

# Panama

July - August 2023

## Key Figures

Over **13,000** Refugees and asylum-seekers live in Panama, mainly from Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

**251,758** People crossed the Darien jungle between January and August 2023, surpassing the number of people who crossed in 2022.

UNHCR informed over **9,600** people about the asylum system in Panama and UNHCR's mandate.

## Context

Despite a slight decrease in irregular entries through the Darien jungle in May/June, July (55,387 people) and August (81,946 people) marked the highest monthly entries in 2023.

In July, the total number of people crossing the Darien jungle in 2022 was surpassed. August set a record for monthly entries in Panama's history, exceeding October 2022's figures.

The Ministry of Public Security released Executive Decree No. 112, which created a temporary residency status called "Temporary Protection Permit." The permit is available to all foreigners who entered Panama irregularly and stayed in the country for at least one year without starting a regularization procedure.

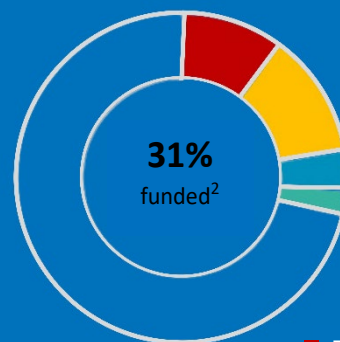
The Government launched the campaign, "Darien is not a route, it is a jungle," to discourage irregular entries. The authorities reiterated the allocation of US\$60 million to respond to mixed movements and announced the implementation of forceful measures to address this matter, which is now considered a national security issue.

UNHCR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) launched a **book on statelessness prevention** to help institutions and community leaders identify people at risk of statelessness and promote timely registration. The entities also released a **podcast** covering essential aspects of statelessness prevention and the book's key messages.



## Regional funding Overview

as of 31 August, 2023



**\$55.4 million**  
UNHCR's financial requirements 2023

<sup>1</sup> Financial requirement for the Panama MCO in 2023 including requirements for the operations and activities in Aruba, Belize, Cuba, Curaçao, Guyana, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>2</sup> The percentage funded is indicative.

## UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR works closely with the Government, civil society, UN agencies, refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants in Panama. UNHCR and IOM co-chair the UN inter-agency group on human mobility, coordinating humanitarian support for mixed movements in Darien and Chiriquí. UNHCR has partnerships with Fundación Espacio Creativo (FEC), Fútbol con Corazón (FCC), HIAS, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Panamanian Red Cross (CRP) and the Pastoral of Human Mobility (PMH).



**Coordination with Local Authorities** | UNHCR participated in the webinar "Engaging the private sector in solutions to forced displacement in Panama", in the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) scope. Over 90 people participated, including government officials, trade associations, civil society, and private companies.



**Protection** | UNHCR trained 50 Government officials on international protection and statelessness prevention. UNHCR interviewed over 200 refugees and migrants during its monthly protection monitoring in Darien and Chiriquí. The Agency and partners provided information on the risks of the route, the asylum system in Panama and the Agency's mandate to over 10,000 people. With partner NRC, UNHCR assisted over 60 people with asylum applications.



**Cash-Based Assistance (CBI)** | UNHCR, through CRP, HIAS and NRC, assisted 240 households with cash-based assistance for food, medicines, livelihoods, education, documentation, rent and temporary accommodation, reaching over 700 people during July and August.



**Humanitarian Assistance** | UNHCR, through CRP, provided primary health care to 5,300 refugees and migrants at Darien's ETRMs and Los Planes de Gualaca in Chiriquí.



**Local Integration and Livelihoods** | UNHCR, HIAS, and ManPower Group launched its 2023 Talents Without Borders programme and trained 19 participants on employability skills, including refugees and host community members. Bilateral meetings with the private sector are scheduled to accelerate the recruitment of refugees. UNHCR donated two laptops to Hogar Luisa, a refugee shelter run by the Pastoral of Human Mobility. The donation supports the shelter with technological tools, enabling refugees staying in their facilities to prepare their resumes for employment opportunities.



### Youth Mentoring and Leadership Programme - Second Edition

UNHCR hosted the closing ceremony of its 2023 Leadership and Mentoring Programme for Youth, jointly conducted with the Key Communication for Social Innovation Group.

Thirty-three students participated, including 18 from Colegio Brader and 15 refugees and asylum-seekers. Participants presented projects and media awareness campaigns on local integration and efforts to combat xenophobia.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the United States of America, the European Union, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Guyana, and the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS. We also thank the fundamental support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds: Belgium | Canada | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | private donors in Australia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

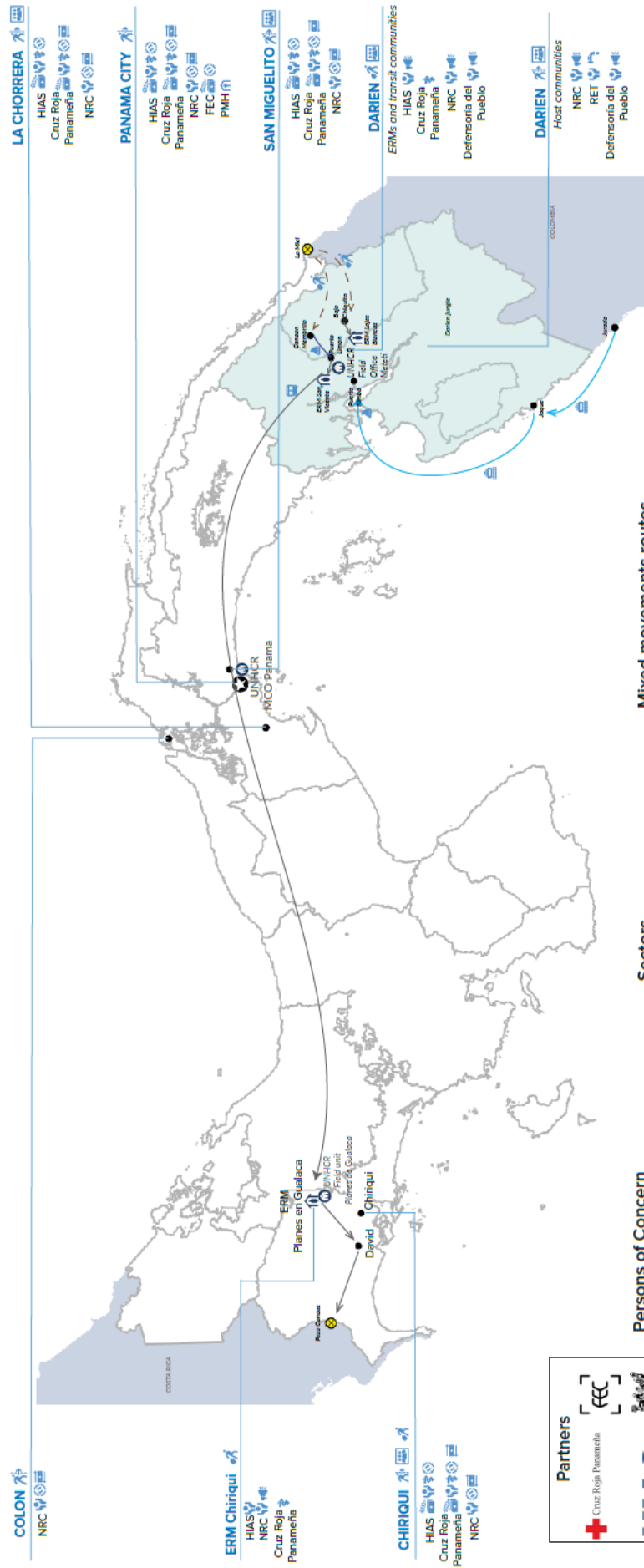
For more information:

**Philippa Candler**, Representative, [candler@unhcr.org](mailto:candler@unhcr.org)

**Viola Eleonora Bruttomesso**, Associate Communications Officer, [bruttome@unhcr.org](mailto:bruttome@unhcr.org)

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# UNHCR Panama Operational Presence



**LA CHORRERA**  
HIAS  
Cruz Roja  
Panameña  
NRC

**PANAMA CITY**  
HIAS  
Cruz Roja  
Panameña  
NRC  
FEC  
PMH

**SAN MIGUELITO**  
HIAS  
Cruz Roja  
Panameña  
NRC

**DARIEN**  
ERMs and transit communities  
HIAS  
Cruz Roja  
Panameña  
Defensoría del Pueblo

**DARIEN**  
Host communities  
NRC  
RET  
Defensoría del Pueblo

**COLON**  
NRC

**ERM Chiriqui**  
HIAS  
NRC  
Cruz Roja  
Panameña

**CHIRIQUI**  
HIAS  
Cruz Roja  
Panameña  
NRC

**Partners**

**Persons of Concern**  
Refugees and Asylum Seekers  
Host Communities  
Refugees and Migrants in Transit (Mixed Movements)

**Sectors**  
Cash and Voucher Protection (including CBP)  
Health (including MHFSS)  
Local integration  
Livelihoods  
Information sharing  
WASH  
Reconstruction  
Shelter

**Mixed movements routes**  
Border crossing point  
Migrant Reception Station (ERM)  
By road (bus)  
By boat (sea)  
By boat (river)  
Walking

The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations  
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