

## Panama evacuates islanders due to rising sea levels

3rd June 2024



Rising sea levels have caused Panama to evacuate the residents of one of its islands. The inhabitants of the tiny Gardi Sugdub island off Panama's Caribbean coast are being relocated to the mainland. However, a Panamanian government official said

some people are refusing to vacate their ancestral home. They will stay until the absolute last minute. Panama's government said Gardi Sugdub is a sign of things to come as more low-lying islands are under threat from being engulfed by the ocean. A recent study by Panama's Environment Ministry estimated the country would lose 2.01 per cent of its coastal territory to rising sea levels. It added that 38,000 people will need to be relocated at a cost of about \$1.2 billion.

Gardi Sugdub has been home to the indigenous Guna people for generations. The overcrowded island is just 366 metres long and 137 metres wide, but was home to nearly 300 families. They relied on fishing and tourism to make a living. Islander Nadin Morales, 24, said: "We're a little sad...but the sea is sinking the island little by little." She added: "Lately, I've seen that climate change has had a major impact....The tide comes to a level it didn't before, and the heat is unbearable." Ms Morales said she hopes her community will prosper in its new location. Her new home will be in a \$12 million government development two kilometres from the port from which boats go to Gardi Sugdub.

Sources: [hrw.org](https://www.hrw.org) / [apnews.com](https://www.apnews.com) / [france24.com](https://www.france24.com)

### Writing

We must all turn our lives around 180 degrees to help climate change. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

sea levels / evacuate / mainland / ancestral home / a sign of things to come / coastal / indigenous / overcrowded / tourism / make a living / heat / community / prosper

### True / False

- 1) Panama has ordered residents on three islands to evacuate. T / F
- 2) The island of Gardi Sugdub is in the Caribbean Sea. T / F
- 3) Panama's government said more islands would go under the waves. T / F
- 4) Panama may have to spend \$1.2 billion on relocating people. T / F
- 5) The Guna people have island on the Gardi Sugdub for 22 years. T / F
- 6) An islander said Gardi Sugdub has stopped sinking. T / F
- 7) The islander said the level of the tide is unbearable. T / F
- 8) Gardi Sugdub is 20 km from the mainland. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>evacuate</b>     | a. land         |
| 2. <b>residents</b>    | b. swallowed up |
| 3. <b>ancestral</b>    | c. site         |
| 4. <b>engulfed</b>     | d. intolerable  |
| 5. <b>territory</b>    | e. locals       |
| 6. <b>indigenous</b>   | f. depended     |
| 7. <b>relied</b>       | g. move out of  |
| 8. <b>unbearable</b>   | h. native       |
| 9. <b>prosper</b>      | i. hereditary   |
| 10. <b>development</b> | j. thrive       |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of rising sea levels?
- c) What do people in your town rely on to make a living?
- d) What impact has climate change had on you?
- e) What cities is climate change putting at risk?
- f) How can we reverse climate change?
- g) What will Earth look like in 50 years from now?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the islanders?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. evacuate the residents                        | a. on fishing            |
| 2. being relocated to the                        | b. last minute           |
| 3. people are refusing to vacate their ancestral | c. prosper               |
| 4. They will stay until the absolute             | d. for generations       |
| 5. lose 2.01 per cent of its coastal             | e. mainland              |
| 6. home to the indigenous Guna people            | f. unbearable            |
| 7. They relied                                   | g. territory             |
| 8. make a  | h. of one of its islands |
| 9. the heat is                                   | i. living                |
| 10. she hopes her community will                 | j. home                  |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about rising sea levels?
- What do you know about Panama?
- How would you feel if you had to evacuate your town?
- Why are sea levels rising?
- Do you have an ancestral home?
- Would you like to live on a tiny island?
- How will government policy change when more islands sink?
- What advice do you have for the islanders?

## Spelling

- uteaavce the residents
- nnbasahiitt of the tiny Gardi Sugdub island
- their acsatrnln home
- until the busloeat last minute
- under threat from being gdenflue by the ocean
- 2.01 per cent of its coastal eyrtrotir
- home to the iugoisendn Guna people
- for ngrnsoeaiet
- They eilerd on fishing
- climate change has had a major mitapc
- the heat is ralebuneba
- her community will psropre

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. i	4. b	5. a
6. h	7. f	8. d	9. j	10. c

## Role Play

### Role A – Rising Oceans

You think rising oceans are the biggest problem facing Earth. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their problems aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): desertification, species loss or population displacement.

### Role B – Desertification

You think desertification is the biggest problem facing Earth. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their problems aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): rising oceans, species loss or population displacement.

### Role C – Species Loss

You think species loss is the biggest problem facing Earth. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their problems aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): desertification, rising oceans or population displacement.

### Role D – Population Displacement

You think population displacement is the biggest problem facing Earth. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their problems aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): desertification, species loss or rising oceans.

## Speaking – Climate change

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest problems of climate change at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| • Rising oceans   | • Loss of species         |
| • Water scarcity  | • Population displacement |
| • Droughts        | • Hotter temperatures     |
| • Desertification | • More severe storms      |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	F	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.