

The Migratory Situation in the Darién Gap



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The Darien Gap and Migration



1. Between January and September 2023, a total of 408,889 migrants have crossed the Darien Gap, the border area between Colombia and Panama.
1. Between 2022 and 2023 the increase in the number of migrants reached 300% in August of this year.
1. *Clan del Golfo*, the illegal armed group that controls migrant smuggling in the area, makes an estimated \$30 million a year.



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4. 64.16% of the migrants who have crossed are Venezuelans, followed by Ecuadorians (11.91%), Haitians (10.98%), Chinese (5.33%) and Afghans (0.79%).
4. According to *Migración Colombia*, 19.04% were minors, totaling 77,835 minors on the aforementioned date.
4. It is difficult to obtain accurate data on the number of people stranded mid-crossing due to the lack of institutional presence.



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Other Border Issues

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- 1 • The Urabá Region is located in the departments of Antioquia and Chocó, where part of the jungle and swamp area meet, this is known as the Darién Gap.
- 2 • According to the Panamanian government, 96% of the illegal timber sold in the country comes from the Darién. "Illegal logging uses mules to take the logs out of the forest and this has deteriorated the quality of the soil in some areas of the park," explains Nianza Ángulo Paredes.
- 3 • Information on drug trafficking through Darien is scarce. In 2021, the Panamanian government seized a shipment valued at \$9.9 million belonging to the Clan del Golfo.



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Humanitarian corridor

The Darien Gap presents an enormous institutional challenge, which requires a joint approach between Panama, Colombia and international organizations.

Prioritizing lives and taking into account the need to address the business of migrant smuggling, the creation of a humanitarian corridor in the border area should be sought, taking into consideration that Panama and Costa Rica have already activated a humanitarian corridor for the transit of migrants arriving from the Darien.

This corridor should be extended to Urabá in Colombia, in a coordinated effort between the countries of the region, the United States as the final destination, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other international organizations involved in safe migration.

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Pan American Route

The fight against migrant smuggling requires a long-term solution, which can only be achieved by guaranteeing an institutional presence in the Darien Gap.

It is necessary to again discuss the completion of the Pan-American Route, building the remaining 130 km that pass through the Darien.

The financing of the environmental impact studies should be initiated, proposing the construction of the road at the edge of the sea so as not to affect the Serranía.

Completing the Panamerican Route will serve to guarantee the effective presence of the two States, retake territorial control and provide a safe passage for migrants.

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Legislating for migration

The Congress of Colombia has several legislative initiatives that seek to address the problem of irregular migration.

The Senate of the Republic is in the process of approving the "Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime", a fundamental instrument of international cooperation in this area.

Between 2020 and 2021, the Comprehensive Migration Policy Law was discussed and approved, which establishes the guidelines for migration management in the country. The Congress has the obligation to review this Law and modify it to provide better responses to the current migration crisis.





THANK YOU!

