



MTM

Mobility Tracking
Matrix

**BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA (VENEZUELA)
ROUND 2 PILOT: TÁCHIRA STATE**

1. INTRODUCTION

The ongoing political instability, deteriorating socioeconomic situation and growing insecurity and violence in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereinafter referred to as Venezuela) have led to the largest exodus in Latin America and the Caribbean's modern history. According to the latest official figures from the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination platform for Venezuela, over 5.1 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela have left the country seeking humanitarian assistance, protection and access to basic services and job opportunities abroad. Of these, 4.3 million are in the Latin America and the Caribbean region and it is expected that the outflows will continue, with an estimated 6.5 million individuals in the region by the end of 2020. In addition, there are also an estimated 2 million people making pendular movements between Venezuela and host countries. There is also a significant amount of population movement within Venezuela, however the latest census available is from 2011 and so mobility figures can only be estimated using demographic projections. In addition, the 2019 Venezuela Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) reported that seven million people need humanitarian assistance. However, to respond to this crisis stakeholders need reliable, timely information for evidence-based programming.

In this context, IOM has rolled out two Mobility Tracking Matrix (MTM) baselines. The first, conducted in September – October 2019 in the metropolitan district of Caracas and Táchira State, chosen due to their high population mobility and given that they were target states for the 2019 HRP. This created a network of key informants at parish level and demonstrated the high population mobility both internally and externally. Building on these existing networks this second pilot again found the high mobility reported in the first round and additionally that there has been an upward trend in people moving both internally and from outside Venezuela since late 2019. Additional questions were asked during the second round on household composition, remittances and access to basic services. Initial analysis of data collected in Táchira shows high levels of split households, mainly one parent or the elderly looking after minors and a prevalent reliance on remittances. Moreover, access to basic services is limited and priority needs are drinking water, fuel, electricity and food.

The existing vulnerabilities of the Venezuelan population have been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those living in host countries, mainly working in the informal sector, have been affected due to the loss of livelihoods and in some cases evictions due to physical distancing policies. In addition, it is impacting internal mobility in Venezuela and the needs of its population. Border closures between countries have severely affected the ability of the estimated two million pendular migrants to move between Venezuela and border countries. Given the reliance of the population on remittances, the loss of livelihoods of those sending money from outside the country and the impacts on pendular flows will acutely hit those inside Venezuela. Moreover, the lack of access to drinking water, fuel, electricity and food make them particularly vulnerable during a health crisis. Findings have also shown that the composition of Venezuelan households in surveyed areas and their access to basic surveys make them acutely vulnerable in the COVID-19 pandemic such as the presence of elderly-headed households. Therefore, there is a continued need for accurate, timely and comprehensive data on mobility, access to services and needs of the population within Venezuela and it is even more urgent in this context.

2. METHODOLOGY

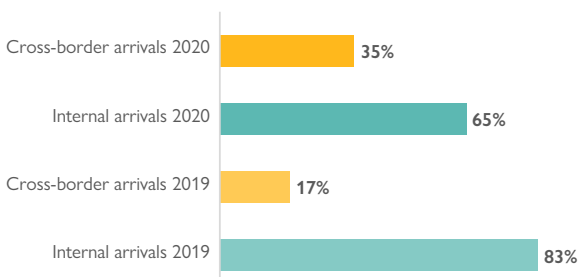
The first MTM pilot was conducted in September-October 2019 in the metropolitan district of Caracas and Táchira to capture baseline information on population mobility, triangulated through local registration exercises. Areas were selected based on levels of human mobility as informed by anecdotal evidence and regional flow monitoring surveys. Preparative cartographic work was then used to identify areas for assessment to Parish level. Key informants were identified by the network of trained enumerators (including community leaders such as education and religious personnel and local authorities). This first pilot created a network of key informants at sector level and demonstrated the high population mobility both internally and externally.

The aim of this second pilot in February-March 2020 was to confirm the findings of the first round and expand the type of information collected in the previous round, based on discussions with Humanitarian partners in Venezuela. Using the existing key informant network built on the first pilot the MTM expanded the data collection to include priority information needs from partners that includes information on population vulnerabilities (split households, remittances), population mobility trends and access to basic services. In total 154 sectors were surveyed in Táchira State. Data collection took place before the Government of Venezuela imposed a quarantine and movement restrictions as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic in all the parishes except Bolívar, Palotal and 9 out of 28 sectors of Junín Parish. As in the previous round, the profile of the interviewee was more commonly a community representative, educational personnel, and more rarely religious or humanitarian organization affiliates.

3. MOBILITY

The first quarter of 2020 (Jan-Mar) was characterised by a comparative increase in the number of arrivals to surveyed areas of Táchira state, both cross-border and from within Venezuela (Figure 1). However, the most marked increase is the percentage of cross-border arrivals when compared to internal arrivals.

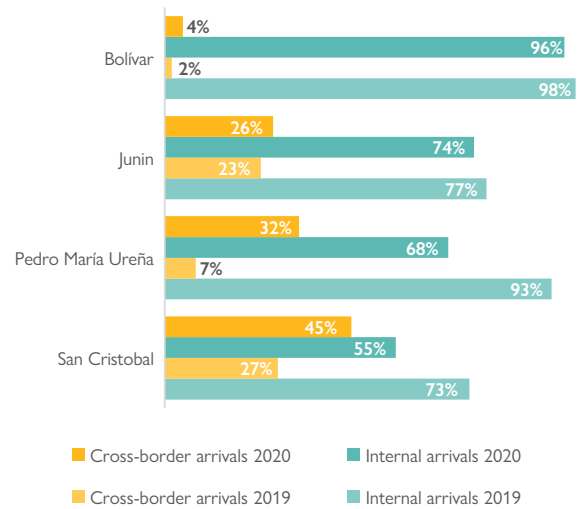
FIGURE 1
Proportion of arrivals to Táchira (2019 vs Jan-Mar 2020)



In 2019, 83 per cent of arrivals to Táchira came from another state in Venezuela and just 17 per cent from abroad. However, in the first quarter of 2020, there was a significant increase in the share of arrivals from abroad as they were 35 per cent of all arrivals.

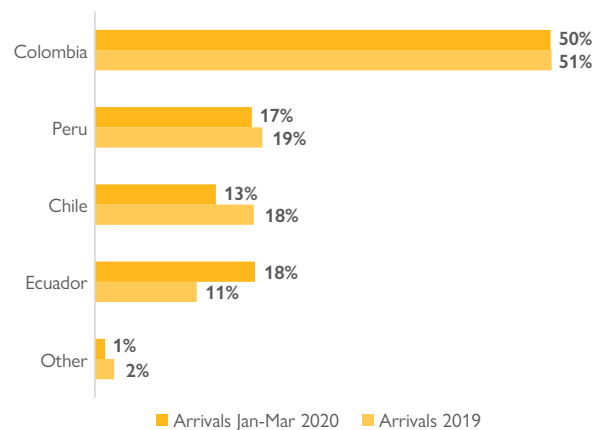
This increase is also visible when analysing the data at municipality level particularly in Pedro María Ureña and San Cristobal (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2
Percentage of cross-border vs internal arrivals to Táchira by Municipality



The trend is most prominent when analysing the comparative increase in the number of arrivals to Táchira from outside Venezuela when broken down by country (Figure 3). In general, there has been little change in the percentage breakdown per country, as 50 per cent are still coming from Colombia and the remainder nearly all from Ecuador, Peru and Chile.

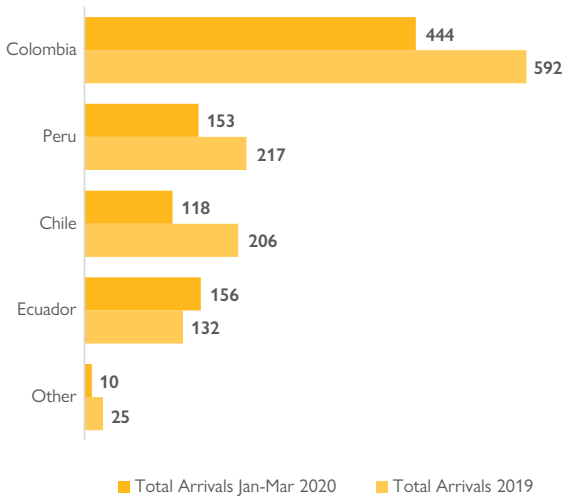
FIGURE 3
Arrivals to Táchira from outside Venezuela (% by Country)



However, while overall there were more arrivals from abroad to Táchira in 2019, for almost every main host country, there were already nearly as many in the first quarter of 2020 and for Ecuador, the number exceeded those who arrived in 2019 (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

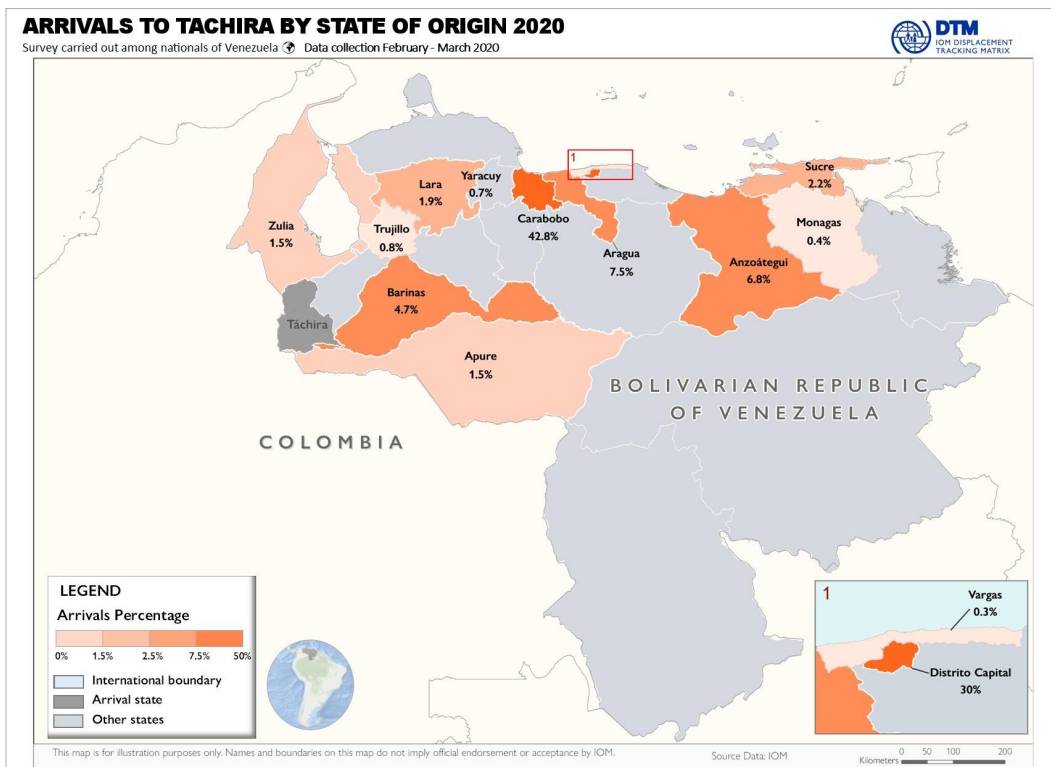
Arrivals to Táchira from outside Venezuela (by Country)



Those who arrived internally to Tachira came from 12 states. Most of them from just two states: Carabobo (42.8%) and Distrito Capital (30%) (Map 1).

MAP 1

Arrivals to Táchira by state of origin

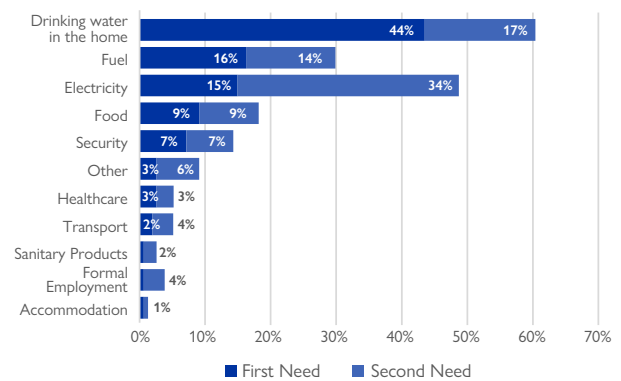


4. ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

Respondents were asked what services were not available to people in their sector and what their priority needs were. Access to drinking water was the most reported priority need, followed by access to fuel, electricity, food and security. These were also the most reported secondary needs (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5

First and second priority needs in Tachira



First and second needs of sectors by Parish

When broken down by parish it is clear to see that certain parishes require tailored assistance. For example, in Bolivar and Palotal Parishes 'Drinking water' was by far the most reported first priority need, whereas sectors in La Concordia, Pero Maria Morantes, San Juan Bautista and San Sebastian also reported Fuel, Electricity and Food. It is worth noting that Palotal parish consists of only one sector that only reported water as main need (Figure 6).

As displayed in Figure 6, 'Healthcare' was not viewed as a priority need by most sectors. Of the 9 Parishes surveyed, sectors in only four of them reported 'Healthcare' as a first need: Nuevo Arcadia (9% of sectors), Pedro María Ureña (6%), Junin (4%) and La Concordia (3%).

Electricity

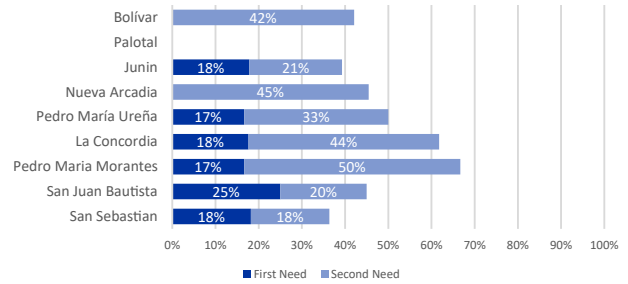
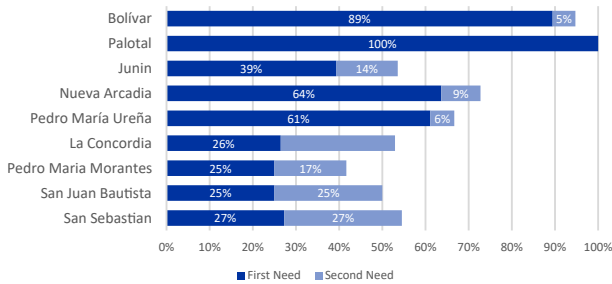


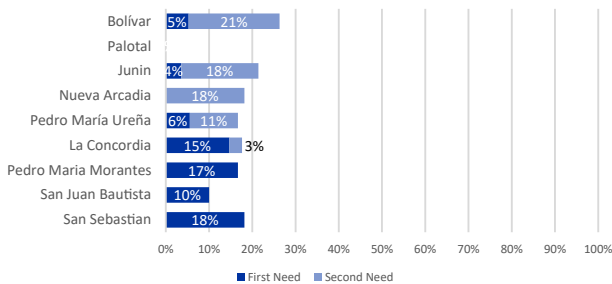
FIGURE 6

First and second priority needs in Tachira by Municipality

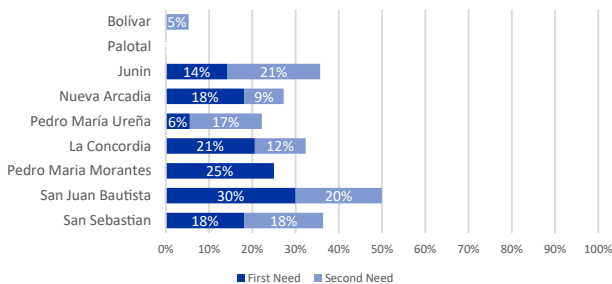
Drinking water in the home



Food



Fuel



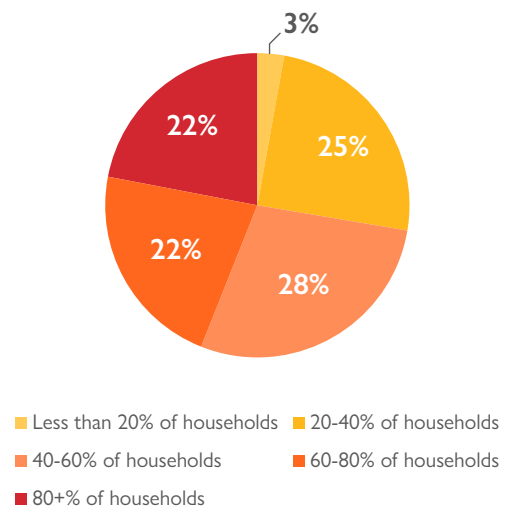
5. SPLIT HOUSEHOLDS

Given the large-scale population exodus from Venezuela, key informants were asked questions about household composition in their sector. In total, 99 per cent of sectors reported the presence of split households.

Out of all assessed sectors, only two reported that there were no split households and only three per cent of sectors reported that both parents were present in 80 per cent or more of households. In fact, 22 per cent reported that more than 80 per cent of households were split households (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7

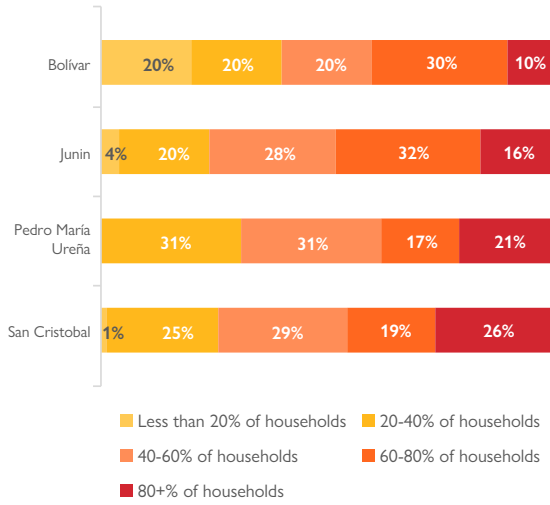
Split households in Táchira



When analysing the data at municipal level (Figure 8), it is notable that this situation is particularly prevalent in sectors in San Cristobal.

FIGURE 8

Proportion of households in Táchira without both parents present at municipal level

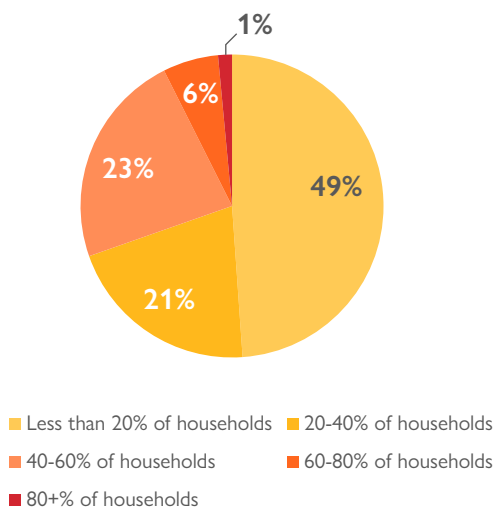


In terms of the composition of these split households, key informants reported the presence of household with one parent present, those with another family member as a head and those with non-family members.

More concerning in the current context, given their vulnerability to serious complications if infected by COVID-19, 75 per cent of sectors reported the presence of elderly-headed households. As the graph below (Figure 9) illustrates in seven per cent of sectors more than 60 per cent of households are elderly-headed. In addition, in 19 per cent of sectors reported the presence of minor-headed households.

FIGURE 9

Proportion of households with elderly head of household

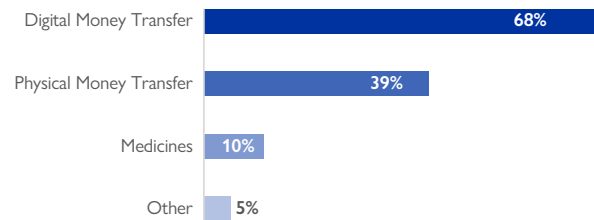


6. REMITTANCES

Key informants were asked whether people in their sector were receiving remittances and, if so, how were they receiving them. Households are reportedly receiving remittances in the vast majority of sectors (95%). While the most reported type of remittance was a digital money transfer, physical transfers of money and medicine were also reported (Figure 10).

FIGURE 10

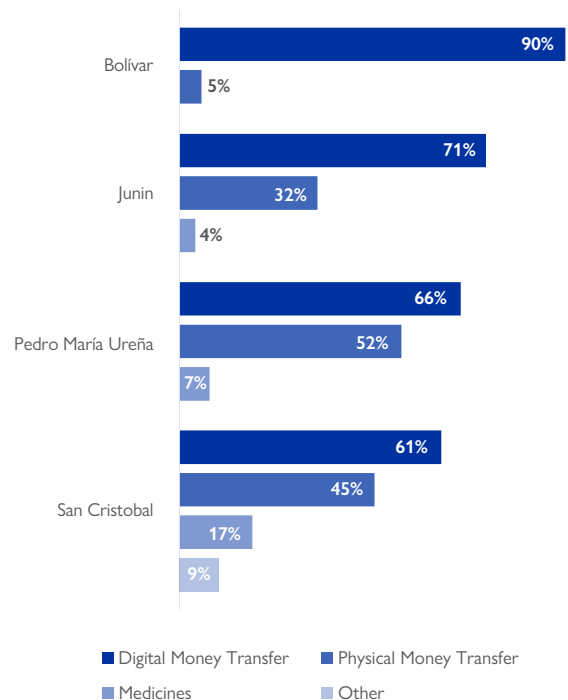
Type of remittances in Táchira



In Bolívar Municipality, nearly all remittances were received by digital money. However, Pedro María Ureña and San Cristóbal had comparatively higher proportions of remittances received physically (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11

Type of remittances in Táchira by Municipality



In addition, San Cristobal was the only Municipality receiving non-monetary or medicinal remittances where 6 Parishes (8%) reported receiving 'Ropa zapatos' and 1 Parish (1%) reported receiving 'Repuestos para vehiculo'. These and a reliance on physical transfers makes households particularly vulnerable given the border with Colombia has been closed due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, with access only open formally through the designated humanitarian corridor:

7. CONCLUSIONS

Results from the second pilot MTM in Táchira State show that there has continued to be high population mobility with an increase in the share of cross-border arrivals compared to internal arrivals in the first quarter of 2020 and made up 35 per cent of all arrivals compared to 17 per cent in 2019. Additional questions collected also highlight key vulnerabilities in the population, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Households in surveyed sectors reportedly lack access to drinking water, fuel, electricity and security, key infrastructure necessary for responding to a pandemic and stay-at-home movement restrictions. In addition, the widespread presence of split households (99% of sectors), particularly elderly-headed households (75% of sectors) and minor-headed households (19% of sectors) are vulnerable in terms of access to livelihoods and COVID-19 itself. This is combined with a high level of reliance on remittances (both digitally and physically transferred) in a context where the informal economy has largely collapsed across the Latin America and the Caribbean region and there are strict border closures. For the families left in Venezuela a reduction in remittances from the 4.3 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela or the more than a million making pendular movements is likely to drastically impact an already highly vulnerable population.

MTM

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