Currently, South America is a region of origin, transit and destination of international migrants. There are changes in the direction, intensity and composition of population movements compared to previous years.

### 2019 Migration Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Immigration</th>
<th>Emigration</th>
<th>Immigration as % of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOMBIA</strong></td>
<td>1,724,508</td>
<td>2,869,032</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECUADOR</strong></td>
<td>757,786</td>
<td>1,183,685</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERU</strong></td>
<td>1,043,187</td>
<td>1,512,920</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOLIVIA</strong></td>
<td>160,535</td>
<td>878,211</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHILE</strong></td>
<td>1,201,357</td>
<td>650,151</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ARGENTINA</strong></td>
<td>2,266,564</td>
<td>1,013,414</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VENEZUELA</strong></td>
<td>1,375,609*</td>
<td>4,769,498</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Due to space limitations, we will refer to the Plurinational State of Bolivia as ‘Bolivia’ and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as ‘Venezuela’. 

Source: Developed by the authors based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (20192) and data from Response for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V3).
Currently, the intra-regional migrant population stands out above the extra-regional. This is partly explained by the lack of renewal of the massive European immigration of the twentieth century, and by the increasing regional flows of recent decades.

In South America there are about 10 million immigrants from different countries of the region and the world.

**RECENT DYNAMICS**

Intra-regional migration has grown at a faster rate than migration to more developed countries. In comparison to 2010, the number of intra-regional migrants in South America has reached almost that of South Americans residing in other parts of the world. The relative size between these two migratory stocks was reduced from 2 (2010) to 1.1 (2019).

Currently, the intra-regional migrant population stands out above the extra-regional. This is partly explained by the lack of renewal of the massive European immigration of the twentieth century, and by the increasing regional flows of recent decades.

*This document reports the migratory situation of South American countries as of December 2019. The migratory dynamics of 2020 will be certainly affected due to COVID-19 pandemic (declared by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020) Other measures taken by the countries include: the restriction on the entry of foreigners, extension of residence permits, new forms of immigration procedures (online), etc.*
In comparison to 2015, the number and percentage of intra-regional immigration in South America increases, mainly due to Venezuelan migration.

Colombia and Peru register the largest increase in absolute and relative terms of South American immigration, a situation related with Venezuelan migration in recent years.

Although the number of South Americans has doubled, Brazil remains one of the countries with the lowest percentage of South American migrant population (29% in 2015 and 44.4% in 2019).
In recent years, the number of non-South American immigrants has increased as the result of growing migration from Caribbean, African and Asian countries.

**EXTRA-REGIONAL MIGRATION**

Caribbean, African and Asian migration is highly visible and extremely vulnerable due to language barriers, cultural differences and difficult access to regularization and, consequently, to registered work.

**SOUTH-SOUTH MIGRATION**

In South America the main migratory corridors are constituted both by bordering and non-bordering countries.

### MIGRATORY CORRIDORS - 2019

*Intra-regional migration has been favored by the approval of new regulatory and institutional frameworks at the national level and integration agreements at the regional level facilitates residency and circulation.*

**REGIONAL MIGRATORY REGULATION**

**BORDERING COUNTRIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,630,903</td>
<td>Venezuela in Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>690,948</td>
<td>Paraguayans in Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205,609</td>
<td>Peruvians in Chile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NON-BORDERING COUNTRIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>863,613</td>
<td>Venezuelans in Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120,626</td>
<td>Colombians in Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>198,744</td>
<td>Peruvians in Argentina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESIDENCE PERMITS GRANTED THROUGH THE MERCOSUR RESIDENCE AGREEMENT (2015-2018)**

*In South America the main migratory corridors are constituted both by bordering and non-bordering countries.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>838,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>210,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>152,978</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CARIBBEAN MIGRATION

In recent years, the presence of Caribbean nationals in the region has increased, mainly from Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba.

AFRICAN MIGRATION

In recent years, the African population has increased and new nationalities of origin are registered (countries from Horn of Africa, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, among others).

THE MAIN AFRICAN NATIONALITIES IN SOUTH AMERICA ARE ANGOLAN, MOROCCAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN.

ASIAN MIGRATION

Asian immigration is long-standing, particularly from the People’s Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. Also, new nationalities of origin are observed: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Arab Syrian Republic among others, although of low population impact in quantitative terms.

THE MAIN ASIAN NATIONALITIES IN SOUTH AMERICA ARE CHINESE, JAPANESE AND KOREAN.

TRANSIT REGION

South America is a final destination as well as a transit region for migrants. They pass through the Darien Gap (Colombia-Panama border) heading north toward USA and Canada.

DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 2019, AROUND 15,000 CASES OF SMUGGLED MIGRANTS WERE REGISTERED (MOSTLY OF NATIONALS FROM HAITI, CUBA, CAMEROON, INDIA AND ANGOLA).
Globally, there are around 17 million South American emigrants, of which almost 8 million live in the region. Currently, three countries concentrate 55% of the emigrated population: Venezuela (4.7M*), followed by Colombia (2.8M) and thirdly Brazil (1.7M).

Destinations of extra-regional emigration and main South American countries of origin-2019

Extra-regional emigration is concentrated mainly towards already historical destinations such as the United States of America, Europe (mainly Spain and Italy), Canada and Japan.

* According to R4V website, as of March 2020, the emigrated Venezuelan population amounts to 4,933,920.
RECENT DYNAMICS

In recent years, the number of South Americans emigrating has increased. However, the growth rate slows down between 2010 and 2019.

The United States is the American country where the largest number of South American migrants reside. The growth of Venezuelan nationals stands out, which doubles in five years.

In Europe, Spain is the country with the highest number of South American migrants, with the Venezuelan population standing out, doubling between 2015 and 2019.

---

1. In the case of Venezuela, immigration figures remain high because the information from UNDESA (2019) would not include, for example, the half million nationals of Colombia returned from Venezuela. Information available on a Press Release: https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/en/pressrelease/news/


6. Own elaboration based on information provided by the National Directorate of Migrations- Argentina, Foreigners and Migration Department- Chile and Ministry of Justice and Public Security-Brazil.


This publication is part of a series of reports on migration produced by the Migration Analysis Unit of the IOM Regional Office for South America.

South America Regional Office
www.robuenosaires.iom.int

@OIMSuramerica  @OIMSuramerica