

## HIGHLIGHTS



**2,525**  
Migrants sheltered  
at the MRS



**60**  
Pregnant women



**228%**  
Overcapacity in  
Migration Stations  
nationwide



**30%**  
Children and  
adolescents  
under 17



**4**  
Unaccompanied  
children and  
adolescents under 17



**25**  
Cases of COVID-19 have  
been identified by community  
transmission in Darién



**No reported arrivals of migrants  
in Bajo Chiquito since 29 March 2020**



**52**  
Recovered cases of COVID-19



**Transit population is not ruled out  
through the Darién National Park**

## METHODOLOGY

The information contained in this report is collected by IOM Panama staff in Darién and Chiriquí, through field monitoring, multi-sectoral assessments through key informants, as well as regular information exchange at the technical level, and at the central level of the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Human Mobility. This group is co-led by IOM and UNHCR, where agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in Panama are currently actively participating, such as: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

(OHCHR), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UN AIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Inter-Agency Group on Human Mobility coordinates actions at the national level to complement the efforts of the Government of Panama to address the challenges of managing human mobility from a dignified, humane, safe, orderly and regular manner.

## CONTEXT OF THE SITUATION

The Darién region has been characterized as one of the most important points of transit for extra-regional migrants for the past eleven years. However, the Darién region is characterized as one of the most challenging for Panama's socio-economic development; a situation that increases the complexity of dealing with massive and irregular migration flows.

Since 2009, significant extra-regional migration flows have been identified, that is, migrants from other continents, such as Africa, Asia and the Caribbean region, specifically Haitians and Cubans.

In 2016, the first significant extra-regional migration crisis occurred, that is, migrants from other continents such as Africa, Asia and the Caribbean region, specifically Haitians and Cubans.

In 2016, the first migration crisis by extra-regionals occurred in the province of Darién, influenced by the closing of borders in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. Faced with this situation, the governments of Panama

and Costa Rica established an agreement known as 'Operation Controlled Flow', that would guarantee the orderly, regular and safe transit of these migrants through the territory.

The World Health Organization declared a state of pandemic for the COVID-19 virus on 11 March 2020, which is why global sanitary measures were established in order to mitigate the contagion. Central America, responded by shutting its borders or by modifying its border management policies, as well as launching massive hygiene campaigns. The application of these measures implied changes in the mobility of migrants transiting through Panama. In addition, organizations such as SICA have drawn up regional work plans for the contingency of the pandemic.

Since 12 March 2020, Panama has been under a state of emergency, with closed borders, as a result of the measures imposed to contain the virus. Due to the closing of the Costa Rican borders

on 16 March, Operation Controlled Flow has been severely affected. Currently, there are 2,525 migrants stranded in the national territory, distributed as follows: 1,984 in the province of Darién (1,684 in MRS La Peñita, 125 in Bajo Chiquito, and 176 in MRS Lajas Blancas), and 541 migrants in the province of Chiriquí at MRS Los Planes. Borders continue to be closed until 22 May according to provisions from the Government of Panama.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, different media outlets have been covering the news regarding the issue with migrants stranded at the Darién border; the most recent being on May 21, when migrants held demonstrations. Migrants asked for compliance with the agreements reached at the meeting held with government officials and other institutions, as well as regarding the border crossing with Costa Rica so that they could continue on with their journey.

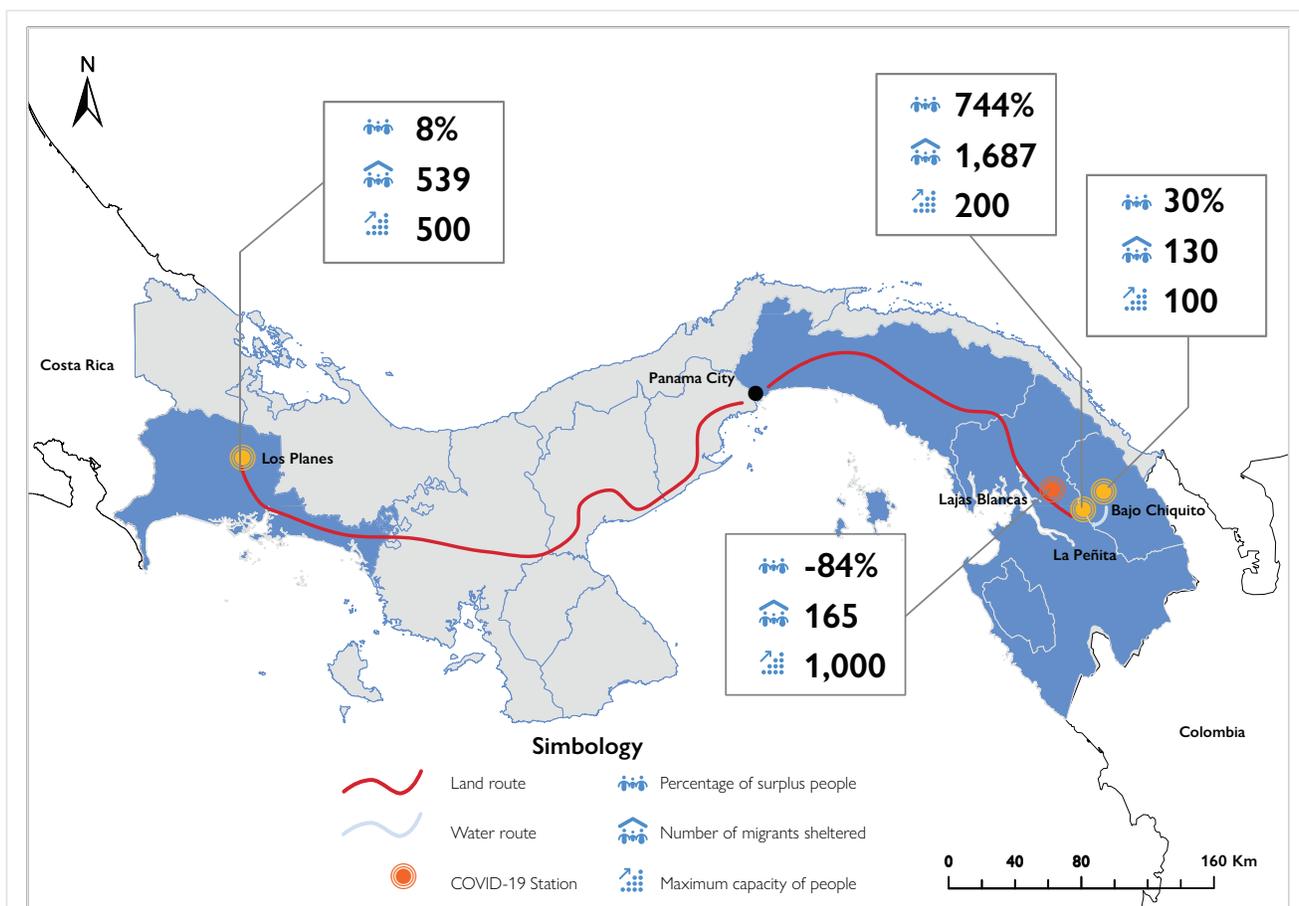
As of 21 May, Panama has 10,116 confirmed cases and a total of 291 deaths from COVID-19. In terms of border provinces, Darién reports a total of 204 cases, and Chiriquí a total of 293 positive. In this context, the National Migration Service (NMS) has decided to extend the validity of residence permits until 31 May, and ordered the suspension of procedural terms, including procedures for

residence permits (pending and professional), non-resident visas, judicial residence cards, migration regulation cards and tourist residence card.

Since the beginning of community transmission of COVID-19 in Darién at MRS La Peñita, no serious cases have been reported; patients with moderate disease due to the virus have been managed under a stay-at-hotel/hospital protocol in Panama City. At the time of writing this report, 25 positive COVID-19 cases have been reported: 7 moderate cases, 52 recovered cases, and 102 remain at MRS Lajas Blancas because of possible contacts. So far, 9 swab tests have been performed at the MRS.

At MRS Los Planes de Gualaca in Chiriquí, the health situation has not changed much; the newborn is still hospitalized since birth was premature (7 months). Regarding the cases of leishmaniasis, the child is still under observation and medical treatment at the migration station, and under the care of the parents. On 20 May, a young woman was transferred due to a hypertension crisis that led to a momentary loss of vision and is currently hospitalized. So far, zero cases of COVID-19 have been reported at MRS Los Planes.

## POPULATION SHELTERED AT MIGRANT RECEIVING STATIONS



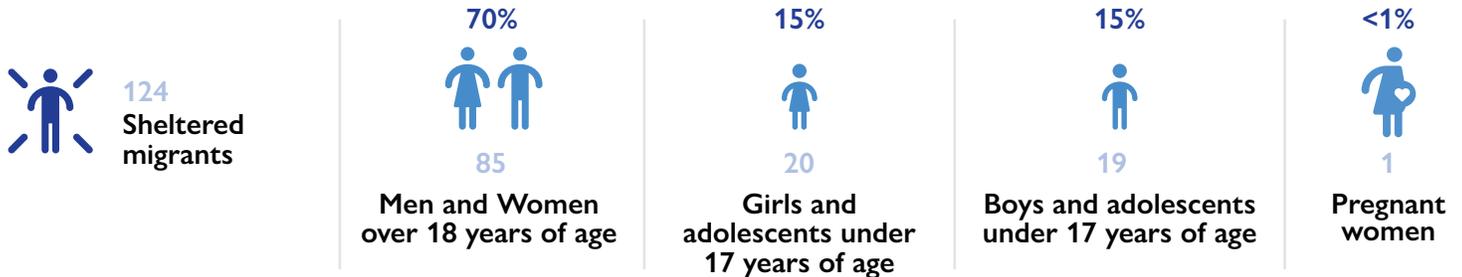
Basemap source: ESRI and UN World Map

This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

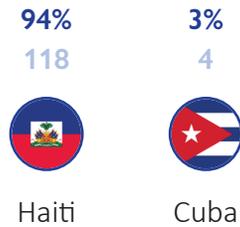
## STATISTICS ON THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

21 MAY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



The remaining 3% corresponds to different nationalities from various countries in South America.

### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT BAJO CHIQUITO, MAY 2020



### COVID-19 CASE STATISTICS



## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN THE COMMUNITY OF BAJO CHIQUITO

### WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



#### Identified needs

- Promotion of proper hygiene practices and personal hygiene kits.

### SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



#### Implemented actions

- The National Border Service (SENAFRONT by its Spanish acronym) delivered personal care products to migrants.

### FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



#### Identified needs

- Although the Government of Panama continues to provide food to migrants, food supply must be improved.

### PROTECTION



#### Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains units that protect the community.

### HEALTH



#### Implemented actions

- The Ministry of Health (MINSa by its Spanish acronym) continues monitoring potential COVID-19 cases.

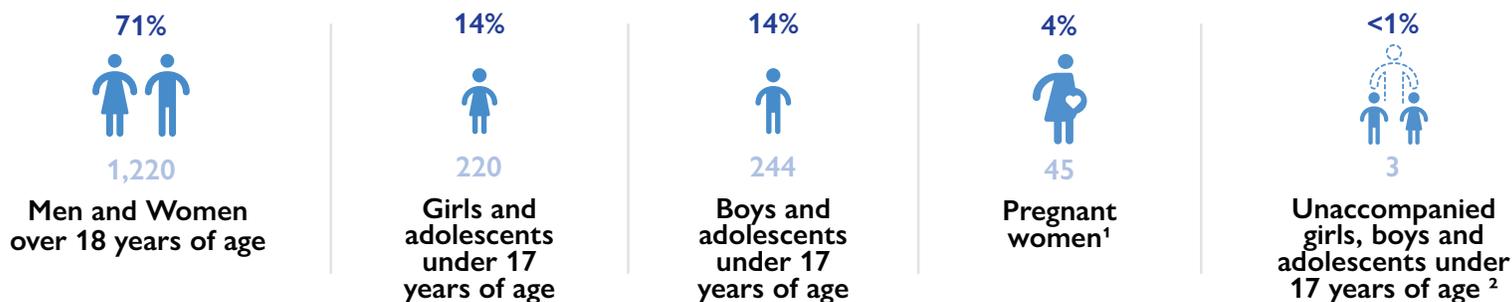
## STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA

21 MAY, 2020

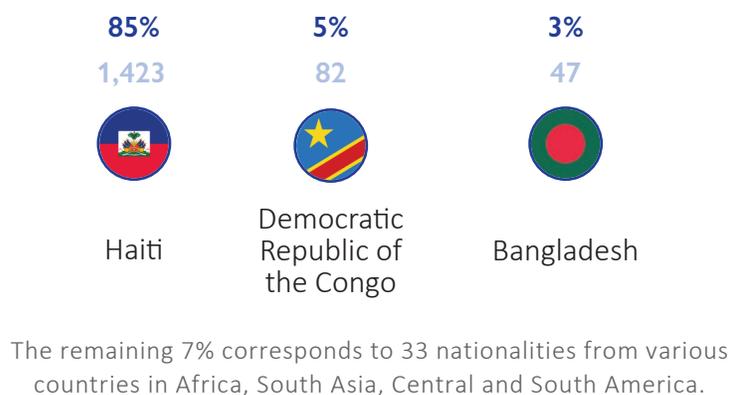
SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA



1,684  
Sheltered migrants



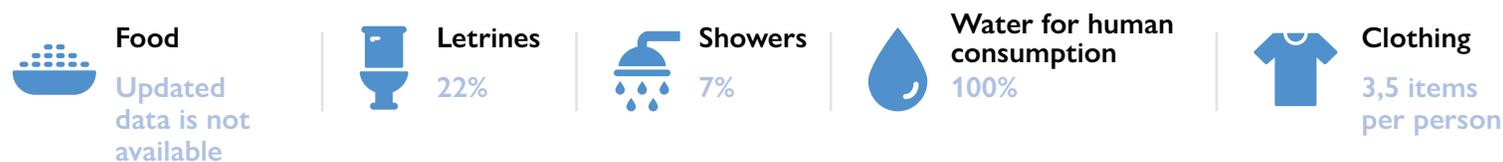
### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LA PEÑITA, MAY 2020



### SERVICES PROVIDED AND AVAILABLE AT MRS LA PEÑITA DURING THE PANDEMIC COMPARED TO MINIMUM HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS



### COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS



**1**  
Case spread by community transmission at MRS La Peñita

These individuals and their contacts have been transferred to MRS Lajas Blancas, which has been temporarily authorized to attend COVID-19 positive cases at Darién, as part of the health care protocol implemented in Panama. These statistics are accounted for within MRS Lajas Blancas data.

<sup>1</sup> Data included women over 18 years of age. The updated registration is currently being carried out under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership.

<sup>2</sup> Data included girls, boys and adolescents under 17 years of age.

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AT MRS LA PEÑITA

### WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



#### Implemented actions

- Under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership, talks on hygiene promotion are being held with adults and children, particularly on hand washing.
- Also, under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership, cleaning of common spaces and the delivery of garbage collection bags, gloves and brooms are carried out.

#### Identified needs

- Due to the pandemic situation, hygiene promotion should be emphasized.
- Lack of personal hygiene kits.
- Increase cleaning frequency of latrines; currently scheduled at two days per week.

### FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



#### Implemented actions

- IOM in coordination with SENAFRONT promoted creating a Migrant "Feeding Table", with the engagement of the Apostolic Vicariate of Darién, the National Secretariat for the Defense of Afro-Panamanians (SENADAP), SENAFRONT and IOM.

### SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



#### Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT delivered personal hygiene products to migrants.

#### Identified needs

- Support is required to retrofit the MRS infrastructure at La Peñita.

### HEALTH



#### Implemented actions

- MINSA maintains the systematic collection of samples (swabs) from migrants to identify COVID-19 cases.
- Under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership, health monitoring of pregnant women is maintained.
- Also, under the UNICEF-IFRC partnership, health monitoring is maintained for children between 0 to 5 years of age.
- UNFPA donated disposable gowns, surgical masks, gloves, face shields, alcoholic gel, surface disinfectant, paper towels and sanitary napkins, especially for women and pregnant women at four health centers in Darien. In addition, 20 packets of condoms were distributed at the MRS.

#### Identified needs

- Additional equipment is required for COVID-19 testing.

### PROTECTION



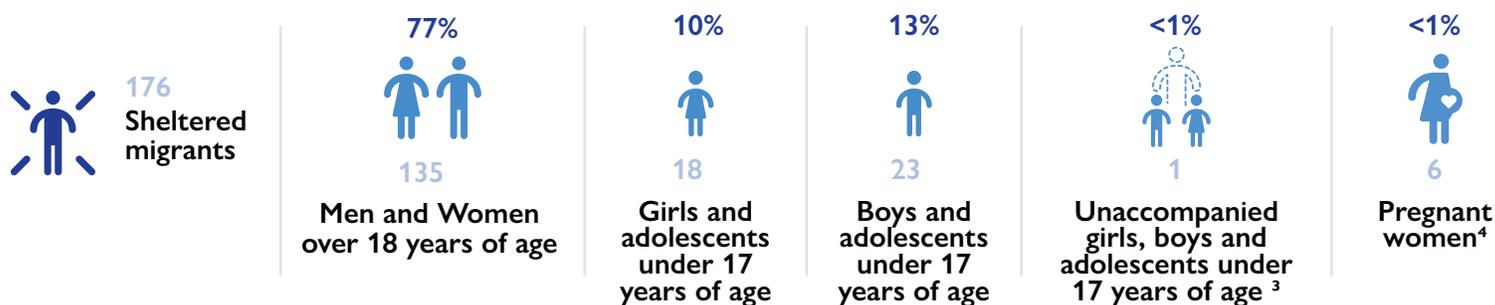
#### Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains units that provide safety and order in the community.
- UNICEF followed up with SENNIAF regarding the protection of the three unaccompanied adolescents.
- UNICEF initiated a process to deal with nine children that are at risk of statelessness with the Electoral Tribunal.
- MINSA, in coordination with UNFPA, updated the protocol for the care of pregnant migrant women in the context of COVID-19.

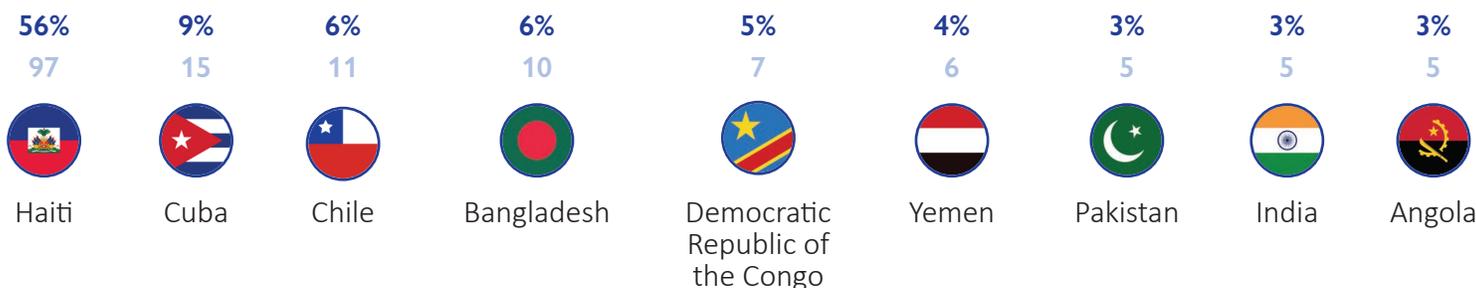
## STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

21 MAY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

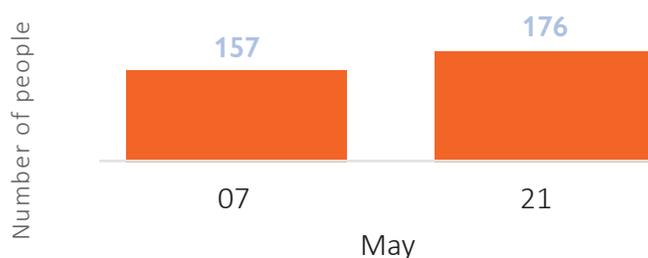


### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



The remaining 5% correspond to nationalities from various countries in South America, South Asia and Africa.

### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS, MAY 2020



### SERVICES PROVIDED AND AVAILABLE AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS DURING THE PANDEMIC COMPARED TO MINIMUM HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS



<sup>3</sup> Data included in children under 17 years of age.

<sup>4</sup> Data included in women over 18 years of age.

## COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS

 **25**  
Positives<sup>5</sup>

 **No updated data available**  
Tests applied

 **102**  
Suspected

 **52**  
Recovered

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AT MRS LAJAS BLANCAS

### WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



#### Implemented actions

- NMS delivered hygiene products and water bottles for migrants.

#### Identified needs

- Promotion of proper hygiene practices and personal hygiene kits.

### SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND NON-FOOD ITEMS



#### Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT delivers personal hygiene products.

### PROTECTION



#### Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT and NMS remain at the MRS providing security and orientation to migrants.
- UNICEF, in coordination with SENNIAF, continues to monitor COVID-19 positive unaccompanied adolescents.

### FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



#### Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT continues providing prepared food to the sheltered population.
- The NMS has provided cookies, cereals and milk to children.

### HEALTH



#### Implemented actions

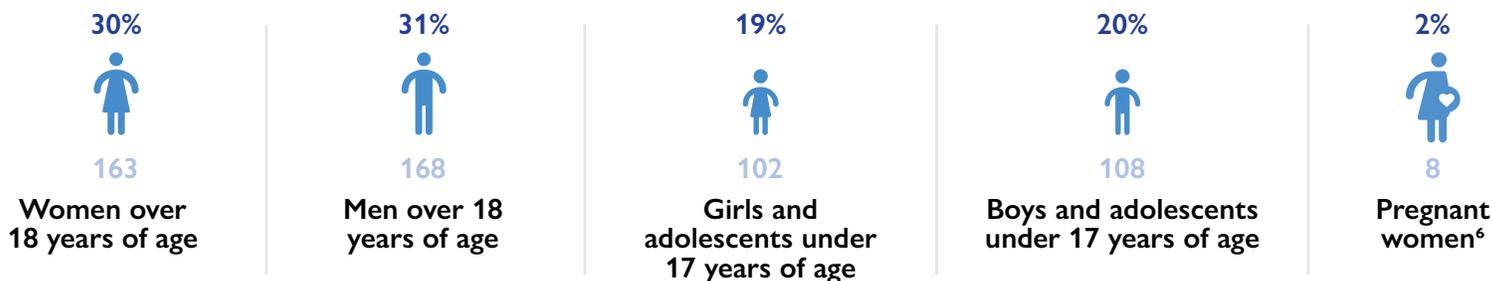
- MINSa provides daily epidemiological monitoring of COVID-19 positive migrants and their contacts.
- NMS delivered bio-security masks for children.

<sup>5</sup> One patient has been transferred to Panama City for treatment, for a total of 7 low-risk hospitalizations.

## STATISTICS OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES

19 MAY, 2020

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA

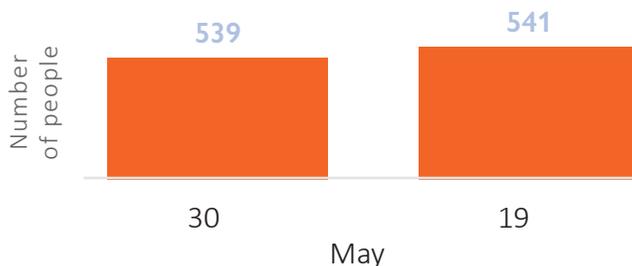


### HIGHLIGHTED NATIONALITIES



The remaining 8% correspond to 17 nationalities from various countries in South America, Africa, South Asia; as well as minors born in Panama.

### NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SHELTERED AT MRS LOS PLANES, MAY 2020



### SERVICES PROVIDED AND AVAILABLE AT THE MRS LOS PLANES DURING THE PANDEMIC COMPARED TO MINIMUM HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS



<sup>6</sup> Data included in the total number of women over 18 years of age.

## COVID- 19 CASE STATISTICS



0

No cases of COVID19  
have been identified in  
the migration flow

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN MRS LOS PLANES

All actions are being undertaken by the Government of Panama at MRS Los Planes, based on the capacities of the responsible institutions and in collaboration with IOM, especially in the protection sector.

### WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROMOTION (WASH)



#### Identified needs

- There is great concern regarding the situation with the sanitary landfill, as it is still collapsing.
- Technical inspection is required to assess the condition of the water tanks; they are in poor condition and there is evidence of wastewater.
- There are groups of migrants who still do not use the sanitary services for their own physiological needs.
- Cleaning frequency of latrines must be increased.
- Install hand-washing stations; provided at minimum standard of 1 in 10 inhabitants per shelter, in accordance with Sphere Standard N 6.3 "WASH in health facilities" in order to increase prevention measures.
- Promotion of proper hygiene practices and personal hygiene kits.

- NMS is in the process of recruiting someone for logistical support and food preparation.

### SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT



#### Implemented actions

- Maintenance visits have been scheduled twice a week.
- Migrants, NMS and SENAFRONT continue to make minor repairs to the infrastructure.

#### Identified needs

- Technical support is required to repair the MRS infrastructure.
- There are no gender or age specific bathrooms.
- There is a high risk of fire, because there are pine trees located next to the electrical wiring.
- There is no evacuation plan or emergency contingency measures.
- Six fire extinguishers were found empty and require replacement.

### FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION



#### Implemented actions

- NMS maintains milk distribution for children when requested by families.

## PROTECTION



### Implemented actions

- SENAFRONT maintains 8 units that are responsible for maintaining order and protecting the MRS perimeter.
- NMS carries out integration activities among migrants.

### Identified needs

- There has been an increase in cases of domestic violence among migrants, a situation that is being addressed by the authorities in charge of the MRS.
- NMS identified the need to train staff on how to deal with cases of domestic violence at the MRS and with migrant populations in transit.

## HEALTH



### Implemented actions

- MINSA and NMS are monitoring a premature newborn, a child with leishmaniasis and a woman with hypertension problems. Two of them were transferred to hospitals in the city of David.

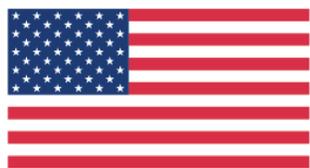
### Identified needs

- MRS Los Planes does not have an ambulance. NMS provides emergency transportation with the MRS patrol vehicle, but it is not outfitted with the minimum standards for emergency transfers, and is intended as a multiple use vehicle, mainly administrative staff procedures.
- There is no access to birth control methods, such as condoms.

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