

HIGHLIGHTS



2.522

**Migrants sheltered
at the MRS**



215%

**Overcapacity in
Stations nationwide**



73

Pregnant women



27%

**Children and
adolescents
under 17**



4

**Unaccompanied
children and
adolescents
under 17**



**Cases of COVID19
have been identified**

by community transmission in Darien

There are no official data on the number of positive migrants



**No reported arrivals of migrants
in Bajo Chiquito since March 29, 2020**



**Transit population is not ruled out
through the Darien National Park**

METHODOLOGY

The information in this report is collected by IOM Panama staff in Darién and Chiriquí, through field monitoring, multi-sectoral assessments through key informants, as well as regular information exchange at the technical level, and at the central level of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Human Mobility.

CONTEXT OF THE SITUATION

The Darien region has been characterized as one of the most important points of transit for extra-regional migrants for the past eleven years. However, the Darien region is characterized as one of the most challenging for Panama's socio-economic development; a situation that increases the complexity of dealing with massive and irregular migration flows.

Since 2009, significant extra-regional migration flows have been identified, that is, migrants from other continents, such as Africa, Asia and the Caribbean region, specifically Haitians and Cubans.

In 2016, the first migration crisis from extra-regionals occurred in the Darien region, strongly impacted by the closing of borders in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Faced with all this mobility, the governments of Panama and Costa Rica established a binational agreement that would guarantee the orderly, regular and safe transit of these migrants through the territory.

In addition to these facts, on March 11th 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a state of pandemic for the COVID19 virus, which is why global sanitary measures were established in order to mitigate the contagion. Central America, responded by

shutting its borders or by modifying its border management policies, as well as launching massive hygiene campaigns.

The application of these measures implied changes in the mobility of migrants transiting through Panama.

The Government of Panama decreed a state of emergency on 12 March 2020, and as a result of the related measures that were established, many operations have been severely affected, particularly the Controlled Flow Operation. For its part, the Government of Costa Rica declared a nationwide state of national emergency on 16 March 2020. As a result, the border between Panama and Costa Rica is presumed to be closed for at least another month, due to the sanitary measures set by the Government of Costa Rica.

Among the various measures decreed by both countries; include the closure of borders, a situation that has left a stock of approximately 2.500 migrants stranded since 18 March 2020 in Panama. They have been mostly stranded at the Migrant Receiving Station (MRS) La Peñita and at the community of Bajo Chiquito in Darién and others in MRS Los Planes in Chiriquí. This has obviously generated a series of complications, such as overcrowding, lack of

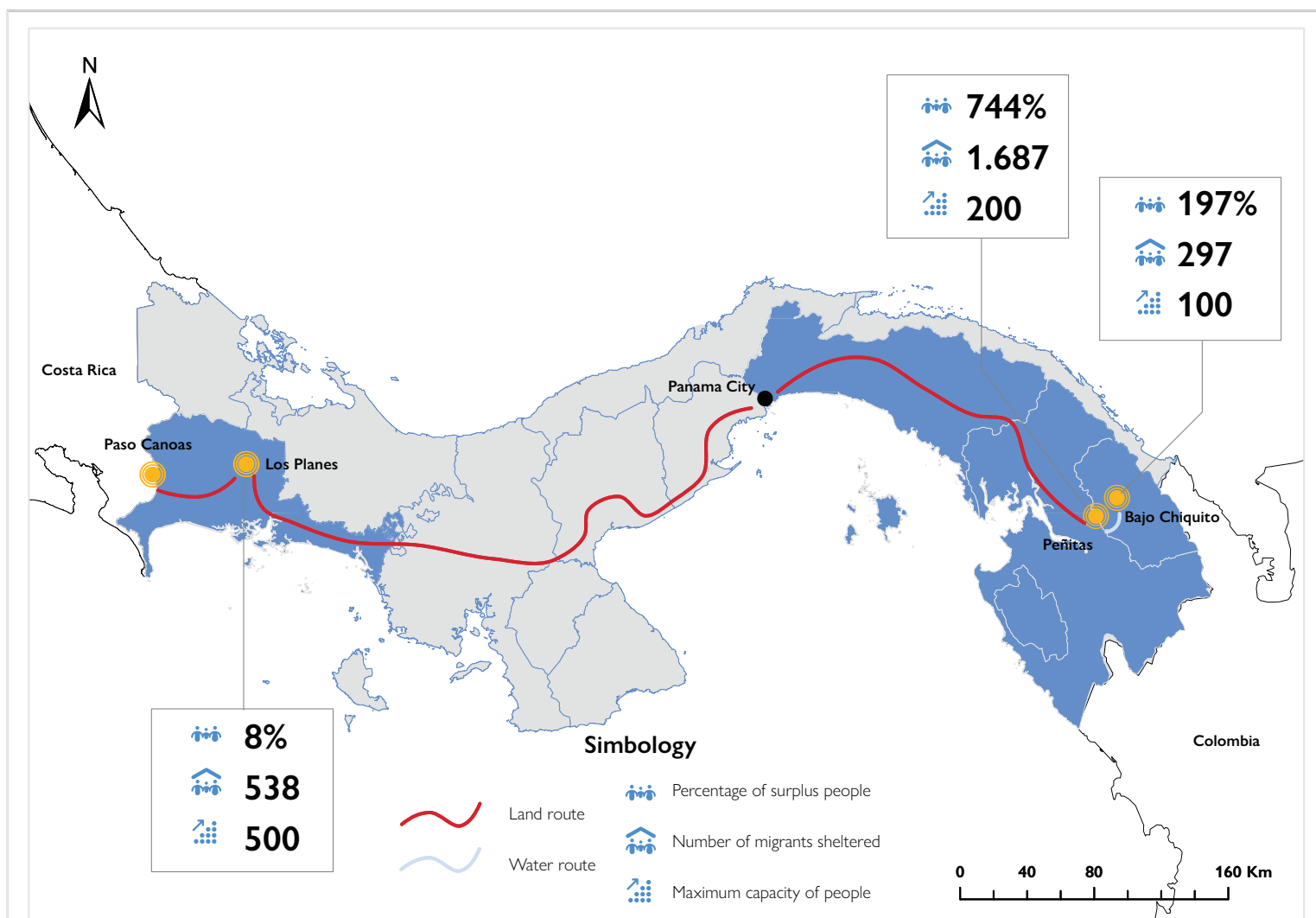
hygiene resources and food provisions, complications with solid waste management, and increased stress due to uncertainty, among others.

At the time of writing, community COVID19 transmission was confirmed at MRS La Peñita, infecting National Border Service Officers (SENAFRONT for its acronym in Spanish) and National Migration Service Officers (NMS), as well as migrants. As a result of this situation, there has been a decreased presence of field migrant control and protection units, as well as key staff and partners supporting humanitarian assistance work. Migrants who tested positive for COVID19 after the outbreak in Darién were transferred to the former Temporary Humanitarian

Assistance Station in Nicanor and are being managed by the active sanitary protocol set by Panama.

Similar to the 2015/2016 crisis, Panama has a stock of migrants stranded at three points located along their territory: Bajo Chiquito, MRS La Peñita in the province of Darien and MRS Los Planes de Gualaca in the province of Chiriquí. These can be scaled down at any time to: MRS La Peñita and reopening MRS Lajas Blancas. Currently, this is not expected to change in the short term, but this scenario may facilitate managing the stations in Darién.

POPULATION SHELTERED AT MIGRANT RECEIVING STATIONS



Basemap source: ESRI and UN World Map

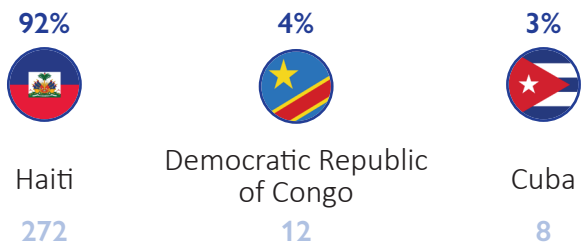
This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED
 IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

9 APRIL 2020



HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



The remaining 1% corresponds to 4 different nationalities from various countries in Africa and South America.

COVID19 CASE STATISTICS



HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Identified needs

- Promote and establish a sanitation or hygiene system.
- Development and printing of informational materials in the predominant languages spoken in the accommodations and handed out to the MRS migrant population and host communities regarding the COVID19 outbreak, WHO recommendations and MINSAs national guidelines on hand washing and hygiene practices and symptom-identification campaigns.
- Support an adequate socialization of guidelines and routes of medical attention as set by Ministry of Health (MINSAs for its acronym in Spanish) before the COVID-19 outbreak, with the engagement of MRS staff, the host community, UN organizations and civil society.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented Actions

- SENAFRONT is providing food for migrant consumption.

Identified needs

- There is no adequate shelter infrastructure for migrants.

HEALTH



Identified needs

- It is not considered an area of responsibility by MINSA, so health services are scarce.

ACCOMMODATION AND SETTLEMENT



Identified needs

- There is no adequate infrastructure for the shelter of migrants.

PROTECTION



Implemented Actions

- SENAFRONT maintains 5 units that protects the migrant community.

Identified needs

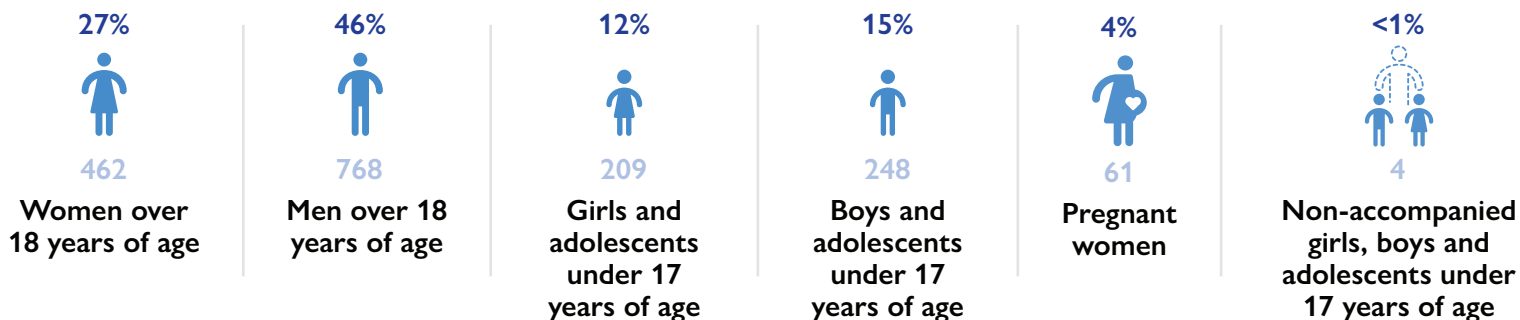
- Lack of institutions responsible for channeling specific cases that require protection within the vulnerable population.

STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA

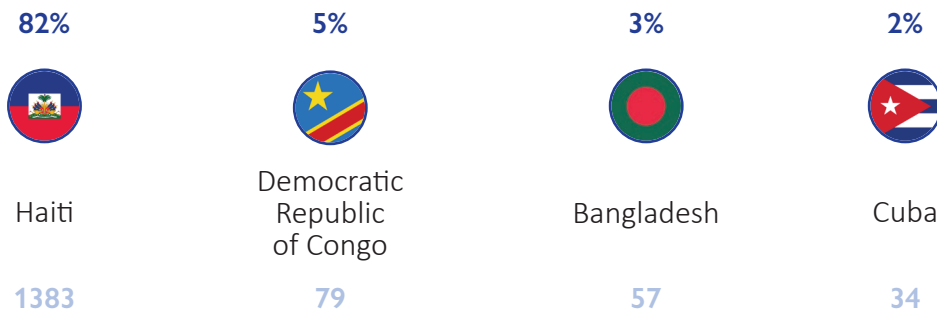
9 APRIL 2020



1.687
Sheltered migrants

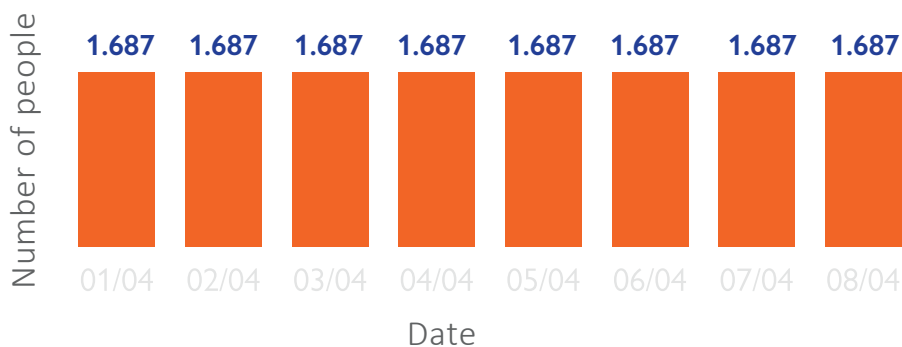


HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

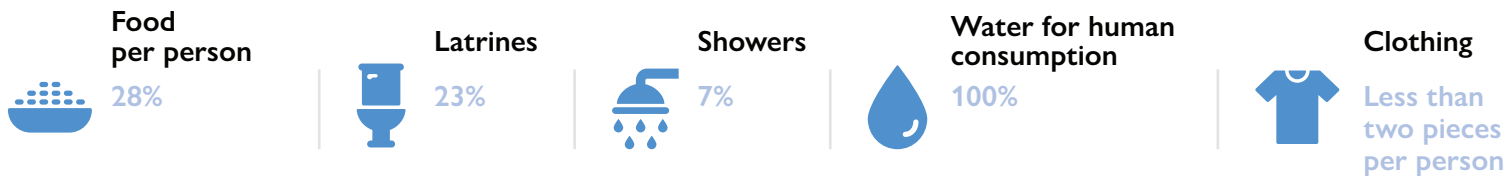


The remaining 8% corresponds to 33 different nationalities from various countries in Africa and South Asia.

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA, APRIL 2020



SERVICES PROVIDED AND AVAILABLE AT MRS LA PEÑITA DURING THE PANDEMIC COMPARED TO MINIMUM HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS



STATISTICS ON COVID19 CASES



Cases of COVID19 positive migrants has been identified as community transmitted infections at La Peñita community. There is no official data on the number of cases identified, but these individuals have been channeled and transferred to the former Temporary Humanitarian Assistance Station in Nicanor, which has been temporarily authorized to manage COVID19 positive migrants in Darién, as part of the sanitary protocol implemented by Panama.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AT MRS LA PEÑITA

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented Actions

- In response to the emergency, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has increased the capacity from 15.000 litres of water per day to 30.000 litres per day.
- The National Migration Service (NMS) has installed a water tank to provide an additional water reserve in case the current system fails and is unable to provide safe potable water.
- Migrants are currently helping out with the cleaning chores, due to the current shortage of cleaning staff.
- IOM has donated 10 cases of paper towels and 960 16oz bottles of alcohol. In conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2.300 masks have been donated and the Apostolic Vicariate of Darien has donated 50 gallons of disinfectant soap.

Identified needs

- Constant water system monitoring system
- Increased cleaning frequency of latrines; currently scheduled at two days per week.
- Lack of personal hygiene kits.
- Development and printing of informational materials in the predominant languages spoken in the accommodations and handed out to the MRS migrant population and host communities regarding the COVID19 outbreak, WHO recommendations and MINSAs national guidelines on hand washing and hygiene practices and symptom-identification campaigns.
- Install hand-washing stations; provided at minimum standard of 1 in 10 inhabitants per accommodation, in accordance with Sphere Standard N 6.3 "WASH in health facilities" in order to increase prevention measures.
- Support an adequate socialization of guidelines and routes of medical attention as set by MINSAs before the COVID19 outbreak, with the engagement of MRS staff, the host community, UN organizations and civil society.
- Increase mosquitoes-spraying frequencies.

FOOD SECURITY



Implemented Actions

- The Red Cross and UNICEF implemented a food distribution system consisting of numbered meal cards for each migrant, along with a list of migrants per accommodation in order to simplify the feeding process and ensure that everyone actually receives the corresponding food portions.
- IOM has managed to secure meal support in collaboration with the Apostolic Vicariate of Darien, specifically the Mission of the Sisters of Mariknoll. Deliveries of rice, beans, chicken meat, baby formula and sugar have been made.
- Migrants are helping with meal preparations and distribution due to the withdrawal of non-governmental organizations and other agencies that were collaborating with this process.

Identified needs

- Food is distributed only once a day.
- Support is required to provide sufficient food to cover all migrants currently located at the MRS. Dietary needs must be considered contemplating the minimum quantity of nutrients required per person, and meal frequency must be increased to 3 times a day.
- There are no specific dietary requirements established for children under 5 years old, chronically ill people or pregnant women.
- Cases of children suffering from dehydration have been identified. Baby formula is only provided every two weeks and is insufficient to cover all children at the shelter.

ACCOMMODATION AND SETTLEMENT



Implemented Actions

- SENAFRONT is considering moving the MRS to Lajas Blancas.
- IOM shared WHO sanitary measures and the Camp Coordination and Maintenance Cluster with SENAFRONT and the National Civil Protection System regarding the need for infrastructure, shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene before the COVID19 outbreak.
- No individualized housing units are available.

Identified needs

- Acquisition and installation of two multipurpose tents (one at MRS Lajas Blancas and the other at La Peñita), with a capacity of up to 12 people, intended to isolate individuals that present COVID19 similar symptoms.
- Support is required to retrofit the MRS infrastructure at La Peñita and Lajas Blancas.
- Installation is required for a temporary COVID19 emergency shelter at MRS La Peñita, in order to provide immediate and very short-term emergency response.
- MRS La Peñita capacity limit has been exceeded. People do not have enough space in order to maintain social distancing measures, and there is no adequate isolation space for possible COVID19 cases.
- Installation of solar-powered lights is required at distant points and near latrines, due to the fact that currently there is little or no lighting in these areas.

- Proper cleaning items are required for an adequate waste management.
- There is no access to birth control methods, such as condoms.
- Support is required for supplying hygiene kits during the national COVID19 emergency.
- Organizations such as the Panamanian Red Cross have withdrawn from the station due to the national COVID19 outbreak emergency.
- There are reports of migrants with conditions associated with diarrhea, vomiting, fever and dehydration, especially in children and pregnant women.
- There is a lack of information among migrants regarding access to health services, especially when there are cases of family members who need to be hospitalized.

HEALTH



Implemented Actions

- Health measures have been reinforced and the station has been staffed with two doctors and three nurses, following the positive COVID19 cases identified at the station. This is led by MINSA.

Identified needs

- MRS La Peñita does not have an ambulance. SENAFRONT provides emergency transportation with the MRS patrol vehicle, but it is not outfitted with the minimum standards for emergency transfers.

PROTECTION



Implemented Actions

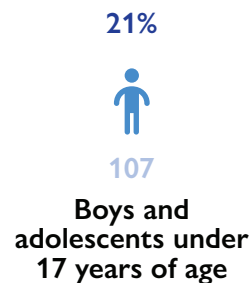
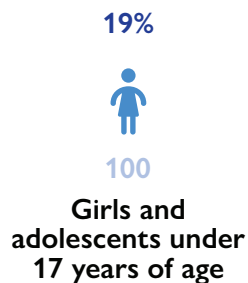
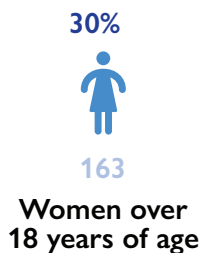
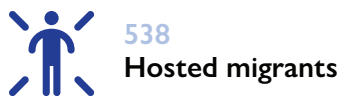
- SENAFRONT maintains 14 units for a migrant population of over a thousand people at this time. These units provide security, order, logistical support and support to the NMS in the registration process upon the arrival of migrants from Bajo Chiquito.

Identified needs

- Support is required for the development of protocols, as well as the registration of migrants at MRS La Peñita and Lajas Blancas in order to identify vulnerable and high-risk profiles, and facilitate monitoring health conditions in order to prevent the spread of COVID19.
- All specific actions that require protection and assistance have been suspended due to the COVID19 outbreak health measures at the station.

STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES

9 APRIL, 2020

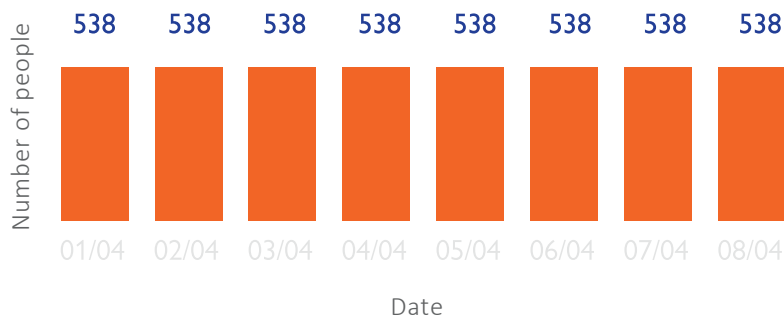


HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



The remaining 8% corresponds to 16 different nationalities from various countries in South America, Africa and South Asia.

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES, APRIL 2020



SERVICES PROVIDED AND AVAILABLE AT MRS LOS PLANES DURING THE PANDEMIC COMPARED TO MINIMUM HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS



STATISTICS ON COVID19 CASES



HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN MRS LOS PLANES

All actions are being taken by the Government of Panama at MRS Los Planes, based on the capacities of the responsible institutions and in collaboration with IOM, especially in the protection sector.

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented Actions

- There are two 15.000 gallon water tanks capable of supplying the station every day. Tanks are chlorinated with 3 tablets daily based on recommendation from the health personnel.

Identified needs

- cleaning frequency of latrines must be increased and damaged units must be repaired.
- Development and printing of informational materials in the predominant languages spoken in the accommodations and handed out to the MRS migrant population and host communities regarding the COVID19 outbreak, WHO recommendations and MINSAs national guidelines on hand washing and hygiene practices and symptom-identification campaigns.
- Install hand-washing stations; provided at minimum standard of 1 in 10 inhabitants per accommodation, in accordance with Sphere Standard N 6.3 "WASH in health facilities" in order to increase prevention measures.
- Support an adequate socialization of guidelines and routes of medical attention as set by MINSAs before the COVID19 outbreak, with the engagement of MRS staff, the host community, UN organizations and civil society.
- Promotion of proper hygiene practices and personal hygiene kits.

FOOD SECURITY



Implemented Actions

NMS maintains meal services three times a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. It offers an equal distribution of food portions, but is insufficient according to adequate caloric loads.

Identified needs

- There are no specific dietary requirements established for children under 5 years old, chronically ill people or pregnant women.

ACCOMMODATION AND SETTLEMENT



Identified needs

- Repair and lighting are required throughout the station, mainly in areas where latrines and sanitary batteries are located.
- There are spaces which could be used as rooms, however they are unfit because they are deteriorated and require repairs.
- There are no gender or age specific bathrooms.
- There is a high risk of fire, because there are pine trees located next to the electrical wiring.
- There is no evacuation plan or emergency contingency measures.
- The solid waste landfill, authorized for the station, has collapsed and there is no waste disposal plan.

PROTECTION



Implemented Actions

- SENAFRONT maintains 8 units that are responsible for maintaining order and protecting the MRS perimeter.
- SENAFRONT provides support in coordinating with the institutions responsible for processing the identification documents, such as birth records, citizenship cards, death certificates, among others.
- IOM provides support in channeling routes for the protection and assistance of migrants who are vulnerable or at risk, and provides access-protection information to migrants.

Identified needs

- Migrants usually decide not to formally report acts of violence, family separation or cases that merit legal protection and custody, because they fear it might eventually delay their migration journey. At the institutional level, mitigation measures have been established in the event of violence, such as the immediate distancing of couples and the temporary protection of women and children who suffer from some kind of aggression by a perpetrator. This is done in coordination with the authorities from Costa Rica's General Directorate on Migration and Immigration.
- There are no permanent institutions that support processing applications for shelter, psychosocial support or that address specific protection needs with a differential approach.
- There is no access to information on the migration process or general related issues, and in different languages. Information is only disseminated for important communications and done through spokespersons from the migrant population or with a language translation phone app.

HEALTH



Implemented Actions

- MINSA maintains a permanent medical station at the MRS, which is open: Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. It is staffed with a doctor; including a paramedic four days a week, from 04:00 pm to 08:00 pm intended for emergencies only.
- MINSA and the NMS are the entities responsible for providing support and information to the families of individuals who require hospitalization.

Identified needs

- The MRS Los Planes does not have an ambulance. SENAFRONT provides emergency transportation with the MRS patrol vehicle, but it is not outfitted with the minimum standards for emergency transfers, and is intended as a multiple use vehicle.
- There is no access to birth control methods, such as condoms.

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