

HIGHLIGHTS



2,527
Migrants sheltered
at the MRS



215%
Overcapacity in Migration Stations
nationwide



91
Pregnant women



27%
Children and
adolescents
under 17



4
Unaccompanied
children and
adolescents
under 17



39
Cases of COVID-19 have been identified
by community transmission in Darién



7
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.

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 (WHO) 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 2,527 migrants stranded in the national territory, distributed as follows: 1,988 in the province of Darién (1,698 in MRS La Peñita, 130 in Bajo Chiquito, and 160 in MRS Lajas Blancas), and 539 migrants in the province of Chiriquí at MRS Los Planes. The opening of the borders was postponed until 22 May.

Since 1 May, the country has remained stable and without

significant changes in migration governance issues. In the last week, steps have been taken towards the gradual reopening of certain sectors of the economy. On 5 May, the Ministry of Health (MINSA, by its Spanish acronym), through resolution No. 399, allowed the reopening of hardware stores, auto repair mechanic shops, mechanical workshops, small retail service industries, among others. As of 7 May, Panama has confirmed 7,868 cases and a total of 225 deaths by COVID-19. In terms of border provinces, Darién reports a total of 183 cases, and Chiriquí a total of 112 cases, as of 30 April 2020.

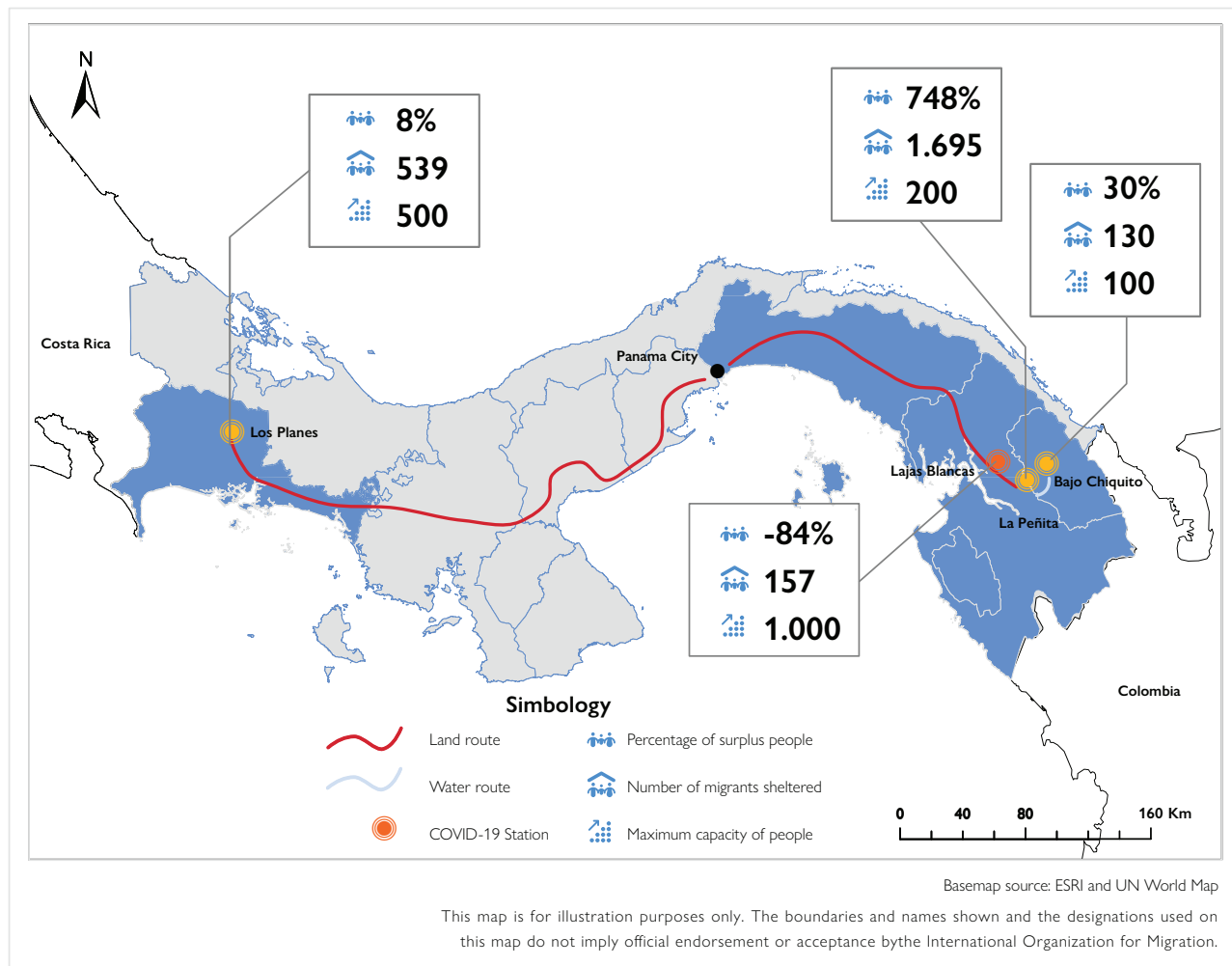
At the time of writing, cases continue to increase due to COVID-19 community transmission at MRS La Peñita in Darién. 17 new cases have been confirmed during this reporting period, totaling 39 positive cases, and an estimated 100 migrants have been segregated due to possible COVID-19 contact. Swabbing continues to be performed at MRS La Peñita for possible COVID-19 positives, and MRS Lajas Blancas continues to be the center for care and isolation of COVID-19 positive cases and their possible contacts. This week, thanks

to the coordination of international cooperation agencies, help has arrived for the migrants in the form of food, hygiene kits, clothing, sheets and others. At MRS Los Planes in Chiriquí, as of the closing day of the report, zero positive cases of COVID-19 were reported.

Additionally, MINSA has decided to set up an isolation area at MRS Lajas Blancas for COVID-19 positive migrants and their contacts in Darién. MRS La Peñita is carrying out swabbing and testing of suspect cases. Once the positive cases and possible contacts have been properly identified, they are transferred to MRS Lajas Blancas, where three areas have been established for positive cases, suspect cases due to possible contact, and negative cases.

MRS Los Planes in Chiriquí reported zero COVID-19 positive cases on the closing day of this report. On Friday 24 April, the National Immigration Service Directorate provided the necessary inputs for the station, in which - among other institutions- IOM was present during the visit.

POPULATION SHELTERED AT MIGRANT RECEIVING STATIONS



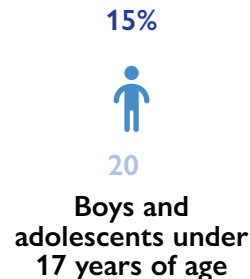
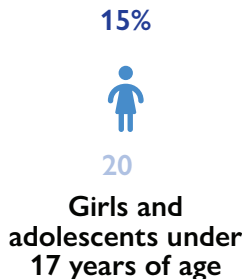
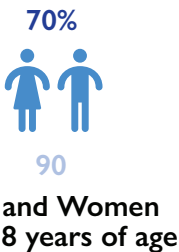
STATISTICS ON THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

07 MAY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



130
Sheltered migrants



HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



Haiti

123

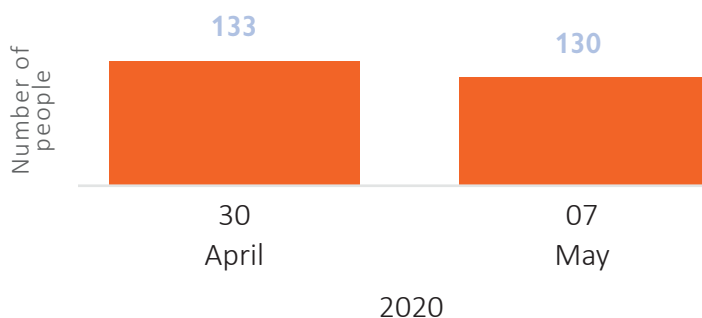


Cuba

5

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

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT BAJO CHIQUITO, APRIL 2020



COVID-19 CASE STATISTICS



0

No cases of COVID19 have been identified in the migration flow

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Identified needs

- As part of the UNICEF-IFRC partnership, a sand filter, activated carbon and sieve were installed to remove particles for water purification.
- Also, under the UNICEF and IFRC partnership, three water distribution points were installed to increase access to water. Currently, 30,000 liters of water is supplied.

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT



Identified needs

- There is no adequate shelter infrastructure for migrants.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- National Border Service (SENAFRONT, by its Spanish acronym) maintains units that protects the community
- NMS maintains field staff to help guide the migrant population.

HEALTH



Identified needs

- With the onset of the rainy season and the proliferation of mosquitoes, two cases of malaria have been detected in migrants.

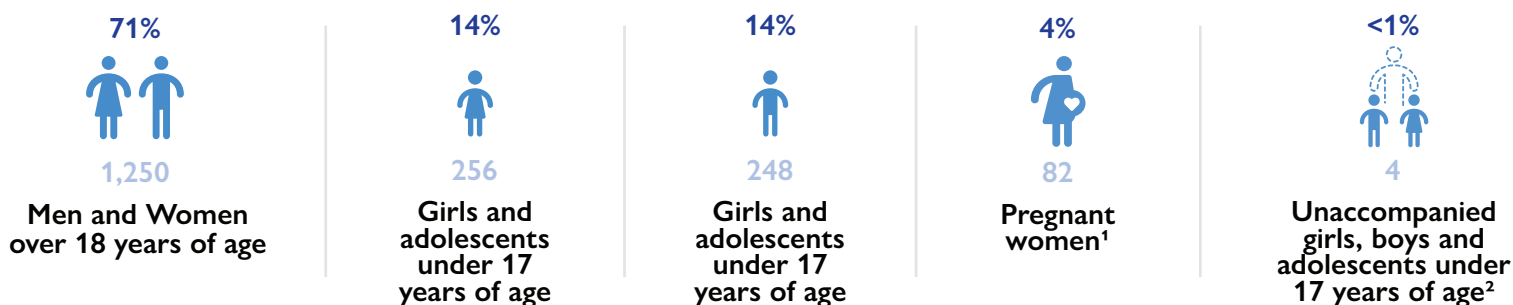
STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA

07 MAY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



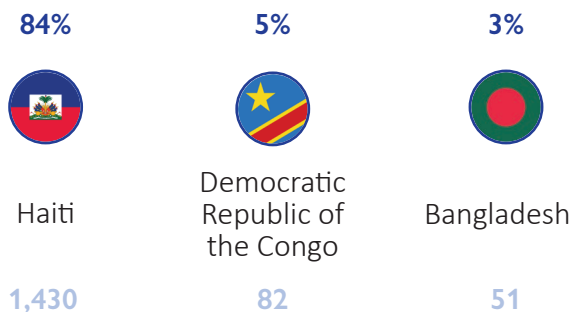
1,695
Sheltered migrants



¹ Data included in women over 18 years of age.

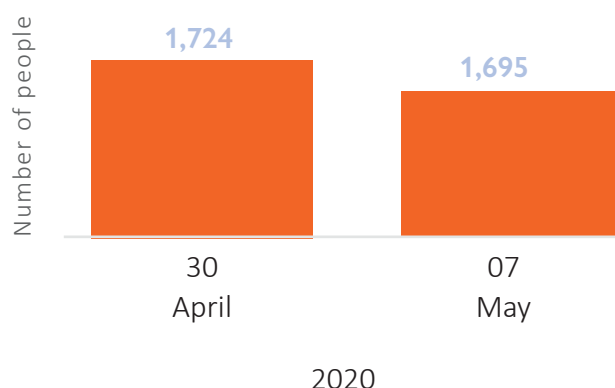
² Data included in girls, boys and adolescents under 17 years of age.

HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

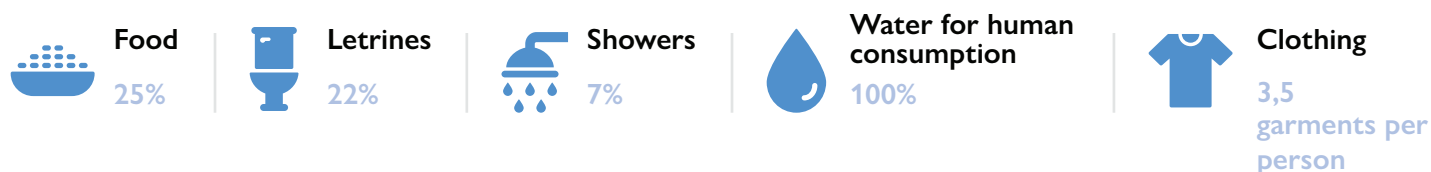


The remaining 8% corresponds to 33 nationalities from various countries in Africa, South Asia, Central and South America.

NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA, APRIL-MAY 2020



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



COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS

17 cases spread by community transmission at MRS La Peñita

These individuals 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.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AT MRS LA PEÑITA

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented actions

- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in coordination with the Ministry of Government and the Libyan Embassy, delivered hygiene kits.
- In partnership with civil society organizations such as the Rotaract Club of Panama and the Rotary Club of Panama, in coordination with IOM, bottles of water and alcoholic gel were delivered to SENAFRONT staff and migrants.

Identified needs

- Lack of personal hygiene kits.
- Increase cleaning frequency of latrines; currently scheduled at two days per week.
- Support the adequate socialization of guidelines and routes of medical attention as set by MINSA before the COVID-19 outbreak, with the engagement of MRS staff, the host community, UN organizations and civil society.
- Increase mosquitoes-spraying frequencies

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- The Muslim community through the Sunni Muslim Religious Association of Panama and the Islamic Foundation of Panama donated a truckload of food for consumption.
- NMS delivered food kits, mainly gallons of drinking water and baby formula.
- IOM, in coordination with MNS, is monitoring food security and nutrition in order to operationalize areas of action.

Identified needs

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

- Lack of facilities suitable for food handling and cooking.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

- MINSA maintains the systematic collection of samples (swabs) from migrants to identify COVID-19 cases.
- The National Migration Service (NMS) provided masks to migrants.
- SENAFRONT's Immediate Response Unit (URI) staff carried out the disinfection of the MRS.

Identified needs

- Proper cleaning items are required for an adequate waste management.
- There is no access to birth control methods, such as condoms.
- There are reports of migrants with conditions associated with diarrhea, vomiting, fever and dehydration, especially in children and pregnant women.
- Strengthen the provincial health network.

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



Implemented actions

- In partnership with civil society organizations such as the Rotaract Club of Panama, the Rotary Club of Panama, in coordination with IOM, delivered bales of 4,500 new T-shirts for migrants.
- IOM provided blankets for adults and children.

Identified needs

- Support is required to retrofit the MRS infrastructure at La Peñita. There are no individual housing units.
- MRS La Peñita capacity limit has been exceeded. People do not have enough space to maintain social distancing measures, and there is no adequate isolation space for possible COVID-19 cases. The relocation of the migrant population located on the banks of the Chucunaque River is required, due to the risk of flooding.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains units that provide security, order, logistical support and support to the MNS in the registration process upon the arrival of migrants from Bajo Chiquito.
- Young volunteers from the Panamanian Red Cross, El Real de Santa María Chapter and the ICRC carried out vegetation clearing and provided services for family reunification.

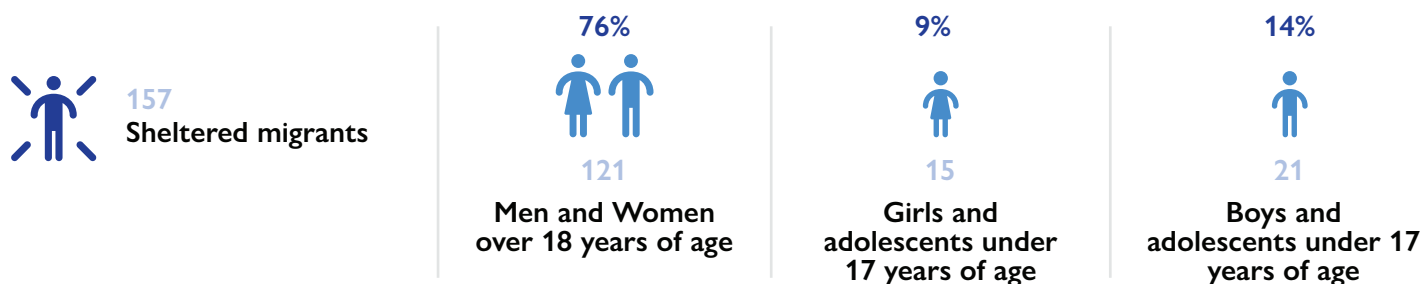
Identified needs

- All specific actions that require protection and assistance have been suspended due to the COVID19 outbreak health measures at the station.

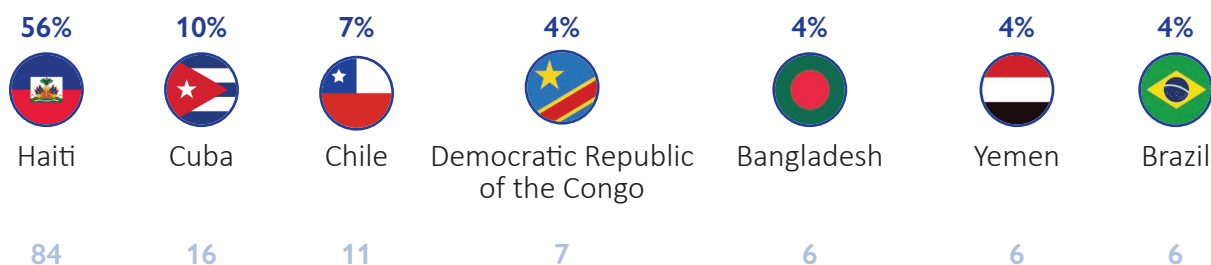
STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

07 MAY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES

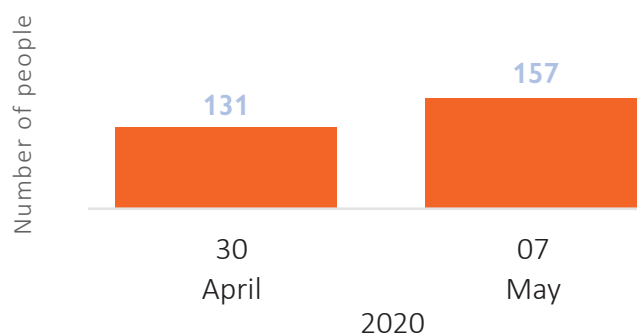


The remaining 11% correspond to 3 nationalities from various countries in South America and South Asia, as well as 8 persons of unknown nationality.

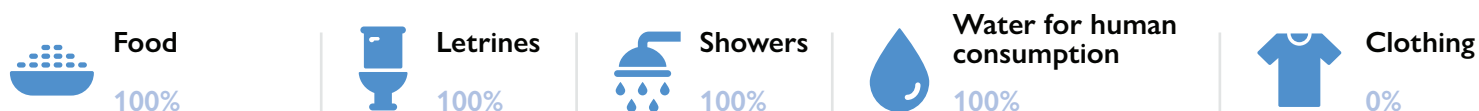
COVID-19 CASE STATISTICS



NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS, APRIL-MAY 2020



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



³ One patient has been transferred for treatment in Panama City, for a total of 6 low-risk internships.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



Implemented actions

- As part of the UNICEF-IFRC partnership, mosquito nets with repellent were delivered.
- In partnership with civil society organizations such as the Rotaract Club of Panama, the Rotary Club of Panama, in coordination with the IOM, gave 50 hygiene kits including towels, masks, shampoo, toothpaste and bath soap and alcoholic gel to positive people to COVID-19.
- UNHCR in coordination with the Ministry of Government and the Libyan Embassy delivered hygiene kits.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- In partnership with civil society organizations such as the Rotaract Club of Panama, the Rotary Club of Panama, in coordination with IOM, delivered bottles of water.
- The Muslim community through the Sunni Muslim Religious Association of Panama and the Islamic Foundation of Panama donated a truckload of food for consumption.
- NMS delivered food kits, mainly gallons of drinking water and baby formula.
- IOM, in coordination with NMS, is monitoring food security and nutrition to operationalize areas of action to close the food gap and guarantee the right to food.

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT



Implemented actions

- Alianza Club Rotarac of Panama, the Rotary Club of Panama, and IOM delivered bales of new T-shirts for migrants.
- IOM provided blankets for adults and children.

Identified needs

- MINSA provides daily epidemiological monitoring of COVID-19 positive migrants and their contacts.
- NMS provided masks to migrants.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT and NMS remain in the MRS providing security and orientation to migrants.

HEALTH



Implemented actions

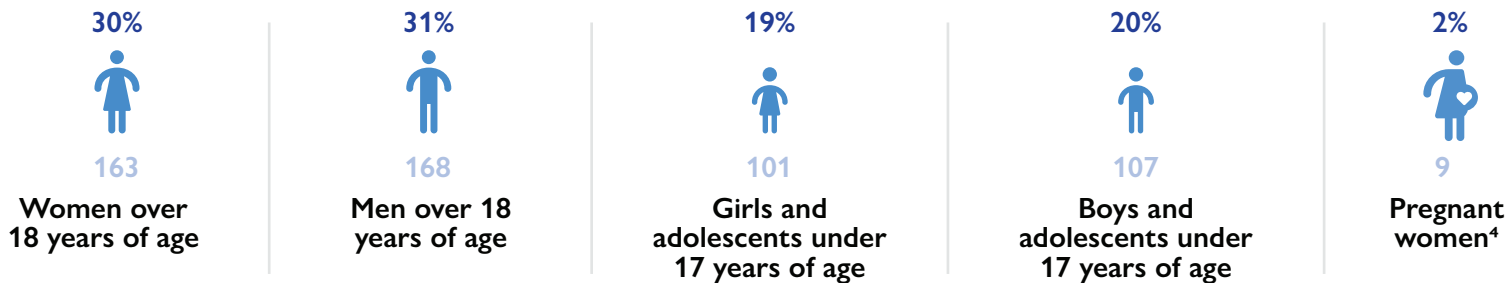
- MINSA provides daily epidemiological monitoring of COVID-19 positive migrants and their contacts.
- NMS provided masks to migrants.

STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES

07 MAY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

 **539**
 Sheltered migrants

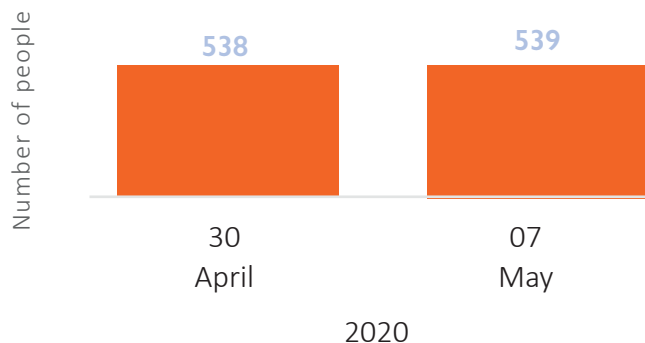


HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



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, APRIL-MAY 2020



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



COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS

0

No cases of COVID19 have been identified in the migration flow

⁴ Data included in the total number of women over 18.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN MRS LOS PLANES

All actions are being undertaken 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)



Identified needs

- Technical inspection is required to assess the condition of the water tanks; they are in poor condition and there is evidence of water waste.
- There are groups of migrants who still do not use the sanitary services for their own physiological 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 shelters and handed out to the MRS migrant population and host communities regarding the COVID19 outbreak, WHO recommendations and MINSA 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 shelter, 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 MINSA before the COVID-19 outbreak, with the engagement of MRS staff, the host community, UN organizations and civil society.
- Promotion of proper hygiene practices and personal hygiene kits.

- The NMS, together with representatives of the migrant population, identified migrants who would eventually be supported in food preparation. The sanitary protocol for endorsement by MINSA is in the process of being implemented.

Identified needs

- There is no specific food for children under 5 years of age, chronically ill people or pregnant women.
- It has been observed that migrants do not receive fruit as part of their daily diet.

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



Implemented actions

- NMS maintains meal services three times a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner.

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT



Identified needs

- About 40% of the station's facilities require repairs (electrical installation, rooms, common spaces, 150 bathrooms, among others) and 100% of the shelter units require roof 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.
- Six fire extinguishers were found empty and requires replacement.

PROTECTION



Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains 8 units that are responsible for maintaining order and protecting the MRS perimeter.
- IOM provides support in channelling routes for the protection and assistance of migrants who are vulnerable or at risk, and provides access-protection information to migrants.
- IOM, in coordination with NMS, is collecting clothing donations for all ages, disposable baby diapers, blankets and toys in the community of David, and the village of Chiriquí.

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.

Identified needs

- 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.
- There are reports of viral illnesses, such as colds, diarrhea, vomiting and skin rashes. Medical attention and medication is provided, but when the MRS does not have the required medicine, on-site health staff provides the prescription to be taken to a commercial pharmacy. However, migrants must cover the expenses related to the purchase of the medication.

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