



# ABANDONED HOUSES OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA IN

COLOMBIA | ECUADOR | PERU



PROTECTION  
SECTOR

Inter-Agency Coordination  
Platform for Refugees and  
Migrants from Venezuela

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This survey is part of the work plan of the Regional Protection Sector 2021-2022 and is framed within our strategic priority: *Promote the inclusion of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in national protection systems and public policy, legal and institutional frameworks/mechanisms to ensure the enjoyment of durable solutions.*

Document developed by the Regional Protection Sector of the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants of Venezuela (R4V).

*The Regional Protection Sector is led by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and HIAS and; 109 organizations (non-governmental, UN System agencies and civil society organizations) present in the 17 countries covered by the R4V Platform participate in it.*

**Lead Regional Consultant:**

Juan Carlos Betancur

**Legal assistant for the consultancy:**

Renata Scarzella

**For more information:**

Lorena Nieto - UNHCR/Sector co-lead [nieto@unhcr.org](mailto:nieto@unhcr.org)

Carolina Espinosa- HIAS/Sector co-lead [carolina.espinosa@hias.org](mailto:carolina.espinosa@hias.org)

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**SURVEY ON ABANDONED HOUSES OF  
REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA  
IN COLOMBIA, ECUADOR AND PERU**



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 [soyfloressolano](https://www.instagram.com/soyfloressolano)

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# 1. CONTEXT OF THE SURVEY

## 1.1. General context of the survey

The main purpose of the regional survey on abandoned housing and housing at risk of abandonment in Venezuela was to identify the extent of the abandonment of dwellings belonging to refugees and migrants from Venezuela living in Peru, Colombia and Ecuador. The survey aimed to characterize the dwellings abandoned by this population along with the most frequent circumstances and typologies of this abandonment. The survey also sought to characterize the housing situation faced by this population in the host countries using differential approaches.



This survey was conducted in the three countries with technical support from the member organizations of the Regional Protection Sector of the R4V Platform.

The surveyed households come from more than 90 municipalities in Venezuela where the dwellings they have abandoned or considered at risk of abandonment were located. Although these municipalities have different population, social and geographic characteristics, the abandonment or

risk of abandonment of housing affects all of them. It should be noted that the scope of the sample is focused on the populations and territories where the R4V Platform organizations operate in the 3 countries and where the survey was conducted.

For the purposes of the survey, "abandoned dwellings" were considered to be those dwellings that were uninhabited and left by all of the members of the household in Venezuela, and "dwellings at risk of abandonment" were defined as those abandoned by only some members of a household.

The time period for these abandoned homes and homes considered at risk of abandonment was between 2010 and 2022. For this reason, all of the surveyed households have been affected by the migration phenomenon that has occurred in the last twelve years and primarily consist of lower-income households. This sector of the Venezuelan population has been the focus of special assistance from the national and international organizations that are members of the R4V Platform's Regional Protection Sector in the host countries.

The results of the present survey are linked, when relevant, to the results of the Regional Survey on Evictions of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in countries in the region, which was conducted by the R4V Platform's Regional Protection Sector in

2021<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter called the "Regional Evictions Survey"). It is important to note that when this prior survey was conducted there were still strong mobility restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 1.2. Documentary review of the housing situation in Venezuela

In addition to the Regional Evictions Survey, and in order to obtain a general understanding of the housing situation in Venezuela as well as in the host countries, it was necessary to conduct a documentary review on this subject. This included different sources such as censuses, studies, publications and other surveys conducted by different actors (organizations, public entities, universities, among others). This exercise meant that we could confirm that there is no comprehensive information about the current housing situation in Venezuela, nor the situations experienced by the refugee and migrant population in relation to the abandonment or risk of abandonment of housing.

A number of sources were used as reference points to contribute to the design of this survey, such as. These include the studies carried out by organizations belonging to the R4V Platform, particularly NRC and DRC.

The census conducted by the Venezuelan Government in 2011 reported the growing phenomenon of unoccupied housing in urban spaces, which at that time amounted to 15% of dwellings<sup>2</sup>. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) also reported key data on housing tenure in Venezuela<sup>3</sup>, highlighting that ownership continues to be the predominant form of housing tenure while there has been a decrease in the number of families renting a home compared to other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

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- [1] Regional Protection Sector/R4V (2021). *Regional Evictions Survey*. Available at: <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/encuesta-regional-de-desalojos-de-las-personas-refugiadas-y-migrantes-de-venezuela>.
- [2] National Institute of Statistics, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Available at: [http://www.ine.gov.ve/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=584](http://www.ine.gov.ve/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=584).
- [3] Inter-American Development Bank (2015), "Rent in Numbers: Housing Tenure in Latin America and the Caribbean". Available at: <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Alquiler-en-n%C3%BAmeros-La-tenencia-de-vivienda-en-Am%C3%A9rica-Latina-y-el-Caribe.pdf>.

In 2017 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights analyzed the social housing programs in Venezuela and concluded that although there had been progress with people exercising their right to housing in some sectors in the country, this was had been affected by the lack of formalization of housing titles for the beneficiary population<sup>4</sup>.

The National Survey of Living Conditions (ENCOVI)<sup>5</sup> was conducted in 2021 by the Andrés Bello Catholic University evidenced that there had been a reduction in housing tenure and increased problems related to public sanitation and water services during 2019 and 2020<sup>6</sup>.

In addition to these antecedents that informed the design of the survey, multiple media outlets have reported on the current housing situation in Venezuela. They regularly address the risks faced by refugee and migrant households of having their abandoned housing invaded by third parties and expropriated<sup>7</sup>. These reports have made it possible to identify the different housing protection measures used by Venezuelans to avoid deprivation, aggression or appropriation of their dwellings by third parties<sup>8</sup>.

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[4] IACHR (2017), *Country Report Venezuela, "Situation of human rights in Venezuela"*. Available at: <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/informes/pdfs/Venezuela2018-es.pdf>

[5] Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Caracas, *National Survey on Living Conditions, ENCOVI*. Available at: <https://www.proyectoencovi.com/>

[6] Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Caracas, *National Survey on Living Conditions, ENCOVI 2021, report "Living conditions for Venezuelans: between the humanitarian emergency and the pandemic"*, September 2021. Available at: [https://assets.website-files.com/5d14c6a5c4ad42a4e794d0f7/6153ad6fb92e4428cada4fb7\\_Presentacion%20ENCOVI%202021%20V1.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/5d14c6a5c4ad42a4e794d0f7/6153ad6fb92e4428cada4fb7_Presentacion%20ENCOVI%202021%20V1.pdf)

[7] Redacción Sipse (2018). "Millions of Venezuelans abandon their homes". Available at: <https://sipse.com/mundo/venezuela-millones-venezolanos-maduro-abandonan-casas-migran-sipse-mundo-311475.html>

[8] Redacción Sipse (2018), "Millions of Venezuelans abandon their homes". Available at: <https://sipse.com/mundo/venezuela-millones-venezolanos-maduro-abandonan-casas-migran-sipse-mundo-311475.html>; GDA, *El Nacional* (2019), "Fear is growing about the expropriation of empty homes in Venezuela", *El Nacional*. Available at: <https://www.elnacional.com/venezuela/crece-el-miedo-por-expropiacion-de-casas-vacias-en-venezuela/>; Ostos, E., (2019), "Alert in Venezuela: the Maduro regime encourages the occupation and expropriation of empty homes left behind by people living in exile", *Infobae*. Available at: <https://www.infobae.com/america/venezuela/2019/10/03/alerta-en-venezuela-el-regimen-de-maduro-incentiva-la-ocupacion-y-expropiacion-de-las-viviendas-vacias-que-dejaron-los-exiliados/>



## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 2.1. To national and local entities in host countries.



#### 2.1.1.

Variables related to the legal status and habitability of dwellings should be included when characterizing the households of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in host countries. These characterizations should take into account the most recurrent special needs of this population, with a specific focus on household members suffering from chronic or critical illnesses or disabilities, as well as the presence of older adults, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children and adolescents, members of the LGBTI+ community. It is also important to recognize households that identify as indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples.

#### 2.1.2.

The results of these characterizations, achieved through surveys, censuses and other methodologies, should be used to ensure the prioritization of this population in terms of access to public services. This would mean that refugees and migrants from Venezuela could enter public programs that facilitate their access to housing, both existing programs and programs that will be implemented in the future.

#### 2.1.3.

Review existing regulations in public programs that limit or impede access for Venezuelan refugee and migrant households to purchasing or renting dwellings, as well as other forms of housing tenure. After completing this review, it is recommended that the respective modifications are made in order to remove these obstacles.

Design and implement public policies that facilitate socioeconomic integration and housing access for refugees and migrants from Venezuela. These policies should take into account situations that include their lack of documentation, low income and language barriers.

#### 2.1.4.

Implement programs for Venezuelan households living in rental housing in host countries based on the right to adequate housing and market-based programming. These should include providing rental subsidies and support for the payment of utility bills, as a way to avoid forced evictions and precarious housing conditions. In addition, these programs should include measures to guarantee

not just respect for the rights of this population in rental contracts and agreements, but also their timely access to justice and guarantees against forced evictions.

States must prevent forced evictions of refugees and migrants from their homes in host countries and must ensure that their human rights are not violated. Specifically, Venezuelan nationals who are at risk of eviction should have access to due process, legitimate consultation and guarantees that they will not be left homeless.

#### **2.1.5.**

Design initiatives for the exchange of information between countries that host refugees and migrants from Venezuela on best practices related to: housing access programs, rental subsidy projects and public services, habitability and the management of evictions in order to guarantee the human rights of this population.

#### **2.1.6.**

Generate dialogue and collaboration channels with international, national and local organizations operating in the host countries in order to guarantee the right to adequate housing for refugees and migrants from Venezuela. These channels must

take into account the specific needs of this population, especially those suffering from chronic or critical illnesses or disabilities, as well as older adults, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children and adolescents, people belonging to LGBTI+ communities and indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples.

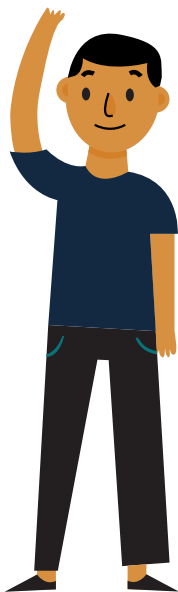
#### **2.1.7.**

Promote access to subsidies for works to improve the quality and structure of refugee and migrant households' housing, primarily in those households that face higher risks due to disasters or poor housing stability. It is important to make investments that improve public infrastructure and spaces for community interaction. These include parks, trails, green areas and cultural, sports and family care centers. This will complement efforts to promote access and protection of housing for this population.

#### **2.1.8.**

Recognize and strengthen the capacities of organizations and leaders of Venezuelan migrant and refugee communities regarding their right to adequate housing and protection guarantees in relation to evictions from their homes.

## 2.2. To the supervisory authorities in charge of ensuring the fulfillment of human rights



### 2.2.1.

Design and implement special protocols to prevent forced evictions of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, regardless of their migratory status and types of tenure of their dwellings. These protocols should establish accompaniment mechanisms for families at risk of forced eviction that include the provision of legal advice and representation to ensure their access to the justice system. The housing priorities of this population should be taken into account in these situations in order to prevent evictions of these families that result in them living on the street.

### 2.2.2.

Include variables related to housing tenure in Venezuela and housing situations in host countries as part of the characterization of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households in order to establish the habitability and legal status of their homes.

### 2.2.3.

Advocate for the inclusion of households in public programs that provide access to housing in host countries, taking into account family members with special needs (specifically people with chronic or critical illnesses, people with disabilities, older adults, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children and adolescents and people belonging to ethnic and LGBTI+ communities).

### 2.2.4.

Support the strengthening of refugee and migrant organizations and their leaders in relation to awareness of their right to adequate housing, the prohibition of forced evictions and reparations for the loss of their homes.

## 2.3. To international, national and local organizations operating in host countries



### 2.3.1.

Contribute to the development and implementation of legal procedures for the protection of the right to adequate housing in host countries. This should not just include initiatives aimed at prohibiting forced evictions, but also technical advice and monitoring of mechanisms that facilitate access to housing based on the special needs of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households.

### 2.3.2.

Provide technical advice to host countries for the design and inclusion of evidence-based prioritization criteria (studies, characterizations, censuses, etc.) in housing and property programs that facilitate access to housing for Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

### 2.3.3.

Host country governments should accompany and promote processes that support the documentation and registration of abandoned homes or homes at risk of abandonment in Venezuela, in collaboration with refugee and migrant organizations based in Venezuela and the host countries. This will support the development of future protection and reparation mechanisms related to the tenure of refugee and migrant homes.

### 2.3.4.

Implement mechanisms to identify Venezuelan refugee and migrant households that are at risk of being evicted or in precarious situations regarding the habitability or tenure of their homes in host countries, taking into account the special needs of this population.

### 2.3.5.

Promote the inclusion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in rental support, housing improvement and home construction programs operated by public entities and international, national and local organizations.

### 2.3.6.

Promote capacity building for the leaders of Venezuelan refugee and migrant organizations so that they can participate in and influence public policies that facilitate housing access and tenant protection.

## 2.4. To organizations of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in host countries

### 2.4.1.

Within the framework of their missions, implement local processes to characterize the housing situation of Venezuelan refugee and migrant populations in host countries that include the variables of housing tenure and habitability of their homes.

### 2.4.2.

Establish mechanisms for monitoring public housing policies that provide access to housing Venezuelan refugee and migrant households. These mechanisms should prioritize families that have members with special needs, including: chronic or critical illnesses, disabilities, older adults, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children and adolescents and people belonging to ethnic and LGBTI+ communities.

## 2.5. To international, national and local organizations operating in Venezuela

### 2.5.1.

Accompany households at risk of abandonment of their homes through social and legal strategies that are designed to protect their housing tenure. These include initiatives that provide legal advice and facilitate access to the justice system, including documentation and registration actions. Households should receive support to formalize their property titles when they have an informal tenancy or live in homes at risk of abandonment.

### 2.5.2.

Support local and community organizations in the most affected municipalities and parishes so that they can provide social and legal support to households that are at risk of abandoning their homes or have already abandoned them.

### 2.5.3.

Create and strengthen support networks designed for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in host countries who have abandoned their homes in Venezuela or are at risk of abandoning them. These networks should be supported to carry out characterizations, studies and surveys of their homes for their protection.



#### 2.5.4.

Taking into account the high percentage of households abandoning their homes in Venezuela based on the results of this survey, which are primarily houses and apartments, it is recommended that the organizations working in Venezuela support households to access property titles and map abandoned homes in coordination with local and community groups. These actions could help migrants and refugees plan their future return to Venezuela or participate in eventual reparations processes.

#### 2.5.5.

Support the creation and strengthening of family and community protection and prevention mechanism for abandoned homes or homes at risk of abandonment in Venezuela. These mechanisms should bring together the different protection experiences of family initiatives, support networks, local organizations and community protection projects.

#### 2.5.6.

Implement initiatives to identify the individuals and families who remain in the dwellings that have been abandoned in order to provide them with assistance. It is important to take into account the special needs of these households that were identified in the survey and prevent their abandonment.

#### 2.5.7.

Deliver support strategies for households that have abandoned their housing or are at risk of abandonment with the goal of strengthening the possibility of their return to Venezuela. These strategies should include market-based programming and focus on the right to adequate housing in coordination with national and sub-regional programs, as well as with civil and private initiatives in Venezuela. These work could involve joint actions coordinated by the Protection and Shelter Clusters in Venezuela.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON HOUSING ABANDONED BY REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN VENEZUELA

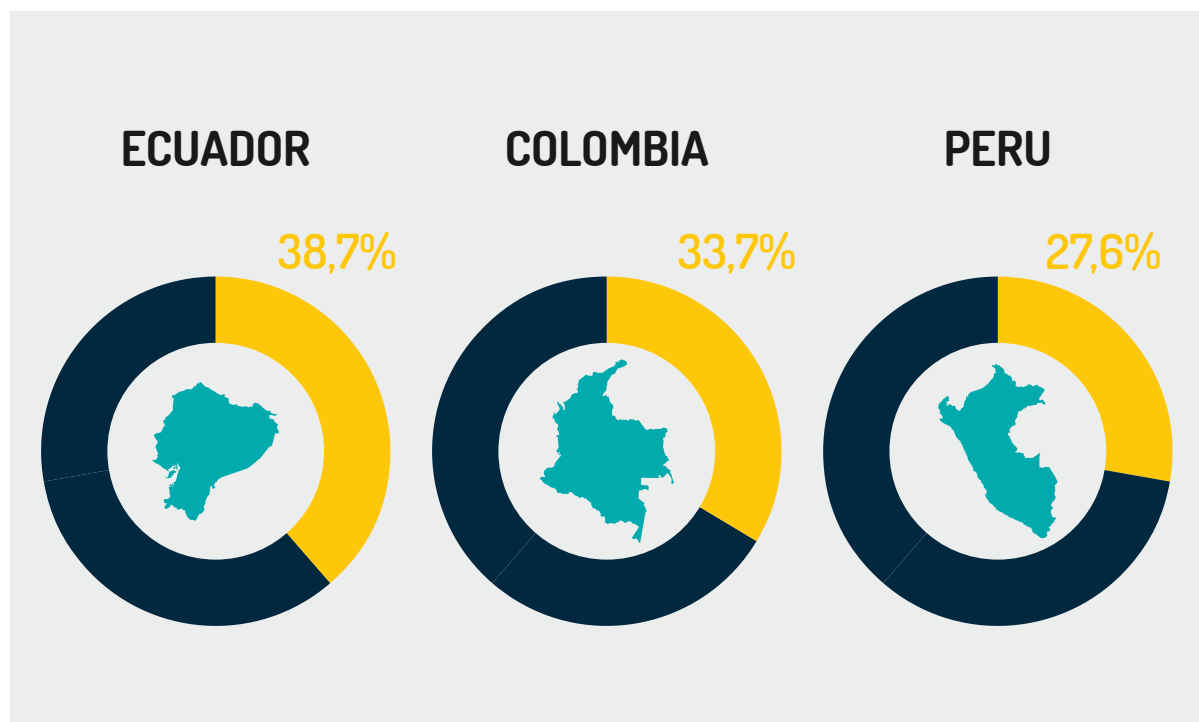
#### 3.1. Survey information

##### 3.1.1. General survey data

##### 3.1.1.1.

As indicated at the beginning of this report, this survey was conducted in three countries: Ecuador,

Colombia and Peru using the telephone (80.3%) and in-person (19%) Modalities. The distribution of respondents by country is as follows: Ecuador 38.7%, Colombia 33.6% and Peru 27.6%.



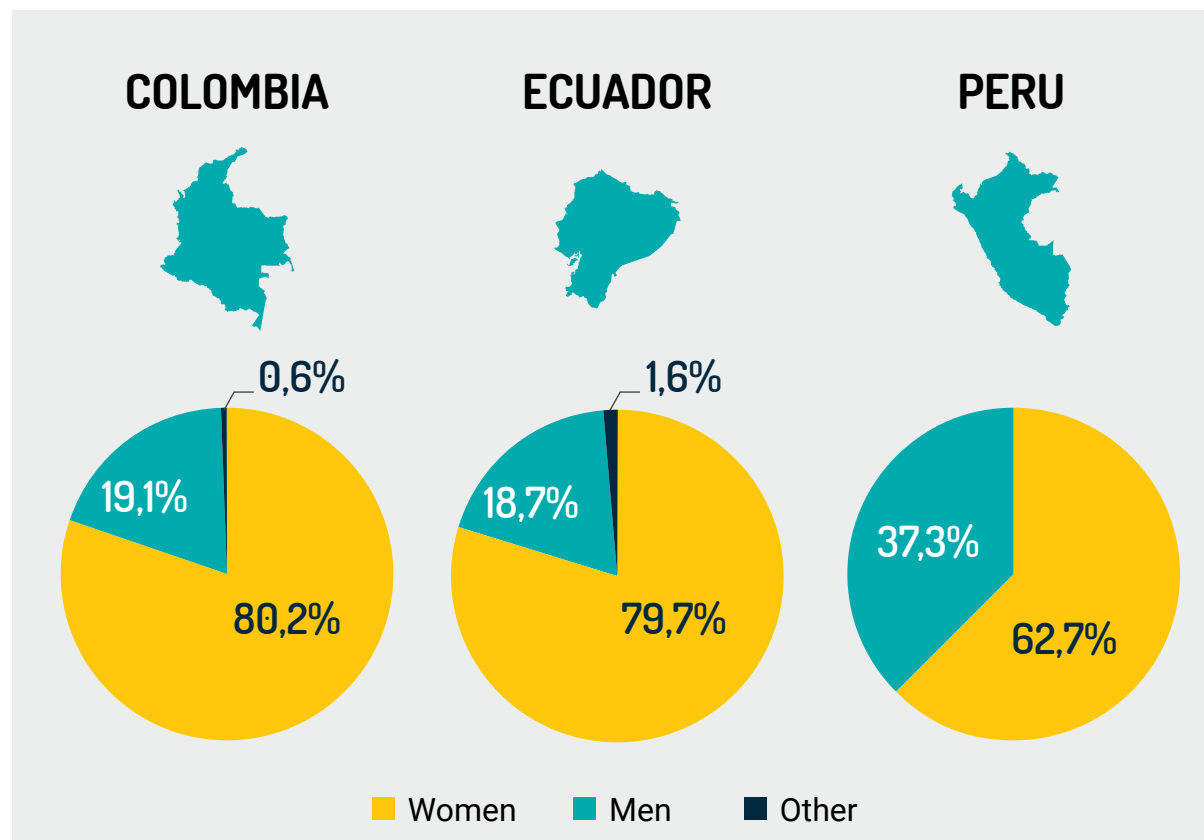
Graph No. 1.  
Survey location

### 3.1.2. General information about the survey respondents

#### 3.1.2.1.

The majority of respondents were between 28 and 37 years of age and 77.8% of respondents

were heads of their household. As in other studies, most of the refugees and migrants from Venezuela who responded to the survey were women. Their participation in the surveys conducted in each country was: Colombia 80.2%, Ecuador 79.6% and Peru 62.6%<sup>9</sup>.



Graph No. 2. Distribution by country according to gender identity of the respondents

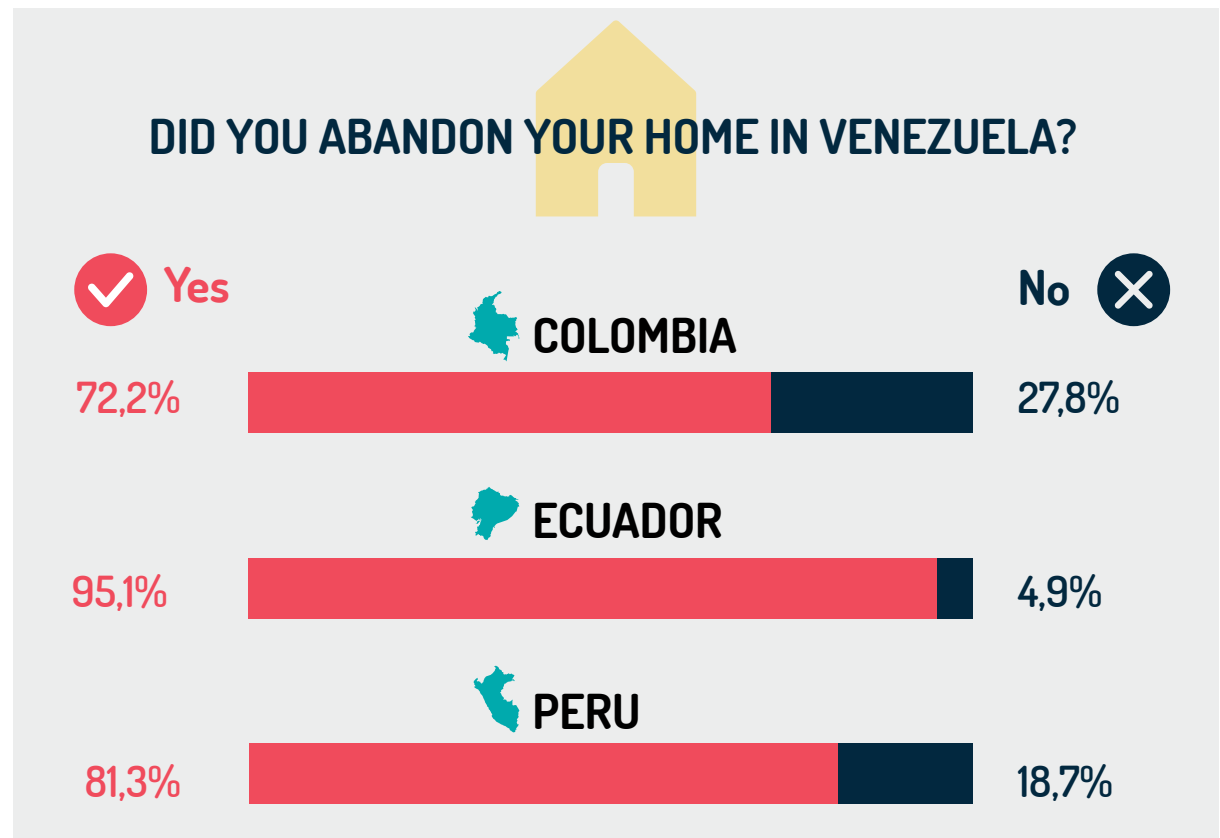
[9] This situation is similar to some of the periodic reports prepared by DRC in Peru (January - March 2022) and Colombia (October - November 2021) in which most of the participants were female migrants. These documents are available for consultation at: [https://www.r4v.info/es/document/DRC\\_Informe\\_Monitoreo\\_de\\_Proteccion\\_Mar22](https://www.r4v.info/es/document/DRC_Informe_Monitoreo_de_Proteccion_Mar22) and <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/colombia-informe-de-monitoreo-de-proteccion-de-octubre-y-noviembre-2021-drc>.



### 3.1.2.2.

Of the 615 Venezuelan refugee and migrant households surveyed in Peru, Colombia and Ecuador, 65.8% of households responded that they had abandoned their homes in Venezuela and 12.8% of households stated that their homes were at risk

of abandonment. These two groups represent 77.1% of the total respondents. Only 22.9% of the households that participated in the survey stated that their dwelling was not abandoned or at risk of abandonment. By country, the dynamics of abandonment yielded the following results:



Graph No. 3. Distribution by country of people who abandoned their homes in Venezuela.

### 3.1.2.3.

52% of the households that abandoned their homes are led by women. For homes at risk of abandonment, 55% of families that left their homes are led by females while 48.4% of respondents who remain in their homes are families led by women. This reflects that among Venezuelan refugees and migrants, more female-led households have left their homes compared to households led by other gender identities.

### 3.1.2.4.

This graph shows that of the three countries where the survey was conducted, Ecuador is the country with the highest proportion of surveyed households that have abandoned their homes in Venezuela with 95%, compared to just 4.9% of respondents

who said they had not abandoned their homes. In Colombia, the percentage of households surveyed that have abandoned their homes in Venezuela is 72.2%.

### 3.1.2.5.

This data affirms that the vast majority of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households living in Ecuador, Colombia and Peru at the time of the survey have abandoned their homes in Venezuela or consider them at risk of abandonment (77% of all households surveyed). This situation means that the current protection and future restitution of their homes is a crucial factor in terms of their return to Venezuela or local integration in the host countries due to the symbolic, economic and social value that the homes represent for the households.

## 3.2. Characteristics of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households and individuals

### 3.2.1. General household information

#### 3.2.1.1.

According to the results of the survey, 47.5% of the households that abandoned their homes in Venezuela consisted of between 3 and 4 people. It should also be noted that 23.5% of households had between 5 and 6 persons.

#### 3.2.1.2.

Even though a significant percentage of the households surveyed reported no change to their composition since leaving Venezuela, more than half of the households surveyed stated that the number of members of their household had either increased (36.5%) or decreased (20.5%) after leaving the country.

### 3.2.1.3.

The increase in the number of household members may be related to family reunification, joint migration journeys undertaken by several individuals or the need to share housing in the host country. The decrease in the number of household members can be explained by different factors such as: violent incidents during the trip, difficulties when entering host countries and medical conditions, among others.

### 3.2.1.4.

In terms of specific information about heads of household, in 44.5% of the households surveyed they were in a civil union with their partners. 20% of heads of households were married and in 33.4% of the households the head of household did not

have a partner. The high percentage of civil unions creates problems in judicial processes, particularly for women, as they face increased difficulties with proving the existence of their relationship with their partners, affecting their property rights and those of their children in relation to abandoned housing. Women and their children face greater difficulty with accessing these rights following their migration or during refugee status application processes.

### 3.1.2.5.

For children and adolescents, 35.7% of households that abandoned their homes included children and adolescents. For homes at risk of abandonment, children and adolescents represented 32.1% of the members of households that left their homes and 30.6% of members in households that remain in the home.

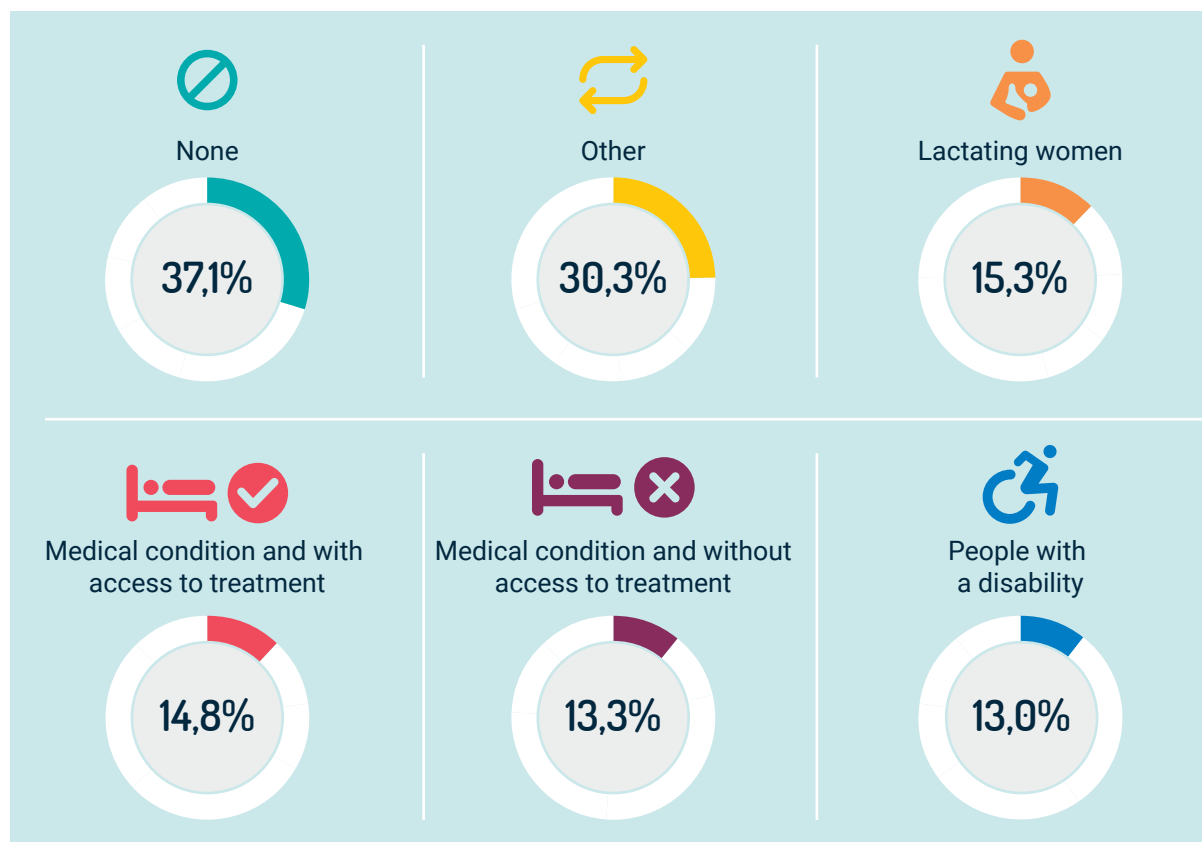


### 3.2.2. Characteristics of household members who abandoned their homes in Venezuela

#### 3.2.2.1.

When asked about the special conditions or needs of household members who abandoned their homes, 15.2% of respondents identified the presence of breastfeeding women in the household and 28% stated that they had household members with critical or chronic medical conditions (14.7%

of respondents had members who regularly access medical treatment or medicines and 13.2% of respondents had members who did not have regular access to treatment or medicines). 13% of respondents mentioned the existence of household members who have physical or mental disabilities. Other special needs that were identified at a lower rate included the presence of unaccompanied children, the existence of elderly household members and pregnant women.

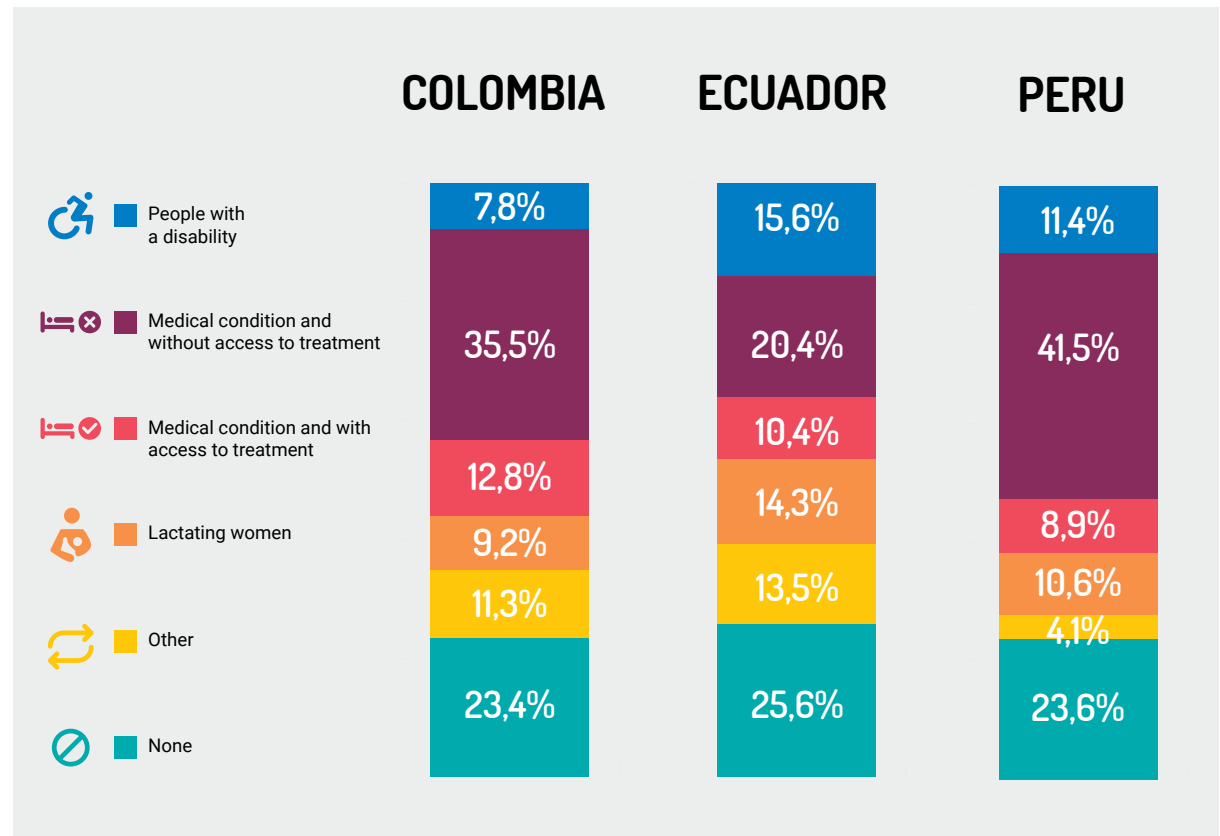


Graph No. 4. Special needs of households that left their homes in Venezuela

3.2.2.2.

It is important to note that in Colombia, the special need that was most often mentioned by the people surveyed were having household members with chronic or critical medical conditions who did not

have access to treatment or medicines (12.7% of the households surveyed in this country), while in Ecuador and Peru the most common special need were household members who were breastfeeding women (15.6% and 11.3% respectively).



Graph No. 5. Distribution by country of the special needs of households that abandoned their homes in Venezuela.

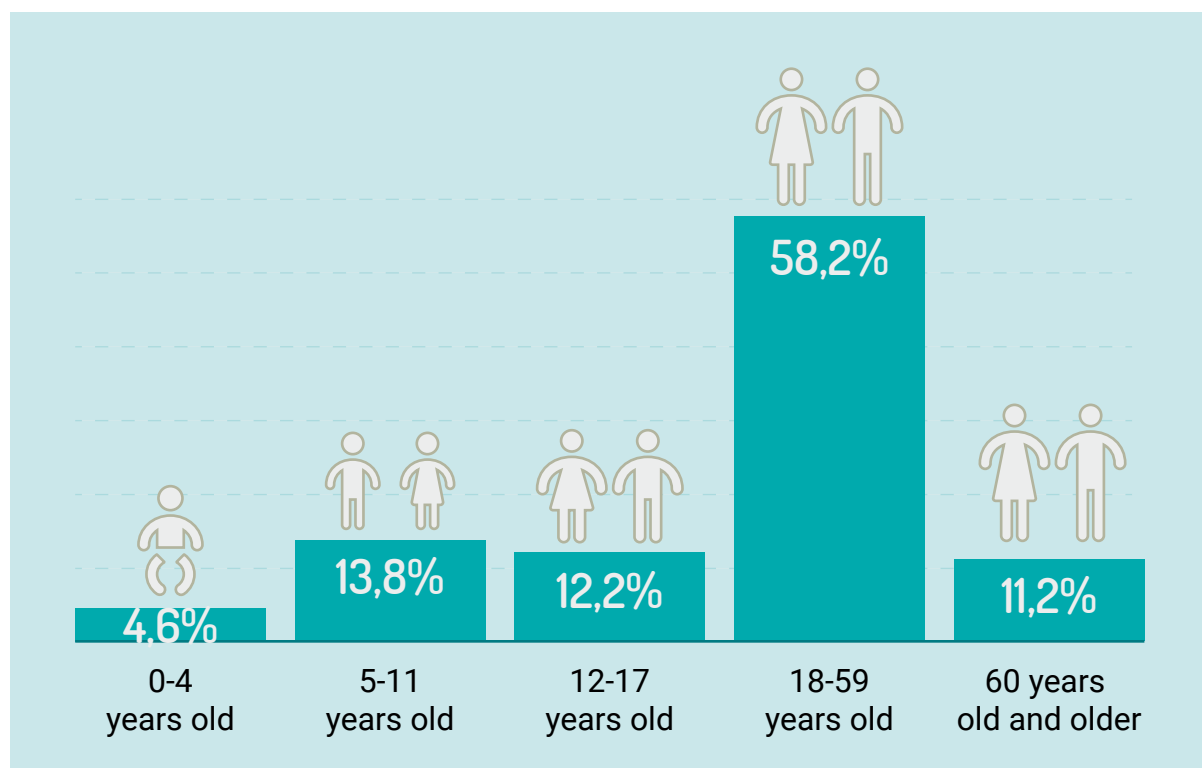
### 3.2.3. Characteristics of household members in households at risk of abandonment in Venezuela.

#### 3.2.3.1. General composition of households in housing at risk of abandonment in Venezuela.

##### 3.2.3.1.1.

In terms of households in Venezuela that are at risk of abandoning their housing, the survey distinguished between the household members who abandoned their homes and those who remain

in their dwellings. Among the household members who remain in a dwelling that is considered at risk of abandonment in Venezuela, the majority of persons are in the 18 - 58 age segment (58.2%), and the majority of household members are males (51.5%).

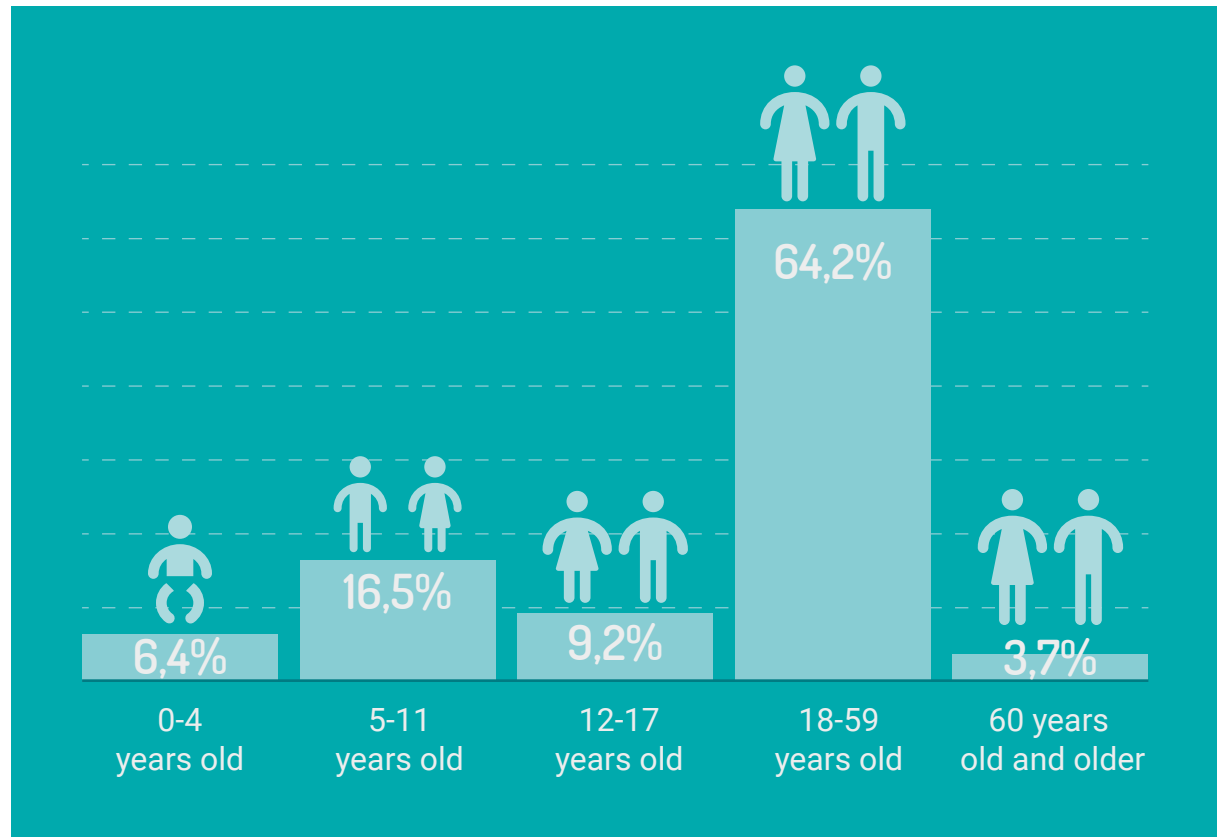


Graph No. 6. Age segments of household members remaining in dwellings that are at risk of abandonment

### 3.2.3.1.2.

In terms of the household members that abandoned a dwelling that is considered at risk of abandonment,

the majority of people are in the 18 - 59 age segment (64.2%) and are females (56%).



Graph No. 7. Age segments of the household members that left dwellings that are at risk of abandonment.

### 3.2.3.1.3.

It should be noted that, when observing the age distribution of household members in housing that

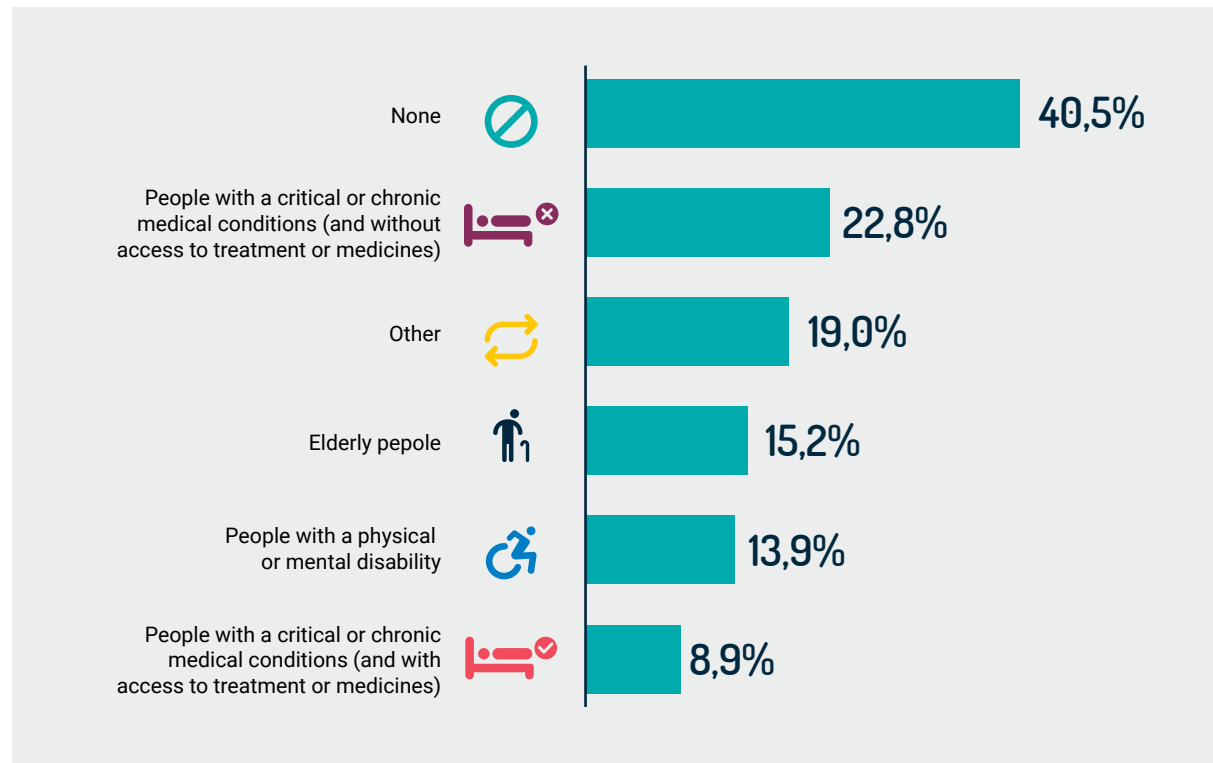
is at risk of abandonment, older adults generally remain in these dwellings children and adolescents generally leave the dwellings.

3.2.3.2. Special needs of members of households that are at risk of abandoning their housing in Venezuela.

3.2.3.2.2.1.

Among the members of the households who remain in the dwellings at risk of abandonment, there are high percentages of people with critical

or chronic conditions who do not have access to treatment or medicine (22.7%), older adults (15.1%) and people suffering from a physical or mental disability (13.9%). Other special needs presented by members of these households include chronic or critical medical conditions with access to treatment and breastfeeding or pregnant women.



Graph No. 8. Special needs of household members who remain in the home



### 3.2.3.2.2.

While a significant portion of the households that consider their housing to be at risk of abandonment stated that there are no special needs among the members who left the dwelling, a significant percentage of the households (18.9%) highlighted the presence of people with critical or chronic medical condition who have access to treatment in this group. Other less prevalent needs include breastfeeding women, as well as people with a disability.



### 3.2.3.2.3.

In general, the trend identified in the Regional Evictions Survey related to the special needs of refugees and migrants from Venezuela is similar to the results from this survey. In both of these surveys, the most important special needs for refugee and migrant households from Venezuela are those related to critical or chronic medical conditions, the presence of elderly household members, people with physical or mental disabilities and women who are breastfeeding.

### 3.2.3.2.4.

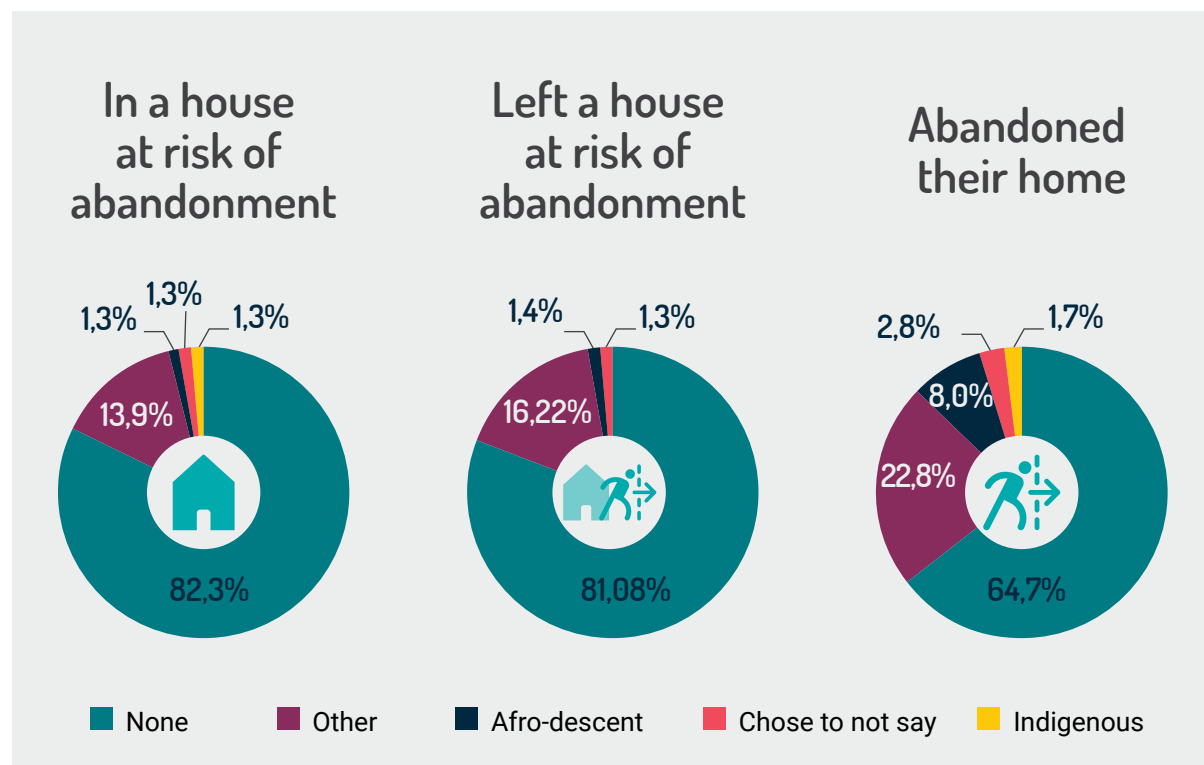
In terms of the special needs of people living in homes at risk of abandonment, it is notable that the household members with critical or chronic medical conditions and do not have access to treatment are

those who tend to migrate less and remain in the home. On the other hand, household members who do have access to medical treatment tend to be the group that abandon their homes the most. This may be associated with the existence of increased mobility difficulties for people without access to medical treatment.

### 3.2.3.3. Ethnicity of household members who are at risk of housing abandonment in Venezuela.

#### 3.2.3.3.1.

Related to the ethnicity of household members among those who remain in dwellings at risk of abandonment, the survey showed that 16.4% of households stated that one or more of the members remaining in the dwelling belong to an ethnic group. In 32.5% of the household members who abandoned these dwellings belonged to an ethnic group. In the Regional Evictions Survey conducted by the Protection Sector of the R4V Platform in 2021, just 6.2% of the people surveyed stated that they belonged to an ethnic group. In this current Survey of Abandoned Housing in Venezuela, it is notable that this percentage is considerably higher, both in households that abandoned their homes as well as in the households that are at risk of housing abandonment. This is evidenced in the following graphs:



Graph No. 9.  
Ethnicity in dwellings

### 3.3. Characterization of abandoned dwellings in Venezuela and in the host countries of Venezuelan refugees and migrants

#### 3.3.1. General information about the dwellings

##### 3.3.1.1.

Of the total number of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households surveyed that stated that they had abandoned a dwelling in their country or considered it to be at risk of abandonment, 98.5% said that they had access to accommodation in the

host countries (houses, apartments, rooms and shelters), 1.2% said they were living on the street and 0.2% declared that they were migrants in transit.

##### 3.3.1.2.

In terms of the location of homes that were abandoned or are considered at risk of abandonment according to the survey, this is a situation that is occurring in most Venezuelan

states (Zulia: 23.6%, Miranda: 11.8%, Carabobo: 10.6%, Caracas: 6.9%; etc.) and specifically in approximately 92 municipalities in the country. There is no increased prevalence of abandonment or risk of abandonment in a specific department or municipality. It is important to note that the survey was only conducted in locations in Peru, Colombia and Ecuador where organizations that are members of the R4V Platform's Protection Sector are operating.

#### 3.3.1.3.

In terms of the distribution of where households that abandoned their dwellings are living in the host countries, 38% were in Ecuador, 33.8% in Colombia and 28% in Peru. The most prominent departments or provinces where this population lives include: El Oro - Ecuador (79%), Atlántico - Colombia (24.2%) and Lima - Peru (21.3%).

### 3.3.2. Types of housing

#### 3.3.2.1.

Of the dwellings that have been abandoned or are at risk of abandonment in Venezuela, houses represent 75.7% of this group while apartments represent just 14.2%. Private rooms represent 5.86% of the total while 2.5% of respondents are living in improvised accommodation and 1.68%. Combined,

this evidences that 4.1% of the respondents in Venezuela are living in precarious conditions, primarily in public spaces or in accommodation that has minimal levels of habitability.

#### 3.3.2.2.

In terms of the number of persons living in abandoned dwelling and those that are at risk of abandonment in Venezuela, it was identified that most of the dwellings were inhabited by between 3 and 4 persons. Specifically, almost 40% of households that live in a single room in Venezuela stated that 3 people lived in the single room. Three people was also the most common amount of members of the households living in improvised housing 3.3%. For other types of housing (different to houses, apartments, improvised housing and rooms), the average number of people in each household was 4. These results evidence a clear relationship between increased precariousness of housing conditions in Venezuela and the number of people living in these households.

#### 3.3.2.3.

In relation to number of rooms in the dwellings inhabited by refugee and migrant households in the host countries, it was observed that 46.2% of the surveyed households live in accommodation with 2 rooms and 23.5% have 3 rooms in their homes. Just



8.8% of respondents have homes with more than 3 rooms. When comparing this aspect with housing in Venezuela, a possible trend of overcrowding was observed. This is because 45.3% of the surveyed households had 3 rooms in their homes in Venezuela, 25.8% had 2 rooms and 20.9% had more than 3 rooms. One room dwellings correspond to just 8% of the households surveyed.

#### 3.3.2.4.

In the host countries, the types of housing inhabited by Venezuelan refugee and migrant households vary significantly: the percentage of households living in rooms or tenements is 46.4% (35.6% and 10.8% respectively) while the percentage of households living in houses or apartments drops to 49.2%. It is notable that 72% of households living in tenements or rooms in the host countries lived in houses in Venezuela. Conducting studies on housing conditions in host countries, especially in rooms and tenements, is essential to identify their

needs that can be addressed by public policies.

#### 3.3.2.5.

It is also important to note that in the host countries, 4.2% of households live in improvised housing or other forms of accommodation, primarily in informal settlements or public spaces that have high levels of insecurity, issues with habitability and the risk of being evicted. It should be noted that in Colombia the percentage of households surveyed living in improvised housing or other accommodation reaches almost 10%.

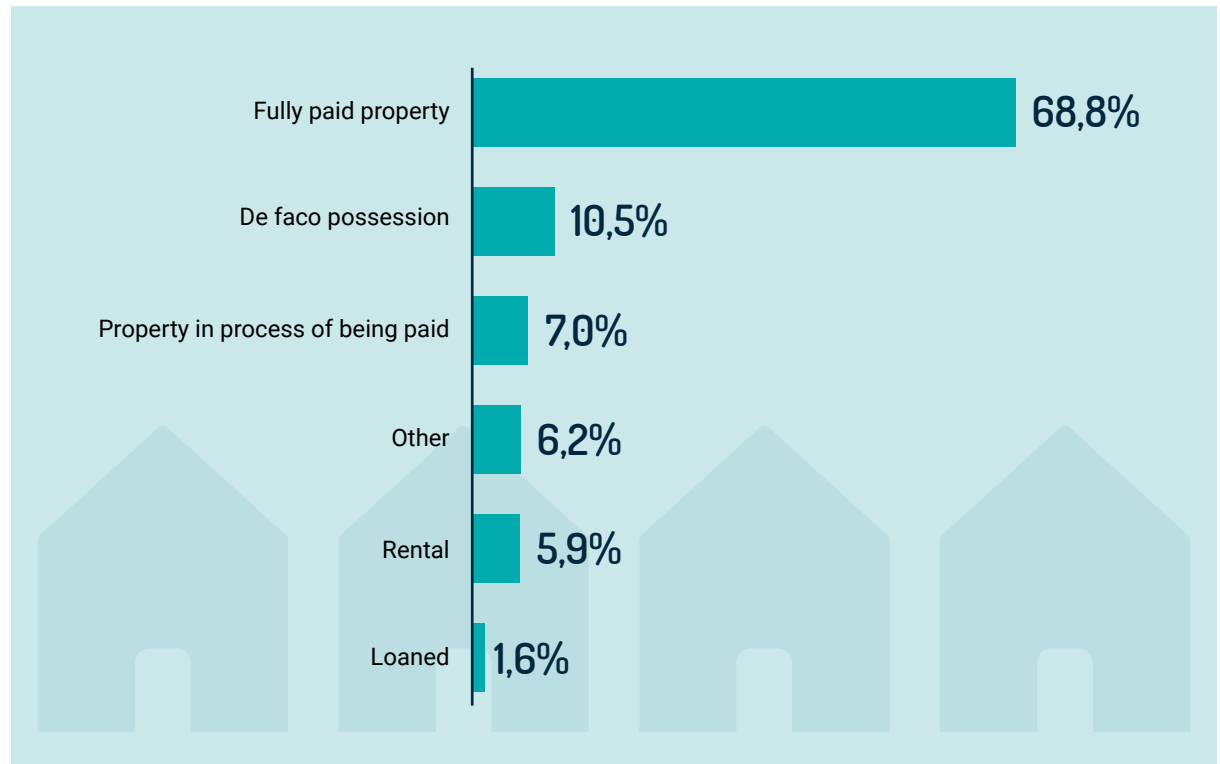
#### 3.3.2.6.

Shelter as a form of housing in Ecuador, Colombia and Peru is almost nonexistent among surveyed households. For example, just 0.21% of the surveyed households live in shelters in Peru.

### 3.3.3. Types of housing tenure

#### 3.3.3.1.

The following types of tenure of housing that was abandoned in Venezuela or is at risk of abandonment were identified by the survey.



Graph No. 10. Types of housing tenure in Venezuela

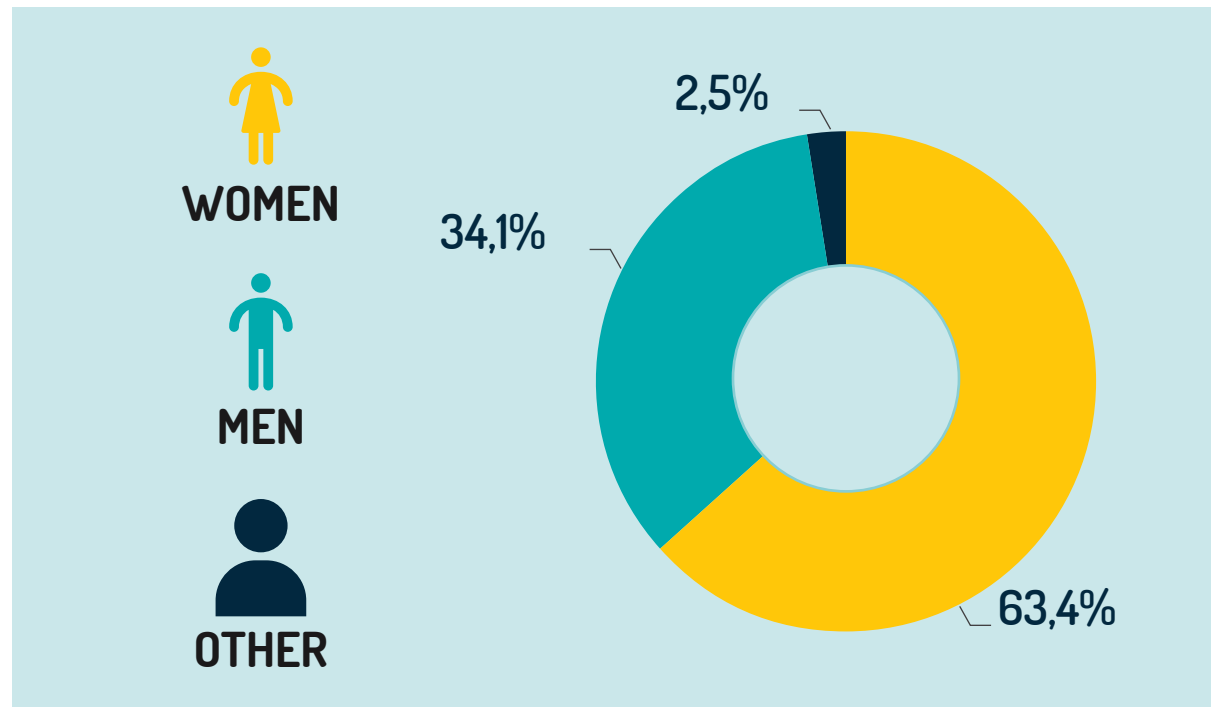
### 3.3.3.2.

It is notable that ownership (fully paid or in the process of being paid) is the most prevalent form of tenure among those surveyed (nearly 76% of household). However, it is also important to mention that 94.1% of households that had a property being paid had abandoned these homes, which may have negative implications in terms of the legal ownership of the property in relation to possible return or restitution processes. In addition, it is highly possible that some of these households

with homes that are in the process of being paid belong to the "Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela" (Great Venezuelan Housing Mission) government program, in which the payment process has a term of 30 years<sup>10</sup>.

### 3.3.3.3.

Of the total number of owners of these dwellings, 63.4% are women. In Ecuador, this percentage rises to 72.2% among the surveyed Venezuelan refugee and migrant households in the country.



Graph No. 11. Housing ownership in Venezuela

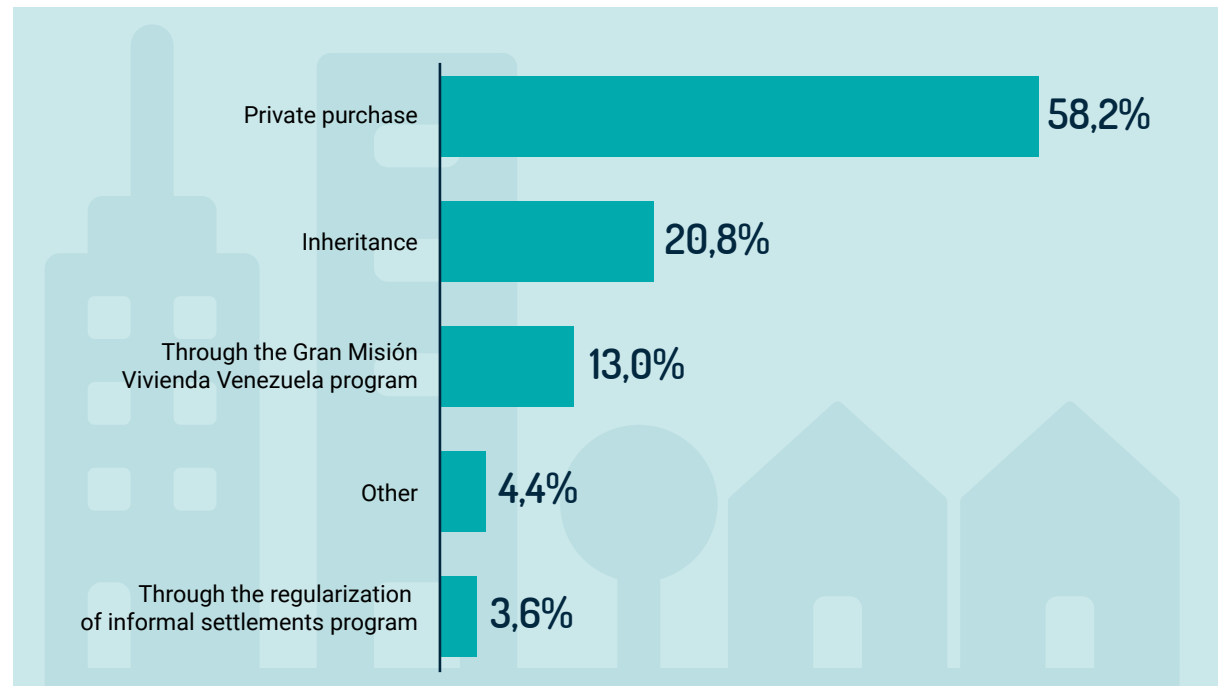
[10] This program has been implemented in Venezuela since 2007 and involves the allocation of public housing to low-income families.

#### 3.3.3.4.

A significant finding by the survey is that 10.6% of the Venezuelan refugee and migrant households interviewed in the three countries occupied private or public land in Venezuela, which means they did not have legal ownership of their homes and were most likely living in informal settlements that had low levels of access to public services and high levels of insecurity.

#### 3.3.3.5.

In terms of the form of acquiring housing, the vast majority of respondents stated that their home ownership was the result of a private purchase or inheritance (58.1% and 20.7%, respectively). Another form of ownership (13%) mentioned by respondents was the provision of housing through the "Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela" government program. It is possible that the households that have been beneficiaries of the "Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela" tend to abandon their homes less due to the complementary support they receive from the government (programs including "Mi Casa Bien Equipada" - My well-equipped house - and others).



Graph No. 12. Forms of acquisition of home ownership in Venezuela



### 3.3.3.6.

In general, surveyed households had a high level of access to home ownership in Venezuela with the majority having fully paid or in the process of paying for their homes (almost 76.5%). This characteristic of housing tenure in Venezuela is a factor that will determine migrant return processes and the design of rights restitution programs in the medium and long term. In these situations obtaining formal ownership and other housing rights will be fundamental for this population's future access to justice and reparations processes.

### 3.3.3.7.

In relation to rental agreements and housing loans in Venezuela, verbal agreements prevail over written contracts (69.4% versus 30.5%). This demonstrates high levels of informality with housing tenure, a finding supported by studies that evidence the existence of a very active informal housing rental market in the country<sup>11</sup>.

### 3.3.3.8.

Contrary to the situation in Venezuela, the vast majority of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households that responded to the survey had a rental agreement or housing loan in the host country (93.3%), with 91.4% renting and 1.91% with a mortgage. The remaining percentage of respondents have other types of housing tenure: de facto ownership (2.8%), fully paid property or paying it off (2%) and other forms of ownership or rental (1.6%). It is notable that among the households renting in the host country, 76.8% were households that owned their home in Venezuela (fully paid or paying off a mortgage).

### 3.3.3.9.

The country with the highest percentage households that are renting their homes is Ecuador, where 93.96% of the surveyed households rent, followed by Peru (92.1%) and Colombia (88.3%). These results confirm a trend evidenced in the Regional Evictions Survey (2021), in which rental housing predominated in these 3 countries. The percentage of refugee and migrant households that live in rented housing is higher in the Abandoned Housing Survey<sup>12</sup> compared to the Regional Evictions Survey.

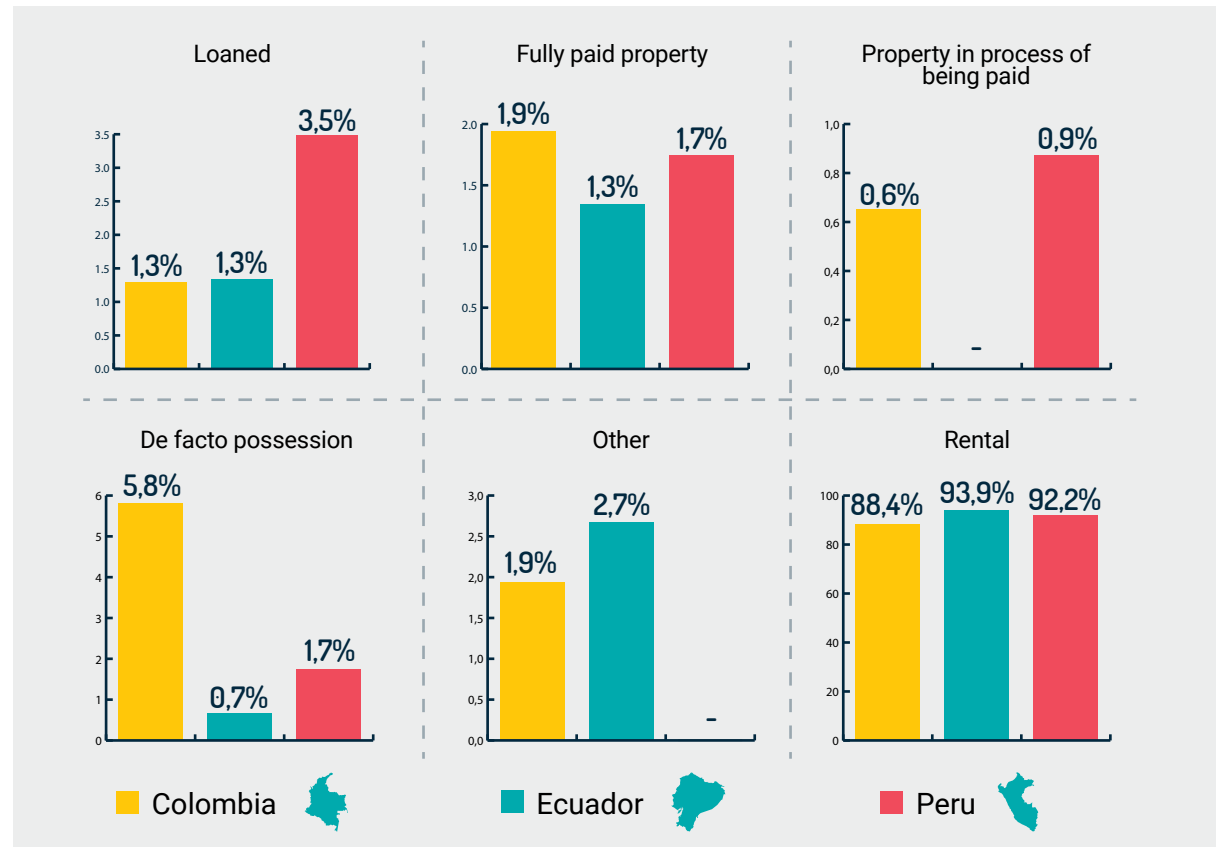
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[11] These results are consistent with the studies carried out by the researcher Roberto Briceño. Briceño-León, R., (2007), "Freedom to rent in the informal housing sector of Caracas", Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.



A public policy to protect the homes of refugees and migrants from Venezuela who are tenants in host countries implemented by national governments and with support from human rights oversight and defense agencies, would have a high impact on

reducing the conflicts caused by the breaking of rental contracts (verbal and written) by either party and would also help avoid forced evictions of this population.



Graph No. 13. Distribution of the forms of housing tenure in host countries by country

[12] According to the results of the Regional Evictions Survey, which was conducted in 2021 by the R4V Platform's Protection Sector, in Ecuador more than 81% of those surveyed lived in rented housing, in Peru more than 71% and in Colombia the figure is close to 65%. Document available at: <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/encuesta-regional-de-desalojos-de-las-personas-refugiadas-y-migrantes-de-venezuela>. These results coincide with those of some of the periodic reports prepared by DRC/MMC in Peru (January - March 2022) and Colombia (October - November 2021): the most common form of tenure of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the host countries is renting. Documents available for consultation at: [https://www.r4v.info/es/document/DRC\\_Informe\\_Monitoreo\\_de\\_Proteccion\\_Mar22](https://www.r4v.info/es/document/DRC_Informe_Monitoreo_de_Proteccion_Mar22) and <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/colombia-informe-de-monitoreo-de-proteccion-de-octubre-y-noviembre-2021-drc>.

#### 3.3.3.10.

Contrary to the situation in Venezuela, where ownership is the predominant form of tenure, in the host countries just 2.1% of the households surveyed own or are paying off their homes. This situation could be explained by the difficult economic situation they face and their low income, as well as the lack of public programs to support access to for this population and irregular migrants in these countries.

#### 3.3.3.11.

When observing the relationship between the type of housing tenure for refugees and migrants from Venezuela in host countries and their form of entry into those countries, it was identified that in both cases (regular or irregular entry), more than 90% of the persons surveyed are renting their homes. This situation is the same for refugees and migrants from Venezuela who have a visa or permanent residence permit and other valid personal documents (passport or identity card).

### 3.3.4. Accreditation documents for housing in Venezuela

#### 3.3.4.1.

When inquiring about the different documents that respondents have to prove their home ownership in Venezuela<sup>13</sup>, the most commonly held documents among the surveyed households included a notarized property title (42.6%) and a title from the public property registry (24%). The results also indicate that there is a significant percentage of households that do not have any type of document to prove their home ownership or other types of housing tenure (24.6%).

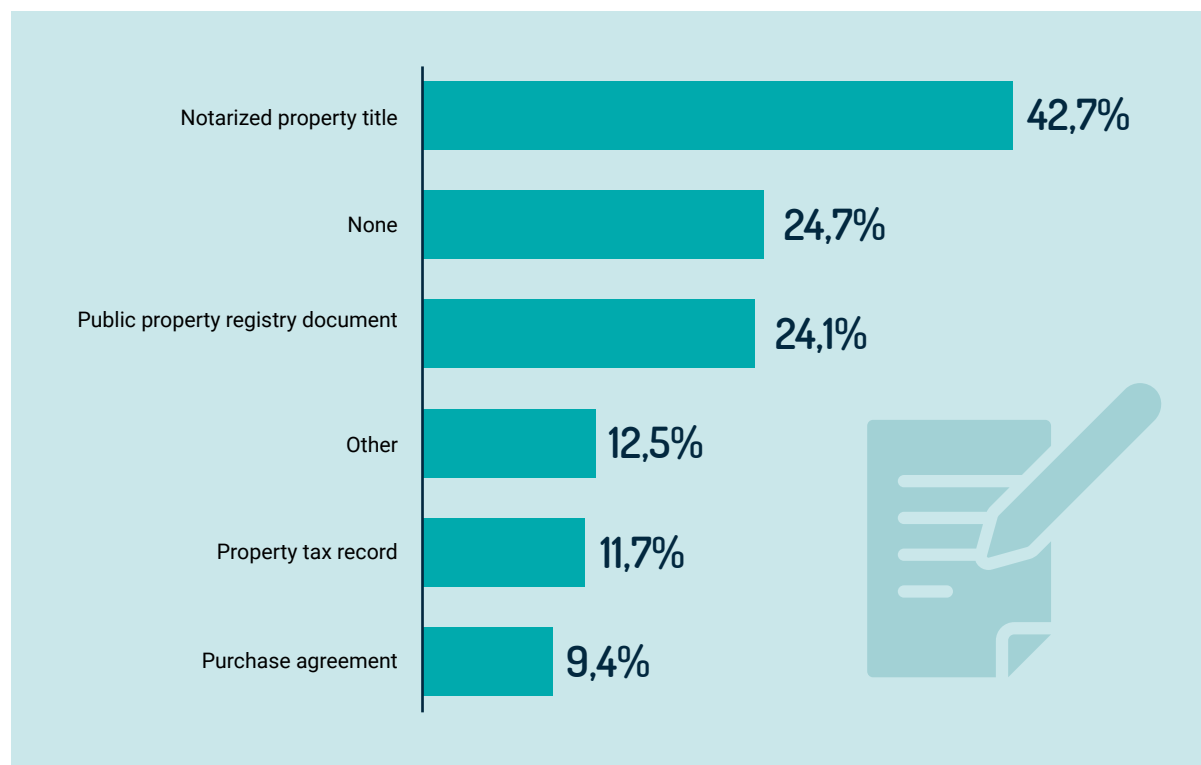
#### 3.3.4.2.

Among the respondents that own homes in Venezuela (76% of the households surveyed), 19.7% do not have any document proving their home ownership, which represents a high level of legal insecurity for future processes involving the recovery or protection of their properties.

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[13] Multiple-choice question. Respondents could answer one or several options.

Graph No. 14. Documents evidencing ownership or other types of housing tenure in Venezuela

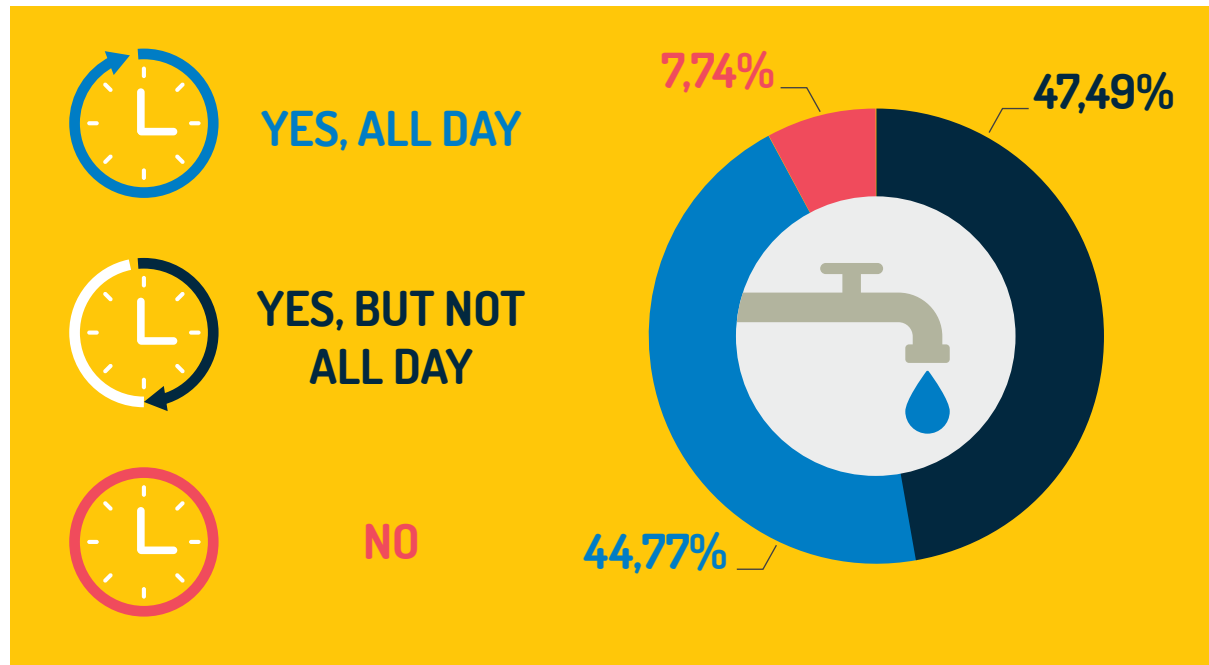


### 3.3.5. Habitability conditions of the dwellings

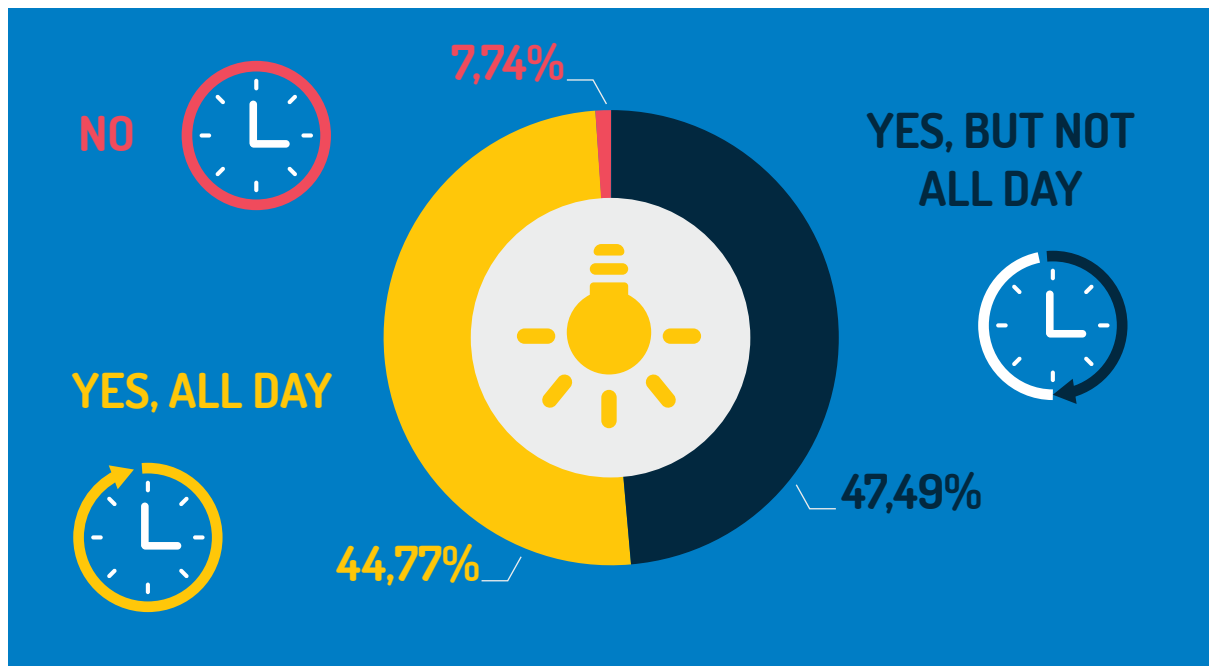
#### 3.3.5.1.

Regarding the habitability conditions of abandoned dwellings and those at risk of abandonment in Venezuela, almost 47.4% of the households that responded to the survey stated that their dwellings

did not have water and sanitation services 24 hours a day, and 7.7% indicated that they did not have these services at all. In terms of electricity service, 48.7% of households indicated that they did not have this service 24 hours a day. This evidences limited access to basic public services that may encourage, among other factors, the decision by households to migrate.



Graph No. 15. Access to water and sanitation services in good condition in Venezuelan homes



Graph No. 16. Access to electricity services in Venezuela.

### 3.3.5.2.

Observing the specific results on access to electricity service disaggregated by type of housing tenure, it was notable that the majority of households that have this service 24 hours a day have fully paid for their property (68.5%). However, there is still a high percentage of households that despite having fully paid for their housing do not have regular access to an electricity service constantly or have no access (67.9% and 40% respectively). This situation allows us to conclude that the type of housing tenure in Venezuela does not necessarily determine access to energy services for households. These results may be related to the location of a respondent's home (e.g., on the periphery of cities) as well as to the generalized limitations of public services in Venezuela.

### 3.3.5.3.

In contrast, 89.4% of households enjoyed 24-hour availability of these services in the host countries. The availability of water and sanitation services in each country is as follows:

- » Ecuador: Among the households surveyed in this country, 91.4% have water and sanitation services in good condition throughout the day, 5.7% have them but don't have access 24 hours a day, and 2.8% do not have these services.

- » Peru: Among the households surveyed in this country, 88% have water and sanitation services in good condition throughout the day and 11.9% have them but don't have access 24 hours a day. All households reported having access to these services.
- » Colombia: Among the households surveyed in this country, 78.4% have water and sanitation services in good conditions all day long, 13.5% have them but don't have access 24 hours a day and 8% do not have any access to these services.

### 3.3.5.4.

The distribution of electricity services in each host country is as follows:

- » Ecuador: Among the households surveyed in this country, 97.7% have electricity all day long, 1.7% have access to electricity but not 24 hours a day and just 0.5% of households stated that they do not have access to an electricity supply.
- » Peru: Among the households surveyed in this country, 92.5% have electricity all day long and 7.4% have access to electricity but not 24 hours a day. All households stated that they had access to this service.

- » Colombia: Of the households surveyed in this country, 88.27% have electricity all day long and 11.73% have access to electricity but not 24 hours a day. All households reported having access to this service.

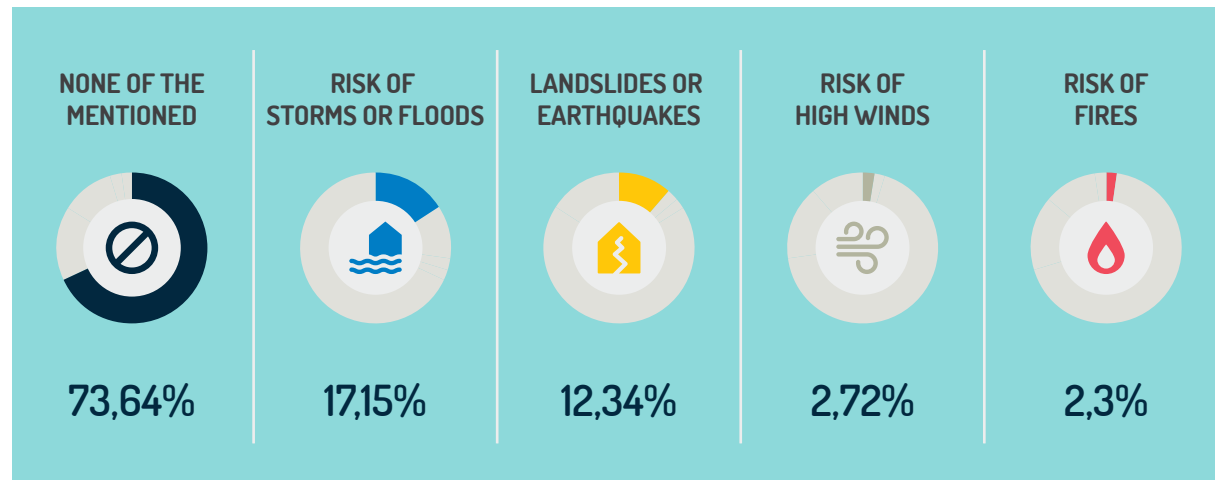
### 3.3.5.5.

As evidenced above, access to public water and electricity services in the host countries for the surveyed households is much better than their access in Venezuela, which could be a factor that encourages them to not return to Venezuela. It should be noted that the results of the surveys in the three host countries do not reflect the national situation of these countries, as but just the situations faced by Venezuelan refugee and migrant households living in the regions where most of the surveys were conducted.

## 3.3.6. Safety of dwellings and exposure to risks

### 3.3.6.1.

On the topic of the security and protection against climate conditions offered by housing in Venezuela, 72.5% of households responded that they felt safe, primarily those households living in houses and apartments. However, among the households living with de facto ownership, 20.2% responded that their swelling did not guarantee their safety. Regarding natural disaster risks, 73.6% of refugee and migrant households stated that their homes were not exposed to any of these risks. Exposure to storms and floods was the most represented risk with 17.1% among households that stated that they did face risks from natural disasters.



Graph No.17. Exposure of housing to physical risks in Venezuela



### 3.3.6.2.

Compared to the security and risk situation for the dwellings currently occupied by the surveyed households in the host countries, the feeling of security in relation to climate change is similar to that in Venezuela. This is even the case for the perception of risks to the physical structure of the dwelling, which increases slightly from 72.5% in Venezuela to 75.3% in the host countries. The greatest risk for housing in Peru and Ecuador is living in unstable areas and being exposed to landslides (21.3% of households in Peru and 8.8% of households in Ecuador). In Colombia, the biggest risk reported by households is exposure to storms or floods (17.7% of households).

### 3.3.6.3.

These high levels of housing habitability and safety may explain why 42.6% of the surveyed households intend to remain in their current place of residence. They stated that their plan is to stay where they are.

## 3.3.7. Housing programs in host countries

### 3.3.7.1.

The survey shows that of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households do not have access to housing programs in host countries or that these programs do not exist: 99.5% of households stated that they have not had access to any housing program in host countries, with Peru being the only country where a few households have had access to a program (just 0.4% of the households surveyed).

This finding highlights existing barriers to housing access for refugee and migrant households in existing public housing programs in host countries. It also evidences the need for new programs that take into account the special needs of this population and promote their access to housing. It is important to implement new housing programs that can be accessed by these households, as this could stimulate the economy through the construction industry and contribute to better land use planning.

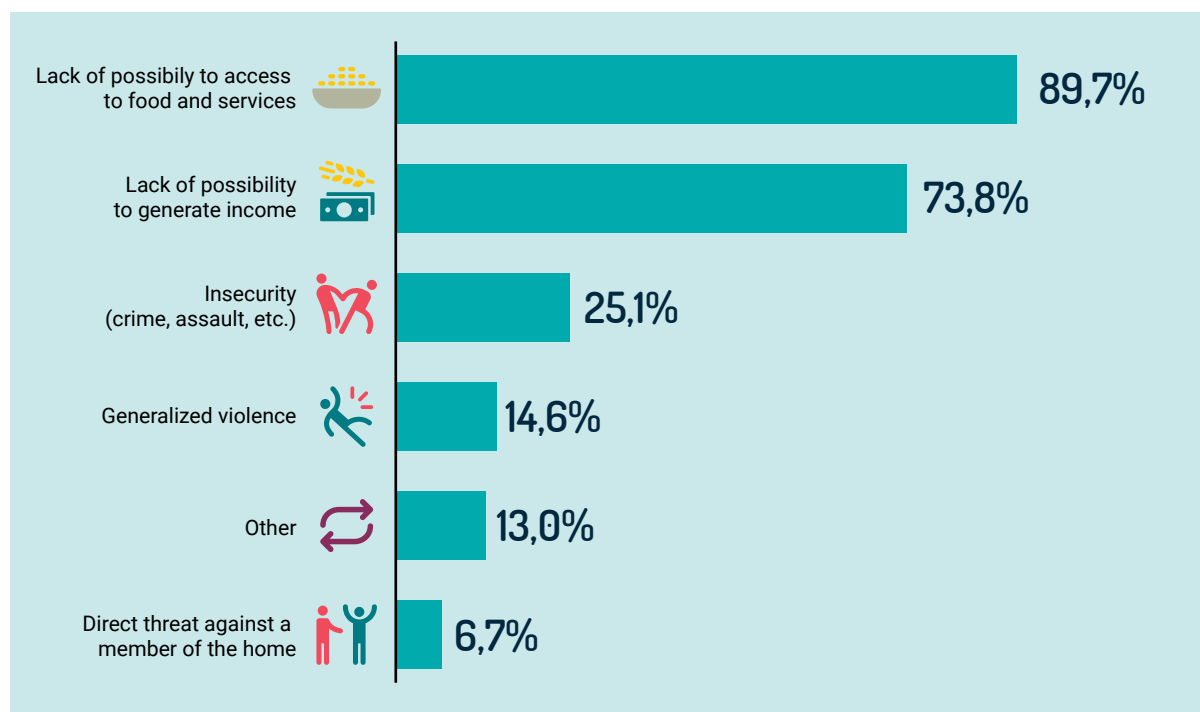
### 3.4. Circumstances of housing abandonment in Venezuela

#### 3.4.1. Causes and perpetrators of housing abandonment or risk of housing abandonment in Venezuela

##### 3.4.1.1.

When inquiring about the main causes of abandonment or risk of housing abandonment in Venezuela, the two most important categories were socioeconomic living conditions and violence or insecurity factors. The socioeconomic conditions included the difficulty or impossibility with access

to food, medical services, health, education and access to a minimum standard of living due to the economic situation (reported by 89.7% of the households surveyed) and difficulties with or the impossibility of generating sufficient income for a household due to unemployment (reported by 73.8% of the households). The causes related to violence included personal insecurity (reported by 25.1% of households), generalized violence (14.6% of households) and threats (6.6%).



Graph No. 18. Main causes of housing abandonment or risk of abandonment



#### 3.4.1.2.

The main causes were similar across all almost types of housing (house, apartment, improvised accommodation, and others), except in the case of households living in rooms. Difficulties caused by unemployment are affected respondents more than difficulties due to the economic situation.

#### 3.4.1.3.

Two types of causes of abandonment or risk of abandonment of housing that were the most relevant to respondents: economic factors and those associated with situations of violence are the risks most cited by the surveyed households when considering a return to their country of origin. This could explain the low rates of intention to return to Venezuela among respondents (an aspect that will be addressed later).

#### 3.4.1.4.

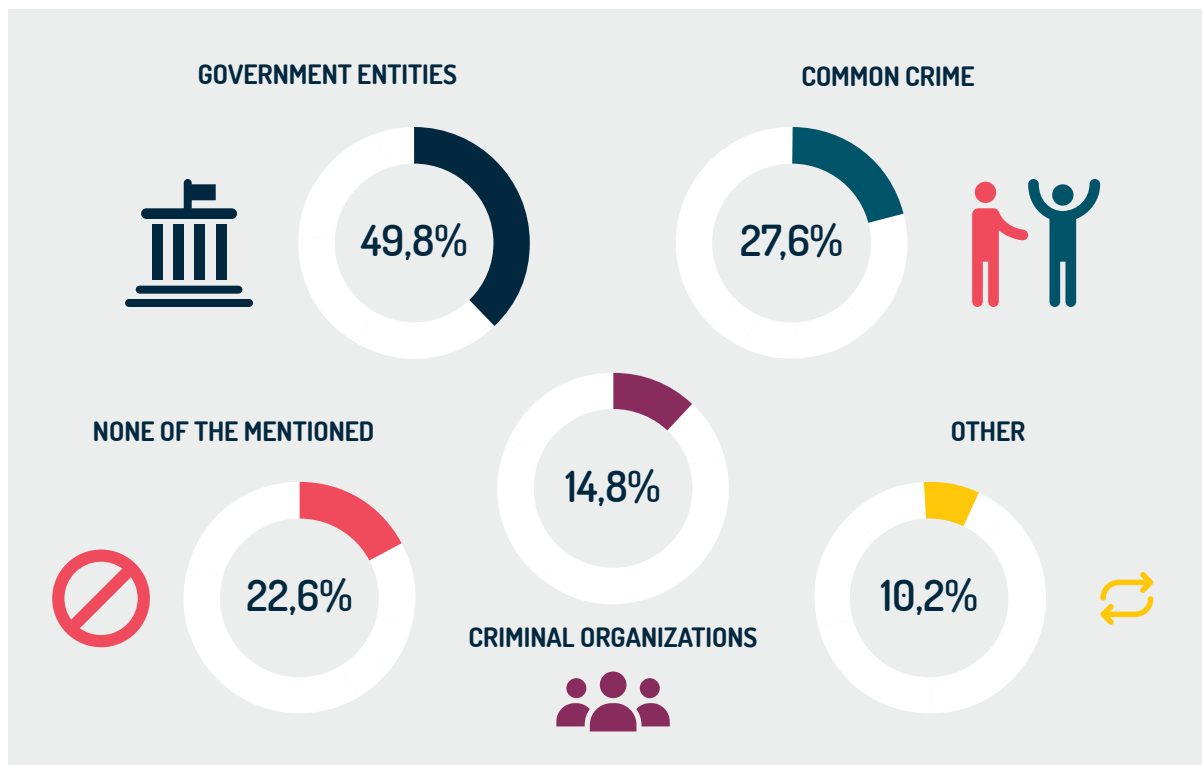
In relation to the types of housing tenure for households, the causes of abandonment or risk of abandonment associated with economic factors (unemployment, economic situation) are also prevalent for households that have de facto ownership, home loan or rent their homes, as well as for those that own their property (fully paid or in the process of payment). Particularly noteworthy is that among the households that had de facto possession of their homes in Venezuela, 12.8% mentioned generalized violence as one of the most important causes of abandonment or risk of abandonment of their homes. This can be explained by the precarious housing tenure conditions for this population. This data follows similar trends in other surveys conducted with refugee and migrant households<sup>14</sup>.

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[14] One such study is the DRC/MMC protection monitoring reports. Although this study does not focus on housing abandonment or the risk of abandonment in Venezuela, the data does confirm that the main reasons for migration from Venezuela to Latin American and Caribbean countries, including Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, are economic. Documents available at: <https://www.r4v.info/pt>

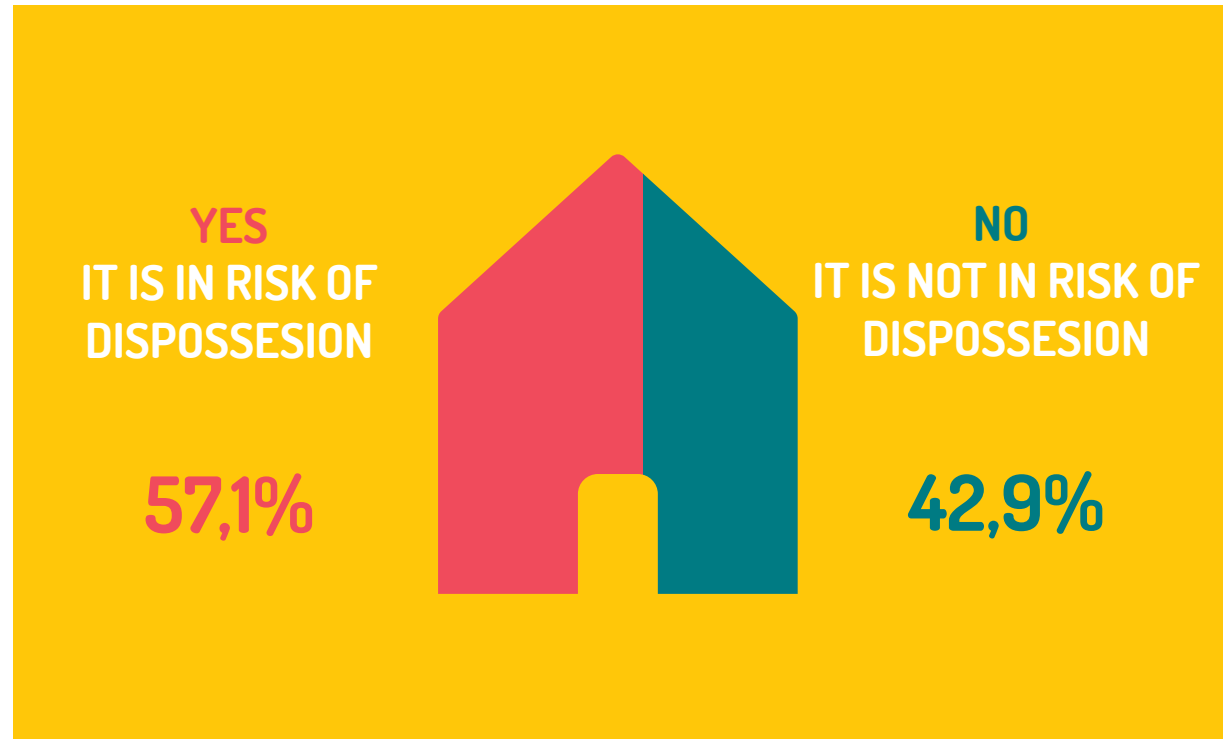
3.4.1.5.

In terms of those responsible for the abandonment or risk of abandonment of their homes (, households generally cited government agencies and criminal groups (49.7% and 27.6% respectively).



Graph No. 19. Those responsible for the abandonment or risk of abandonment of housing in Venezuela

### 3.4.2. Perceived risk of dispossession of abandoned housing or housing at risk of abandonment in Venezuela

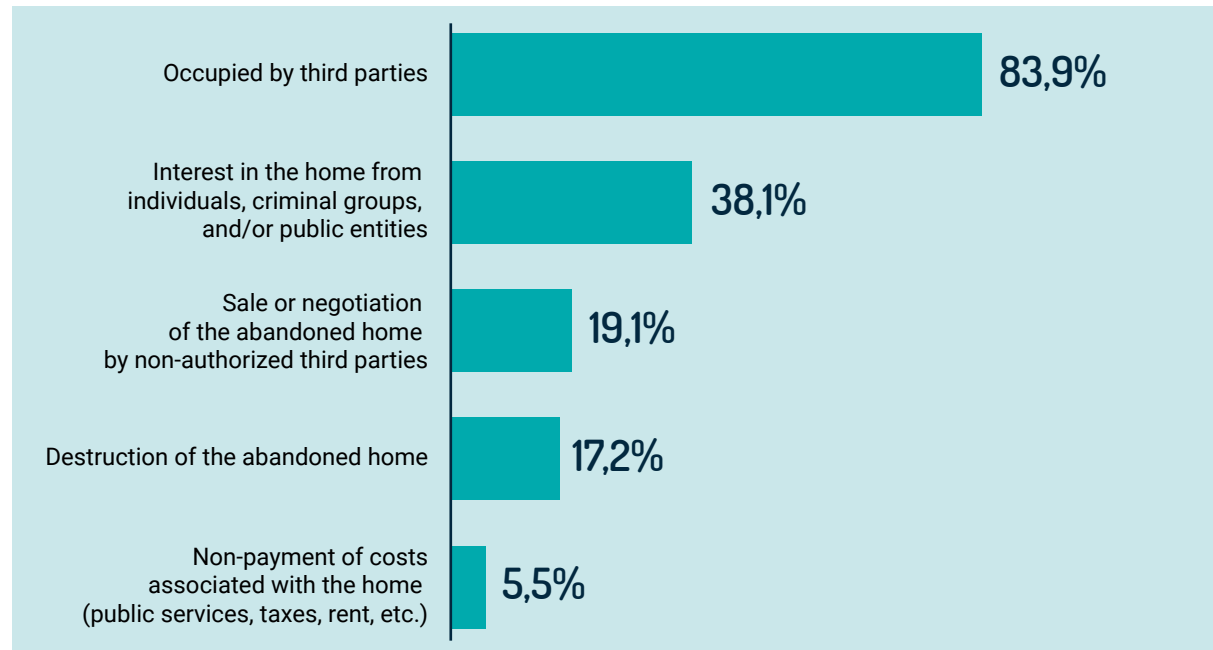


Graph No. 20. Perception of risk of dispossession of abandoned housing or housing at risk of abandonment in Venezuela

#### 3.4.2.1.

Regarding the perception of the risk of dispossession of housing in Venezuela among the surveyed households, 57.1% stated that they believed that there was a risk of dispossession of their housing. The three main causes of risk shared by the households included occupation

by third parties (83.8%), the existence of interest from individuals involved in criminal groups and/or public entities in obtaining the dwelling (38.1%) and the sale or negotiation of the abandoned dwelling by unauthorized third parties (19%). These causes are the across all of the Venezuelan states where the homes of surveyed households are located.



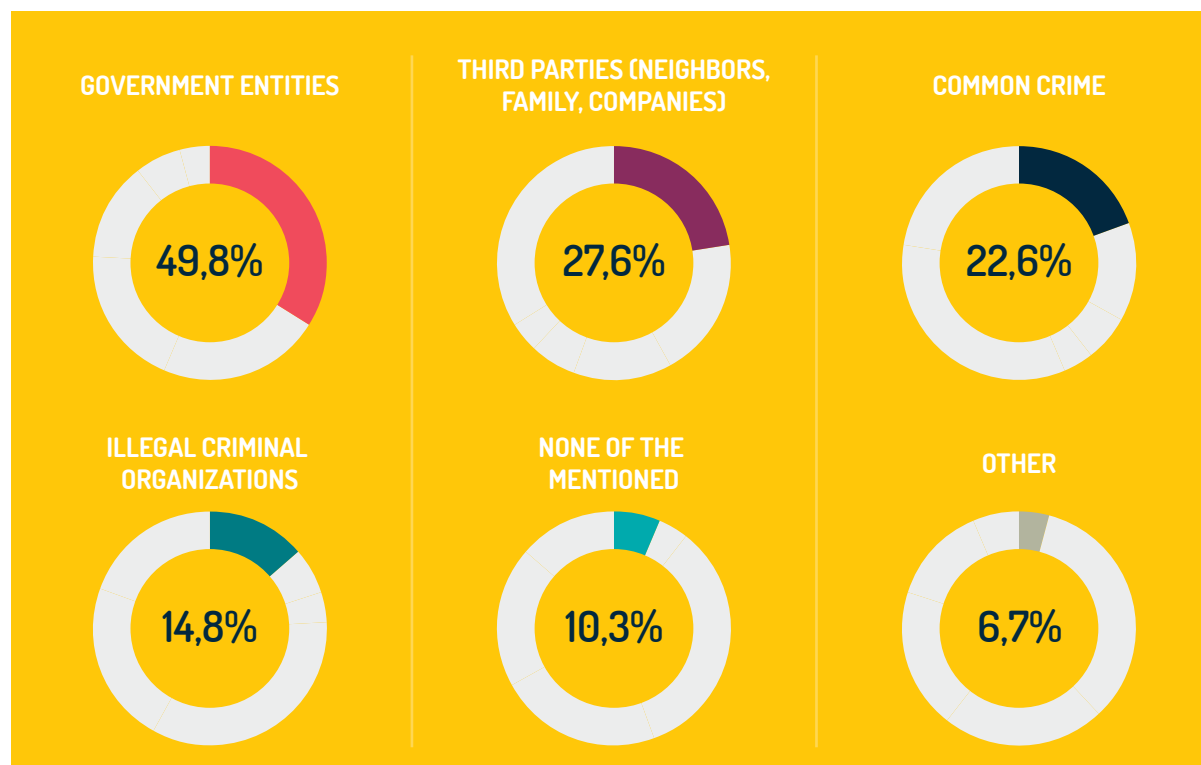
*Graph No. 21. Situations of risk of dispossession of abandoned housing*

#### 3.4.2.2.

Those responsible for the risk of dispossession according to the surveyed households included government agencies (49.4%), third parties (neighbors, relatives, companies) (32.9%), individual criminals (28.2%) and illegal criminal groups (19.7%).

#### 3.4.2.3.

The results of the survey evidence that although the causes of abandonment can be attributed to the country's socioeconomic situation and the government is identified as the primary responsible party, in the case of dispossession (which occurs before abandonment), the respondents feared that third parties with interests in their property may take control of the houses and even negotiate its sale without their authorization. This is a situation that may eventually hinder their return to Venezuela or make it more difficult due to the loss of their dwelling and the existence of occupants in their homes.



Graph No. 22. Main responsible parties for the risk of dispossession of abandoned housing or housing at risk of abandonment in Venezuela

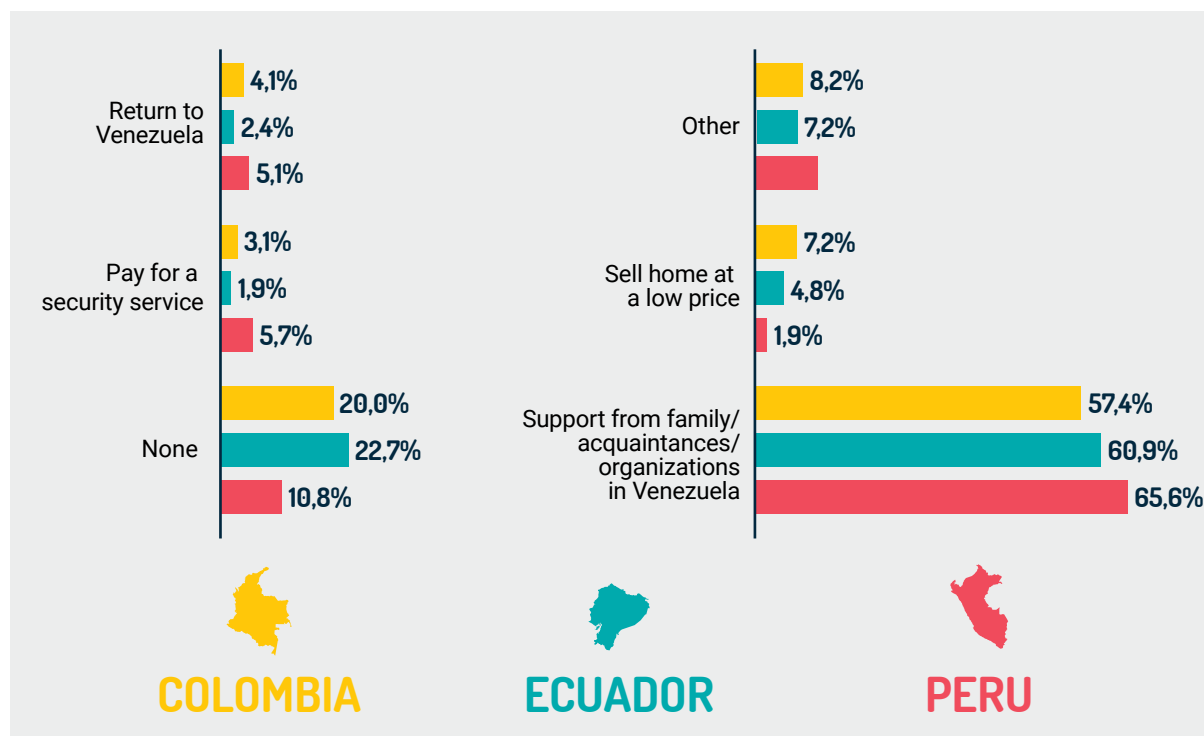
### 3.4.3. Measures to protect abandoned housing or housing at risk of abandonment in Venezuela

#### 3.4.3.1.

Regarding measures to address housing abandonment or risk of abandonment in Venezuela, 71.3% of households (that abandoned their homes or consider their homes at risk of abandonment) stated

that they had requested support from relatives, acquaintances or organizations in Venezuela to help with this issue. 21.5% of households stated that they had not taken any action in relation to this issue. Other protection measures that were less frequently reported included selling the home at low cost, returning to Venezuela and hiring security services.

*Protection or prevention measures against housing abandonment or risk of abandonment in Venezuela that have been adopted by refugees and migrants*

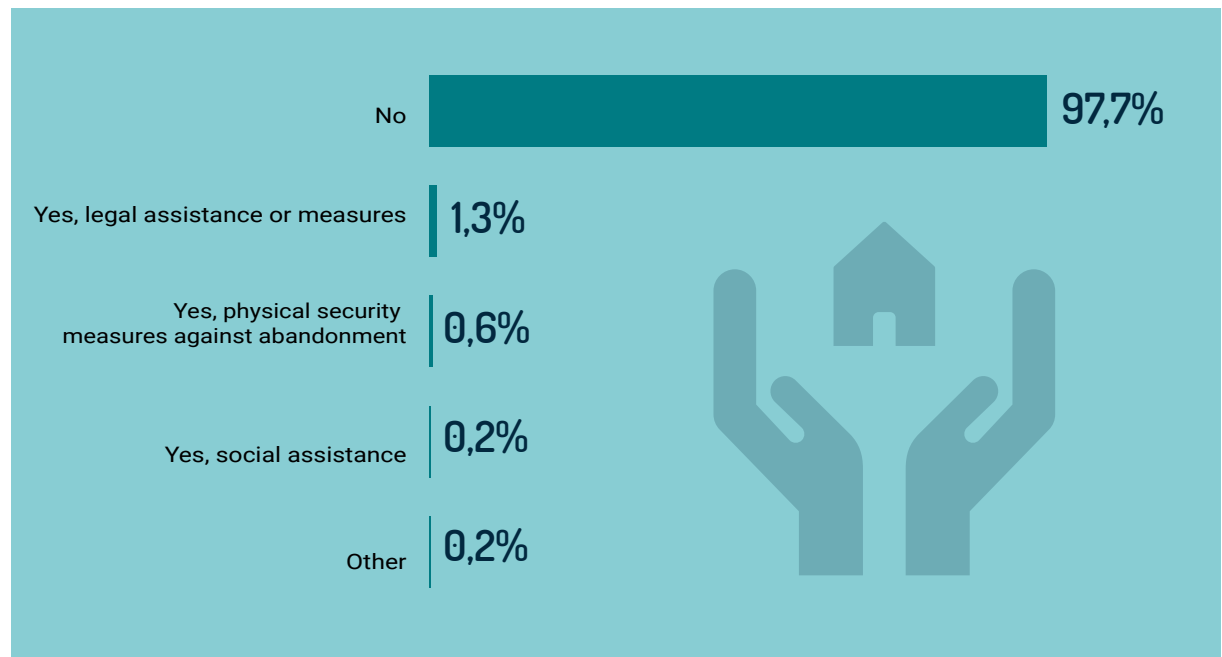


### 3.4.3.2.

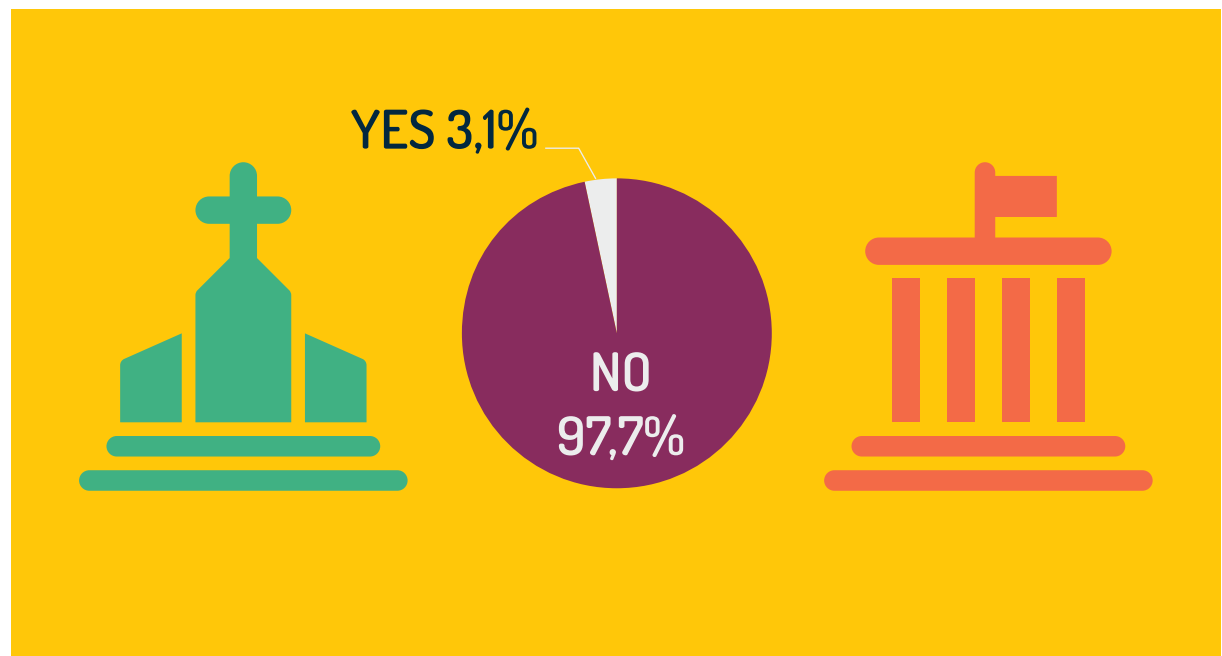
In general, the Venezuelan refugee and migrant households surveyed did not have access to institutional or governmental measures to protect their homes, nor could they access support programs implemented by social, international and church organizations. However, there are a number

of protection actions carried out by relatives, neighbors and friends of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. These include regularly visiting abandoned houses, asking people to temporarily inhabit them and even making payments to people so that they ensure that the homes are not occupied by third parties.

Graph No. 25. Access to institutional or governmental protection or prevention measures against housing abandonment or risk of abandonment in Venezuela



Graph No. 25. Support from social, international and church organizations for protection or prevention against housing abandonment or risk of abandonment in Venezuela



#### 3.4.3.3.

The identification of government agencies as being primarily responsible for the abandonment of housing in Venezuela could be associated with unemployment and the economic situation that Venezuela has been experiencing for several years.

#### 3.4.3.4.

Limited access to prevention or protection measures against housing abandonment, not just from government agencies but also from different organizations, highlights the general absence of these programs and types of support, as well as insufficient awareness of these programs when they do exist. In addition, other issues may explain the lack of access to these measures for this population, including insecurity, emergency situations, mobility restrictions, etc.

### 3.5. Situations faced by refugees and migrants in host countries

#### 3.5.1. Plans for change of residence and perception of the security situation in host countries

##### 3.5.1.1.

When asked about returning to Venezuela, 51.6% of the surveyed households stated that they did not intend to do so, while 24.4% answered that they did not know and 23.8% answered that they do intend to return.

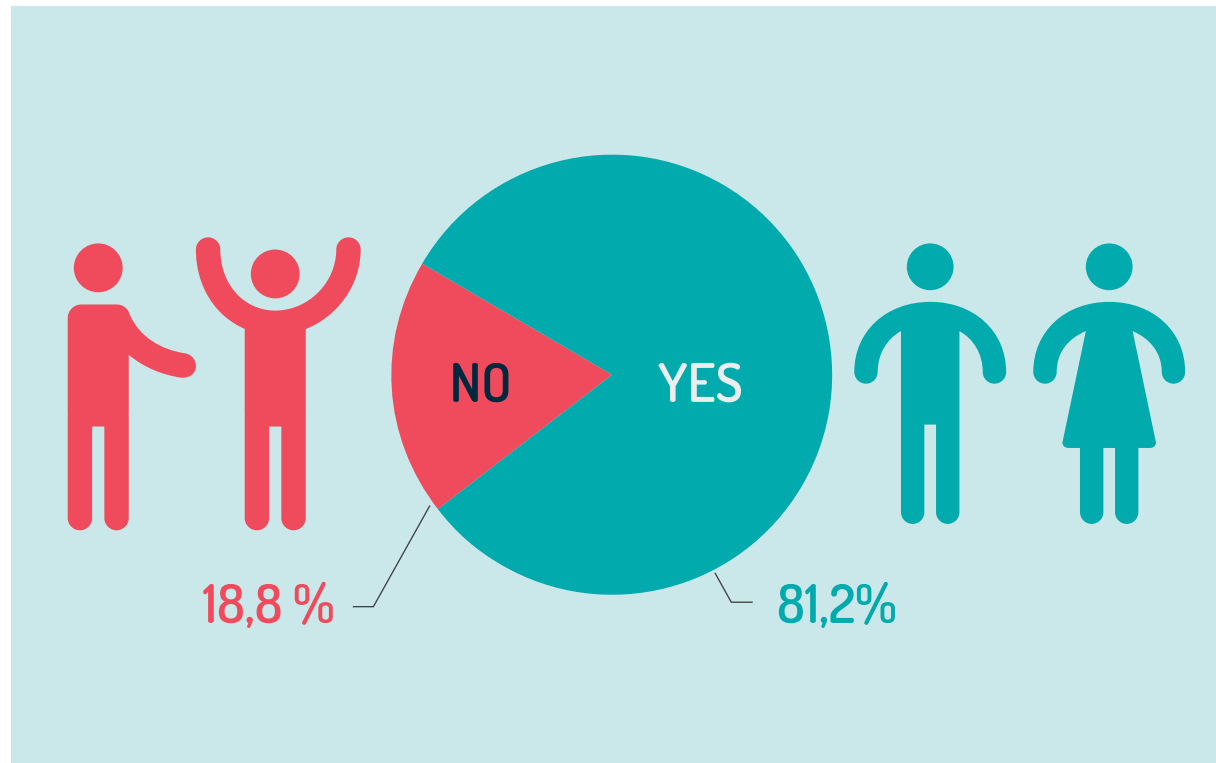
##### 3.5.1.2.

Of the 23.8% of refugees and migrants from Venezuela who intend to return, 59.2% consider that the greatest risk of dispossession of their homes is related to third parties, in particular, the sale or negotiation of the home by unauthorized third parties or the unlawful occupation of their home.

##### 3.5.1.3.

In addition, 42.6% of the households that responded to the survey indicated that they intended to stay in the country where they were in the short or medium term. Of those surveyed in Colombia, 43.2% expressed this intention, while in Ecuador the figure reached 52.7% and in Peru it was 28.3%. These results may be associated with the perceived safety of where they now live, as 81.1% of the households surveyed stated that they felt safe in their current place of residence. In Ecuador, this perception was shared by 85.1% of the households surveyed.



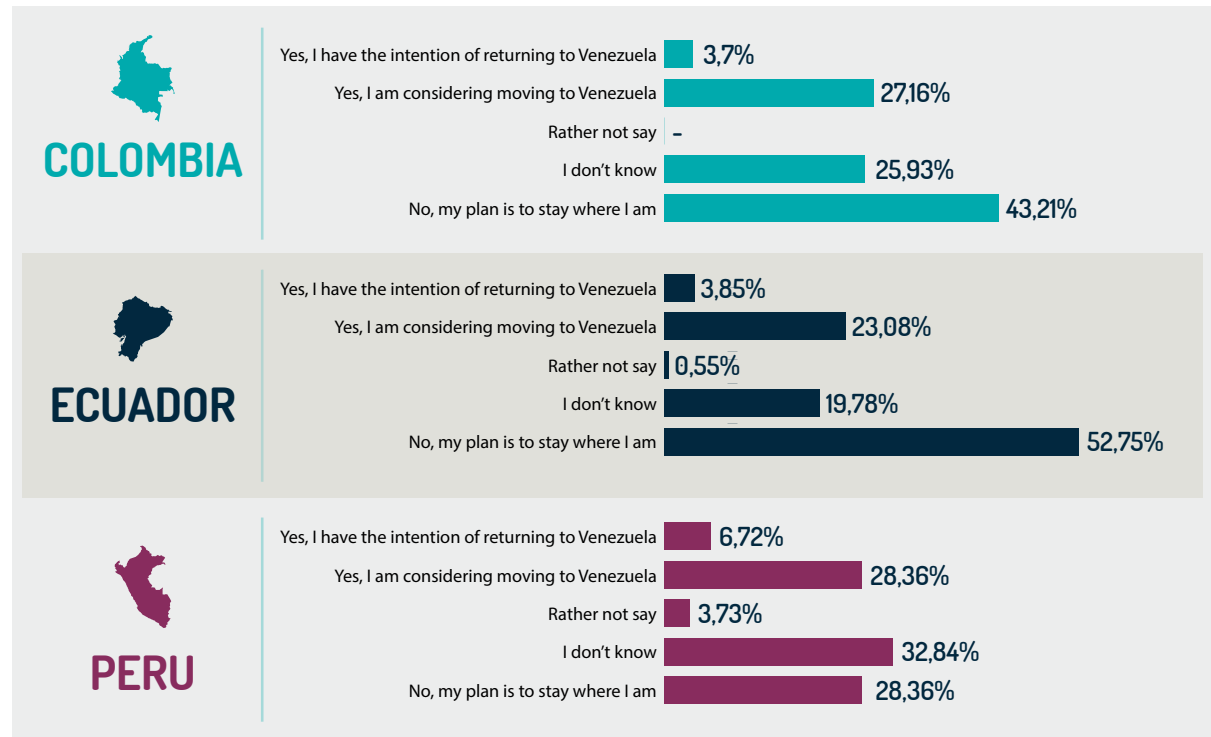


Graph No. 26. Perception of safety in current place of residence

#### 3.5.1.4.

In turn, 25.9% of the households surveyed stated that they intended to change their current place of residence, citing the existence of situations involving threats and intimidation, the presence

of criminal organizations and incidents of theft or fraud. Although these risks were also reported by households intending to remain in their current place of residence, they were identified to a lesser extent by this latter group



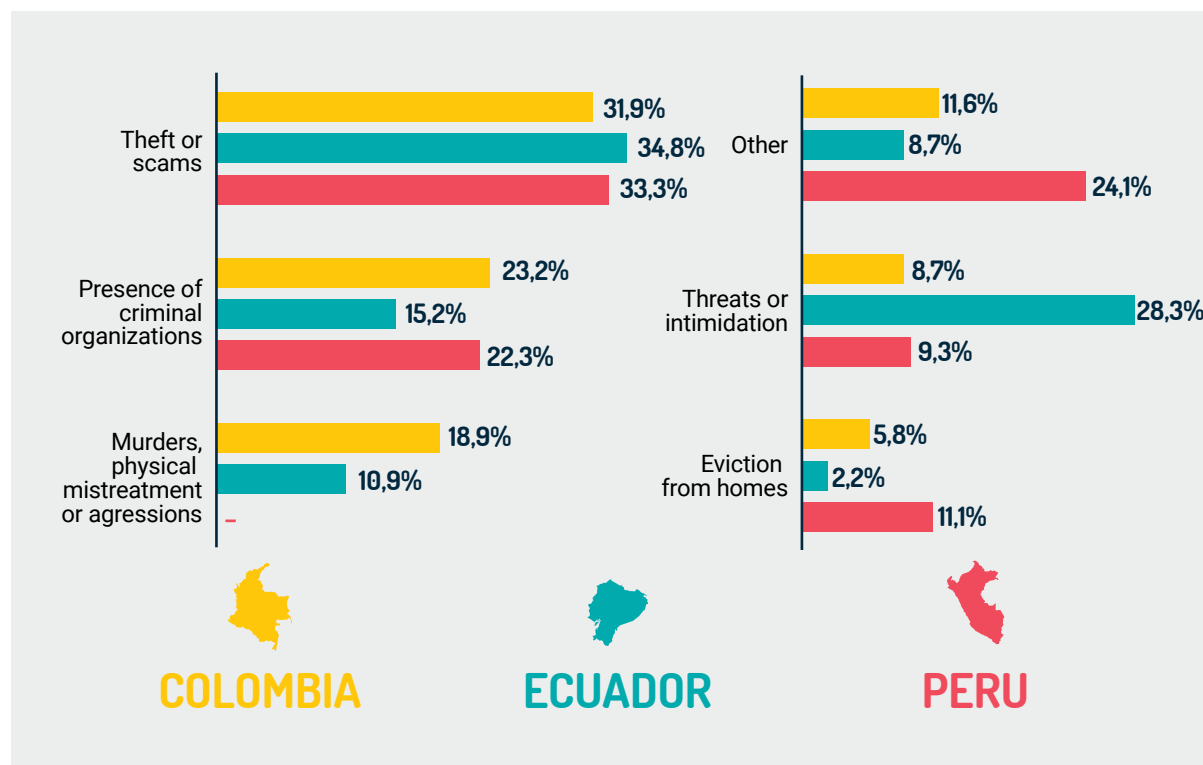
Graph No. 27. Intention to change place of residence

3.5.1.5.

Households that indicated that they did not feel safe in their current place of residence cited theft or scams (62.2%), the presence of illegal criminal organizations (38.8%) and other situations such as threats and/or intimidation (26.6%) as reasons for this perception. In addition to these situations, in Colombia, cases of murder, physical mistreatment or aggression were also identified by respondents, while in Ecuador additional factors related to

this perception of insecurity were threats and intimidation and in Peru they cited evictions from homes.

Guaranteeing the housing rights of Venezuelan refugees and migrants in host countries, either in terms of property rights, possession, rental and other forms of tenure, is closely linked to protecting the lives and physical safety of this population and combating discrimination.



Graph No. 28. Perception of insecurity in current place of residence

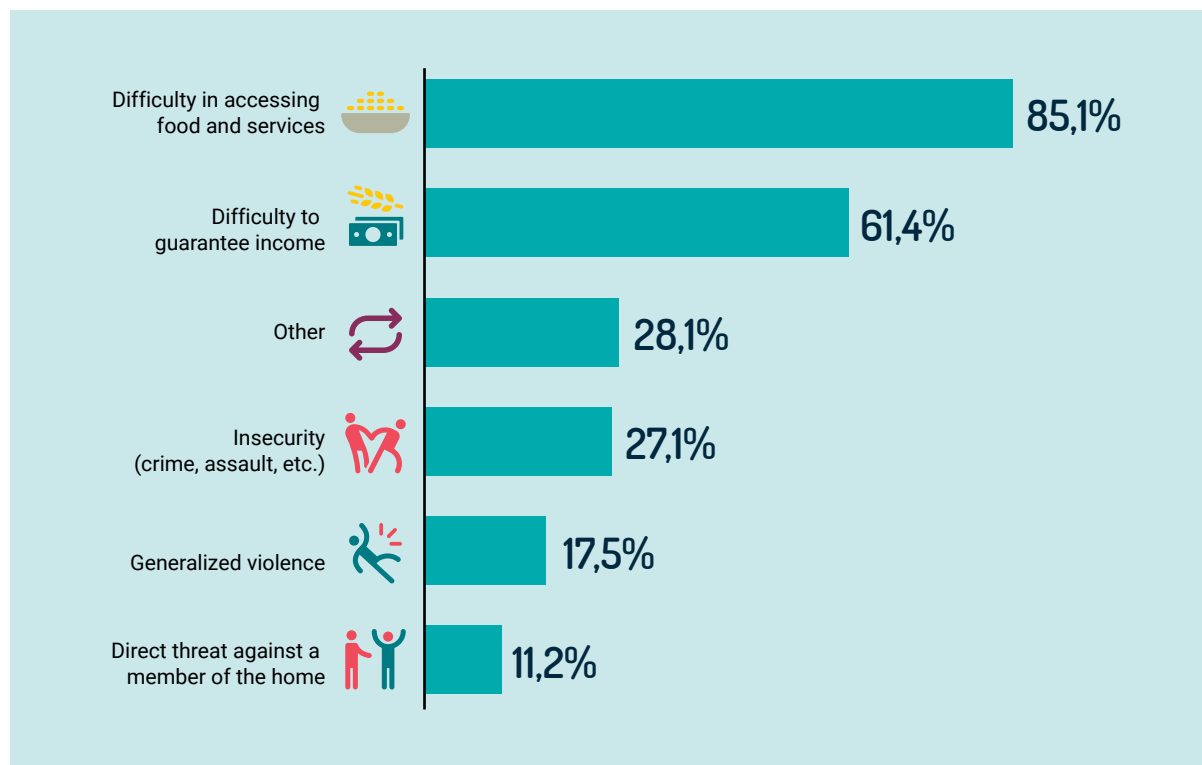
### 3.5.2. Perception of risks involved in their return to Venezuela

#### 3.5.2.1.

Regarding their return to Venezuela, 63.3% of the surveyed households agreed that they would face risks if they had to return to Venezuela. The main risks correspond are similar to the factors cited

as the causes of housing abandonment or risk of abandonment, which include: difficulties with or impossibility of accessing food, medical services, health, education or an adequate standard of living due to the economic situation (85.1%); and difficulties with or impossibility of guaranteeing an income for their household due to unemployment (61.3%).

Graph No. 29. Perception of risks in case of return to Venezuela



### 3.5.3. Incidents of housing abandonment in Venezuela

#### 3.5.3.1.

Compared to the Regional Evictions Survey, in which 27% of the refugees and migrants from Venezuela surveyed stated that they had suffered or witnessed a risk incident since leaving their country of origin, the Abandoned Housing Survey showed that just 16.5% of those surveyed stated that they had experienced or seen these types of incidents.

### 3.5.4. Documentation and immigration status of respondents

#### 3.5.4.1.

Regarding personal documentation, the majority (74.6%) of refugees and migrants from Venezuela stated that they had a valid or current identity card, passport or identity document at the time of answering the survey. This included 53% of respondents in Colombia, 65.2% of respondents in Ecuador and 55% of respondents in Peru. 40% of

respondents stated that their document had expired (identity card or passport): 40.3% in Colombia, 25.% in Ecuador and 32.22% in Peru.

#### 3.5.4.2.

Among the three countries, Colombia is the country with the highest number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela who have expired identity cards or passports (31.1% expired identity card or document, 9.1% expired passport), followed by Peru (14.7% expired identity card or document, 17.4% expired passport).

#### 3.5.4.3.

It is important to note that 50% of the people surveyed stated that they had entered their host country irregularly. When observing this trend in each country, Colombia is the country with the highest number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela with an irregular migratory status (76.5%)<sup>15</sup>, followed by Ecuador (46.1%) and Peru (26.8%)<sup>16</sup>. This is a trend that is contrary to what was evidenced in the Regional Evictions Survey, in which the host country with the highest number of regular entries was Colombia (more than 62% of respondents), followed by Ecuador (more than 48% of respondents).



It should be noted that the two surveys were conducted at two different moments in time. The Regional Evictions Survey was conducted in 2021 in the midst of lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which included heavy mobility restrictions at border crossings. The Abandoned Housing Survey was conducted in 2022 after these restrictions had been lifted and there possibly fewer controls on irregular entry into these countries.

#### 3.5.4.3.1.

It is notable that among the respondents who preferred not to state whether they had a regular or irregular entry into the host country (2.5%), 50% identified situations associated with violence (generalized violence, insecurity and direct threats against household members) as the main causes of abandonment or risk of abandonment of their homes in Venezuela. These situations could have contributed to their departure from the country, as well as their entry into the host country, and explain their willingness to not discuss the details of their entry.

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[15] The periodic report carried out by DRC/MMC in Colombia between October and November 2021 supports the results of this survey. 82.1% of the families that responded to this survey entered the country irregularly. Document available for consultation at: <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/colombia-informe-de-monitoreo-de-proteccion-de-octubre-y-noviembre-2021-drc>.

[16] The periodic report carried out by DRC/MMC in Peru corresponding to the January - March 2022 quarter indicated that 84.8% of the migrants who participated in this survey entered this country regularly. Document available for consultation at: [https://www.r4v.info/es/document/DRC\\_Informe\\_Monitoreo\\_de\\_Proteccion\\_Mar22](https://www.r4v.info/es/document/DRC_Informe_Monitoreo_de_Proteccion_Mar22).

#### 3.5.4.4.

In relation to asylum or refugee status, 52% of the respondents stated that they had no intention of applying for it, which is a higher percentage than what was identified in the Regional Evictions Survey (39.6%). A total of 8.3% of respondents have already applied for refugee status and are awaiting a decision, 6.2% of respondents have already applied but were rejected, 5.4% gave other responses and just 5% of respondents have refugee status. Ecuador is the country with the most respondents who have refugee status (6.5%), followed by Peru (4.4%) and Colombia (3.7%).

#### 3.5.4.5.

In addition to the above results, 22.8% of respondents stated that they intend to apply for refugee status even though they have not yet initiated the process. In the Regional Evictions Survey, this figure was 29% of all respondents. The reasons indicated by the respondents for not having filed their application include lack of information, the cost of the process, lack of documentation and lack of time.

These figures on respondents' intention to apply for refugee status should be taken into account by host countries when considering the provision of access to housing for refugee households through existing or planned programs. This is based on the host countries' obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention, which establishes that States have the responsibility to provide "the most favorable treatment possible" <sup>17</sup> in housing matters and cannot provide treatment that is less favorable than what is experienced by other foreigners in the country.

#### 3.5.4.6.

The survey results indicate that 36.6% of respondents do not have a residence permit or visa in the host country. This percentage was 44% in the Regional Evictions Survey. In Ecuador, this figure reached 59.3% of surveyed Venezuelan refugees and migrants, 58% in Colombia and 33.5% in Peru. Respondents with a visa or permanent residence permit for their host country was 4.6% of the population surveyed, which is almost the same percentage identified in the Regional Evictions Survey.

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[17] Article 21 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951).

### 3.5.4.7.

In terms of the relationship between the genders of the surveyed population and their possession of visas or other types of residence permits in the host countries, the results of this survey confirm those identified in the Regional Evictions Survey.

Compared to men, more women do not have any type of permit or visa (39% compared to 27.8% for men). This implies increased risks and difficulties when they try to obtain adequate housing or try to protect the housing that belongs to them.

## 4. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1

The survey identifies that the vast majority of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households surveyed in Ecuador, Colombia and Peru have abandoned their homes in Venezuela or consider that they are at risk of abandonment (77% of the households surveyed). Those affected by this situation are from 92 municipalities and the majority of states in Venezuela.



### 4.2

As in other surveys, most of the people surveyed were between 28 and 37 years of age and are generally female heads of households. This confirms that the majority of Venezuelan refugees and migrants are young people and women. The survey also identified that in cases where members of a household remain in Venezuela, in this population there is a high prevalence of people

with critical or chronic health conditions who do not have access to treatment or medicine (22.7%), elderly members (15.1%) and people suffering from a physical or mental disability (13.9%).

### 4.3

The survey reveals the precariousness of the housing conditions faced by refugee and migrant households due to the living conditions they experienced in Venezuela and the conditions of the housing they currently inhabit in the three host countries. Specifically, 72% of the households living in tenements or rooms in Ecuador, Peru and Colombia were households that lived in houses in Venezuela.

Across the three countries, 4.2% of the surveyed households live in improvised housing, informal settlements or public spaces that have deficient security and habitability conditions and are at risk of being affected by weather conditions or structural

issues. The improvement of housing or subsidies for refugee and migrant households in host countries, and not just those living in informal settlements, is essential for reducing the precariousness of their living conditions.

#### 4.4.

The most recurrent form of housing tenure in Venezuela among those surveyed is ownership, with nearly 76% of households owning their own home, (63.4% female-led households). However, 19.7% of those surveyed stated they did not have any document that accredits them as owners, which represents a high level of legal insecurity for the protection or recovery of their housing tenure.

#### 4.5.

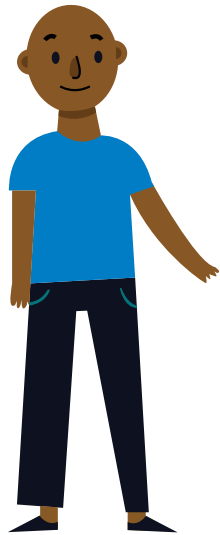
Regarding the form of acquisition of their housing among the respondents, the vast majority stated that it was a result of a purchase between individuals or inheritance, and to a lesser extent through the social housing provided by the "Gran Misión Vivienda Venezuela" government program. This finding may be associated with increased assistance provided to households that were beneficiaries of the government program as opposed to other homeowners. Home ownership is a key factor in migrant return processes and programs for the restitution of housing rights in the medium and long term. This issue will be fundamental in

relation to migrant return, specifically requiring the accreditation of ownership and other housing rights as well as access to justice and reparations if returning migrants have lost tenure of their homes.

#### 4.6

The two types of causes of housing abandonment or risk of abandonment in Venezuela identified by the surveyed households were economic factors and situations of violence, which in turn coincide with the risks that migrants may face in the event of returning to the country. The surveyed households indicated that government agencies and criminal groups (49.7% and 27.6% respectively) were primarily responsible for the abandonment or risk of abandonment of their homes.

These results can be explained by government actions causing the economic factors that led to the departure of the surveyed households from the country, as well as the presence of criminals as a factor that has increased violence and the perceptions of insecurity in Venezuela. However, when inquiring about the risks of dispossession of abandoned homes, the surveyed households stated that action by third parties were the greatest risk factor that could cause the dispossession of their homes. Based on this situation, 63.3% of the surveyed households agreed that there were risks if they returned to Venezuela.





## 4.7

In general, although the surveyed Venezuelan refugee and migrant households did not have access to institutional or government support to help protect their homes, nor to support programs delivered by social organizations, they had carried out a wide variety of family and community protection actions that should be recognized and strengthened in Venezuela by organizations working in the country.

## 4.8.

In contrast, renting is the predominant form of tenure for refugee and migrant households in the three host countries covered by this survey. Renting accounts for nearly 90% of their housing tenure, while just 2.1% of the households surveyed own their homes. These findings highlight the need to implement national and regional actions that ensure the ongoing protection of the tenancies of this population in host countries.

As part of protecting tenants in host countries, it is necessary to strengthen the prohibition of forced evictions in accordance with international human rights standards, as well as to study the possibility of establishing subsidies or support so that this population can pay their rent and public services. Another need is to facilitate their access to national and local public housing construction programs.

## 4.9.

The survey evidences that, in general, access to public services (water, energy and housing security) is better in the host countries compared to Venezuela. These better housing conditions of may be one of the reasons that many households to remain in their current place of residence (42.6% of the households surveyed). These households stated that their plan is to stay in these countries, despite the fact that 99.5% of the surveyed households did not have access to public housing programs in the host countries. Among all respondents, just two households in Peru reported participating in an urban land access program that allowed them to self-build their home.

It is evident that access to housing is one of the biggest problems faced by Venezuelan refugee and migrant families and affects their ability to achieve an adequate standard of living. In urban contexts in the three countries covered by this survey there are different limitations, which include: lack of special local and national programs that are open to Venezuelan refugee and migrant households; obstacles related to migratory status and identity documentation; and budgetary limitations that stop refugee and migrant households from being included in public housing programs.

#### **4.10.**

50% of the people surveyed stated that they had entered the host countries in an irregular manner. Colombia is the country with the highest number of refugees and migrants from Venezuela with irregular entry (76.5%), followed by Ecuador (46.1%) and Peru (26.8%), which is the opposite trend to that found in the Regional Evictions Survey. These findings can be explained by the fact that these studies were conducted at two different moments in time: the Regional Evictions Survey

was conducted in 2021 during lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which included mobility restrictions at border crossings. The Abandoned Housing Survey was conducted in 2022 after these restrictions had been removed and there were possibly fewer controls on irregular entry in the host countries. Irregular entry into host countries should not be an obstacle that affects the signing of rental agreements, nor should a person's irregular migratory status justify their eviction or limit their access to housing programs.

## 5. ANNEXES

### 5.1. Technical sheet of the survey

A total of 615 interviews were conducted between August 9 and August 22, 2022. The data were reviewed using a program with cleaning quality standards (HighFrequencyChecks), in accordance with World Bank and Innovations for Poverty Action good practices.



For cleaning, consideration was given to: submitted evidence, removal of outliers, enumerator errors, misunderstood questions, and other problems occurring during data collection.

After data cleaning and excluding those that did not match the survey profiles (137 persons), the sample then consisted of 478 interviews. Of the 615 Venezuelan refugee and migrant households surveyed in Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, 65.8% of households responded that they had abandoned their home in Venezuela and 12.8% of households considered the home at risk of abandonment. These two groups comprise 77.1% of the total respondents. Only 22.9% of the households that participated in the survey stated that their dwelling was not in either of these two circumstances.

Of those interviewed 75% were female, 24% were male, and 1% were of another gender identity. Interviews were conducted by 58 interviewers from

6 participating non-governmental organizations. Most of the interviews were conducted in Ecuador (182, 38.1%), Colombia (162, 33.9%) and Peru (134, 28%). The data collection exercise has some limitations that should be considered when making statements derived from the results. First, only refugees and migrants from Venezuela were of interest to the survey, so the statements cannot be extended to populations of other nationalities who are also displaced abroad.

The survey did not include nationals of the countries, so comparisons with the national population cannot be made. Secondly, there was no sampling frame of reference on abandoned housing in the region, as this is an area that had not been analyzed to date.

It should also be noted that this is the first time that a specific survey has been carried out in the region to determine the adequate housing situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, and especially their situation in relation to evictions in the host countries, which is why there is no comparative study prior to this survey that could be used.

Finally, the sample size was not calculated or weighted as proportional to the population of interest residing in those countries.

### 5.1.1. General information

The survey of refugees and migrants on abandoned housing and housing at risk of abandonment in Venezuela was initially conducted in Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. The total number of surveys conducted in these four countries was 649 households. These included: households that reported having abandoned their homes ; households that consider their homes to be at risk of abandonment; households that had not abandoned their homes and did not consider them to be at risk of abandonment. The analysis of results was conducted using 615 surveys after discarding some surveys for technical reasons (23), as well as the surveys conducted in Brazil (11) as they did not constitute a representative sample of this country.

The survey on housing that has been abandoned or is at risk of abandonment in Venezuela for refugees and migrants had 4 parts:

First: Characteristics of Venezuelan refugee and migrant households and individuals.

Second: Characterization of housing abandoned or at risk of abandonment by refugees and migrants in Venezuela and their housing in the host country.

Third: Circumstances of housing abandonment in Venezuela.

Fourth: Situations faced by refugees and migrants in host countries.

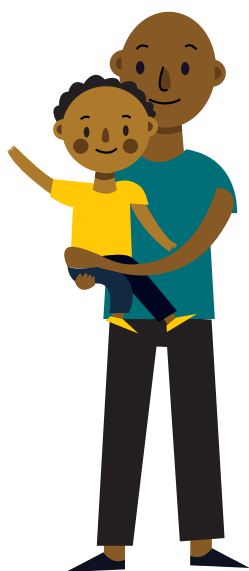
The different sections had the purpose of generating learning about the housing situation in Venezuela and host countries. It is important to mention that the survey was structured around the two main issues involved in respondents' housing situation in Venezuela: abandoned housing and housing at risk of abandonment.

### 5.1.2. Methodology

In addition to the aforementioned documentary review, interactions with experts in this field facilitated a better understanding of important aspects of the current housing situation in Venezuela. The result of this exercise was the *Trend Identification Report*, which contains a review of international experiences in restitution processes, specifically in socialist and communist bloc countries of Eastern Europe. A *Conceptual Framework* document was prepared in order to identify the key elements of housing tenure in Venezuela and other relevant aspects that were covered by the survey.

Based on these documents, the following selection criteria were designed for the application of the survey. The survey was aimed at people who:

1. Were of legal age (i.e., over 18 years of age), unless they were a head of household.



2. Belonged to a household of refugees or migrants from Venezuela whose home was located in Venezuela and:
  - a. had been abandoned by all of its members; or,
  - b. continued to be inhabited by one or more household members, but members of the households believe that the home is at risk of abandonment.
3. Were living outside of Venezuela at the time of answering the survey.
4. Reported their most recent departure from Venezuela when they had abandoned their home (or considered it at-risk). The event covered by the survey was their last exit from the country that was preceded by an abandonment or a risk of abandonment of housing in Venezuela.

A preliminary version of the survey was designed that took into account the objectives of the R4V Platform's Protection Sector. This survey adopted a qualitative approach to housing tenure in Venezuela and host countries. The original version of the survey was conducted with five

refugees and migrants from Venezuela in Bogota in order to observe its consistency and relevance. Adjustments were made to the survey following this exercise.

In addition, a pilot of this survey was carried out in the municipality of Soacha, Colombia, with the support from the GIFMM National Protection Sector. This pilot consisted in conducting the survey with 18 women refugees and migrants from Venezuela who participated in projects implemented by the Migrant Assistance Foundation (FAMIG), which is supported by UNHCR Colombia. At the end of this exercise, all of the participants' suggestions and concerns were collected, studied and integrated into the final version of the survey.

Finally, and with the support of the manual prepared for the organizations that helped carry out the survey, a training session was held before launching of the survey. This session provided information about the objectives of this study and its structure, as well as clarifying key elements in the survey. Comments and suggestions from the people responsible for conducting the survey in the different countries were collected, evaluated, and integrated into the questionnaire.



PROTECTION  
SECTOR



Inter-Agency Coordination  
Platform for Refugees and  
Migrants from Venezuela