

FYR MACEDONIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

02 – 08 September 2015

KEY FIGURES

31,541

Food packages distributed

18,436

Medical interventions provided

700

People provided with direct legal assistance

1,608

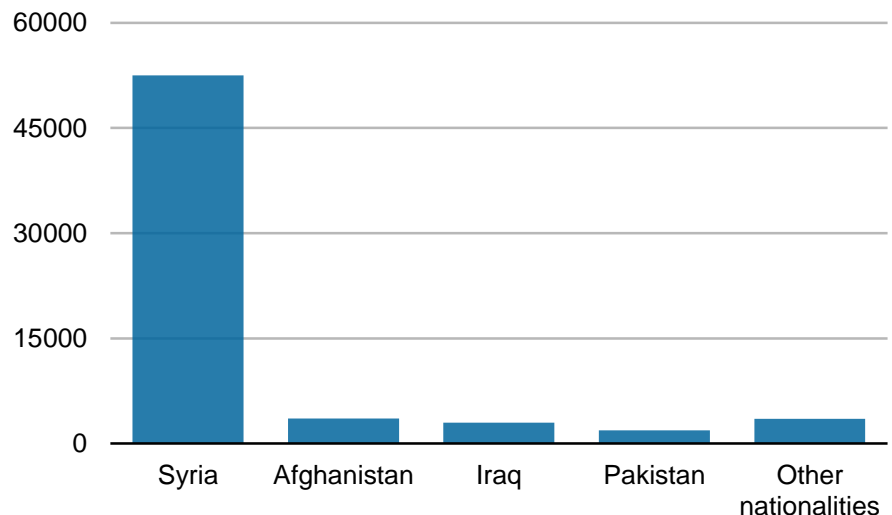
Unaccompanied minors identified

PRIORITIES

- Assist the Government and civil society in responding to the most urgent humanitarian and protection needs of the refugees
- Strengthen the asylum systems in the country in line with applicable international standards

HIGHLIGHTS

- The influx of refugees has increased with daily figures of 4,000 – 5,000. On Monday 7 September more than 7,000 refugees crossed the border from Greece into Macedonia. A large sudden influx in the morning hours strained the capacity of the reception facilities and led to a challenging situation with refugees scattered around the site and the surrounding fields. UNHCR managed to engage with the crowd and calm the tense situation. Red Cross organized food and water supplies and provided medical assistance with support from the Ministry of Health. UNHCR and partners organized distribution inside and outside the reception centre. Additional buses were organized to decongest the site.



Intention to apply for asylum: **65,658** applications have been filed from 19 June to 08 September 2015 (source: Ministry of Interior).

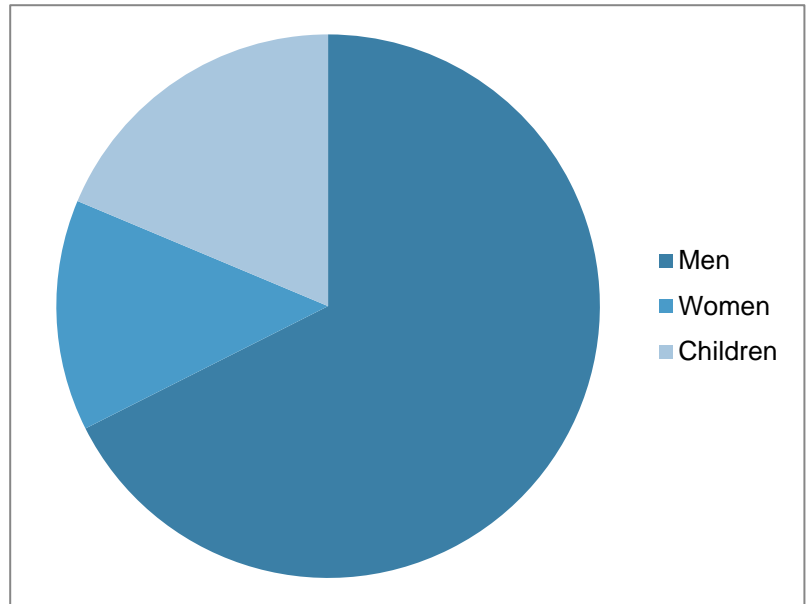


Refugees about to enter Vinojug.
Photo: UNHCR/A.Moller

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The number of refugees and migrants crossing the border from Greece, entering the city of Gevgelija continues to be high with 65,658 persons registered their intention to apply for asylum, including 12,264 children, of whom 1,698 are unaccompanied since 19 June until 08 September 2015. Of these 53,437 (81%) of the arrivals are Syrians, 3,612 (6%) Afghans, 3,091 (5%) Iraqis, 1,886 (3%) Pakistanis and the remainder represent other nationalities such as Somalis, Palestinians, Congolese and Cameroonians. 49 applications for asylum were registered out of which 36 were submitted by Syrians in the same period while from January to end of July 1,675 asylum applications were submitted.



Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- The influx of refugees has increased during the reporting period (02-08 September) with daily arrival figures of 4,000 – 5,000. The last few days have seen spikes of more than 7,000 arriving .
- The Vinojug reception centre, 600 meters from the Greek border and 500 meters from Gevgelija town, now has a fully operational UNHCR rub hall with a capacity of accommodating more than 160 people according to international standards. Two more are currently being erected. UNICEF provided two tents that function as child friendly spaces. The refugee housing units in Vinojug have now reached 20 while some are dedicated as storage capacity and service area for partners to ensure a constant capacity on the ground of food, water, NFIs and medical equipment.
- UNHCR has stepped up its protection capacity at the site and the border to meet the immediate needs of the increased influx. This includes UNHCR staff deployed both during the day and night.
- During the reporting period approximately 700 persons were offered free legal advice at the Vinojug station by MYLA who also assisted 5 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. These activities are funded by UNHCR.
- In *Tabanovce* refugees continue to arrive from Gevgelija in an organized manner using trains, buses and taxis.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The Ministry of Interior and UNHCR met to discuss the deployment of additional data entry clerks and an improved overall registration process including finger printing. The suggested changes will be further discussed and are foreseen to be implemented shortly.



Health

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period the Red Cross provided 18,436 medical interventions out of which 638 were pregnant women and 531 were children. 481 first aid kits were distributed. Four mobile teams of the Red Cross are working in three shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce. This activity is funded by UNHCR.
- The Ministry of Health provided medical assistance during the large influx on 7 September, where several severer medical cases (pregnant woman and children) were evacuated to the local hospital in Gevgelija.
- Medical teams from the public health facilities are present at the Gevgelija reception center. Voluntary MRP and polio vaccination is available at the site. All healthcare services for the refugees at the public health facilities are provided free of charge.
- On 4 September 2015 the mobile gynecological clinic managed by HERA provided services to 7 women who sought gynecological care at the Vinojug reception center, of which 3 were pregnant.
- The medical teams of the Red Cross now cover 24 hours at Gevgelija to meet the immediate needs of the increased numbers.



UNHCR staff share information with Syrian refugees. Photo: UNHCR/A.Moller

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The provision of drugs including those requiring a prescription is currently being explored with the Ministry of Health and the Crisis Management Team.



Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- A weekly plan for the food and NFI distribution by the various NGOs working at the reception centre has been agreed upon with standard operating procedures for all partners involved.
- The NGOs Nun, Legis and Help the refugees with the support of individuals are providing daily food packages and other products to the refugees. During the reporting period 30,500 food packages, 5,521 jars of baby food and 468 kg fruits were distributed
- The Red Cross provided 1,359 food kits last week. Red Cross has procured additional 3,000 food parcels (family packages) and sufficient water for the expected increase in refugees.
- UNICEF has procured a batch of child appropriate food composed of baby food, biscuits, milk, water and oral rehydration sachets for children.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Discussions are taking place to supply hot meals during the winter period through the usage of kitchen facilities.

Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- The Red Cross provided 503 hygienic parcels (for men, women and babies), 636 blankets and 11,284 bottles of water.
- Legis, Nun and Help the Refugees in Macedonia distributed daily hygienic goods to babies consisting of: diapers (2,600), wipes (1,400 pkg.), clothing (510 pcs), and to women; pads (930 pcs), wipes (1,400 packages) and 2,000 blankets to those in need.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The three water bladders with a capacity of 10,000 liters each should be functional in the coming days.
- Additional chemical toilets have been financed by UNHCR to meet the expected needs of increased numbers.

Communication and Information

Achievements and Impact

- Signboards with information pertaining to tickets and prices for trains, buses and taxis have been placed at strategic points in Vinojug reception centre.
- UNHCR information desk is operating from a refugee housing unit in Vinojug. Refugees can obtain information related to registration and other questions.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Once the necessary construction have been finalized, leaflets, sign posts, posters and other information material will be made available to ensure an optimal communication and exchange with the refugees.

Working in partnership

Achievements and Impact

- At the meeting of the Crisis Management team an official site manager for the Vinojug reception centre was appointed.
- Partners working with the Ministries and municipalities to provide protection and assistance to refugees are: Help the Refugees in Macedonia, HERA, IOM, La Strada Open Gate, Legis, MYLA, Nun, Droka, Red Cross, SoS Children's Village, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO.
- In order to prepare for the expected influx from the evacuation of Lesbos/Greece, a meeting was called by UNHCR with all Commanders (Special Unit, Border Police, MLSP, CMC) to discuss preparedness measures and processes in case of large influx to the reception centres. An agreement on the management of the arrivals (including registration) was reached and started to being implemented as of Tuesday.



Syrian women inside the reception centre Photo: UNHCR/A.Moller