

Ten migrants drown while crossing the Darien Jungle

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Migrants using a boat to cross the Darien jungle. Photo: X/ @ElInformadorVE

Panama City, July 25 (RHC)-- In Panama, the National Border Service (SENAFRONT) confirmed that ten migrants, whose bodies have not been found, drowned several days ago in a Caribbean region of

Panama.

This tragedy occurred in the riverine areas near the Indigenous community of Carreto, where undocumented migrants attempted to cross a river in the Darien jungle on their route to the U.S.

SENAFRONT believes that “these bodies may have been buried to cover up their criminal connections with human trafficking,” but it has not yet been possible to locate the remains.

“It is known that the bodies are in the area. However, the formal exhumation process has not yet taken place,” a SENAFRONT member said, adding that the Prosecutor’s Office is carrying out the corresponding investigations.

According to testimonies collected by the La Prensa outlet, some migrants told the residents of Carreto that the rising river had swept away several people whose bodies could not be recovered.

Panamanian authorities warned that human traffickers and their local collaborators are using clandestine routes on the Caribbean coasts to move migrants under very risky circumstances. “The authorized route for irregular migration is the one that leads to Cañas Blancas, where specialized patrols are available for protection and humanitarian assistance,” SENAFRONT said.

According to data from Doctors Without Borders (MSF), undocumented migrants have to pay human traffickers up to \$550 USD to take a boat from Capurgana (Colombia) to Carreto (Panama), where they then walk for about four days through the jungle to reach the Indigenous community of Canaan Membrillo.

Panamanian President Jose Mulino has implemented various measures to try to reduce the flow of migrants through the Darien jungle, through which an estimated over 261,000 people have crossed so far this year.

Since July 3, Panamanian authorities have placed barbed wire fences along approximately 4.7 kilometers in the Darien, aiming to prevent the use of unauthorized routes and channeling the flow of migrants through a humanitarian corridor.

Darien is a jungle located on the 266-kilometer border between Panama and Colombia. Thousands of migrants pass through it seeking to reach Central America, facing very harsh environmental conditions, attacks by wild animals, and ambushes by criminal groups responsible for assaults and sexual abuse.

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