

April - June 2024

## Key Figures

Over

**13,000**

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

**91,055**

People crossed the Darien jungle between April and June, a 16 per cent decrease in the number of refugees and migrants who entered during the same period last year.



UNHCR informed

**17,308**

people about the risk of the route, the asylum system in Panama, and UNHCR's mandate.

## Context

The second quarter of 2024 was marked by the [general elections](#) and the [government transition](#), culminating with José Raúl Mulino's [inauguration](#) as the 2024-2029 President. Mulino secured 34 per cent of the votes in an election that registered the highest voter turnout in the last 30 years. During his campaign and transition, Mulino reaffirmed his plans to [repatriate](#) those entering irregularly through the Darien jungle and sought financial support from the US for this operation.

Although the National Migration Service (SNM) estimated a 20 per cent increase in people entering irregularly through the jungle in 2024, officials consider that the harsh weather and the new US policies might have reduced these rates.

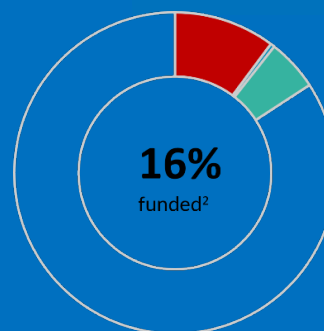
The Ombudsperson filed a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office after receiving [400 reports](#) of sexual violence in the Darien jungle. He clarified that the crimes have not necessarily occurred in the Darien province but at the Colombian-Panamanian border.

Due to rising sea levels, authorities evacuated [300 families](#) (1,350 people) from Gardi Sugdub island in Guna Yala's Indigenous territory. This is the first community in Latin America to be [internally displaced](#) by climate change. The families are being relocated to Nuevo Cartí mainland settlement, a 300 m<sup>2</sup> housing area known as Isberyala.

UNHCR held the Closing Ceremony of the third edition of its Leadership and Mentoring Programme with the support of the Key Communication Group and HIAS. Twenty students, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and locals participated. The students presented three sensitization projects on peaceful coexistence and integration.

## Regional funding Overview

as of 30 June 2024



- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

**\$56.1 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2024

<sup>1</sup> Financial requirement for the Panama MCO in 2024 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 with the Government, civil society, UN agencies, refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants in Panama. UNHCR and IOM co-chair the UN inter-agency Human Mobility Group, coordinating protection and humanitarian support for mixed movements. UNHCR has partnerships with Fundación Espacio Creativo (FEC), HIAS, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Panamanian Red Cross (CRP) and the Pastoral of Human Mobility (PMH).



**Coordination with Local Authorities** | UNHCR participated in drafting the new **Public Policy on Opportunities for Women (2023-2033)**, led by the Ministry of Women Affairs. This is the first time a governmental policy on gender equality includes measures focused on human mobility, guaranteeing the protection of refugee women's rights.



**Protection** | UNHCR and partners trained 371 Government officials on international protection and statelessness prevention, and interviewed 359 refugees and migrants through protection monitoring exercises in Darien and Chiriquí. The Agency participated in the **Caribbean Subregional Consultation on Protection and Comprehensive Solutions for Persons in Situations of Human Mobility and Statelessness**. The event focused on identifying good practices for integrating forcibly displaced and stateless persons while supporting host communities.



**Humanitarian Assistance** | UNHCR provided cash assistance to 380 refugees and asylum-seekers (175 households) to support access to health, documentation, and shelter. Of these, 211 were new beneficiaries. UNHCR provided primary health care to 1,724 refugees and migrants at the Government's Temporary Reception Centres. The Agency donated 6,155 mosquito nets, 128 blankets, and 14 sleeping mats to government institutions, indigenous community leaders, and refugees and migrants at border points.



**Local Integration** | In Chiriquí, UNHCR and HIAS hosted the workshop "Free and Empowered Women" for community leaders and promoters in the Bolívar neighborhood, where some asylum-seekers live. The workshop focused on promoting the integration of refugee women into their host community and sensitizing community leaders to their challenges. Twenty-five women participated.



### COMMEMORATING WORLD REFUGEE DAY (WRD) IN PANAMA CITY

UNHCR hosted "The Embraces Along the Way," a contemporary dance performance by members of the Enlaces Programme. The Agency participated with an information booth at the Panamanian Red Cross' annual WRD fair, with over 100 attendees. With the City of Knowledge Foundation, UNHCR organized "Podrías ser tú", a photo exposition featuring refugees' stories worldwide. UNHCR and EcoCinema launched its third "Cine comunitario" project. It visited six locations in Panama City, West Panama, and Darien, bringing free, solar-powered cinema to refugees and Panamanians.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: [Australia](#) | [Belgium](#) | [Denmark](#) | [European Union](#) | [France](#) | [Ireland](#) | [Republic of Korea](#) | [The Netherlands](#) | [Norway](#) | [Sweden](#) | [Switzerland](#) | [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#) | [United States of America](#) | [Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS](#) | [Private donors from the Republic of Korea](#), [Australia for UNHCR](#), [España con ACNUR](#), and the [Dutch Postcode Lottery](#).

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# UNHCR Panama Operational Presence

