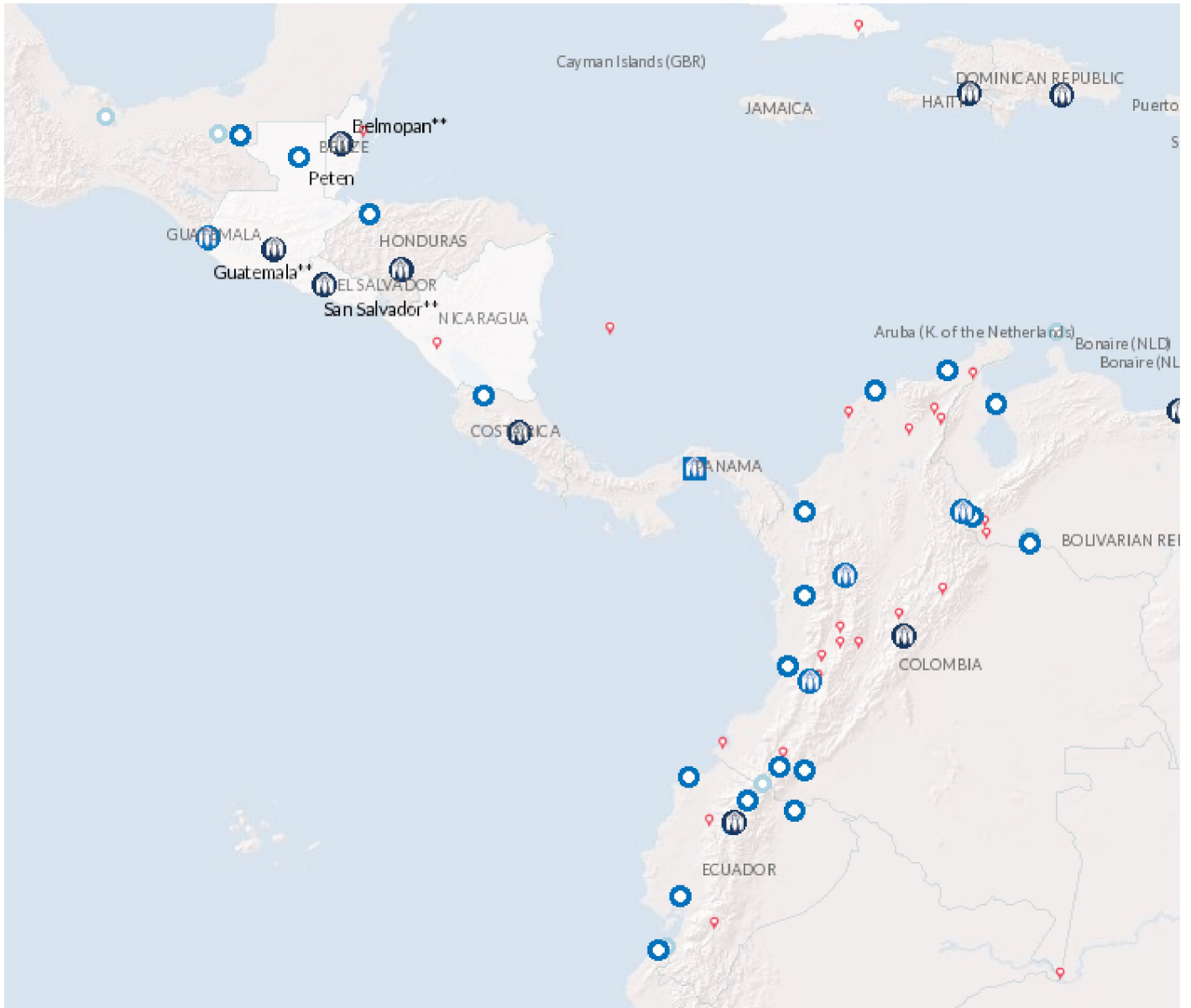


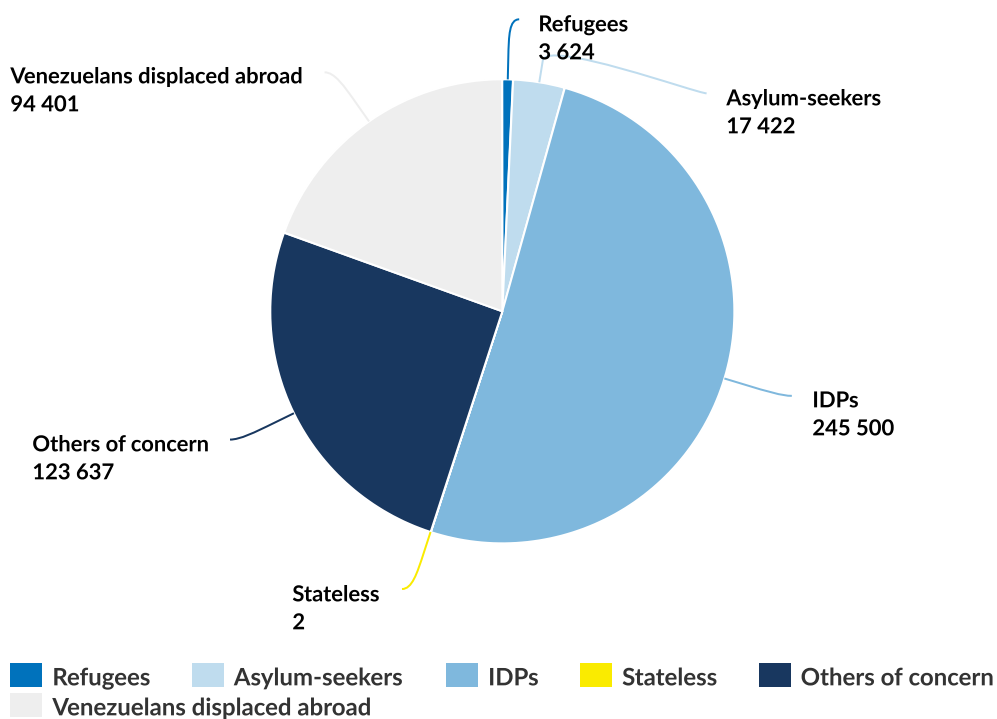
## Operation: Panama Regional Office



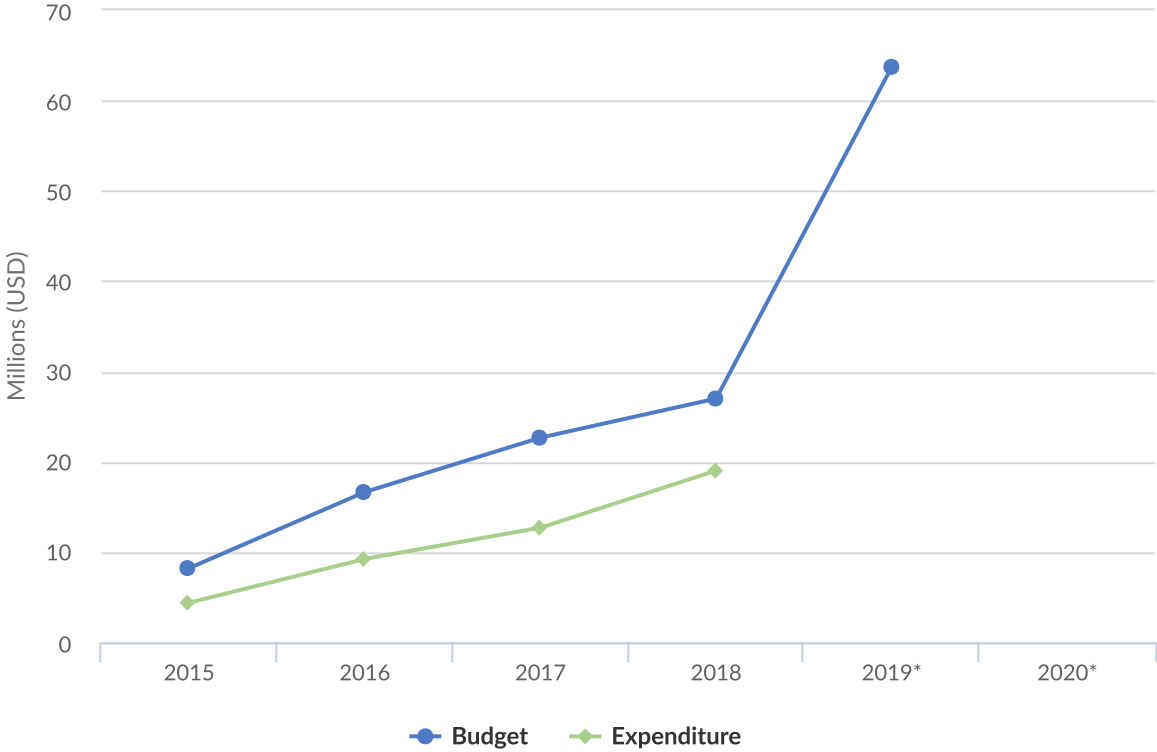
# People of Concern

INCREASE IN  
**29%** 2018

2018	484,586
2017	375,326
2016	235,707



# Budgets and Expenditure for Panama Regional Office



### Working environment

By end-2018, there were 353,200 refugees and asylum-seekers from the North of Central America (NCA) registered worldwide; almost 20 times more than at the end of 2011. In the first semester of 2019, an additional 42,300 asylum applications of NCA nationals were reported, an 80% increase compared to same period in 2018. The crises in Nicaragua and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have continued to put additional pressure on national asylum systems in the hosting countries. As of end-August, the total number of asylum-seekers from Nicaragua stood at over 88,000, with Costa Rica remaining the largest recipient and Panama also witnessing a sharp increase. These trends are likely to continue in 2020.

Levels of internal displacement are similarly high. According to estimates from government-led profiling studies supported by UNHCR, there are 247,000 IDPs in Honduras (2004-2018), based on an updated profiling exercise soon to be published. In El Salvador, a government-led study found that at least 71,500 IDPs (2006-2016) have been displaced as a direct result of the violence.

UNHCR's Multi-Country Office in Panama ensures the overall coordination of the Regional Protection and Solutions Strategy for the NCA situation, supports the response to the Nicaragua situation and coordinates the implementation of the regional application of the CRRF, known regionally by its Spanish acronym MIRPS. UNHCR has national offices in Belize, El Salvador, and Guatemala, maintains a small presence in Cuba for protection activities and covers Nicaragua, where it has no operational presence but is working through field missions and an implementing partner. In 2020 UNHCR will have a full representation in Honduras.

In spite of the efforts made by States to tackle root causes, high levels of violence will most likely continue to affect all three NCA countries - El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras - in 2020, with high homicide rates, SGBV, recruitment of children by gangs and other crimes affecting a large portion of the population, and little effective protection being offered by State institutions. As a consequence, many people will continue to flee NCA countries to seek protection in other countries. While in 2019 the United States of America kept on being the primary country of destination, followed by Mexico, the current changes in the migratory and asylum policies of these countries, make it hard to predict what the displacement patterns will be in Central America in 2020. Consequently, UNHCR is increasing its border monitoring activities, ramping up its assistance capacity and strengthening its support to national asylum systems in the region.

In 2020, UNHCR will continue to reinforce its protection responses in the region, strengthening asylum systems, reception conditions and provide immediate humanitarian assistance through cash-based interventions. At the same time, livelihood activities will be further expanded in asylum countries to support local integration and peaceful coexistence with host communities.

With the recent addition of El Salvador - which became officially part of the MIRPS process in July 2019 -, Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama will further deepen their collaboration under MIRPS in 2020. The MIRPS fosters regional cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination for greater responsibility sharing on prevention, protection and solutions. It also provides for an inclusive approach as it involves the participation of regional and international organizations, civil society and the private sector.

### Key priorities

In 2020, UNHCR will focus on:

- Building strong asylum systems in destination countries;
- Strengthening mechanisms that can respond to urgent protection risks faced by IDPs and other people affected by violence in countries of origin;
- Identifying and protecting deportees with protection needs;
- Finding durable solutions for people of concern, including local integration in destination countries, resettlement, or cooperation with development actors to address root causes that will allow for voluntary return;
- Ensuring safe transit along the main migration routes by establishing protection networks and providing humanitarian assistance, with a special focus on the most vulnerable.

Funding shortfalls for the regional protection response could result in greater displacement and increased risks for people of concern who have to flee, such as exploitation, SGBV, trafficking, and forced recruitment.

## 2020 Original Budget for Panama Regional Office | USD

*The following table presents the original budget for this operation broken down at the objective level. Resource allocation at the objective level is subject to change during the course of the year as the operational situation evolves and priorities shift.*

	Total
2020 Original Budget	0

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