

# Panama

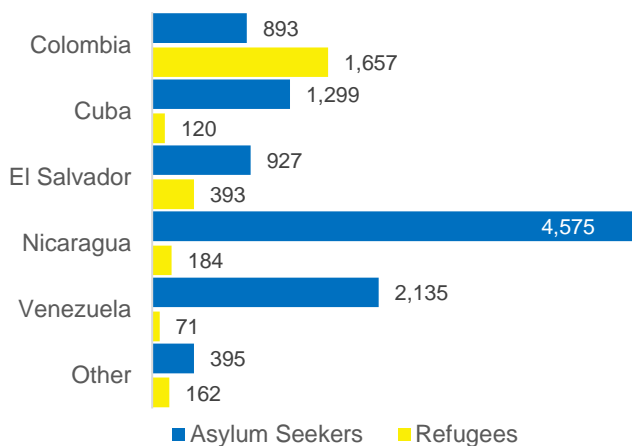
May - June 2022

Panama is home to **12,811 refugees and asylum-seekers**. By the end of 2021, **128,000 displaced Venezuelans** are estimated to be living in the country. During the first semester

of 2022, **81** refugees and asylum-seekers have been provided with legal assistance. From January to June 2022, over **48,000 migrants** crossed the **Darien Gap**, according to the National Migration Service data.

In 2022, **2,500** asylum-seekers and refugees were supported with **multipurpose cash or vouchers** to cover for their basic and urgent needs.

## Population of concern\*



\*As per ONPAR, May 2022

## CONTEXT

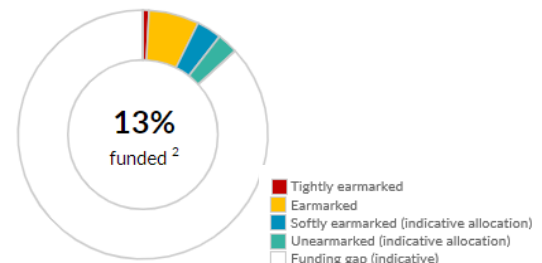
Refugees and asylum seekers in Panama are mainly from Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as their host communities, face exacerbated risks and increased vulnerabilities in local integration, mainly due to the loss of opportunities to generate an income, together with the socio economic effects of the pandemic. Daily subsistence, rent and access to other services has become a challenge.

Movements of people entering through the Darien Gap (southern border with Colombia) continue on the rise. During the first semester of 2022, 48,430<sup>1</sup> people entered through Darien, surpassing those registered for the same months in 2021. As of 2022, Venezuelans represent the main nationality crossing through Darien. Routes are constantly shifting, as protection risks and humanitarian needs escalate in the region, particularly for children and women.

## FUNDING (AS OF 5 JULY 2022)

**US\$ 54.3 M**

requested for the Panama Multi-Country Office for 2022



1 The financial requirements for the Panama MCO include requirements for the Coronavirus Emergency and the Venezuela Situation. **Panama** is part of the Panama Multi-Country Office since 2022 along with Belize, Nicaragua, Cuba, and the Southern Caribbean

2 The percentage funded includes indicative allocations of softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions

## “SOMOS”, a contemporary dance piece commemorates World Refugee Day



For World Refugee Day, UNHCR, the Ministry of Interior, and Fundación Espacio Creativo (FEC) presented the contemporary dance piece SOMOS.

The piece was inspired by stories of refugees and asylum seekers in Panama and became a call to action to take responsibility and protect the 100 million displaced people across the globe.

Credit: FEC | Alegre Saporta

## UNHCR Response and Strategy

UNHCR works in close coordination with the Government, civil society, UN agencies, refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants in Panama. Close coordination with the National Office for the Attention of Refugees (ONPAR) is maintained to channel support and continue strengthening the asylum system in the country. UNHCR closely liaises with the Ombudsperson's Office, the Electoral Tribunal, and the National Migration Service. UNHCR co-chairs with IOM the UN inter-agency group on human mobility, which coordinates humanitarian support and interventions related to the mixed movements in Darien and Chiriquí provinces. UNHCR has established partnership agreements with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), the Pastoral of Human Mobility (PMH), Panamanian Red Cross, *Fútbol con Corazón* (FCC), and *Fundación Espacio Creativo* (FEC). Furthermore, UNHCR supports the government in implementing their commitments under the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS).

## Main Activities

Alongside the government, partner organizations, civil society, development actors, and UN Agencies, UNHCR undertakes protection and solutions activities, including:

### Protection

- The **Human Mobility Group**, co-led by UNHCR and IOM, is supporting the development of a government-led Contingency Plan for mixed movements of refugees and migrants through the Darien Gap. This plan aims to establish coordination mechanisms with government institutions and response actors to provide timely assistance and services at Migration and Reception Stations in Darien and Chiriquí provinces.
- UNHCR and partner Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) trained **187 government officials and officers** from the Naval Air Service, the National Border Service (SENAFRONT), the National Police, and National Migration Service on international protection, Refugee Status Determination (RSD) and statelessness.
- UNHCR and NRC, provided **legal assistance to 14 persons** with international protection needs to access the asylum procedure. Furthermore, **84 persons** were supported with access to documentation procedures.

### Humanitarian Assistance

- UNHCR through partners supported **826 persons** with multipurpose cash for food, medicines, rent payments, and/or temporary accommodations during May and June.

### Durable Solutions and Livelihoods

- UNHCR, IOM, and UN Habitat presented the **Human Mobility Profile**, a study that provides analysis and recommendations on challenges and opportunities to ensure the effective integration of refugees and migrants in host communities. The Profile is part of *Ciudades Inclusivas, Comunidades Solidarias* Project, funded by the European Union (INTPA).
- **25 refugee and asylum seekers** are taking part in the eighth edition of *Canal de Empresarias*, a capacity-building and mentorship programme for women entrepreneurs led and coordinated by Fundación Ciudad del Saber (FCDS).

### Advocacy and Peaceful Coexistence

- On World Refugee Day, UNHCR and partners hosted a wide range of activities with refugees, host communities, the government, the international community, key partners, and allies. UNHCR, the Ministry of Interior, and Fundación Espacio Creativo hosted the presentation of **SOMOS**, a contemporary dance piece that highlighted the flight of refugees and displaced people worldwide. UNHCR's partner, the Panamanian Red Cross, organized a family fair for over **600 refugees and asylum seekers** to celebrate World Refugee Day.
- **Over 400 persons were reached** in Panama, West Panama and Darién **through the Cine Comunitario project**, an innovative initiative led by UNHCR, which aims to promote peaceful coexistence and safe recreational spaces through movie screenings and workshops in host communities where refugees and locals reside.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: Canada, the European Union, France, United States of America, 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 | Denmark | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom. Private donors in Australia | Canada | Germany | Italy | Japan | Republic of Korea | Spain | and the United States

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