

Panama

January-February 2023

Key Figures

Approximately
13,000
Refugees and asylum-seekers live in Panama, mostly from Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

49,291
People have crossed through Darien jungle between January and February 2023, five times the number of those who arrived during the same period in 2022.

6,389
People were directly reached by UNHCR with information on the journey risks in the Temporary Migratory Reception Centres (ETRM) and reception points in Darién and Chiriquí.

Context

Panama has approximately 13,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, most from Latin America. Due to its specific location, Panama is also a transit country many people on their journey northwards pass through.

In 2022, nearly 250,000 people in mixed movements crossed irregularly through Darien. Authorities estimate that by the end of 2023, some 400,000 people will have crossed through Darien.

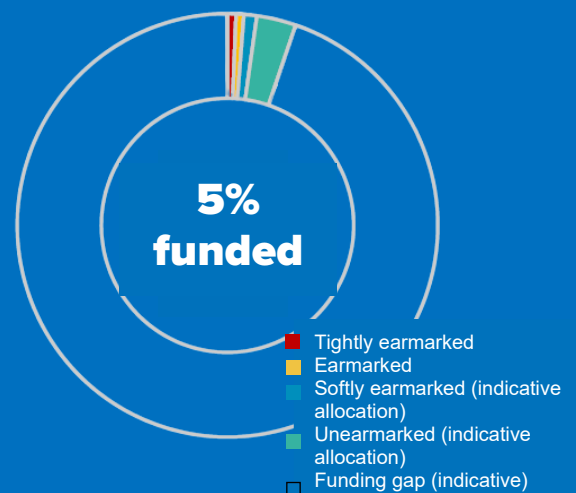
UNHCR provides technical support to government entities responsible for refugee protection, including the Ministry of Interior and its National Office for the Attention of Refugees (ONPAR). The Agency assists institutions in border areas by providing information on route risks, core relief items, technology, and international protection mechanisms.

Similarly, UNHCR, civil society actors, the United Nations system, the private sector, and academia, promote the socio-economic integration of refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as the consolidation of peaceful relations between host and transit communities.

In Darien, UNHCR provides orientation and information about rights and access to services to refugees and migrants part of the mixed movements pursuing their journey northwards.

Regional funding Overview

as of February 28th, 2023



\$55.4 million
UNHCR's financial requirements 2023

¹ 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.

² 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 co-chairs the UN inter-agency group on human mobility, coordinating humanitarian support related to the mixed movements in Darien and Chiriquí. UNHCR has established partnerships with NRC, HIAS, the Pastoral of Human Mobility (PMH), Panamanian Red Cross (CRP), and Fundación Espacio Creativo (FEC).



Protection | UNHCR conducted training on Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for 61 staff members of partners and relevant stakeholders UNHCR reached out to over 200 refugees and migrants through the monthly protection monitoring exercises in Darien. With partner HIAS, UNHCR provided over 6,380 people with information on the risk of the route and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) to 2,126 people in Darien and Chiriquí.



Cash-Based Assistance (CBI) | UNHCR, with CRP and NRC, provided some 200 households -over 580 beneficiaries- with cash-based assistance for food, medicines, livelihoods, education, documentation, rent, and temporary accommodation.



Durable Solutions and Livelihoods | UNHCR, through partner FEC, trained 87 teenagers with soft and technical skills to support livelihoods alternatives. UNHCR and FEC also helped 18 young refugees and Panamanian participants with internships in cultural and creative enterprises.



Local Integration | UNHCR is developing a community-based protection program with 12 community leaders from the Bajo Chiquito and Canaan-Membrillo indigenous communities in Darien, Panama. Most women leaders will be trained in community-based solution mechanisms and accountability strategies. UNHCR, through FEC, provided 115 children and adolescents with dance, art, and technical skills for innovation classes through the program *Veranito Enlaces* held during the summer.



“Raíces” (Roots) A contemporary dance piece by Enlaces

Together with partner *FEC* and through its programme *Enlaces*, UNHCR supports refugee and asylum-seeker children with their formal education, dance classes, and integration. In January 2023, *Enlaces*' students performed a contemporary dance piece accompanied by the songs of the famous Panamanian musician Ruben Blades.

UNHCR Panama MCO wishes to convey a special thank you to its donors: the European Union, the United States of America, and the UN Programme on HIV/AIDS. We also thank the fundamental support provided by public and private donors who have contributed to UNHCR with unearmarked and softly earmarked funds: Belgium | Canada | Denmark | Germany | Ireland Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland

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