

# EUROPE'S REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE #27

24 May – 20 June 2016

## HIGHLIGHTS

### KEY FIGURES

**215,380**

Refugees and migrants arriving by sea to Europe in 2016 (as of 19 June).

**2,868**

Refugees and migrants estimated to have died / gone missing at sea in 2016 (as of 20 June).

**157,801**

Estimated sea arrivals in Greece in 2016 (as of 19 June)

**56,227**

Estimated Sea arrivals in Italy in 2016 (as of 19 June)

**56,766**

Refugees and migrants present in Greece (as of 20 June)

**468**

People returned to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Statement (as of 20 June)

**USD 670M**

Total 2016 requirements for UNHCR's activities in the context of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe.

**USD 359.4M**

Funding received for UNHCR's activities thus far in Europe in 2016.

### PRIORITIES

- Boost reception capacity and provide emergency assistance in receiving countries through support for States, civil society and local communities.
- Strengthen protection systems and prevent *refoulement* including through presence and capacity building.
- Increase strategic messaging and advocacy to and about people of concern.

- As of the end of the reporting period, some 215,380 people have arrived to Europe by sea, including 157,801 in Greece (as of 19 June), some 56,227 in Italy (as of 19 June) and some 1,352 in Spain (as of 30 April). So far in June 2016, there have been approximately 5,805 arrivals as compared with 54,588 arrivals in June 2015.
- A [joint UNHCR-EASO-Hellenic Asylum Service press release](#) announced the launch of the pre-registration exercise on 8 June. This operation aims to pre-register applications for international protection from the estimated 49,000 people currently residing in accommodation sites in the mainland, additionally offering the possibility to pre-request for family reunification or relocation to another EU Member State for those qualifying. This exercise is supported financially by the European Commission, with UNHCR and EASO supporting its implementation. The process is open to people who entered Greece from 1 January 2015 to 20 March 2016.
- On 10 June, UNHCR and partners [launched an update of the regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan \(RMRP\)](#) involving 60 partner organizations and covering changes along the eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkans route. In this context, UNHCR and humanitarian partners have redefined their engagement to focus on a static population in Greece and on protection activities across the region. The financial requirements to implement the plan have been adjusted to reflect the change in circumstances. They currently stand at almost 670 million US dollars for 2016, of which contributions of 359.4 million US dollars have been received.
- UNHCR offices around the world commemorated World Refugee Day on 20 June with a variety of events and awareness-raising activities during the week. In Greece, these included celebrations with refugees at reception centres across the mainland and on the islands, and public outreach activities.



Ibrahim al-Hussein, a Syrian refugee, who carried the Olympic Flame in Athens for the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro takes part in the run relay on World Refugee Day in Athens along with children from Greece and Afghanistan. © UNHCR/Achilleas Zavallis

## UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

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### **Trends on sea arrivals**

While in the past weeks we have seen several tragic incidents and thousands of people rescued in the Central Mediterranean route, the sea arrivals trends in this route remain similar to that of the previous year. Some 47,851 people arrived to Italy in the first five months of 2016, in line with the total recorded in the same period of 2015. In terms of nationalities, the main countries of origin of arrivals to Europe include the Syrian Arab Republic (41%), Afghanistan (21%), Iraq (13%), Pakistan (3%) and Iran (2%), amongst others. In Greece, these are the Syrian Arab Republic (49%), Afghanistan (26%), Iraq (15%), Pakistan (4%) and Iran (3%), amongst others, while in Italy, these are Eritrea (13%), Nigeria (12%), Gambia (8%), Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire (7%), Guinea, Sudan (6%), Mali and Senegal (5%) as of end of May.

At least 1,000 people are believed to have drowned in a spate of shipwrecks during the last week of May. UNHCR Spokesperson, William Spindler, added that "Thus far 2016 is proving to be particularly deadly. Some 2,510 lives have been lost so far compared to 1,855 in the same period in 2015 and 57 in the first five months of 2014".

### **Global Trend report**

According to the [Global Trends](#) report released on 20 June by UNHCR, wars and persecution have driven more people from their homes than at any time since UNHCR records began. On average 24 people were forced to flee each minute in 2015, four times more than a decade earlier, when six people fled every 60 seconds. The detailed study found a total 65.3 million people were displaced at the end of 2015, compared to 59.5 million just 12 months earlier. While the spotlight was on Europe's challenge to manage more than 1 million refugees and migrants who arrived via the Mediterranean last year, the report shows that the vast majority of the world's refugees were in developing countries. In all, 86 per cent of the refugees under UNHCR's mandate in 2015 were in low-and middle-income countries close to situations of conflict. Worldwide, Turkey was the largest host country, with 2.5 million refugees. With nearly one refugee for every five citizens, Lebanon hosted more refugees compared to its population than any other country.

### **Situation in the Western Balkans**

Following the closure of the Western Balkans route, some 276 refugees and migrants remain in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 1,800 in Serbia, 63 in Croatia and 296 in Slovenia as of 20 June. In Serbia, it is estimated that some 300 refugees and migrants continue to arrive through the green borders daily. UNHCR and partners encountered and assisted over 1,410 people near entry points. At the Hungarian-Serbian border, an average of 520 people, many women and children, were awaiting admission into the "transit zones" of Horgos and Kelebija in dire conditions. In practice, Hungary accepts around 15 asylum seekers in each of the two transit zones per day. There are reports of a higher number of people crossing the border irregularly. Serbian authorities have requested their Hungarian counterparts to agree on feasible *modus operandi* for the waiting and admission process.

The UN Refugee Agency is [alarmed](#) at reports of the death of a Syrian refugee at the Hungary–Serbia border this week. UNHCR is seeking further details after being alerted about the death by the Hungarian Border Police. The man apparently drowned in the Tisza River after attempting to cross into Hungary from Serbia. He was allegedly with a larger group of refugees and migrants, who have said that they were pushed back, into the river. UNHCR remains concerned about the increasing number of allegations of abuse in Hungary against asylum-seekers and migrants by border authorities, and the broader restrictive border and legislative measures, including access to asylum procedures.

### **Relocation**

On 17 June, the European Commission (EC) released its [Fourth Report on Relocation and Resettlement](#). The report concludes that increased efforts on relocation and resettlement, including under the provisions of the EU-Turkey Statement, should be sustained. In particular, the EC calls on Greek authorities to increase their processing capacity, to establish additional "relocation centres" and to relocate those who are eligible under the EU scheme. The EC also urges the Italian authorities to quickly enhance their hotspots and processing capacity, as well as to establish specific

accommodation facilities for unaccompanied and separated children and procedures to allow for their relocation. In addition, the EC is also asking other Member States to increase their pledges for relocation, to quickly process relocation cases, and to pledge more experts under EASO deployments.

So far, 1,682 asylum-seekers have been relocated from Greece and 789 from Italy to 19 EU Member States and Switzerland (European Commission data, as of 20 June. See [here](#) for additional details). During the reporting period, a total of 709 asylum-seekers left Greece to be relocated to Belgium (20), Estonia (8), France (318), Lithuania (8), Luxembourg (41), Malta (13), Netherlands (95), Portugal (122) and Spain (84). While a total of 187 persons were relocated from Italy to Cyprus (10), Finland (32), France (44), Malta (2), Netherlands (25), Portugal (28), Spain (22), and Switzerland (24).

### **High level mission to Greece**

UN Secretary General (SG), Ban Ki-moon, visited Greece between 17 and 19 June, accompanied by a delegation of 17 UN officials, including UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Volker Türk. He praised the people of Greece for their remarkable 'solidarity and compassion' towards refugees throughout the emergency and expressed his gratitude towards all Greek Government authorities. During his visit to Lesbos, he met with Greek volunteers and organizations, visited Moria Registration and Identification centre and the Kara Tepe temporary accommodation site. In his [public remarks](#) at the conclusion of his visit on the island, the SG reiterated that "the United Nations is doing all we can to mobilize support" and called for greater sharing of responsibility across Europe and the whole world "to respond with a humane and human rights-based approach". He commended "the Greek authorities, the people of Lesbos and the humanitarian community" for working non-stop to save lives and secure the future of refugees, showing commendable "philoxenia" (the Greek word for "friendship towards strangers") and solidarity.

UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, the Director of the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply, and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe, accompanied by the UNHCR Representative in Greece visited Thessaloniki on 9 June. Their two-day mission included assessments of sites in Nea Kavala, Derveni warehouse, Oreokastro warehouse, Softex warehouse, Diavata, Lagkadikia, and the preregistration site at the Regional Asylum Service in Thessaloniki. The mission's main objective was to look at UNHCR's operational engagement following the evacuation of Eidomeni conducted without the use of force by the Greek police on 24-25 May and the urgent need to provide support to and work with the authorities in the newly established sites. Several high-level meetings were also held in Athens with Greek authorities.

## **Protection, Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Support**

### **Greece**

#### **Achievements and Impact**

- During the reporting period, a total of 7,247 people have been pre-registered and 8,728 people received a wristband to prepare for their pre-registration since the beginning of the exercise on 8 June. Over 233 unaccompanied children and 91 separated children were identified during the exercise and best interest assessments were conducted. The exercise has been proceeding smoothly, with the creation of pre-registration hubs in key locations and the organized transfer of people from the sites to the respective hubs and back. Protection Desks, as well as dedicated room for nursing mothers and child-friendly spaces are operational at the pre-registration hubs.
- With the start of the holy month of Ramadan on 6 June, the inter-agency Food Security Working Group published through Save the Children a Ramadan guide for Greek authorities and catering companies explaining traditions related to food and the importance of fasting as well as meal planning. In cooperation with several partners including Samaritan's Purse, IRC, DRC, MSF, Oxfam, ADRA, Intervolve, Pampeiraiki and other volunteer groups, UNHCR managed to distribute 14,000 "Ramadan Tupperware" within the mainland and the islands. The plastic containers provide a means to store food in a hygienic way for those who are fasting during Ramadan.
- The inter-agency Cash Working Group finalized and endorsed the Minimum Expenditure Basket for multi-purpose cash grants. Discussions are ongoing about the possibility to conduct market survey and conditional cash transfer programmes.

- A code of conduct for translators has been finalized as an inter-sector initiative and is used in particular for those working in areas which require certain expertise and training, i.e. health and protection.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- High temperatures on the islands and the mainland exacerbated dire living conditions resulting in an increase of tensions. The heatwave remained a challenge, particularly for young children and the elderly. In the North temperatures surpassed 40 degrees Celsius inside the army tents, which are currently being replaced in some sites with UNHCR family tents which are better insulated. Other infrastructural arrangements to cool the shelters are being discussed.

## The Western Balkans and Hungary

### *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

#### Achievements and Impact

- As a result of the dissatisfaction of the quality of the food provided in the transit centres, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MSLP) has terminated the contract with the previous food supplier.
- All meals are currently being provided by the City Red Cross (CRC). In addition, food distribution has been adjusted during Ramadan, following UNHCR's recommendations, and kitchens at the centre will work during the evenings to allow the preparation of meals before dawn and after Iftar.
- In light of the warmer weather, the construction of a shaded dining area has been completed with tables and benches for refugees and migrants to use when socializing outdoors.
- The new electronic distribution system of Non-Food Items (NFIs) was introduced and carried out with electronic distribution cards, replacing how distribution was previously carried out. UNHCR assisted the City Red Cross to develop the tracking of NFIs distribution. CRC tracks all distributions provided specifically by UNHCR. Since the introduction of the new NFI distribution system distribution among PoCs has gone smoothly.
- Shower construction in Tabanovce is still ongoing and should be completed by the set deadline. The water supply for the showers is still pending installation of the water pump, for the shower to be functional upon construction completion (to be provided by GIZ). Anti-mosquito sprays are being procured by UNHCR and will be delivered by DRC to the transit centres.
- During the reporting period, repellents against snakes were put in TCs as a precautionary measure based on increase reports of snakes in/around TC Tabanovce. UNHCR donated the repellents which were placed in the centers put by Ministry of Health staff.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The electric stoves which were meant to be used by PoCs were removed from the kitchen by the decision of Crisis Management Centre (CMC) manager and moved into the CMC's warehouse on site. As a result, PoCs are no longer able to cook their own meals in TC Tabanovce but are provided three ready-made meals per day.
- PoC's accommodated in the containers remain without air-conditioners, and are still complaining about the high temperatures within their living spaces. For the time being, they are provided fans.
- As the temperatures have drastically increased, and based on the high temperatures inside the kitchen, HCR together with DRC have agreed to buy two air-conditioners for the kitchen in TC Tabanovce, and two for the kitchen in TC Vinojug.

### *Serbia*

#### Achievements and Impact

- Around 750 refugees and migrants, including many women and children, remained in the North of the country. In addition to those waiting at the two sites of Horgos I and Kelebija at the border with Hungary, up to 250 more were

accommodated by the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) in the Refugee Aid Point (RAP) near the town of Subotica. UNHCR, UNICEF, HCIT and Red Cross continued to distribute food and non-food aid to asylum-seekers at the two sites at the border. Authorities installed ten chemical toilets in Horgos and 15 in Kelebija to address the serious sanitary needs.

- To support bringing refugee legislation and practices in line with applicable international standards and good models, assisting the EU accession process, UNHCR submitted comments to the Ministry of Interior on a second draft law on Asylum and Temporary Protection.
- In light of the increased number of refugees and migrants in Belgrade, the NGO Refugee Aid Miksaliste re-opened in Belgrade on 31 May a new facility where refugees and migrants can receive assistance. Few refugees and migrants were observed, however, at night in Belgrade city centre open areas as the SCRM continued to provide transport, shelter and assistance to them at Krnjaca Asylum Centre.
- From 8 to 10 June, the Mikser House, a multidisciplinary platform based in Belgrade, organized a Festival entitled “Sensitive Society” with a focus on refugee integration. UNHCR actively participated in the festival in a number of events, including in panel discussion “Legal and Economic Framework for Refugee Integration” with representatives of the Government, civil society and refugees.
- On 17 June, with the support of UNHCR and the Government of Japan, WAHA International donated medical equipment to the health centre in Sid, as a token of appreciation to the local population and the health workers for their support during the refugee crisis. The same donation was also made to Dimitrovgrad Health centre.
- Events marking Worlds Refugee Day were held, including the Government’s opening of an exhibition documenting 40 years of UNHCR activities in Serbia.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Serbia Commissariat for refugees and Migration (SCRM) along with municipal authorities placed the chemical toilets in Horgos I and Kelebija sites at the border with Hungary, which greatly alleviated the sanitary situation for people waiting to enter Hungary. Nevertheless, the overall conditions in the two sites remain dire. Regular removal of garbage and cleaning of the toilets remain a challenge, considering the high number of people present. Humanitarian actors are advocating with relevant authorities for its improvement.

## Croatia

### Achievements and Impact

- On 13 June, the Integration Working Group finalized the draft of the Action Plan for Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection 2016-2018. The aim of the Action Plan is to list activities which should be continuously implemented by all competent state authorities and bodies at the local and regional level, out of which the most important are access to appropriate accommodation and housing, social welfare, education at all levels and employment. The draft also has a number of activities directed towards raising awareness among the public, but also civil servants, on the rights and needs of refugees, practically this would be carried out through media and public campaigns, and education on human rights. The draft is pending adoption and will be taken upon following appointment of the new Government.
- Following UNHCR’s recommendation, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) introduced weekly coordination meetings with representatives of asylum-seekers in the reception centres. These allow for asylum-seekers to share their concerns and discuss possible improvements. This new practice contributed to better overall atmosphere in the centres.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Croatian language classes for beneficiaries of international protection are no longer available. UNHCR intervened with the Minister of Science, Education and Sport to request the resuming of the language classes and to stress how important they are for integration. At the end of the reporting period, the classes were not re-established.

## Slovenia

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR met with the Ombudsman's office to discuss a joint initiative on conducting a quality assessment of asylum procedures and decision-making. This shall culminate into a report that will outline recommendations for further strengthening of the protection environment.
- UNHCR assisted in facilitating the arrangement of a room at the Logatec Asylum Home facility be designated to serve as an Islamic prayer room.
- The opening of the photo exhibition "The Winter is Coming" organized by the Italian Community and Radio Capodistria in Koper took place on 25 May, where UNHCR NFIs were exhibited. This is of importance in particular in relation to raising awareness with the wider Slovenian public of the challenges that refugees face.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- As part of the enhanced monitoring of the situation of UASC and increased phenomenon of children disappearing from accommodation places; UNHCR will be undertaking regular monitoring visits to the Crisis Centres in which asylum seeking and refugee UASC under the age of 15 are accommodated.
- Following in-depth discussions with PoCs who have arrived under the relocation programme, UNHCR observed that they have a misunderstanding of the asylum procedures vis a vis their relocation. Some were unaware that they would have to go through the official asylum procedures upon their arrival in Slovenia.

## Hungary

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to maintain daily presence in the transit zones to monitor the admission procedure and coordinate the identification and referral of cases with specific needs for their accelerated entry to Hungary.
- UNHCR met with the Deputy Commander of the Police as a follow up to allegations of excessive use of force towards asylum-seekers and migrants who are crossing the border irregularly, including cases of physical abuse and harassment by police forces, security guards and military personnel. Information on such incidents has been collected by UNHCR and presented to the authorities. The Police agreed to investigate any allegations where detailed information is available. Following a report presented by UNHCR, an investigation is on-going in relation to an alleged incident of abuse inside one of the transit zones.
- On June 1 around 480 asylum-seekers carried out a demonstration at the detention facility in Kiskunhalas. The purpose of their demonstration was to request freedom of movement in and out of the closed reception centre and accelerated processing of their asylum claims. In response to the demonstration, UNHCR assisted by mediating discussions between the asylum-seekers and the Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) whom manages the centre. Additionally, UNHCR provided the asylum-seekers with individual and group counselling sessions where interpreters were also present. As a result of UNHCR's mediation the OIN further reviewed cases and sent some individuals to other open reception centres in the country.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gap

- Tensions continue among those awaiting entry outside the transit zones along the Serbian border. Allegations of physical abuse and harassment by regular or special police forces and military personnel have been increasing in the border area near Röszke. UNHCR is collecting information on these incidents.
- On 3 June, the body of a Syrian national was found in the Tisza River close to the Serbian-Hungarian border. He was allegedly with a group of people who reported that they were pushed back into the river by the Hungarian authorities. UNHCR has called for an investigation by the authorities expressing its concerns about allegations of push-backs and incidents of violence at the Hungarian-Serbian border.

- Reception conditions remain poor in open reception centres in Vámoszabadi and Bicske. Hygiene conditions are sub-standard in some locations, including with infestations of mice, bed bugs, lice and fleas being reported. Many asylum-seekers are unaware of the details of the asylum proceedings, and there is little social support available. UNHCR is following up with relevant partners and authorities to address the identified gaps.
- UNHCR visited various asylum and aliens police detention facilities, including Békéscsaba, Kiskunhalas and Nagyfa. Several detainees made allegations of physical abuse and brutality by security guards which often remain unreported due to fear of retaliation. UNHCR collected detailed information to follow up with the relevant authorities.

## Working in partnership

In line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), UNHCR supports the Government's coordination efforts at central and local level in Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Turkey. In Hungary, UNHCR chairs a coordination forum including UN agencies, IGOs, NGO partners and non-state institutions. This includes the support to crisis management teams, the facilitation of general and sectoral coordination meetings. Besides cooperation with Governments, UNHCR also operates closely with the European Commission and relevant EU Agencies, including Frontex and EASO. Full list of partners is available [here](#).

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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In the framework of the revised inter-agency [regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan \(RMRP\) for Europe](#), released on 10 June, the Plan amounts to USD 669.9 million with UNHCR appealing for USD 380.3 million in additional support for European affected countries in the eastern Mediterranean and western Balkans route for 2016. This appeal supersedes the original 2016 requirements for participating organizations. By participating in this plan organizations commit to engaging in regional and national coordination mechanisms across Europe.

As of 23 May 2016, USD 359.4 million has been earmarked against the RMRP, including USD 166.3 million for UNHCR.

Special thanks to major donors to the refugee emergency in Europe – the European Union, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom – as well as to all government donors and private donors for their generous contributions. The financial support provided by donors who have contributed with non-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds, as well as for those who have contributed directly to the situation allows participating organizations to provide direct assistance in protection and help find solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers. In this changing operational context, UNHCR is appealing to donors to provide contributions that can be allocated as flexibly as possible.

Major donors to UNHCR of unrestricted and regional funds in 2016: Sweden | United States of America | Netherlands | Norway | Australia | Denmark | Priv Donors Spain | Canada | Switzerland | Germany

