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THE PERILOUS JOURNEY THROUGH THE DARIÉN GAP

The Darién Gap between Colombia and Panama is one of the most dangerous regions of the world, particularly for migrants from Haiti, Cuba and Venezuela. It is known as a “no man’s land,” an uncrossable 60-mile wide jungle with thick muddy terrain and poisonous snakes. Most of the migrants that take this route out of South America were subjected to political persecution and yearn for better chances in the United States, Mexico or Canada. Those at greatest risk are the injured or elderly as even able-bodied adults struggle through the gap battle dehydration and hunger.

In one of the wettest regions in the world, the Darién Gap has no road in its disorienting jungle. There is no policing in this region so migrants are often faced with the unthinkable dangers of dealing with paramilitary groups and criminal gangs. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded many of the political circumstances that force migrants to leave their countries.

THIS ISSUE:

**THE JOURNEY THROUGH
THE DARIÉN GAP**
PAGE 02

**SURVIVING THE DARIÉN
GAP: DEVASTATING
PROBLEMS AND
HOPEFUL SOLUTIONS**
PAGE 03

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO
HELP?**
PAGE 04

Surviving the Darién Gap: Devastating Problems and Hopeful Solutions



Survivors emerging from the Darién Gap must remain in shelters in Panama for weeks even stretching to months, waiting for clearance through Costa Rica. Although their names are entered in the United States databases at this time and many migrants risk the deportation when they reach the US border, they persist onward regardless to seek asylum.

World Vision has collected many ideas from experts, governments journalists, and humanitarian groups about improving migration towards the North. The most essential is to create safer and more welcoming options for migrants so that they don't have to face the unbearable and deadly journey through the Darién Gap. In 2021, more than 19,000 Haitian children made the perilous journey according to UNICEF; this number has tripled over the past five years. Some children emerge from the gap unaccompanied often due to the injury of a parent or guardian, unable to continue through the gap. It is integral that migrants are dissuaded from travelling these routes, but this issue will never become resolved if safer alternatives are not made available in the near future.

It is reported that more than 50 people have died since the start of 2021 while trying to cross the muddy jungle of Darien Gap.

University of Ottawa World Vision Mission

To operate a student run non-profit organization that raises awareness of the injustices in the world and organizes funds to support these causes in conjunction with the campaigns of World Vision Canada.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The severity of this issue cannot be overlooked. There are many things that you can do to bring awareness to this issue and help the families affected by this crisis!

1. Support a child through World Vision

a. Through World Vision's child sponsorship program, you can contribute to supporting families from risking dangerous migration routes.

2. Support the No Child for Sale Campaign!

a. Learn about World Vision's campaign at your university.
b. Take action against child labour and exploitation at <https://www.worldvision.ca/no-child-for-sale/home>

3. Increase your own awareness and inspire change through social media platforms.

a. Learn more about what your government can do about the Darien Gap migration crisis and extend your concerns to global platforms!

