

HIGHLIGHTS



2,480

Migrants sheltered
at the MRS



68

Pregnant
women



31%

Children and
adolescents under 17



155%

Overcapacity in
Migration Stations nationwide



<1%

Unaccompanied children
and adolescents under 17



6

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



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



41

Recovered cases
of COVID-19



Transit population is not ruled out
through the Darién National Park

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 (UN AIDS), 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 2,480 migrants stranded in the national territory, distributed as follows:

In the migrant stations of the province of Darién there are 1,532 in MRS La Peñita, 101 in Bajo Chiquito, and 178 in MRS Lajas Blancas. Furthermore, there are 669 migrants in the province of Chiriquí at MRS Los Planes. Borders continue to be closed until 23 July.

The number of migrants in MRS Los Planes has varied due to some voluntary withdrawals of migrants in recent days. A few of them located directly at the border area. The National Migration Service (NMS) has reported that this population will be transferred to one of the MRS's in Darién, and the corresponding isolation protocol will be applied, as dictated by the Ministry of Health (MINSA by its Spanish acronym).

As of 2 July, Panama has registered 35,237 confirmed cases, of which 18,125 are active cases; and a total death count of 667. In terms of border provinces, Darién reports a total of 961 cases, and Chiriquí a total of 1,476 positive cases.

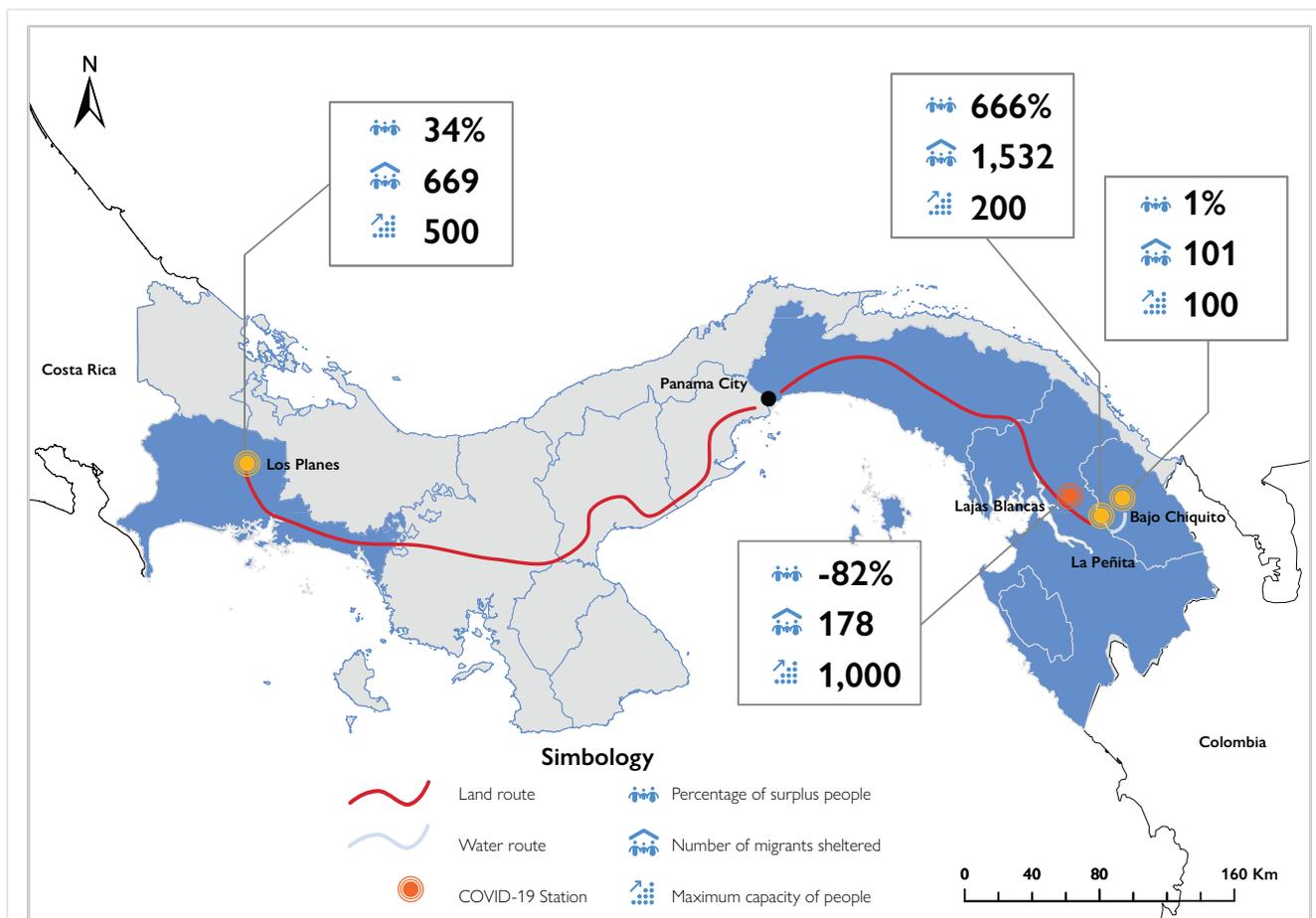
As for the MRSs located in Darién, five positive cases were registered during the week at MRS Lajas Blancas and one

positive case at MRS La Peñita. Patients with moderate virus disease have been managed under a stay-at-hotel/hospital protocol in Panama City. At the time of writing this report, six COVID-19 positives were reported (one currently in Panama for being moderate), 132 migrants among suspects and 41 recovered in MRS Lajas Blancas. This week there were 2 births at the mother and Child Center of Metetí, and are reported as stable.

The NMS reported the death of a 2 year old child due to respiratory complications at MRS Los Planes de Gualaca in Chiriquí, on Friday 26 June, who was part of migrant population at the MRS. The child was hospitalized due to fever. 291 tests were applied, and 100% resulted negative.

Two people continue to require specialized health care, and declare that they do not have the economic resources to access medical services. The adults and children with leishmaniasis continue under medical treatment. A minor, treated at Obaldía Hospital, was released.

SHELTERED POPULATION AT MIGRANT RECEIVING STATIONS



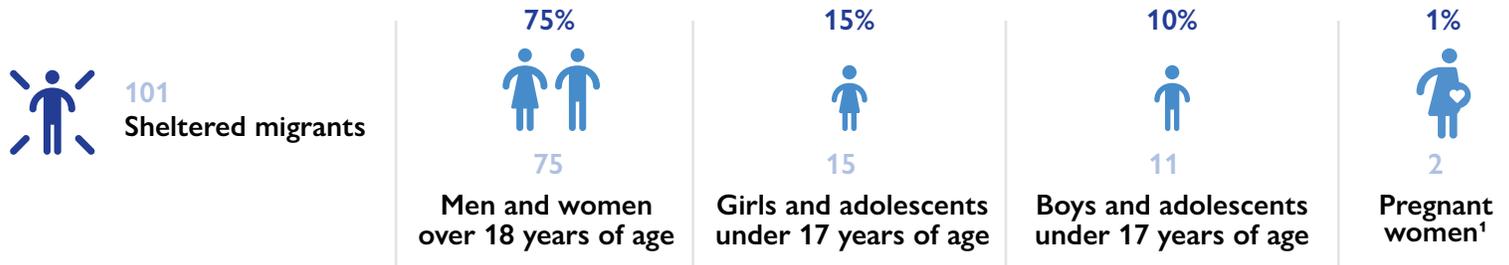
Basemap source: ESRI and UN World Map

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 ON THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

2 JULY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

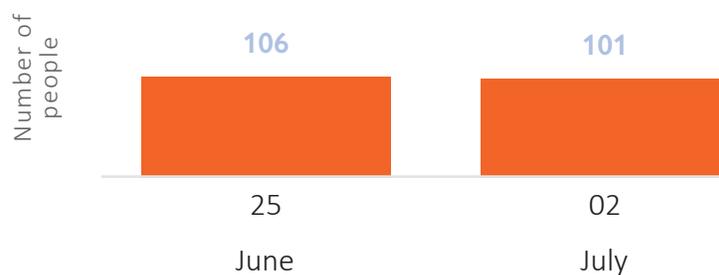


HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



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

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT BAJO CHIQUITO, JUNE-JULY 2020



COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS



No updated data available

Cases spread by
community transmission
at Bajo Chiquito community

¹ All women over 18 are included

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.
- UNICEF-IFRC delivered 50 family personal care kits. Each kit is sufficient for five people and contains shampoo, bath soap, sanitary towels, toothbrush, laundry bar soap, toothpaste, hand towels, combs and toilet paper.

Identified needs

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

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- The National Border System (SENAFRONT by its Spanish acronym) continues to provide food for migrants every ten days.
- Food portions have been improved, but differentiated feeding for children and pregnant women has not been improved.

HEALTH



Identified needs

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

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



Implemented actions

- UNICEF-IFRC provided 40 sleeping mats.

Identified needs

- Although migrants are housed in shelters, they are in temporary shelters made of tarpaulins or tents.

PROTECTION



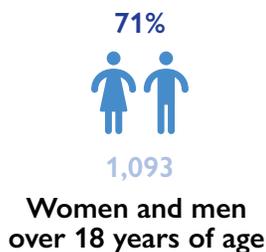
Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains security staff that protects the community.

STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA

2 JULY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

83%
1,269



Haiti

5%
82



Democratic
Republic of
the Congo

3%
47



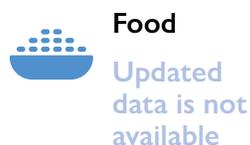
Bangladesh

The remaining 9% corresponds to 28 nationalities from various countries in Africa, South Asia, Central and South America.

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA, JUNE-JULY 2020



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



² Fifty are included in women over 18 years of age. The updated registration is currently being carried out under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership.

³ Data included in all children under 17 years of age.

COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS



1 Case spread by community transmission at MRS La Peña

The identified migrants are transferred to MRS Lajas Blancas, which has been temporarily authorized to care for COVID-19 positive migrants and their contacts in Darién, as part of the health care protocol that is active in Panama.

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 50,000 liters of drinking water daily.

Identified needs

- There are not enough latrines available for migrants.

Identified needs

- There is no differentiated feeding for pregnant women or children under 5 years of age.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- IOM maintains monitoring and follow-up meetings for the management of food donations by the National Secretariat for the Development of Afro-Panamanians and the Apostolic Vicariate of Darién in coordination with SENAFRONT.

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



Identified needs

- Migrants have been setting up tents in the MRS flood zone because of the lack of space due to the overcapacity of the facilities.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

- Under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership framework, a physician is available to focus on accompanying pregnant women, a nurse for nutritional screening and a health technician.
- SENAFRONT has transferred a pregnant woman to the Mother and Child Center (CMI) in Metetí for specialized care in the delivery process. In addition, two children were born at the CMI.
- MINSa maintains its medical care, under a role of ten days of service and four days off.

Identified needs

- Patients with severe diarrhea, injury 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

- The National Office for the Care of Refugees and the Norwegian Refugee Council have identified at least ten people (including one unaccompanied minor) in need of international protection and have given their support in applying for refuge in Panama.

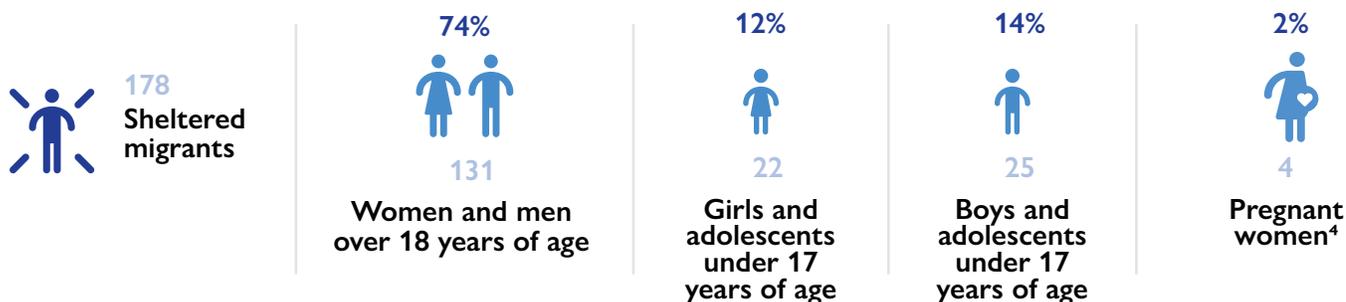
Identified needs

- More communication activities are needed regarding migration status and mobility restrictions in Panama and throughout the Central American region.
- Information should be disseminated about the applicable protocols for migrants who need to be hospitalized and those who need to be legally processed.

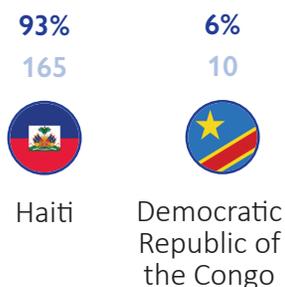
STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

2 JULY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

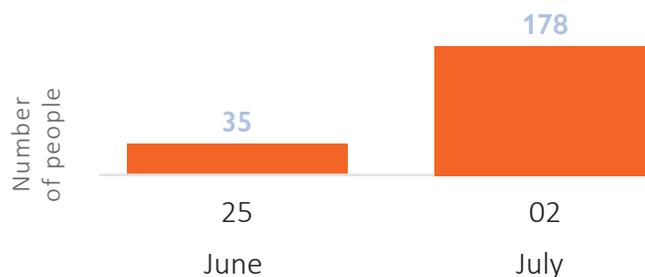


HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



The remaining 1% correspond to nationalities from various countries in South and Central America.

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS, JUNE-JULY 2020

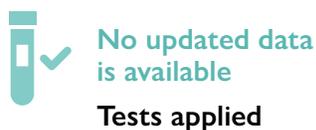


SERVICES PROVIDED AND AVAILABLE AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS DURING THE PANDEMIC COMPARED TO MINIMUM HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS



⁴ Data included in women over 18 years of age. The updated registration is currently being carried out under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership.

COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS



HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Identified needs

- The National Civil Protection System's water treatment plants are damaged and need to be repaired as soon as possible.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

- MINSA maintains epidemiological surveillance of 132 quarantined migrants who are suspected of being COVID-19 positive.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

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

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT- in coordination with the NMS- transferred 168 migrants from MRS Lajas Blancas to MRS Los Planes. The transfer was logistically carried out with 6 buses (4 private transport buses paid by the NMS, 1 public transport bus, and 1 bus owned by the NMS).

PROTECTION



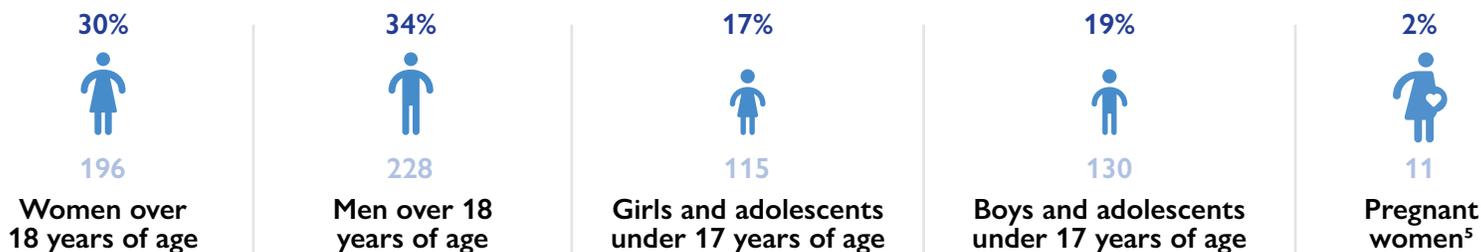
Identified needs

- Latrines are not separated by gender.

STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES

2 JULY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES, JUNE-JULY 2020



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



⁵ Data included in women over 18 years of age.

COVID-19 CASE STATISTICS



0

No cases of COVID19 have been identified in the migration flow

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN MRS LOS PLANES

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented actions

- NMS continues to chlorinate water for human consumption.

Identified needs

- Currently in the middle of the rainy season and rising rivers, water for human consumption shows sediment and therefore migrants do not trust it enough for consumption.
- There is a shortage of bio-security supplies, i.e., masks, gloves and disinfectant gel. For this reason, no departures were allowed to the City of David to process remittances.
- Increased cleaning frequency of latrines.
- 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.

- NMS requires support regarding the distribution of canned milk for children from 0 to 8 years old, with priority given to urgent cases that require special formulas.

- 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.

Identified needs

- Specialized technical support is required to repair the MRS infrastructure, mainly the electrical installation.
- Seventy-five percent of the latrines require repairs.
- The presence of mosquitoes and snakes around the cabins has been identified, so additional pest spraying is required.
- The solid waste dump has collapsed, and gray and black water is polluting a creek adjacent to the MRS.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- NMS continues to provide three daily meals to the entire migrant population.

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.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains 8 to 10 security guards that are responsible for maintaining order and protecting the MRS perimeter.

Identified needs

- 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.
- A voluntary departure of a group of migrants from the MRS was reported, who remain at the Paso Canoas border because Costa Rica denied entry as part of its border closure policy.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

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

Identified needs

- One death of a minor was reported as a result of respiratory problems. This minor was transferred weeks ago from Darién and after the autopsy result it was determined that the cause of death was not COVID-19.
- 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.
- 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.

The views expressed in International Organization for Migration (IOM) publications are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of IOM or the United States Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM). The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM or PRM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that migration in an orderly and humane manner benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental body, IOM works with its partners in the international community to: help address the growing challenges of migration management; enhance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and ensure respect for the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

This publication was made possible through the support of the United States Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), under the framework of the Regional Programme on Migration, Mesoamerica-Caribbean. However, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the United States Government.



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>