Mixed Movements Darién and Chiriquí

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Key Figures

297,354
People have crossed the Darien jungle as of November 2024

11,144
People in November

55 per cent
Of those interviewed left their country due to threats, attacks or generalized violence

Context

Intense rains impacted the country for several weeks, starting on 2 November. The Civil Protection System (SINAPROC) issued yellow climate alerts for East and Central Panama and red alerts for the rest of the country, prompting the Government to suspend November's national parades in some areas and school classes nationwide.

By 25 November, SINAPROC reported that the rains and floods affected over 6,300 people from more than 1,500 families and 26 schools nationwide. There were 304 landslides, and 12 people lost their lives. In Chiriquí, floods impacted some refugee families. Several rivers overflowed in Darien, including near Lajas Blancas' Temporary Reception Centre (ETRM). In Yaviza, a refugee host community, the water supply was disrupted, and the port was damaged, stranding residents and hindering the arrival of essential goods.

November saw the lowest number of irregular entries in the past two years. During UNHCR and UNICEF's monitoring exercise, interviewees reported that persistent rains sometimes extended the jungle crossing to 16 days. Dry shelter spaces in the ETRM were scarce, leading to overcrowding in the remaining areas.

By 27 November, the Government had deported or expelled some 1,200 people on 24 flights, including nationals from Colombia, Ecuador, India and Vietnam.

UNHCR's response

UNHCR supports the Government's response at the Temporary Reception Centres (ETRMs in its Spanish acronym) and to host communities in Darien and Chiriquí. With the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), UNHCR offers legal support to people with international protection needs and refers individuals requiring specialized assistance to relevant institutions. UNHCR and NRC provide information on the asylum system in Panama and assist with refugee status applications. Through HIAS, UNHCR provides Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and provides people in transit with information on the risks of the route through informative sessions. Through the Panamanian Red Cross (CRP), UNHCR delivers primary health care to refugees and migrants at the Government's ETRMs. For detailed information on UNHCR's work in Panama, please refer the achievements sections and access our Data Portal page here.

As part of the UNETE emergency response, UNHCR led efforts to support communities affected by November's floods and rains. The UN donated 7,600 litres of bottled water, 5,400 blankets, 9,600 sleeping mats, 428 kitchen sets, and 500 hygiene kits for the most affected regions.

Key achievements

2,380
people informed on the risks of the journey

1,257
people received counselling and information on asylum

337
people assisted with primary health care

173
Mosquito nets, blankets and sleeping mats distributed to refugees and migrants in Darien

Commemorating the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

As part of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, UNHCR and members of the Darien Gender-Based Violence (GBV) working group organized various activities in the ETRM Lajas Blancas, including a mural painting and a focus group discussion with refugee and migrant women and girls, co-facilitated by HIAS and RET. UNHCR painted a mural at Yaviza port to raise awareness of the campaign among the host community.

In Chiriquí, UNHCR and HIAS held an awareness-raising session for 23 refugees and asylum-seekers focused on the impact of the Positive Masculinities Programme and strategies to tackle stereotypes and gender inequalities.

Following the launch of the national campaign "Your Voice Counts, Turn the Silence into Colour," the art visuals were displayed in Bugaba, Chiriquí, and Panama City's Metro Stations. UNHCR participated in two community rallies to raise awareness of GBV prevention in Chiriquí, one in David and another in Bugaba. Some 500 people participated, including Government officials, civil society organizations, school bands, refugees, asylum-seekers, and host community members. The Agency also hosted the screening of the documentary 'Batallas Intimas' in Bugaba, depicting the stories of five GBV survivors and painted two thematic murals in the Doleguita and San Mateo schools in David, with the participation of asylum-seekers, refugees, and students.

Other achievements

UNHCR's Help Page registered 433,233 visits in November. Please scan our QR code to learn more about international protection and asylum.

UNHCR with UNICEF, interviewed 442 refugees and migrants during the monthly mixed movements monitoring exercise in Darien and Chiriquí.

UNHCR, through HIAS, assisted 39 people with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) related to traumatic experiences crossing the jungle.

Confía en el Tucán released eight new social media posts. In November, the campaign reached 1,651,194 visualizations on TikTok and Facebook, with 160,507 engagements.

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For more information | Margarida Loureiro, Deputy Representative at loureirm@unhcr.org | Benedetta Pignatti, External Relations Officer at pignattb@unhcr.org
For media interviews | **panpamedia@unhcr.org** Follow us on X (former Twitter) | **@acnurpanama**