregular status going to the bottom of the line in some cases.