

HIGHLIGHTS



2,518

Migrants sheltered
at the MRS



167%

Overcapacity in
Migration Stations nationwide



66

Pregnant
women



30%

Children and
adolescents under 17



4

Unaccompanied children
and adolescents under 17



13

Cases of COVID-19 have been identified
by community transmission in Darién



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



Transit population is not ruled out
through the Darién National Park



180

Recovered cases
of COVID-19

METHODOLOGY

The information contained 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. This group is co-led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), where agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in Panama are currently actively participating, such as: United Nations Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Inter-Agency Group on Human Mobility coordinates actions at the national level to complement the efforts of the Government of Panama to address the challenges of managing human mobility from a dignified, humane, safe, orderly and regular manner.

CONTEXT OF THE SITUATION

The Darién region has been characterized as one of the most important points of transit for extra-regional migrants for the past eleven years. However, the Darién 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 by extra-regionals occurred in the province of Darién, influenced by the closing of borders in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Faced with this situation, the governments of Panama and Costa Rica established an agreement known as 'Operation Controlled Flow', that would guarantee the orderly, regular and safe transit of these migrants through the territory.

The World Health Organization declared a state of pandemic for the COVID-19 virus on 11 March 2020, 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. In addition, organizations such as SICA have drawn up regional work plans for the contingency of the pandemic.

Since 12 March 2020, Panama has been under a state of emergency, with closed borders, as a result of the measures imposed to contain the virus. Due to the closing of the Costa Rican borders on 16 March, Operation Controlled Flow has been severely affected. Currently, there are 2,518 migrants stranded in the national territory, distributed as follows: in

the migrant stations of the province of Darién there are 1,669 in MRS La Peñita, 106 in Bajo Chiquito, and 202 in MRS Lajas Blancas. Furthermore, there are 541 migrants in the province of Chiriquí at MRS Los Planes. Borders continue to be closed until 23 July.

At the Darién province, the sanitary fence is maintained in the community of Agua Fría and in the village of Yaviza, the latter being, according to data from the Ministry of Health (MINSA by its Spanish acronym), the 15th village in the country with the highest number of cases of COVID-19.

As of 18 June, Panama has 23,351 confirmed cases of which 9,094 are active cases; and a total of 475 deaths. In terms of border provinces, Darién reports a total of 696 cases, and Chiriquí a total of 767 positive cases.

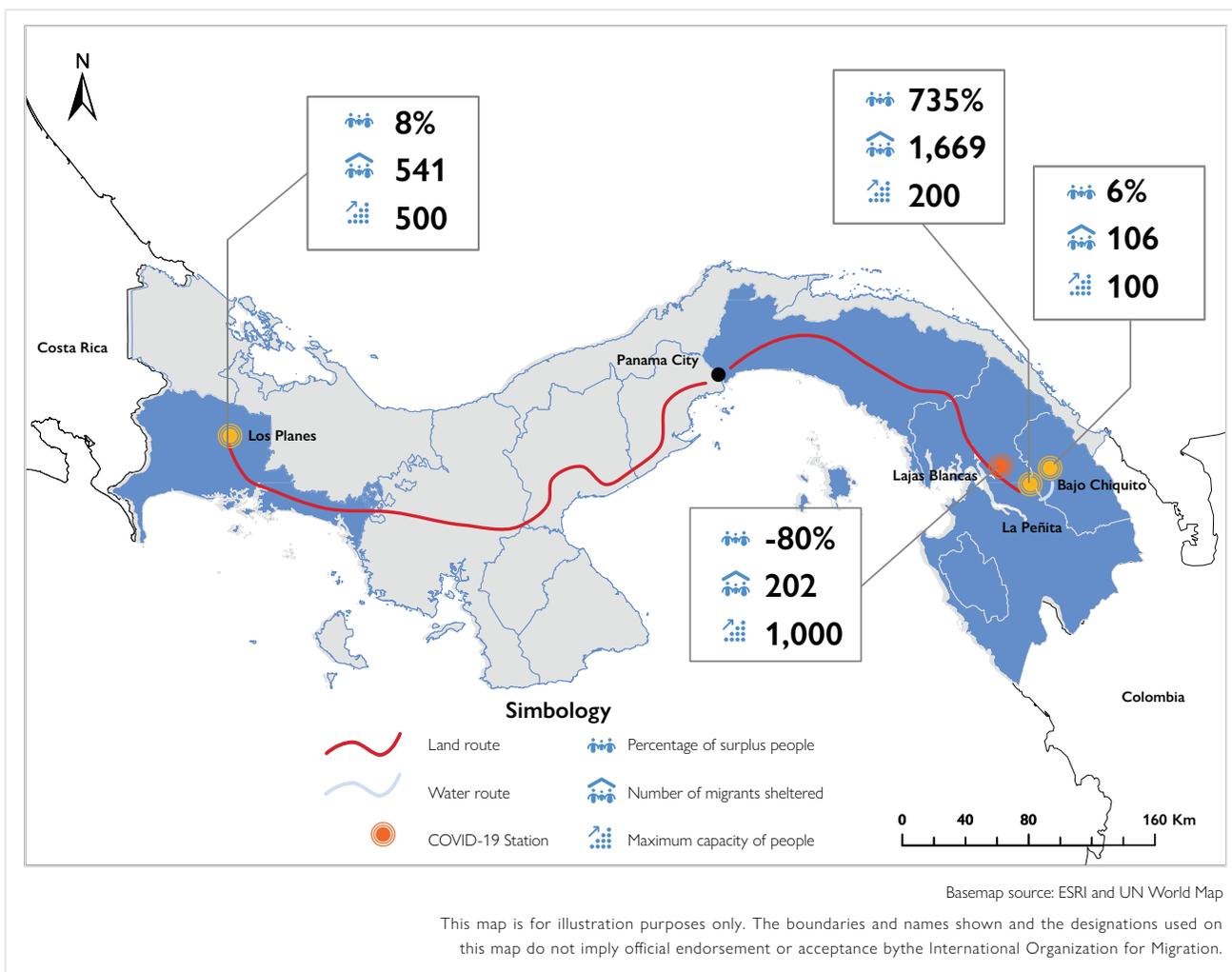
In the context of COVID-19, in recent weeks there have been protests by migrants in the different MRS in both provinces. This week, during the monitoring of shelters, 3 incidents of violence were identified: one took place in MRS La Peñita, another in MRS Los Planes and the third (which was more serious), happened in

MRS of Lajas Blancas, where 4 migrants were injured, and 18 migrants were removed from the MRS.

Since the beginning of community transmission of COVID-19 in Darién, 3 positive cases have been recorded in the community of Bajo Chiquito, 10 cases in MRS La Peñita have been transferred to MRS Lajas Blancas, and 8 cases with moderate virus disease have been managed under a stay-at-home/hospital protocol in Panama City. At the time of writing this report, 180 cases have been recovered and 10 possible contacts have occurred in MRS Lajas Blancas. So far, 318 swabs have been taken.

A small change in the health situation is reported at MRS of Los Planes de Gualaca in Chiriquí; two people require specialized health care; one has a stomach abscess and the other requires dental maxillofacial surgery. Both manifest that they do not have the resources to cover the surgery. The adults and the child with leishmaniasis continue under medical treatment. Zero cases of COVID-19 have been reported at MRS Los Planes.

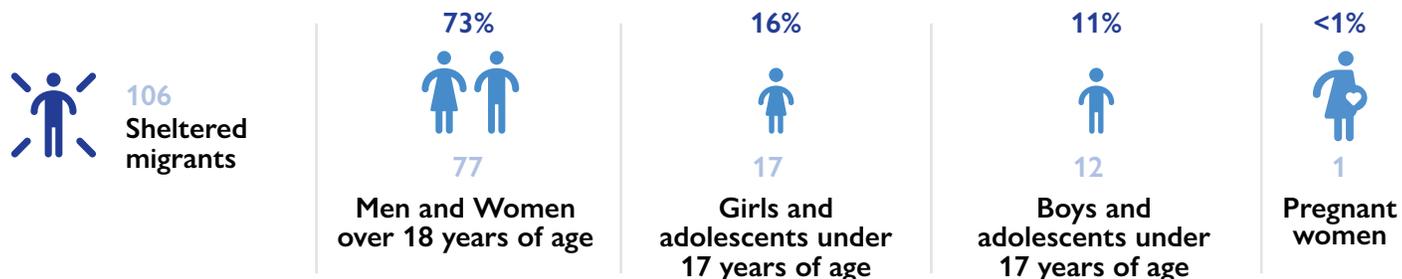
SHELTERED POPULATION AT MIGRANT RECEIVING STATIONS



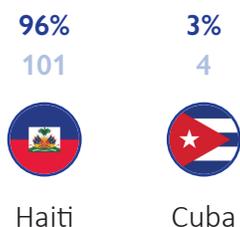
STATISTICS ON THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

18 JUNE 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

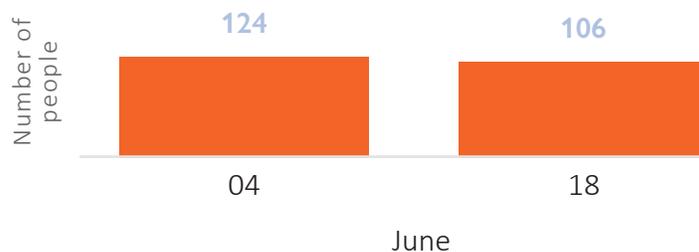


HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



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

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT BAJO CHIQUITO, JUNE 2020



COVID-19 CASE STATISTICS



3
Cases spread by
community transmission
at Bajo Chiquito community

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented actions

- Under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership, the distribution of 24,000 liters of potable water is maintained. Including the assistance of a community technician who monitors the system.

Identified needs

- Progress is required with the construction of showers and latrines at the MRS.

Identified needs

- Migrants, especially children, have allergies and skin infections from mosquito bites, as well as stomach diseases that cause diarrhea.
- The health post has no medicines or medical supplies for personal protection or medical care.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT continues to provide food for migrants.

Identified needs

- In field monitoring carried out on June 12 by UNICEF-IFRC-Panamanian Red Cross, the population indicated that the food rations provided were quite small and did not cover their nutritional needs.

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



Identified needs

- Although migrants are housed in shelters, they are in temporary shelters made of tarpaulins or tents. Migrants do not have decent conditions in which to rest, for example, they do not have sleeping mats.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

- IOM is following up with the Regional Directorate of MINSA to confirm the protocol and treatment of COVID-19 positive migrants.
- UNFPA provided condoms for the migrant population.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- The National Border Service (SENAFRONT by its Spanish acronym) maintains security staff that protects the community.

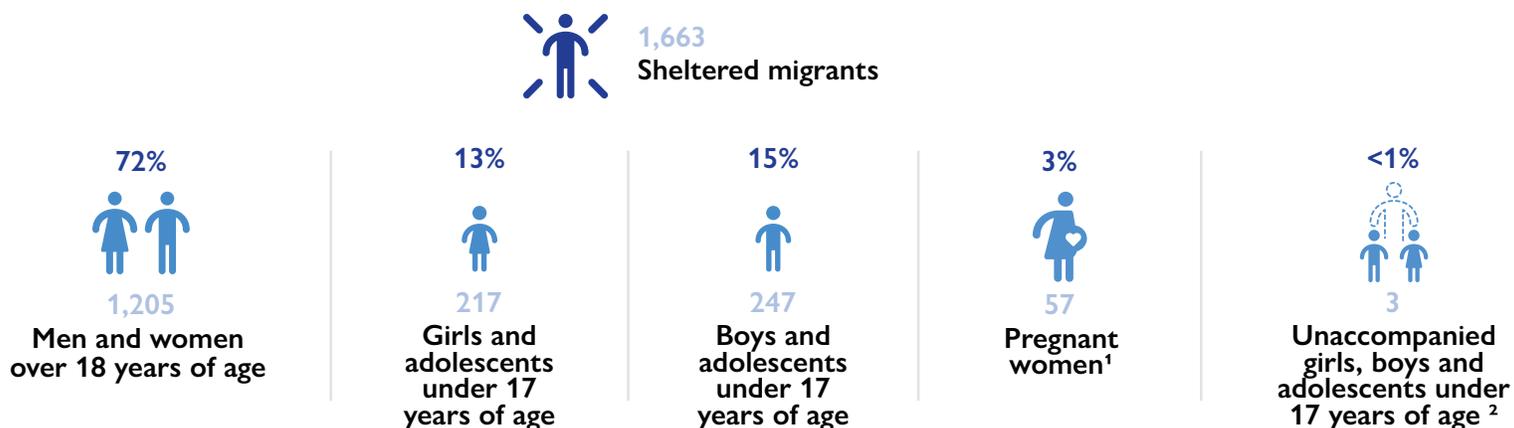
Identified needs

- Cases of migrants in need of international protection have been identified.
- There have been violent incidents among migrants.

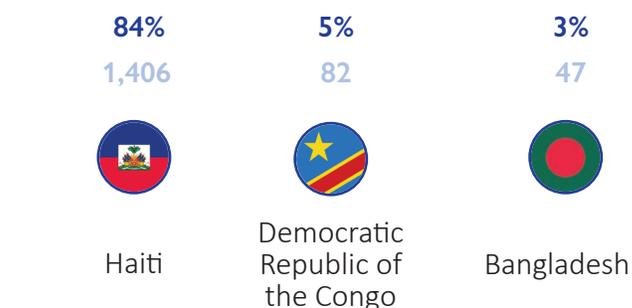
STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA

18 JUNE 2020

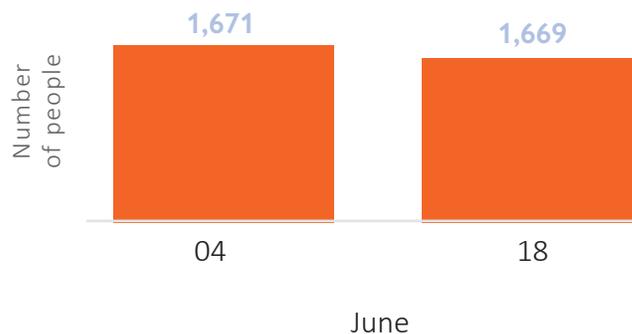
SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



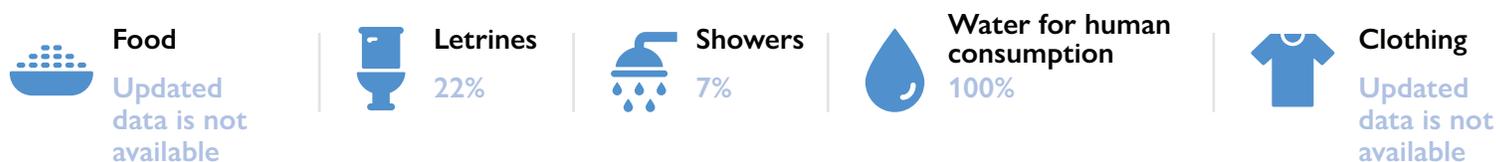
HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA, JUNE 2020



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



¹ Fifty-six are included in women over 18 years of age and 1 is included in women under 17 years of age. The updated registration is currently being carried out under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership.

² Data included girls, boys and adolescents under 17 years of age.

COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS



10

**Cases spread by
community transmission
at MRS La Peña**

These individuals and their contacts have been transferred to MRS Lajas Blancas, which has been temporarily authorized to attend COVID-19 positive cases at Darién, as part of the health care protocol implemented in Panama. These statistics are accounted for within MRS Lajas Blancas data.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AT MRS LA PEÑITA

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented actions

- Under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership framework, four technicians are still presently monitoring the water, sanitation and hygiene distribution systems, as well as the distribution of 64,000 liters of drinking water daily.
- Under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership framework, 1,600 personal hygiene kits were delivered. No information on products delivered is available.

Identified needs

- Problems have been detected with the collection of solid waste, and SENAFRONT requires support with this task.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- The Ministry of Social Development delivered 4,000 bags of food. No information is available on the products delivered.

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



Implemented actions

- IOM in coordination with the National Migration Service (NMS) has delivered 25 tarpaulins.
- IOM managed the donation of 80 packages of clothing with approximately 4,000 pieces for distribution in the MRS in Darién. These were handed over to SENAFRONT. At the time of writing, the clothing had not been delivered to the migrants.
- UNICEF provided 300 sleeping mats to SENAFRONT.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

- IOM donated a testing booth to MINSA for COVID-19 swabbing.
- Under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership framework, a doctor is working to accompany pregnant women, a nurse for nutritional screening and a health technician.
- UNFPA provided condoms to the migrant population.
- SENAFRONT has assigned a patrol vehicle for emergency health transportation.

Identified needs

- Four cases of child malnutrition have been identified, one of which is still in hospital.
- Patients with severe diarrhea, lesions and skin infections from mosquito bites are reported.
- The sheltered population is strongly affected at the psychosocial level, mainly due to uncertainty and their prolonged and indefinite stay at the MRS.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains security staff providing safety and order in the community.
- IOM Panama coordinated a meeting with leaders of the Haitian population, IOM Haiti, IOM Regional Office and SENAFRONT. Through interpreters, IOM was able to communicate with migrants and identify their specific needs, highlighting the urgent need for psychosocial support and containment. In addition, the team of interpreters provided information on the closure of borders and the current context of mobility restrictions due to COVID-19.
- The Ombudsman's Office, in coordination with UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council, has followed up on asylum-seekers' cases and referred them to the National Office for Refugee Affairs.
- UNICEF and UNHCR are accompanying 17 children born in Panamanian territory, through follow-up and coordination with the authorities of the Civil Registry (Electoral Tribunal) to avoid risks of statelessness.
- UNICEF continues to follow up on cases of unaccompanied children with the Family Court and the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family (SENNIAF by its Spanish acronym).

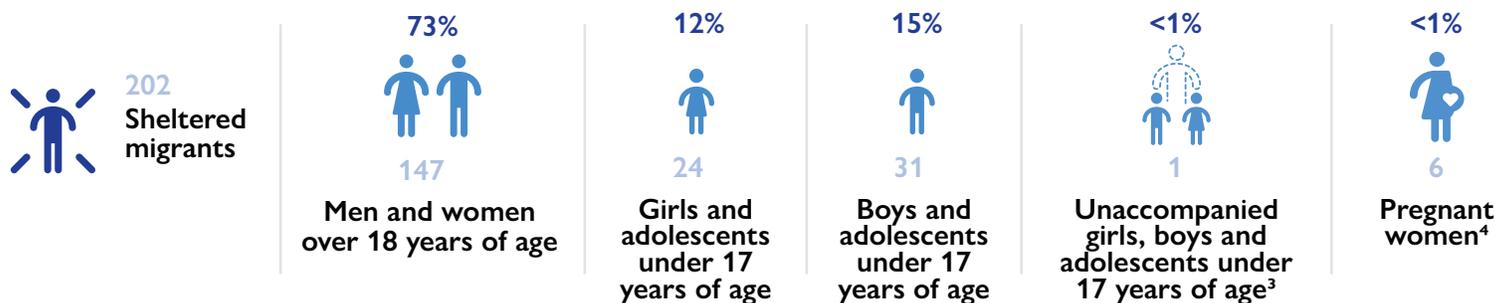
Identified needs

- An increase in cases of gender-based violence, violence against children and between people of different nationalities has been reported. Migrants have also blocked the entrance to the MRS to other people.

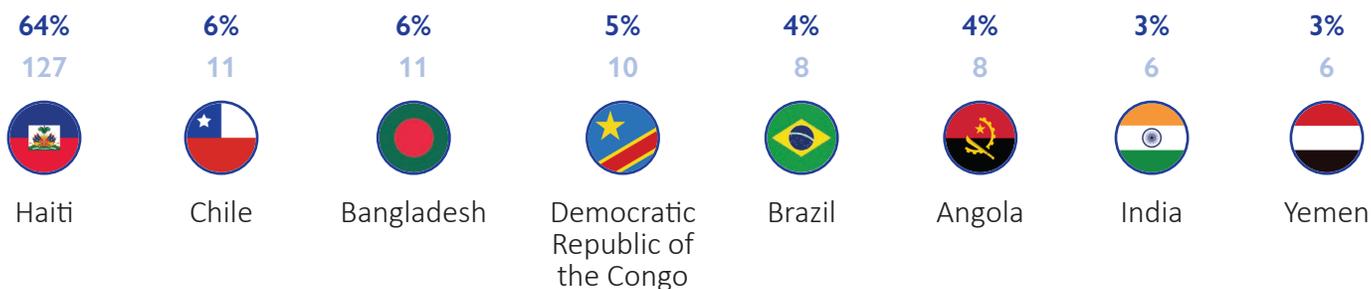
STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

18 JUNE, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

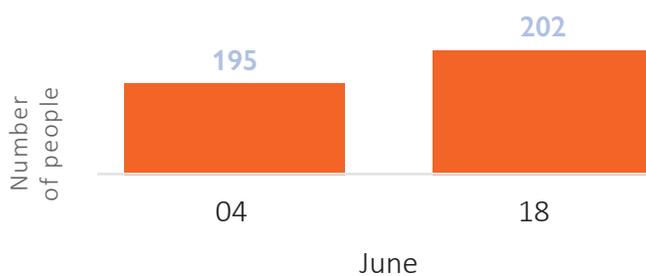


HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



The remaining 5% correspond to nationalities from various countries in South America, South Asia and Africa.

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS, JUNE 2020



SERVICES PROVIDED AND AVAILABLE AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS DURING THE PANDEMIC COMPARED TO MINIMUM HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS



³ Data included in children under 17 years of age.

⁴ Data included in women over 18 years of age.

COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS

 **10**
Positive⁵

 **318**
Tests applied

 **10**
Suspected

 **180**
Recovered

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains the distribution of 2-liter bottled water every 2 days for migrants.
- The Norwegian Refugee Council provided 172 personal hygiene kits containing a bucket, 4 toilet paper rolls, 1 deodorant, 2 toothbrushes, 2 bath soaps, a large toothpaste, 1 shampoo bottle, 2 bars of soap for washing, a disposable plastic bag and a towel.

Identified needs

- The water treatment plants are being underutilized; therefore they are not guaranteeing the standards of the sphere.
- Latrines, bathrooms and sinks do not have running water. Migrants are using the river for bathing instead.
- Migrants indicate that the latrines are out of service.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains the distribution of three prepared meals for migrants.

Identified needs

- Migrants indicate that food portions are very small and that they have received some bad products.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

- IOM coordinated the transfer and donation of two testing booths for COVID-19 swabbing.
- UNFPA provided condoms for the migrant population.

Identified needs

- Migrants, especially children, have allergies and skin infections from mosquito bites, as well as stomach diseases that cause diarrhea.

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



Identified needs

- Migrants are placed in temporary accommodation and tents.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- IOM has followed up with the Ombudsman's Office to monitor situations of violence among migrants.
- UNICEF is following up on the case of an unaccompanied minor with the Family Court and SENNIAF.
- The Ombudsman's Office has set up a complaints box available to migrant at the MRS.

Identified needs

- Latrines are not separated by gender.
- Physical violence among migrants has occurred at the MRS. Some people were transferred to the Public Prosecutor's Office for the corresponding legal process.

⁵ Six low-risk migrants are kept in the hotel/hospital in Panama City. This data only compiles active cases.

STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES

19 MAY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



541
 Sheltered migrants

30%

 163
 Women over 18 years of age

31%

 168
 Men over 18 years of age

19%

 102
 Girls and adolescents under 17 years of age

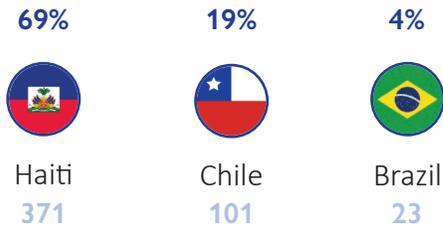
20%

 108
 Boys and adolescents under 17 years of age

2%

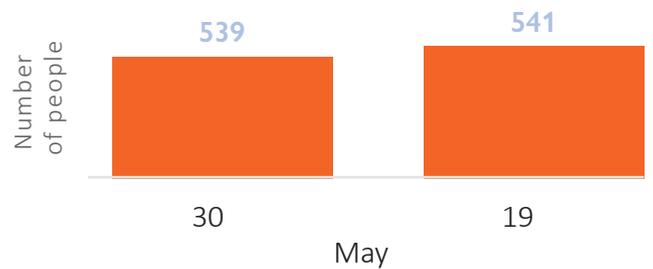
 8
 Pregnant women⁶

HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



The remaining 8% correspond to 17 nationalities from various countries in South America, Africa, South Asia; as well as minors born in Panama.

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES, MAY 2020



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

 **Food**
 85%

 **Letrines**
 100%

 **Showers**
 7%

 **Water for human consumption**
 100%

 **Clothing**
 At least 10 pieces per person

COVID-19 CASE STATISTICS



0
 No cases of COVID19 have been identified in the migration flow

⁶ Data included in the total number of women over 18 years of age

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN MRS LOS PLANES

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented actions

- NMS has talked about the promotion of hygiene to specific groups of migrants through awareness talks and on a one-to-one basis.

Identified needs

- Currently in the middle of the rainy season and with recent heavy rains, plus a collapsed landfill, sewage runoff was found heading to the creek next to the MRS.
- Cleaning frequency of latrines must be increased.
- Install hand-washing stations; provided with a minimum standard of 1 in 10 inhabitants per shelter, in accordance with Sphere Standard N 6.3 "WASH in health facilities" in order to increase prevention measures.

Identified needs

- NMS maintains the distribution of bottled water to children and pregnant women. However, there are shortages at the moment and bottled water is only being delivered three times a week.
- There is a need for food supplies in general and specifically fruits, vegetables, formulas for children and infants.

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



Implemented actions

- IOM coordinated the participation of officials and representatives from NMS, MINSA, SENAFRONT and SENNIAF in virtual seminars on Camp Management and Coordination.
- Migrants voluntarily carry out cleaning chores, minor infrastructure repairs and clothing distribution.

Identified needs

- Specialized technical support is required to repair the MRS infrastructure, mainly the electrical installation.
- The presence of mosquitoes and snakes around the cabins has been identified, so additional pest spraying is required.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- NMS continues to provide three daily meals to the entire migrant population. Food portion distribution has been improved.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains 8 to 10 security guards that are responsible for maintaining order and protecting the MRS perimeter.
- NMS in coordination with IOM managed the donation, transfer and delivery of a playground to the MRS.
- IOM donated banners and signs to NMS with information on the health protocol and prevention of the spread of COVID-19, translated into several languages and placed in the MRS.
- NMS authorities consulted the migrant population about their interest in opting for voluntary return to their countries of origin, but the migrants indicated that they were not interested in returning. On the contrary, they requested the authorization of a temporary visa that would allow them to stay in Panama in a regular way while the borders are closed. The authorities redirected the request to the department in charge and will follow up on the request.

Identified needs

- There have been incidents of physical violence, specifically in one case of domestic violence. However, no formal complaints have been filed.
- There is no gender- or age-specific bathrooms.
- There is an urgent need for permanent specialized psychosocial care services for migrants, with special emphasis on children and gender-based violence, as well as the development of preferred routes and permanent psychosocial support programs.
- NMS identifies the need for training on how to address the psychosocial care of migrants in the MRS.
- The implementation of an educational programme for school-aged children is necessary, as a large number of children in this age group have been identified, as well as safe spaces for children and adolescents to guarantee their right to development.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

- MINSA and NMS have set up a migrant health centre at the MRS, which is staffed by a physician and nurses. Approximately 30 patients are seen daily, and referrals are made to hospitals for special cases.

Identified needs

- Two cases requiring specialized medical care have been identified: one person with a stomach abscess and another person in need of a tooth extraction (maxillofacial). These people have recurrent pain.
- At the time of writing, no outlets have been provided for the withdrawal of remittances, as there are no biosecurity inputs for migrants.
- A shortage of medication has been identified at the MRS clinic; however, doctors have issued prescriptions to be used at pharmacies, but migrants do not have the economic resources to pay for them.
- Migrants have been identified with respiratory diseases, infections, lacerations and headaches.
- High levels of anxiety and stress have been identified, causing irritability in migrants.
- MRS Los Planes does not have an ambulance. NMS 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, mainly administrative staff procedures.
- There is no access to birth control methods, such as condoms.

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Contact info

IOM Regional Office for Central America, North America and the Caribbean

Sabana Business Center Building,
Ernesto Rohrmoser Boulevard,
San Jose Costa Rica.

Email:
iomsanjose2@iom.int

Phone:
+506 2212-5300

Website:
<http://rosanjose.iom.int/site/>

IOM National Office in Panama

Vicente Bonilla street,
Building 110 and 113,
Ciudad del Saber, Clayton

Email:
pac@iom.int

Phone:
+507 305-3350

Website:
<https://panama.iom.int/panama>