



PEOPLE IN NEED IN THE
SUB-REGION
739.1K



PEOPLE REACHED WITH SOME
FORM OF ASSISTANCE*
360.7K



FUNDING SITUATION**

20.3% FUNDED: 9.76 M
REQUIREMENT: USD 48.08



Situation

Panama

- During the reporting period, historical numbers of entries to Panama via the Darien jungle were observed. In 2023, [520,085 refugees and migrants crossed the Darien](#), including 328,650 Venezuelans (63%), Ecuadorians (11%), Haitians (9%), Chinese (5%), and Colombian (4%), representing more than double the total number of crossings in 2022 and the greatest number of crossings in any year to date.
- Nearly two-fifths of those interviewed (39%) had resided in another country for at least six months. The main countries of residence were Colombia (12%), Peru (8%), Ecuador (5%), and Chile (4%). Almost half of interviewed refugees and migrants (49%) were travelling with their ID card as their main travel documentation. Around 30% of interviewed participants were also travelling with their passports; however, 8% had expired passports. Around 48% were travelling with a birth certificate, 7% with a residence permit, and 5% were not travelling with any document. Interviewed refugees and migrants were from Venezuela (60%), Colombia (12%), Ecuador (8%), and Haiti (5%), among others (Source: Partner monitoring aggregated data compiled from data collection exercises from October-December 2023. Monthly reports can be accessed [here](#)).
- Beginning in late October, protests against the Minera Panama mining contract resulted in road blockages across the country lasting over five weeks, which affected buses transporting refugees and migrants from the Darien to Costa Rica. Due to the blockades, many refugees and migrants in transit continued their journey on foot. The movement of buses from the Darien to Costa Rica was fully re-established towards the end of December 2023 following the declaration of the Supreme Court of Justice on 28 November that Law No. 406 approving the mining contract was [unconstitutional](#).
- In October, the governments of Panama and Costa Rica urgently [called](#) upon countries in the region of origin, transit and destination, as well as international organizations, to address the challenges of the human mobility crisis. These governments [agreed](#) to allow buses to transport refugees and migrants directly from the Darien region to Paso Canoas (Costa Rica).
- The governments of Panama, Mexico, the United States, and Colombia also held a [high-level](#) virtual meeting to highlight the need for safe, orderly and regular migration in the midst of the regional human mobility crisis.
- In December, Panama government officials held a [meeting](#) with high-level officials of the United States with the purpose of continuing to collaborate on issues related to migration.

Costa Rica

- In October, the Government of Costa Rica reallocated all 400 individuals staying in the Campo Ferial Park near the border with Panama to the government's temporary migration station in Paso Canoas, EMISUR, thus discontinuing the use of Campo Ferial. EMISUR's capacity at the time allowed 200 people to sleep indoors (cabins with bunkbeds) and 200 outdoors (in tents in a location with a roof). EMISUR (regulated by the State with the support of the United Nations System and NGOs) provides refugees and migrants with medical care and food and coordinates their travel to the northern border via buses that cost USD 60.



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- In November, the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry confirmed, through a [press release](#), that the embassy in Costa Rica is reopening its doors to facilitate the handling of all types of consular procedures such as the issuance and extension of passports.
- The increase in homicides related to drug trafficking by 45% since 2021 captured the attention of media. Subsequently, the government of Costa Rica announced decisions that may affect the protection environment for refugees and migrants, including the announcement of “consular registration” as a requirement for all immigration formalities, including the special temporary category. This registration can be issued by the newly opened Venezuelan Consulate, but although the registration is free, emitting the document costs USD 60, which creates another obstacle for Venezuelans to access regularization options.
- On 24 November, the Costa Rica took over the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Quito Process during the plenary session held in Chile, a government body created to coordinate the response to the Venezuelan refugee and migrant situation in the region.
- In December, the U.S. announced the extension of the Safe Mobility [Initiative](#) until 2024 for Nicaraguans and Venezuelans. This program helps eligible refugees and migrants in Costa Rica to travel safely and lawfully to the U.S.

Mexico

- In 2023, a decrease in asylum claims by Venezuelans was observed with approximately 5,500 asylum applications by Venezuelans (compared to 14,768 in 2022).
- In October, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR) was instructed to stop issuing registration appointment slips to avoid the use of such documents to transit within the country. As a result, pre-registration for the asylum process in Tapachula (Chiapas), at the southern border with Guatemala, dropped by 60 per cent. The National Migration Institute (INM) also stopped issuing humanitarian visas (TVRH) to migrants and asylum-seekers, limiting access to basic rights and services and putting those in an irregular situation at risk of detention and deportation.
- On 30 October a large group of some 3,000 persons departed from Tapachula towards Huixtla, consisting mainly of family groups, including children, with participants from Honduras, Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti. The participants requested INM to provide documents and transportation to move onwards. Secondly, another group of some 5,000-persons departed Tapachula on 24 December towards the northern border. On 20 December, the judicial authority ruled in favour of halting the detention and deportation of the complainants to their countries of origin and required that INM and COMAR review and adjudicate any procedures/petitions of the complainants currently on file. The judge ruled against the possibility of free transit through Mexico. Over the last five years, caravans have been used to influence policy, draw attention to the migration phenomenon, and strengthen the narrative that there are wide-ranging unmet needs in the region.
- In December, Mexico and Venezuela announced that they would restart [repatriation flights](#) to Venezuela. Two first repatriation flights left Mexico between 29 and 30 December. The repatriation mechanism is part of the [Palenque Declaration](#) of the Migration Summit with Latin American regional leaders of October 2023.



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- On 27 December, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas travelled to Mexico and met with Mexico's President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to discuss cooperation and measures to reduce the record border crossings. According to the [official press release](#), both countries reaffirmed their existing commitments to foster "orderly, humane and regular migration." This includes strengthening the collaboration to address the root causes of migration, such as poverty, inequality, and violence, as well as the joint initiative for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans."
- Along the northern border with the U.S., an increase in kidnappings and extorsions by organized criminal groups was reported during the reporting period, particularly in Ciudad Juarez and Tamaulipas state. On 30 December 2023, [31 persons on the move were kidnapped](#) in Reynosa, Tamaulipas while travelling on a bus to Matamoros. They were mainly from Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia, Honduras, and Mexico.

Response



EDUCATION

In **Mexico**, seven Venezuelan students graduated from university successfully completing their commitments as beneficiaries of a scholarship program for tertiary education, 4 Venezuelans received assistance for the recognition of their academic degrees, and 10 children received support for enrollment in public primary and secondary schools. In **Costa Rica**, 4,395 in-transit children received educational kits and 3,468 in-destination children and adolescents obtained early childhood development kits as well as primary and secondary school supply kits.



FOOD SECURITY

In **Costa Rica**, 1,441 Venezuelans received food assistance in the form of cards for the purchase of food in authorized supermarkets. The cards had different monetary amounts and beneficiaries were selected through an evaluation process to measure their vulnerability including gender protection concern, women-lead household, elderly women, unemployment, and number of family members. In **Panama** 21,606 Venezuelans received food assistance in kind such as fruits, granola bars, cookies for children, and other food items.



HEALTH

In **Panama**, 11,579 refugees and migrants in-transit received medical attention at the migrant reception stations in the Darien. Partners delivered training courses on psychological first aid and activities related to mental health. In **Costa Rica**, 715 Venezuelans benefitted from interventions under the health sector as they received medical insurance with support of a partner agency.



INTEGRATION

For more information, please contact: Janine Hutchison – jhutchison@iom.int | Marketa Jerabek – jerabek@unhcr.org

* From 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2023 | **Source: FTS Website



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In **Mexico**, refugees and migrants were supported with the certification, recognition, or validation of professional diplomas, 30 Venezuelans were supported with self-employment or entrepreneurship activities, and 59 Venezuelans received support activities/interventions enabling them to access or to keep a job. In **Costa Rica**, 30 Venezuelans received the support for self-employment or entrepreneurship initiatives.



SHELTER

In **Costa Rica** and **Panama** 25,149 in-transit Venezuelans benefitted or short-term accommodation, temporary collective shelter solutions or from settlement infrastructure and settlement management.



WASH

In **Panama** and **Costa Rica**, 16,860 Venezuelans received appropriate hygiene supplies and services, and 63,127 in-transit Venezuelans received safe access to sufficient and safe water.



PROTECTION

From October to December, R4V partners in **Mexico** supported the naturalization of 88 Venezuelan individuals, bringing the total number of naturalizations supported in 2023 to 175. In **Costa Rica** and **Mexico**, 3,732 Venezuelans received legal assistance and in **Panama** 25,083 in-transit Venezuelans received protection services like face-to-face information, awareness and sensitization activities about the risks on the route and legal pathways.



CHILD PROTECTION

In the sub-region, 864 humanitarian workers were trained on child protection. In **Panama**, 15,835 in-transit children, adolescents and their families and caregivers were provided with community-based mental health and psychosocial support, and in **Panama** and **Costa Rica**, 13,771 in-transit and in-destination children and adolescents received specialised child protection services.



MPC

Sixty Venezuelans in **Panama** and 109 in **Costa Rica** received multipurpose cash assistance to cover basic needs.

	Education	Food Security	Health	Hum. Transp.	Integration	Nutrition	Shelter	WASH	Protection	GBV	Child Protection	Human trafficking & smuggling	MPC
PEOPLE REACHED*	7,891	21,712	11,919	1	94	341	2,518	79,987	3,4578	33,465	29,606	0	169

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