

## HIGHLIGHTS



2.466

Migrants sheltered  
at the MRS



154%

Overcapacity in  
Migration Stations nationwide



63

Pregnant  
women



31%

Children and  
adolescents under 17



<1%

Unaccompanied children  
and adolescents under 17



6

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



41

Recovered cases  
of COVID-19



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



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 (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 1,582 in MRS La Peñita, 102 in Bajo Chiquito, and 184 in MRS Lajas Blancas. Furthermore, there are 650 migrants in the province of Chiriquí at MRS Los Planes. Borders continue to be closed until 23 July.

The number of migrants at MRS Los Planes has changed, due to recent evasions. The whereabouts of this group of 19 people is unknown. The National Migration System (NMS) has reported that this group will be transferred to one of the MRS in Darién, and the isolation protocol will be applied based on parameters established by the Ministry of Health (MINSA by its Spanish acronym).

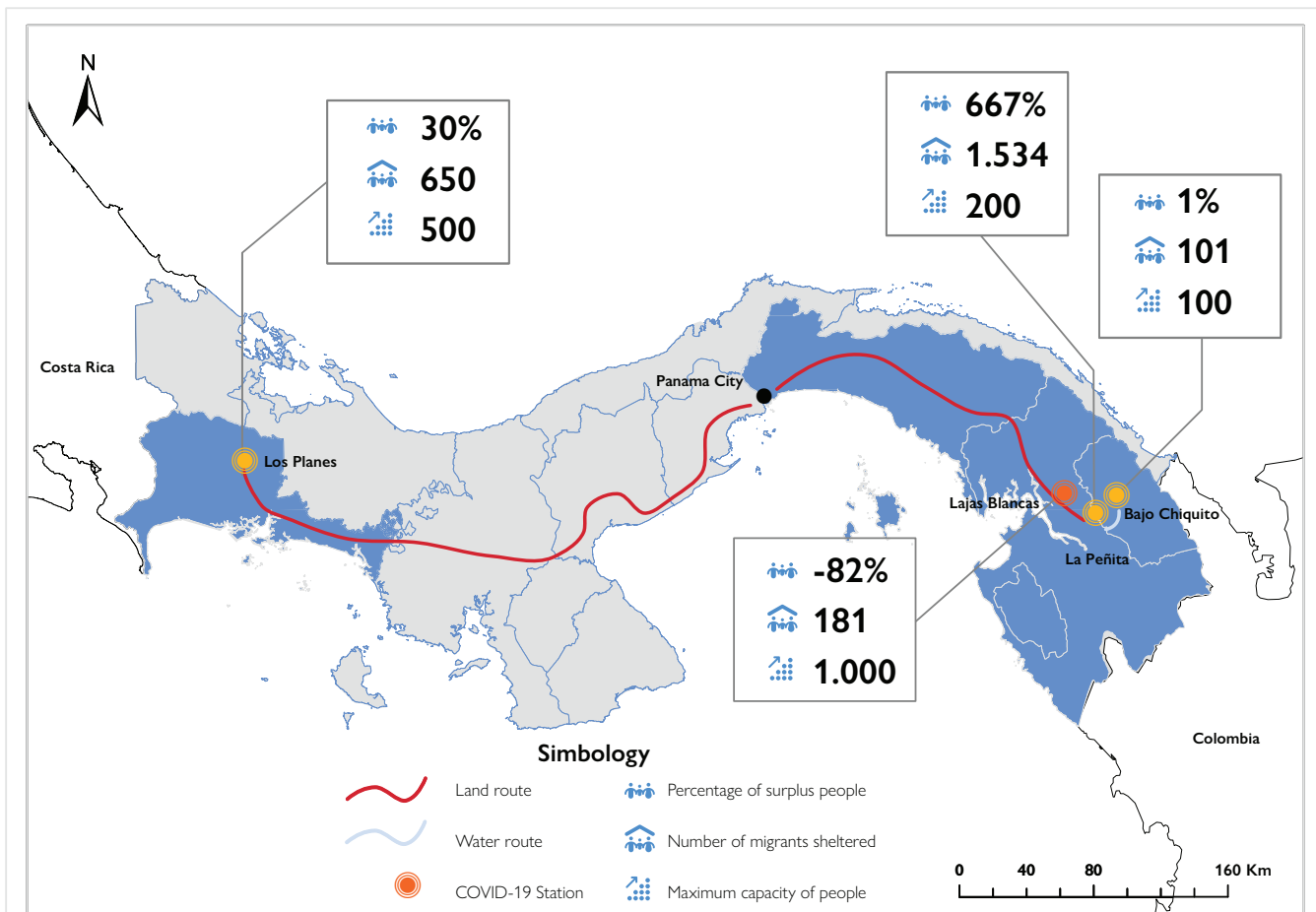
As of July 9, Panama has 42,216 confirmed cases, of which 20,437 are active cases; and a total death count of 839. In terms of border provinces, Darién reports a total of 1,086 cases, and Chiriquí a total of 1,961 positive cases.

As for COVID-19 at the MRS in Darién, since the beginning of community transmission, 5 positive cases have been recorded in MRS Lajas Blancas and there is no updated data on MRS La Peñita. At the time of writing this report, 5 positive COVID-19 cases have been confirmed, 41 recovered and 136 possible contacts in MRS Lajas Blancas. The UNHCR trained Red Cross volunteers began setting up tents at the new MRS in San Vicente.

In MRS Los Planes de Gualaca in Chiriquí, the health situation has not changed. Two people continue to require specialized health care, one with a stomach abscess, and the other with a toothache due to a broken tooth (requiring maxillofacial surgery). Both declare that they do not have the financial resources to access medical services. The adults and the child with leishmaniasis continue under medical treatment, and a minor continues to be hospitalized due to symptoms requiring special care due to a severe gland infection. The NMS is in charge of transferring the minor's parents to take care of him in the hospital.

A total of 292 COVID-19 tests have been carried out, all of which were negative. The request for a special visa that would allow migrants to remain in Panama while borders remain closed is still on hold. Official birth certificates of five children born in the province of Chiriquí have been issued. On Tuesday, July 7th, a family day was held at MRS Los Planes, where several sports, cultural, recreational and integration activities were held for the migrant population..

## SHELTERED POPULATION AT MIGRANT RECEIVING STATIONS



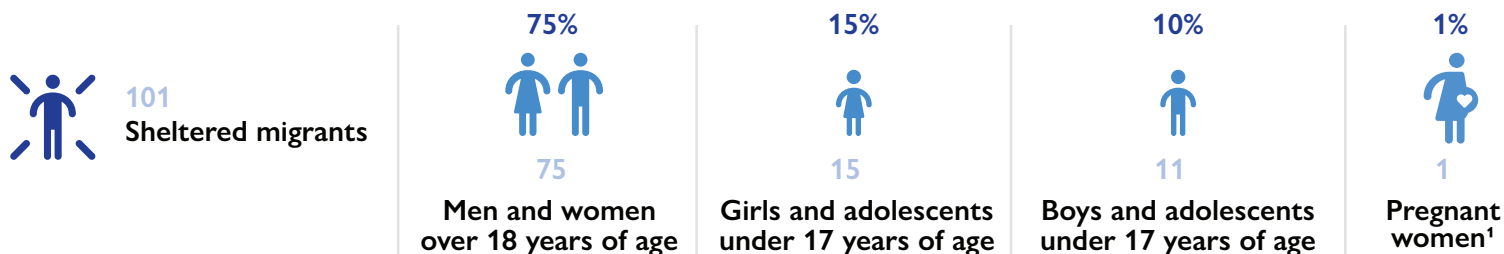
Basemap source: ESRI and UN World Map

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.

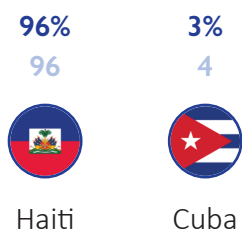
## STATISTICS ON THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

9 JULY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

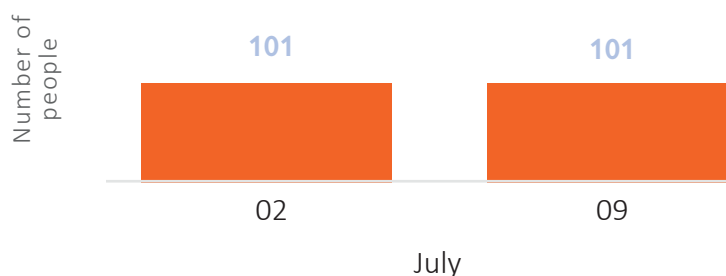


### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



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

### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT BAJO CHIQUITO, JULY 2020



### COVID-19 CASE STATISTICS



**No updated data available**

Cases spread by  
community transmission  
at Bajo Chiquito community

<sup>1</sup> 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

- SENAFRONT 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



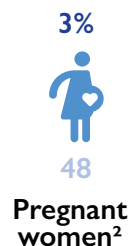
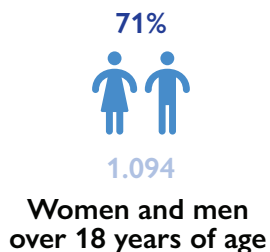
#### Implemented actions

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

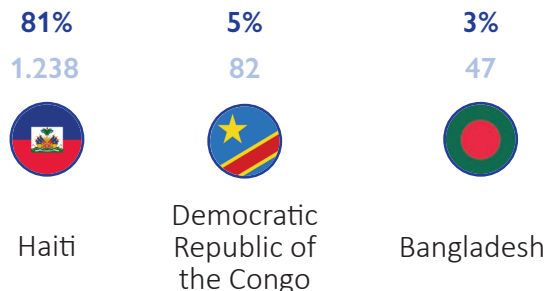
## STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA

9 JULY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

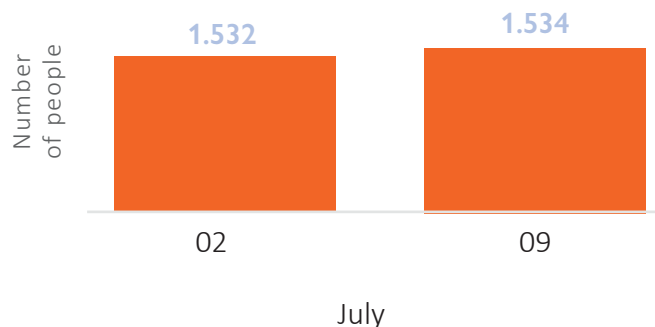


### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

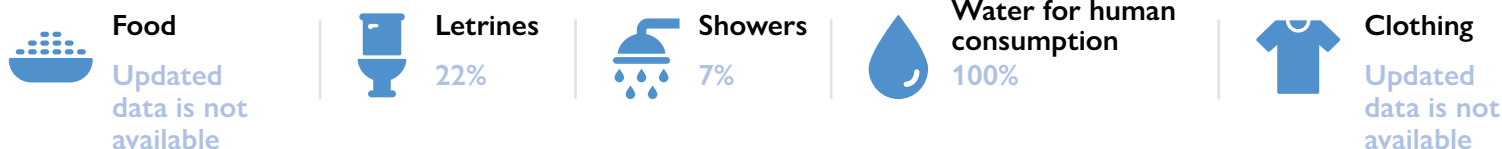


The remaining 11% corresponds to 28 nationalities from various countries in Africa, South Asia, Central and South America.

### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA, JULY 2020



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



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

<sup>3</sup> Data included in children under 17 years of age.

## COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS



### 1 Case spread by community transmission at MRS La Peñita

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.

- Under UNICEF's coordination, cleaning committees made up of migrants are active in all sectors of La Peñita.

#### Identified needs

- There are not enough latrines available for migrants.

### FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



#### Implemented actions

- IOM maintains monitoring and follow-up meetings for the management of food donations by SENADAP and the Apostolic Vicariate of Darién.

#### Identified needs

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

### SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



#### Identified needs

- Overcrowding of migrants continues.

## 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.
- MINSA maintains its medical care: 10 days on, 4 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

- IOM promoted and distributed videos for migrants with information regarding the COVID-19 context with SENAFRONT, NMS, the Ombudsman's Office, UNICEF, MINSA and the Apostolic Vicariate of Darién.

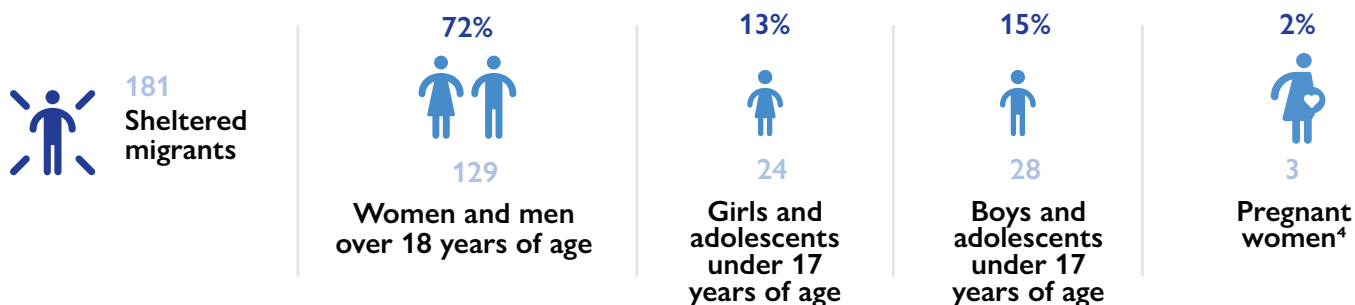
### Identified needs

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

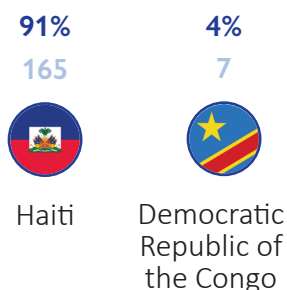
## STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

9 JULY, 2020

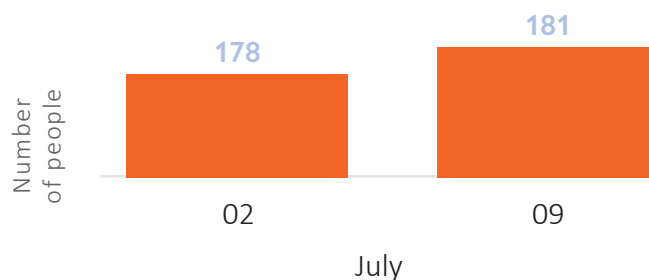
SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



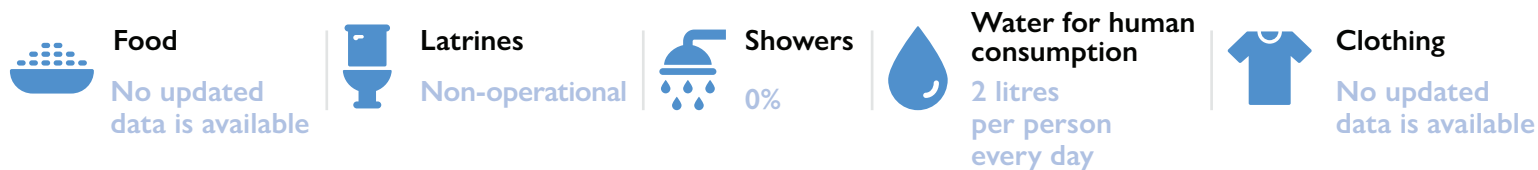
### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS, JULY 2020



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




<sup>4</sup> 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

 **5**  
Positive

 **No updated data is available**  
Tests applied

 **136**  
Suspected

 **41**  
Recovered

## 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



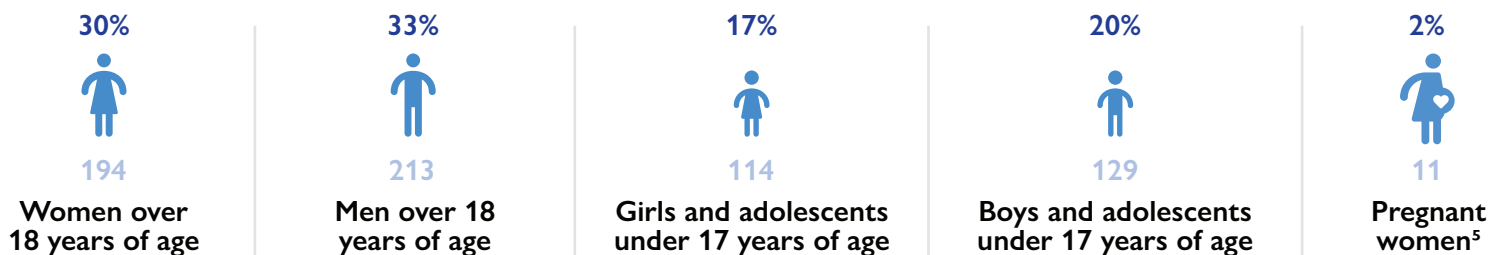
#### Identified needs

- Latrines are not separated by gender.

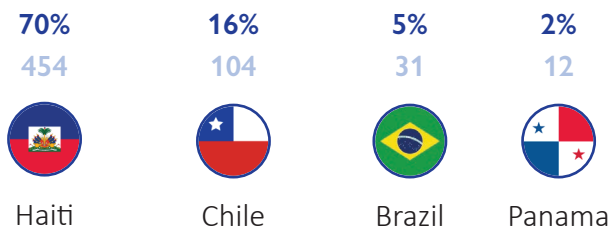
## STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES

9 JULY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

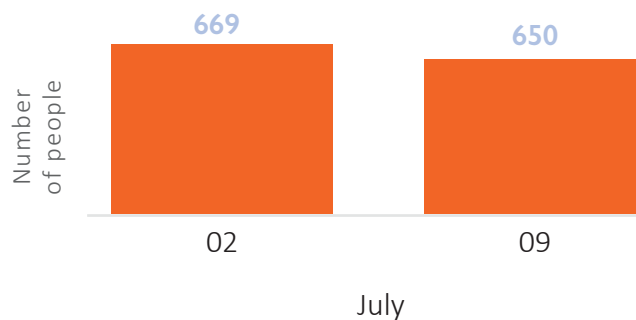


### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

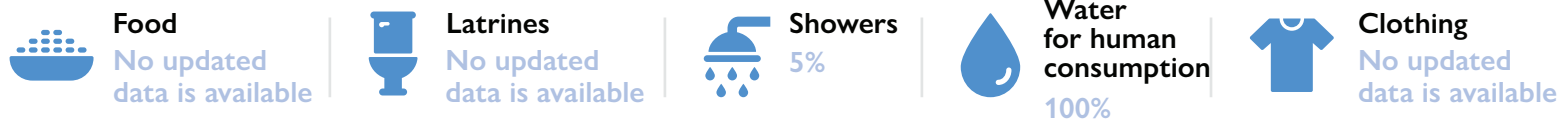


The remaining 8% correspond to 17 nationalities from various countries in South America, Africa, and South Asia.

### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES, JULY 2020



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



<sup>5</sup> 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.
- 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 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



#### 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.
- NMS delivered 40,000 bottles of purified water for consumption mainly by pregnant women and children and those with health conditions identified by medical instructions.

## 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.

- NMS is coordinating the psychosocial care with the corresponding institutions, regarding the parents of the minor who died the previous week.

- NMS organized recreational, cultural and sports activities in coordination with IOM in order to promote recreational activities and integration of migrants in the MRS. The activity was used to celebrate birthdays of migrants during the month. The IOM donated a piñata with sweets, a large sheet cake, 192 juice boxes, 200 assorted appetizers, a speaker and a microphone to cheer up the celebration.

### 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.
- 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.

## HEALTH



### Implemented actions

- MINSAs and NMS have set up a health center for migrants 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.

- A minor is hospitalized for a respiratory tract infection. NMS is transporting his parents from the MRS to the Hospital in the City of David.

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