

KEY FIGURES

46,798

Food packages distributed

3,727

Medical interventions provided

2,299

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

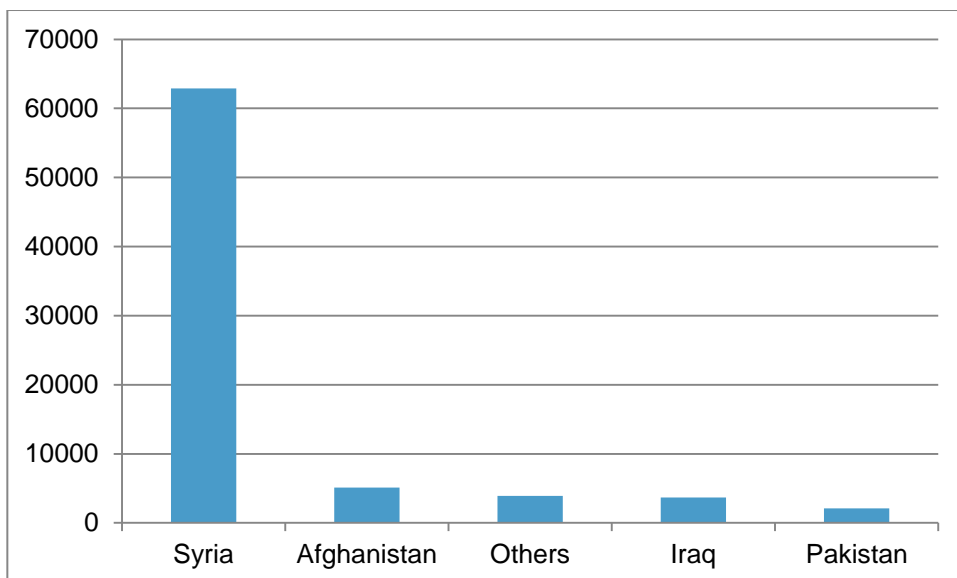
FYR MACEDONIA

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

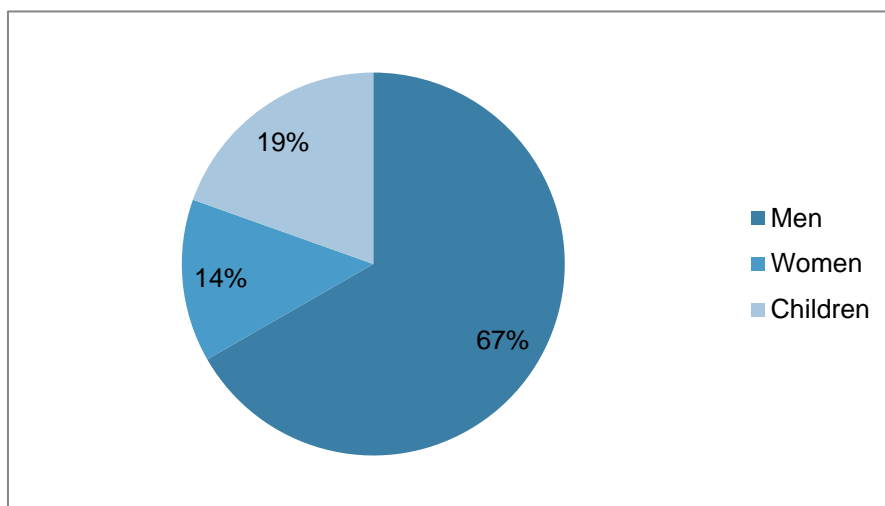
09 – 15 September 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- The average daily influx of refugees in September is more than 5,000 refugees and during the reporting period from 09 - 15 September the figure has risen to above 6,000 per day with an all-time high of 8,660 alone on 13 September. Assistance with food, NFIs, counselling, medical and psychosocial services, child friendly spaces and monitoring have been stepped up and registration is ongoing 24/7.
- The train prices have increased considerably by 150%. Advocacy efforts are ongoing to revert this decision.



- Intention to apply for asylum: **77,674** applications have been filed from 19 June to 15 September 2015 (source: Ministry of Interior).



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The Ministry of Interior's officially registered number of refugees and migrants crossing the border from Greece continues to be high with 77,674 persons registered their intention to apply for asylum, including 15,106 children, of whom 2,299 are unaccompanied since 19 June until 15 September 2015. Of these 62,898 (81%) of the arrivals are Syrians, 5,099 (7%) Afghans, 3,694 (5%) Iraqis, 2,086 (3%) Pakistanis and the remainder represent other nationalities such as Somalis, Palestinians, Congolese and Cameroonian. 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.



Vinojug site near Gevgelija, Refugees waiting to board the train, UNHCR rub halls. Photo: UNHCR /A.Moller

Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- The average daily influx of refugees, monitored by UNHCR, in September is more than 5,000. During the reporting period 09 - 15 September the figure has risen to above 6,000 per day with an all-time high of 8,660 alone on 13 September. All in need have received humanitarian assistance from UNHCR and partners.
- The train prices have increased considerably with 150% from 10 to 25 EUR. No official statement has followed the decision. Advocacy efforts are ongoing to revert the decision. There is a need to clarify the ticket prices for children. A train strike lasted for a couple of days in the wake of the increased price.
- The Vinojug reception centre has grown with two additional rub halls since the last reporting period totaling three with a capacity to cater more than 480 people in transit.
- The sudden change in weather with rain and a temperature drop proved the need to prepare for winter. Distribution of blankets (650 by Legis) and clothes are already taking place. UNHCR has started winterization preparation for shelters.
- The two UNICEF supported child-friendly tents have been upgraded with additional art and play materials, beds for children and hygienic packs for children. UNICEF is supporting La Strada with two field coordinators, two social workers, two pedagogues, two psychologists, two Arabic translators and four support staff.
- UNHCR and the Ombudsman's Office visited Tabanovce and Gevgelija to assess the situation.

- During the reporting period some 6,300 persons were offered general and legal advice at the Vinojug site by MYLA who also assisted 11 asylum seekers at the Vizbegovo Reception Center with their asylum procedure. These activities are funded by UNHCR.



Tabanovce near the Serbian border, Red Cross and UNHCR distributing food. Photo: UNHCR /A.Moller

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The Minister of Defense visited Vinojug and was briefed by UNHCR. Besides the urgent need to improve garbage collection, the Minister highlighted the need for environmentally friendly water disposal and suggested to increase the speed of registration capacity. He requested UNHCR to support more with equipment and additional data entry clerks.



Health

Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period the Red Cross provided 3,727 medical interventions out of which 218 were pregnant women and 643 were children. Financed by UNHCR, four mobile teams of the Red Cross are working in two shifts to provide medical assistance and first aid in Gevgelija and Tabanovce. The medical teams of the Red Cross will be increased by one more additional team per shift with a total increased coverage of 24 hours to meet the immediate needs of the increased numbers.
- Medical teams from the public health facilities are present at the Gevgelija reception center. Voluntary MRP and OPV vaccination is available at the site. All healthcare services for the migrants at the public health facilities are provided free of charge.
- On 11 September 2015 the mobile gynecological clinic, managed by HERA, provided services to 5 Syrian women at the Vinojug reception center. This activity is supported by UNFPA.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is only one ambulance available for the site.



Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- To improve assistance UNHCR has drafted standard operating procedures for food and NFI distribution for the Vinojug reception centre.
- The NGOs Nun, Legis and Help the Migrants with the support of individuals are providing daily food packages and other products to the refugees. During the reporting period some 46,000 food packages were distributed.
- The Red Cross provided 798 food kits and has procured additional 3,000 family food packages in preparation for a potentially increased influx of refugees.

- UNICEF procured 4,500 food packets for children comprised of semi-solid food jars for babies, chocolate milk, 500ml bottled water and oral rehydration sachets.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Red Cross is procuring 110,000 more food parcels and other items to cover increased needs at Vinojug and Tabanovce.

Water and Sanitation

Achievements and Impact

- The Red Cross provided 396 hygienic parcels (for men, women and babies).
- Legis and Help the Refugees and SOS Children's Village (through Red Cross) distributed daily hygienic goods to babies consisting of: diapers (2,200), baby wipes (1,804 packages), baby crèmes (400 pcs) baby and chocolate milk (2,400 pcs) and to women; pads (940pcs), wipes (400 packages).
- The water bladder with a capacity of 10,000 liters is operational with twelve taps. Refugees are using it for drinking and washing.
- Garbage collection has improved with additional staff working in three shifts.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

The WASH facilities with 40 toilets/showers for refugees and additional 5 toilets/showers for staff are currently being constructed.

Communication and Information

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR has established an information point with a translator outside the reception center to inform the refugees of the process and tend to immediate needs of the most vulnerable with Red Cross distributing water. The effort has proven efficient to ensure a calm atmosphere and improved management of the newly arrived refugees before they enter the site.
- UNHCR has set up information boards for refugees where important information is passed on and refugees can leave messages.

Working in partnership

Achievements and Impact

- The weekly coordination meeting in Gevgelija took place on Thursday 8 September.
- 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, Operation Mercy, Dorcas, Red Cross, SoS Children's Village, Hilal, Samaritan's Purse UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WHO.



Vinojug, Syrian boy waving goodbye Photo: UNHCR /A.Moller