

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR MIGRANT WOMEN IN MEXICO



World Union of
Catholic Women's
Organisations





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Introduction

In recent decades, global migratory movements have acquired an unprecedented magnitude, generating humanitarian crises at various borders. Latin America has not been exempt from these phenomena and is characterised as a region of intense intra-regional migratory flows. Structural factors such as economic inequality, lack of employment, limited access to basic services, widespread violence and the effects of climate change are among the main causes of this massive displacement (Pedemonte Rojas et al., 2021; IOM, 2020). However, the experience of migrant women in this context presents specific dynamics that require special analysis.

The feminisation of migration flows in Latin America and the Caribbean is a recent phenomenon that deserves more academic and political attention. According to global data, women represent approximately 48% of the international migrant population (DESA, 2021), a proportion that, despite its relevance, has not received adequate focus in terms of migration research and governance. In this context, women face multiple forms of structural, symbolic and everyday violence during the migration process, exacerbated by their gender and migration status. This violence is intimately linked to dynamics of economic and social inequality that affect countries of origin as well as transit and destination countries (IDB-OECD, 2021; Vidal, 2021).

There are significant gaps in migration data, particularly with regard to the gender of the individual. Gender is an important factor at all stages of the migration experience: from the decision to migrate and crossing borders, to working or settling in the destination country. The lack of data has implications for global migration governance, as well as for migrant women themselves, while making it difficult to achieve the 2030 Agenda's goal of *leaving no one behind*

In particular, access to justice is one of the main barriers for migrant women, who often face discrimination based on their gender and nationality, and are made invisible as well by public policies. In Mexico, a key destination and transit country, the legal and political context limits the possibilities for these women to access legal resources and support services, perpetuating their vulnerability. (Vidal, 2021; Willers, 2016). This problem is exacerbated in contexts where corruption, impunity and lack of a gender perspective dominate the institutions responsible for protecting their rights.

The violence, injustice and social precariousness faced by migrants in the region - especially women - are not a central issue on the public agenda, and the problem tends to go unnoticed, silenced and made invisible by the political, economic and social elites. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), both lay and religious, play a fundamental role in the care of this population. These entities not only provide immediate assistance, but also document the experiences and needs of migrant women, generating valuable knowledge that makes their realities visible.

Hence, approaching the study of the phenomenon through the efforts of these organisations allows for a privileged approach to the vulnerabilities, demands and most urgent needs of migrant women in the region. With this objective in mind, this study contacted and interviewed 234 migrant women (167 international and 67 internal), who are assisted by these non-governmental organisations throughout the region, in order to provide a specific account of the migratory experiences of women who arrive in or move within Mexican territory.

The data shown in this research comes from a self-administered survey of international and internal migrant women moving through Mexico conducted by the World Women's Observatory (WWO) of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO), which examines issues related to the reasons for the decision to migrate and access to justice during the migration journey.

Therefore, the results presented in this report reflect the responses of the migrant women surveyed, without constituting a representative sample of all migrant women at the regional level. The contribution of this research is to provide a first approach to the phenomenon under study, and to a population group that is invisible in terms of migration, which represents an initial starting point for future research.

All of this is analysed according to topics of interest, mainly according to their origin, age, ethnic descent and those with whom the migration process took place.

Methodology and sample

In order to investigate the reasons for migration and access to justice, both for women who arrive in Mexico from different countries on the Latin American continent, as well as for Mexican or foreign citizens residing in the country who move around the territory, this study uses a quantitative methodology for the collection of information. The technique used was an online questionnaire provided by the Google Forms platform.

The questionnaire was applied during four months, from May to August 2024, to migrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean residing in Mexico and to internal migrants. Contact with them was achieved through the network of correspondent women social leaders built by WUCWO in 2023 linked to this phenomenon, the support of fellow organisations and the generosity of 18 shelters, which selflessly opened their doors so that we could meet face to face with migrant women and hear them first-hand.

A total of 234 migrant women responded to the survey (167 international and 67 internal). Therefore, the results presented in this report are not representative of the experiences of all Latin American migrant women, nor of the relative weight of this population in the countries that comprise it, but only express the findings and percentages of different indicators of women's responses.

The countries of origin of the migrant women who participated are: Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.

1. Description of the sample of migrant women surveyed from Latin America and the Caribbean

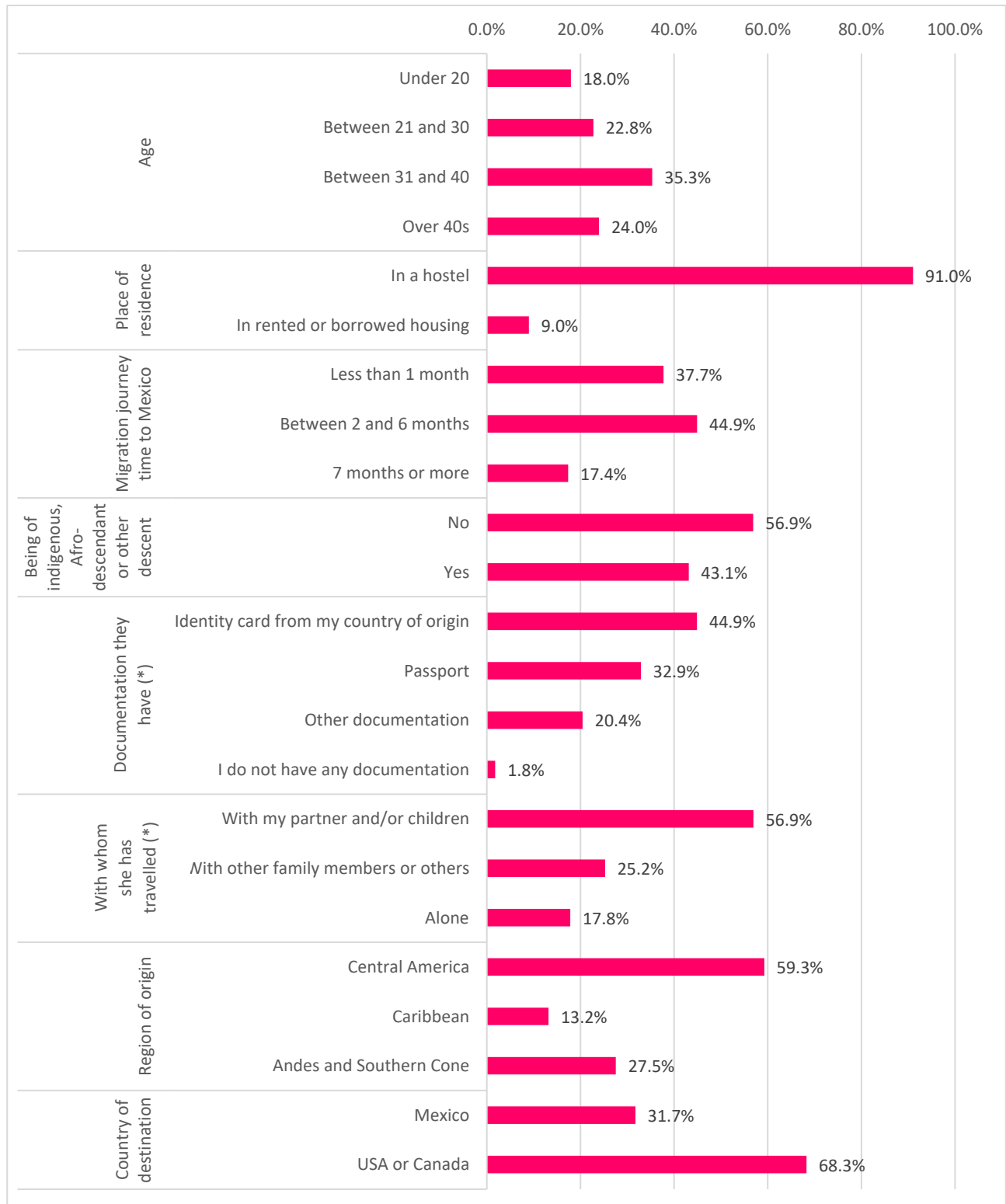
1.1. International migrants

First, an analysis is presented of the population of migrant women arriving in Mexico from different Latin American and Caribbean countries, which we will refer to as **international migrant women**. It is observed that:

- The sample of international migrant women over the age of 18 arriving in Mexico has a diverse age distribution. 35.5% of respondents are between 31 and 40 years old, followed by those over 40 (24.0%).
- Regarding the conditions of residence upon arrival in Mexico, the majority of the international women surveyed (91.0%) live in shelters, while only a minority of them (9.0%) have access to rented or borrowed accommodation. This suggests a situation of predominant vulnerability, with the majority relying on temporary assistance structures.
- The time spent on the migration journey varies considerably, but 44.9% of international women migrants take between 2 and 6 months to reach Mexico, followed by 37.7% of international respondents who arrive in less than a month.
- A significant proportion of international migrant women are of indigenous, Afro-descendant or other descent (43.1%), while 56.9% do not identify with these categories.
- In terms of documentation with which they arrive, the majority of international migrant respondents have some form of identification from their country of origin (44.9%), while 32.9% of their responses indicate that they have a passport. Only 1.8% of the responses they gave showed that they lacked any kind of documentation.
- Regarding company during the journey, more than half of the international migrant women surveyed (56.9%) reported travelling with their partner and/or children, reflecting a family migration dynamic. Some 25.2% do so with other family members or companions, and only 17.8% undertake the journey alone, which could indicate greater risks for the latter.
- In relation to region of origin, the majority of international migrant women who participated in the survey come from Central America (59.3%), followed by women from the Andes and the Southern Cone (27.5%) and the Caribbean (13.2%). This shows the importance of intra-regional migration flows to Mexico.
- Finally, the desired destination for most international migrant women is not Mexico, with 68.3% aiming to reach the United States or Canada. Only 31.7% plan to settle in Mexico, which could imply that the country is seen more as a transit point than as a final destination.

Figure 1. International migrants: Composition of the sample of migrant women according to variables of interest.

In percentages of the sample of international migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

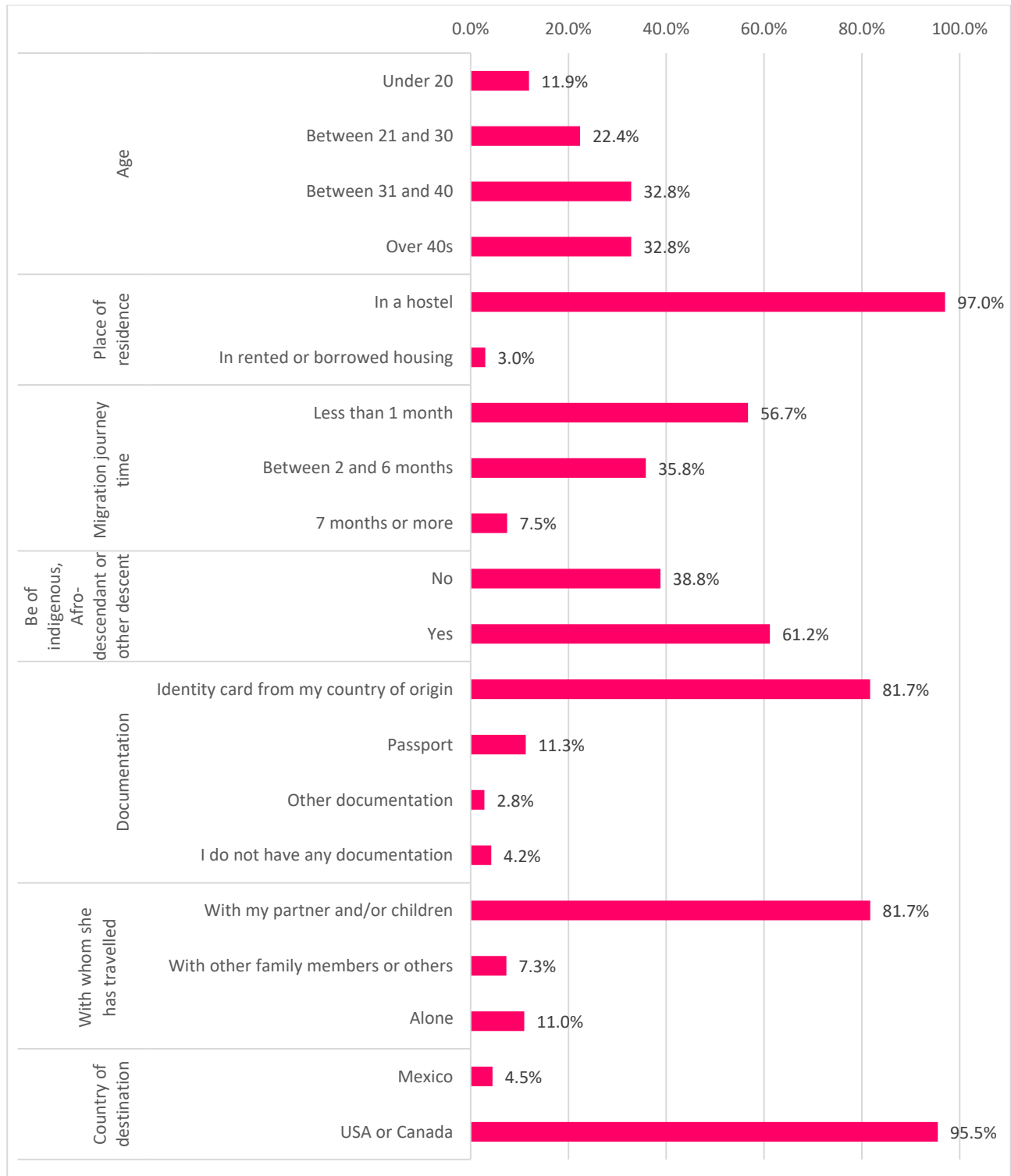
1.2. Internal migrants

And now the analysis continues with migrant women with Mexican citizenship or residence who move within the territory, which we will call **internal migrant women**. It is observed that:

- The majority of the internal migrant women surveyed are over 30 years old. Of these, 32.8% are between 30 and 40 years old, and 32.8% are over 40 years old. Those under 20 years of age represent 11.9%, while 22.4% are between 20 and 30 years of age.
- 97% of internal migrant women live in shelters, while 3% live in rented or borrowed housing. This indicates that shelters are the main refuge during the migration process.
- More than half (56.7%) of the women reported having migrated internally less than one month ago. Of these, 35.8% reported journeys of two to six months, and 7.5% migrated seven months or more ago.
- 61.2% of internal migrant women have indigenous, Afro-descendant or other descent, while 38.8% do not.
- The majority of internal migrants (81.7%) have an identity document. Only 11.3% of them have a passport, 2.8% have another type of documentation, and a worrying 4.2% lack any type of document. The latter is particularly relevant if their final destination is not Mexico.
- According to the responses of the internal migrant women surveyed, the majority (81.7%) travelled with their partner and/or children. 11% of the responses indicate that they travelled alone.
- 95.5% of female internal migrants have the United States or Canada as their final destination. Only 4.5% plan to remain in Mexico.

Figure 2. Internal migrants: Composition of the sample of female migrants according to variables of interest.

In percentages of the sample of internal migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

2.

3. Access to justice in Mexico

This large section explores different aspects of access to justice in Mexico for the migrant women surveyed, in terms of whether they are international or internal migrants. The sub-sections are: access to information on migrant rights, experience of violation of migrant rights, complaints and reasons for not reporting cases of rights violations, obstacles and possible improvements.

3.1. Access to information on migrant rights

Beginning with this sub-section, here we look at different aspects related to accessing and holding information, and the institutions that provide assistance on the dissemination of migrants' rights.

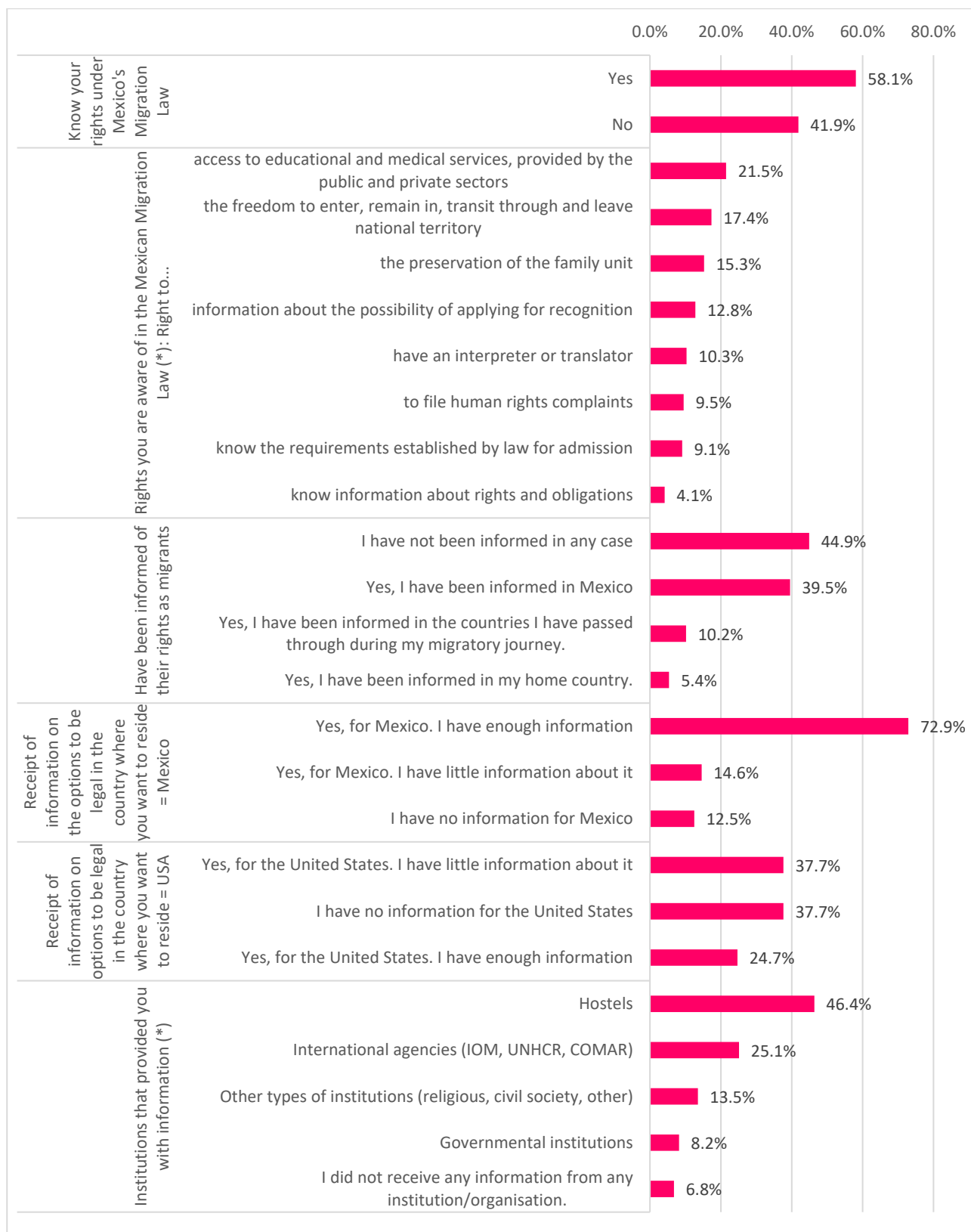
3.1.1. International migrants

With regard to international migrant women:

- 58.1% of them are aware of their rights under Mexico's Migration Law, while 41.9% are unaware of them. Among the rights most frequently mentioned by international migrant women are: access to educational and medical services (21.5%) and freedom of movement within the country (17.4%). However, essential rights such as the possibility to file human rights complaints (9.5%) or to have an interpreter (10.3%) are less known, which may limit their ability to defend their basic protections.
- - Mexico is the country where migrants are most often informed upon arrival in the country (39.5%), followed by transit countries (10.2%) and, to a lesser extent, by countries of origin (5.4%). Nevertheless, almost half of the international women surveyed (44.9%) did not receive information about their rights at any point during their migration journey.
- The majority of women with Mexico as their final destination have sufficient information to regularise their status in Mexico (72.9%). Regarding the United States as a final destination for international migrant women, only 24.7% have adequate information, while 37.7% have limited or no information at all. This reflects a disparity in access to information between the two countries.
- Shelters are the main institution providing information for the international migrants surveyed (46.4%), followed by international organisations such as IOM and UNHCR (25.1%). Governmental institutions provide information to only 8.2%, indicating a limited role in assisting this population. A small percentage (6.8%) did not receive information from any source, leaving these women in a more vulnerable situation.

Figure 3. International migrants: Indicators of access to information on migrant rights.

In percentages of the sample of international migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

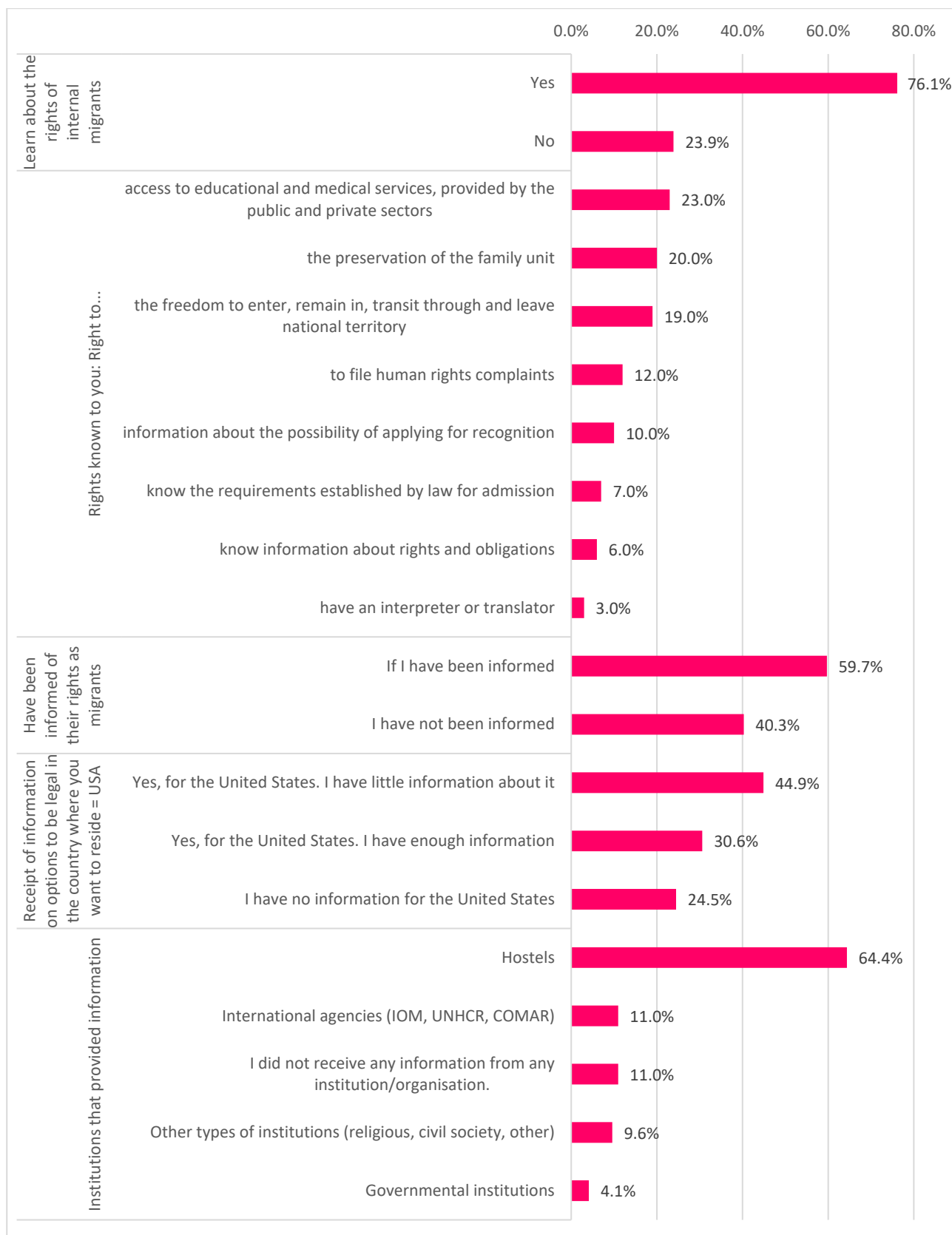
3.1.2. Internal migrants

And with regard to internal migrant women:

- The majority of internal migrant women moving through Mexico (76.1%) claim to be aware of the established constitutional rights of a social nature for migrant citizens and residents, while 23.9% are not aware of these rights. Among the most recognised rights, access to education and health services are the most prominent in terms of their responses (23.0%), preservation of family unity (20.0%) and freedom to transit and reside in Mexican territory (19.0%). Lesser known rights include the possibility of having an interpreter (3.0%) and information about rights and duties (6.0%).
- 40.3% of internal migrant women stated that they had not received any information about their rights as migrants within their own territory. However, 59.7% of them report that they have been informed about it.
- Regarding female internal migrants whose final destination is the United States, 30.6% of them indicate that they have sufficient information, while 44.9% say they have little information and 24.5% have no information at all.
- Shelters are the main source of information, representing 64.4%. They are followed by international organisations such as IOM, UNHCR or COMAR (11.0%) and religious or civil society organisations (9.6%). Only 4.1% received information from governmental institutions, and a worrying 11.0% received no information from any source.

Figure 4. Internal migrants: Indicators of access to information on migrant rights.

In percentages of the sample of internal migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

3.2. Experience of violation of migration rights

This subsection presents the findings regarding international migrant women's experiences of rights violations during their migration process and as they transit through Mexican territory.

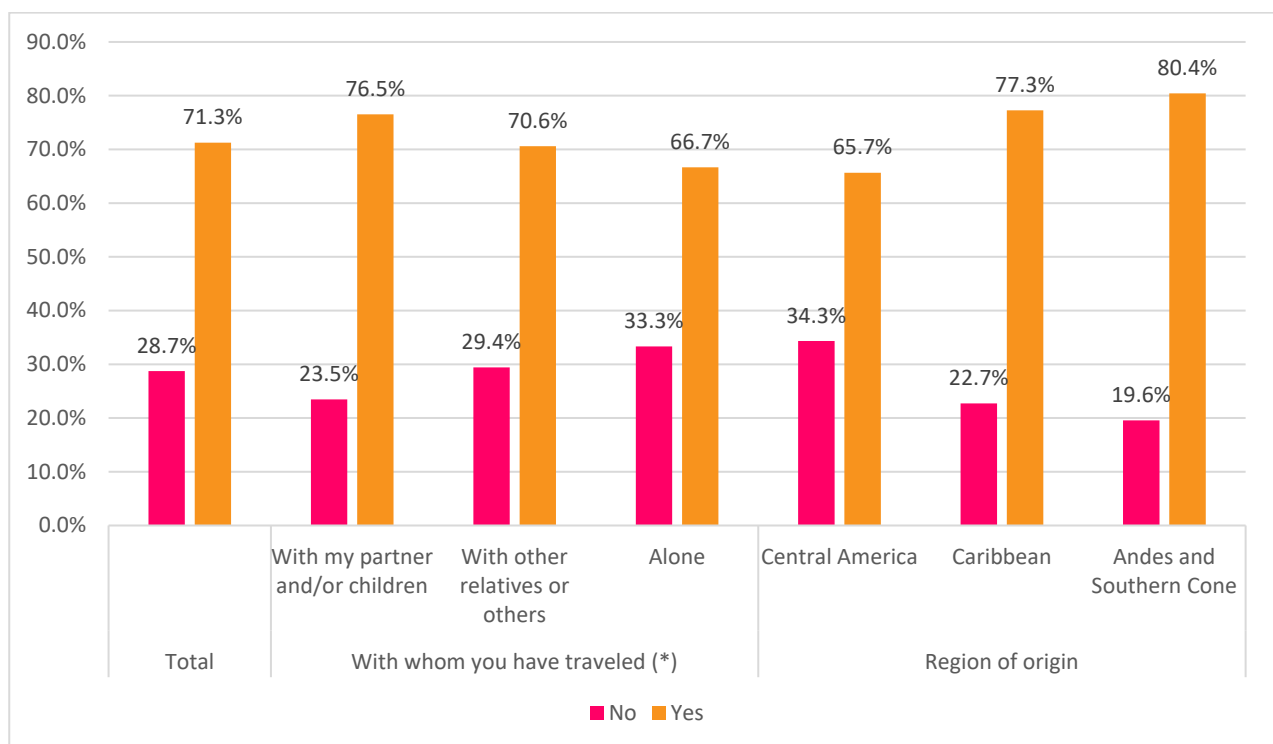
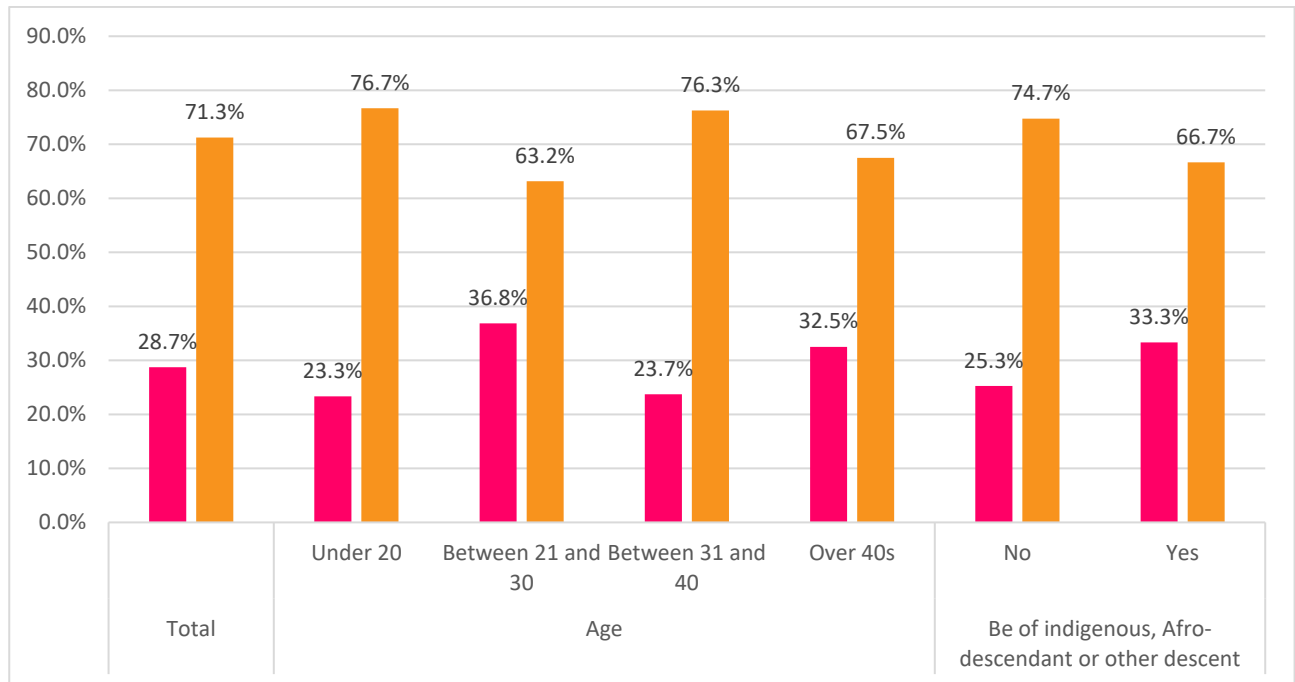
3.2.1. International Migrants

Firstly, it is noted that of international migrant women:

- 71.3% of them report having suffered violations of their rights during the migratory process. This reflects a high incidence of situations of vulnerability and lack of protection, which shows serious deficiencies in the guarantee of rights for this population.
- While more than half of migrant women of all ages reported having experienced violations of their rights, the youngest (under 20 years) and the oldest (over 30 years) had the highest rates of rights violations (76.7% and 76.3% respectively).
- A higher proportion of women of non-indigenous, Afro-descendant or other report having been victims of violations of their rights (74.7%) compared to those with such descent (66.7%). Although the difference is not drastic, it points to possible differences in routes, support networks or levels of exposure to risks.
- 76.5% of women travelling with a partner or children reported that their rights had been violated, while the proportion was 70.6% for those travelling with other family members and 66.7% for those travelling alone. Although the risk is slightly lower for those travelling alone, the differences are not significant.
- Women from the Andes and the Southern Cone have the highest incidence of rights violations (80.4%), followed by women from the Caribbean (77.3%) and Central America (65.7%). This could be related to factors such as the length of the journey or the conditions of the migratory routes.
- The violations of migration rights experienced by migrant women take many forms, reflecting a high level of vulnerability in different aspects of their migration process. Some 33.6% of international migrant women report having been victims of a crime, such as extortion, human trafficking or abuse, and 32.9 per cent express fear of being detained, not knowing what to do in such a situation.

Figure 5. International migrants: Experiencing rights violations as migrants by age group, ethnic descent, who they travelled with and region of origin.

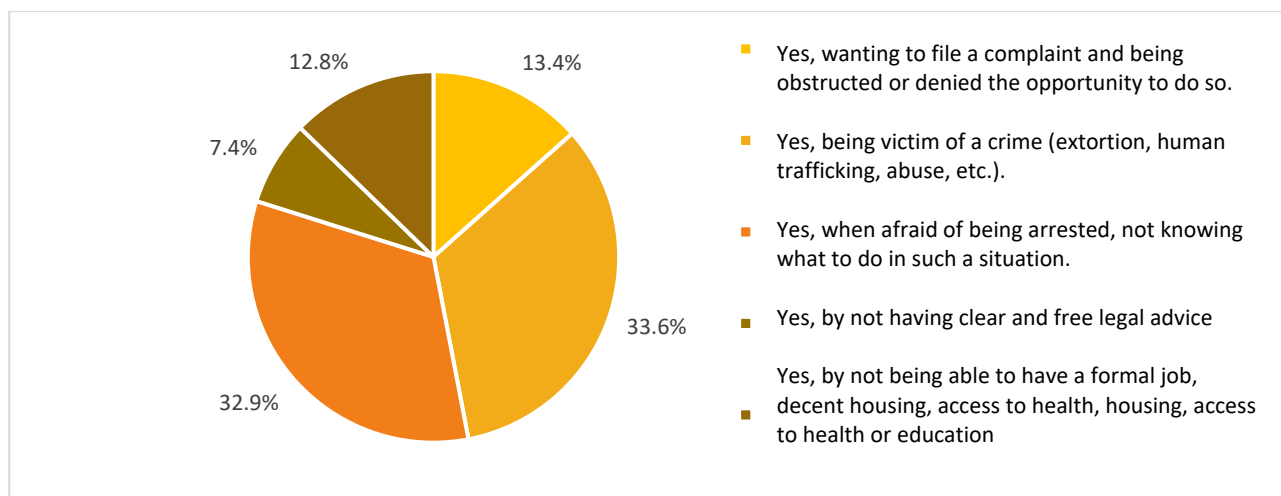
In percentages of the sample of international migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

Figure 6. International migrants: Type of rights violation based on migrant status.

In percentages of responses from the sample of international migrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

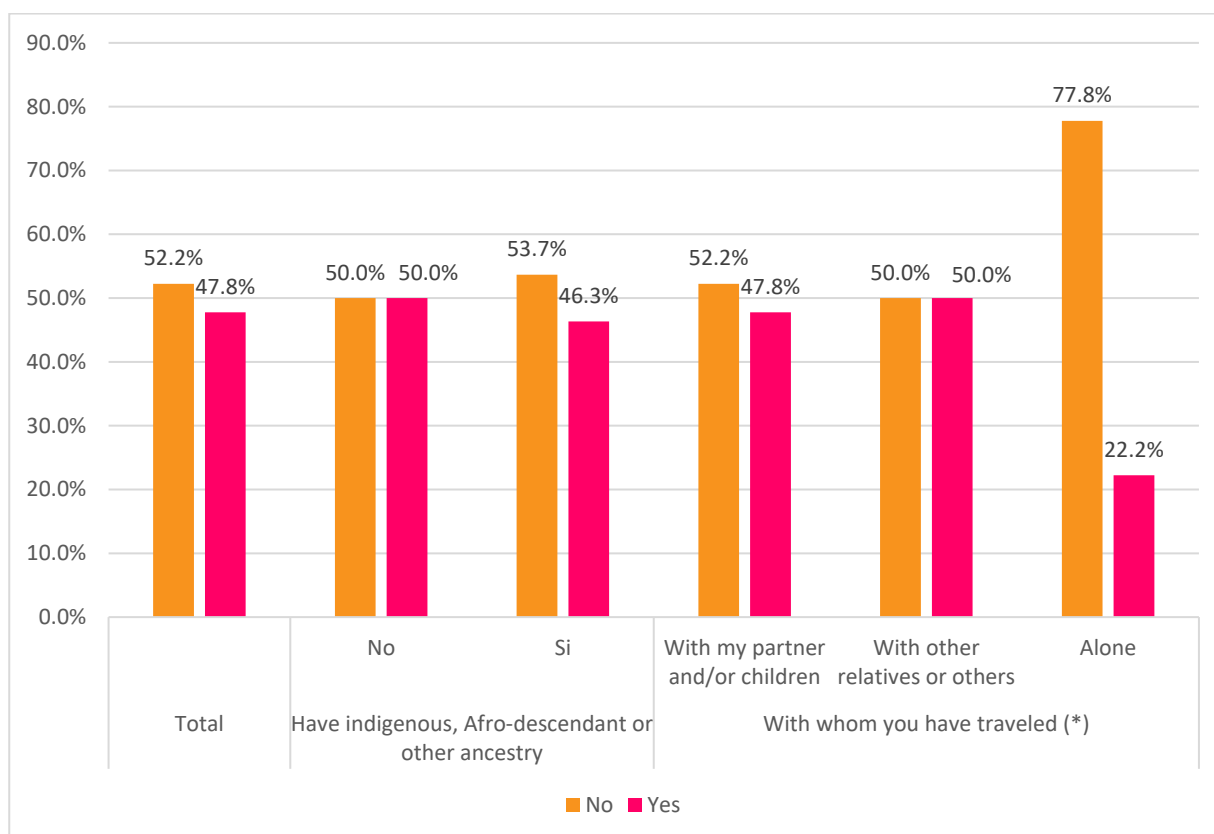
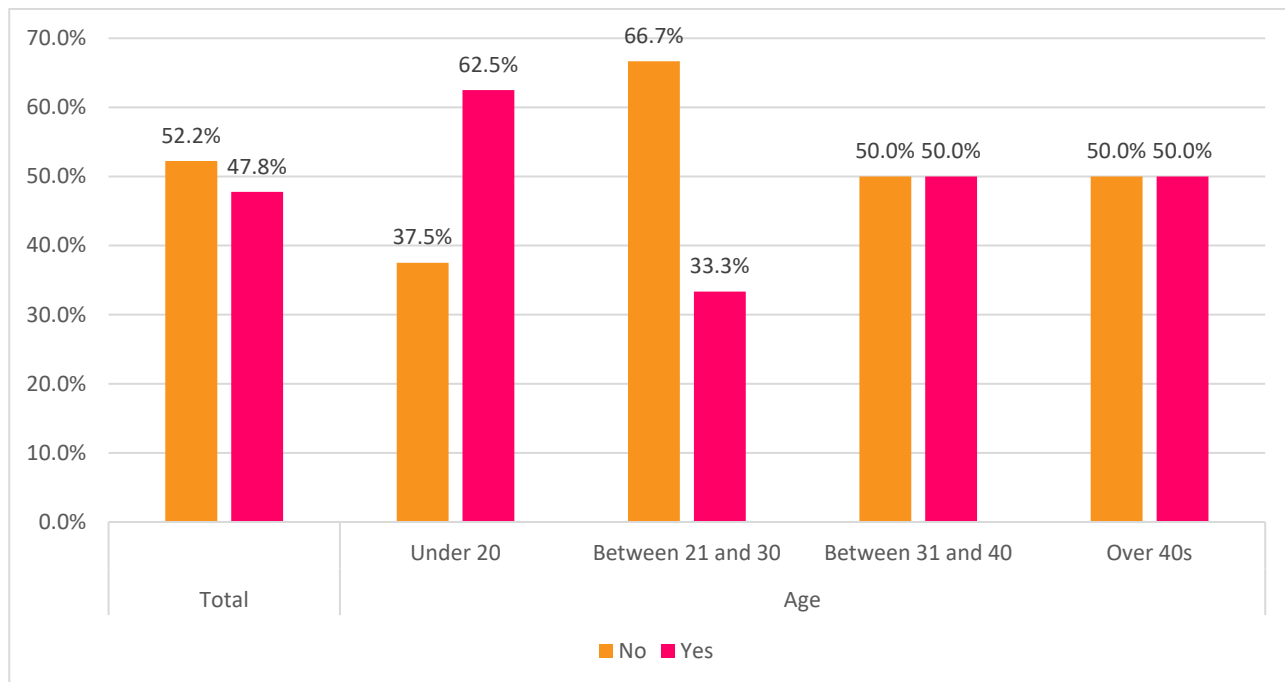
3.2.2. Internal migrants

And secondly, with internal migrant women:

- 47.8% of internal migrant women report having experienced violations of their rights, while 52.2% say they have not.
- The highest number of internal migrants who report having been victims of rights violations are under 20 years of age, followed by those over 30 and 40 years of age (both with 50.0%). On the contrary, those under 30 years of age are the least affected (33.3%).
- Among women of indigenous, Afro-descendant or other descent, 46.3% report having suffered rights violations, compared to 50.0% of women of non-ethnic descent.
- Only 22% of women travelling alone reported having experienced rights violations, while those travelling with a partner or children and with other family members were the most likely to report experiencing violence during their migration process (47.8% and 50.0%, respectively).
- The most frequent form of violation of the rights of internal migrant women is to have been victims of crimes such as extortion, human trafficking or abuse, reported by 35.1% of those affected. 24.3% mentioned having experienced fear of being detained without knowing how to act in such situations.

Figure 7. Internal migrants: Experiencing rights violations as migrants by age group, ethnic descent, who they travelled with and region of origin.

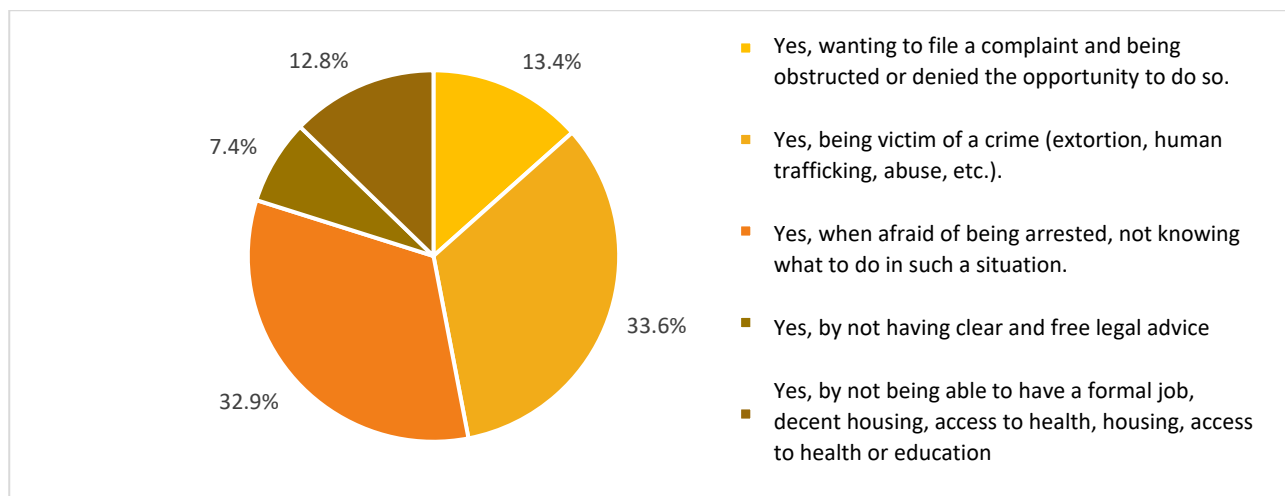
In percentages of the sample of internal migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

Figure 8. Internal migrants: Type of rights violation based on migrant status.

In percentages of responses from the sample of internal migrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

3.3. Complaints and support networks in cases of rights violations

In this sub-section, we analyse whether international and internal migrant women **reported** to the relevant authorities that their rights as migrants were violated, and by whom they were accompanied and advised in this process.

3.3.1. International migrants

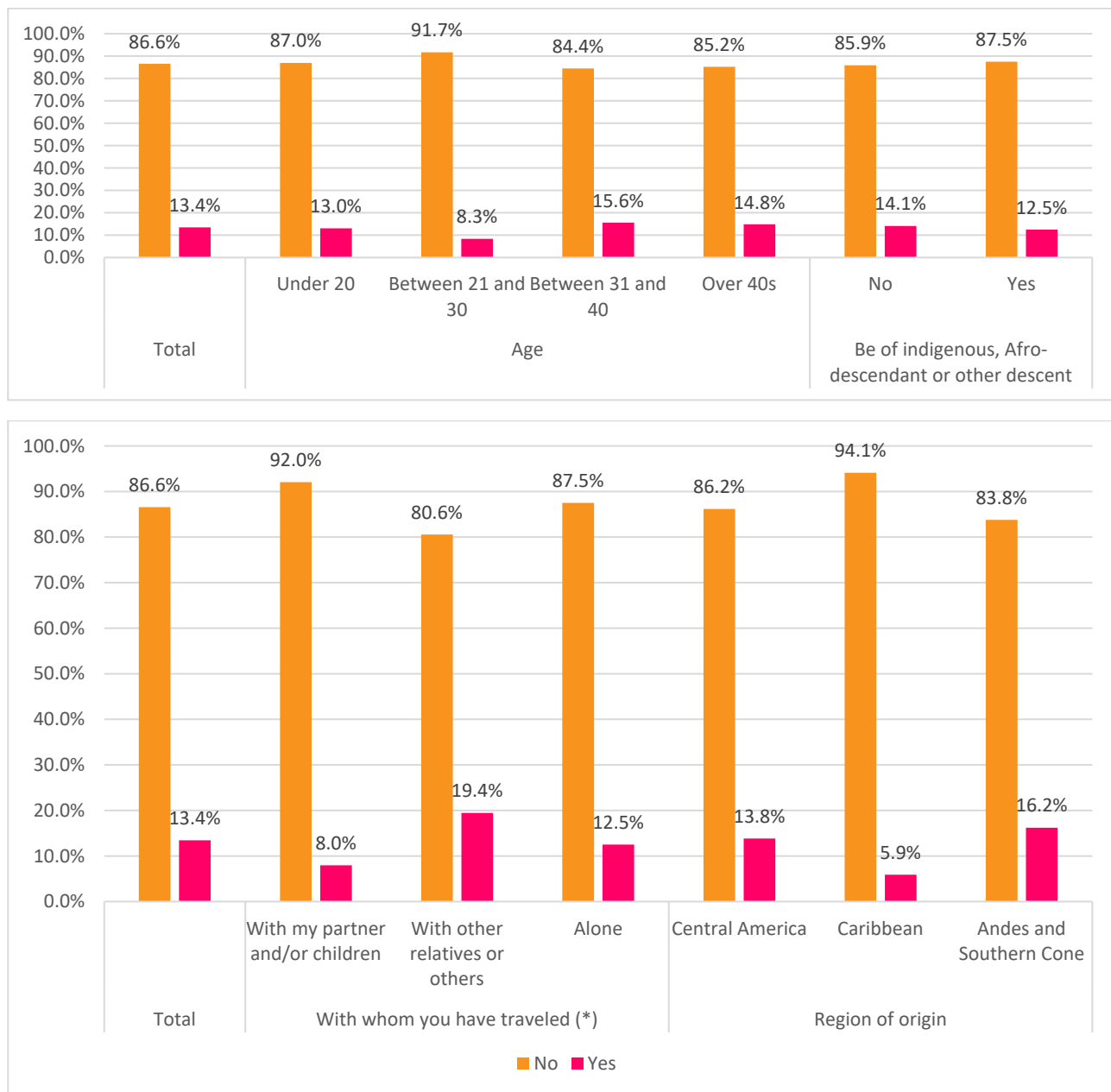
Accordingly, it can be seen that international migrant women:

- Only 13.4% of international migrant women who have experienced violations of their migration rights have filed a complaint. This shows that the vast majority (86.6%) do not report the abuses they have suffered, which already points to the existence of barriers such as fear of reprisals, lack of access to information about their rights or distrust in authorities.
- International migrant women under the age of 30 are mostly non-reporters, with 13% and 8.3% in the under-20 and under-30 age groups respectively. In contrast, women over the age of 30 have a higher reporting rate. This could be related to higher levels of awareness or experience in managing reporting by older women.
- Women without indigenous, Afro-descendant or other show a slight difference in the reporting rate (14.8%) compared to women with indigenous or Afro-descendant descent (12.5%). This 2 p.p. difference is significant, suggesting that reporting of migration rights is partially influenced by descent in this context.
- International migrant women travelling with other family members have the highest reporting rate (19.4%), which may reflect a greater willingness to act in the presence of an accompanying person, who is not dependent on them as children are.
- Women from the Caribbean have the lowest reporting rate (5.9%), while those from the Andes and Southern Cone have the highest rate (16.2%). This difference could be related to the socio-political context and the accessibility of resources for reporting in the countries of origin.
- Among the international migrant women who did report, 31.3% were assisted by a public defender (free of charge), reflecting the support provided to some migrants who do not have the resources to hire a private lawyer. However, none of the complainants had a private lawyer, indicating that migrants are not availing themselves of this type of legal assistance for a variety of reasons, possibly due to high costs or lack of access. In addition, 43.8% of the reporting women did the complaint process alone, without any kind of support, which highlights an important concern in terms of the lack of protection faced by migrant women who report. Some 25% received other types of support, possibly from social organisations or informal groups.
- When it comes to the resolution of complaints, 50% of international migrant women waited for a resolution. This could indicate that, although many migrants seek justice, they are not always

certain that their cases will be dealt with effectively. On the other hand, 50% did not wait for a resolution, suggesting a lack of trust in justice systems, a possible disinterest in pursuing the process due to a lack of tangible results or fear of reprisals, or the need to continue their migratory journey to the country of final destination.

Figure 9. International migrants: Reported rights violations due to migrant status by age group, ethnic descent, who they travelled with and region of origin.

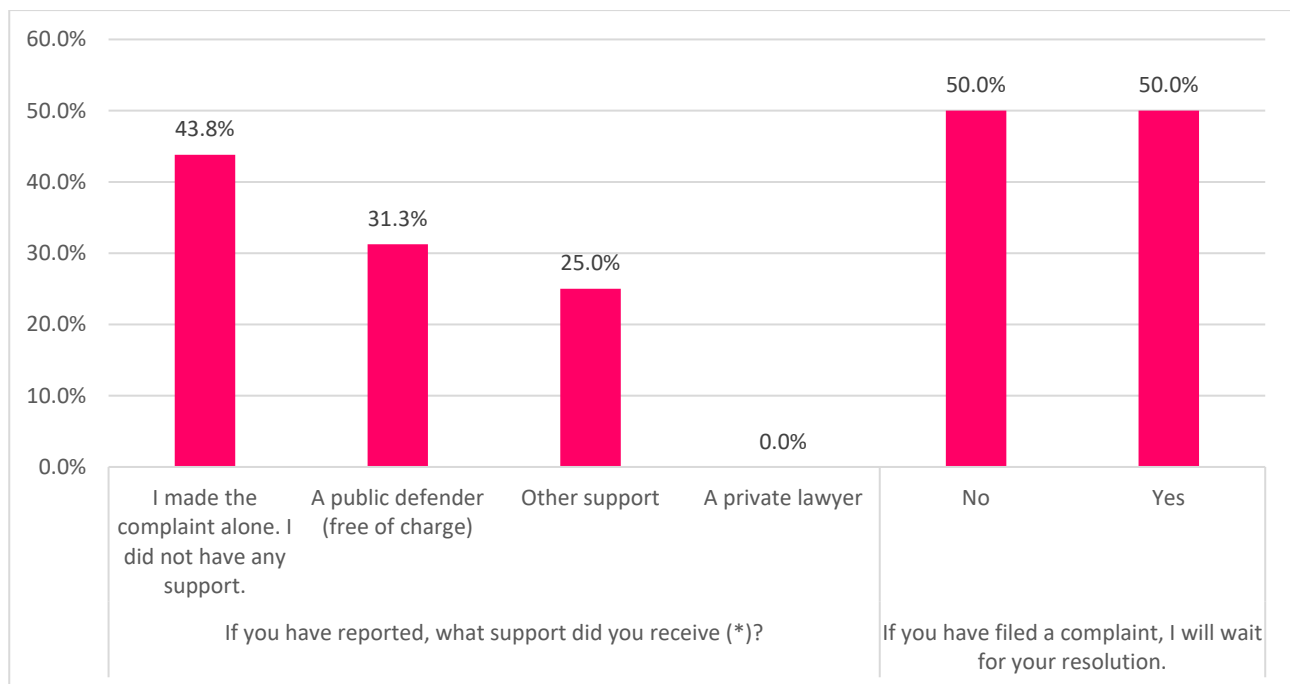
In percentages of the sample of international migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean who experienced rights violations. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

Figure 10. International migrants: Who supported them at the time of reporting and waiting for the resolution of the complaint.

In percentages of the sample of international migrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean who experienced rights violations. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

3.3.2. Internal migrants

On the other hand, the following results are observed with regard to the population of internal migrant women:

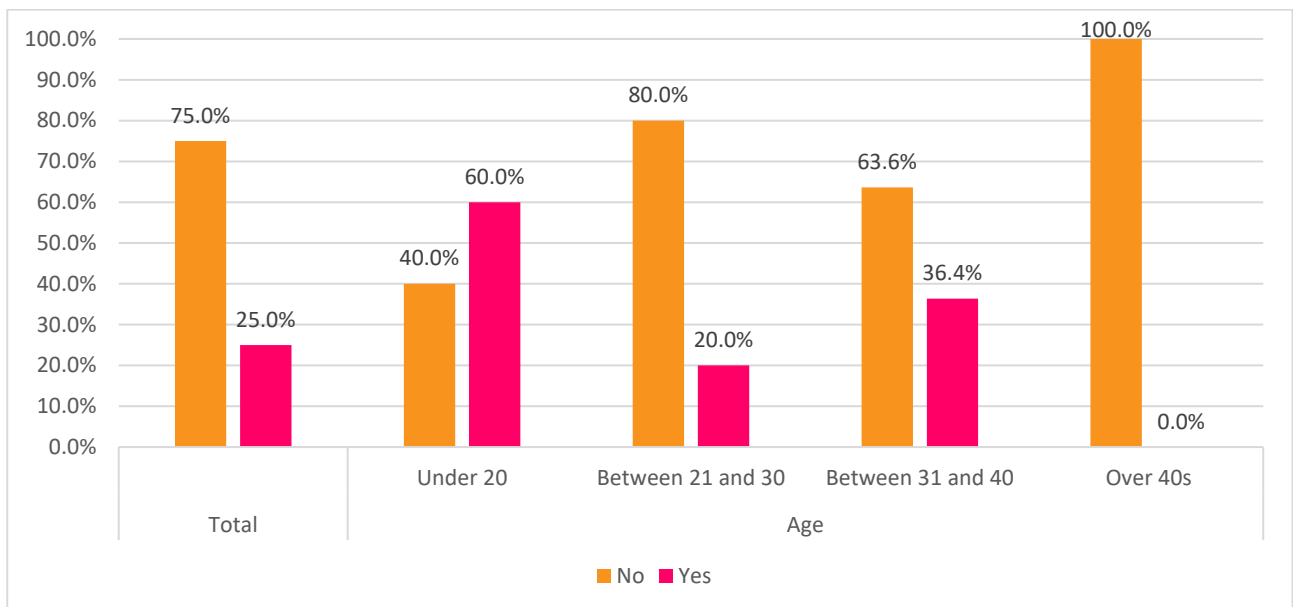
- The proportion of internal migrant women who actually reported that their rights had been violated (25.0%) is considerably lower than those who did not (75.0%).
- Younger women, under 20 years of age, showed a significant tendency to report, reaching 60.0%. In contrast, the rest of the age groups show low rates of reporting, which could be linked to factors such as lack of information or a greater concern for continuing their migratory journey.
- Internal migrant women without indigenous, Afro-descendant or other ancestry reported a higher proportion (30.8%) than those with such ancestry (21.1%). This pattern may reflect lower access to justice for women of such descent, who may experience additional difficulties such as language barriers or institutional discrimination.
- The travel context also influences the decision to report. Women who travelled alone had the highest rate of reporting (50.0%), which can be interpreted as an indicator of greater individual agency or need to act without relying on others. On the other hand, 33.3% of those who travelled with other family members or other groups made complaints, which could be linked to collective support. In contrast, 18.8% of women who travelled with a partner and children reported, possibly

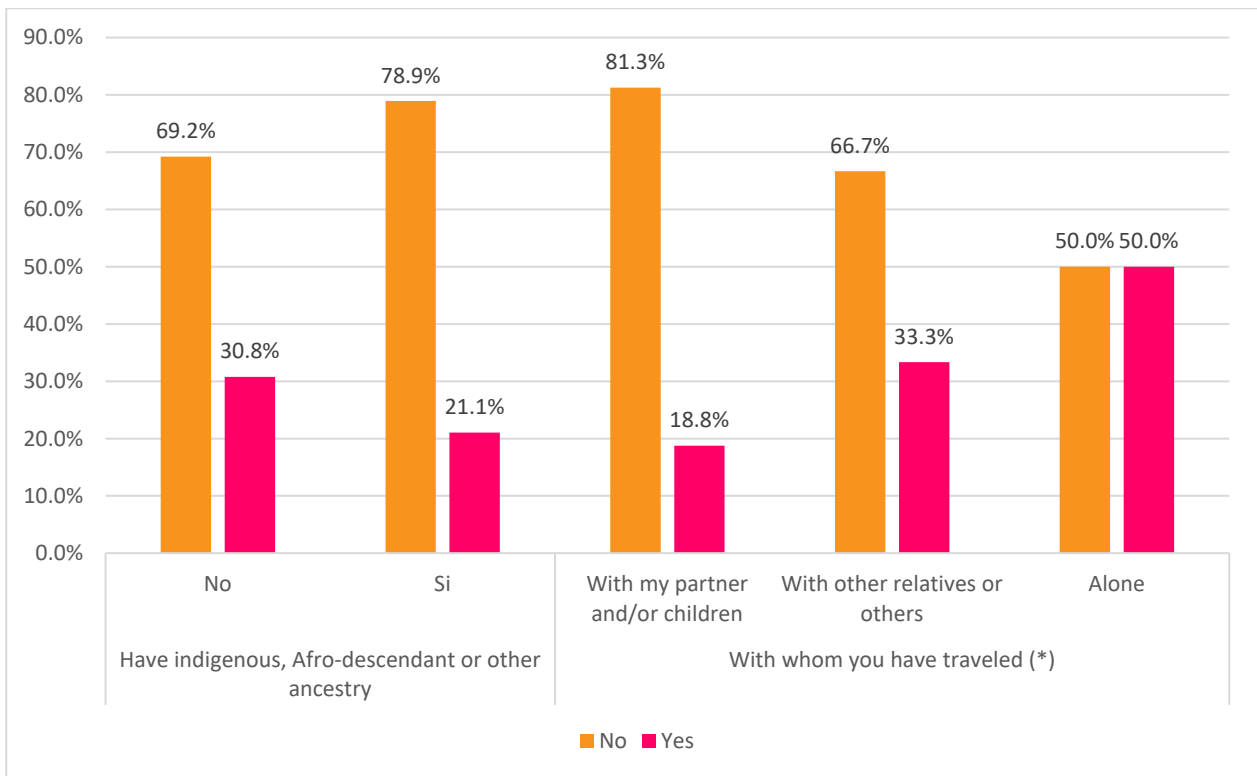
due to concerns related to the safety or stability of their companions that they prioritise over seeking justice.

- A high percentage of migrant women who reported violations of their rights did not receive any support (62.5%). 25.0% of women reported having a public defender, highlighting the importance of free legal services. The majority of women who reported (62.5%) waited for their case to be resolved, which could indicate trust in institutions or a need for justice as part of their migration process.

Figure 11. Internal migrants: Having reported rights violations due to migrant status by age group, ethnic descent, who they travelled with and region of origin.

In percentages of the sample of internal migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean who experienced rights violations. Year 2024.

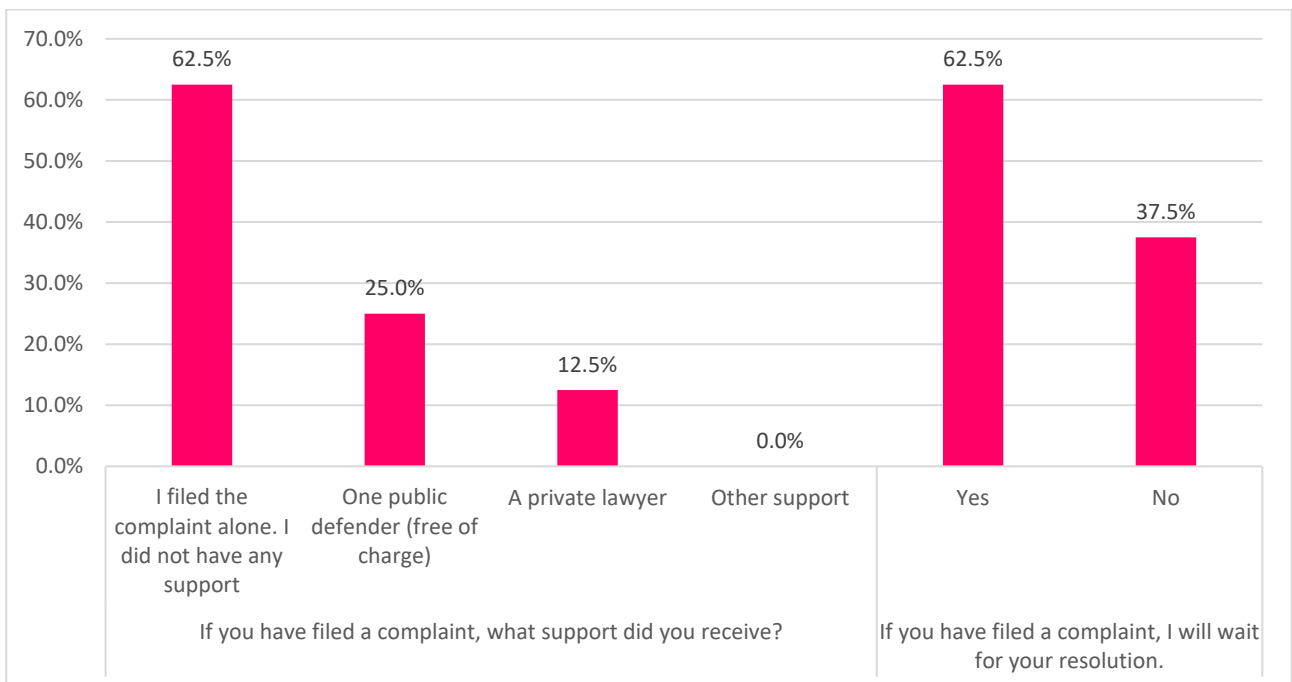




Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

Figure 12. Internal migrants: Who supported them at the time of reporting and waiting for the resolution of the complaint.

In percentages of the sample of internal migrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean who experienced rights violations. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

3.4. Reasons for non-reporting in cases of rights violations

This subsection analyses the opposite scenario, i.e. when migrant women did not report violations of their rights as migrants to the relevant authorities, and if they did not do so, what were their reasons for not doing so.

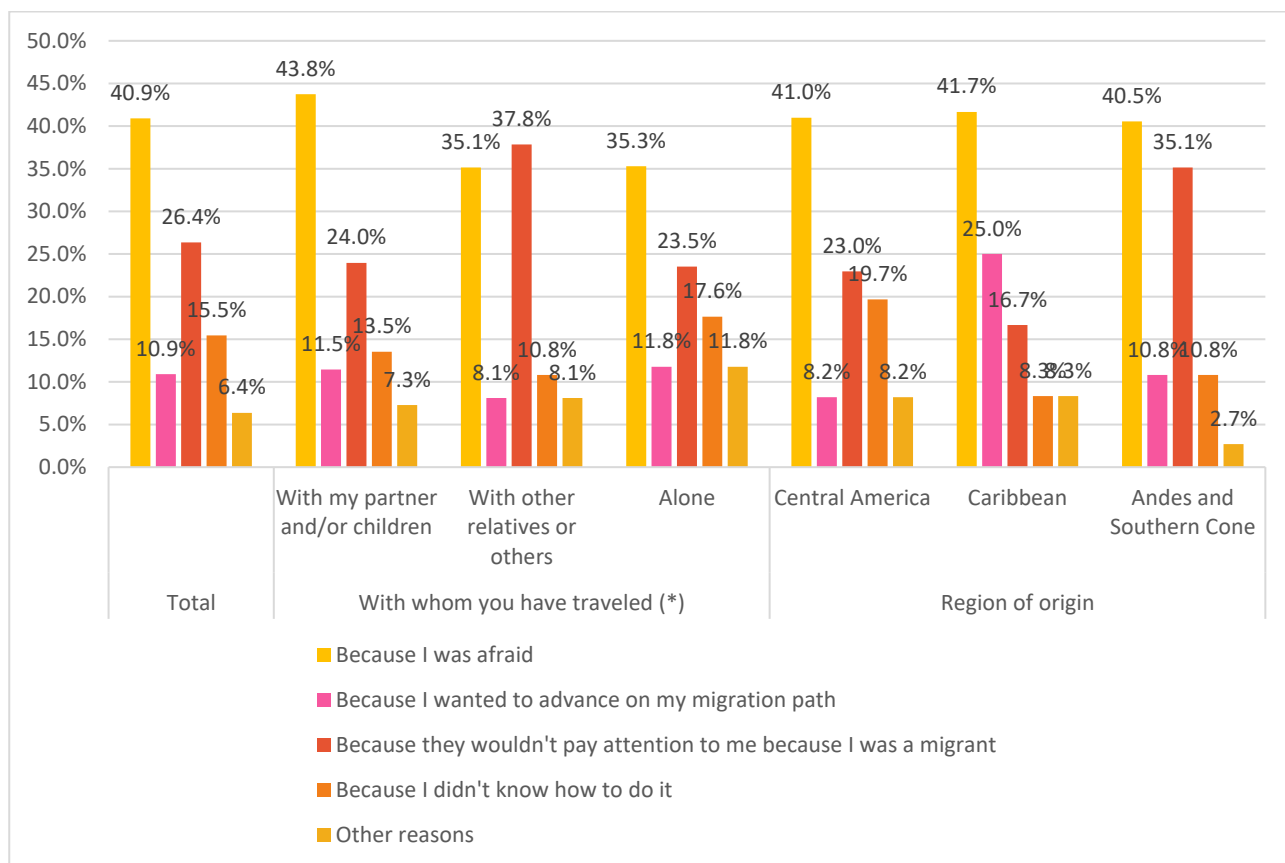
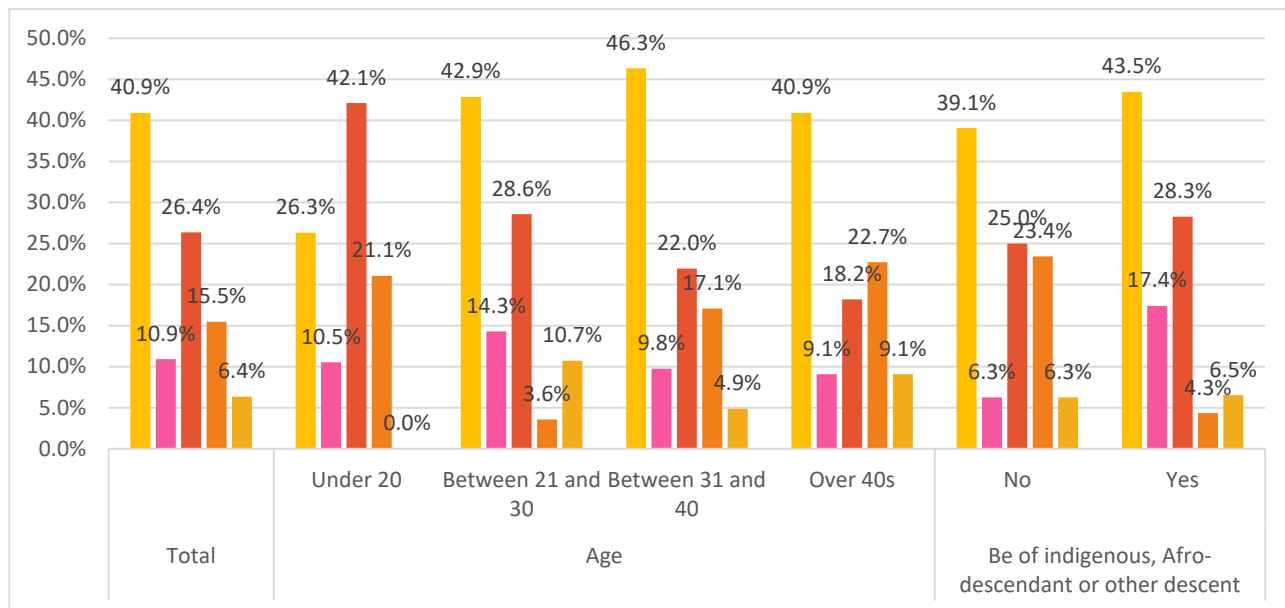
3.4.1. International migrants

First, the results are reported for the population of international migrant women:

- The main reasons why international migrant women did not report violations of their migration rights are related to fear (40.9%), the perception that they would not be heard due to their migrant status (26.4%) and the desire to continue their migration route (10.9%). These factors reveal the vulnerability and lack of trust that migrants have in the institutions in charge of protecting their rights, which can lead to passivity or distrust of legal processes.
- International migrants under the age of 20 tend not to report mainly because they feel that they are not listened to because of their migrant status. Those under 30 and over 30 do not report out of fear.
- International migrants without indigenous or Afro-descendant descent stand out for their fear (43.5%) and the perception that they would not be listened to (28.3%) when reporting. This suggests that perhaps the lack of recognition of an ethnic identity does not help to make their situation visible. Indigenous or Afro-descendant migrants also experience fear (39.1%), which leads them not to report, and distrust (25%), although to a lesser extent.
- International migrant women who did not report and regardless of who they travelled with during the migration process show that this is due to a higher proportion of fear and also because of their perception of not being listened to.
- Among international migrants coming from Central America, fear is the most cited reason, with 41.0% of the women's responses indicating it as the main reason for not reporting. On the other hand, 23.0% of their responses indicate that they would not be listened to because they are migrants, which could reflect experiences of exclusion or discrimination in the countries of transit or destination. In the case of the Caribbean, although fear is also the main reason (41.7%), 25.0% of women who did not report because they wanted to move on in their migratory route stand out, the highest percentage among the three regions. This indicates that Caribbean women prioritise continuing their journey, possibly due to situations of greater urgency or vulnerability in their contexts of origin. Among women from the Andes and the Southern Cone, fear is again the most cited reason (40.5%). However, 35.1% do not denounce because they believe that they would not be taken into account because of their migrant status, the highest percentage among the regions. This reflects a more acute perception of discrimination or lack of institutional response towards migrants from this region, which may be related to specific prejudices.

Figure 13. International migrants: Reasons for not reporting having been a victim of rights violations by age group, ethnic descent, who they travelled with and region of origin.

In percentages of the sample of international migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean who experienced rights violations. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's

migratory route

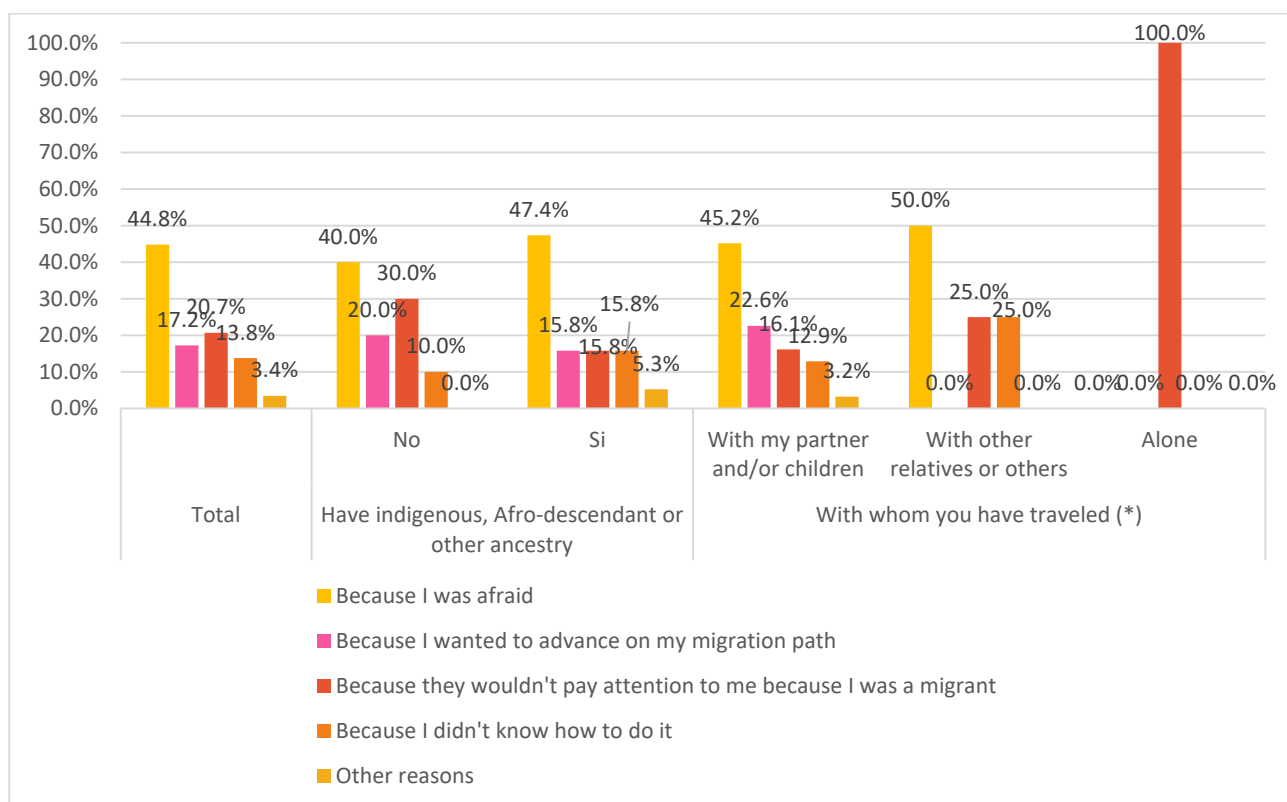
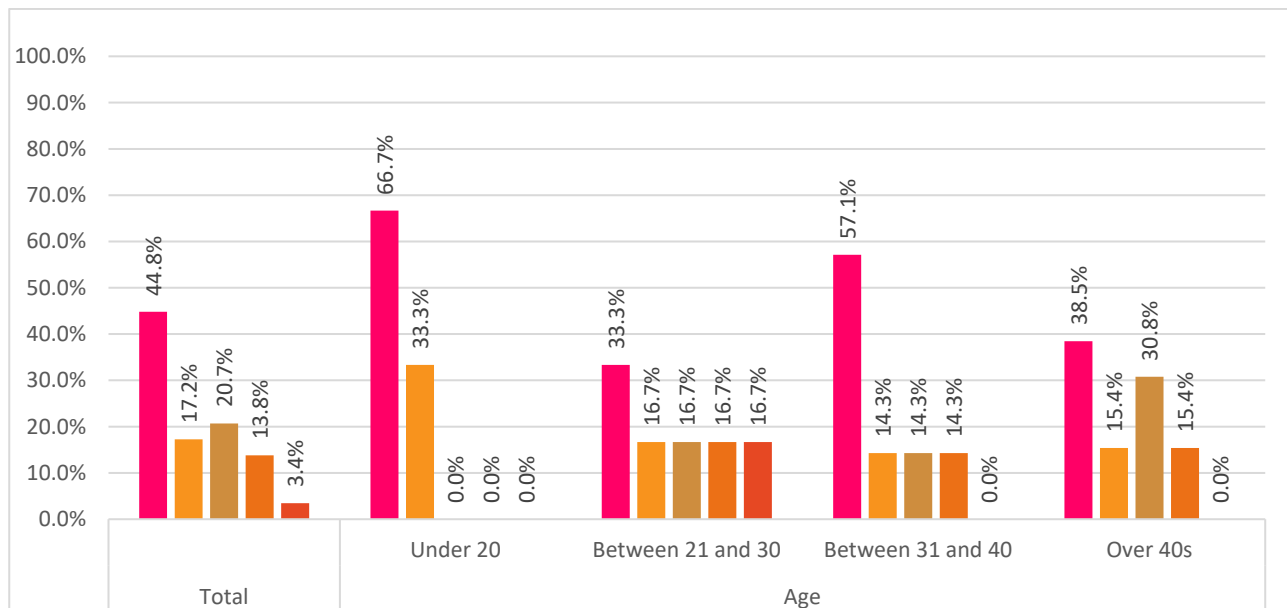
3.4.2. Internal migrants

And, with regard to internal migrant women, it is noted that:

- The analysis of the reasons why internal migrant women did not file a complaint reveals that fear is the main barrier, being mentioned by 44.8% of respondents. This suggests that experiences of insecurity, possible threats or distrust of institutions play a significant role in their decision not to proceed with a complaint. Secondly, 20.7% stated that they did not report because they considered that they would not be heard due to their migrant status, which reflects perceptions of exclusion or discrimination in the domestic context. In addition, 17.2% of the women mentioned that their priority was to advance along their migratory route, indicating that the circumstances of displacement influence their decisions, relegating the complaint in favour of continuing their journey or achieving their settlement goals.
- Female internal migrants under the age of 20 are the most affected by fear (66.7%), which limits their ability to report. They also show an interest in continuing their migratory route, which may interfere with the decision to report. In women under 30, fear is still predominant (33.3%). Likewise, the reason "they would not listen to me because I am a migrant" increases significantly among women over 40 (30.8%), which could reflect a greater perception of institutional discrimination with age.
- Women of indigenous, Afro-descendant or other descent report a higher frequency of reasons related to fear (47.4%) and lack of knowledge about how to report (15.8%) compared to those without this ancestry. This highlights a double barrier: their migratory status and their belonging to a historically marginalised ethnic group. On the other hand, women without indigenous or Afro-descendant descent are more likely to mention that they would not report because they would not be listened to for being migrants (30.0%), suggesting a perception of exclusion more linked to their role as migrants.
- The composition of the travel group also influences motives. Women who travel with their partners and children mention fear with similar frequency to the average (45.2%), while those who travel with other family members or other people report it in a higher proportion (50.0%). However, those travelling alone do not mention this reason, but 100% indicate that they do not report because they do not believe they would be listened to as migrants, reflecting a more marked experience of discrimination and lack of support compared to those travelling accompanied.

Figure 14. Internal migrants: Reasons for not reporting having been a victim of rights violations by age group, ethnic descent, who they travelled with and region of origin.

In percentages of the sample of internal migrant women and responses (*) from Latin America and the Caribbean who experienced rights violations. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

3.5. Obstacles and possible improvements

The final section presents the results of the study in terms of the obstacles identified by the women interviewed that have made their migration process even more difficult, as well as possible improvements that the Mexican authorities should adopt in order to provide better and greater assistance to migrant women - international and internal - in transit through their territory.

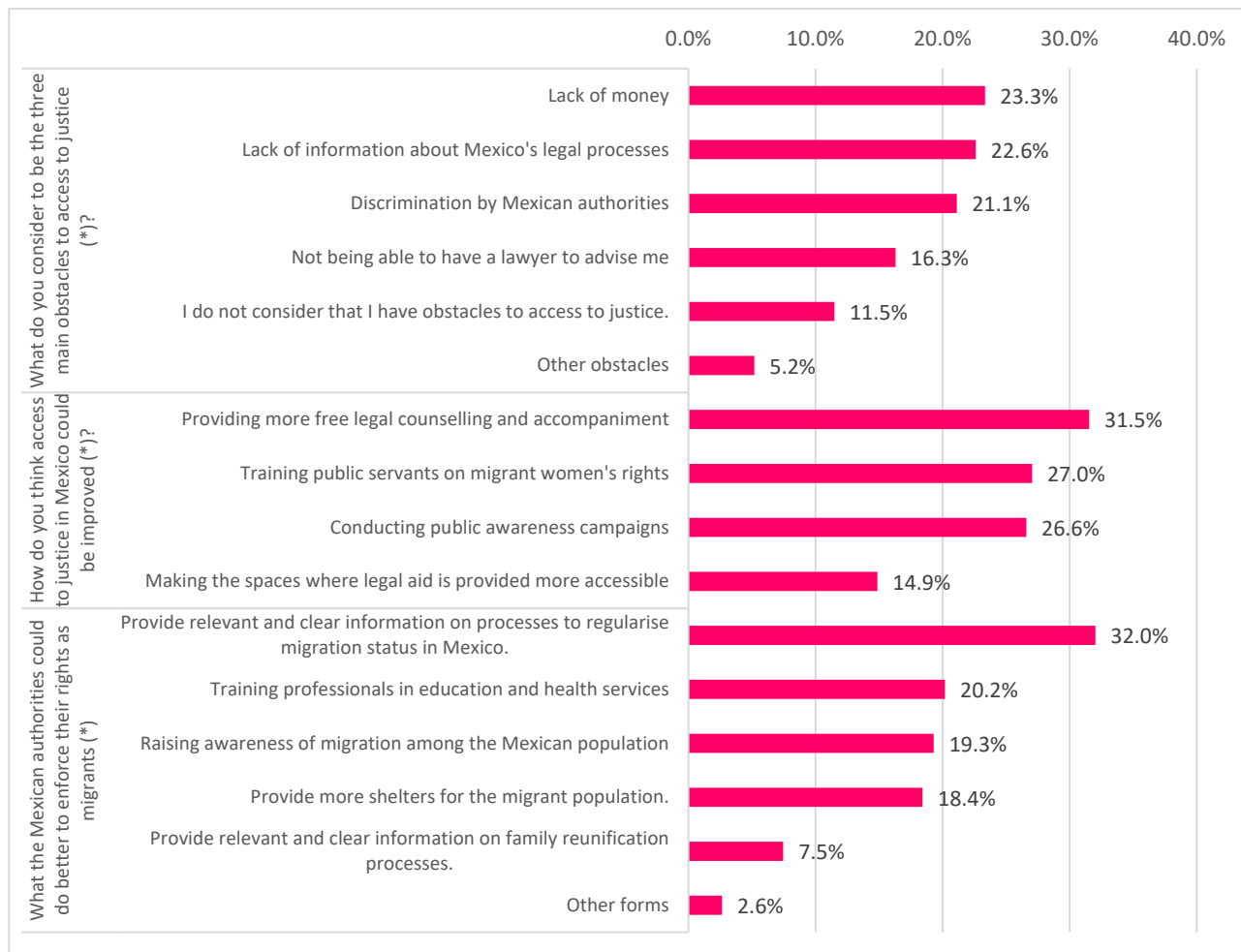
3.5.1. International migrants

First, we lend the results from the group of international migrant women:

- The three main obstacles identified by international migrant women to accessing justice in Mexico are lack of money (23.3%), lack of information about legal processes (22.6%) and discrimination by Mexican authorities (21.1%). Lack of financial resources is presented as a significant barrier to accessing legal services, as many migrant women cannot afford legal advice. In addition, lack of information about legal procedures in Mexico and discrimination by the authorities hinder the process of defending their rights.
- To improve access to justice, the majority of international migrants suggest providing more free legal advice and support (31.5%) and facilitating and improving training for public officials on migrant women's rights (27%). They also propose public awareness-raising campaigns (26.6%) to sensitise society and authorities about migrant women's rights. These measures aim to reduce barriers to access to justice and promote better understanding and treatment of migrant women.
- In terms of what the Mexican authorities could do to better guarantee the rights of migrant women, the majority believe that providing clear and relevant information on the processes to regularise their migration status (32%) would be a key improvement. In addition, they consider it important to train professionals in education and health services (20.2%) and to raise awareness of migration among the Mexican population (19.3%). They also suggest providing more shelters for the migrant population (18.4%), which would reflect a greater willingness to address the basic needs of migrant women during their transit through the country.

Figure 15. International migrants: Obstacles to access to justice, aspects to be improved for better access to justice in Mexico and possible improvements by Mexican authorities.

In percentages of responses from the sample of international migrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

3.5.2. Internal migrants

And then, from the group of internal migrant women, we know that:

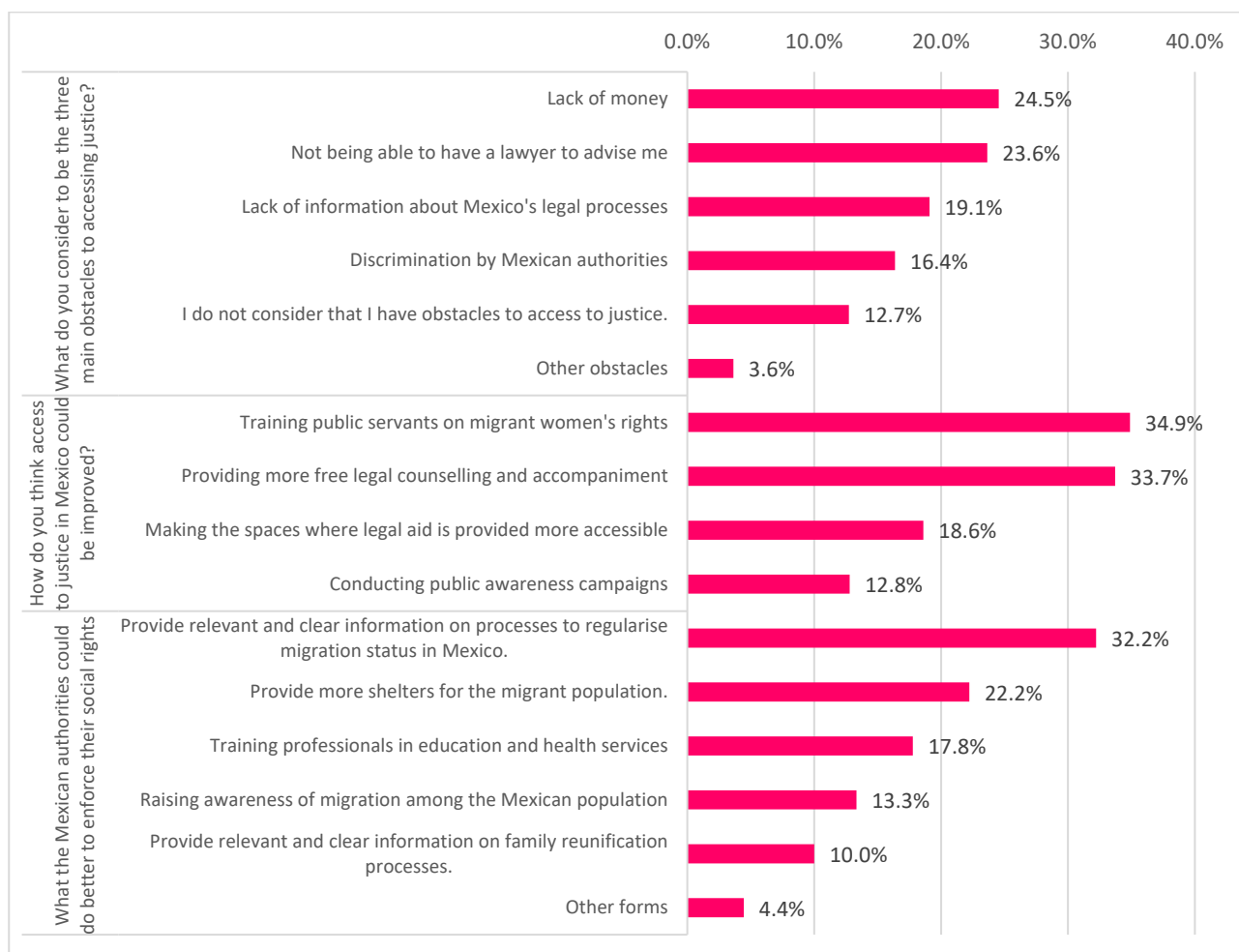
- The three main obstacles to accessing justice according to the responses of internal migrant women are lack of money (24.5%), not being able to have a lawyer to advise them (23.6%) and lack of information about legal processes in Mexico (19.1%). Lack of economic resources limits the possibility of accessing legal services, while lack of information about legal procedures and structural discrimination further hinder access to justice.
- In relation to aspects that could be improved in Mexico in terms of access to justice, internal migrant women consider that providing more free legal advice and accompaniment (33.7%) and training public officials on migrant women's rights (34.9%) would be the most effective measures

to improve access to justice in Mexico. Improving the training of civil servants and access to free legal services could reduce the legal barriers they face.

- On the other hand, women were also asked about possible improvements that the Mexican authorities should incorporate in order to better guarantee the social rights provided by the Mexican constitution and norms for all citizens or residents in its territory. One of the aspects most frequently reported by internal migrant women is to provide more clear information on the processes to regularise their migratory situation (32.2%) and to provide more shelters for the migrant population (22.2%). In addition, raising awareness about migration and training in basic services such as education and health are key areas to strengthen the inclusion of migrant women.

Figure 16. Internal migrants: Obstacles to access to justice, aspects to be improved for better access to justice in Mexico and possible improvements by Mexican authorities.

In percentages of responses from the sample of internal migrant women from Latin America and the Caribbean. Year 2024.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on the survey "Consultation questionnaire on migrant women in LAC" of the World Women's Observatory.

Conclusions

This report brings to light the experiences of migrant women who arrive in Mexico from different regions of Latin America and the Caribbean and those who do so within Mexico, identifying both the barriers they face in accessing justice and the specific dynamics that characterise their migratory journeys. The findings show that while there are shared patterns in terms of vulnerability, differences in origin, age, ethnic descent and type of travel companions during the journey largely determine their experiences and needs.

In terms of access to information on rights, internal migrant women show a higher level of knowledge (76.1%) compared to international migrants (58.1%), reflecting greater access to sources within the country and greater familiarity with the Mexican legal system. However, both populations face significant limitations, as a significant portion of both do not receive adequate information about their rights. The most common sources of information are shelters and international organisations, with little presence of government institutions.

With regard to migration rights violations, international migrant women experience much higher rates of abuse (71.3%) compared to internal migrants (47.8%). International migrant women, especially those from areas such as the Andes and the Southern Cone, face longer and more dangerous routes, which increases their vulnerability. In addition, female migrants travelling with family members appear to be more susceptible to abuse, while internal migrants suffer mainly from crimes such as extortion and abuse, with a higher incidence among women over 30 years of age.

In relation to reported violations, only 13.4% of international migrant women file a complaint, reflecting a generalised fear and mistrust of the authorities. Younger women (under 30) are the least likely to report, possibly due to lack of autonomy or fear of reprisals. In contrast, internal migrant women have a higher reporting rate (25%), especially the younger ones, which could indicate a greater willingness to confront the authorities, although they also face barriers such as lack of institutional support.

Finally, the reasons for not reporting vary, but fear of reprisals and distrust of the judicial system are the main factors. While international migrant women fear not being heard or suffering consequences due to their migration status, internal migrant women face similar fears, mainly related to their safety and that of their family members. In conclusion, both populations of migrant women face serious barriers to accessing justice in Mexico, highlighting the urgent need to improve institutional support and protection for these women.

In sum, migrant women, both international and internal, face significant barriers to accessing justice in Mexico. The differences in their experiences and reporting rates reflect not only the vulnerabilities inherent in the migration process, but also the socio-political and legal context that surrounds them. International migrant women face greater obstacles due to lack of information and fear of reprisals,

while internal migrant women are more aware of their rights, but also face similar barriers in terms of access to justice. For both populations, the lack of institutional support and limited government presence in the provision of information and legal assistance highlight the urgent need to improve protection mechanisms and access to justice for migrant women in Mexico.

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